HiHm 2047: The Middle East Since the 1920s

This course allows Students to gain an in-depth understanding of the recent history of a large region which is of central importance in the contemporary world. Students will study the intellectual and political forces, and the internal conflicts, which have transformed the Middle East in modern times. The course also covers the complex and dynamic interactions between the peoples and states of the Middle East and the wider international community.

Purpose of the Course

The purpose of the course is to understand one of the most pivotal and volatile areas of the world today, an area that put forth some of the world's oldest civilizations; that gave rise to three major religions; and that remains critical in modern times. Particular attention will be paid to the role that religion, nationalism, and imperialism have played in shaping contemporary events.

Learning Outcomes

A: Use knowledge and methods of history, literature, and philosophy, to address enduring questions of meaning and purpose and develop a worthy vision of the human person.

B: Review existing knowledge and synthesize it in original ways to clarify meaning, develop a broader perspective, or present a new point of view.

C: Express ideas effectively in speech and writing to inform, engage, and persuade their audiences.

D: Demonstrate knowledge of the richness of human diversity.

Course Objectives

1. Students will demonstrate knowledge of the key events, people, and ideologies that have shaped the history of the Middle East.

2. Students will comprehend the roots of modern conflicts and challenges in the Middle East by examining the role that nationalism, religion, and imperialism have played in shaping the modern region.

3. Students will demonstrate an understanding of the influence of geography on the region's history.

5. Students will gain an understanding of the vital role that Judaism, Christianity, and Islam have played and continue to play in the modern Middle East.

6. Students will become familiar with historiography as it pertains to the history of the Middle East.

Topical Outline

I.Introductory Lecture: What is there to Understand about the Middle East?

II.The Middle East in the First World War

III. The Middle East between Fires

 IV.The Middle East in World War II

V.The Middle East Since World War II

VI.Arab Israeli Conflict

VII.Revivalism and Reform

Required Texts

Gelvin, James The Modern Middle East:A History (Oxford: Oxford University

Press, 2004)

Goldschmidt Jr., Arthur,Lawrence Davidson A Concise History of the Middle East(Westview Press,2005)

Gilles, Kepel. Jihad: the Trail of Political Islam (London; New York: I.B. Tauris,

2004)

Gilles, Kepel. The Roots of Radical Islam (London: 2005)

Lesch, David The Arab Israeli Conflict: A History (Oxford: Oxford University

Press, 2008),

Yezid Sayigh, Armed Struggle and the Search for State: the Palestinian National

Movement, 1949-1993 (Oxford: Clarendon Press; New York: Oxford

University Press, 1997)

Rashid Khalidi, Palestinian Identity: The Construction of Modern National

Consciousness (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997)

Chapter I

"The Study of history is the best medicine for a sick mind!" Livy

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What is this thing called the "Middle East?"

Introduction to the Geography and Historical Background of the Middle East

THE MIDDLE EAST:

Geographic and cultural region located in southwestern Asia and northeastern Africa. The geopolitical term "Middle East" was first coined in 1902 by a United States naval officer Alfred Thayer Mahan. (Originally referred to the Asian region south of the Black Sea between the Mediterranean Sea to the west and India to the east). The older term for this area was the "Near East": loaded term. "Near" to the British colonialist rulers. In modern scholarship, and for the purposes of this class, the term "Middle East" refers collectively to the Asian countries of Bahrain, Cyprus, Iran, Iraq, Israel/Palestine, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates, Yemen, and the African country of Egypt. The Middle East and North Africa brings in the Muslim countries of Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, and the Sudan.   An even more broad definition of the term would include Afghanistan and Pakistan since they are adjacent areas, are predominantly Muslim and share many cultural and historical similarities with the rest of the Middle East.   Arabs in fact make up the overwhelming majority of the people of the Middle East but we also have non-Arab Iranians, Turks, the Hebraic people or Jews, now associated primarily with Israel, although you continue to have Jewish communities the rest of the Middle East, the Berbers of North Africa, and the Kurds in Iraq and Turkey, for example.

The Middle East is described as the cradle of civilization. Why is this? By 300 BC,1) we see the division of society into a number of social classes; 2) the development of large, densely populated urban centers, or the rise of cities; 3) and the emergence of centralized political institutions, leading to the formation of the state. We also have evidence of the rise of different kinds of occupations other than the primarily agricultural one, as artisans, merchants, priests, soldiers, and kings. Long-distance trade becomes important.

WRITING:

Phoenicians: a nation of seafarers and traders: developed a phonetic alphabet; previously hieroglyphics (Egypt) and cuneiform (Akkadians and Sumerians)

Writing made possible: keeping of written records, the spread of information and therefore education, and progressively led to a more sophisticated civilization.

The area we are primarily concerned with:

Today the part of the world that first witnessed the rise of Islam is the area known as Saudi Arabia, containing two of Islam's holiest sites, Mecca and Medina. In earlier periods, known simply as ARABIA or the Arabian peninsula. We do not know that much about life in the Arabian peninsula before the seventh century when Islam arose there. Much of the literature during this period was oral; there was much poetry and exquisite poetry at that. What we know about the culture and mores of Arabian society from this period is largely gleaned from this oral literature which was written down during the Islamic period. From the viewpoint of Islamic history, we have two very distinct periods: the pre-Islamic and the Islamic periods. In Islamic chronology, there are two main historical periods, the "Jahiliyya" era and the Islamic era.

The great divide is 622 of the common era which is year 1 of the Islamic era. We'll explain the significance of this date later. From the existing literature of the pre-Islamic period, we are able to reconstruct important pieces of information regarding the construction of Jahili Arab society. The basic unit of pre-Islamic Arab society was the tribe. Membership and affiliation with one's natal TRIBE was crucial for individual identity and standing in society. One basically did not exist - as a person or individual - and did not have any social power without reference to one's tribe. Personal names to this day can reflect a person's genealogical descent (nasab). Descent is always patrilineal, that is traced through the father and his male ancestors. The name of a tribe is usually prefaced by the word Banu, meaning sons.

The importance of kinship and tribal affiliation was something the Arabs shared with other Semitic peoples: Thinking of how the Gospel of Matthew begins with the extended GENEALOGY OF JESUS: it refers to Jesus Christ as the son of David the son of Abraham and then through Abraham reaches down to Joseph and to Mary, his wife. THIS REFLECTS A COMMON SEMITIC PREOCCUPATION WITH ONE'S LINES OF KINSHIP; IT IS BOTH A SOURCE OF IDENTITY AND LEGITIMATION OF AUTHORITY AND POWER.

Who are the Arabs, ethnically and historically?

Popularly, Arabs, like other ancient Middle Eastern peoples, are considered to be the descendants of Shem, son of Noah, and therefore considered to be Semites. Like ancient Babylonians, Phoenicians, Assyrians, the Hebrews, and the Aramaeans. Another son of Noah, called Ham, gives his name to a closely related group called the Hamites, among whom are the Ethiopians (called Habeshas or Abyssinians in ancient times), the ancient Egyptians, and the Sabians and Himyarites, in southern Arabia. These terminologies were made popular by European scholars based especially on chapter ten in Genesis from the Old Testament. Where the original home of the Semites was remains a point of debate and discussion for scholars today; some say they come from some part of Asia, i.e. originally from the Arabian Peninsula or from Mesopotamia, some say they crossed into Asia originally from Africa. But in any case, based on linguistic evidence, we know that these various peoples of the Middle East must have originally come from one stock and then settled in various parts of what we call the Middle East, including North Africa, to become distinctive ethnic groups.

THE ARABIAN PENINSULA is divided into North and South; divided by a desolate, desert area called Rub` al-khali (the Empty Quarter). This is not only a physical division: the peoples of the North and the South are in fact two peoples with differing languages and characteristics. The people of the North considered themselves to be the descendants of a legendary figure known as Adnan, who in turn was

believed to be the descendant of Isma`il, the biblical Ishmael, the son of Abraham. A prominent tribe from among the North Arabians is the Banu Quraysh, the most famous member of which is Muhammad b. 'Abd Allah, the prophet of Islam. The people of the South considered themselves to be the descendants of a man called Yaqtan, who has been popularly identified with Joktan mentioned in the Bible (as the son of Eber) in Genesis.

Until about 600 A.D. (of the common era), it was the southern Arabs who were culturally and materially more advanced than the northern Arabs. Yemen was actually referred to in ancient times as Arabia Felix (happy or prosperous Arabia), the site of an ancient civilization and of fabulous wealth, spices, gold, and precious stones. It is believed that the legendary gold mines of Solomon were located in southern Arabia. However, by the sixth century, the south Arabian kingdom called the Himyarite was overthrown by the Abyssinians (Ethiopians) and by 600 A.D., south Arabic was basically a dead language. The Arabic language of northern Arabia now gained prominence and this is the language we now refer to when we speak of the Arabic language.

Political organization and worldview:

As far as the INDIVIDUAL was concerned, one knew where one belonged; he or she had the right to a place in the tribe; as long as one did not commit a crime or violate its mores or rules and thus become an outlaw, one could count on its help and support.

Based on this strong identification with their individual tribe and the larger clan of which the individual tribe was a member, the Arabs evolved an intricate system of kinship and genealogical relationship. On the positive side, this system helped them distinguish between personalities and defined their relationship to one another, to remember historical events and keep track of participants in them; in short it was their way of recording history.

ON THE NEGATIVE SIDE, this intense loyalty to one's tribe and the sense of partisanship that it created often led to tribal feuds. Blood revenge was one frequent reason for outbreaks of hostilities. For every blood-guilt, whatever the motive for its being committed, imposed upon any member of the tribe the duty of avenging it; he was, in turn, the object of an avenger. Thus, wars between whole tribes or individual members were constant, and only willingness to offer and accept a ransom instead of paying with blood prevented them from continuing indefinitely. These wars are the subject of those literary narratives I mentioned before, the Ayyam al-`Arab.

Among the Arabs we find those who lived in settled communities in urban areas as well as the "Bedouins," the nomads who lived in the desert and who travelled throughout it for their livelihood.

The settlements developed from the presence of water in an oasis or grew up around a sanctuary which in turn often owed its existence to the presence of a well, as was the case in Mecca, the most renowned of all. The famous sanctuary in Mecca is the Ka'ba which as Arab and Islamic tradition maintains was built by Abraham and which then consequently became a shrine to the pagan gods of the Meccans. Another important place associated with the environs of Mecca was a market-place called Ukaz. This was an important center for the cultural and literary activities of the peninsular Arabs of this time. Every year a fair would be held here at which the most renowned poets would gather to compete with one another in the composition of poetry, some of which have come down to us. Other important settled centers were

Ta'if, Yathrib which later was renamed Medina, and Khaybar, an important oasis town. The importance of these settlements lay in their role as places for rest and replenishment of food and water for the caravans that passed through them on their way from South Arabia to Egypt and the Fertile Crescent and beyond. North and Central Arabia contributed by way of merchandise to this trade in dates from the oases, riding and pack camels which the Bedouins bred and their wool and skins. Caravans from Yemen and Hadramawt and from faraway India brought back incense or sandalwood and spices.

Religious attitudes and ideas prevailing in pre-Islamic Arabia:

Our sources do not give us copious evidence of the religious practices and emotions of the Jahili Arabs. We know they worshipped a multiplicity of gods much like the ancient Greeks and Romans or other ancient Near Eastern peoples. These deities were housed in the Ka'ba to which they performed pilgrimage. The Ka'ba is the cube-shaped temple in the city of Mecca which tradition affirms was originally built by Abraham and his son, Ishmael, and dedicated to the one God. Under the pre-Islamic Arabs, the Ka'ba was given over to the worship of idols. The pre-Islamic Arabs also subscribed to an animistic or pantheistic religion; that is they regarded the natural phenomena as manifestations of the divine. In the harsh environment of the desert, exposed to hardships of climate and geography, constantly endangered by the hostility of man and nature, the Bedouin must often have felt small and in need of divine assistance. There is evidence from the Quran and other sources which indicate that some of the pre-Islamic Arabs like the Sabeans subscribed to an astral belief; i.e. they worshipped celestial bodies like the sun, the moon, and the stars. The pagan Arabs probably had little or no concept of the after-life or of personal accountability for their deeds; no explicit expression of this belief can be found in our texts.

But this did not mean that the pre-Islamic Arab did not aspire to spiritual and moral ideals. The very important notion of muruwwa may be seen to be akin to the Latin notion of virtus, from which we get the English word virtue. Muruwwa is comprised of honor (sharaf), hospitality (karam), loyalty (wafa), help for (najda) the weak, particularly widows or women in general, and orphan children. Blood-feuds (thar) were conducted in order to avenge loss of either personal or tribal honor. Ideas of chivalrous behavior were part of the inter-tribal moral code. To the domain of chivalry belonged ideas of gallantry to women, holding to pledges, avoidance of treachery in combat and refraining from fighting an unarmed opponent. We find all or some of these themes reflected in the pre-Islamic literature and in the Ayyam al-`Arab, the battle-days of Arabs.

We also find glimpses in this literature into the political organization of the tribe. The tribal group of the Bedouin was a closely knit one. Only as a member of the tribe could the Bedouin Arab be assured of protection and help in his feuds and raids for the sake of revenge or booty. Political organization tended to be loose and very flexible, for lack of a better word, the internal organization of the tribe has been described as a democratic one.

 Leadership rested in the most admired and honored, and often the strongest member of the tribe, the man who could guide because of superior wisdom and insight. At the same time he dispensed advice and charity, speaking with authority for the tribal community. A leader in particular had to have muruwwa. This leader, known as the sayyid (chieftain, ruler) or shaykh, was a primus inter pares, first among equals, and not a despotic tyrant. He was primarily a consultant, a chief advisor.

This has important implications for the Islamic period as well, for in many ways, the caliph, the successor to the Prophet Muhammad, who was the leader of the entire Muslim community, was conceived along the lines of a tribal sayyid. We will discuss this further when we talk about the period of the rightly-guided caliphs.

"No matter how busy you may think you are, you must find time for reading, or surrender yourself to self-chosen ignorance." Confucius

"የቱንም ያህል በስራ ብትወጠርም ቅሉ ለማንበብ ጊዜ ሊኖርህ ይገባል፨ ያለበለዚያ በገዛ ፈቃድህ ለመረጥከው መሀይምነት እጅህን ስጥ!"

Chapter II

"The Study of history is the best medicine for a sick mind!" Livy

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World War I in the Middle East

The Middle East played a major role in World War I, and, conversely, the war was important in shaping the development of the modern Middle East. One might even say that World War I began and ended with Middle East-related conflicts. (The beginning, the event that formed the immediate cause of the war, was the assassination of the Austro-Hungarian Archduke Franz Ferdinand by a group of Bosnian high school students in June 1914, and that assassination was a direct result of the long process of separating Balkan countries from the fading Ottoman Empire. The end, the last treaty arising from the war nearly five years after it ended, was the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne, ending the conflict with Turkey that arose from the failed Treaty of Sevres in 1920 that was supposed to have ended World War I in the Middle East.)Here is a brief overview of some of the events and issues of World War I in this key region of the world.

Middle Eastern issues and the origins of the war (why a group of Bosnian teenagers were gunning for an Austrian archduke and what that had to do with the Middle East – and a world war):

If you had been a European or American living in 1914 who was interested in foreign affairs, you would undoubtedly have been debating "the Eastern Question": the future of the areas that still remained part of the Ottoman Empire. Every educated person living in 1914 knew that, after 600 years as a world power, the once great Ottoman Empire was struggling to adjust to changing times. Many people were calling it "the sick man of Europe" and questioning whether the sick man's death would lead to a major war among the European powers. Yet, people had been worrying about the Eastern Question for the past century and a half. Why was the issue an especially dangerous problem in 1914?

The answers for this are complicated, but three factors in particular are relevant to this discussion. Each of them involves the Great Powers of Europe: Great Britain, France, Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Russia. (Remember that the U.S. was not yet considered a "great power.")

First, these powerful European countries were engaged in a race for foreign colonies – in order to expand their economic and political influence. The declining Ottoman Empire contained many areas that they all wanted to control: the Turkish Straits, for example, because of their strategic significance, the Arab lands because of their resources and location along the Mediterranean, and the Balkan Peninsula because of its location in Europe.

Second, two of the powers – Austria-Hungary and Russia – were multi-national empires in a time in which modern nationalism was making their political structure and organization seem very outdated. The Austrian Empire was particularly threatened by Serbian nationalism in the Balkans because Austria-Hungary contained millions of people who spoke some dialect of the Serbo-Croatian language, and some of them were talking of breaking away and uniting them with Serbia. This possibility worried the Austrian leadership, who then wanted to take over formerly Ottoman territories in Europe, like Bosnia.

(This was not because the Austrians really wanted more Serbian-speaking people in their empire, but because they didn't want Serbia to have those lands and become more powerful.) Russia, of course, priding itself on being the protector of Orthodox Christians, backed up Serbia and its interests. The result: any problem in the Balkans would easily lead to a bigger war between Russia and Austria.

This brings us to the third factor: the newly consolidated alliance system, pitting Austria, Germany, and Italy, on one side, against Great Britain, France, and Russia, on the other. This meant that if Austria were to go to war with Russia, Germany and Italy would back Austria, while Great Britain and France would rush to the defense of their ally, Russia. In other words, everyone knew in 1914 that a small spark could ignite a really big war.

Another thing that "everyone" knew in 1914 was that war was coming and that it would probably begin in the Balkans. Actually, there had been almost continuous conflict in the Balkans for just over a century. Yet far from lessening, the conflicts just seemed to be intensifying in the early years of the 20th century. In 1908 Austria had formally annexed Bosnia-Herzegovina, a previously Ottoman province that it had occupied since the 1870s. This act had enraged nationalists throughout the Balkans and intensified the hatred between Austria and Serbia. Then, there were the two Balkan Wars of 1912 and 1913, which involved several of the small Balkan countries and the Ottoman Empire. (Later, some people would dub World War I the "Third Balkan War.")

By 1914 Bosnia was a center of unrest, especially among the small educated part of the population, most of whom were young people in their teens and twenties.With no army or government of their own, these youthful revolutionaries knew that change could only come about through an intervention of powerful countries like Russia or Britain. In their view, the only way to get this intervention would be in the event of a crisis. Many of them believed that the quickest way to provoke a crisis was through political assassination – assassinating an Austrian political leader would lead to Austrian intervention in Bosnia, which would lead to Russian intercession in Bosnia's behalf. It seemed to make perfect sense,especially when news got out that the heir to the Austrian throne would parade through the streets of Sarajevo on a day that would particularly offend the Serbs: the anniversary of the day on which they had lost their independence to Ottoman conquerors. (You can imagine that much of the population of Bosnia would be outraged to see a parade by another conqueror on that day of mourning!)

The assassination of Franz Ferdinand was not the work of one – or even two – students: it was a conspiracy that directly involved dozens of people and indirectly involved many, many more. Six young people (five of whom were high school students between the ages of 16 and 19) went to the parade carrying weapons and intending to kill the royal visitor; others assisted or at least knew about the plot; a number of officials from Serbia (one of whom was a member of the government of Serbia – though he was acting without the authorization of his government) supplied the weapons and other assistance.

No one was surprised that the assassination took place and that it led to a war! However, it was a great shock to the students involved in the plot – and to most other people at the time – that the war turned out to be so long and so incredibly bloody. The killing of the archduke and his wife set off a chain of events: Austria attacked Serbia; Russia backed Serbia; the alliance system came into play pulling Britain and France in on Russia's side and Germany in on Austria's. Not to be outdone, the Ottoman Empire joined in too – on the side of the Central Powers (Germany, Austria). The Great War had begun.

The Middle East during the war (from military campaigns to hunting locusts, from an Arab revolt to the Armenian 'genocide'):

The Middle East was directly involved in World War I, and so it was affected by the war in all aspects of life. The most immediate impact was on young men: Turks, Kurds, Armenians, Arabs and others fought as part of the Ottoman army. They fought against Russian troops along the northeastern border of the empire and against Anzac (Australian, New Zealand) troops in the Turkish straits (the great battle of Gallipoli). They fought British troops – from Great Britain itself and the British commonwealth – along with troops from various parts of the empire (India, Africa), that massed in Egypt and campaigned throughout the Arab lands (Egypt, Palestine, Lebanon, Syria, Arabia, Iraq). Although the Ottomans won a number of important battles (such as Gallipoli), they also lost a lot of men. In addition to combat, all the forces fighting in the Middle East – on both sides – struggled with disease (spread by war) and scarcity of water and supplies. Ottoman commanders, fighting to protect their own territory, also had to contend with local administrative issues, such as an infestation of locusts in Palestine.

In addition to all this, the Ottoman Empire – along with other multi-national empires such as its ally Austria-Hungary and its enemy Russia – found itself facing internal unrest from its national minorities. In the case of the Ottoman Empire, Great Britain used Arab dissatisfaction with Ottoman rule to the advantage of the Allied cause – the "divide and conquer" approach. First, they made a deal with the Arabs. As early as 1915, Britain had opened negotiations with Sharif Hussein of Saudi Arabia, promising Hussein that after the war, he would rule a large Arab country that would presumably include most of the lands between Persia and Egypt (including today's Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Palestine/Israel, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and other countries). Hussein led a revolt, assisted by a young, Arabic-speaking British officer named T.E. Lawrence (later called "Lawrence of Arabia"). Neither man realized that the Western powers had no intention of honoring their commitments to the Arabs. As early as May 1916, France and Britain signed the secret Sykes-Picot Agreement in which they made plans to divide the Arab lands into French and British spheres of influence. Further, in 1917 the British signed the Balfour Declaration, indicating an acceptance of the idea of establishing a Jewish state in Palestine. The inconsistency of these plans is obvious: within two years, the West had promised the territory of Palestine to three different parties: the Jews (then a small minority in Palestine), the Arabs (under Sharif Hussein), and the British!

Although the Ottoman Empire, throughout its long history, had had a generally good track record with regard to human rights (long-standing tolerance of its Jewish and Christian populations), the pressures of the world war and the rise of modern nationalism led to the worst kind of wartime abuse: genocide. Since the rise of nationalism, there had been tensions between the Ottoman government and the Armenian population, and sporadic persecutions of Armenians had occurred since the late 19th century. With the pressure of a world war, some members of the Ottoman government looked at the Armenians with increased distrust. After all, many Armenians lived near the Russian border (a combat zone), and because both Armenians and Russians were Christians, the Ottomans suspected that the Armenians might ally with the enemy of the Ottoman state. In 1915 Ottoman forces began rounding up Armenians, especially in the eastern part of the country. Between 1 and 1 ½ million Armenian men, women, and children died – either killed directly or marched across eastern Turkey and into the Syrian desert, where they died of

disease and starvation. This is considered the first modern genocide in world history; unfortunately, it would not be the last.

The Middle East and the peace settlements after the war (division, foreign occupation, renewed war, population exchanges):

It must have been obvious even before the armistice ending the war was signed in November 1918 that the Ottoman Empire had lost the war. Its European territories had already been lost; its Arab territories were falling away; its population was exhausted – and depleted – by three wars over the last six years. However, the settlement that followed the war – the Treaty of Sevres in 1920 – was so harsh that it must have come as a shock to people in the Middle East.

The Treaty of Sevres was created mainly by Britain and France. (The U.S. had withdrawn from the international peace negotiations, while Russia had fallen into revolution and civil war.) Middle Eastern leaders were mostly excluded for the decision-making process.

According to the Treaty of Sevres, the Arab lands were separated from the Ottoman Empire, but that did not mean that Arab nationalists got the large, independent Arab state that they expected. Except for the Kingdom of the Hijaz, which became independent (and several years later joined with other territories to become part of Saudi Arabia), the Arabs did not achieve real independence. Instead, France and Britain divided the region among themselves: the French declaring a "mandate" over Syria and Lebanon; Britain a mandate over Iraq and Palestine.

The Kurdish people were even more disappointed by the settlement. After some initial talk of creating a small Kurdish state (from territories that are now part of Turkey), plans for even a limited Kurdistan were soon scrapped. Kurdish lands were divided among Iran, Iraq, Turkey and Syria. Today, the Kurds are the largest group of people in the world without their own country.

It was in Turkey, however, that opposition to the Treaty of Sevres led to another war. The treaty was a totally unacceptable blow to Turkish nationalists. They might have accepted the fact that the treaty ended the Ottoman Empire and took away all its Arab territories (which must have seemed inevitable). However, they could never accept that the treaty divided Turkey itself. Greece, Italy, and France occupied sections of Turkey-proper, the Turkish Straits were put under international control, and France and Britain were considering giving large sections of territory to the Kurds in the southeast and the Armenians in the northeast. It was especially galling when Greek occupying forces marched in – after all, Greece had been under Ottoman rule, not the other way around!

The revolt against the Allies, which began even before the ink was dry on the Treaty of Sevres, became known in Turkey as the "War of Independence." Led by Mustafa Kemal, later called "Atatürk," the fighting caused the Allies to withdraw occupying forces from Anatolia. In 1923 the Treaty of Lausanne finally ended the last conflict that was part of the First World War. The borders of today's Turkey came about as a result, to the bitter disappointment of Armenians and Kurds – and Greeks. The resulting population exchanges – forced expulsions of ½ million Turks (Muslims) from Greece and of 1 ½ million Greeks (Christians) from western Turkey – became part of the agreement, and this policy set an unfortunate precedent for future international settlements.

Aftermath:

The First World War would have a lasting effect on the Middle East. Millions died. In fact, after 11 years of warfare from the Balkan Wars through the Turkish War of Independence, so many young Turkish men died that in parts of Anatolia women outnumbered men by 5-1. Total Ottoman population losses may have reached 5 million people if one counts death in combat, death from disease (including the Spanish influenza), the Armenian genocide, and the expulsion of peoples during the Greek-Turkish population exchanges.

There were lasting political effects as well; one can even say that the roots of many contemporary conflicts in the Middle East go back to the Great War and the settlements that came out of it. The ongoing enmity between Armenia and its neighbors Turkey and Azerbaijan can be traced directly back to the so-called Armenian genocide and Turkey's refusal to acknowledge it. Over the past century, Kurdish unrest has been an ongoing issue in Turkey, Iran, Iraq, and Syria, sometimes flaring into outright warfare, revolution, and even genocide (for example, Iraqi measures against its rural Kurdish population in the 1980s). Bloody civil wars in Lebanon and, most recently, in Syria – as well as conflicts in Iraq - are rooted in political and social issues that developed or were intensified during the mandate period that resulted from the First World War treaties. Finally, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, probably the greatest, most continuous source of unrest in the Middle East, has been greatly accelerated by wartime promises and post-war policies.

It is generally acknowledged that World War I was a transformative event in world history, possibly the single greatest catalyst for change on a global scale, marking the end of 19th century institutions and the beginning of a new era. This statement is especially true in the Middle East. Studying the Great War in that area of the world raises important military, social, political, and health issues that even one century later, continue to affect the world in which we live.

"No matter how busy you may think you are, you must find time for reading, or surrender yourself to self-chosen ignorance." Confucius

"የቱንም ያህል በስራ ብትወጠርም ቅሉ ለማንበብ ጊዜ ሊኖርህ ይገባል። ያለበለዚያ በገዛ ፈቃድህ ለመረጥከው መሀይምነት እጅህን ስጥ!"

Chapter III

"The Study of history is the best medicine for a sick mind!" Livy

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The Middle East between Fires…

Voices from the Past

In 1925, Hayyim Bialik, a Ukrainian Jew who had settled in Palestine the year before, spoke at the opening of the Hebrew University of Palestine:

"Through cruel and bitter trials and tribulations, through blasted hopes and despair of the soul, through innumerable humiliations, we have slowly arrived at the realization that without a tangible homeland, without private national premises that are entirely ours, we can have no sort of a life, either material or spiritual. . . . We have not come here to seek wealth, or dominion, or greatness. How much of these can this poor little country give us? We wish to find here only a domain of our own for our physical and intellectual labor." —The Human Record: Sources of Global History, Alfred J. Andrea and James H. Overfield, eds., 1998

Bialik was a believer in Zionism, a movement that supported the establishment of Palestine as a homeland for Jews.

Decline and Fall of the Ottoman Empire

The empire of the Ottoman Turks—which once had included parts of eastern Europe, the Middle East, and North Africa—had been growing steadily weaker since the end of the eighteenth century. Indeed, European nations called it "the old sick man of Europe."

The empire's size had decreased dramatically. Much of its European territory had been lost. In North Africa, Ottoman rule had ended in the nineteenth century when France seized Algeria and Tunisia and Great Britain took control of Egypt. Greece also declared its independence in the nineteenth century.

In 1876, Ottoman reformers seized control of the empire's government and adopted a constitution aimed at forming a legislative assembly. However, the sultan they placed on the throne ,Abdulhamid II, suspended the new constitution and ruled by authoritarian means.

Abdulhamid paid a high price for his actions—he lived in constant fear of assassination. He kept a thousand loaded revolvers hidden throughout his guarded estate and insisted that his pets taste his food before he ate it.

The suspended constitution became a symbol of change to a group of reformers named the Young Turks. This group was able to force the restoration of the constitution in 1908 and to depose the sultan the following year. However, the Young Turks lacked strong support for their government. The stability of the empire was also challenged by many ethnic Turks who had begun to envision a Turkish state that would encompass all people of Turkish nationality.

Impact of World War I

The final blow to the old empire came from World War I. After the Ottoman government allied with Germany, the British sought to undermine Ottoman rule in the Arabian Peninsula by supporting Arab nationalist activities there. The nationalists were aided by the efforts of the dashing British adventurer T. E. Lawrence, popularly known as "Lawrence of Arabia."

In 1916, the local governor of Makkah, encouraged by Great Britain, declared Arabia independent from

Ottoman rule. British troops, advancing from Egypt, seized Palestine. After suffering more than three hundred thousand deaths during the war, the Ottoman Empire made peace with the Allies in October 1918.

The Armenian Tragedy

During the war, the Ottoman Turks had alienated the Allies with their policies toward minority subjects, especially the Armenians. The Christian Armenian minority had been pressing the Ottoman government for its independence for years. In 1915, the government violently reacted to an Armenian uprising by killing Armenian men and expelling women and children from the empire.

Within seven months, six hundred thousand Armenians had been killed, and five hundred thousand had been deported (sent out of the country). Of those deported, four hundred thousand died while marching through the deserts and swamps of Syria and Mesopotamia .By September 1915, an estimated 1 million Armenians were dead. They were victims of "genocide," the deliberate mass murder of a particular racial, political, or cultural group. (A similar practice would be called ethnic cleansing in the Bosnian War of 1993 to 1996.)

One eyewitness to the 1915 Armenian deportation wrote:

"[She] saw vultures hovering over children who had fallen dead by the roadside. She saw beings crawling along, maimed, starving and begging for bread. From time to time she passed soldiers driving before them with whips and rifle-butts whole families, men, women and children, shrieking, pleading, wailing. These were the Armenian people setting out for exile into the desert from which there was no return."

By 1918, another four hundred thousand Armenians had been massacred. Russia, France, and Britain denounced the Turkish killing of the Armenians as "against humanity and civilization." Because of the war, however, the killings went on.

Emergence of the Turkish Republic

At the end of World War I, the tottering Ottoman Empire collapsed. Great Britain and France made plans to divide up Ottoman territories in the Middle East .Only the area of present-day Turkey remained under

Ottoman control. Then, Greece invaded Turkey and seized the western parts of the Anatolian Peninsula.

The invasion alarmed key elements in Turkey, who were organized under the leadership of the war hero Colonel Mustafa Kemal. Kemal resigned from the army and summoned a national congress calling for the creation of an elected government and a new Republic of Turkey. His forces drove the Greeks from the Anatolian Peninsula. In 1923, the last of the Ottoman sultans fled the country, which was now declared to be the Turkish Republic.The Ottoman Empire had finally come to an end.

Evaluating: How did the Ottoman Empire finally end?

The Modernization of Turkey

President Kemal was now popularly known as Atatürk (AT•uh•TUHRK), or "father Turk." Over the

next several years, he tried to transform Turkey into a modern state. A democratic system was put in

place, but the president did not tolerate opposition and harshly suppressed his critics.

Atatürk's changes went beyond politics .Many Arabic elements were eliminated from the Turkish language, which was now written in the Roman alphabet. Popular education was introduced. All Turkish citizens were forced to adopt family (last) names, in the European style. Atatürk also took steps to modernize Turkey's economy. Factories were established, and a five-year plan provided for state direction over the economy.

Atatürk also tried to modernize farming, although he had little effect on the nation's peasants. Perhaps the most significant aspect of Atatürk's reform program was his attempt to break the power of the Islamic religion. He wanted to transform Turkey into a secular state—a state that rejects religious influence on its policies. Atatürk said, "Religion is like a heavy blanket that keeps the people of Turkey asleep."

The caliphate was formally abolished in 1924. Men were forbidden to wear the fez, the brimless cap

worn by Turkish Muslims. When Atatürk began wearing a Western panama hat, one of his critics

remarked, "You cannot make a Turk into a Westerner by giving him a hat."

Women were forbidden to wear the veil, a traditional Islamic custom. New laws gave women marriage

and inheritance rights equal to men's. In 1934,women received the right to vote. All citizens were

also given the right to convert to other religions.

The legacy of Kemal Atatürk was enormous. In practice, not all of his reforms were widely accepted, especially by devout Muslims. However, most of the changes that he introduced were kept after his death in 1938. By and large, the Turkish Republic was the product of Atatürk's determined efforts.

Identifying: What radical step did Atatürk take to modernize Turkey?

The Beginnings of Modern Iran

A similar process of modernization was underway in Persia. Under the Qajar dynasty (1794–1925), the country had not been very successful in resolving its domestic problems. Increasingly, the dynasty had turned to Russia and Great Britain to protect itself from its own people, which led to a growing foreign presence in Persia. The discovery of oil in the southern part of the country in 1908 attracted more foreign interest. Oil exports increased rapidly, and most of the profits went to British investors.

The growing foreign presence led to the rise of a native Persian nationalist movement. In 1921, Reza Khan, an officer in the Persian army, led a military mutiny that seized control of Tehran, the capital city. In 1925, Reza Khan established himself as shah,or king, and was called Reza Shah Pahlavi. The name of the new dynasty he created, Pahlavi, was the name of the ancient Persian language.

During the next few years, Reza Shah Pahlavi tried to follow the example of Kemal Atatürk in strengthen and modernize the government, the military ,and the economic system. Persia became the modern state of Iran in 1935.

Unlike Kemal Atatürk, Reza Shah Pahlavi did not try to destroy the power of Islamic beliefs. However, he did encourage the creation of a Western-style educational system and forbade women to wear the veil in public.

Foreign powers continued to harass Iran. To free himself from Great Britain and the Soviet Union, Reza Shah Pahlavi drew closer to Nazi Germany. During World War II, the shah rejected the demands of Great Britain and the Soviet Union to expel a large number of Germans from Iran. In response, the Soviet Union and Great Britain sent troops into the country. Reza Shah Pahlavi resigned in protest and was replaced by his son, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi.

Comparing: How was Reza Shah Pahlavi's modernization of Persia different from Atatürk's transformation of Turkey?

Arab Nationalism

World War I offered the Arabs an opportunity to escape from Ottoman rule. However, there was a question as to what would replace that rule. The Arabs were not a nation, though they were united by their language and their Islamic cultural and religious heritage.

Because Britain had supported the efforts of Arab nationalists in 1916, the nationalists hoped this support would continue after the war ended. Instead, Britain made an agreement with France to create a number of mandates in the area. These mandates were former Ottoman territories that were now supervised by the new League of Nations. The league, in turn, granted league members the right to govern particular mandates. Iraq, Palestine, and Jordan were assigned to Great Britain; Syria and Lebanon to France.

For the most part, Europeans created these Middle Eastern states. The Europeans determined the nations' borders and divided the peoples. In general, the people in these states had no strong identification with their designated country. However, a sense of Arab nationalism remained.

In the early 1920s, a reform leader, Ibn Saud, united Arabs in the northern part of the Arabian Peninsula. Devout and gifted, Ibn Saud (from whom came the name Saudi Arabia) won broad support. He established the kingdom of Saudi Arabia in 1932.

At first, the new kingdom, which consisted mostly of the vast desert of central Arabia, was desperately

poor. Its main source of income came from the Muslim pilgrims who visited Makkah and Madinah. During the 1930s, however, U.S. prospectors began to explore for oil. Standard Oil made a successful strike at Dhahran, on the Persian Gulf, in 1938. Soon, an Arabian-American oil company, popularly called Aramco, was created. The isolated kingdom was suddenly flooded with Western oil industries that brought the promise of wealth.

Examining: How were many Middle Eastern states created after World War I?

The Problem of Palestine

The situation in Palestine made matters even more complicated in the Middle East. While Palestine had

been the home of the Jews in antiquity, few had lived there for almost two thousand years. While some

Christians and Jews did live in Palestine, it was inhabited primarily by Muslim Palestinians. Britain, however, stated its intention to support a national home for the Jews in the 1917 Balfour Declaration:

"His Majesty's Government views with favor the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the

Jewish people."

The British promised that the Balfour Declaration would not undermine the rights of the non-Jewish peoples living in the area. Still, Arab nationalists were angered. They questioned how a national home for the Jewish people could be established in a territory that was 80 percent Muslim.

In the meantime, the promises of the Balfour Declaration drew Jewish settlers to Palestine. The Zionist movement   had advocated the return of Jews to Palestine since the late 1890s. During the 1930s, tensions increased between the new arrivals and the existing Muslim residents. At the same time, the rising persecution of Jews in Nazi Germany caused many European Jews to flee to Palestine. By 1939, there were about 450,000 Jews in Palestine.

The British, fearing aroused Arab nationalism, tried to restrict Jewish immigration into the territory. In 1939, the British declared that only 75,000 Jewish immigrants would be allowed into Palestine over the next five years. After that, no more Jews could enter the country. This decision would eventually produce severe conflicts in the region.

Explaining: Why did the Balfour Declaration produce problems in Palestine?

"No matter how busy you may think you are, you must find time for reading, or surrender yourself to self-chosen ignorance." Confucius

"የቸነም ያህል በስራ ብትወጠርም ቅሉ ለማንበብ ጊዜ ሊኖርህ ይገባል፡፡ ያለበለዚያ በገዛ ፈቃድህ ለመረጥከው መሀይምነት እጅህን ስጥ!"

Chapter IV

"Remember that all through history, there have been tyrants and murderers, and for a time, they seem invincible. But in the end, they always fall. Always."

Mahatma Gandhi, The Story of My Experiments With Truth

Middle East Theatre of World War II

Campaigns of World War II

The Middle East Theatre of World War II is defined largely by reference to the British Middle East Command, which controlled Allied forces in both Southwest Asia and eastern North Africa. From 1943, most of the action and forces concerned were in the adjoining Mediterranean Theatre.

The region was quiet for the first few months of the war, until Fascist Italy declared war against France and Britain on June 10, 1940. It remained a major active theatre for two and a half years until the British Commonwealth Eighth Army crossed the border from Libya into Tunisia. In February 1943, command of the Eighth Army passed from the Middle East Command to the Allied Joint command for the Mediterranean, AFHQ. The Middle East Theatre remained quiet for the remainder of the war.

Overview

The Allies initially believed that the Middle East (Southwest Asia) could become a major operational theatre, because they thought that the Germans might invade the area. This did not materialise, although when Allied forces occupied much of the area, in anticipation of such an invasion, there was fighting against Vichy French forces in Lebanon and Syria, and against Iraq in the Anglo-Iraqi War.

The Italian forces in North Africa greatly outnumbered the Allies. However, Allied forces were able to not only defend against Italian attacks but also to defeat the Italians in East Africa. By February 1941, Commonwealth forces appeared to be on the verge of overrunning the last Italian forces in Libya, which would have ended Axis control in all of Africa.

While the fighting was taking place in Libya, Axis forces were attacking Greece. The Allied commander, General Archibald Wavell, was ordered to stop his advance against Libya and send troops to Greece. He disagreed with this decision but followed his orders.

The Allies were unable to stop Greece falling to the Axis forces and before they could retake the initiative in the Western Desert the German Afrika Korps had entered the theatre. It would not be until early in 1943, after another year and a half of hard fighting and mixed fortunes, that the Axis forces would be finally driven out of Libya and the theatre would again become a backwater.

Middle East campaigns

In March 1942 the Indian 10th Infantry Division was in Iraq. It had fought Iraq, and in the invasions of Syria, Lebanon, and Persia. As its soon to be promoted commander Major-General William Slim wrote: "We could move we could fight and we had begun to build up that most valuable of all assets a tradition of success. ... it was stimulating to be at what we all felt was a critical spot, waiting for the threatened German invasion of Turkey."

Although Southwest Asia was destined to remain a strategic backwater for the duration of World War II, in late 1941 and early 1942 the Allies were not certain that it would remain so. Before the turning points of the Battle of Stalingrad (June 1942 to February, 1943) and the Second Battle of El Alamein (October to November 1942), the fear was that the Germans might attack the area either through Turkey, or via Cyprus into Lebanon; or through defeating of the British 8th Army in Egypt. If the anticipated attack came through Turkey or Lebanon, then not only could the Axis Powers threaten British controlled Egypt and the strategically important Suez Canal via an advance through Palestine and the Sinai Peninsula, it would also allow the Germans an alternative route to attack the Soviet Union from Southwest Asia north through the USSR's southern frontiers. In the slightly longer term the British feared independent regimes in the region as well as the possibility that the Germans might follow in Alexander the Great's footsteps and attack British controlled India from Persia in the west as Japan simultaneously attacked India from the east through Burma.

Command structure

Commonwealth forces in the region were for the most part under the Commander-in-Chief of the Middle East Command based in Cairo. The exception was Persia which for some of the time came under the command of the Commander-in-Chief in India.

British Mandate of Palestine

Bombing of Palestine in World War II

Starting in July 1940, the Italian bombings in the British Mandate of Palestine were primarily centered on Tel Aviv and Haifa. However, many other coastal towns such as Acre and Jaffa also suffered. On 9 September 1940, a bombing raid on Tel Aviv caused 137 deaths.

As in most of the Arab world, there was no unanimity amongst the Palestinian Arabs as to their position regarding the combatants in WWII. Some signed up for the British army - into the mixed Palestine Regiment unit, but others saw an Axis victory as their best hope of gaining Arab control of Palestine. Some of the leadership went further, especially the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, Haj Amin Al-Husseini (by then settled in Axis occupied Europe), who on November 25, 1941, formally declared jihad against the Allied Powers. During the war, the British forbade entry of Jews into Palestine escaping Nazi persecution, placing them in detention camps or deporting them to other places such as Mauritius. However, over 30,000 Palestinian Jews fought for Great Britain during World War II, within the regular British army, Palestine Regiment and the Jewish Brigade. David Ben Gurion, leader of the Jewish Agency, which was the mainstream Zionist organization in Palestine, had said "We will fight the White Paper as if there is no war, and fight the war as if there is no White Paper." By 1940, The Haganah and other underground

Jewish militias ordered complete cease fire with the British, in favor of the joint war effort against the Axis, but continued smuggling attempts of Jewish refugees from Iraq and Europe into British Palestine.

Iraq

Anglo-Iraqi War and Farhud

Iraq had been officially granted independence by the United Kingdom in 1932, under a number of conditions, including the retention of British military bases. This caused resentment within Iraq and a pro-Axis prime minister, Rashid Ali, assumed control. In early 1941, Ali ordered British forces to withdraw.

The Middle East Command hastily assembled a formation known as Iraq force — which included the Indian 10th Infantry Division and the Arab Legion — and it arrived on April 18. There were two main British military bases in Iraq, at Basra and at Habbaniya, north east of Baghdad. On April 30 the Iraqi Army surrounded and besieged the isolated and poorly defended Royal Air Force base at Habbaniya. Although the base had no offensive aircraft, RAF personnel converted training aircraft to carry weapons, and attacked the Iraqi forces.

Habbaniya was soon relieved by Iraqforce, which defeated the larger but poorly trained Iraqi Army in a series of battles, even though the Iraqis received direct aid from the Luftwaffe. Iraqforce pressed on from Habbaniya to Baghdad and then to Mosul. Rashid Ali and his supporters fled the country and an armistice was signed. Prior to the arrival of British forces to Baghdad, the power vacuum erupted into a series of massacres and looting (Farhud), in which the Baghdadi Jewish community was hit particularly hard.

Syria and Lebanon

Syria-Lebanon campaign

A Luftwaffe aircraft was shot down over Iraq during the advance on Baghdad. Since the nearest Axis bases were on Rhodes, the Allies realised that the plane had refueled in Vichy French controlled Syria or Lebanon. This confirmed suspicions among the Allies regarding the "armed neutrality" of Vichy territories.

Australian, Free French, British and Indian units invaded Syria and Lebanon from Palestine in the south on 8 June 1941. Vigorous resistance was put up by the Vichy. However, the Allies' better training and equipment, as well as the weight of numbers eventually told against the Axis. Further attacks were launched at the end of June and early July from Iraq into northern and central Syria by troops from Iraq force. By 8 July the whole of north east Syria had been captured and elements of Iraq force advancing up the river Euphrates were threatening Aleppo and as a consequence the rear of the Vichy forces defending Beirut from the advance from the south. Negotiations for an armistice were started on 11 July and surrender terms signed on 14 July.

Iran

Anglo-Soviet invasion of Iran

The final major military operation in the war in the Middle East campaign took place shortly thereafter. The Soviet Union desperately needed supplies for its war against Germany. Supplies were being sent round the North Cape convoy route to Murmansk and Archangel, but the capacity of that route was limited and subject to enemy action. Supplies were also sent from American to Vladivostok in Soviet-flagged ships. However, yet more capacity was needed, the obvious answer was to go through Iran. The Shah of Iran was deemed as pro-German; he would not allow this free access. Consequently British and Soviet forces invaded and occupied Iran. The Shah was deposed and his son put on the throne.

Western Desert Campaign

After the fall of France and before United States land forces entered the war in Operation Torch, the north African campaign in the Sahara desert and Mediterranean coastal plains of Libya and western Egypt was the major land front between Western Allied and Axis forces.

In September 1940, Italian forces stationed in Libya crossed the border and launched an invasion into Egypt. After advancing to Sidi Barrani they set up defensive positions in order to regroup and resupply before continuing.

In December, the outnumbered Allied forces launched Operation Compass which was initially to be a five-day raid against the Italian defensive positions in Egypt. Ultimately the raid turned into a full-scale counter-offensive against Italian forces in Egypt and Libya. The operation was more successful than planned and resulted in the capture of the Libyan province of Cyrenaica and the advance of the Allied forces as far as El Agheila. Over 100,000 Italian prisoners were taken.

The defeat of Italian forces did not go unnoticed and soon the German Africa Corps (Deutsches Afrikakorps), commanded by Erwin Rommel, were sent in to reinforce the Italians. Although ordered to simply hold the line, Rommel launched an offensive from El Agheila in March 1941 which, with the exception of Tobruk, managed to press the Allies beyond Salum on the Egyptian border, effectively putting both sides back at their approximate pre-war positions.

During the following stalemate, the Allied forces were reinforced and reorganised as the Eighth Army. In addition to British formations, the army was made up of divisions from the armies of several countries: the Australian Army, the Indian Army, the South African Army, and the New Zealand Army. There was also a brigade of Free French under Marie-Pierre Koenig. In November 1941 the new formation launched a new offensive, Operation Crusader, and recaptured almost all of the territory recently acquired by Rommel and lifting the Siege of Tobruk. Once again, the front line was at El Agheila.

After receiving supplies from Tripoli, Rommel was able to push the Allies back to Gazala, west of Tobruk. After a period when both sides were rebuilding their strength, the Axis forces defeated the Allies in May 1942 at the Battle of Gazala, capturing Tobruk, and drove them back to past the border of Egypt. Deep into Egypt, the Axis forces were halted in July at the First Battle of El Alamein.

At this point General Harold Alexander took over as commander-in-Chief Middle East Command and Lieutenant-General Bernard Montgomery took over the Eighth Army under him. After victory in the defensive battle of Alam Halfa in late August and early September, the Eighth Army went on the offensive in October 1942 and decisively defeated the Axis at the Second El Alamein. The Axis forces were pursued through Libya and the capital Tripoli was captured by Eighth Army in January 1943.

"No matter how busy you may think you are, you must find time for reading, or surrender yourself to self-chosen ignorance." Confucius

"የቱንም ያህል በስራ ብትወጠርም ቅሉ ለማንበብ ጊዜ ሊኖርህ ይገባል፡፡ ያለበለዚያ በገዛ ፈቃድህ ለመረጥከው መሀይምነት እጅህን ስጥ!"

Chapter V

The Middle East Since World War II

The Question of Palestine

As you will learn, in 1948, Palestine was divided into two states: an Arab state and a Jewish state. In the Middle East, as in other areas of Asia, World War II led to the emergence of new independent states. Syria and Lebanon gained their independence near the end of World War II. Jordan achieved complete self-rule soon after the war. These new states were predominantly Muslim.

In the years between the two world wars, many Jews had immigrated to Palestine, believing this area to be their promised land. Tensions between Jews and Arabs had intensified during the 1930s. Great Britain, which governed Palestine under a United Nations (UN) mandate, had limited Jewish immigration into the area and had rejected proposals for an independent Jewish state in Palestine. The Muslim states agreed with this position.

The Zionists who wanted Palestine as a home for Jews were not to be denied, however. Many people had been shocked at the end of World War II when they learned about the Holocaust, the deliberate killing of six million European Jews in Nazi death camps. As a result, sympathy for the Jewish cause grew. In 1948, a United Nations resolution divided Palestine into a Jewish state and an Arab state. The Jews in Palestine proclaimed the state of Israel on May 14, 1948.

Its Arab neighbors saw the new state as a betrayal of the Palestinian people, most of whom were Muslim. Outraged, several Arab countries invaded the new Jewish state. The invasion failed, but the Arab states still refused to recognize Israel's right to exist.

As a result of the division of Palestine, hundreds of thousands of Palestinians fled to neighboring Arab countries, where they lived in refugee camps. Other Palestinians came under Israeli rule. The issue of a homeland and self-governance for the Palestinians remains a problem today.

Nasser and Pan-Arabism

In Egypt, a new leader arose who would play an important role in the Arab world. Colonel Gamal Abdel Nasser took control of the Egyptian government in the early 1950s. On July 26, 1956, Nasser seized the Suez Canal Company, which had been under British and French administration. Concerned over this threat to their route to the Indian Ocean, Great Britain and France decided to strike back. They were quickly joined by Israel. The forces of the three nations launched a joint attack on Egypt, starting the Suez War of 1956. The United States and the Soviet Union supported Nasser and forced Britain, France, and Israel to withdraw their troops from Egypt. These Cold War enemies were opposed to French and British influence in the Middle East.

Nasser emerged from the conflict as a powerful leader. He now began to promote Pan-Arabism, or Arab unity. In February 1958, Egypt formally united with Syria in the United Arab Republic (UAR). Nasser was named the first president of the new state. Egypt and Syria hoped that the union would eventually include all the Arab states. Many other Arab leaders were suspicious of Pan-Arabism, however. Oil-rich Arab states were concerned they would have to share revenues with poorer states in the Middle East. Indeed, in Nasser's view, Arab unity meant that wealth derived from oil, which currently flowed into a few Arab states or to foreign interests, could be used to improve the standard of living throughout the Middle East.In 1961, military leaders took over Syria and withdrew the country from its union with Egypt. Nasser continued to work on behalf of Arab interests.

The Arab-Israeli Dispute

During the late 1950s and 1960s, the dispute between Israel and other states in the Middle East became more heated. In 1967, Nasser imposed a blockade against Israeli shipping through the Gulf of Aqaba. He declared: "Now we are ready to confront Israel. We are ready to deal with the entire Palestine question."

Fearing attack, on June 5, 1967, Israel launched air strikes against Egypt and several of its Arab neighbors. Israeli warplanes wiped out most of the Egyptian air force. Israeli armies broke the blockade and occupied the Sinai Peninsula. Israel seized territory on the West Bank of the Jordan River, occupied Jerusalem, and took control of the Golan Heights. During this Six-Day War, Israel tripled the size of its territory. Another million Palestinians now lived inside Israel's new borders, most of them on the West Bank.

Over the next few years, Arab states continued to demand the return of the occupied territories. Nasser died in 1970 and was succeeded in office by Anwar el-Sadat. In 1973, Arab forces led by Sadat launched a new attack against Israel. This conflict was ended in 1974 by a cease-fire agreement negotiated by the UN.

Meanwhile, however, the war was having indirect results in Western nations. A number of Arab oil producing states had formed the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) in 1960 to gain control over oil prices. During the 1973 war, some OPEC nations announced large increases in the price of oil to foreign countries. The price hikes, coupled with cuts in oil production, led to oil shortages and serious economic problems in the United States and Europe.

In 1977, U.S. president Jimmy Carter began to press for a compromise peace between Arabs and Israelis. In September 1978, Carter met with President Sadat of Egypt and Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin (BAY•gihn) at Camp David in the United States. The result was the Camp David Accords, an agreement to sign an Israeli-Egyptian peace treaty. The treaty, signed by Sadat and Begin in March 1979, ended the state of war between Egypt and Israel. Many Arab countries continued to refuse to recognize Israel, however.

The PLO and the Intifada

In 1964, the Egyptians took the lead in forming the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) to represent the interests of the Palestinians. The PLO believed that only the Palestinian peoples had the right to create a state in Palestine. At the same time, a guerrilla movement called al-Fatah, headed by the PLO political leader Yasir Arafat, began to launch terrorist attacks on Israeli territory. Terrorist actions against Israel continued for decades.

During the early 1980s, Palestinian Arabs, frustrated by their failure to achieve self-rule, became even more militant. This militancy led to a movement called the intifada ("uprising") among PLO supporters living inside Israel. The intifada was marked by protests throughout the nation. A second intifada began in September 2000 and continued for over a year.

As the 1990s began, U.S.-sponsored peace talks to address the Palestinian issue opened between Israel and a number of its Arab neighbors. Finally, in 1993,Israel and the PLO reached an agreement calling for Palestinian autonomy in certain areas of Israel. In return, the PLO recognized the Israeli state. Yasir Arafat became the head of the semi-independent area known as the Palestinian Authority. Progress in making this agreement work, however, has been slow.

Revolution in Iran

The leadership of Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi and revenue from oil helped Iran to become a rich country. Iran was also the chief ally of the United States in the Middle East in the 1950s and 1960s.However, there was much opposition to the shah in Iran. Millions of devout Muslims looked with distaste at the new Iranian civilization. In their eyes, it was based on greed and materialism, which they identified with American influence.

Leading the opposition to the shah was the Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini (ko•MAY•nee), a member of the Muslim clergy. By the late 1970s, large numbers of Iranians had begun to respond to Khomeini's words. In 1979, the shah's government collapsed and was replaced by an Islamic republic.

The new government, led by the Ayatollah Khomeini, moved to restore Islamic law. Supporters of the shah were executed or fled the country. Anti- American sentiments erupted when militants seized 52 Americans in the United States embassy in Tehran and held them hostage for over a year.

After the death of Khomeini in 1989, a new government, under President Hashemi Rafsanjani, began to loosen control over personal expression and social activities. Rising criticism of official corruption and a high rate of inflation, however, sparked a new wave of government repression in the mid-1990s.

Iraq's Aggression

To the west of Iran was a militant and hostile Iraq, under the leadership of Saddam Hussein since 1979.Iraq and Iran have long had an uneasy relationship ,fueled by religious differences. Both are Muslim nations. The Iranians, however, are largely Shiites, whereas most Iraqi leaders are Sunnis. Iran and Iraq have engaged for years in disputes over territory, especially the Strait of Hormuz, which connects the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman.

In 1980, President Saddam Hussein launched an attack on Iran. Poison gas was used against civilians, and children were used to clear minefields. A ceasefire was finally arranged in 1988.

In 1990, Iraqi troops moved across the border and occupied the small neighboring country of Kuwait,at the head of the Persian Gulf. The invasion sparked an international outcry. The United States led an international force that freed Kuwait and destroyed a large part of Iraq's armed forces. The allies hoped that an internal revolt would overthrow Hussein, but he remained in power.

Afghanistan and the Taliban

After World War II, the king of Afghanistan, in search of economic assistance for his country, developed close ties with the Soviet Union. In 1973, the king was overthrown by his cousin, who himself was removed during a pro-Soviet coup in 1978. The new leaders attempted to create a Communist government but were opposed by groups who wanted an Islamic state. The Soviets then launched a full-scale invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, installing Babrak Karmal as prime minister.

The Soviets occupied Afghanistan for 10 years but were forced to withdraw by anti-Communist forces supported by the United States and Pakistan. Though a pro-Soviet government was left in the capital at Kabul, various Islamic rebel groups began to fight for control. One of these, the Taliban, seized Kabul in 1996. By the fall of 1998, the Taliban controlled more than two-thirds of the country.

Opposing factions controlled northern Afghanistan. Condemned for its human rights abuses and imposition of harsh social policies, the Taliban was also suspected of sheltering Osama bin Laden and his al-Qaeda organization. In 1999 and 2000, the United Nations Security Council demanded the Taliban hand over bin Laden for trial, but it refused. In 2001, the Taliban was driven out of Kabul by rebel forces and American bombers.

Society and Culture

In recent years, conservative religious forces have tried to replace foreign culture and values with Islamic forms of belief and behavior. This movement is called Islamic revivalism or Islamic activism. For most Muslims, the Islamic revival is a reassertion of cultural identity, formal religious observance, family values, and morality.

Islamic Militants

Actions of militants have often been fueled by hostility to the culture of the West. In the eyes of some Islamic leaders, Western values and culture are based on materialism, greed, and immorality. The goal of extremists is to remove all Western influence in Muslim countries.

The movement to return to the pure ideals of Islam began in Iran under the Ayatollah Khomeini. In revolutionary Iran, traditional Muslim beliefs reached into clothing styles, social practices, and the legal system. These ideas and practices spread to other Muslim countries. In Egypt, for example, militant Muslims assassinated President Sadat in 1981. Unfortunately for Islam, the extreme and militant movements received much media exposure, giving many people an unfavorable impression of Islam.

Women's Roles

At the beginning of the twentieth century, women's place in Middle Eastern society had changed little for hundreds of years. Early Muslim women had participated in the political life of society and had extensive legal, political, and social rights. Cultural practices in many countries had overshadowed those rights, however.

In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Muslim scholars debated issues surrounding women's roles in society. Many argued for the need to rethink outdated interpretations and cultural practices that prevented women from realizing their potential. This had an impact on a number of societies, including Turkey and Iran.

Until the 1970s, the general trend in urban areas was toward a greater role for women. Beginning in the 1970s, however, there was a shift toward more traditional roles for women. This trend was especially noticeable in Iran.

Middle Eastern Culture

The literature of the Middle East since 1945 has reflected a rise in national awareness, which encouraged interest in historical traditions. Writers also began to deal more with secular themes. Literature is no longer the preserve of the elite but is increasingly written for broader audiences.

The most famous contemporary Egyptian writer is Naguib Mahfouz. He was the first writer in Arabic to win the Nobel Prize for literature (in 1988). His Cairo Trilogy, published in 1957, is considered the finest writing in Arabic since World War II. The story follows a merchant family in Egypt in the 1920s. The changes in the family parallel the changes in Egypt.The artists of the Middle East at first tended to imitate Western models. Later, however, they began to experiment with national styles and returned to earlier forms for inspiration.

Chapter VI

"History is a people's memory, and without a memory, a man is demoted to the lower animals." —
Malcolm X

PART I

ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT

Causes and Consequences

CAUSES

1. JEWISH vs ARAB NATIONALISM

Arab Nationalism

The rise of Arab Nationalism took root in the 19th century, where a national identity took roots among the Arabic-speaking populations of the Ottoman Empire. By World War I, this identity developed into a fully-fledged revolutionary movement, a revolt against the Ottoman Empire. However, it was only after World War II when Arab nationalism gradually took the form of a political movement. The past was glorified, political consciousness was raised and a nationalist spirit was kindled by education of young Arabs.However, Arabs had different identities and loyalties to tribe, sect, region, and religion. Within the Arab identity, there was tension between Iraqi, Syrian, Egyptian, and other regional identities. There were differences in language and religion also. Therefore it was hard to get some form of unity.

With such odds battling against the movement, it became all the more important to keep Palestine in Arab hands. It was hoped that Arab unity would be forged on the anvil of war against the common enemy.

Pan-Arabism is a movement for unification among the Arab peoples and nations of the Middle East. It is simply defined as the desire to forge a single Arabian super state. Pan-Arabism has tended to be secular and often socialist, and has strongly opposed colonialism and Western political involvement in the Arab world.

From the 1930s, hostility toward Zionist aims in Palestine was a major rallying point for Arab nationalists. The movement found official expression after World War II in the Arab League and in such unification attempts as the Arab Federation (1958) of Iraq and Jordan, the United Arab Republic, the Arab Union (1958), the United Arab Emirates, and the Arab Maghreb Union. The principal instrument of Pan-Arabism in the early 1960s was the Ba'ath party, which was active in most Arab states. Gamal Abdul Nasser of Egypt, who was not a Ba'athist, expressed similar ideals of Arab unity and socialism. The defeat of the Arabs in the Arab-Israeli War of 1967 and the death (1970) of Nasser set back the cause of Pan-Arabism.

Jewish Nationalism

Jewish Nationalism or Zionism expresses the historical link between the Jewish people and Israel. Zionism arose as an active national movement in the 19th century. Due to anti-Semitism, Jews have faced persecution and numerous massacres, such as the slaughter by the Crusaders, burning at the Stake during

the Spanish Inquisition and in the Nazi Holocaust. These actions have been made on several pretexts, such as social, economic, religious or even national. Alongside these, they have been expelled from almost every European country. There came a need to have a land of their own, a place where no more persecution takes place – their God-given homeland, Israel. This area is known as the famous Land of Israel. According to the Bible, particularly in Genesis, the Land of Israel was promised as an everlasting possession to the descendants of Hebrew patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob by God, making it the Promised Land. On that day, God made a covenant with Abram, saying: "To your descendants I have given this land, from the river of Egypt as far as the great river the Euphrates. The land of the Kenites, Kenizites, Kadmonites; the Hittites, Perizzites, Refaim; the Emorites, Canaanites, Girgashites and Jebusites." - Genesis 15:18-21

Zionism also promoted a reassertion of Jewish culture. An important element in this reawakening was the revival of Hebrew, long restricted to liturgy and literature, as a living national language, for use in government and the military, education and science, the market and the street.Despite knowledge that Palestine ("the Land of Israel") had an Arab population, few regarded the Arab presence as a real obstacle to the fulfillment of Zionism. At that time in the late 19th century, Arab nationalism did not yet exist in a strong form, and the Arab population of Palestine was sparse. Friction between it and the returning Jews was believed to be easily avoided.

Contrarily, the renewed Jewish presence in the Land met with militant Arab opposition. It was a clash between two peoples both regarding the country as their own - the Jews by virtue of their historical and spiritual connection, and the Arabs because of their centuries-long presence in the country. Having faced much rejection and longing for a land where their people are free from persecutions as they have experienced before, the Jews naturally feel a strong nationalist emotion for Israel.

2. BRITISH DECISION TO END MANDATE

During WWI, after Damascus (in the Ottoman Empire) fell, the Arabs' belief in British honesty in which they had been led to believe the British would support a Palestinian state, was shattered by two events which took place in November 1917. In Russia the Bolsheviks seized power. They broke off fighting the Germans and published the Sykes-Picot Agreement to show the trickery of the Imperial Russian government's allies. The Arabs were furious when they realised that the Agreement had been made only a year after McMahon had promised British support for their independence.Worse, the Bolsheviks published the Agreement just a few days after the British Foreign Secretary, Arthur Balfour, wrote to Lord Roths¬child, the leading Zionist in Britain:

Foreign Office November 2nd, 1917.

Dear Lord Rothschild,

I have much pleasure in conveying to you, on behalf of His Majesty's Government, the following declaration of sympathy with Jewish Zionist aspirations which has been submitted to, and approved by, the Cabinet. "His Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of

existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country."

I should be grateful if you would bring this declaration to the knowledge of the Zionist Federation.

Yours sincerely,

Arthur James Balfour

This letter became known as the Balfour Declaration and was the basis of British policy towards the settlement of Jews in Palestine. As for the Palestinian Arabs who made up about 92 per cent of the popu¬lation, all that they got was a promise that the British would protect their civil and religious rights.

The Zionists saw the Declaration as a green light to set up a national home in Palestine. To the Arabs, it was another act of treachery.

British Mandate of Palestine

The United Kingdom was granted control of Palestine by the Versailles Peace Conference which established the League of Nations. During World War I, the British had made two promises regarding territory in the Middle East. Britain had promised the local Arabs, through Lawrence of Arabia, independence for a united Arab country covering most of the Arab Middle East, in exchange for their supporting the British; and Britain had promised to create and foster a Jewish national home as laid out in the Balfour Declaration, 1917.

3. UN ROLE AND THE PARTITION PLAN

However, the British government placed limitations on Jewish immigration to Palestine. Following WW II, 250,000 Jewish refugees were stranded in displaced persons (DP) camps in Europe. Despite the pressure of world opinion, in particular the repeated requests of US President Harry S. Truman and the recommendations of the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry, the British refused to lift the ban on immigration and admit only 100,000 displaced persons to Palestine. The Jewish underground forces then united and carried out several attacks against the British. In 1946, the Irgun blew up the King David Hotel in Jerusalem, the headquarters of the British administration, killing 92 people.

British government decided in February 1947 that it would hand the problem over to the United Nations, and would leave Palestine in May 1948.The United Nations appointed a Special Committee on Palestine (known by its initials as UNSCOP), which reported in August 1947 in favour of the partition of Palestine into two states, Jewish and Arab, within a joint frame¬work which would maintain their economic unity.

The United Nations, the successor to the League of Nations, attempted to solve the dispute between the Jews and Arabs in Palestine.On 29 November 1947, UN General Assembly voted 33 to 13, with 10 abstentions, in favour of the Partition Plan for Palestine or United Nations General Assembly Resolution 181. The plan would have partitioned the territory of Western Palestine into Jewish and Arab states, with the Greater Jerusalem area, encompassing Bethlehem, coming under international control.

The United Kingdom refused to implement the plan, arguing it was not acceptable to both sides. It also refused to share with the UN Palestine Commission the administration of Palestine during the transitional period, and decided to terminate the British mandate of Palestine on May 15th, 1948. The failure of the British government and the United Nations to implement this plan, prior agreement between the Jewish Agency and King Abdullah to divide Palestine between them, and rejection of the plan by the Arabs resulted in the 1948 Arab-Israeli War.

The country once known as Palestine was now divided into three parts, each under separate political control. The State of Israel encompassed over 77 percent of the territory. Jordan occupied East Jerusalem and the hill country of central Palestine (the West Bank). Egypt took control of the coastal plain around the city of Gaza (the Gaza Strip). The Palestinian Arab state envisioned by the UN partition plan was never established. The response by Palestine's neighbors was overwhelmingly negative. Intent on preventing any Jewish entity in the region, they rejected the plan, and in what was to be a precursor to many more wars, the armies of Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Egypt and Iraq invaded the new country with the declared intent of destroying it.

4. Israel's declaration of independence and Israel's control of the area and the Establishment of State of Israel

The Declaration of Independence of the State of Israel was publicly read in Tel Aviv on May 14, 1948, before the expiration of the British Mandate of Palestine at midnight. The new state and its government was recognized de facto minutes later by the United States and three days later de jure by the Soviet Union. It was, however, opposed by many others, particularly Arabs (both the surrounding Arab states and the Palestinian Arabs), who felt it was being established at their expense.

In 1950, the Knesset(legislative branch of the Israeli government) passed the Law of Return which granted all Jews the right to immigrate to Israel. This, together with the influx of Jewish refugees from Europe and the later flood of expelled Jews from Arab countries, had the effect of creating a large and apparently permanent Jewish majority in Israel. Futhermore, the Absentee Property Law that was passed in the same year provided for confiscation of the property and land left behind by departing Palestinians, the so-called "absentees". Arabs who never left Israel, and received citizenship after the war, but stayed for a few days in a nearby village had their property confiscated. About 30,000-35,000 Palestinians became "present absentees" - people present at the time but considered absent.

Jerusalem

After establishment, Israel proclaimed Jerusalem as its capital in 1950 and all the branches of Israeli government (Presidential, Legislative, Judicial and Administrative) are seated in Jerusalem. In 1950, given that the city was divided between Israel and Jordan, this proclamation related only to western Jerusalem.

However, after the Six Day War in 1967, Israeli legislation incorporated East Jerusalem into Israel, annexing it to the municipality of Jerusalem, and making it a de facto part of its capital. Israel enshrined the status of united Jerusalem, west and east, as its undivided capital, in Israel's 1980 Basic Law: Jerusalem, Capital of Israel.

The Temple Mount, ground zero in Jerusalem, to Jews and some Christians ,or Al-Haram As-Sharif (the noble sanctuary) to Arabs and Muslims, was the site of the first and second Jewish Temple in Jerusalem. According to Judaism, it is to be the site of the third and final Temple to be rebuilt with the coming of the Messiah. It is also the site of two major Muslim religious shrines, the Dome of the Rock and Al-Aqsa Mosque. It is the holiest site in Judaism and the third holiest site in Islam

Treatment of Arabs (Palestinians) in region

Israel established a military administration to govern the Palestinian residents of the occupied West Bank and Gaza. Under this arrangement, Palestinians were denied many basic political rights and civil liberties, including freedom of expression, freedom of the press and freedom of political association. Palestinian nationalism was criminalized as a threat to Israeli security, which meant that even displaying the Palestinian national colours was a punishable act. All aspects of Palestinian life were regulated, and often severely restricted by the Israeli military administration. For example, Israel forbade the gathering wild thyme (za`tar), a basic element of Palestinian cuisine.

"No matter how busy you may think you are, you must find time for reading, or surrender yourself to self-chosen ignorance." Confucius

"የቱንም ያህል በስራ ብትወጠርም ቅሉ ለማንበብ ጊዜ ሊኖርህ ይገባል። ያለበለዚያ በገዛ ፈቃድህ ለመረጥከው መሀይምነት እጅህን ስጥ!"

"Those who understand history are condemned to watch other idiots repeat it."

Peter Lamborn Wilson

PART II

5. RISE OF PALESTINIAN NATIONALIST MOVEMENTS

A display of the Arab's resistance to the formation of the state would be the 1948 Arab-Israeli War, also known as the 1948 War of Independence. In 'retaliation' of the UN Partition Plan, the Arabs (led by the Arab Higher Committee) immediately launched a three-day protest strikes and instigated riots on the Jewish population, claiming the lives of 62 Jews. The violence, however, escalated as the days went by. On 9 January 1948, approximately 1,000 Arabs (mainly Palestinian) started attacking the Jewish communities in Northern Palestinian with the help from volunteers from neighbouring countries.

6. ARAB RESISTANCE

Naturally, the Arabs were angered that a part of their land was given to the Jews without being informed beforehand. Even if they were informed earlier, they would also be unhappy about such agreement. Firstly, both groups faced the problem of religious differences. The Arabs were Muslims and the Jews were Christians. Besides this, many Arab-Palestians became stateless (2"d class citizens). Furthermore, Israeli settlements were seen as insults on Palestinian dignity and freedom of movement. Not only that, they were also seen as a threat to their hopes for an independent Palestinian nation. Lastly, the Israelis took most of the best areas for themselves and left the Palestinians with the less desirable areas.

In reaction to these causes which were seen as unreasonable treatment to them, they started an organization also known as the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO). They use terrorism to try making the Jews afraid of them and thereby giving them back the land. For example, the Arabs used leftover British vehicles during the war and drive into Jewish-filled places and bomb practically anything they feel worth bombing like buildings, people. Other than this type of extreme actions, they also organize strikes, refuse to pay taxes and go against the government thereby causing civil unrest within the country. The situation was so bad that even the British and French found it hard to control. However it seems that the more the Arabs resist, the more they get hurt. The Israelites were also unwilling to give up the land for which they fought so hard to get.In a situation with both parties unwilling to give up their own struggle and ideals, they thought by fighting it out, they could resolve things. However, these only made the hatred more deep and casualties to both sides.

CONSEQUENCES

1. Protracted Conflict

Wars and Skirmishes of the Arab-Israeli Conflicts

a) The 1947-1949 War (Israeli Independence War)

Cause

In 1947, the UN proposed a partition plan whereby the Palestine would be divided into two states, an Arab and a Jewish one, with the disputed Jerusalem becoming an international zone.Zionists Jews agreed to the plan although they were unhappy not to be offered Jerusalem. On the other hand, the Arabs rejected the plan believing that the UN had acted under Zionist pressure.

Event

On November 1947, the UN general Assembly voted to accept the plan and within days, military and guerilla conflicts erupted between small Jewish and Arab forces.With the British departure from Palestine in 15 May 1948, the Zionists declared the founding of the state of Israel. Soon after, neighboring Arab countries including Egypt, Syria, Transjordan, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia and Iraq invaded the new state.The Israeli forces were seemingly fewer in strength but were better trained and organized. When shipments of arms started reaching Israel from Europe, the war swung in Israel's favor.It was not until the UN arrangement for a ceasefire that the war ended.

Consequences

Under the UN agreement signed by the other Arab states and Israel, former Palestine was divided into three parts. Israel controlled 77% of it, while East Jerusalem and the West Bank were allotted to Transjordan and the Gaza Strip was given to Egypt.

b) The Suez Crisis (29 October to 6 November 1956)

Causes

After an army coup in 1952 which overthrew the Egyptian monarchy, Gamal Abdul Nasser emerged as the country's leader. Nasser intensified the campaign against Israel and at the same time, wanted to end the remaining British influence in the Middle East.In July 1956, Nasser nationalized the Suez Canal. The tolls that he can charge on the ships passing through the canal would be a valuable source of revenue for Egypt. Nasser also closed the canal and blockaded the Straits of Tiran to Israeli ships, a move which strained relations between Egypt and Israel. He had also made enemies of Britain and France who had major economic and trading interests in the canal.

Event

The Israelis saw an opportunity to weaken an over-powerful and hostile neighboring state. An agreement was made under the table among Israel, Britain and France. It was agreed upon that Israel would invade Egypt and that Britain and France would intervene and ask the Israeli and Egyptian armies to withdraw from the canal zone. Meanwhile, the Anglo-French troops would then take control of the canal.On 29

October, 1956, Israel invaded the Gaza Strip and the Sinai Peninsula, while advancing towards the canal zone rapidly.As previously agreed, the British and French army offered to occupy the canal acting as a mediator, which Nasser disagreed. As such, Britain and France launched a joint invasion.

But before the invasion could be carried out, USA put pressure on Britain and France to withdraw their forces from the canal, fearing the possible escalation of the conflict after the Soviet Union threatened to enter the war on Egypt's side.

Consequences

During the conflict, Israel conquered both the Sinai Peninsula as well as the Gaza Strip. However, in March 1957, it was forced by the UN to return to its previous borders.Israel failed to win back its shipping rights in the canal but managed to regain the freedom to use the Straits of Tiran.

Through manipulation of the media, Egyptian President Nasser persuaded his people, and other Arabs, that Egypt had won. The Canal was more Egyptian than before, and he gained great support throughout the Arab world. A demilitarized zone was set up extending from the Gaza to Sharm el-Sheikh, policed by UN forces.

c) The Six Day War (5 June to 10 June 1967)

Causes

Israel set about to carry out its National water Carrier Plan (NWCP) in August 1963, pumping water from the Sea of Galilee to irrigate south and central Israel. Syria was gravely angered by the NWCP.During 1964, the Arab countries met and decided to intercept Israel's NWCP. They diverted the Banias Stream, one the sources of the River Jordan that feeds the Sea of Galilee.Israel tried to fire at Syrian tractors and equipment which were working on the diversion project. This Syria responded with air strikes in Israeli towns.As tensions escalated, the Soviet Union informed Syria that Israel was massing troops on the Syrian border in preparations for an invasion. The claim was untrue but Syria was unaware of that fact and thus called upon Egypt for help.Egyptian troops began moving into the Sinai after Nasser requested for the UN troops to withdraw from the demilitarized zone.

Event

Interpreting this as an act of aggression, Israeli Prime Minister, Levi Eshkol began its offensive at 7.45am on 5 June 1967 after being informed that the USA would not intervene.Israeli's initiative started with a surprise attack on the Egyptian Air Force which was the most modern and best-equipped of the Arab air forces. The poorly defended Egyptian air bases were bombed and in less than three hours, the entire air force was virtually destroyed. This granted Israel air superiority for the entire war.The Israeli Defense Force (IDF) then started moving into the Gaza Strip and the Sinai Peninsula. After a defeat of at Abu Aweigila, Egyptian troops retreated and the Israelis completed their conquest of the Sinai.

Nasser, desperate for help from Jordan, sent a message to King Hussein on 5 June in which he pretended that the Egyptians were having the upper hand in the war. Hussein then gave orders to attack and the Jordanian army began firing at Israeli positions in Jerusalem. When Israeli forces counterattacked, they destroyed the tiny Jordanian air force and soon, conquered the West Bank and East Jerusalem as well.

Israeli's offensive on Syria was an air strike that destroyed two thirds of the Syrian air force and forced the remaining third to retreat to distant bases. With Israeli bombardment on the Golan Heights, Syrian forces began to retreat and soon, Israel controlled the Golan Heights also.USSR worried for Syria, a firm ally and sent a telegram to American President, Lyndon Johnson threatening military action against Israeli unless they ceased fighting.

Consequences

Both the US and the UN urged Israel to stop their advance fearing the escalation into a far more serious confrontation. In 10th June 1967, the Israeli ordered a ceasefire at 6.30pm.

Israel emerged as a dominant Middle East force in the region, defeating a combined Arab force that was far more superior in weapons and equipment.Israel annexed the Gaza Strip and the Sinai Peninsula from Egypt. The West Bank and East Jerusalem was gained from Jordan and the Golan Heights were conquered from Syria.

d) Yom Kippur (6 October to 22 October 1973)

Causes

After the death of Nasser, the Egyptian leadership was handed over to Anwar Sadat, who sought genuine peaceful relations with Israel. In February 1971, Sadat announced that if Israel partially withdrew their forces from the Sinai, Egypt would reopen the Suez Canal and sign a peace agreement with Israel.Israel's new Prime Minister, Golda Meir, refused the Egyptian offer despite pressure from the Americans to accept.

Event

On 6 October 1973, Egypt and Syria launched a joint invasion of Israel. They chose the day deliberately as it was Yom Kippur, or the day of Atonement, the holiest day in the Jewish calendar. The Israelis were caught completely off guard and soon the forces manning the outposts of the canal were destroyed. Within days, the Egyptians had successfully recovered the western bank of the Sinai Peninsula.

Israeli's forces in the north were also outnumbered by Syrian tanks and artillery. The arrival of the Israeli reserve forces in the nick of time managed to prevent the Syrian's capture of the Golan Heights. Soon, Israel was back on the offensive advancing within artillery range of the Syrian capital, Damascus. When the Israeli army managed to cut off the Egyptian supplies, they advanced with Egypt and came to within 100 km of Cairo.Under pressure from the USA and USSR, both sides agreed to a ceasefire on 22 October 1973, returning to the pre-war borders.

Consequences

After being caught so badly off guard, the Israeli forces managed a rapid recovery and recaptured nearly all the territories.However, the war also shown the government's lack of preparedness and under-estimation of the enemies which led to the resignation of Golda Meir and the Defense Minister, Moshe Dayan.

e) Other crises

i) 1970 – War of Attrition

Military clashes between Egypt and Israel occurred intermittently from the end of the Six-Say War until the spring of 1969. However, it was the large-scale offensive mounted by the Egyptian army in March 1969, coupled with Nasser's renunciation of the U.N.-Decreed cease-fire that marked the beginning of the War of Attrition. A formal declaration of intent came later, on June 23, 1969. Nasser's immediate goal was to prevent the conversion of the Suez Canal into a de facto border with Israel, while his ultimate goal was to force Israel to withdraw to the prewar border. This conflict was resolved when the United states, fearing another full-blown war, stepped in and offered peace plans.

ii) 1982 – Lebanon War

In 1982, the Israelis invaded southern Lebanon. The following is a highlight of events that led to the war and how the United Nations later stepped in. Quoted from UNIFIL's website,: "In the early 1970s, tension along the Israel-Lebanon border increased, especially after the relocation of Palestinian armed elements from Jordan to Lebanon [see Black September]. Palestinian commando operations against Israel and Israeli reprisals against Palestinian bases in Lebanon intensified. On 11 March 1978, a commando attack in Israel resulted in many dead and wounded among the Israeli population; the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) claimed responsibility for that raid. In response, Israeli forces invaded Lebanon on the night of 14/15 March [1978], and in a few days occupied the entire southern part of the country except for the city of Tyre and its surrounding area.

This war had a huge impact on the PLO and the PLO military infrastructure in southern Lebanon was destroyed and was driven out of Beirut. However, the PLO was not destroyed or mortally wounded, as Israeli Defense Minister Sharon and Israeli Prime Minister Begin had hoped and planned. Indeed, it could well be argued that the drubbing the organization received drove it, in the end, to moderate its positions, a process that culminated in Arafat's 1988 declaration recognizing Israel and repudiating terrorism. Thus, instead of demolishing the PLO...it can be argued that the invasion of Lebanon had, albeit very violently, groomed the PLO for Participation in the diplomacy and peace process that was to characterize the 1990s and was to pave the way for its assumption of authority in parts of the West Bank and Gaza.Also, this invasion was closely tied to the formation of Hezbollah (Party of God) and the rise of this "terrorist" organization.

"No matter how busy you may think you are, you must find time for reading, or surrender yourself to self-chosen ignorance." Confucius

"የቱንም ያህል በስራ ብትወጠርም ቅሉ ለማንበብ ጊዜ ሊኖርህ ይገባል። ያለበለዚያ በገዛ ፈቃድህ ለመረጥከው መሀይምነት እጅህን ስጥ!"

Chapter VII

"I went to the West and saw Islam,but no Muslims;I got back to the East and saw Muslims, but not Islam."— *Muhammad Abduh*

ወደ ምዕራብ አቀናሁ እስልምናን አየሁ ሙስሊሞች ግን የሉም፡፡ወደ ምስራቅ ፊቴን አዞርኩ ሙስሊሞች አገኘሁ እስልምና ግን የለም፡፡

REVIVALISM AND REFORM

Author:Professor Asma Afsaruddin, Harvard University

The period I am going to focus on now is the period of revivalism and reform that began in the period of Western colonization and continues into our own time.

Islam possesses a strong tradition of revival and reform. The concepts of Tajdid (renewal) and islah (reform) are fundamental concepts within Islam, based on the Qur'an and sunna of the Prophet. The preaching of Islam itself is presented in the Qur'an as, first of all, the revival of the true religion of God and reform of corrupt practices that had crept into the practices of religion by earlier communities. As we've discussed before, Islam regards itself as both the corroboration and the purification of the original Abrahamic faith, not a new religion but a reaffirmation of the ancient Abrahamic tradition and its renewal. Islah (reform) itself is a Qur'anic term (occurring in chapters 7:170; 11:117, 28:19) and refers to the reformist activities of all the prophets throughout time, who were sent by God to warn their communities of their sinful ways, and calling on them to return to God's path.

The notion of tajdid (renewal) is based on a prophetic hadith in which Muhammad states, "God will send to the umma [the Muslim community] at the beginning of each century those who will renew its faith for it." We know, for example, 'Umar the second and al-Ghazali was declared to be the renewer of Islam for the 12th century. The question remains, what are the main components of the term renewal or tajdid? The two major components or aspects of the process of renewal are the following: 1) the process of renewal advocates, calls for, a return to the basic moral and religious principles contained in the Qur'an and sunna and secondly, 2) the right to practice ijtihad; that is to use independent reasoning in interpreting and re-interpreting the sources of Islam.

This two-pronged process of renewal therefore is based on the assumption firstly that the righteous community established and led by the Prophet Muhammad at Medina should be imitated by later Muslims, secondly, the additions and innovations (bid'a) that have crept in over the centuries, have to be removed, and thirdly, one must examine critically the interpretation of the medieval commentators and scholars of Islam.

Therefore, those who are regarded as renewers of the faith, like our old friend al-Ghazali, claimed the right to exercise ijtihad to reinterpret Islam in order to purify and revitalize their societies. As someone who exercised his right to reinterpret Islam and having the credentials of a well-known scholar and theologian, he was able to make Sufism a part of mainstream Islam and infuse new life into Islamic thought.

Another famous renewer whose name you should remember is Ibn Taymiyya (d. 1328), who interestingly, as part of his campaign to reform Islam, spoke out against some Sufi practices, such as visiting the shrines of famous mystics, the (blind) following of Sufi leaders, which he regarded as dangerous innovations within Islam and compromising its basic principles.

Before we go on to talk about specific revivalist movements, I want to emphasize that there are many faces and voices within these movements. There is no single paradigm or pattern for them. I also want to discuss the terms that are used in the literature today to describe these movements, both pre-modern and modern. Scholars in the field refer to Islamic revivalism, Islamic resurgence, political Islam, and Islamism.

Another term that is used is Islamic fundamentalism. We must remember that fundamentalism was a term coined in the 19th century to refer to particularly Protestant Christian movements which insisted on the acceptance of the Bible as the literal word of God. In Islam, this is simply not an issue. A Muslim by definition is someone who accepts the Qur'an as the literal word of God. whether one is a conservative or liberal Muslim, there is a consensus on this issue; one cannot be a Muslim without accepting that the Qur'an is a divine, revealed text.

From this point of view, it doesn't make sense to talk of Muslim fundamentalists as a separate group within Islam. With this caveat, this warning in mind, it is better to speak of Islamic revivalist or reform movements, and particularly in the 20th century, to talk about modernist Islam and political Islam.

I am now going to discuss a few of these revivalist movements, starting in the eighteenth century. The first movement of significance in the 18th century was founded by a man called Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab (1703-1792), from what is known as Saudi Arabia now, and after whose name this movement is called Wahhabism. Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab was by training a jurist or a lawyer and a theologian who had also studied Sufism in the two principal cities of Mecca and Medina. He was greatly influenced by the writings of the 13th century reformer Ibn Taymiyya, and who like Ibn Taymiyya condemned popular Sufi practices such as the visitation of tombs, and veneration of Sufi mystics, which to them smacked dangerously of idolatry and superstition. Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab, like other revivalists, therefore, maintained, that the moral decline of the Muslim community was due to deviation from the original practices of the umma. For the community to regain its vitality and moral vigor, these practices had to be uprooted and replaced with a society that resembled the early Muslim community set up by Muhammad.

The reformist movement of Ibn Abd Al-Wahhab acquired a political dimension when he joined forces with a local tribal chief, by the name of Muhammad ibn Saud (d. 1765). Religious revivalism was now combined with military power to create a religio-political movement that was highly successful in achieving political power in what became renamed as Saudi Arabia. Esposito has described the Wahhabis as similar to the Kharijites of the first century of Islam, and I think this comparison is quite appropriate. Like the Kharijiyya, the Wahhabis subscribed to a rigid, puritanical view of Islam and considered themselves to be the correct and literal interpreters of Islamic principles.

Their understanding of ijtihad was not that ijtihad should lead to a reinterpretation of Islam but rather a return to the exact state of affairs during the time of the Prophet and his four caliphs. No deviation was to be tolerated, and Esposito describes to us how they denounced what appeared to them as saint worship, which led them to destroy even the tombs of Muhammad and his Companions, and the tomb of Husayn, the Prophet's grandson, at Karbala. You can imagine why the Shi'a have a particularly dim view of the Wahhabis. Wahhabism as a majoritarian school of thought that, however, remains restricted to Saudi Arabia; no other Muslim country has adopted on a large scale their point of view, although you find pockets of people who consider themselves Wahhabis in certain countries.

In recent times, 'Abd al-Wahhab has been compared to Martin Luther who ushered in the period of Reformation. This comparison is actually quite apt; like Luther, 'Abd al-Wahhab was a puritan and a literal scripturalist. Both had contempt for scholarly learning and wished to rid their religions of the elaborate theological and intellectual interpretations that had grown up over the years. Sola scriptura: back to the scripture only! And just as Luther's Reformation led to some of the bloodiest and most savage religious wars in Europe, the legacy of Wahhabism, as reflected in the ideology of the Taliban in Afghanistan and al-Qa'eda, has been barbaric violence.

Now because of time constraints I am of necessity skipping over other reformist movements and simply picking out the ones that have had the most impact. MOVING ONTO THE NEXT CENTURY, the 19th, we encounter two famous names that are now forever associated with Islamic reform and modernism. These two names are Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (d. 1897) and Muhammad 'Abduh (d. 1905), who was a disciple of al-Afghani. Both men stressed the importance of ijtihad as their main tool of effecting reform, and they advocated using ijtihad to arrive at new interpretations of Islam, rather than slavishly following the interpretation of the medieval scholars.

The political and historical situation of the period is important to keep in mind in understanding why reformist and modernist movements began to gain ground at this time. The nineteenth century represented the height of European colonialism in the Middle East and other areas of the Islamic world. This was a humiliating situation for Muslims everywhere; whereas until recent times, the Islamic civilization had been the dominant one and Muslims had been the masters of their destiny, now they were reduced to subjects of alien, hostile powers who regarded their way of life with contempt. This was therefore a period of great soul-searching and self-examination.

Muslim thinkers reflected on their fate; what had led to the decline and stagnation of their societies? What factors had contributed to their downfall? Both al-Afghani and later Abduh would emphasize that Muslims had lost their way because they had succumbed to blind imitation of their forefathers and they had ceased tapping into the dynamic, progressive spirit of Islam that had made it a world civilization in an earlier period.

Abduh in particular stressed that religion was completely compatible with reason, and that reason, employed through the tool of ijtihad, should lead to sweeping social and legal reforms. Although Western political domination should be resisted and Muslim countries liberated from colonialism, Western civilization in itself was not to be regarded as a threat to Islam. And that modern science and technology in so far as they improved the quality of life and led to social advancement, should be embraced just as Muslims had once embraced the learning of the ancient Greeks, Persians, Indians, and so forth.

Abduh made a very important distinction between two spheres of activity of Islam, one of which was badly in need of reform. The first sphere of activity was worship as embodied in the five pillars; this formed the core of Islam and is unchangeable. What remains is then a vast body of social relations and matters: commercial transactions, legal relations, public and family law that are subject to reform.

Abduh argued that the elaborate legal system that had grown up concerning these matters were conditioned by historical circumstances; as historical circumstances changed, the old legal rulings should be subjected to reinterpretation to reflect the new social realities. As part of his agenda of social reform, he focused on women's rights and the issues of veiling and polygamy. He was critical of both practices, arguing that the changed social situation demanded that these practices be curbed.

Muhammad Abduh's thought has been enormously influential among reform-minded Muslims. He was a highly-regarded scholar and theologian and became the rector (president) of al-Azhar university, the Muslim world's most prestigious religious university. Abduh, however, was in many ways ahead of his time, and during his lifetime had his share of critics. After his death though and until the present time, he has remained easily one of the most widely-respected and widely read author on the topic of renewal and reform.

SUBSCRIBERS TO POLITICAL ISLAM/ISLAMISTS:

Political Islam as a modern phenomenon arises in the early part of the 20th century. Esposito refers to these groups as neo-revivalists, which is also an apt description of them. Like the early revivalists, these neo-revivalists also believed that contemporary Muslim society should be reformed from within by modeling themselves closely on the early Muslim community at Medina. Only by regenerating itself can it successfully establish a righteous government that would rule its subjects wisely and justly while successfully resisting Western imperialism. In many ways, emphasis on a highly politicized Islam is a defining characteristic of these neo-revivalists, who are more frequently referred to as Islamists. Islamists derive a broad political ideology from Islamic principles; it is due to their emphasis on political Islam that we are setting them apart from the other two groups.

Political Islam can have many faces; some Islamists take the more militant and radical route, and these are the ones who regularly get into the media today. The earliest such groups are the Muslim brotherhood, established by Hasan al-Banna (1906-49) in Egypt and the Jamaat-i Islami ("the Islamic society") established by Mawlana Abul 'Ala Mawdudi (1903-79) of India. As Esposito points out, both men were personally pious, highly educated men both in the traditional Islamic sciences and in Western learning. Both came to react strongly against British imperialism, under whose shadow they lived a part of their lives.

Also importantly, they were reacting against a local elite that under European colonial influence had become Westernized to the extent that members of this elite spoke the language of the colonizers, imitated their dress and customs, and considered themselves secular. Thus they were fighting the influence of both external and internal forces. Islamists are both religious and social activists; both al-Banna and Mawdudi were very effective at organizing supporters at the grass-roots level. They set up health clinics and social welfare projects that helped in gaining the loyalty of a cross-section of the middle and working class people. The activities of these Islamists may be described as being part of a religious, socio-political protest movement that was committed to fighting political corruption and religious laxity, through violence if necessary.

After the departure of the foreign colonial rulers, they continued their opposition to the local governments that were set up, often by the departing colonizers; these local ruling elites were thus perceived as representing Western interests at the expense of national interests. If you have studied anything about modern Middle Eastern politics and history, you will know that Arab governments that have ruled after the Second World War have off and on been primarily monarchies and military regimes.

As far as the Islamists were concerned, these governments, often corrupt and despotic, had no legitimacy and therefore they had a sacred mission to set up a just and righteous government that would govern according to Islamic principles. If they have to resort to violence and lay down their lives for it; they were quite prepared to do so. For them, jihad primarily came to mean the equivalent of just war or holy war to fight those whom they regarded as compromising Islamic principles. Many Islamists, but not all, believe in what Mawdudi called theo-democracy; in other words, a democracy that called for power-sharing through consultation, according to the Qur'anic concept of shura. They also believed in elections, because the Islamic principle of bay'a, which is a pledge an individual gives to his or her ruler, gives the right to the people to express their approval or disapproval of the government. But it would have to be an Islamic democracy, subject to the tenets of the religious law, the Shari'a, as interpreted by them.

Members of the Muslim Brotherhood may embrace a variety of opinions. Many of the current members in Egypt are moderates who seek to create an Islamic state by democratic means today. In the earlier period, they did engage in violent and largely unsuccessful actions against the government. The movement's leading thinker during the period of Jamal Abdul Nasser was Sayyid Qutb who was accused of attempting to assassinate Nasser. Qutb was tortured and hanged in 1966. Nasser banned the Muslim brotherhood (between 1954 and 1975). His successor, Anwar al-Sadat lifted the ban on them; in 1976, 15 members of the Muslim Brotherhood were elected to Parliament.

However, a militant splinter group, the Jihad Organization (Munazzamat al-Jihad), assassinated Sadat in 1982 after his trip to Israel to sign a peace treaty with Menachem Begin, a trip that was regarded as a highly treacherous act. Other militant groups who resort to violence to achieve their goals are for example, Hamas in the Palestinian Occupied territories and Hizbullah in Lebanon.

And, finally, we should refer to modernist Muslims, who believe that the Qur'an and the Sunna can be reinterpreted so as to make their injunctions compatible with the modern world and that real change can come about only through long-lasting changes in the legal and educational systems; not merely through political changes, certainly not simply by overthrowing corrupt governments.

Modernists are, therefore, reformers. Fazlur Rahman, was certainly one of these modernists, who emphasized that by correctly interpreting the Qur'an in particular, and not simply by accepting the views of the medieval commentators, modern Muslims could derive an authentically Islamic response to modern life. Muhammad Arkoun, who is still alive and teaches at the University of Sorbonne in Paris, is also a liberal, modernist Islamic thinker who advocates wholesale rethinking and reinterpretation of much of the traditional religious thought and structure. There are many more such names, Hasan Hanafi in Egypt and Azizah al-Hibri, a Lebanese-American.Tariq Ramadan is also influential among such thinkers.

ABOVE ALL, we must keep in mind that terms like Islamists, revivalists, modernists, mean a lot of different things and covers a whole range of responses to the modern world in particular. There is no single, pat definition of any one of them.

"No matter how busy you may think you are, you must find time for reading, or surrender yourself to self-chosen ignorance." Confucius

"የቱንም ያህል በስራ ብትዋጠርም ቅሉ ለማንበብ ጊዜ ሊኖርህ ይገባል፡፡ ያለበለዚያ በገዛ ፈቃድህ ለመረጥከው መሀይምነት እጅህን ስጥ!"