1 THE MAKING OF THE MODERN MIDDLE EAST

Michael Gasper

The Modern Middle East emerged out of a variety of social, cultural, and political transformations. The degree of changes differed from place to place, but they left distinct historical experiences, social structures, cultural norms, and political tensions in common across the region we call "the Middle East." The early experiences of the region, combined with its nineteenth- and twentieth-century encounters with the West—that led the region to be labeled the Middle East—created a sense of identification across the region.

Elements of this common identity date back to the spread of Islam in the seventh century CE. Islam spread remarkably quickly in the early period, establishing large empires, converting populations to Islam, and spreading Arabic language and culture.[1] The Abbasid, Umayyad, and later the Ottoman, Safavid, and Qajar empires extended across a vast territory, stretching from North Africa to the Gulf. These empires established a memory of "greatness," a time of Islamic empires that rivaled the West.

By the eighteenth century, the two major political entities in the Middle East, the Ottoman Empire (centered in what is today the Republic of Turkey) and Safavid/Qajar Persia (centered in what is today the Islamic Republic of Iran), enjoyed relative strength and security. The Ottoman Empire was a vast multiethnic, multilingual, and multireligious polity that at its peak stretched from central Europe all the way to Yemen and across North Africa to Morocco. It compared favorably with the expanse of the Roman Empire at its height. The Safavid/Qajar domains stretched from the Caucasus to what is today Afghanistan, and they too hosted a myriad of different ethnicities and religions.

The nineteenth century saw a number of challenges to Ottoman and Qajar power. The resulting pressures convinced the Ottomans and to a lesser degree the Iranian Qajars to undertake substantial political and economic reform during the course of the nineteenth century. These reforms were accompanied by cultural and religious modernization movements that generated new intellectual and ideological perspectives for the people of the region.

In the twentieth century, World War I (1914–1918) was a cataclysmic event in the Middle East. It resulted in a redrawing of the map of the entire area and laid the foundation for a series of rivalries and conflicts that reverberate up until the present day. Anticolonialism, nationalism, and the rise of the United States and the Soviet Union as superpowers after World War II added new dimensions to these questions. Finally, the increasing importance of the politics and economics of oil and the regional role of the states that produce it emerged as a major question in the last decades of the twentieth century and into the twenty-first.

THE OTTOMAN AND SAFAVID EMPIRES
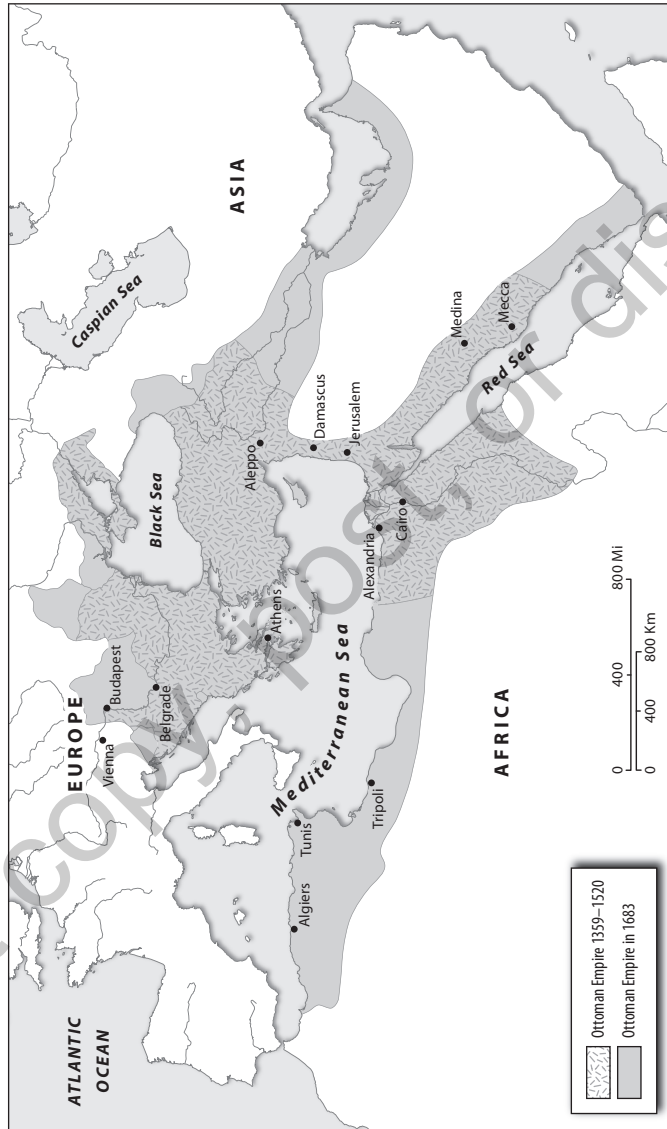
The Ottomans

The infamous Mongol invasion of 1258 CE completely disrupted the political and social worlds of the Middle East. The Ottoman Empire emerged out of the wholesale changes and dislocations wrought by this event. Based in Istanbul, the Empire became a major world power and ruled over much of the Middle East for centuries. The Ottomans descended from Turkish-speaking Muslim tribes that fled the Mongol invaders between 1100 and 1300 CE. Osman I, head of a tribe known for its horsemanship and martial culture, established the Ottoman dynasty around 1300 in the northwestern corner of Anatolia (the central plateau of modern Turkey) on the frontier with the Byzantine Empire. The word *Ottoman* is derived from his name.

By the beginning of the sixteenth century, Osman's descendants had built an empire that stretched from western Asia to North Africa to southeast Europe. Ottoman armies in 1529 and again in 1683 laid siege to the Habsburg capital of Vienna. They controlled much of the Middle East and the Balkans as well as vast areas around the Black Sea until the beginning of the twentieth century. The Ottoman state did not control its vast territory through force alone. Indeed, one of the most remarkable features of Ottoman rule was its ability to insert itself into local power dynamics to achieve a measure of security and stability.[2] In the Balkans, for example, the Ottomans ended the dominance of feudal lords and limited the growth of church lands. Both moves proved very popular within the majority Eastern Orthodox Christian communities that detested their former Habsburg and Hungarian Catholic rulers.

The Ottoman sultans built a large standing army that successfully dampened the threat of fragmentation, a constant problem in large, premodern, military patronage empires. The janissaries (from the Turkish *yeniçeri,* or new soldier), or infantry force, were a professional, full-time force that wore distinctive uniforms and were paid even during peacetime. Initially, the janissaries consisted of Christian boys enslaved at a young age through a system called the *devshirme* (*devşirme*). The Ottoman sultans adopted this system early in the history of the empire to prevent the emergence of rivals from among the Turkish noble and warrior classes. The *devshirme* levy was imposed every four years on non-Muslims in the Balkans. Each locality provided a certain number of boys who were taken from their families, converted to Islam, and trained to serve the Ottoman state—theoretically, absolutely loyal to the sultan. Those with greater intellectual abilities staffed the large bureaucracy throughout the empire, reaching the highest offices in the state. Thus, slavery represented an odd form of upward mobility for the rural poor of the Balkans. Much of the administration and military of the Ottoman Empire was made up of slaves, or Mamluks, of the sultan. They were, in fact, a privileged caste who could profit handsomely from their position in the state hierarchy. Taken from their villages and educated far away, they were theoretically cut off from their families. In practice, however, they often maintained links to their families and found ways to advance their relatives' interests.

In addition to a large standing army, the Ottoman military was also innovative in its use of firearms. The Ottoman infantry and cavalry units became legendary for their effective use of gunpowder weapons (such as muskets and cannons) in the conquest of Constantinople in 1453. The Ottomans became the first successful "gunpowder empire";

MAP 1.1 ■ The Expansion of the Ottoman Empire

ATLANTIC OCEAN

EUROPE

Vienna
Budapest
Belgrade
Athens

ASIA

Caspian Sea

Black Sea

Aleppo
Damascus
Jerusalem

Mediterranean Sea

Tunis
Algiers
Tripoli

Alexandria
Cairo

Red Sea

Medina
Mecca

AFRICA

0   400   800 Km
0   400   800 Mi

Ottoman Empire 1359–1520
Ottoman Empire in 1683

PHOTO 1.1

Süleymaniye Mosque

the Safavids of Persia and the Mughals of India soon followed suit. In an effort to project this power and authority, the Ottomans developed a predilection for architectural grandness. They built stunning mosques and other magnificent edifices throughout their realm, and visitors to Istanbul still marvel at the splendid monuments built by Ottoman architects.

The Safavids

To the east, another state grew into a rival of Ottomans. The Safavid Empire had its roots in the Azerbaijan region of Iran, and its rulers, like the Ottomans, were of Turkic descent. The king, Shah Ismail I, who reigned until 1524, established the Safavid dynasty in 1501 with his capital in Tabriz, and he declared himself the shah of Iran. The Safavids spread from Azerbaijan to unite the lands of Persia for the first time in nearly a thousand years. The borders that Ismail eventually established still define Iran today. To undermine the power of elite Turkic clans, Shah Ismail I established a Persian-speaking bureaucracy and built a conscript slave army made up of peoples from the Caucasus. In contrast to the Ottomans, Shah Ismail made Islam a centerpiece of his authority, declaring that the shah was the shadow of God on earth. Importantly, he decreed that Shi'i Islam would become the state religion, and the central place of Shi'ism in Safavid Iran generated an enduring identification with Shi'ism in Iran. Ismail compelled all of his subjects to embrace Shi'i Islam and abandon Sunni Islam. Sunni clerics were given the choice to convert or face exile or death. In contrast to the Ottoman religious authorities, who were incorporated into the state structure, the *ulema* achieved more independence in Safavid (and later Qajar) Iran. In Shi'i Persia the religious establishment grew into a formidable and separate center of power and remained so until the Iranian Revolution of 1979, after which they became the main power brokers in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The Shi'i identity of Iran and its imperial ambitions were sources of tension with the Sunni Ottoman sultans. The Safavids and the Ottomans were in a constant state of cold and hot war throughout the period. Indeed, the presence of this ambitious and expansionist Shi'i regime on its eastern frontier drove Ottoman conquerors south into the Arab heartlands of the Middle East rather than eastward into Persia and central Asia. The animosity and rivalry between the Ottomans and Persians lasted until well into the Qajar period in the middle of the nineteenth century.

In the late sixteenth century, reacting to a series of military defeats at the hands of the Ottomans, Shah Abbas I (reigned 1587–1629) undertook a number of reforms to reinvigorate the Safavid state. He rebuilt a large standing army of slave conscripts and adopted the use of gunpowder weapons. Abbas I also rebuilt the state bureaucracy in an effort to increase tax revenues to pay for these military reforms. The new army, organized with the idea of matching the strength of the Ottoman janissaries, enabled Abbas to secure the frontiers and to recover territories the Safavids had lost. For a time, he won control over parts of Iraq, Afghanistan, Armenia, and eastern Turkey. Abbas helped finance his army, a reenergized bureaucracy, and a new capital by facilitating commercial relationships between European merchants and local Armenians. Commodities such as carpets

and other textiles as well as porcelain found their way to the markets around Europe.

The reign of Abbas I in the first two decades of the seventeenth century was the high point of Safavid power. A lack of leadership and resolve among the later shahs left the Safavid Empire without an effective army and with a weak central government by the end of the seventeenth century. The Safavid state soon collapsed, and more than a hundred years passed before the Qajar dynasty united Iran under one government again.

Ottoman Society

Ottoman society varied a great deal across both its vast expanse and its six centuries of existence. Thus, this section should be read as merely an approximation of how Ottoman society functioned. Nevertheless, one can identify broad patterns of sociopolitical interaction that continue to impact the region today.

Until the 1820s, the multiethnic, multireligious Ottoman society was organized hierarchically on a system of social and legal differentiation based on communal religious identity, with the largest group, Sunni Muslims, at the tip of the pyramid. The guiding social-legal principle of premodern and early modern Ottoman society was that of administration based on a universally recognized hierarchy of identities rather than the modern notion of equality among citizens.[3] There were no citizens as such; there were only Ottoman subjects of the sultan. The modern notion that the general population would have duties, responsibilities, and rights as well as an obligation to share in governance through voting, jury duty, or other tasks was not understood at the time. The idea of universal citizenship and equality came to the Middle East in the late nineteenth century. Nevertheless, this social pyramid was flexible to the extent that non-Muslims often achieved preeminent positions both in the state structure and in commerce. The Phanariot Greeks of Istanbul, for example, supplied the empire with translators and diplomats and consequently enjoyed great prestige.[4]

In theory (especially in the late centuries of Ottoman rule), the social-legal structure of the Empire was roughly organized by *millet* (pronounced mil-lét). A *millet* was a religious group officially recognized by the Ottoman authorities and granted a degree of communal autonomy. The leader of the *millet* reported directly to the sultan, who appointed him after consultation with the *millet*'s leading personalities. Each *millet* could use its own language, establish charitable and social institutions, collect taxes for the imperial treasury, and operate its own religious courts.[5] The competency of such courts extended to personal status (marriage, inheritance, family relations) and sumptuary laws (laws that regulated dress, public comportment, and preparation of food, among other behaviors). State courts adjudicated in areas of public security, crime, and other areas not covered by religious law. These courts applied Ottoman legislation or *qanun* in their rulings. In practice, therefore, a series of local religious courts with no relationship to one another oversaw the daily life routines of individuals and families, while another court system acted as the arbiter of the general society.

PHOTO 1.2

Safavid manuscript. Detail from illustration of Gayumars and his court from the *Shāhnamah* (Book of Kings) by Firdawsī. Sixteenth century (British Museum).

MAP 1.2 ■ The Safavid Empire
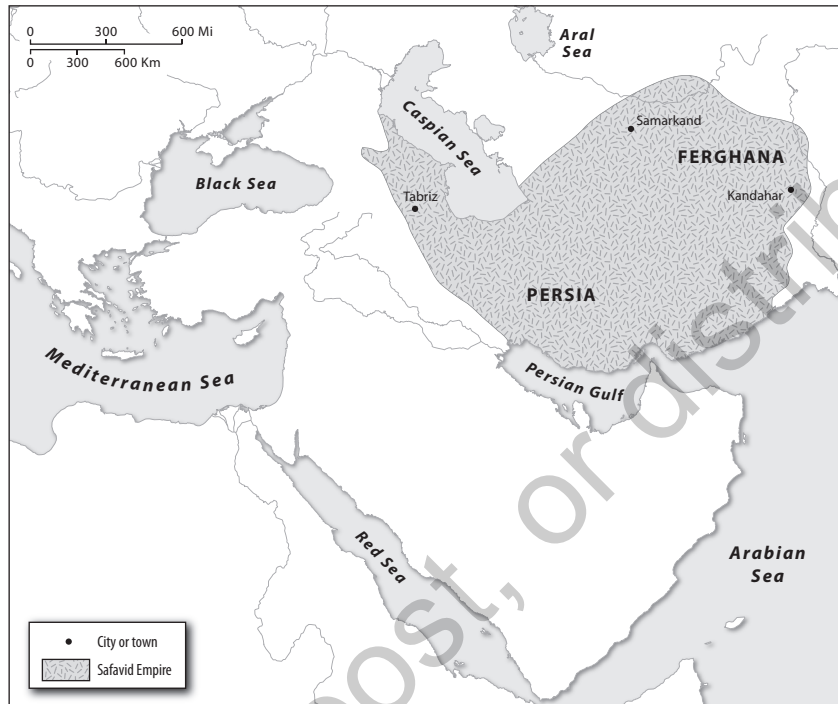
Gender relations were patriarchal but also based on a notion of complementarity. Certain tasks, such as economic production, were the purview of men, and other areas, such as child rearing and the management of the household, were women's responsibility. This general outline varied according to social class and communal identity. For example, gender roles tended to be more flexible among the poor than among the ruling elite. Urban women worked in markets and textile workshops, while rural women worked in the fields alongside the males of the family. Women also tended animals and saw to the affairs of the household when men were conscripted into military service or drafted into levies to repair or construct agricultural canals and roads.

In urban society, public life—that is, life outside of the home—was divided along gender lines. To a great extent, social space was largely homosocial; in other words, people of the same gender socialized together. Strict separation of the sexes was thought to be the best way of maintaining the moral and social order. Gender separation led to misunderstanding on the part of some Western travelers about the notion of the harem. Some wrongly believed that women were locked away in a harem, and the image of women imprisoned in a luxurious golden cage persists in the popular imagination to this day. Some wealthy urban households did make efforts to seclude the family's women, but the fact is that this sort of lifestyle was unknown among the vast majority of the population. The harem was merely the part of a large house or villa open only to immediate family members. Social life with people from

outside the family was conducted in more public sitting rooms. Of course, almost no one in Ottoman society possessed the financial wherewithal to live in such a home; for all intents and purposes, the idea was unknown to the general population. This began to change in the nineteenth century with the emergence of new middle classes. While historians sometimes argue that this class was more "Westernized" than the traditional Ottoman elite, many of its members imitated some of the old guard's cultural practices; as a consequence, the practice of seclusion became more, not less, widespread with the proliferation of Western education and tastes in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.[6]

Society was arranged hierarchically, with each stratum undertaking tasks thought to be essential for the maintenance of society. Many trades were organized into guilds in order to ensure proper taxation as well as to regulate competition and quality of work. Carpenters, tanners, smiths, peasants, sharecroppers, servants, and even those working in sex trades (such as dancers and prostitutes) were understood to be engaged in trades like any other. In some places, prostitutes were organized into guilds similar to those in other lines of work.

In a political and social sense, society consisted of rulers and ruled. The ruling caste comprised the leaders of the military, the chief bureaucrats, and the religious authorities or the *ulema*. Despite the social hierarchies, markets and coffeehouses were open to people of all classes. Residents in a particular quarter of a city or in a smaller town's central market gathered to conduct business and to socialize. Markets and the coffeehouses usually located near them were places where traveling merchants and others would discuss news and developments from other regions. Coffeehouses were also sites of relaxation, socializing, and entertainment. The Ottoman authorities understood the potential for political agitation in markets and coffeehouses, and they placed informants in them to keep them apprised of what was discussed.[7]

CHANGING CONTEXTS

The Challenge of the West

Even as the Ottomans lay siege to the Habsburg capital of Vienna in 1683, the center of power in the West had already shifted from the Mediterranean to the North Atlantic. Benefiting from the vast riches of the New World, technological advances, and increasing economic output, ascendant European powers caught up to and then surpassed the Ottomans' military might. England, France, Holland, Spain, Portugal, and soon Russia increasingly exerted economic and political pressure on the Ottoman government (or the Sublime Porte, or Porte, as it was known in the West).

The initial push was provided by the wealth brought to Europe from the Americas beginning in the sixteenth century. The huge influx of silver from South American mines set off an inflationary cycle in the Ottoman lands. As the value of silver decreased with the increase in supply, prices for the products and goods and services purchased with silver coins necessarily increased. Smuggling became a major problem as merchants sought to avoid increased customs duties and to profit from the suddenly more valuable raw materials such as Balkan lumber. These developments resulted in lower Ottoman tax receipts, major security issues, and an increase in corruption. All had a corrosive effect on the state.

The so-called Capitulations treaties that date from the sixteenth century were a testament to Ottoman strength that vanished so quickly in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Ottoman rulers sought to encourage foreign merchants' activities in the Ottoman

domains, and thus, these treaties offered favorable conditions to European merchants doing business in Ottoman lands. Consular courts set up by the various embassies adjudicated cases between European merchants who were exempt from Ottoman laws. This legal immunity meant that these foreign merchants essentially paid no taxes. Initially, the treaties enabled the empire to obtain goods and maintain a positive relationship with other European states. As the balance of power shifted away from the Ottomans, however, these concerns paled in comparison to the depredation caused by the treaties. Europeans flooded local markets with finished goods, devastating the Ottoman merchant class. Adjusting to these changed circumstances, local merchants began to acquire foreign citizenship in order to enjoy the advantages of the Capitulations. In doing so, many became local agents of foreign trading houses. In addition, the Europeans used these treaties and the economic power they provided to exert political pressure on the Porte, the government of the Ottoman Empire.

The question of the treatment of minorities in the Ottoman Empire was another tactic that European powers used to bring pressure on the Porte. In claiming that minorities were denied equal rights, European critics ignored the fact that there was no notion of rights in Ottoman law for any subjects of the sultan. This did not stop the major European powers from asserting that they would "protect" a particular group from discrimination and persecution. Orthodox Christians and Armenians became the patrons of Russia, and the French and Austrians looked after the interests of Catholics, while the British sponsored the Greeks in their war of independence in the 1820s and later declared Ottoman Protestants and then Jews to be under British protection.

With economic and political pressure mounting, the Ottoman Empire suffered through a long period of crisis that began at the end of the eighteenth century. The newly ascendant Russian Empire defeated the sultan's armies on several occasions beginning in 1774, and the Ottomans were forced to cede large amounts of territory around the Black Sea. The French invaded and occupied the Ottoman province of Egypt in 1798. Egypt's Mamluk rulers had become increasingly remote from the Porte over the course of the eighteenth century, but they continued to send tribute to Istanbul up until the time of the French campaign. Meanwhile, the Balkans became restive with the rise of Greek and Serbian nationalist movements. The Serbs achieved de facto independence in 1817, and the Greeks gained independence with British help in 1830. Finally, the French conquered and annexed the province of Algeria in 1830.

Napoleon's Invasion of Egypt and Reaction

In 1798, Napoleon Bonaparte landed a French expeditionary force of twenty-five thousand troops on the northern coast of Egypt. Napoleon hoped to cut British supply lines to India. He also viewed the conquest of Egypt in historical terms, seeing himself as a new Alexander the Great. Along with his army, Napoleon brought a group of experts, or *savants,* who were tasked with studying Egypt's people, history, and archaeology and thereby to provide assistance to the French occupiers. At the outset of the occupation, these savants tried to establish legitimacy for French rule by claiming the French had arrived merely to remove Ottoman oppression. They also tried to camouflage the fact that Egypt's new rulers were non-Muslims. They posted notices in appallingly bad Arabic around Cairo not only informing the populace that the French meant them no harm but also implying that Napoleon was a Muslim.[8] These notices and other attempts by the French to legitimate their rule failed. Consequently, despite

quick victories over the antiquated tactics and weaponry of the Mamluk cavalry, the French never succeeded in stabilizing their rule throughout much of the country. The British and the Ottomans organized a military campaign to dislodge the French. British ships transported Ottoman troops to Egypt, and this, combined with popular resistance, convinced the French to sue for peace. They departed Egypt in 1801 leaving little trace of their brief occupation.

By the end of the eighteenth century, the main question for the Great Powers was no longer how to defend themselves against Ottoman expansion; instead, it was how to deal with an Ottoman Empire that was not keeping up with its neighbors' growing strength. This was the "Eastern Question" that dominated European international relations for more than a hundred years until the end of World War I. Any change of status of the Ottoman Empire was seen as almost inevitably benefiting the interests of one European state over the interests of another, potentially upsetting the carefully maintained balance of power. Thus, those seeking to change the status quo, in particular the Russians, did their utmost to undermine the Ottoman state. Meanwhile, those invested in the status quo, in particular Britain and Hapsburg Austria, supported the sultan whenever convenient.

Egypt: Mehmet Ali

An indirect consequence of the French campaign in Egypt was the emergence of Mehmet Ali (in Arabic, Muhammad Ali). Mehmet came to Egypt as part of the Ottoman force sent to battle the French. Within a few years, this ambitious Mamluk officer from Albania had established himself as the de facto ruler of Egypt. Through a combination of political skill and ruthlessness, Mehmet Ali consolidated his position in Egypt and established a ruling dynasty that would endure until 1952. He then set about building a strong, centralized state by bringing tax collection and other functions under his direct control. Wanting to expand from Egypt, Mehmet built a formidable military machine with its own industrial base. He also established modern schools, sent promising students abroad to complete their studies, and brought in foreign advisers and experts to train military officers and to teach at new scientific and technical institutes.

He paid for these elaborate reforms by setting up agricultural monopolies. The Egyptian government essentially became the only merchant in the entire country licensed to buy and sell agricultural commodities. Mehmet Ali compelled peasants to grow export crops and sell them to his government at low prices. In 1820, he introduced the cultivation of long-staple cotton. Egypt soon became famous for high-quality cotton that English mills bought up in large amounts. The immense wealth this created provided Mehmet Ali the necessary capital to build the Egyptian state and his army. The Egyptian government also undertook a number of steps to increase agricultural production, including building major roads, irrigation canals, dams, and waterworks. Cotton cultivation proved, however, to be as much of a curse as a blessing. During the last third of the nineteenth century, Egypt's overreliance on cotton as a source of income led not only to increased hardship for its peasant producers but also to devastating financial crisis, breakdown of the state, and, ultimately, to British occupation.

In any case, Mehmet Ali's army of Egyptian conscripts conquered Sudan, the Arabian Peninsula, and then the eastern Mediterranean through Syria, and for a time, it threatened the Ottoman heartland of Anatolia and Istanbul itself. It seemed as though Egypt might even supplant the Ottoman Empire as the major power in the East. However, just as they had done against Napoleon in 1801, the British (with Austrian help) came to the Ottomans' rescue and confronted the Albanian's Egyptian army in 1840. Mehmet Ali was forced not only to withdraw

from Syria but also to accept the Treaty of London of 1840 that included the British-Ottoman Commercial Convention forbidding monopolies in the Ottoman Empire. The treaty deprived him of the ability to raise the enormous sums of capital that had funded his reforms, and it also limited the Egyptian army to 18,000 troops from its previous 130,000. In return for Mehmet Ali's withdrawal from Syria and signing this treaty that effectively put an end to his short-lived mini empire, the sultan declared Mehmet Ali's family the hereditary rulers of Egypt. Indeed, Mehmet Ali's heirs remained in power until the 1952 military coup led by Gamal Abdel Nasser.

The Tanzimat Reforms

From at least the end of the eighteenth century, Ottoman rulers recognized that drastic administrative and organizational changes in the empire were necessary. However, stubborn resistance from entrenched interests hobbled the first steps toward change. For example, the janissaries, once the heart of the Ottoman army, had become less a military force and more a political lobby in Istanbul. Their military effectiveness declined precipitously after the end of the seventeenth century. By the beginning of the nineteenth century, they were completely outside of the sultan's control and more interested in pursuing the good life than in protecting the empire's borders. In 1808, Sultan Selim III paid with his life when he attempted to abolish the janissaries; however, his son and successor, Mahmud II, planned carefully for years and successfully disbanded the janissaries in 1826.

Any resistance to change that existed in Ottoman ruling circles disappeared with the shock caused by Mehmet Ali's march to the doorsteps of Istanbul.[9] No one in a position of authority could now doubt the imperative of fundamental change. Mahmud II's successor, Abdülmecid I (Abd al-Majid I), introduced a series of major reforms that came to be called the Tanzimat (Reorganization). What had once been a strength of Ottoman administration and governance—its practice of making allowances for local custom and tradition—had become a major liability. The Ottomans' Western European rivals ruled over states with relatively centralized, uniform administrative regimes that promoted a single economic policy. The Ottoman Empire's propensity toward local autonomy, in contrast, handicapped efforts to formulate coherent economic strategies across the entire realm. It was abundantly clear to Abdülmecid I, his successor Abdülaziz I (Abd al-Aziz I), and even more so to their advisers such as Mehmet Fuad Pasha, Mustafa Reshid Pasha, Ahmed Shefik Mithat Pasha, and Mehmet Emin Ali Pasha that this situation needed to be rectified.

Historians term the sort of reform strategy the Ottomans undertook as *defensive developmentalism*.[10] Ottoman rulers attempted to modernize the state by centralizing power in order to maintain their position and to stave off revolutionary change. They wanted to reproduce the modern, efficient European state model in the Ottoman Empire. This would enable them to manage and tax their population more efficiently and in turn provide the necessary capital to undertake ambitious reforms. The Ottoman reform program bore some resemblance to that of Mehmet Ali's in Egypt. Like their rebellious Egyptian governor, the Ottoman sultans aimed to improve security, concentrate power in the central government, build a more stable economic base, and guarantee sufficient income for government coffers to pay for their development plans. Unlike Mehmet Ali, however, who had brought his reform program to a fairly homogeneous population living in a contiguous geographic area, the Ottoman reformers faced the much more onerous task of trying to implement fundamental change across a multilingual and multiethnic empire that spanned three continents.

The question of security was paramount to the reformers as corruption and porous borders weakened the economic foundation of the empire. They tackled this complex problem with administrative reforms and by rebuilding the armed forces and upgrading the empire's communication and transportation infrastructure. They built vast road, railroad, and telegraph networks that crisscrossed the empire. These improvements enabled Istanbul to act quickly to quell disturbances and to confront internal challengers to the Ottoman center. This, in combination with more professionalized and efficient policing throughout the empire, led to increased security, making it possible for the state to extend its writ to outlying areas such as Syria and Palestine, which had often suffered from raiding and general lawlessness.

A rationalized and modernized bureaucracy required qualified and educated officials; thus, the Ottomans expended a great deal of effort to modernize education. They established new kinds of primary and secondary schools throughout the empire. In Istanbul, they opened a modern university, as well as medical, veterinary, and engineering schools. They also established an institute to train the bureaucrats who were to implement the Tanzimat reforms. The Ottomans also created modern military academies for infantry and naval officers and other technical schools for munitions experts, engineers, and military doctors.

Legal reform represented another priority for the Tanzimat reformers. They took a number of steps to rationalize the complicated and multilayered Ottoman legal system. For example, the Ottoman Land Code of 1858 and Land Registration Law of 1859 codified, standardized, and modernized land ownership rules that varied widely from place to place throughout the empire. Reformers then introduced a modified French civil code that restricted the brief of Islamic law. These moves brought the Ottoman legal regime in line with those operating in Western Europe. The hope was that these steps would help Ottoman merchants compete with their European competitors. Unfortunately, legal reform also made it easier for European merchants to do business locally. It did nothing to stem the tide of European finished goods pouring in; nor did it change the fact that the Ottoman Empire was merely a source of raw materials for Western European manufacturers. All of this deepened the Ottoman's marginal economic position in the emergent global economy.

The scale of the reforms was staggering and extremely expensive. To fund the Tanzimat, the sultans took out a series of loans beginning in 1854. Given the vast sums required and the relatively limited ways the Ottomans could raise the funds necessary to meet their obligations, it is hardly surprising that the Porte soon found itself in dire financial straits, and by the mid-1870s, bankruptcy loomed. In 1881, European creditors forced the Sultan into accepting a financial oversight body called the Ottoman Public Debt Commission made up of representatives of British, French, Dutch, and other nations' bondholders, and it had extraordinary power to use tax payments to reimburse foreign investors. With the debt commission, the Ottoman Empire essentially ceded control of its finances to Western Europeans.

Legal Reform and Ottomanism

Legal reform had far-reaching consequences beyond the economic sphere. With the Hatt-i Hümayun decree of 1856 and the Nationality Law of 1869, the Ottomans undertook one of the most sweeping social and legal reforms of the Tanzimat period. They completely restructured the *millet* system and its multiple status hierarchies and, in its place, inaugurated a form of modern proto-citizenship. All individuals were accorded the same legal status regardless of religious identity. This step raised new questions of collective belonging

and identity. How would the Ottomans replace the multiple sectarian identities of the past with a single modern form of identity? Did the diverse peoples of the Ottoman lands comprise a single people? One response to these questions was through the promotion of a kind of proto-nationalism called *Osmanlılık* (Ottomanism) that stressed that all citizens were equal members of the same political community and bound together by a common allegiance to the state. This notion of universal political community was supposed to transcend religious and regional identity. One early twentieth-century reformer put it this way:

> Henceforth we are all brothers. There are no longer Bulgars, Greeks, Romanians, Jews, Muslims; under the same blue sky we are all equal, we glory in being Ottomans.[11]

Equality did not prove to be very popular. Equality politicized difference in ways that had not been seen before. This was true among Muslims and non-Muslims alike. Some Muslims, especially among the elite, felt they were losing privileges justified by their status as the majority of the population. At the same time, some Christians objected to the new definition of equality and proto-citizenship because of the duties it imposed upon them—in particular, military conscription. Indeed, conscription was so unpopular that the Ottoman authorities eventually permitted Christians to buy their way out of military service. This concession then created great resentment among Muslims, who were not granted this right. Equality and a universal legal definition of the individual in effect created the idea of a "minority." Instead of a discrete community with its own hierarchy and therefore its own privileged elites, all members of the seventeen recognized *millets* became part of the larger pool of Ottoman citizens. This new status deprived the well-connected within each *millet* of their privileged position; moreover, the Christian population in general became a minority within a predominantly Muslim empire. The relationship of Christians to the state was changed as their former collective autonomy was replaced by the individual's direct relationship to the state. Influence in these changed circumstances no longer depended solely on status within an identity group; now it depended on numbers. In this new legal world, even elites had to gather sufficient numbers for the state to take notice. Popular appeal to sectarian and national identity in order to mobilize large groups of people replaced the older, more "polite" form of the politics of notables.[12]

The new legal regime left almost everyone dissatisfied. The Ottoman world became politicized in ways it had not been before.[13] This led to the emergence of political tensions that plagued the empire during its final decades and led to its final dissolution after World War I. The irony is that measures intended to promote equality resulted in sharpened divisions between Christians and Muslims and others. These divisions then fed latent nationalist tendencies, which were in turn fomented by the empire's enemies in Moscow, Vienna, and elsewhere.

The End of the Tanzimat

The last of the Tanzimat reforms was the promulgation of the first Ottoman constitution in 1876 and the election of the first Ottoman parliament in 1877. A new sultan, Abdülhamid II (Abdul Hamid II), ascended to the throne in August 1876. Many assumed that he was another liberal reformer. But dismayed at what he saw as the dissolution of the empire, Abdülhamid II suspended the constitution, dismissed or pushed aside the

reformers, and reversed the devolution of the sultan's absolute power to other state institutions. Yet, even as he reversed some of the political reforms, he continued other aspects of the Tanzimat, such as the modernization of the communication and transportation infrastructure and educational reform.[14]

Abdülhamid II became well known for emphasizing the Islamic character of the Ottoman Empire and using the title of caliph rather than sultan. Beginning in the sixteenth century, the Ottomans had claimed descent from the family of the Prophet, but this had been generally viewed as a convenience and hardly taken seriously by the sultans themselves or anyone else for centuries. Abdülhamid II's focus on the Islamic character of the Ottoman Empire thus was not a turn back to the past but rather a completely new departure. The importance he accorded the Islamic aspects of Ottoman identity contrasted with what he saw as creeping Western influence and interference in Ottoman lands. He was convinced that the political reforms of the Tanzimat era had only aggravated these problems.

Abdülhamid II's Islamic Ottomanism potentially appealed to Muslims whose communal identity was no longer validated by the now-revamped *millet* system. Indeed, nascent forms of pan-Islamic thought were already circulating in intellectual circles around the Muslim world. With Britain, France, Holland, and Russia ruling over so much of the world's Muslim population, thinkers throughout the Muslim lands argued that political unity was the only way to resist further domination. Aware of this, Abdülhamid II hoped to capitalize on this idea in his efforts to build support for his besieged regime. Perhaps an indication of the success of his efforts was the fact that his reign is associated with a dramatic expansion of the secret police and the use of informants and spies to keep tabs on the public. Likewise, his government suppressed dissidents such as Arab nationalists with great vigor, but Abdülhamid II reserved the harshest treatment for Armenians who were perceived as a "fifth column" that might ally with the rival Russians to the north. Consequently, Armenians faced moments of extreme state-sanctioned violence in the mid-1890s and once again in 1909.[15]

Reforms in Qajar Persia

Qajar Persia, like the Ottoman Empire, gradually succumbed to the pressure of the Great Powers. By the end of the nineteenth century, the Qajar state was in disarray. The shah had little direct authority outside of the capital, Tehran. The Qajars relied on farmed-out tax collection to various fief holders and ruled not through a central administration or through coercion but rather through the shah's balancing tribal, clan, and ethnic factions against one another. To offset the power of the Shi'i *ulema*, the Qajars created genealogies that linked them to Shi'i imams, presented themselves as the protectors of Shi'i Islam, and made very public shows of their piety and support for shrines in Mashhad and Samarra. Nevertheless, as was the case with the Ottoman Empire, the lack of central authority resulted in the growing influence of European powers, primarily the Russians in the north and the British in the south, who bypassed the shah's government altogether by signing treaties with various tribal leaders and regional notables.

The shah Nasser al-Din attempted some reforms during the nineteenth century. In 1852, he opened a school staffed mostly with teachers from France to train personnel for the military and for the bureaucracy. Beginning in the 1860s, he tried to extend his reach outside of the capital by building telegraph lines and a postal service across the country. Then in 1879, he created a new military force called the Cossack Brigade, officered by Russians.

These moves did little to stem the decline of Qajar power. Indeed, at the turn of the twentieth century, most of the tribal confederations grew more autonomous and had greater military capability than the central state.

To reverse the dissolution of their authority, the Qajars, like the Ottomans, contemplated a program of defensive developmentalism. Of course, this entailed raising more revenue, but the state could not collect taxes more efficiently because it lacked both a bureaucracy and an effective military to impose its writ. Consequently, Nasser al-Din borrowed money and sold concessions to foreigners to raise funds. In the 1870s, he began selling the rights to build a communications infrastructure (railroads, telegraph lines, roads, and dams) to European investors who would then pocket most of the proceeds. This paved the way for his successor, Mozaffar al-Din, to grant the famous D'Arcy oil concession in 1905 that surrendered much of Iran's oil wealth to the British for decades. Despite their efforts, the Qajars could not hold off the Russians and the British. Around the turn of the century, the two Great Powers essentially divided the country into two spheres of influence, with the Russians dominating in the north and the British in the south. At the same time, the state was unable to repay British and Russian loans, and a Belgian-administered financial oversight board was put in place. Economic distress caused in part by foreign economic encroachment led to growing dissatisfaction among the bazaar merchants and the *ulema*. These groups together rebelled in 1906 and forced Mozaffar al-Din to accept a constitution. However, Persia's new constitution did not solve the basic problem of a weak state. As a result, the next two decades witnessed increasing anarchy and civil war. Order was not restored until the 1920s with the emergence of Reza Khan.

European Encroachment Elsewhere in the Middle East

From the later part of the nineteenth century until World War I, the entire Middle East experienced deepening European influence and domination. Often, this involvement began with crushing debt, leading to financial crisis that Europeans took upon themselves to "resolve." In other cases, European powers simply wanted to build colonial empires.

In Egypt during the second half of the nineteenth century, for example, Mehmet Ali's successors undertook a number of large infrastructure projects to expand agricultural production. The most spectacular was the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869. The Egyptian government secured loans from European creditors that it intended to pay off with the proceeds from expanded cotton cultivation. A spike in world cotton prices during the US Civil War (caused by the blockade of the Confederate states by the Union Army) spurred the hopes of substantial returns for cotton growers. Cotton prices soon collapsed, however, and Egypt found itself on the verge of bankruptcy. In 1876, Egypt's European creditors took control of Egypt's finances, and the ensuing resentment helped lead to rebellion. In 1882, an Egyptian army colonel, Ahmad Urabi, led a revolt that aimed to remove foreign influence from Egypt. The British put down the rebels in the summer of 1882 and occupied Egypt and Sudan, where British troops remained until 1952 and 1956, respectively. Beginning in 1882, British officials governed Egypt. It would not be until the 1950s that Egyptians governed their own country again.

With the exception of Morocco, Libya and the area known collectively as the Maghreb (Algeria, Tunisia, and Morocco) had been part of the Ottoman order for centuries. As was often the case in much of the Ottoman periphery, the reach of Istanbul was tenuous at

best. In general, these territories were ruled over by semi-independent Ottoman-appointed governors (Deys or Beys) whose tenure depended on skillfully managing relations with different elements of elites such as tribal leaders, sufi sheikhs, and merchants in coastal cities. North Africa's population spoke Arabic and Berber (Tamazight) and was predominantly Muslim, although there were Jewish communities in a number of cities across the region.[16] Merchants and craftsmen made up the urban population along the coast and in inland market towns. Tribal formations and pastoralists dominated the countryside, and sufi Islam played an important role in the organization of society and the legitimization of authority.

All of North Africa came under control of European colonial powers beginning in the first third of the nineteenth century. In 1830, after the famous "fly swatter" incident when the Ottoman ruler of Algiers, Hussein Dey, slapped the French consul, Pierre Duval, during a disagreement about French debts, the French occupied the city. Thus began a campaign of conquest that, due to determined local resistance, required forty years to complete. In 1848, France declared Algeria an integral part of France and divided it into three administrative units, or *départements*. Algeria's legal status as part of France came to a bloody end with the Algerian War of Independence in the 1950s and 1960s. Through the 1860s and 1870s, the Ottoman province of Tunisia experienced a financial and debt crisis not unlike that of Egypt. Just as in Egypt, foreign creditors came to control Tunisian finances; then, the French army occupied the country and added Tunisia to its official North African colonial portfolio in 1881 when it declared Tunisia a protectorate under the pretext that Algerian rebels used the territory for sanctuary. In Morocco, after a period of tension caused by conflicting French and German colonial ambitions and after the collapse of Morocco's finances, it too fell to European rule. The French and the Spanish (who were granted a strip of land along the Mediterranean coast) occupied and then divided Morocco into two protectorates in 1912. Italy, too, desired a foothold in North Africa, and in 1911, Italy invaded Ottoman Libya. It took two decades to subdue local resistance. The Italians finally succeeded in combining Tripolitania, Cyrenaica, and Fezzan (the three Ottoman provinces that made up Libya) into a single colony in the mid-1930s. Libya remained a colonial possession of Italy until after World War II, when the United Nations declared that it should become independent.

The Ottomans lost other territories during this period; for instance, in southern Arabia, the British chipped off pieces of Yemen, such as the Aden Protectorate. The British established a line of protectorates and principalities from Kuwait to Yemen by throwing their support behind cooperative local families who, in return, they recognized as rulers of small statelets. Many of these families remain in power today. During the course of the nineteenth century, Britain installed the ruling families that currently rule Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, and the principalities that came together as the United Arab Emirates in 1971.

Originally, the British saw these ruling families and the small states they controlled as a way to maintain trading privileges and to keep the shipping lanes to India free of piracy. With the discovery of oil, these small semicolonies took on more direct importance. For example, Kuwait had been merely a coastal town known for its pearl divers and fishermen. In 1913, the British forced the Ottoman government to recognize the Sabah family as the rulers of the city of Kuwait and the surrounding area. After World War I, the British declared Kuwait an independent British protectorate, controlling it until 1961. British Petroleum received a lucrative concession after oil was discovered in the emirate in 1934, and within two decades, Kuwait became one of the largest oil exporters in the region.

Cultural Renaissance: Social and Religious Reform

The reforms of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries set in train far-reaching cultural and social changes that continue to reverberate today. In building educational institutions to officer armies and staff modern bureaucracies, the Ottomans, Qajars, and others helped create a new literate stratum not associated with religious institutions. Western missionaries also contributed to this development through the schools they established during the course of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. While Christian missionaries had little success in converting the local Muslim and Jewish populations, the schools they set up played a significant role in producing a modern, educated intelligentsia. From primary and secondary schools to modern postsecondary institutions such as the Syrian Protestant College (American University of Beirut), Robert College of Istanbul (Boğaziçi University), and then the American University in Cairo, missionary schools had a role in producing many important Middle Eastern intellectuals of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

The graduates of the state and missionary schools were the force behind far-reaching cultural and intellectual movements that began to crystallize during the second half of the nineteenth century. What first began as a series of critical questions blossomed into a full-fledged cultural renaissance as many in the region sought to answer how the Middle East, North Africa, and indeed most of the Muslim world came to be dominated by the Great Powers. Intellectuals began to ask questions about themselves, their societies, and their future: How did this happen? What is wrong with us? How can we change these circumstances? This questioning inaugurated an intensely creative period in the region's cultural history and was instrumental in producing many of the ideological currents later translated into the nationalist and Islamist politics of the twentieth century. Two extremely influential trends were the Arabic Nahda (or literary renaissance; there were Turkish- and Persian-language counterparts) and the Islamic Modernist or Islamic Reform movement.

The Nahda—the Arabic literary renaissance—refers to a cultural phenomenon that began around the middle of the nineteenth century and drew to a close before the middle of the twentieth century. The Nahda began as a revival movement in Arabic literature that sought to rejuvenate Arabic letters and music. Figures such as the Egyptian Rifa'a Rafi' al-Tahtawi and the Lebanese Butrus al-Bustani were leaders in the movement to modernize Arabic. Many of those associated with this literary movement also became advocates of Arab nationalism. The progression was logical. Men and women of letters such as the Lebanese May Ziade and the Egyptian Malak Hifni Nasif began their quest to revive Arabic by developing new forms of prose and poetry. This led them to study the long history of classical Arabic letters. They compared what they saw as the decline of Arabic letters with the stagnation of Arab society. It was not long before some traced this stagnation to Ottoman hegemony. These theories evolved into a political prescription: Arab society could not move forward until it threw off the yoke of "Turkish" dominance. It was no coincidence that these thoughts crystallized at a time when Abdülhamid II's government began to press Turkification of the Ottoman Empire. This nascent Arab nationalism was given a further boost after the Young Turk coup of 1908 brought an even more extreme Turko-centric leadership into power.

The emergence of the newspaper was a significant factor in the Nahda. Newspapers were an incubator of discussions and political ideas, allowing Arabic speakers from across the region to engage with one another in ways that had heretofore been impossible. One can compare the emergence of the newspaper in the Arabic-speaking world to the invention

MAP 1.3 ■ The Decline of the Ottoman Empire

Legend:
- Ottoman Empire territory lost 1774–1878
- Ottoman Empire territory lost 1878–1914
- Ottoman Empire in 1914
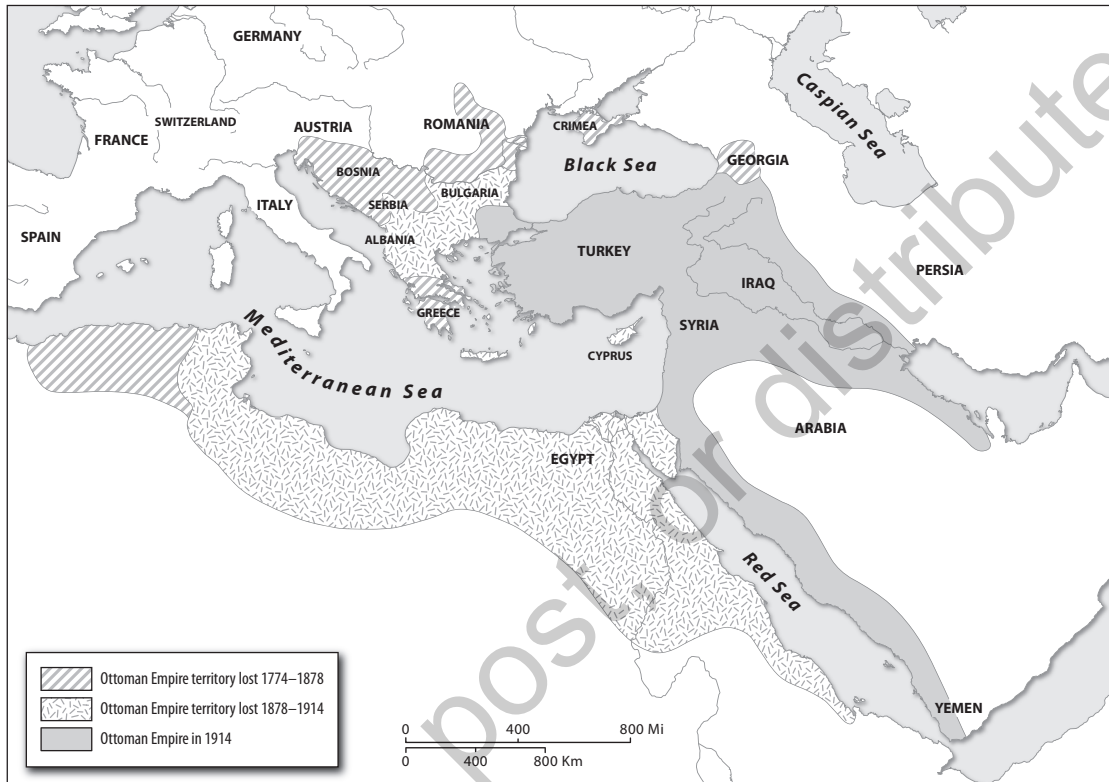
of the Internet. The first newspapers, little more than government newsletters or gazettes, appeared in the first half of the nineteenth century. By the 1880s, however, with the emergence of capitalist print culture, newspapers had become fairly widespread. A relatively large audience of voracious readers created a market for the new literary products.[17] Newspapers were important laboratories for linguistic experimentation with simplified forms of expression, grammar, and punctuation. Traditional forms of prose (such as rhyming prose) gave way to sentence structure and syntactical style more recognizable to the modern reader. But newspapers were also the primary conduit for new ideas written in this new, simplified idiom of Arabic. Newspapers helped to manifest the idea of an Arabic-speaking community, and in this sense, they helped create the idea of an Arab world that had not existed before.

This new forum inevitably led to new forms of solidarity across the Arab world, and it also helped fuel a vibrant culture of research and critique. This in turn led to a greater interest in a variety of questions related to culture, identity, history, and social reform. Indeed, newspapers became the preferred method by which social reformers detailed their ideas, communicated with their fellow travelers, and challenged their opponents. The newspaper was the vehicle for the sustained debate over the status of women at the turn of the century. The controversy

followed the publication of Egyptian lawyer Qasim Amin's books *The Liberation of Women* (1899) and *The New Woman* (1900). Every major newspaper and public figure weighed in on the topic.[18] Qasim Amin called for the elimination of the full-face veil, the education of girls, and reform of marriage practices. For these views, some condemned him as a "Westernizer." Reformers were sensitive to the charge made by some of their opponents that they were advocates of Westernization. Thus, important figures, especially those who were not men of religion, such as Qasim Amin, Abdallah al-Nadim, and Muhammad Kurd 'Ali, were very careful to explain that their calls for women's rights, education, and social and political change were aimed at reform and advancement of Muslim society and not its destruction. The Islamic reformer Rashid Rida spoke for many when he called the uncritical adoption of all things European a dangerous form of imitation that led only to cultural obliteration.

Islamic Modernism

Another important current of thought spurred by the ethos of reform and the culture of debate during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was the Islamic reform movement, or the Islamic modernist movement. The influence of the luminaries of the movement, the Iranian Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, the Egyptian Muhammad Abduh, and the Syrian Rashid Rida, continues almost a century after the death of the last of them. Their writing and activism shaped a major rethinking of the practice of Islam on a scale that compares with that of the Protestant Reformation in sixteenth-century Europe. Islamic modernists reread the canon of Islamic thought in light of the changed circumstances of the modern world, the challenge of colonialism, and the cultural power of the West. The era in which they wrote was unlike any other in Islamic history. Most of the Muslim world was either colonized or dominated in other ways by the non-Muslim European states.

As was the case with social reformers, newspapers and other kinds of periodicals were the preferred technology for transmitting their ideas. Jamal al-Din al-Afghani provided financial support to a number of newspapers, and among his many devotees were some of the most prominent journalists and editors of the era. Rashid Rida studied to be a religious scholar in Syria before going to Cairo. There, he became a journalist and essayist, founding the legendary Islamic reform journal, *al-Manar*. Muhammad Abduh had a regular column in *al-Manar*, and his writing appeared often in other newspapers.

Islamic modernists were not only in conversation with other Muslims but also with the many European commentators discoursing about Islam and the state of the Muslim world. Many of these Europeans were connected to, or were supporters of, the colonial enterprise, and they thought that only through enlightened European intervention and guidance could the Muslim world emerge from what they saw as its stupor. In many cases, Islamic reformers and their European interlocutors agreed on the diagnosis about what ailed the Muslim world. Both groups used the word *backward* to describe its general condition, and they agreed that ignorance and superstition were by-products of the intellectual isolation of Muslims. Likewise, they concurred with the suggestion that Islam was stagnant because too many Muslims mindlessly repeated what they had been taught. In addition, they both decried religious scholars at some of the major centers of Islamic learning who opposed any call for change or modernization.

European critics of Islam and Islamic modernists saw the same problems, but they differed markedly in their analyses about the source of the problems and how to overcome them. Simply put, Europeans argued that Islam was the major problem facing Muslim

society, while Islamic reformers countered that Muslims were the source of society's difficulties. Indeed, Islamic reformers asserted that Islam was the solution rather than the problem: Muslim society began to decline, the reformers argued, when Muslims strayed from the true essence of Islam. They had distorted its true meaning and its simple practice, and only by returning to the faith of the first generations of Muslims, the so-called *al-salaf al-salih* (the pious ancestors), could Muslims reverse the corrosion of their civilization. Because of their emphasis on the experience of the *al-salaf al-salih*, modernists were sometimes called *salifiyun* and their movement *salafiyya*.

Islamic modernists pinned the blame for "distortions" in Islamic practice on the role played by Muslim scholars and their views on Islamic thought that supported centuries of repressive rule. They argued that these scholars were an entrenched interest group that gave more importance to loyalty and obedience to rulers than to following God's law. They had declared all major questions of Islamic law settled and advised Muslims that they needed only to imitate precedent. Islamic modernists saw this not only as a prescription for suicidal rigidity but as a violation of the basic tenets of Islamic law. Because of the history of despotism and its deleterious effects on Islamic practice, Islamic reformers became strong advocates of representative government. Colonial domination by non-Muslims made this all the more imperative.

The cure for the illnesses of backwardness and foreign domination lay in a return to the original teachings of Islam and to the reimplementation of its simple message. They argued that Muslims must seek the answers to today's problems through the use of reason derived from the Islamic tradition. For them, there were no answers either in "blind imitation" of the past or in "blind imitation" of the West. The solutions to their problems would be found in Islam. Islamic modernism offered a dynamic picture of Islamic law and thought. For reformers, the universality of Islamic law meant that it was appropriate for every time and place and could never be "settled" because every era is unique. Muslims of every generation must seek answers in the Qur'an and other foundational texts to meet the challenges of their age. In this sense, they advocated for a methodology of Islamic rational practice rather than a specific set of rulings.

Muslims must be taught how to seek answers within Islam and not outside of it. Superstition entered Islam because Muslims had borrowed from other traditions. Reformers cited ecstatic mysticism with its "wild" chanting, self-flagellation, and saint worship as an example of this sort of dangerous syncretism. Such practices contradicted Islam's strict monotheism. Through them, Muslims appeared to be seeking the divine intercession of human, or worse, other godly figures. If Muslims learned to think rationally, they would never partake in such rituals. Consequently, education was the centerpiece of Islamic modernism. Reformers campaigned for modern education for both men and women. They asked, "How can women be expected to raise upright children if they are slaves to superstition?" They also were strong advocates for scientific and technical education, as this knowledge would help Muslims build a modern society.

Religious and social reformers had much in common. Whether in the Arab East, Egypt, or Istanbul, reformers sought to reconcile what they saw as the positive elements of European society—scientific and technical knowledge, new economic practices, democratic political institutions, and freedom of expression—with what they believed was essential to Muslim or Eastern society. Both contained elements of cultural translation as reformers of all stripes self-consciously and unapologetically borrowed from the West, but in ways they felt most appropriate for their own societies. In so doing, they viewed themselves as taking these new forms and implanting them in an Eastern or Muslim cultural and religious context that would produce a fusion that was true to Islam and to the culture, history, and mores of the East.

THE NEW MIDDLE EAST

The Ottoman Empire in the Post-Tanzimat Period and World War I

The map of the Middle East was completely redrawn as a result of World War I. The only prewar border in the region that remained essentially unchanged was that between Iran and what became the Turkish Republic. These changes had extraordinary effects on the region's entire population, upsetting centuries of commercial, social, political, and cultural ties. The effects of these wholesale changes still reverberate nearly a century later.

The twentieth century began with the Ottoman state facing a multitude of external and internal problems, including dissent throughout the provinces and among reformers unhappy with the absolutist rule of Abdülhamid II. The reformers believed that Abdülhamid II had moved the Ottoman state backward by suspending the constitution in 1878 and by using religious rhetoric to prop up his authority. He was deposed in 1908 by a group of reformers known as the Young Turks in a revolt that started as a military insurrection in the Balkans and eventually moved to Istanbul.[19] After the coup, power moved from the older Ottoman institutions to the newly formed Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) that the Young Turks established. Across the Ottoman Empire's ethnic and religious communities, groups of new leaders modeled on the Young Turks replaced the traditional leaderships. The new leaders did not possess the same allegiance to the Ottoman state and its institutions as the traditional elite. The stage was set for the rise of nationalist movements throughout the empire.

The end of the nineteenth century also saw a shift in the British attitude toward the Ottomans. Throughout the nineteenth century, Britain had viewed the empire as a strategic asset because it acted as a buffer between the Mediterranean and the Russians, whom the British viewed as their most immediate threat. The only ports the Russians could use year-round were in the Black Sea, and this required them to pass through Ottoman-controlled sea-lanes whenever they wanted to move. Later, the rise of Germany began to concern British strategists more than the Russians. Support that Britain had given the Ottoman Empire throughout the nineteenth century no longer seemed necessary. Instead of looking for ways to preserve the Ottoman Empire, Britain now contemplated the best way to carve it up.

When the CUP government in Istanbul threw its support behind Germany and the Central Powers in World War I, the die was cast. Britain now had a green light to begin dismantling the Empire. In 1914, Britain declared the Ottoman province of Egypt a protectorate of the British Crown, independent of the Ottoman Empire for the first time in four hundred years. The British deposed the khedive, Abbas II, the Egyptian head of state, and chose the pliant Hussein Kamel from among the descendants of Mehmet Ali and gave him the title of sultan of Egypt.

After two years, the war in Europe had been fought to the bloody stalemate and wholesale slaughter of trench warfare. Worried about troubling signs of unrest in Russia, the British sought ways to keep the Russians in the war. At the outset of hostilities, the Russian military had inflicted a crushing defeat on the Ottoman army in the east. The Ottoman forces were completely wiped out not by enemy bullets but by the catastrophically inadequate supply lines set by Enver Pasha. This defeat led Enver to seek a scapegoat for his mismanaged and ill-advised plan to march through the Caucasus during the dead of winter. He accused the region's Armenians of actively supporting the Russians and, beginning in April 1915, used the crisis as an excuse to deport the entire Armenian population in eastern Anatolia. This precipitated what is now referred to as the Armenian Genocide and resulted in as many as one million deaths. Less than two years later,

however, the Russians seemed to be the ones wavering. The British were convinced that they could knock the Ottomans out of the war and, by doing so, alleviate the pressure on the bogged-down Russian-led eastern front. This thinking led to the disastrous campaign on the Gallipoli Peninsula southwest of Istanbul in 1915 to 1916. After nine months of bloody fighting, the British withdrew in ignominious defeat, and the Ottomans had their first war hero. The Ottoman commander, Mustafa Kemal, devised strategies that frustrated all attempts by the British to break out of their beachhead. Mustafa Kemal, who later became known as Atatürk, would make an even bigger name for himself after World War I as the leader of the new Turkish Republic.

Contradictory British Promises

After their defeat at Gallipoli, the British sought other ways to undermine the Ottoman Empire. British armies moved from Basra in Iraq toward Baghdad and from Cairo toward Palestine. They also responded positively to the promise of Hussein bin Ali (aka the Sharif or Guardian of Mecca) to revolt against his Ottoman overlords in exchange for British guarantees for an Arab kingdom after the war. The British were willing to support Hussein's aspirations as long as they coincided with their own strategic interests. British advisers, including Thomas Edward (T. E.) Lawrence, later known as Lawrence of Arabia, aided the rebellion. Throwing in their lot with the British would make Hussein and his three sons Faisal, Abdallah, and Ali pivotal figures in the history of the Middle East.

British interests in the Middle East at the time could be summarized by two words: *oil* and *India*. Oil had become a strategic asset a little more than a decade before World War I, when the Royal Navy switched from coal to oil. The British never wavered in their quest to control the oil fields of Iraq in any postwar settlement. Since the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, British strategic planning in the Mediterranean was fixated on the need to protect the supply lines to British India.

Henry McMahon, the British high commissioner in Cairo, and Sharif Hussein exchanged a series of letters in 1915 and 1916, the content of which later became a source of much trouble. Hussein understood the letters to say that the British pledged that the Arabian Peninsula and the Arab lands of the Eastern Mediterranean (except what is now Lebanon) would be granted independence as an Arab kingdom in return for Hussein organizing a rebellion against the Ottomans. McMahon, however, was intentionally vague so as not to restrict British maneuverability. The Arab Revolt nevertheless commenced soon after and was led by Hussein's son, Faisal.

In May 1916, about a month after making their pledges to Hussein, the British, French, and Russians completed other postwar settlement agreements. The Sykes-Picot Agreement violated the spirit if not the letter of the Hussein-McMahon correspondence. The French and British agreed to divide much of the Middle East between them. The British received most of Iraq and the lands of the Persian Gulf, while the French would control Syria, Lebanon, and parts of Anatolia. The fate of Palestine would be decided later through consultation with other allies and other concerned parties, including Hussein. The actual borders of the spheres of influence of the parties to the Sykes-Picot Agreement were to be delineated at a later time. In a separate agreement, Russia would realize its long-held desire to have access to the Mediterranean from the Black Sea, as the Russians gained control of Istanbul, the Bosporus, and the Dardanelles as well as the Armenian lands to the east. However, this agreement was not honored because mounting Russian losses and the general misery of the Russian population resulted in Russia's 1917 revolution. Russia soon dropped out of the war and signed a peace treaty with the Ottomans.

If all of this were not already complicated enough, the British made one additional set of promises about how conquered Ottoman land would be divided. On November 2, 1917, an advertisement appeared in the newspaper *Times of London* that soon became a source of resentment and scorn among Britain's Arab allies in the Middle East. The Balfour Declaration, as it became known, was a note signed by Arthur James Balfour, the British foreign secretary, and addressed to the banker Lord Walter Rothschild. The simple four-line announcement pledged British support for a "national home" for the Jews in Palestine. The Balfour Declaration was the culmination of a massive lobbying campaign by the influential Polish-born chemist Chaim Weizmann. Weizmann was widely known in London's power circles, and he had an important role in British munitions production. He also had a gift for political lobbying and networking, and he convinced British politicians to regard the small Jewish nationalist movement, Zionism, as a potential British ally in the Middle East.

MAP 1.4 ■ The Sykes–Picot Agreement and the Mandates
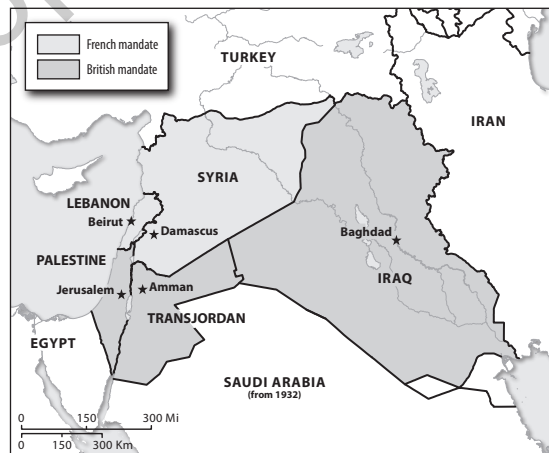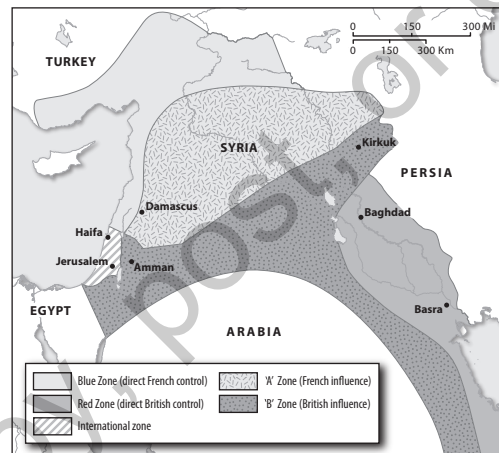
The Balfour Declaration was a sign of British desperation. Britain was deeply troubled by the prospect of a collapse of the French army after a mutiny in its infantry divisions. Some in Her Majesty's government even believed that if Britain seemed positively disposed toward the Zionists in Palestine, the government might convince the Jews in the Russian revolutionary government to remain in the war. The Bolsheviks not only rebuffed this idea but also made a mockery of it by releasing the details of the Sykes-Picot Agreement, the contents of which infuriated Britain's Arab allies. In the end, the French stayed in the war, and the British managed to convince Greece to join the allies by making yet another promise of postwar spoils from the carcass of the Ottoman Empire.

The End of the War and the Mandate System

The end of World War I signaled the beginning of a new era in the Middle East. The peace treaties that followed the armistice introduced a new term into the lexicon of international relations: the *mandate*. A mandate was essentially a colony by another name. It was given an international legal fig leaf by its authorization through the newly organized League of Nations. The people of mandated territories were deemed unable to "stand by themselves under the strenuous conditions of the modern world." The state designated as the "Mandatory Power" would provide "administrative advice and assistance" until the people of the mandate could "stand alone." Just when that time would be was not specified.

The 1923 Treaty of Lausanne formalized the mandate system, and it recognized the borders of the new Turkish Republic. This ended any hope for independent Kurdish and Armenian states as part of the Great War settlement. The British received mandates in Palestine, Transjordan, and Iraq. The French, who had appended some Syrian territory to the Mount Lebanon area in 1920, creating a larger Christian-dominated entity, were granted mandatory power over Syria and over this new Greater Lebanon. The new lines drawn on the post–World War I maps of the Middle East effectively divided a contiguous area into discrete entities. These new borders disrupted commercial ties that had existed for centuries and placed restrictions on the movement of people and the flow of goods around the region. The economies of these individual mandates became increasingly oriented toward the mandatory power and away from its neighbors. The mandate system's multiple jurisdictions replaced the central Ottoman political and legal structure throughout the Middle East.

Administering the new territories necessitated establishing individual governments and other institutions of state. New borders created an assortment of regimes and forms of local administration that imposed new kinds of responsibilities and legal sanctions on the peoples of the various mandates. As a consequence, new kinds of loyalties and identities began to take hold among locals. While the idea of a Greater Syrian Arab nation encompassing Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Palestine/Israel, and parts of Iraq, Turkey, and Iran continued to have a powerful hold on some, it was not long before ideological rivals in the form of Iraqi, Syrian, or Palestinian nationalism came to vie for the hearts and minds as well.[20]

The British and Mandate Iraq

The case of Iraq is representative. Although much of the area that became the mandate had been known as Iraq for millennia, the new entity combined three Ottoman administrative units: Mosul, Baghdad, and Basra. The population of the mandate was diverse, with

a majority of Shi'i Muslim Arabs, a sizable minority of Sunni Muslim Arabs, along with Assyrian and Armenian Christians, and a large, ancient Jewish community in Baghdad. Complicating matters even more were the many ethnic groups such as Turkmen and the large number of Kurds in the north around Mosul. In addition, the experience of Iraq during late Ottoman times was such that the Tanzimat and post–Tanzimat era reforms had little effect outside of the largest cities. Iraq had been on the margins of Ottoman society, and the presence of the central government had never been very pronounced.

The establishment of the British mandate government and its powerful security forces signaled an abrupt change. The new British-run administration in Baghdad imposed its will through military force, especially by using the new technology of airpower.[21] Local objections took a variety of forms. Arab nationalism had found fertile ground among the literate urban classes. These groups objected to the semicolonial rule implied by the mandate and sought outright independence. The lower middle classes and small merchants resented military conscription and the tax collection apparatus of the new government. Regional elites objected to the centralized power the British built in Baghdad, seeing it as a direct assault on their prerogatives. The British were oblivious to these concerns, and their heavy-handedness touched off a major rebellion in 1920 that joined together many segments of Iraqi society, including tribal confederations and urban notables. Although the rebellion was suppressed, it signaled the emergence of what later became Iraqi nationalism. In the wake of the 1920 rebellion, the British established separate legal and administrative regimes for the cities and for the countryside. In the semiautonomous Kurdish north, the British devolved administrative and legal authority to Kurdish tribal leaders and other important figures such as sufi shaykhs in exchange for pledges of loyalty.

Britain encountered great financial difficulty in the postwar era. Therefore, the British looked for a cost-effective style of indirect rule for their new possessions. They handed the reins of state to friendly leaders who signed treaties favorable to British commercial interests and backed them with British military power. Faisal, the British-installed king of Iraq, for example, granted a seventy-five-year oil concession in 1925. In the early 1920s, the British granted a limited form of independence to Iraq, Transjordan, and Egypt. These "sovereign" states did not control their militaries, their borders, or their foreign affairs, and they granted Britain the right to maintain troops on their soil.

Britain came to depend on Sharif Hussein bin Ali and his sons to maintain its new colonies in the Middle East. At the outset, the ambitious Sharif Hussein hoped to lead an Arab kingdom himself, and he even declared himself caliph in 1924. His grand scheme did not come to fruition as his ambitions rankled the Al Saud family of Riyadh, with whom he had fought a few years earlier. In 1924, the House of Saud attacked Hussein's British-backed kingdom of the Hejaz and forced Hussein into exile. A few years later, the Al Sauds also deposed Hussein's third son, Ali, and incorporated the entire kingdom of the Hejaz into their territory. At that point, the British merely shifted their support from the hapless Ali to the House of Saud.

Hussein's other sons were more fortunate. In 1920, the Syrian National Congress declared Hussein's son Faisal king of Syria. The French, who had been promised the Syrian mandate, objected, and they deposed Faisal five months later. The British, still reeling from the Iraqi revolt of 1920, hoped Faisal could bring legitimacy to "independent" Iraq and installed him as king of Iraq in 1921. The British subsequently named Faisal's brother Abdallah the king of Transjordan (Jordan).

Mandate Palestine and Zionism

The question of Palestine had its own unique complications and would significantly shape the region, from the early twentieth century to today. While known as Palestine during Ottoman times, the area was divided between several administrative units belonging to the province of Beirut. Muslims, Christians, and people who were later called "Palestinian Jews" (to differentiate them from European Jewish immigrants who had begun arriving around the turn of the twentieth century) populated the area. On the eve of World War I, the total population of Palestine was approximately 850,000—about 750,000 were Muslims and Christians; 85,000 were Jews; and the remainder were made up of Ottoman troops and officials and Europeans of various nationalities. A detailed examination of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is found in Chapter 2, as well as in the chapters on Israel and Palestine in this volume. Given the importance of the mandate in shaping the region, however, a brief overview is in order here.

Zionism in Europe

Before we examine the Palestine mandate, it is necessary to say a few words about the background of the Zionist movement and its prewar history and presence in Palestine. Zionism is a form of Jewish nationalism, the roots of which go back to central and eastern Europe. In response to a history of oppression punctuated by periods of extreme violence, Jews of those European regions began to despair about their future. In response, increasing numbers of Jews chose to immigrate to the United States and elsewhere. Others, such as the Russian Jew Leon Pinsker, suggested in 1882 that, just as the Jews would never be accepted in eastern Europe, it was only a matter of time before every host nation would reject them. This was the predicament articulated in the so-called Jewish Question: Could Jews ever be accepted as Jews in a nation made up of non-Jews? No, responded Zionists, arguing that Jews must therefore have their own nation-state.

Zionism was very much an eastern-European phenomenon at its inception, but this changed in the last years of the nineteenth century. In 1897, Vienna-based Jewish journalist Theodor Herzl published *The Jewish State*. Through his experiences in France, Herzl had become convinced that Jews could never be safe from oppression except through the "restoration of the Jewish state." For Herzl, a nonreligious Jew, the Jewish Question was not a religious question but a political one. For him, it was a simple formula: Jews were not French, nor were they German, nor were they Dutch. As such, France, Germany, and Holland could never fully assimilate them.

Herzl was neither the first nor the most articulate to make this argument. He was a skilled publicist, however, and he brought the Zionist message to Jews around the world. He was also a tireless organizer. Through his efforts, the first international Zionist conference was convened in Basel, Switzerland, in 1897. There, he proposed that Jews should endeavor to obtain "sovereignty over a portion of the globe large enough for the rightful requirements of a nation." After some disagreement about where that "portion of the globe" should be, the conferees founded an organization to assist Jews in immigrating to Palestine, which began in earnest shortly after the Basel conference.

The Beginning of Zionism in Palestine

The Zionists were not successful in acquiring a large footprint for their community during the first decades of the twentieth century. Perhaps this is why the rural Palestinian

population perceived the early Zionist settlements as little more than a curiosity. The small numbers of settlers made an insignificant impact on the area. Later, with the advent of Zionist agricultural estates, Palestinians saw a chance to work. The early Zionist planters were more than willing to hire Palestinians because it was more economical to hire them at lower wages than Jewish workers who demanded wages more in line with those in Europe.

Nevertheless, there was some resistance to the Zionist presence from the beginning because of the question of land. Palestinian peasants often did not own the land they worked; according to local practice, when a new landlord took over a piece of land it was understood that the peasants would simply work for the new landowners. In contrast with this practice, when Zionist immigrants bought the land they sometimes tried to expel the peasant renters. Peasants objected to being removed from land that they had rented for decades. Tensions also developed between the Palestinian population and the newly arrived Zionists in the cities. Resentment toward them emanated from small merchants and artisans, who were weary of the Zionist competition. As in other places in the Ottoman Empire, the fact that these new arrivals often had the protection of foreign governments—because of the Capitulations—intensified this resentment. In addition, these new arrivals were wealthier than the local Palestinians. The Palestinians also grew suspicious of what they perceived as the Zionists' aloofness. The Zionists set up their own institutions and organizations and seemed uninterested in becoming part of local society.

Upper- and middle-class Palestinians soon joined peasants and lower-middle-class artisans and merchants in their discomfort with the growing Zionist presence. Before the end of the first decade of the twentieth century, local newspapers voiced their opposition to land transfers to the "foreigners." With the greater freedom of expression that came with the 1908 Young Turk coup, criticism of the central government for allowing Zionist immigration became widespread. Some of this anger took the form of Arab nationalist agitation against the local "Turkish" officials for aiding the Zionist purchases of land. Newspaper editors and journalists began to write more frequently about the expropriation of peasant land and the lack of concern shown by Ottoman authorities toward the local Palestinian population. In the second decade of the twentieth century, this criticism spread to the newspapers of Beirut and Damascus. This growing discontent took on an Arab nationalist tone as the CUP government was depicted as ineffectual and unconcerned with the fate of the Arab population of the Ottoman Empire. By the outbreak of World War I, the land question in Palestine had become a central issue in Arab nationalist grievances against the CUP government of the Young Turks. It was one of the factors that led to widespread support of the Arab Revolt during World War I.

Zionists and Palestinians in the British Mandate

When the British took over their mandate in Palestine in 1920, they found brewing tensions between the Palestinians and Zionists. These tensions were compounded by the Balfour Declaration, which created a general feeling of distrust toward British intentions in Palestine and throughout the entire region. These doubts were certainly not assuaged by the fact that the preamble of the League of Nations Charter for the Palestine mandate included the text of the 1917 Balfour Declaration. Thus, this short statement that began its life as a newspaper advertisement became a legal document with the backing of the Great Powers.

The British and Palestinians did not get off to a good start, and things soon got worse. When the British set up their mandate government, they chose Herbert Samuel, a dedicated Zionist, as the first high commissioner of Palestine. Their mandate policies recalled the Ottoman *millet* system, as each religious community was treated as a single unit. Funds from the mandate authority were distributed on a community basis—not according to population, but as a proportion of taxes collected from each community. Members of the Zionist community, or *yishuv,* received a much greater percentage of government funding because they earned higher wages and therefore paid more in taxes. Each community was to have its own executive that would represent the collective interests to the British authorities. The Zionists had already set up an organization, known as the Jewish Agency, as their de facto government, and it represented the yishuv to the British mandate authorities. The Palestinians had no such local administration, so they were at an immediate disadvantage in seeking intervention and help from the British authorities. Two early attempts by the British to set up a representative body of all the communities did not succeed. The Palestinians rejected the first plan because it gave disproportionate representation to the yishuv. They rejected the second because the British authorities forbade the body from discussing the only two issues important to the Palestinians: Jewish immigration and the sale of land.

Violence broke out intermittently even before the official declaration of the mandate. On November 2, 1918, fights flared in Jerusalem on the one-year anniversary of the Balfour Declaration. In 1920, only weeks after Faisal's short-lived Arab kingdom was declared in Damascus, riots erupted after a local religious occasion was transformed into a celebration of Arab nationalism. In 1921, May Day riots began as clashes between Jews in Tel Aviv, but soon the Palestinians were drawn in, and violence spread to Jaffa and Jerusalem. In the ensuing rioting, Palestinians killed dozens of Jews, and British soldiers gunned down a large number of Palestinians. The volatility of the situation led the British to issue their first policy study or "white paper" on the question of Palestine in 1922. British investigators concluded that resentment toward the Zionists and the perceived British favoritism toward the yishuv was the primary cause of the violence. At the same time, the white paper re-endorsed both the British commitment to the Balfour Declaration and the continuation of Jewish immigration to Palestine. The yishuv welcomed the report while the Palestinians repudiated it.

Underlying tensions exploded again in the 1929 Western Wall clashes. These disturbances began when some Zionists tried to change some of the conventions regarding the use of space around the highly contested Western Wall–al-Aqsa Mosque complex, an area that both Muslims and Jews view as sacred. Quickly, this dispute became a clash of Zionism versus Arab nationalism. An orgy of violence erupted in several towns that resulted in 250 dead Palestinians and Zionists. The Jewish community of Hebron suffered tremendously and was not rebuilt until after the Israeli occupation of the West Bank in 1967.

The wanton violence of this event led the British to produce another investigative report about Palestine. This 1930 report essentially absolved the Palestinian leadership of responsibility and put the blame on increasing anger toward Zionist immigration and the ways in which the Zionists were acquiring land. Another report issued less than a year later made the case even stronger. As a consequence, some British officials called for restricting Jewish immigration to Palestine. This drew the ire of the Zionists in London, and Chaim Weizmann pressured the British prime minister into releasing a letter that rejected these reports and dismissed any notion of restricting Jewish immigration.

The Arab Revolt of 1936

The Palestinians were incensed at what they saw as British partiality toward the Zionists. This set the stage for the Great Arab Revolt of 1936 through 1939. The aftermath of this revolt transformed the dynamics of the Palestine question forever. During the 1930s, tensions were high and needed only a spark to set off a conflagration. There were two sparks in 1935. The first was the discovery of a ship carrying arms for the military arm of the Zionist movement, the Haganah. The second was the killing of Shaykh Izz al-Din al-Qasim in 1935. Al-Qasim was born in Syria but came to Palestine after fleeing the French in the wake of the collapse of Faisal's Arab kingdom in 1920. He worked with the urban poor in shantytowns but also traveled widely in the countryside. He was a well-known figure whose populist nationalism drew on religious imagery. Al-Qasim also preached the importance of military organization and helped set up an armed group called the Black Hand. His importance as an organizer, agitator, and militant brought him to the attention of the British, who ambushed and killed him in 1935. Open rebellion was now just a matter of time.

The rebellion that began in April 1936 in Nablus as a series of attacks and counterattacks between Palestinians and Zionists escalated. The British called for a state of emergency, and then the Palestinian leadership headed by Hajj Amin al-Husseini called for a general strike. Strikes soon spread across Palestine. This in turn led to a generalized rebellion against the British and the Zionists. The British tried to force merchants to open their shops, and they brought strikebreakers to mines and large industrial enterprises. As a result, the level of violence rose dramatically. The leadership then called for a boycott of Jewish products and businesses and adopted a policy of noncooperation with British authorities. Fissures within Palestinian society came to the fore as some traditional leaders, fearing increasing economic damage to their interests, began to take a more conciliatory approach toward the British. Meanwhile, militant elements from among the lower social classes pushed for more radical and violent methods of resistance.

After months of clashes, the British convened a commission to study the troubled state of their Palestine mandate. War was brewing in Europe, and the British could ill afford to spare large numbers of troops to keep the peace in a small colony on the Mediterranean. The so-called Peel Commission report succeeded in nothing except fueling the most violent round of fighting. The report concluded that the mandate as constituted was unworkable and a clash between "national" communities inevitable. Then, it went on to suggest partition for the first time. It recommended that 80 percent of Palestine be set aside for the Palestinians and 20 percent for the Zionists. The Palestinian community reacted strongly against the report. Many in middle-class leadership positions and virtually every local leader rejected the proposal because of what they saw as its fundamental unfairness. According to the partition plan, the Zionists would receive the most fertile land of Palestine in areas where Arab land ownership was four times greater than that of the Zionists. Furthermore, Palestine would not be independent; instead, it would be linked politically to Britain's closest ally in the area, King Abdallah of Transjordan. Zionist leaders such as Chaim Weizmann and David Ben-Gurion tentatively accepted the idea of partition as a first step toward acquiring all of Palestine. Nevertheless, because of the vehemence of the Palestinian rejection and the upsurge in fighting after partition proposals were made public, the British were forced to repudiate it.

From the summer of 1937 and until it was finally put down in January 1939, the Great Arab Revolt shifted to the countryside and became more violent. By 1938, there were perhaps

ten thousand insurgents. In this stage of the rebellion, traditional notable figures gave way to a new stratum of grassroots leadership who controlled the local "popular committees" that determined tactics and strategies. The appearance of these local figures marked something of a social revolution within Palestinian society. Indeed, after the emergence of this new leadership, the rebellion took a more radical approach to social questions within Palestinian society itself. The insurgents now not only targeted British and Zionist interests but also attacked privilege among Palestinians, obliging wealthy Palestinians to "donate" to the nationalist cause. In the countryside, they attacked large landowners and threatened moneylenders. In the cities and towns, they warned landlords not to try to collect rents. Meanwhile, middle-class urbanites were compelled to wear the Palestinian scarf, or *kaffiyeh* (also known as the *hatta*), as a sign of solidarity, transforming this traditional peasant garment into a national symbol. As the rebellion dragged on, criminal elements also took advantage of the chaotic security situation, and brigandage became a constant worry. Inevitably, wealthy Palestinians began to flee. Many left for Beirut or Cairo, leaving Palestinian society further depleted economically and politically. The Palestinian economy was devastated by the rebellion and especially by the anarchy and criminality that became so prominent in its last stages.

Through spring and summer 1938, the insurgents controlled the central highlands, as well as many towns and cities. In October 1938, the British moved twenty thousand troops to Palestine just after reaching the Munich agreement with Nazi Germany that cleared the way for the occupation of Czechoslovakia. With war looming in Europe, the British were determined to do anything necessary to calm the situation in Palestine. Accordingly, their counterinsurgency campaign was brutal, with tactics that included the destruction of whole villages, assassinations, and the employment of Zionist "night squads" to perform some of the more unsavory tasks for the British.

With one eye on the situation in Europe and the other on pro-German demonstrations in Arab capitals, the British policymakers became very uneasy. They began to search for ways to extract themselves from the morass of Palestine. Trying to curry favor with the Arab world, the British released yet another policy study in 1939. It called for a limit of seventy-five thousand Jewish immigrants for five years and then a total moratorium. The white paper of 1939 also promised that only with Palestinian acquiescence would the British allow the establishment of a Jewish state. This, in turn, infuriated the Zionists.

The events of 1936 to 1939 had far-reaching consequences. The British no longer wanted to deal with Palestinian leaders such as Hajj Amin al-Husseini, especially after he fled to Germany during World War II. Instead, they tried to negotiate the Palestine question with Egyptians, Iraqis, Saudi Arabians, Transjordanians, and Yemenis. It was another thirty years before the Palestinians would once again gain the ability to speak for themselves and nearly sixty years before Palestinians and Israelis would hold face-to-face negotiations. Perhaps paradoxically, the rebellion was also a catalyst for the emergence of Palestinian nationalism. Large segments of the Palestinian public joined in the nationalist cause for the first time through strikes, demonstrations, boycotts, and combat. At the same time, the rebellion was an economic and social disaster for Palestinian society. Many wealthy and educated Palestinians fled the violence, depriving Palestinian society of an important mediating group. Years of fighting left many exhausted, and whatever military capabilities the community had were lost in the British counterinsurgency campaign. As a result, the Palestinians were at a major disadvantage when the war for Palestine started seven years later.

Palestine Mandate after World War II

On the Zionist side, the diplomatic approach to the British championed by the London-based Chaim Weizmann came under increased pressure after the release of the 1939 white paper. Zionist leaders in Palestine such as David Ben-Gurion favored a more confrontational approach and were deeply concerned about the legacy of the white paper in postwar Palestine. Other more radical elements among the Zionists chose to confront the British militarily right away; these radicals were the so-called revisionists. They wanted to revise the Balfour Declaration's promise of a Jewish national home west of the Jordan River by claiming the area to the east—that is, Transjordan—as well.

During the 1940s, the United States stepped into the question for the first time since the Versailles Conference in 1919. In 1942, American Jewish leaders called for the United States to back their call for a Jewish national home in all of Palestine. Then, immediately after the war, President Harry Truman pressured the British to admit European Jewish refugees to Palestine on humanitarian grounds. The British feared the powder keg of Palestine was on the verge of detonation. They were right. As expected, soon after the end of World War II, the British sought a quick exit from what one minister called the "millstone around our neck" that Palestine had become. By 1947, nearly one hundred thousand British soldiers were in Palestine trying to keep the peace. This was more than in all of India for a place a fraction of the size.

Two irreconcilable positions defined the immediate postwar situation. Zionist representatives refused to participate in any conference or negotiation where partition was not the starting point. Meanwhile, the Palestinians rejected on principle all suggestions about partitioning Palestine into two separate states. Palestinians called for a single secular state and an end to Jewish immigration. Their argument was simple: They made up 70 percent of Palestine's population, and it was manifestly unfair to divide the land for the sake of a minority.

The War for Palestine

In early 1947, with no deal in sight, the British announced that they would withdraw from Palestine in May 1948. On November 29, 1947, the United Nations voted in favor of partition. Immediately after the vote, the war for Palestine began. From December 1947 until May 1948, war between the Zionist Haganah (soon to be renamed the Israel Defense Forces [IDF]) and Palestinian irregulars raged in Palestine. Then, when the British withdrew in May 1948 the Zionists declared Israel an independent state, and units from the Egyptian, Syrian, Iraqi, and Saudi Arabian armies invaded. This fighting went on until mid-1949. Fortunately for the Israelis, these Arab armies not only lacked a unified command structure; they also did not have unified war aims in mind. Indeed, they were as opposed to one another as they were to the state of Israel.

Each of the Arab factions had its own reasons for becoming involved in the war, and very few of them had to do with the Palestinian right to self-determination. Egypt and Saudi Arabia did not trust the Hashemite "axis" of Iraq and Transjordan. They knew King Abdallah wanted to prevent the emergence of an independent Arab state on his western border and was in contact with the Israelis on how best to carve up the area. Transjordan's Arab Legion was the best-trained fighting force in the Arab world, and with the exception of some fighting around Jerusalem, barely participated in the war. By prior agreement with Zionist leaders, King Abdallah's men occupied central Palestine, the area that has come to be called the West Bank. The Egyptians supported the Palestinians only to the extent that

they opposed King Abdallah. The Egyptians also hoped that they could use any territory they captured as a bargaining chip in negotiations about the future of the British army in Egypt. After some early losses, the Israelis pushed these armies back. By midsummer of 1948, with the exception of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, the Israeli forces had taken all of the land set aside for both the Jewish and Palestinian states. The war officially ended with the armistice agreements of 1949.

The Arab-Israeli war resulted in the establishment of the state of Israel and crushing defeat for the Arab armies—even more so for the Palestinians, who have come to refer to the war as the *nakba,* or catastrophe. Approximately 750,000 Palestinians were displaced and expelled through a combination of fear, compulsion, and psychological pressure on the part of the IDF. Out of a prewar population of nearly 900,000, only about 133,000 Palestinians remained within the borders of Israel.

STATES, NATIONS, AND DEBATES ABOUT THE WAY FORWARD

In the region, the processes of state- and nation-building were two of the most notable features of the post–World War I period and, indeed, in the first two-thirds of the twentieth century. The decades after World War I also saw a transition to mass politics with political mobilization and agitation centered around anticolonial nationalism. It began in Syria, Iraq, Palestine, and Egypt and spread to almost every other country in the region to some degree. The period also saw the emergence of new political entities, which required the development of new institutions, practices, and identities.

The late 1930s and 1940s saw the rise of elite-led nationalist parties more often narrowly focused on the interests of their supporters—urban professionals from large, land-owning families, big-business owners, and elements of the old Ottoman elites (the Turkish Republic was an exception in this regard). These groups wanted merely to take the reins of the colonial mandate, or protectorate state, leaving intact the extant social structure. They feared popular democratic rule and its threat of social revolution, and they showed little or no interest in the problems faced by the vast majority of the populations. The myopia of elite nationalists opened the door to movements from the lower social classes.

Communist parties, various Arab nationalisms, ethno-nationalisms, groups inspired by the Italian Fascists and Franco's Spanish Falange movement, and Islamist parties all drew supporters from groups alienated from elite nationalism: the peasantry, the growing labor sector, small-business owners, tradespeople, and other marginalized ethnic and religious groups. They formed the basis of Baʿthist support in Syria, Iraq, and Lebanon; Nasserist Arab socialism throughout the entire Arab world; communist parties in Egypt, Iraq, Syria, Iran, Turkey, and North Africa; the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and its branches elsewhere in the region; and also groups such as Young Egypt and the Phalange Party of Lebanon.

The interwar period also witnessed the beginning of the cultural struggle between the self-described secular modernists and those claiming to stand for the preservation of Eastern and/or Islamic tradition. The opening salvo in this face-off began in Egypt with controversies around two books written by respected intellectuals. Ali Abdel Raziq, an Islamic scholar, published his *Islam and the Foundations of Governance* [*Al-Islam Wa Usul Al-Hukm*] in 1925. He argued that there existed no Islamic textual support for the idea of

the caliphate. His book appeared just after the Turkish Republic was officially abolishing the office of caliph and declaring itself a secular state based on a modified Swiss legal code, causing much consternation throughout the Muslim world. A year later, Taha Hussein, a Cairo University literature professor and well-known author, published *On Pre-Islamic Poetry* [*Fi al-Shi'r al-Jahali*], which some read as expressing doubt about the authenticity of the Qur'an. Both of these authors were accused of attacking Islam, and protracted and inconclusive public debates and legal moves followed. Taha Hussein became a symbol for a form of modernization that his critics described as Western-style secularism. He championed the idea that Egypt's Mediterranean heritage should be the source of inspiration for overcoming the country's "backwardness."

The other pole of these culture wars was personified by Hassan al-Banna and the organization he founded, the Muslim Brotherhood. He and his successors argued that Muslims must look to the leaders of the Islamic past for guidance. Nevertheless, theirs was not a call for a *return* to the past. Indeed, they became strong advocates for adopting Western technology and science and modern education for boys and girls.

In any case, these two "opposing camps" had much in common. They shared the view that Egypt and indeed the entire Muslim world was plagued by backwardness compared with Europe. They both called for political and cultural independence and sought to modernize Egyptian society by adapting appropriate elements of Western civilization while preserving Egyptian identity.

As we have seen, the map of the post–World War I Middle East was populated with semicolonial political entities called mandates. Iraq, Jordan (Transjordan), Syria, Israel (Palestine), and Lebanon all began their lives as mandates. But this map also shows other new states, such as the Republic of Turkey, Pahlavi Iran, and Saudi Arabia, that emerged out of the wreckage of the old Middle East.

Every political entity in the region was new (see Table 1.1). Almost without exception, governmental and legal structures, institutions, and practices had to be created from scratch. All of the states in the region ratified constitutions that delineated the limits of governmental power and defined the rights and responsibilities of the citizenry. In addition, elections were held in most countries. These practices produced at least an illusion of a modern state and mass participation, even if they would become little more than window dressing for authoritarian regimes.

These structures were planned and designed with the aim of inculcating a national consciousness, a sense of "modernity" and national pride. For example, public schools and the military imparted nationalist ideology (and in some cases, such as Iran, taught the national language) to students and conscripts. Museums were dedicated to national history and culture; sporting clubs and competitions were instituted at the local and national level; institutes for the study of national folklore and folk customs were established. The new states became more deeply involved in the daily lives of their populations while self-consciously using this power to sanction modern ways of life. They did this through such things as outlawing traditional dress and compelling the use of one national, and therefore "modern," language while forbidding the use of others; by using the most ordinary forms of surveillance, such as licensing, permits, zoning laws, and identification documents; and by using, of course, an expanded and more efficient security apparatus. Employment in the public sector was another way that these states induced a sense of loyalty from the population. The bureaucracy was not only a source of patronage but also a tie between people's personal

TABLE 1.1 ■ Dates of Independence of Middle Eastern and North African Countries		
Country	**Date of independence**	**Former colonial holding power**
Algeria	1962	France
Bahrain	1971	Great Britain
Egypt	1922	Great Britain
Iran	1925	None; Qajar dynasty
Iraq	1932	Great Britain
Israel	1948	Great Britain
Jordan	1946	Great Britain
Kuwait	1961	Great Britain
Lebanon	1943	France
Libya	1951	Italy, France, Great Britain
Morocco	1956	France, Spain
Oman	1951	British Protectorate
Qatar	1971	Great Britain
Saudi Arabia	1932	None
Sudan	1956	Great Britain de facto (de jure Anglo-Egyptian)
Syria	1946	France
Tunisia	1956	France
Turkey	1923	None; Ottoman Empire
United Arab Emirates	1971	Great Britain
Yemen	1967	Great Britain

Source: Author's data.

interests and the maintenance of the regime. All of this helped generate a sense of national identity and belonging where none had existed before.

The Birth of the Turkish Republic

The birth of the modern Republic of Turkey upon the ruins of the Ottoman Empire was not without severe labor pains. In the peace negotiations after World War I, the victors demanded their recompense in the form of Ottoman territory. The sultan reluctantly signed the Treaty of Sèvres in 1920, ceding huge swaths of territory to Britain, Italy, Greece, and France and tacitly agreeing to the establishment of Kurdish and Armenian states on former Ottoman territory.

The sultan also agreed to relinquish control of the waterways between the Black Sea and the Mediterranean. Only a small Turkish rump state would remain from the lands of the once-vast Ottoman Empire. Nationalist sentiment was enflamed throughout Turkey.

For nearly two years prior to Sèvres, however, nationalist leaders were planning a new direction for postwar Turkey. From their base in Ankara, the Turkish nationalists quickly rejected the Sèvres treaty and established a parliament, the Grand National Assembly. The nationalist government denied that the sultan possessed the authority to sign the treaty because he no longer represented the Turkish people. The Grand National Assembly soon voted to abolish the office of the sultan, whose collaboration with the Entente powers deprived him of whatever semblance of legitimacy he might have once had. In the subsequent Turkish war of independence, fighting erupted between nationalist forces and British, Armenian, French, and especially Greek armies in the east, southwest, and south of the country.

Mustafa Kemal, the hero of the Gallipoli campaign, was one of the major figures behind the nationalist movement. He organized the nationalist army and directed the insurgency against the Entente forces. Fighting raged off and on until 1922 when the Entente powers no longer had the stomach to continue. They admitted defeat and agreed to renegotiate yet again the postwar settlement.

The Treaty of Lausanne of July 1923 recognized the legitimacy of the nationalist government and delineated the borders of the new Turkish state. The Turkish Republic was declared in October 1923. After more than 600 years, the Ottoman Empire had ceased to exist. International recognition of the Turkish Republic was the beginning of a new era in modern Turkish history. It signaled another stage in the top-down, state-led transformation process that began with the Ottoman Tanzimat eighty years earlier. In this stage, the nationalist government transformed the former heartland of the Ottoman Empire into a secular republic. Like the transformations of the nineteenth century, this process was neither seamless nor without violence.

The early history of the Turkish Republic is almost inseparable from its founder, Mustafa Kemal. The provisional government in Ankara chose him as its president during the war for independence in 1920. During the course of the next few decades, he became the most important Turkish political figure of the twentieth century. Kemal created a model of secular populist nationalism that guided Turkey in the transition from "Ottomanism" to "Turkishness." His program, which became known as Kemalism, was a conscious effort to break with the Ottoman past and replace it with a modern, nationalist, and secular consciousness. He moved the capital from the old imperial center of Istanbul to the central Anatolian city of Ankara. Kemal also acted to impose a strict separation of religion and state and to remove all vestiges of Ottoman efforts to harness religious legitimacy for the regime. Through the use of state edict, Kemal's government tried to remove religion from the public sphere. The office of caliphate was abolished in 1924, and a modified Swiss legal code replaced Islamic law in 1926. The new state replaced the Muslim calendar with the Gregorian calendar and adopted Sunday as the official weekly holiday instead of Friday, as was traditional in Muslim societies.

Kemalism projected a populist vision of Turkish nationalism. Kemal presented himself as a man of the people, and the new Turkish Republic declared universal suffrage for all adult citizens, male and female. The state was interested in more than promoting populist republicanism, however; it sought to reproduce its vision of modernity in every citizen. The Kemalist state outlawed clothing that hinted at regional, ethnic, or religious identity. Women

were forbidden from wearing the Muslim veil on state property. In 1928, the Turkish language was "purified" and modernized. Arabic words were removed from the language, and the Arabic script was replaced with a Latin alphabet. In 1934, citizens were obliged to use Turkish surnames, eschewing the traditional practice of children simply taking their fathers' first names as second names and the names of their paternal grandfathers as third names. No longer were people in Turkey going to be known as Mehmet son of Ahmet son of Murad. It was at this time that by an act of parliament Mustafa Kemal became Mustafa Kemal *Atatürk*, or Father of the Turks. Banning traditional customs does not stamp out identity, however, and this move pointed to the deep suspicion that came to mark Republican Turkey's view of its minorities, particularly its Kurdish population.

A centerpiece of Kemalist nationalism was its emphasis on Turkishness. This left little or no room for minorities. Among strident nationalists, even the act of acknowledging the presence of minorities seemed to call into question the validity of the idea of the Turkish nation. Consequently, the history of non-Turkish peoples in the new republic has not been a happy one. While not nearly as bad as their previous experience under the Ottomans, Armenians continued to face discrimination well into the republican period as well. The ethnically distinct Kurdish population who live in the southeast of the country faced the greatest difficulties in the new era. Kurds speak an Indo-European language from the Iranian branch that is far more similar to Farsi than it is to Turkish. At one point after World War I, there was some momentum to create a Kurdish mandate and eventually a state, but resistance from the Great Powers who would have had to cede parts of their newly won territories scuttled those plans. They have maintained strong ties to their traditional homeland now split between four states: Turkey, Syria, Iraq, and Iran.

To say that there have been problems between the Republic of Turkey and its Kurdish population is an understatement. For decades, Turkey relentlessly suppressed Kurdish language and culture. The legislation outlawing traditional dress in Turkey was aimed primarily at the Kurds, and until recently, it was illegal to teach or even speak Kurdish in Turkey. Turkey would not even admit that Kurds existed; for decades, state media routinely referred to them as "mountain Turks."

In the 1980s, the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) launched an insurgency against the Turkish state, seeking greater cultural and political rights, including an autonomous Kurdistan region in Turkey. The Turkish military responded with a ferocious counterinsurgency campaign that led to the deaths of nearly forty thousand people, most of them Turkish Kurdish civilians, and the displacement of more than three million Kurds from southeastern Turkey.

Beginning in 2004, the Turkish government, bowing to long-standing demands, permitted Kurdish-language radio and television programs. Political rights, however, continued to be circumscribed by a constitution that outlaws ethnically based political parties. There was a brief glimmer of hope on the Kurdish question around 2013 when Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's government began talks with Kurdish militants. Unfortunately, the subsequent spillover of the Syrian Civil War put an end to this process.

Reza Khan and the Pahlavi Regime

Post–World War I Iranian history has some parallels with Turkey's history. Iran suffered foreign intervention and was also invaded and partially occupied. After the war, the British occupied the southern half of the country, while a Soviet-led army moved toward Tehran

from the north. With Persia's leadership either paralyzed or openly collaborating with the occupying forces, an ambitious army officer attacked the old regime and eventually set the country on a path toward fundamental change.

During the first two decades of the twentieth century, the British sought access to Persian oil while the British-Russian understanding regarding their respective spheres of influence continued undisturbed. After World War I, the British feared that the Soviet Union would try to install a friendly government in Persia. Consequently, the British became heavily involved in supporting Persian resistance against the Soviet-backed invasion in 1920 and 1921. They chose an officer of the Persian Cossacks named Reza Khan to be the Iranian face of their efforts. After Reza Khan and his forces succeeded in pushing back the Soviet-sponsored forces, he set his sights on a much higher goal. In 1925, he deposed the last of the Qajar Shahs and declared himself Shah of the new "Pahlavi" dynasty. Reza Shah was independent minded, and one of his first acts was to refuse the terms of the much-despised Anglo-Persian Agreement of 1919 that would have made the whole of Persia a de facto British protectorate.

Over the next fifteen years, through a combination of brute force, clientelism, and political savvy, Reza Shah built the rudiments of a centralized, modern state. There are some similarities between Reza Shah's modernizing programs and those of Mustafa Kemal in Turkey. As was the case in Turkey, much of the shah's initial base of support was in the military. Reza Shah secured the loyalty of the military through generous financial inducements to the officer corps. Army officers received excellent benefits and were provided with opportunities for personal enrichment in return for their service. The Conscription Law of 1925 provided new recruits for the security forces, whose size was increased from around 20,000 in 1925 to 127,000 fifteen years later. The expanded army and the paramilitary forces in turn played a pivotal role in the extension of state authority throughout the entire country for the first time in its long history. At the same time, the shah established a number of new ministries while thoroughly modernizing those that his government had inherited. He built a bureaucracy of some ninety thousand civil servants by 1941. Improved security and efficient administration enabled the central government to collect taxes and customs duties throughout the country. The collection of tax arrears and customs duties along with revenue from oil sales provided much of the revenue necessary for the shah's reforms.

Reza Shah undertook wide-reaching legal and social reforms that, as in Kemalist Turkey, were imposed by government decree. These reforms aimed at modernizing the country and building a sense of Iranian nationalism. Legal reform brought a new secular judiciary to Iran. The state adopted French law in 1928 and all but eliminated the public role of the *ulema* and religious institutions. The shah decreed that all Iranians should take family names, and he chose Pahlavi for himself. Pahlavi was the name of an ancient form of the Persian language and evoked its classical literary and imperial traditions. Therefore, it should come as no surprise that the shah's version of linguistic reform did not consist of imposing a Latin script, as had been done in Turkey, but rather involved "purifying" the Persian language by removing all so-called foreign words.

Reza Shah, like Atatürk before him, focused much attention on the gender question and on dress in an effort to build a sense of national unity. In 1936, Iran banned the wearing of the veil, and Iranians were encouraged to appear at all public functions with their unveiled wives in tow. Gender separation in cafés and cinemas was outlawed. Reza Shah, however, was no advocate of women's equality. Even as he promoted a form of state feminism in the

battle against "backwardness," he offered little in the way of political or social rights to women. Women never gained suffrage, divorce was almost impossible for them to obtain, and polygamy continued to be permitted even after the adoption of the French civil code. In the shah's eyes, state diktats on gender issues, dress, and personal grooming were not an infringement of personal rights but a means to produce a modern Iranian people. Therefore, men too were subject to the brief of the shah's intrusive vision. The state compelled men to wear Western-style clothes and hats. Any headgear that hinted at one's occupational identity was outlawed, as were all tribal or traditional clothes. Reza Shah's "Pahlavi cap" eventually gave way to a fedora-type hat that men were encouraged to wear. In addition, men were aggressively discouraged from growing beards, and only neatly trimmed moustaches were deemed acceptable.

Despite their many similarities, the nationalist modernizing projects of interwar Turkey and Iran had significant differences. In contrast with Atatürk, who sought to distance his new republic from its Ottoman past, the shah drew on the cultural heritage of pre-Islamic Iran in conjuring his vision of modernity. Thus, he changed the name of the country from Persia to Iran. Likewise, he replaced the Muslim lunar calendar with an Iranian calendar that begins on March 21. The name the shah chose for his dynasty, Pahlavi, was also meant to recall pre-Islamic times, as it was the name of an ancient Persian language. In addition, Reza Shah eschewed the populism of Atatürk. He self-consciously wrapped himself in regal spectacle meant to evoke the splendor of ancient Iranian kings. In any case, any populist airs he might have put on would have been contradicted by both the substantial wealth he amassed and his lavish and ostentatious lifestyle.

In another departure from the Turkish case, Reza Shah made no effort to institute a republican regime. In Pahlavi Iran, legislative elections were insignificant events because the parliament, or *majles,* exercised little real power. Almost from the beginning, Reza Shah's Iran began to take on characteristics of an authoritarian state. The shah paid little heed to the constitution, imposed strict media censorship, and abolished political parties and trade unions at will. Political opponents faced arrest and sometimes execution. Nevertheless, although he did not hesitate to use coercion to achieve his aims, the shah was also skillful in the use of patronage to build support. He appointed political cronies to important positions in the state bureaucracy or within his myriad personal enterprises.

While Reza Shah's regime adopted policies aimed at linguistic "Persianization," in contrast to Turkey, it did not take a suspicious or hostile approach to its "minority" populations. Iran's population was and remains ethnically and linguistically very diverse. By one count, there are more than seventy languages spoken in Iran. The vast majority of these are usually classified as either Iranian (such as Farsi and Kurdish) or Turkic (such as Azeri and Turkmen), but there are also Arabic, Armenian, and Assyrian speakers in Iran. While Shi'i Muslims form the largest religious group, there are large numbers of Sunni Muslims as well as Armenian and Assyrian Christians and Jews.

Despite his efforts at state- and nation-building, the main economic jewel in the country—the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (AIOC)—remained largely outside his control. Frustrated with the situation, the shah tried to wrest increased rents from the AIOC. This did not please the British, who were already becoming disenchanted with their man in Tehran. Then, the shah committed the fatal mistake of making friendly overtures to the Germans during World War II. The British and Soviets deposed him and placed his twenty-one-year-old son, Mohammad Reza, on the throne in 1941.

The beginning of young Mohammad Reza Shah's rule was marked by the return of the landed elites to power through their control of the majles. The late 1940s and early 1950s was a period of rising discontent and nationalist agitation. The Soviets, now occupying the north and hoping to expand the territory they controlled, encouraged Kurdish nationalists to establish their own short-lived Republic of Mahabad in 1945. In 1951, even as the inexperienced young shah was seeking some way to step out from behind the domination of the majles, he was obliged to accept a popular nationalist prime minister, Mohammad Mossadeq. This set in motion a series of events that some believe was a decisive factor in the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

In 1951, Mossadeq nationalized (in other words, put under Iranian government control) the AIOC (later called British Petroleum), enraging Britain. As a consequence, Britain, the United States, and the shah plotted to remove the Mossadeq government by force. In late August 1953, the US Central Intelligence Agency, with the help of a group of Iranian military officers, staged a coup against the popularly elected Iranian prime minister. The shah was returned to power, and then he made his move against the majles and against all his political opponents. With the help of the American FBI and the Israeli Mossad, he built his notorious state security organization, SAVAK, and began to construct the absolutist state that would become the hallmark of his rule by the 1970s. The legacy of British and US involvement in Iranian domestic affairs and the taint that this put on Mohammad Shah was a major part of anti-shah agitation in the run-up to the Islamic Revolution of 1979.

In 1961, Mohammad Shah launched what he called the White Revolution, which he hoped would increase support for his regime and prevent a "Red Revolution" (i.e., communist takeover). The White Revolution was in essence a top-down reform initiative consisting of such measures as land reform and increased spending on public health and education. The reforms failed to satisfy expectations of the urban working and middle classes, did little to alleviate rural poverty, and alienated some of the Shah's supporters among rural landowners. All in all, the reforms succeeded in little more than generating resentment toward the Shah, and with an increasing monopoly of state power, all avenues for expressing discontent were increasingly circumscribed. Indeed, by 1975 Mohammad Reza Shah had created a one-party state (his Resurgence Party was the only legal party), based largely on a cult of personality.

Consolidation of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

The modern state of Saudi Arabia emerged out of a long-running series of tribal wars in the Arabian Peninsula. Beginning in the first years of the twentieth century, the historically powerful Al Saud family of the town of Riyadh in the Nejd, or central highlands, of what is now Saudi Arabia sought to reestablish its dominance throughout the peninsula. The Saudis and their main fighting force, the Ikhwan (a group inspired by the idea of purifying the Arabian Peninsula through imposing their austere understanding of Islam), vanquished their neighboring rivals one by one. By 1926, ibn Saud, the sultan of the Nejd, and his Ikhwan had brought all his rivals to heel. The last of these was the British-supported Hashemite family of Hussein ibn Ali in the western part of the Arabian Peninsula, or the Hejaz. The British had promised the Hashemites a kingdom in Arabia in return for their service during World War I. When the British saw the writing on the wall, however, they deftly transferred their support from their protégés to the Al Saud clan. In 1932, after

uniting the entire peninsula, Abdul al-Aziz ibn Saud proclaimed the kingdom of Saudi Arabia with himself as king, thus becoming monarch of the only country in the world named after a family.

Oil was discovered in the kingdom during the mid-1930s, but it was only after World War II that commercial exploitation of oil began in earnest. US oil companies assisted by the US government displaced the British as the main suitors for the right to access this oil wealth. In 1933, ibn Saud granted the first oil concession to the Arabian American Oil Company (Aramco). Aramco was a consortium, or joint venture, made up of the companies that later became Shell, Exxon, Mobil, Chevron, Gulf, Texaco, and British Petroleum.

Aramco developed a close relationship with Saudi rulers by transferring vast sums of money to them and undertaking the immense task of building a state where none had existed previously. Until the mid-1940s, Saudi Arabia was basically a confederation of tribes and small towns on the coast or built around oases. Beginning in the late 1940s, Aramco and major US defense contractors, such as the Bechtel Brothers, undertook a variety of development activities throughout the new country. Because of the sheer volume of projects in which they were involved, ranging from road and airport building to launching a telephone network to establishing and operating air transport, one scholar referred to Aramco as the de facto "Ministry of Public Works."[22] In short, they created the entire transportation and extraction infrastructure necessary for oil exportation. Meanwhile, Abdul al-Aziz ibn Saud used the Ikhwan to attack enemies of the state who were seeking a more equitable relationship with Aramco or those calling for more democratic politics. The Saudis also set the Ikhwan against "anti-Islamic" workers' movements in the mid-1950s. US oil executives were fond of describing the Aramco-Saudi relationship as a "third way." They boasted that the Aramco model was neither socialist radicalism nor an example of colonial exploitation. For them, it was a capitalist partnership in which both sides benefited.

Post–1948 Egypt and the Rise of Nasserism

The repercussions of the Arab defeat in the war for Palestine in 1948 reverberated throughout the Arab world. In Egypt, many ordinary citizens saw the monarchy as complicit in the defeat; moreover, Egyptians regarded the country's so-called liberal era of the previous two decades as an abject failure. Neither the charade of parliamentary elections nor the power struggles among the tiny ruling elite brought relief from poverty for most Egyptians. The country's rulers seemed oblivious to growing landlessness among peasants as well as the lack of education and opportunity available to Egyptians in general.

Even more ominous for the king was that the military was disenchanted with what it considered a lack of support for the war effort in Palestine. In addition, the continuing presence of British troops in the Suez Canal Zone stoked nationalist resentment. Egyptian guerrillas began to clash with British forces in 1951, and this led to the January 1952 Black Sunday fire in Cairo that targeted foreign-owned businesses, hotels, nightclubs, and bars. The general chaos of this period set the stage for the July 1952 coup that toppled the Egyptian monarchy.

The old regime was swept away by the so-called Free Officers who had grown impatient with the king's inability to negotiate a British withdrawal (the 1952 coup began a period of military rule that continues to this day with the exception of Mohamad Morsi's popularly elected government in 2012–2013). Soon after deposing and exiling the king, the Free Officers set up

the Revolutionary Command Council (RCC) as the main governing institution in the country. Lieutenant Colonel Gamal Abdel Nasser soon emerged as the major force in the new regime.

Nasser, the new Egyptian ruler, implemented a series of reforms that remade Egyptian society. These domestic reforms and the foreign policy of the new regime came to be known as Nasserism. Nasserism was populist and vaguely socialist. Nasser introduced land reform that restricted the amount of land a single family could hold, and the new government nationalized (or took control of) banking, insurance, large manufacturing, and other industries. The Nasserist state built a mass education system and opened universities to large numbers of Egyptians for the first time. A greatly expanded public sector guaranteed employment for university graduates, and the state offered vastly improved health services to many millions. One of the achievements of Nasserism was the creation of a wide and viable middle class for the first time in Egyptian history. Nasser adopted a foreign policy of aggressive anti-imperialism and nonalignment, which meant that he endeavored to steer a course between the Eastern and Western blocs of the Cold War. Regionally, Nasser expressed support for the Palestinian cause and espoused a commitment to Arab nationalism. Arab nationalist fervor was such that Egypt and Syria briefly merged as the United Arab Republic from 1958 until 1961.

Gamal Abdel Nasser was more than just the leader of a coup that toppled a moribund and corrupt monarchy in Egypt. This charismatic young leader projected a great sense of optimism about the future. He proffered an ideology that inspired some in the Arab world for decades. Many in Egypt, the Arab world, and even throughout much of the postcolonial world saw in Nasserism the dawning of a new age when the have-nots of the world would finally receive their due. His place in history was confirmed by the Suez Crisis (known in Egypt as the Tripartite Aggression) of 1956.

In July 1956, Nasser nationalized the Suez Canal that had been British-controlled since 1875. This move was met with wild enthusiasm and national pride throughout Egypt. Even though Nasser pledged to compensate the canal's foreign stockholders, the British government was incensed. Almost immediately, the British began to build an alliance to attack Egypt. France, angry about Nasser's support for the Algerian revolution, and Israel, concerned about the threat of such a charismatic leader on its southern border, both signed on. In late October 1956, the three allies attacked Egypt. The Egyptian military was defeated rather quickly, and the Egyptian cities of Port Said and Port Fouad were heavily damaged.

The United States reacted with anger, however, and in cooperation with the Soviet Union compelled the British, French, and Israelis to withdraw. After 1956, the United States replaced Great Britain as the dominant Western power in the region. In addition, the Israeli Defense Forces' (IDF) performance during the Suez crisis erased any doubt about Israel's military supremacy among regional powers. Moreover, through an agreement reached with the French before the hostilities commenced, the Israelis procured a nuclear reactor that they subsequently used to produce material for their substantial (although officially unacknowledged) stockpile of nuclear weapons.[23] In the immediate wake of the crisis, however, Egypt held on to the canal, and Nasser was hailed throughout the Arab world as a champion against the old imperial powers.

Syria and Jordan: Turmoil and Change after 1948

Syria and Transjordan became independent states in 1946. Two years later, both were drawn into the Arab-Israeli war for Palestine, and both experienced a period of turmoil following the events of 1948.

In Syria, there was little consensus within the political class that inherited the mandate state from the French. As in Egypt, the military did not forgive the civilian leaders of the country for what they perceived as their lack of commitment to the war for Palestine. In 1949 alone, there were three military coups. This was the beginning of more than twenty years of political instability, with nearly twenty different governments and the drafting of multiple constitutions. In 1958, the military, fearing a full-fledged communist takeover would be the alternative, embraced unification with Egypt. The United Arab Republic, as the unified state was called, fell apart three years later following another military coup in Syria. The Syrians and Egyptians spent most of the 1960s in an Arab cold war, with each trying to establish its credentials as the true champion of Arab nationalism. At the same time, stability in Syria remained elusive, with Syria experiencing successive coups, until the young air force commander and Ba'thist Hafiz al-Asad established rule in 1970.[24]

The war for Palestine also had important ramifications for the former British mandate of Transjordan. In return for his unwavering loyalty, the British gave Transjordan's King Abdallah a yearly stipend, and a British army officer even led his armed forces until 1956. During the war in 1948, King Abdallah's Arab Legion, the best trained and equipped of the Arab armies, fought only briefly against the Israelis. Jordan's main goals in the war consisted of preventing the establishment of an independent Palestinian state and seizing control of central Palestine. Zionist leaders ceded the area to Abdallah in exchange for his not getting involved in the fighting elsewhere. In 1949, Abdallah annexed central Palestine and discouraged the use of the word *Palestine* in his kingdom. As a consequence, central Palestine eventually became known as the West Bank (of the Jordan River). He also changed the name of Transjordan to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. In 1951, a Palestinian, unhappy with the king's dealings with Zionist leaders, assassinated him in Jerusalem.

Abdallah's son Talal ascended to the throne but was deposed shortly afterward in favor of his son Hussein bin Talal. After the 1956 Suez crisis, the Hashemite Kingdoms of Jordan and Iraq came together in a confederation called the Arab Federation of Iraq and Jordan, hoping to offset the growing power of Egypt's Gamal Abdel Nasser and his own newly declared United Arab Republic with Syria. Their wariness of the Egyptian leader and his influence in the region was well founded, as the Iraqi Hashemite monarchy was overthrown in a violent coup in July of 1958 by army officers who modeled themselves on Nasser's Free Officers. The coup leader, Colonel Abdel Karim Qasim, initially allied himself with Nasser's Arab nationalism. As an ally (and cousin) of the deposed king, Jordan's King Hussein found himself in a precarious position, and the British brought troops to the country under US air cover to protect his regime. Hussein, who ruled until 1999, continued to receive British (and later US) subventions and, like his grandfather Abdallah, remained unpopular with many Jordanian Palestinians, who eventually comprised about half of the country's population. The Qasim government soon took a more independent line and adopted a hybrid Iraqi Arab nationalist position. These ideological commitments, combined with a low tolerance for opposition, led the postrevolutionary Iraqi state into almost constant strife with Kurdish nationalists. After failing to convince Qasim's revolutionary government to fulfil its commitment to Kurdish regional autonomy, Mustafa Barzani led his militia, the Peshmerga, in rebellion against the Baghdad government. Fighting raged from 1961 to 1970, until the Ba'thist government agreed to another autonomy plan. When the Ba'thists proved to be as insincere as Qasim's government had been about autonomy, a second rebellion broke out in 1974. The Kurds rebelled again in the 1980s and in the 1990s. Only in the aftermath of the

US-led invasion of Iraq in 2003 did Iraqi Kurdistan finally gain officially recognized status in the new federal system. However, since 2017 after a series of missteps by the Kurdish Regional Government (KRG), including the loss of its main oil fields to the central government, the future of an autonomous Iraqi Kurdistan became uncertain.

North Africa after 1948 and toward Independence

North Africa did not play a direct role in the events of 1948; however, its history during the 1950s and 1960s has much in common with the history of the Arab states that did, with one major exception: The North African countries achieved their independence later than the countries in the Arab East. Nevertheless, in postindependence Algeria and Tunisia and later in Libya, new military-backed leaders implemented sweeping social and economic reforms. Their foreign policy tended toward Arab nationalism, although Tunisia's first president, Habib Bourguiba, remained a thorn in Nasser's side during the 1960s. Libya and, to a lesser extent, independent Algeria used their oil to support a variety of nationalist and leftist movements in the Arab world.

Libya was granted independence in 1949 and ruled by King Idris I (Sayyid Muhammad Idris) until 1969. The country remained extremely poor and underdeveloped, even after oil was discovered in the late 1950s. In 1969, a military coup modeled on that of Egypt toppled the monarchy. The coup planners, a group of army officers who emulated Egypt's Free Officers, named Colonel Muammar al-Qadhafi as chairman. He remained the head of state until 2011, when he was deposed and killed in an uprising supported by NATO airpower. Some talked at first about unification with Egypt, but that soon faded. Instead, Qadhafi used Libya's oil wealth to build a modern state and to fund radical Arab nationalist and leftist movements throughout the Arab world. He became a major source of financial support for the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) in the early 1970s. Like the rest of the military-run Arab states, Qadhafi's government became more repressive with time.

In Algeria, the National Liberation Front (FLN) launched a war of independence against France in 1954. The French refused to grant what they considered an integral part of France the right to secede. The ensuing Algerian war of independence was a protracted and bloody affair, with more than five hundred thousand Algerian deaths and tens of thousands of French soldiers and civilians killed. In 1962, France reluctantly granted Algeria independence. In the postindependence era, FLN-led Algeria started down a road of socialist-style central planning. The state became increasingly authoritarian, and its foreign policy remained anti-imperialist and openly supportive of the Palestinian cause.

Tunisia gained its independence from France in 1956 and was declared a republic in 1957. Despite its democratic façade, the new government never countenanced political opposition or even debate. From 1957 to 2011, there were only two presidents, and elections meant little or nothing. Tunisia's first president, Habib Bourguiba, initiated intensive reform and modernization programs that have been compared with those of Mustafa Kemal in Turkey for their emphasis on secularism and women's emancipation. Like Egypt, Tunisia experimented with quasi-socialist economic planning in the 1960s, and, as Egypt, abandoned socialism in the 1970s. Throughout the 1960s, Bourguiba and Nasser were rivals for the sympathies of the Arab public. After Egypt signed a peace treaty with Israel in 1979, the League of Arab States moved its headquarters from Cairo to Tunis. Zine al-Abidine Ben Ali replaced Bourguiba in a bloodless coup in 1987. Ben Ali was the first leader toppled in the so-called Arab Spring in

2011 and 2012. Since then, despite ongoing economic difficulties, Tunisia has become one of the most democratic countries in the Middle East and North Africa.

The French (and the Spanish in the northern Rif region) ruled over Morocco from 1912 to 1956. The French governed their protectorate indirectly through the Alaouite sultans and favored tribal and Sufi figures. As in other French colonies, French farmers and factory and mine owners enjoyed tax policies and government support that created great advantages for them. This, combined with France's obdurate refusal to grant even the most basic concessions, gave impetus to a burgeoning anticolonial nationalism in the interwar period. By the early 1950s, Moroccan nationalist leaders persuaded Sultan Muhammad V to adopt their cause. The French, still determined to hold on to their North African possession, exiled the increasingly defiant Muhammad V for rejecting a dual sovereignty plan in 1953. However, within two years the French had to yield, as popular pressure nearly boiled over into open revolt. In 1956, the French recognized Moroccan independence, and shortly thereafter, Muhammad V was proclaimed king.

Despite Morocco's formal constitutional structure, from 1961 to 1999 King Hassan II, buttressed by patronage and the policing and surveillance power of the state, became an absolute monarch. The 1960s witnessed political violence and repression, with regime opponents jailed, exiled, and disappeared. In the 1980s, International Monetary Fund–mandated privatization policies increased income disparity, deepening poverty for many on the margins. Predictably, the 1980s and 1990s were decades of growing political opposition, protest, and government repression. In 1999, there were high hopes that Morocco's new king, Muhammad VI, would undertake fundamental reforms. With the exception of some minor post–Arab Spring initiatives, after nearly two decades on the throne these hopes have yet to be realized.

AL-NAKSA AND ITS RAMIFICATIONS

The June 1967 War and the End of Nasserism

The June 1967 War caused a major upheaval in the region, the reverberations of which still echo. Throughout the 1960s, tensions increased between Israel and its Arab neighbors. The Israeli policy of massive retaliation for attacks by Palestinian guerrillas or anything it considered a breach of its borders created instability in the region, especially in Jordan and later Lebanon. Meanwhile, Syria and Israel engaged in periodic artillery duels over demilitarized areas between the two states.

The Suez crisis of 1956 had clearly demonstrated that the Arab armies were no match for Israel's military might. Nevertheless, Nasser and the other Arab leaders continued to confront Israel in defense of the Palestinians as an indirect way to pressure rivals among other Arab states and to curry favor with their own populations, who were increasingly disenchanted with political repression and the material progress that the military regimes had failed to provide. Because support for the Palestinian cause was so strong among the general Arab populations, the regimes cynically channeled domestic political criticism toward the Palestine issue. Likewise, the Arab regimes regularly accused one another of not showing real commitment to the Palestinians.

The June 1967 War, or the *naksa* (the Setback) as it is known in the Arab world, resulted from a fundamental misreading of the military-political situation by the Arab states in general and Gamal Abdel Nasser in particular. Nasser hoped that through a game of

brinkmanship he could force the United States to rein in Israeli attacks on Jordan and Syria. He assumed that the United States and the Soviet Union would not permit a war in the Middle East. There is also some evidence that he thought Israel wanted to avoid a war, at least for the moment. He was badly mistaken on both counts. In the spring of 1967 at a particularly tense moment, Nasser asked for the removal of UN observers between Egyptian and Israeli forces in the Sinai and announced a blockade of the Israeli port on the Red Sea. He did not expect Israel to attack, and in any case, he was confident that the superpowers would prevent a regional explosion. In this way, he would be seen as standing up to the main regional power—Israel—without any real risk. His gambit failed disastrously. The Israelis struck on June 5, 1967. Within hours, the Israeli surprise attack destroyed the Egyptian, Syrian, and Jordanian air forces on the ground. Without air cover, the Arab armies were defenseless, and by June 11, Israeli infantry units had occupied the whole of the Sinai Peninsula, the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, and the Golan Heights.

In just six days, Israeli-controlled territory quadrupled in size, and Israel occupied territory with one million Palestinian residents. The Arab world was devastated. Nasser submitted his resignation immediately but withdrew his resignation after huge, government-backed demonstrations expressed support for him. In the wake of the defeat, Nasser was forced to reconcile with King Hussein of Jordan, seek financial support from his Saudi rivals, and accept large quantities of Soviet armaments that essentially put him in the Soviet camp in the Cold War. The Israeli victory in 1967 marked the twilight of Nasser's dominance over the political scene in the Arab world. Soon, more radical Arab nationalist, leftist, and Islamist political groups vied for the hearts and minds of the Arab public.

Although not tied directly to the events of 1967, in Iraq Ahmed Hasan al-Bakr, with his deputy Saddam Hussein, led the Ba'th party to power in a bloodless coup in 1968. In consolidating their position, the Ba'thists systematically eliminated all their internal opponents and negotiated an end to the insurgency in the Kurdish north. In 1979, Saddam Hussein forced an aged and ailing al-Bakr into retirement, and within a year, Hussein's Iraq launched a disastrous war with the Islamic Republic of Iran that lasted nearly eight years and resulted in more than a million deaths.

Radical Palestinian Nationalism

For Palestinians, 1967 represented a turning point in their quest to achieve their own state. The military defeat of Egypt, Syria, and Jordan set the stage for a new phase of direct Palestinian participation in the question of Palestine. A younger, more radical leadership inspired by anticolonial struggles in Algeria and Vietnam called on Palestinians, for the first time since 1948, to take up the fight for a homeland themselves. This new revolutionary spirit resonated both inside and outside of the Middle East, and it pushed the entire political orientation in the region to the Left. The June 1967 War had led radicals to conclude that the Arab states possessed neither the capability nor the desire to win them a homeland and that Israel would respond only to the language of force. No Israeli government would come to the negotiating table willingly. They recognized Israel as invincible militarily, but reasoned that Palestinian resistance could inflict enough pain to compel Israel to bargain.

The Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) became the vehicle through which Palestinians came to articulate their own collective aspirations. This was not always the case. Nasser was instrumental in the formation of the PLO in 1964, and he chose as the organization's

first leader the lawyer Ahmad al-Shuqayri, who had previously worked for Aramco and the Saudi government. The PLO was an umbrella group made up of a number of different Palestinian resistance movements. Nasser hoped to control Palestinian resistance through the PLO. He sought to avoid any Palestinian provocations that might lead to direct confrontation with Israel. The defeat of 1967 changed all of this. The guerrilla leader, Yasir Arafat of the Fatah (Palestine Liberation Movement) faction, parlayed Palestinian frustration into his election as chairman of the PLO in 1969. The PLO, based in the Jordanian capital Amman, began to attack Israel in the West Bank and then within Israel itself. This prompted conflict between the Palestinians and Jordanian regime, ultimately culminating in Black September (see Box 1.1).

However, the fractious nature of Palestinian politics and the basic Palestinian condition of being dispersed across a region divided by all-but-impassable borders made unity a hard-to-achieve ideal. In addition, a number of Arab states—Libya, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait—funded individual factions of the Palestinians, some within the PLO and some outside of the organization. This funding came with strings attached, and this too had centrifugal consequences for Palestinian unity. The Palestinian question was a way for Middle Eastern regimes to fight proxy wars. Thus, the Iraqis might fund a group opposed to factions supported by Syria; Syria and Iraq both might support radical Palestinian factions opposed to the Jordanian regime; while Kuwait and Saudi Arabia supported the PLO with the understanding that the group would do nothing to harm the Jordanian monarchy.

BOX 1.1
BLACK SEPTEMBER

In the wake of the June 1967 War, Palestinian guerrilla groups began to fight in earnest against Israel. Egypt, Syria, and the rest of the Arab states feared military confrontation with Israel. As 1967 clearly demonstrated, their fears were well founded. They sought to curb Palestinians' attacks on Israel and instead to exploit the Palestine question in their domestic and regional political manoeuvring.

In the late 1960s, King Hussein became increasingly wary of the radical regimes on his Iraqi and Syrian borders. Meanwhile, these regimes supported Palestinian groups united in little else than their disdain for the Hashemite monarch, whom they saw as a stooge for the imperialist West and its local ally, Israel. By 1970, Hussein became worried about the stability of his regime in the wake of Palestinian raids on Israel and the massive Israeli reprisals they inevitably provoked. While Arafat was well aware that his funding from the Gulf states was contingent upon avoiding conflict with King Hussein, radical Palestinian factions supported by

Syria and Iraq sought to topple the Hashemite monarchy. The situation in Jordan came to a head in September 1970. After a series of provocative moves designed to undermine the Jordanian regime, King Hussein moved against the PLO in a confrontation known as Black September. Thousands of Palestinian civilians lost their lives in several rounds of fighting. Nasser negotiated an agreement to end the conflict, although he died unexpectedly the day after completing it.

Following Black September, the PLO moved its headquarters and its base of operations to Lebanon. The events of September 1970 also led to the emergence of the Black September terrorist group, whose first act was to kill the Jordanian interior minister who had been the architect of the Black September violence. The group is much better known for its infamous attack on the Olympic Village in Munich, Germany, in 1972, which led to the deaths of thirteen Israeli athletes and coaches during a botched German rescue operation.

The many permutations of this logic and its manifestations in practice are too numerous to detail here. One can say that, ultimately, just as the Arab states never had a united position on Palestine, the Palestinians, funded by various regimes, often worked at cross-purposes because of ideological differences as well as between those of their paymasters.

The October War and the First Peace Treaty

In the aftermath of the June 1967 War, the UN Security Council agreed on Resolution 242. This resolution, which enshrined the notion of land for peace, became the basis of all subsequent peace initiatives. Not surprisingly, there exists strong disagreement about what this short document says. This confusion was not accidental. The English version of the resolution is more ambiguous than the French and Arabic versions. The author of the resolution, the British UN representative Lord Caradon, called the wording "constructive ambiguity." The resolution called for Israel to withdraw "from territories occupied in the recent conflict." The Arabic and French versions have a definite article before the word "territories." That little word makes a world of difference in interpretation. The Arab states and Israel have argued about this for fifty years. Israel understands the resolution as requiring it to withdraw from "territories"—that is, some territory but not all of *the* territories. In other words, Israel need not withdraw from all of the territory it captured in 1967 to satisfy the conditions of the resolution. The Arab states argued for a long time that Israel must vacate all of the territory captured in 1967. For their part, the Palestinians rejected UN Security Council Resolution 242 outright for the simple reason that it refers to them not as a national group seeking a state, but only as refugees.

In the aftermath of their defeat, the Arab states reconciled themselves to the fact that Israel was there to stay. In the summer of 1967, the League of Arab States adopted a resolution that has come to be known as the *Three NO*s. In it, the members of the League affirmed that there would be no negotiation with Israel, no peace with Israel, and no recognition of Israel. However, the resolution was also a tacit recognition that the Arab-Israeli conflict had shifted from a question of the destruction or removal of Israel to the inescapable conclusion that Israel was not leaving. They adjusted their aims accordingly by seeking to regain the territory they lost in 1967. Meanwhile, the Palestinian cause more than ever became a tool by which these states manipulated regional political questions or attempted to draw superpower interest to their parochial concerns.

The Arab states were clearly not powerful enough to defeat Israel militarily. This realization did not bring hostilities between the Arab states and Israel to an end. Instead, the Arabs merely altered their tactics a bit to keep pressure on the Israeli military. Between 1967 and 1970, Israel and Egypt fought a war of attrition across the Suez Canal. In reality, this war of attrition was a series of artillery duels and aerial attacks on each other's fixed positions. The Egyptian cities of Ismailia and Suez were constantly under attack and were heavily damaged, and eventually, their entire populations of nearly a million were evacuated. Syria encouraged Palestinian guerrilla attacks across Israel's northern border and in the West Bank.

Then in October 1973, Egypt and Syria launched an attack on Israel. The Egyptian forces crossed the Suez Canal and overwhelmed the Israeli defenses while Syrian armor also achieved initial success on the Golan Heights. However, the Egyptian infantry units abruptly halted their advance eight miles into the occupied Sinai. In so doing, the Egyptian president, Anwar al-Sadat, was demonstrating his desire only for the return of the occupied Sinai and

not the destruction of Israel. He hoped at this point that the superpowers would intervene and bring about negotiations. The Syrians, not having been privy to Sadat's plans, were baffled. This soon gave way to feelings of betrayal, as the Israelis were now free to concentrate all of their forces on the Syrian front in the Golan Heights. The United States undertook a massive airlift to resupply Israeli forces, and the ensuing Israeli counterattack devastated the Syrian forces and pushed them back across the 1967 cease-fire line. Israel then turned its full attention to the Egyptian front. The Israelis crossed the Suez Canal and besieged the Egyptian army defending Cairo. At this point, the superpowers became involved. They brokered the ceasefire and withdrawal agreements that ended the immediate hostilities.

The agreements that came out of the October War of 1973 eventually led to the signing of the 1979 Camp David Accords between Israel and Egypt. The beginning of the process came with Egyptian president Sadat's visit to Jerusalem in 1977. Two years later, the two states signed a peace treaty ending their thirty-year state of war. The Israelis agreed to give up the Sinai Peninsula in return for full diplomatic relations. This agreement officially delinked Egypt from the Palestinian issue. The treaty was extremely unpopular in Egypt and the Arab world. Egypt was expelled from the League of Arab States, and the League moved its headquarters from Cairo to Tunis. Ultimately, the treaty led directly to Sadat's assassination two years later.

Internally, Israel witnessed a major transformation of its political culture in the 1970s. The Israeli electorate's perception that the Israeli military was unprepared for the 1973 war accelerated this change. In the 1977 parliamentary elections, the Labor Party's monopoly of power came to an end with the victory of Menachem Begin's revisionist Zionist Likud Party. The "earthquake election" signaled the rise of non-European Jews as a major political force in Israel. These so-called Eastern Jews resented what they saw as preferential treatment for European Jews in Israel. The right-wing parties had courted these voters for decades, and it began to pay off by the 1970s. With a Likud prime minister, a more strident rhetoric emanated from the Israeli government toward the Palestinians. This did not seem to augur well for those seeking peace; however, it was the Likud government under Begin that signed the first peace treaty with an Arab state in 1979.

The War Moves to Lebanon

Paradoxically, the Likud government also seemed willing to use force on a greater scale than its predecessors. For example, as was the case in Jordan, Palestinians began to attack Israel from Lebanese territory after 1967, and, just as in Jordan, this brought massive Israeli retaliation. The Israelis argued that these actions were justified because they were in response to Palestinian provocations or undertaken to preempt attacks. Israeli forces engaged in constant fighting in southern Lebanon, with incursions a regular occurrence. Between 1968 and 1975, Israel bombarded Lebanon more than four thousand times and undertook nearly 350 incursions into Lebanese territory. In the midst of Lebanon's violent civil war, Israel launched major invasions of its northern neighbor in 1978 and again in 1982. The Israelis hoped to remove Palestinian guerrillas from the border area from where they staged attacks on Israel. After the invasion of 1978, the Israelis set up a Lebanese proxy force to protect Israel's northern border.

The second invasion in June 1982 was much more substantial and even led to the brief occupation of parts of the Lebanese capital, Beirut. After more than two months of fighting and thousands of Lebanese casualties, the United States brokered a deal for the withdrawal

of the PLO and Palestinian fighters from Lebanon. Immediately following the departure of the PLO, the Israeli government, working with its allies within the right-wing Christian camp, sought to install a new pro-Israeli government on Lebanon that would sign a peace treaty. Israel coerced the Lebanese parliament to elect its candidate, Bashir Gemayal, as president. The Israeli goals of a PLO withdrawal from Lebanon and a peace treaty with Lebanon seemed within reach. However, days before the new president was to take office, he was assassinated by a bomb planted by allies of the Syrian government. In the aftermath of his death, Gemayal's Christian supporters took their revenge on defenseless Palestinian civilians. Over the course of two days, Israeli troops allowed Gemayal's militia to enter Palestinian refugee camps and killed between 2,000 and 3,500 people. The Sabra and Shatila massacres caused such revulsion in Israel that the defense minister, Ariel Sharon, was forced to resign.

The events of summer 1982 also set the stage for the disastrous US and French involvement in Lebanon. After Israel laid siege to Beirut for more than two months, the United States along with France and Italy contributed troops to the newly formed multinational force (MNF) to supervise the removal of the PLO fighters and to provide security to the Palestinian civilian population left behind. The MNF inexplicably withdrew two weeks before scheduled, setting the stage for the horrors of Sabra and Shatila. After the massacres, the MNF returned to Beirut, where it would stay for another year and a half. During the next few months, US and French armies became directly involved in the civil war on the side of the Christian right. The headquarters of the US Marines and the French paratroopers serving in the MNF were destroyed by simultaneous bomb blasts a little more than a year later, resulting in the deaths of more than three hundred military personnel. The United States soon withdrew ignominiously. The Lebanese civil war continued for nearly eight years after the US and French withdrawals.

The civil war was an extremely complex affair. In reality, it was a series of wars that lasted from 1975 until 1990 and resulted in the complete breakdown of the Lebanese state. From its inception in the 1940s, Lebanon had a weak central government with a decentralized power structure that resembled something close to the late Ottoman *millet* system in miniature. Much of the authority normally associated with the modern state devolved onto the seventeen recognized sectarian religious groups. Unfortunately, this also meant that the state did not enjoy a monopoly of arms. A number of militias and sectarian parties trained and carried weapons openly. According to the 1946 National Pact (a power-sharing formula worked out by the Lebanese elite shortly after independence), government positions were distributed according to a sectarian formula. Thus, the all-powerful president was required to be a Maronite Christian, the prime minister a Sunni Muslim, and the speaker of the parliament a Shi'a, while parliamentary seats were divided according to a six-to-five ratio in favor of the Christian minority. All of the ministries and units of the government as well as civil service positions were likewise distributed. This odd formula was inherently unstable, and civil disturbance and political violence were common. The country suffered through a brief civil war in 1958 that resulted in the landing of US Marines on Lebanese soil.

After the PLO moved its headquarters from Amman to Beirut in 1970, the situation in Lebanon became even more unstable. Pressure to abolish the sectarian system came up against an entrenched class of wealthy families that rejected any change. By the mid-1970s, tensions had reached a boiling point, and in April 1975, the situation exploded. The war began as a showdown between leftist nationalist forces allied with the Palestinians against

right-wing, predominantly Christian forces seeking to preserve their privileged position and resentful of the Palestinian presence. The war quickly became far more complex. The fighting unleashed social forces marginalized by the sectarian system maneuvering to better their collective social and economic positions. The war then mutated into a series of inter-sectarian and intrasectarian struggles. This situation was made even more complex by the many outside powers that became involved directly and indirectly. A partial list of these actors includes Syria, Israel, Iraq, Libya, Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states, Iran, the United States, France, Italy, and the Soviet Union. Finally, in 1990 Syria, with the acquiescence of the United States, France, and Israel, imposed a settlement through the Taif Agreement that amended, but did not abolish, the sectarian formula established in 1946.

The First Intifada and the First Gulf War

In 1987, the intensification of Israeli occupation tactics and a lack of basic services such as electricity and water finally exploded into a major uprising of the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza; it has become known as the *intifada* (this literally means "shaking off," but it is also used to mean "insurrection"). The uprising began spontaneously after a traffic accident at an Israeli army checkpoint. Soon, Palestinians were boycotting Israeli products, engaging in mass strikes and demonstrations, and cheering groups of stone-throwing youth confronting heavily armed Israeli troops. The intifada signaled the emergence of new grassroots leaders in the occupied territories. The PLO leadership had moved to Tunis after the 1982 withdrawal from Beirut, and many saw them as remote and unresponsive to the situation in the West Bank and Gaza. The PLO leadership tried to make itself relevant after the outbreak of the revolt, but the intifada continued to be guided by local leaders in so-called popular committees.

The intifada resulted in about one thousand Palestinian and fifty-six Israeli deaths. Tens of thousands were injured and arrested. The uprising was also a public relations disaster for the Israelis as the prime minister announced a series of brutal policies, such as the intentional breaking of bones by Israeli soldiers of anyone suspected of throwing stones. The Israelis also began to give passive support to a local offshoot of the Muslim Brotherhood by allowing the group to receive funding from the Gulf states. Israel hoped that the religious activists associated with this group would be less troublesome than the secular nationalists of the PLO. In this, they were badly mistaken. Even if at first the plan seemed to work, as Hamas (the Islamic Resistance Movement) activists criticized secular nationalists and attacked female political leaders of the PLO, soon became an even bigger problem for Israel.[25] The intifada lasted from 1987 until 1993, and it demonstrated in excruciating detail to many Israelis the high moral and economic costs of the occupation. Israeli soldiers in heavy battle gear riding in tanks and armored personnel carriers seemed to be locked in never-ending battles with defiant stone-throwing Palestinian youths, while Israel's economy suffered from labor shortages and other problems caused by the intifada. Given all of this, it is not surprising that the first Israeli-PLO agreement, the Oslo Accords of 1993, came about as a direct result of the intifada.

One of the most significant events of the 1990s in Middle Eastern history came on the heels of the end of the Lebanese civil war and the Palestinian intifada. In 1991, Saddam Hussein's armies invaded and occupied Kuwait. Fearing for the West's access to the region's oil, the United States cobbled together a broad coalition to remove the Iraqis. The Gulf War, which lasted just one hundred hours, pitted the United States against Iraq only three years after the two nations had been allies during Saddam Hussein's war on Iran that lasted from 1980 until 1988.

During the Gulf War, the United States set up a number of military bases in the Arabian Peninsula. These bases eventually became a rallying point for anti-American Islamist militants led by Osama bin Laden, who demanded that these bases be closed. The coalition victory over Iraq in 1991 left Saddam Hussein in power but brought eleven years of severe economic sanctions on Iraq. Hussein and the United States never reconciled, and in 2003, the United States invaded Iraq to remove Hussein from power.

The Oil-Producing States

An important feature of Middle East history during the past century was the emergence and rising importance of the Middle Eastern oil-producing states such as Iran, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Algeria, Libya, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, and Qatar.

The oil-producing states of the Persian Gulf are sometimes referred to as "rentier states." This essentially means that their revenues are derived from sources other than taxation of the local population. In such circumstances, the state has a propensity to become a dispenser of patronage. Instead of developing a governing consensus, the state merely pays the population—or, more likely, an important constituency—for its loyalty. Because there is little need for rulers to respond to the demands for greater openness, rentier states have a strong tendency to be undemocratic. This general framework more or less describes a number of the oil-producing states in the Persian Gulf: They have vast oil wealth, provide extensive subsidies and material support to key populations, have very little governmental transparency and few democratic institutions, and are ruled by small oligarchies.

Through most of the twentieth century, international oil companies worked in the region through the consortium model. With this approach, a group of companies would pool their resources under a single name; Aramco of Saudi Arabia was the best known of the consortia. Consortia bought the rights to exploit oil fields for terms of a half-century or more. Over time, they came to control the entirety of oil drilling and production in the region. They paid the oil states rent in exchange for monopoly rights over exploration and production. These consortium (and the earlier concessions) agreements enabled the largest of the oil companies, the so-called seven sisters, to control the industry prior to 1973.

Persia granted the first oil concession to Britain in 1901. William Knox D'Arcy, a British explorer, gained the right to "obtain, exploit, develop, carry away and sell" petroleum and petroleum products from Persia in exchange for £40,000 as well as 16 percent of the annual profits to be paid to the Qajar monarchs. The British government bought the concession from D'Arcy and created the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (AIOC) that eventually became British Petroleum or BP. The agreement was extremely profitable. By 1923, BP was receiving upward of £40 million per year in revenue while the Iranian government received around £5 million. D'Arcy's agreement with the Persian monarchy became the model for subsequent oil concessions. Local rulers, often put in power and sustained by British and later US support, granted a number of these concessions.

During the 1950s and 1960s, some states attempted to amend the concession agreements under which multinational oil companies and their consortia controlled the oil wealth in the region. Saudi Arabia and Iran were able to gain 50 percent of profits in the 1950s; however, full local control did not come until much later. Iraq was the first state to successfully nationalize its petroleum sector in 1972.

Oil Politics and Neoliberal Reforms

During the 1960s, Nasser-inspired Arab nationalists savaged the Saudis and the other oil states in the Gulf. They accused the monarchs of being backward, regressive tools of Western imperialism. Domestic support in their countries for Nasser and other radical voices convinced these rulers of the need to counter these attacks. Accordingly, they began to take a higher profile in diplomatic questions concerning the entire Arab world. This approach entailed fostering anti-Nasserist political movements and sentiments whenever they could. The mutual antagonism played out in the 1962 to 1970 Yemeni civil war where Saudi Arabia and Egypt became directly involved on opposite sides. The criticism of the Gulf oil states as pawns of the West became even more acute with the radicalization of Arab politics after Arab defeat in June 1967. One of the ways they sought to quiet their critics was through providing generous financial support to the more moderate elements in the PLO. The other way was through supporting conservative religious movements throughout the region.

The prominence of the oil-producing states grew exponentially after the October 1973 War. The Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC; the cartel made up of many of the world's oil-exporting states) had sought to raise prices long before the October War, and Western support for Israel became a convenient pretext for a dramatic price increase. The Arab members of OPEC then began a five-month oil embargo to protest the US airlift of military supplies to Israel that not only resulted in long gasoline lines on Main Street USA but was also a financial windfall for the oil exporters. At about the same time, the monarchies of the Gulf began to emphasize their Islamic bona fides, actively portraying themselves as the guardians of Islam. Saudi Arabia and Kuwait encouraged Islamic missionary activity, emphasizing conservative religious thought throughout the Arab and wider Muslim worlds. The effect of this has been manifest in the growth of the influence of the Muslim Brotherhood and the rise of "salafist" or ultraconservative groups. The United States saw this as a positive development because it viewed such religious activity as nonpolitical; moreover, seen through the lens of the Cold War, religious activism seemed to provide a popular platform for anticommunism.

Outside of the oil-producing states, the optimism of the early 1960s gave way to stagnation and decline by the mid-1970s. The Nasserist Arab socialism and regionwide state-capitalist programs had run out of steam. An inefficient and nepotistic management culture ruled over a huge public sector of increasingly alienated workers. Middle Eastern governments could no longer promise a decent living to quickly expanding populations, and real incomes decreased rapidly. The resultant discontent manifested itself in an invigorated Left that called for greater social justice and more democratic political institutions, as well as in energized Gulf-supported Islamism that began to proclaim that "Islam is the solution." At the same time, a number of regimes took steps toward liberalizing their economies. These policies entailed cutting back on spending for social programs and food subsidies upon which people had come to depend. Liberalization failed to stem the tide of inflation, underemployment, and economic hardship that was quickly bankrupting the middle classes. This was an explosive combination, and eventually, something had to give.

Egypt's experience illustrates this process. In the mid-1970s, Anwar al-Sadat, Gamal Abdel Nasser's successor, put an end to the quasi-socialist policies of his predecessor. He enacted a series of reforms intended to move the Egyptian economy toward capitalism. Sadat, hoping to spur economic growth and create new jobs for a rapidly growing population, opened the

economy to foreign investment. He also hoped to parlay his economic liberalization plans into new loans from the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank to help reduce Egypt's huge foreign debt. Collectively, these reforms were known as *infitah,* or opening.

Egypt's path toward liberalization included the privatization of state-owned companies (which often led to the dismissal of large numbers of workers) and cutbacks on food subsidies in an effort to decrease government spending. These policies created great resentment because they resulted in intense inflation and gave rise to a group of investors who profited handsomely from their insider position within the ruling elite. Real wages did not keep up with rising prices, and much of the salaried middle class (formerly one of the main bases of support for the regime) was forced to work at several jobs to make ends meet. The dire economic situation engendered new forms of petty corruption that increased the general feeling of disorientation. It seemed as if anything and everything was for sale at the right price. Discontent rose, and unrest spread around the country. In 1977 after the government slashed subsidies for basic food staples, President Sadat sent the army into the streets in Cairo and other cities to quell a series of violent confrontations between protesters and the police.

Islamic Militancy, 9/11, and the Second Gulf War

In the 1970s and 1980s, increasing numbers of people gravitated toward a diverse genre of political activism, often analytically abridged under the rubric of "Islamism." On one level, the roots of these trends recall the nineteenth-century Islamic modernist movement's emphasis on the importance of adopting a critical stance toward the practice of Islam and on reforming society through education. At the same time, some Islamist movements also bear a family resemblance to twentieth-century ideologies that emphasize anti-imperialism, mass social and political engagement, and, in some cases, calls to violence. Events such as the 1979 Islamic Revolution in Iran and the US-organized anti-Soviet insurgency in Afghanistan were seminal events in the history of Islamism and its transformation into a significant part of the region's political imagination.

In 1970s Iran, Mohammad Reza Shah (along with his friends in the West) was oblivious to the many signs of widespread discontent. The last decade and a half of the shah's rule was defined by a series of hard-to-fathom missteps in the face of building dissatisfaction and opposition. His regime became more, not less, autocratic. In 1975, for example, in the face of budding hostility and calls for greater political freedoms, the shah eliminated the two legal political parties and established a one-party state. At about the same time, he declared himself the "spiritual leader" of Iran and in so doing seemed to be engaging in a frontal assault on the powerful clergy who protested vociferously, claiming the shah was seeking to "nationalize" religion. Meanwhile, the merchants from the traditional markets or bazaars, who were allied with the clergy, also felt threatened by the shah's moves to impose new laws and labor regulations that used what they saw as draconian methods. By 1977, demonstrations and protests were spreading throughout the country. Then inexplicably in January 1978, a government newspaper ran an editorial insulting the most popular cleric, the exiled Ayatollah Ruhallah Khomeini, which resulted in anti-shah demonstrations and the police use of deadly force. This began an escalation against the regime that eventually led to the shah's ouster. Over and over, anti-shah demonstrators were met with deadly force by security forces, and then mourners for the slain would organize even bigger marches that were shot at, resulting in more deaths, and so on. In early December 1978, massive demonstrations and a general strike against the shah sealed his fate. Millions of anti-shah protestors

in the streets of Tehran were proof that the military had lost its appetite for killing Iranian civilians, that the urban middle classes had abandoned the shah, and that court patronage had become meaningless. The shah departed Iran in January 1979 for a "vacation," and Khomeini returned from more than twenty years of exile about two weeks later.

In April 1979, nearly 99 percent of the Iranian electorate approved a referendum to replace the Pahlavi monarchy with an Islamic Republic. Ayatollah Khomeini became Iran's first postrevolutionary leader. The success of what became known as the Islamic Revolution inspired like-minded activists around the world who saw it as a victory for both Islam and anti-imperialism. The shah had seemed to be among the most secure leaders in the whole region. The Iranian military was powerful, well trained, and seemingly loyal to the head of state. But popular discontent resulting from extremely uneven economic development, the shah's perceived aloofness from ordinary Iranians, and his ostentatious lifestyle quickly overwhelmed the regime. In the end, Muhammad Reza Shah's pride and joy, the military, stood by as the Iranian people forced him into exile.

Iran was not the only state that grew more autocratic in the 1970s. Regimes throughout the region silenced domestic opposition, especially those objecting to economic liberalization. Rulers from North Africa to the Persian Gulf were simultaneously committed to opening their economies and shutting down political dissent. They viewed the Left, which appealed to large segments of the population (especially youth), as a threat. In response, some encouraged Islam-inspired political movements as a counterweight. At the outset, Islamic activists seemed more interested in preaching and in the minutiae of religious questions than in the politics of economic liberalization. In addition, they attacked secular leftists for "aping" the communist atheism of the West.

This approach turned out to be misguided as Islamist militants turned on their sponsors throughout the region. In Egypt, an Islamist militant organization, hoping to ignite a general uprising, tried to seize a military school in Cairo in 1974. Then in 1977, another group kidnapped and killed a former Egyptian government minister. In 1979 in Saudi Arabia, in an event that shocked the Muslim world, Islamist militants opposed to the Saudi monarchy seized the Grand Mosque in Mecca. Saudi troops regained control after nearly three weeks of ferocious fighting with the help of advisers from the French special forces Groupe d'Intervention de la Gendarmerie Nationale.[26] In 1981, an Islamist militant organization infiltrated the Egyptian army and assassinated President Sadat at a military parade. Meanwhile in Syria after several years of a violent Islamist insurgency, the government, with the help of Soviet advisers, launched an all-out assault on the insurgent stronghold in the city of Hama in 1982. Some have estimated that as many as thirty thousand people died in the assault.

These events did not seem to dampen US support for Islamic militancy in the period before and just after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979. Under President Jimmy Carter, the United States began the biggest covert operation in its history, funneling money and arms and providing training through Pakistan to Afghans fighting the Soviet invaders. The United States even commissioned the writing of a booklet to encourage "freedom fighters" to travel to Afghanistan and join in the jihad against the "atheist communist" regime. Throughout the 1980s, US funding for the insurgency grew enormously. Governments in Egypt, Syria, Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria, and the Gulf states saw the campaign against the Soviets as a golden opportunity to encourage troublesome malcontents to travel to Afghanistan to fight against the infidel invaders. A wealthy Saudi Arabian named Osama bin Laden helped facilitate the travel and training of some of the fighters. These young

men gained valuable fighting experience that they would later put to use against their own regimes as well as against the United States in the 1990s and 2000s.

Just as Iran's Islamic Revolution in 1979 energized Muslim militants around the region, so too did the insurgency against the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan. The US-funded campaign succeeded in forcing the Soviet Union to withdraw from Afghanistan in 1989. After an extended period of internecine fighting, a group sponsored by Pakistani military intelligence—the Taliban—triumphed over its rivals and established a government in Kabul in 1996. The Taliban government was toppled by the United States after the attacks of September 11, 2001; yet even after nearly twenty years of war in Afghanistan, the United States has not succeeded in defeating the movement. After the Soviet withdrawal in 1989, many of the radicalized fighters, the so-called Afghan Arabs, also returned to their home countries. These hardened fighters often joined Islamist militant insurgencies in the 1990s in Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Libya, Tunisia, Morocco, and Jordan.

In the midst of the turmoil and social dislocation caused by the combination of economic liberalization, these Islamist insurgencies, and government-led counterinsurgency campaigns, there emerged an important cultural phenomenon that its devotees sometimes called the Islamic awakening, or *al-Sahwa al-Islamiya*. Some analysts view this complex social and cultural movement and Islamist militancy as a single phenomenon, using terms such as *Islamic fundamentalism* or *political Islam*. However, by lumping together a large number of tendencies and groups with diverse orientations, aims, and national histories, such terms obscure much more than they illuminate. Indeed, depending on how one defines *fundamental*, the term *Islamic fundamentalists* could include almost all who consider themselves practicing Muslims. The neologism *political Islam* is equally fraught because much of the activity of the Islamic awakening was not primarily oriented toward creating an Islamic political entity. For example, many of those participating in Islamic piety movements understood themselves endeavoring to make society more Islamic through the reform of everyday practice of individual believers.

To be sure, there is also a wide array of Islamist political groups, but one should be very wary of labeling legal political parties and extremist militant organizations under the same rubric *political Islam*. The Muslim Brothers in Jordan and Egypt, the Islamic Salvation Front in Algeria, Hamas in Palestine, and Hizballah in Lebanon all participated successfully in electoral processes in their countries. A more useful criterion would distinguish between reformist groups working within the legal framework of the state and those employing violent tactics and terrorism to achieve their aims. Of the latter, there are roughly two types: those seeking to establish an Islamic state or to change the political orientation of a particular national state, such as the Islamic Group in Egypt during the 1990s, and those, such as al-Qaʿida, that seek to undermine the entire global sociopolitical economic regime.

In the 1990s, this latter type, many of whom were associated with the anti-Soviet insurgency in Afghanistan, came to the fore. These militants viewed their victory as a historic turning point, the significance of which became manifest only a few years later when the Soviet Union fell apart. Not without reason, they connected their US-supported guerrilla war to the demise of a superpower. This idea continues to inspire those in the fight against the United States, hoping for a similar outcome. Using their Afghanistan experience as a model, instead of mobilizing large numbers of followers in a revolutionary tide to topple a national government, they formed themselves into small and unattached units and employed violent tactics to bring about what they hoped would be the collapse of the entire international system. Thus, in the

mid-1990s they began to strike the main pillars of the international system, the United States and its allies. A series of attacks followed against US interests in Saudi Arabia, Yemen, and the United States in New York in 1993 and again in New York and Washington, DC, in 2001.

Like the US-backed jihad against the Soviet Union in the 1980s, the US response to the attacks of September 11, 2001, fomented another even-more-violent manifestation of Islamic extremism. After 9/11, the United States launched military operations in Afghanistan and removed the Taliban government because it refused to hand over the al-Qa'ida leaders responsible for the attacks. Then, in what the US government at the time claimed was a further response, President George W. Bush authorized a US-led invasion of Iraq in 2003. The fighting ended quickly, but the mismanaged occupation created a power vacuum in which violent anarchy reigned supreme and multiple insurgencies raged across much of Iraq. Evolving out of the ensuing chaos, the group that became ISIS (or, the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria) adopted a hybrid form of Islamist extremism. Like al-Qa'ida, ISIS rejected any semblance of conformity to the international order, but its disdain for national borders was merely a step in its quest to establish a "caliphate" that would eventually encompass the entire Muslim world.

Eventually, the so-called Caliph Abū Bakr al-Baghdadi (Ibrahim Awad Ibrahim al Badr), based in Raqqa, Syria, "recognized" at least nine other "provinces" from Libya to the North Caucuses to Southeast Asia. Is this ISIS-type hybrid a flash in the pan born out of the disaster of the Iraqi invasion, or is its determination to erase national borders to create a larger political entity a whole new phase of extremism? Only the future will tell whether or not this becomes commonplace in the long run.

Rebellions, Civil Wars, and US Intervention

Surprising experts and laypeople alike, 2011 and 2012 saw masses of protesters pouring into the streets across the Arab world, demanding fundamental change. Despite the shock at the time, such phenomena were not unprecedented in the Arab world. For example, in 1985 massive protests in Sudan led to the overthrow of its autocratic ruler Jafar Numayri. However, the difference in 2011 was how these popular protests and their slogans moved across borders so quickly. In case after case, entrenched rulers, taken by surprise and unaccustomed to domestic opposition, refused to grant major concessions. Their intransigence only hardened the resolve of demonstrators in the streets, and soon, calls for revolution replaced those for reform. The sobriquet *Arab Spring* referred not so much to a particular season of the year but rather to the hope for long-delayed political transformation and social and cultural renewal. In actual fact, many of the seminal events of the Arab Spring occurred in the winter of 2010 to 2011.

The spark that set the Arab world on fire emerged from the most unlikely of sources: a desperate individual act in a provincial town in what was thought of as one of the most stable countries in the region. On December 17, 2010, in Sidi Bouzid, a dusty town of forty thousand in central Tunisia, a street vender named Muhammad Bouazizi set himself on fire in front of the town hall. Fed up with constant police harassment and despondent about his bleak future prospects, Bouazizi acted out of frustration and anger. Solidarity protests broke out immediately in Sidi Bouzid and soon engulfed the entire country. Muhammad Bouazizi's life and death became potent symbols for a whole generation constrained by repressive political systems and meager economic prospects. Within days, Tunisia was in open, peaceful revolt, with increasing numbers of demonstrators standing steadfast in the face of police violence. On January 14, 2011, a little over a month after Bouazizi's self-immolation, Tunisia's president Zine al-Abidine

Ben Ali fled with his family to Saudi Arabia. Almost simultaneously, protests broke out from the Maghreb to the Persian Gulf as protesters in one country after another borrowed the most popular chants of the Tunisian revolutionaries: *al-sha'ab yurid isqat al-nizam*—"The people want to bring down the regime"—and *silmiya, silmiya*—"Peaceful, peaceful."

Mass protests began in Egypt during the last week of January 2011. Egyptian police forces responded with violence, killing nearly a thousand demonstrators. The besieged Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak called the army into the streets, but as was the case in Tunisia, the army declared its neutrality and did not shoot demonstrators. Finally, after weeks of sustained protest that included occupying major public spaces such as Cairo's Tahrir Square, Mubarak stepped down, and the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces announced that it would govern temporarily until elections could be held.

The jubilation of the first months of 2011 gave way to uneasiness and then despair. Fast-moving events across the region did not augur well for a democratic transition, and regional and international intervention often undermined prospects for democracy as well. For example, when huge protests threatened the absolute monarchy in Bahrain, a Persian Gulf state that houses the US Naval Forces Central Command and the US Naval Fifth Fleet, its embattled king (whose forebears have ruled for more than two hundred years) invited the Saudi Arabian armed forces to invade the country and crush the peaceful antigovernment demonstrations. At almost the same time, the eastern Libyan city of Benghazi rebelled against the Tripoli-based government of Muammar al-Qadhafi and declared itself "liberated." With Libyan forces bearing down on the city, NATO initiated an air campaign, ostensibly to protect civilians. Whatever its initial purpose, the air campaign soon became a full-scale assault on the Libyan armed forces and was the decisive factor in the end of Qadhafi's rule and the collapse of his government. Unfortunately, the Obama administration and its European allies had not learned the lessons of the 2003 Iraq fiasco, and without any proper postwar planning, Libya soon fell into a state of violent, febrile anarchy, punctuated by murderous score-settling, collective punishment, and attacks on those whose skin color was evidence enough of their support or opposition to some faction or another. Libya has all but ceased to exist as a centralized state, with several governments claiming legitimacy and fractious militia politics generating disorder, constant fighting, and great bloodshed among civilians.

That brings us to the civil wars in Yemen and Syria. In 2011, huge demonstrations in Yemen called for the end of the thirty-three-year rule of Ali Abdallah Salih. Saudi Arabia and the United States, fearing greater instability in a notoriously unstable country, began to press Salih to transfer power to one of his deputies. After months of foot-dragging, Salih's vice president, Abdo Rabbuh Mansur al-Hadi, became president, "winning" a single-candidate election. Many of Yemen's youthful rebels and some political factions, including the Houthi Movement from the Sa'dah Governate, refused to recognize al-Hadi. The Houthis mobilized in response to what they alleged was al-Hadi's collusion with the forces of al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), who were now attacking Houthi rebels, and their long-running rebellion in the North that was spreading across the country. The situation became more complex as the deposed president Ali Abdallah Salih denounced his successor and joined the Houthi rebellion. The Houthis took the two largest cities, the capital Sana'a and Aden, from Yemeni forces loyal to al-Hadi, who was eventually forced to flee to Saudi Arabia. In spring 2015, Saudi Arabia, accusing the Houthis of receiving Iranian support, forged together a military coalition of nine Arab states (with the United States providing intelligence and logistical support) and began an air campaign in support of al-Hadi's exiled government. Subsequently

as the Saudi-led coalition blockaded Yemen by land, sea, and air, the situation for civilians in the poorest country in the region became desperate, with millions threatened with starvation and disease. As the fighting raged on and civilian casualties mounted, the Saudi military campaign gained little momentum, and coalition spokespeople were often hard-pressed to explain the logic of their operations and to outline their exit strategy.

Meanwhile, in 2011 an armed rebellion broke out in Syria after security forces in the city of Daraa killed a number of demonstrators opposed to the more-than-four-decade rule of the al-Asad family. There were three factors that set the Syrian revolt apart from the others at the time: (1) Syria's proximity to Israel, (2) its role as part of the "resistance" to the United States and its main Middle Eastern allies (Israel and Saudi Arabia), and (3) the rise of ISIS and its success in exploiting the vacuum created by civil war to take over large swaths of the country. From the outset, regime opponents drew on the first two factors to lobby for outside military intervention, calling for what some called the "Libyan Option" at the United Nations. However, with two allies of Syria's president Bashar al-Asad (Russia and China) on the Security Council, this strategy seemed to accomplish little more than to pull Syria inexorably toward the abyss. Indeed, the situation in Syria quickly devolved from a civil war and into a regional and global proxy war, with the Saudis, Qataris, Turkey, the CIA, and the US Defense Department all backing different factions. For all intents and purposes, the only opposition consisted of Islamist militias, many of whom were of the extremist variety, including al-Qaʿida's local franchise, the Nusra Front (now known as Hayʾa Tahrir al-Sham [HTS], or Organization for the Liberation of the Levant). For a time, there was talk of building a "Free Syrian Army" as a secular alternative to the Islamists; despite huge sums spent by the United States and others, these efforts came to naught. The entry of ISIS into the situation in Syria added even more intensity to a conflict already marked by wanton cruelty on a mass scale and with the scope of violence increasing exponentially. With so many external opponents underwriting a plethora of opposition groups and with Turkey openly facilitating the movement of fighters across the border into Syria, there were many questions about whether the Syrian government would survive. However, the war took a decisive turn in the regime's favor when in September 2015 Vladimir Putin committed the Russian military to propping up the teetering Asad government. The Syrian army, backed by Russian airpower and Iran-supported militias from Lebanon and Iraq, turned the tide of the war over the next three years, methodically recapturing rebel-held territories in a vicious war of attrition. If current trends continue, it seems inevitable that the regime will regain sovereignty on its entire territory. What kind of polity and society might emerge out of this catastrophe is anyone's guess.

Since the dissolution of the Soviet Union, one of the primary factors in the history of the Middle East over the past thirty years or so has been the unrivaled power of the United States to impose its will militarily and otherwise on regional actors. Large US military interventions began with the First Gulf War of 1990 and continued after 9/11—first in Afghanistan and subsequently in the Second Gulf War of 2003. The United States justified its invasion and occupation of Iraq by alleging that Saddam Hussein's government had contact with the perpetrators of the attacks on New York and Washington, DC, and that the Iraqis had resumed their weapons of mass destruction (WMD) program. Because of the unsubstantiated nature of these assertions, the United States was unable to convince some of its major allies and the UN to approve the Iraq invasion (both of the allegations turned out to be false). Thus, the United States—without UN approval and with limited support around the world—invaded Iraq and deposed Saddam Hussein.

This proved to be the easiest part of Operation Iraqi Freedom. The country soon descended into chaos, as the US occupation authority was ill-prepared to carry out its mission. The Coalition Provisional Authority, as the occupation authority was known, acted in ad hoc and ill-conceived ways. One of its most glaring mistakes was disbanding the Iraqi army without warning and thereby depriving one hundred thousand armed men a living. Not surprisingly, a very violent anti-US insurgency soon developed, as did a horrifying sectarian bloodbath replete with a campaign of ethnic cleansing that eliminated areas with mixed Sunni/Shi'i Muslim populations, to say nothing of mass exodus of Iraqi Christians from the country.

In the wake of the occupation, Iraqi leaders wrestled with the United States to hand over power, and after protracted negotiations, the United States finally relented and organized elections. Post-invasion Iraqi politics devolved into deadlock, and each round of elections brought on a governmental crisis resolved temporarily through promises that were never meant to be kept by most of the major players. After eight years of occupation, the United States withdrew most of its military forces, leaving a country riven by political paralysis in which near-daily bombings and other terrorist outrages killed thousands of innocent civilians. Making matters worse, in the midst of slaughter and political chaos in the capital, ISIS swept across northern Iraq. The vastly outnumbered ISIS militants captured huge amounts of territory from an Iraqi army that offered almost no resistance. In 2014, Falluja fell first and then Tikrit, Mosul (Iraq's second-largest city), followed by towns and cities across northern Syria. At its height, ISIS controlled territory equal to more than half the size of Syria that contained nearly eight million inhabitants.

The Iraqi army, supported by sectarian militias and backed with US airpower, began to roll back ISIS in 2016. The US-backed Syrian Democratic Forces, the predominately Kurdish militias, did the same across the border in Syria, capturing the de facto ISIS capital Raqqa in October 2016. But all of this hardly seems like an end to conflict. Nearly two decades later, the end of US military campaigning in the region and beyond is not in sight. On the contrary, US operations continue to expand from the Middle East into South Asia, East Africa, and, most recently, the Sahel region of Africa. Each new entanglement seems to metastasize into another apparently endless series of operations involving small numbers of American boots on the ground and the use of drones and other airpower. Ultimately, the violence and political upheaval across the region from Libya to Iraq to Yemen to Syria to East and Central Africa (and South Asia) has had ripples across the globe, creating the worst refugee crisis in Europe since World War II and driving the rise of anti-immigrant, right-wing politicians across the continent and beyond.

Can the United States continue to wield the power it has over the past three decades in the Middle East? Donald Trump was elected president, promising to scale back US military involvements abroad. The early signs were that his administration would more or less continue the policies of its predecessors, with some exceptions. First, the American president has been very receptive to the most adventurous initiatives undertaken by the de facto King of Saudi Arabia, its young Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud (popularly known as MBS). Trump has responded positively to the Saudi involvement in the Yemeni and Syrian civil wars and has stood by MBS in the latter's confrontation with Iran. Trump declared that he would no longer honor the 2013 so-called Iran Nuclear Agreement that the Saudis has vociferously criticized, and he has endorsed the de facto alliance between the Saudis and Israeli government. Second, with respect to the Palestine Question, Trump—despite some campaign rhetoric to the contrary—was quick to endorse some of the most right-wing positions ever adopted by an Israeli government. Soon after moving the American Embassy from Tel

Aviv to Jerusalem, Trump cut off funds to the Palestinian Authority and then later to the UN organization tasked with caring for Palestinians refugees, UNRWA. It still remains unclear when, and if, his administration will make good on producing a "deal" that all parties in this seventy-year-old conflict will accept. However, if one were to take the policies of the Trump administration as a backdrop to accumulated ill-will of nearly twenty-five years of fruitless negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians, the early signs are not encouraging.

CONCLUSION

No one can deny that the history of the Middle East for the past two centuries was profoundly affected by the rise of Western European economic and military power. The Ottoman Tanzimat and the more equivocal reforms of the Qajar shahs were, at least in part, driven by unease about the burgeoning hegemony of Europe. The rise of the West, however, is not the entire story. Events largely driven by internal dynamics, such as Mehmet Ali's short-lived Egyptian empire, come to mind. Important cultural movements such as the Nahda and Islamic modernism, too, have roots that reach back to the region's precolonial history. Even the long-term consequences of events authored in Europe, such as the cataclysm of World War I, played out on social, cultural, and economic fields already well established. For example, the creation of new states in the region, such as Iraq and Syria, did not erase extant social and historical dynamics; it merely reoriented their trajectories. The old regimes did not simply disappear; they blended into the new contexts.

That said, the redrawn post–World War I map of the region, anticolonial nationalist movements, and the emergence of independent states during the course of the first half of the twentieth century ushered in a new Middle East. Elites and charismatic figures armed with new kinds of political ideologies appealed to populations within and without these individual political entities. Arab nationalism, Arab socialism, Islamism, and a myriad of local nationalisms vied for the loyalty of the region's peoples. Top-down reform promulgated by individual strongmen such as Mustafa Kemal or Reza Shah Pahlavi as well as authoritarian military regimes became the norm—so too did inter-Arab rivalries or cold wars involving Nasserist Egypt; Hashemite Jordan; and Iraq, Saudi Arabia, and Syria. The establishment of the state of Israel and the subsequent Arab-Israeli conflict produced momentous events with long-term consequences. The 1948 Arab-Israeli war, the 1956 Suez Crisis, the June 1967 War, the October 1973 War, the Egypt-Israel peace treaty, and the question of a Palestinian state all continue to weigh on the region in some way.

The founding of the stridently secular Turkish Republic in 1923 raised the question of the public place of Islam in unprecedented ways. The issue did not disappear over the course of the century. It achieved new relevance beginning with the rise of Islamist militancy in the 1970s, the 1979 Islamic revolution in Iran, and the blossoming of the Islamic awakening of the past two decades. It has come to the fore even more in the immediate aftermath of the Arab Spring, in which Islamist-oriented parties and movements played a major role. In postrevolutionary Tunisia's budding democracy, the Islamist Ennahdha Party has participated in coalition governments since 2011 and has shown itself very adept at working with secular parties within the parliamentary system. Egypt elected Mohammad Morsi, the Muslim Brothers' Freedom and Justice Party (FJP) candidate, to the presidency in 2012, although he was deposed in a military coup in 2013. His party was also soon outlawed and its leaders and cadres jailed amid a massive crackdown on all political activity. By some measures, since the military's seizure of power in 2013 Egypt has become more repressive than it has ever been in modern times. In Turkey,

the neo-Islamist Justice and Development Party (AKP) led by Recep Tayyip Erdoğan has used its overwhelming electoral dominance to amend the constitution and steer the Republic away from its strict secular origins. In a controversial referendum in 2017, Turkey scrapped its parliamentary system and put in its place a strong presidential system that was supposed to be initiated in 2020. However, fearing growing economic problems, the AKP called for elections a year and a half early, and Recep Tayyip Erdoğan was elected president. Despite whatever economic difficulties come to pass, it is hard to say whether Erdoğan's AKP base would ever consider pushing Turkey back toward Kemalist secularism.

Finally, the last few decades brought great frustration with the lack of economic opportunity and the near absence of the right to free political expression in many countries in the region. This goes a long way toward explaining the Arab Spring and its subsequent civil wars and the call for social and economic justice and free political expression. These frustrations, combined with the increasing violence largely perpetrated or encouraged by outsiders that has marked the region's history for decades, may offer us a vantage point from which to make sense of the emergence of extreme militant groups such as ISIS and the horrifying violence that has shattered a number of states in the region and set millions of refugees on the move. Perhaps this same calculus offers a more optimistic imagining of the future. For despite the fact that even if one were to go back to the Mongol invasion of 1258, there simply is no precedent for the scope and intensity of violence and bloodletting raging across the Middle East. Many, if not most, of the region's inhabitants still believe that collectively they have the capacity to shape their own destiny.

SUGGESTED READINGS

Abrahamian, Ervand. *A History of Modern Iran*. 2nd ed. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018.

Anderson, Betty S. *A History of the Modern Middle East: Rulers, Rebels, and Rogue*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2016.

Campos, Michelle. *Ottoman Brothers: Muslims, Christians, and Jews in Early Twentieth-Century Palestine*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2011.

Gelvin, James. *The Modern Middle East: A History*. 4th ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 2015.

Greene, Molly. *A Shared World: Christians and Muslims in the Early Modern Mediterranean*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000.

Hanioğlu, M. Şükrü. *A Brief History of the Late Ottoman Empire*. Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010.

Kamaly, Hossein. *God and Man in Tehran Contending Visions of the Divine from the Qajars to the Islamic Republic*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2018.

Lockman, Zachary. *Contending Visions of the Middle East: The History and Politics of Orientalism*. 2nd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.

Mitchell, Timothy. *Carbon Democracy: Political Power in the Age of Oil*. New York: Verso, 2011.

Philliou, Christine M. *Biography of an Empire Governing Ottomans in an Age of Revolution*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010.

Schreier, Joshua. *Arabs of the Jewish Faith: The Civilizing Mission in Colonial Algeria*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2010.

Sharkey, Heather J. *A History of Muslims, Christians, and Jews in the Middle East*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2017.