Middle East Perspective

By the same Author

CLIMAX OF HISTORY

Middle East Perspective

R. C. MOWAT



LONDON
BLANDFORD PRESS

First published in 1958
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16 West Central Street, London, W.C.1

Printed in Great Britain
by Tonbridge Printers Ltd., Peach Hall Works, Tonbridge, Kent

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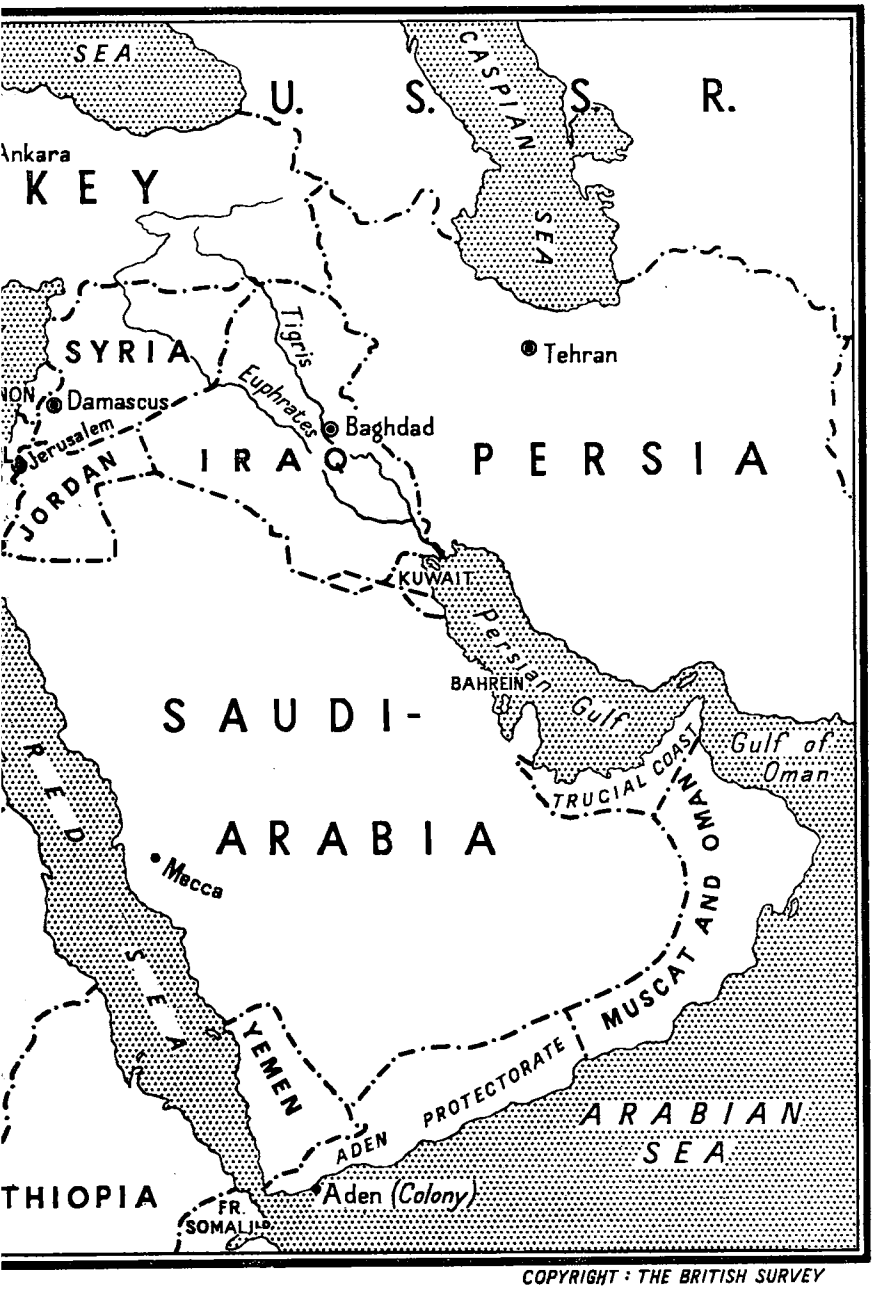
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ALGERIA
MEDITERRANEAN
SEA
Tripoli
CRETE
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SUDAN
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AUTHOR'S PREFACE

FEW ACTS more rash can be imagined than to undertake writing a book dealing with recent events in the Middle East and their background in modern history. Only an angel treading around this controversial field would have a chance of escaping unscathed.

When I began this work, it was rather in an editorial capacity. About a year ago I was asked whether I would adapt the British Survey series of booklets on the Middle East which had been brought out by the British Society for International Understanding during the past years, with a view to their publication in book form. I soon realised, however, that, with the rapid movement of events, a new coherent presentation was required, and this involved the writing of an entirely new book.

I would like to acknowledge gratefully the readiness of Mr John Eppstein, Director of the British Society for International Understanding, to put all his material at my disposal, including an excellent series of maps, which are reproduced: also to acknowledge my debt to the many authors of the British Survey series, for permission to draw on their work, and sometimes to incorporate passages in the text. I would like to add that the responsibility remains mine for any errors of fact or of interpretation which there may be.

This is, of course, equally true of any information that I have used, much of it coming by word of mouth or by letters, or from other unpublished material. In this connection I would like to thank particularly Dr Abdou Sallam, Mr Mellor Jones, Dr Laurence Lockhart, Mr Yerouham Cohen, Mr Frank Stoakes, Mr Francis Goulding, Mr G. E. Kirk and Dr Patrick Petrie. I am also deeply indebted to the staff of the Library of Chatham House.

In transliterating names from Arabic or Persian I have, in general, used the form to which the English newspaper-reading public is most accustomed. For the same reason I have used abbreviations

which would not be correct usage in Arabic (e.g. Nasser for Abdel Nasser). Although I have not been entirely consistent in applying this principle (the reader might find Quwwatly more difficult than Kuwatly), I trust that no misunderstanding will arise.

Many years must pass before it will be possible to make definitive judgments on the events of the Middle East which are the subject of this book. The contemporary historian, perhaps more than the ancient historian, is embarrassed by realising that there are important facts which are not known. These may be revealed one day as official records and private papers are published. For the present, evaluations must be tentative, and subject to immediate revision. The contemporary historian has to be aware that he is expressing his own view and making his personal judgments on men and events. At best, he can set himself to understand an opposite view or interpretation as well as he understands his own, and to give it due weight in as judicial a spirit as possible.

There have been many books and articles dealing with problems and situations in the Middle East. I have not attempted to discuss problems in detail. My aim has rather been to present the main events as they have unfolded in the recent past, in order to give an intelligible picture of the development of the Middle East, and so help towards a sympathetic understanding of the people and nations of this pivotal area.

Blackheath, 1958 R. C. M.

Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

(a) The West versus the Moslem East

STEPPING OUT INTO A CAIRO STREET is like plunging into a maelstrom in which different centuries and civilisations swirl round together. Traffic roars, brakes screech, tramcars grind and clang, street-vendors cry their wares, police-whistles pipe, the harsh Arabic of quarrelling passers-by is heard above the din. One is submerged by the human flood—men in tarbooshes and galabeyas mingling with others in European clothes; women in shapeless widow-like black, presenting a dull uniformity alongside those whose dresses and hair-styles are of Paris or New York.

A woman sits by the kerb with a baby, its face covered with flies. Near her a legless boy drags himself along on two small bits of wood. In the road gleaming Cadillacs glide past the donkey carts of the fellaheen.

The Western world of the twentieth century is here, with its police directing traffic, its concrete buildings, its fashionable shops. But there is the other world of the Orient, and the two have not combined.

* * *

Cairo is not the whole Middle East, but it typifies the conflicts of civilisation and ideology which are found throughout the area. The fact that civilisation was static for a long period in the Middle East has meant that the conflicts between old and new have today taken a particularly violent form.

The creative age of Islam had long since ended when its furthest advance under the banner of the Ottoman Turk was halted at the gates of Vienna in 1683. The Turks were a conquering race who

added little to Moslem society in culture, ideas or administration. Turkish rule was in the nature of garrison duties carried out by an occupying army.

Recent events in Europe have shown that where an occupying force is not freely accepted, lawlessness and corruption increase alarmingly at the side of genuine movements of resistance. It was easy for a Frenchman under the Nazi occupation to justify resort to the black market—because the more food that found its way into the black market, the less there was for the Germans to collect. But this war-time experience did not make a peace-time attitude of honesty towards the government and the tax-collector any easier.

So in the Arab world under the Ottoman Turk—except that the Turkish occupation was not a matter of three or four years, but of five or six centuries. During this long period the moral fibre of the subject peoples was weakened. Men could not depend on justice, because while punishment for crimes was exacted, it was only by chance if the man who paid the penalty had actually committed the crime. Similarly with the collection of taxes: as long as the requisite sum was raised, it did not matter from whom or how it was extorted. Administration was reduced to its crudest elements. Turkish rulers used public money casually as if it were their personal income. Promising developments of social security were cut short, and to look out for oneself and one's family became the prevailing attitude.

The mere removal of the Turkish occupation, though the original cause of much of the trouble, did not remove the trouble itself. But the way was cleared for a genuine movement of reform.

In Persia similar effects have been produced by subjection during long periods to Arabs, Mongols and Turks, and latterly to the influence if not the rule of the West and Russia.

Since ancient days the civilisations of the Middle East have been in conflict with those of Europe. Persia warred against the city states of Greece, and the Greeks in their turn hellenised Egypt and half of Asia. Saracen and Crusader, Turk and Pole, the pendulum swings back and forth. The Russians too have long been in the field, and are mounting today the most formidable offensive in their history.

* * *

What happens when one civilisation attacks another? The impact has the fullest effect when the attacking civilisation is powerful, aggressive and self-confident, the other weak, its strength sapped by a long process of corruption and stagnation.

At first the attacking civilisation may advance almost unchecked. The blows will be absorbed by the apparently prostrate body of its opponent till a reaction is set up. The weaker civilisation, if it survives the initial attack, will become stronger and more resistant, till it eventually arises with its energy renewed. When this has happened it will not be exactly the civilisation that it was before, since having assimilated many elements from its assailant it will emerge as something new—new in its outlook, in its art and in the forms of its society.

These processes are not rapid. A conquered civilisation may lie dormant for centuries before its resurrection. This was the fate of the ancient civilisation of the Orient when it was subdued by the phalanxes of Alexander, and the philosophers, artists and writers who followed in his wake. Its rebirth came about through the ideological forces set in motion by Hebrew prophets and Stoic teachers, and above all by Jesus and Mohammed.

At the moment when Islamic civilisation went into its long decline, that of the West leaped forward to new vigour, discovery and adventure. With the conquest of Constantinople, the great eastern bulwark of Christendom, in 1453, the Moslem advance slowed down, then came gradually to a halt. Byzantine sages, fleeing to Italy, brought the long-cherished seeds of classical wisdom to the west of Europe. Here they found a soil already fertilised by previous influences from the East. The science, mathematics and philosophy (originally Greek) from the universities of Baghdad, Cairo and Cordova had seeped into the intellectual tradition of Europe. This impact of East on West led directly to Europe's Renaissance. Now the pendulum is swinging the other way, and the impact of West on East may lead to the renaissance of the Moslem East. But it could also happen that it paves the way for forces which in the end merely substitute one kind of despotism for another—the Western or Russian totalitarian pattern in place of the old-style despotism of the Orient.

The attack of West on East has been threefold—by arms, by economic power, and by culture. In the nineteenth century these attacks were made on the whole separately and in uncoordinated fashion, but the present age is one of combined operations. Today powerful attacks are being made by forces in which all three elements are linked.

Economic and military power furthered Britain's imperial expansion in the Middle East during the nineteenth century, whereas culture as a means of penetration was left almost entirely to the French. French schools and missions in the Levant went far towards making French culture dominant, particularly in the Lebanon. In Egypt, even after the British occupation of 1882, French was the accepted culture in educated circles for a generation, almost to the exclusion of Arabic. The Italians too were for long more active in the cultural field than were the British, though American educational effort was marked at an early stage in Lebanon and Syria. Only gradually the teaching of English in secondary schools, first in Egypt, then in Palestine and elsewhere, and the founding of British and American educational establishments, have enabled the Anglo-Saxon world to overtake the cultural supremacy of France.

For Middle Eastern students the highlights of European and American history, as taught in the mission schools and colleges, are the revolutionary movements produced by national feeling and by the demand for democratic institutions. The West has taught the East that nationalism and the desire for sovereign independence are the most sacred of causes. It is not surprising that Eastern students have accepted this nationalistic creed almost like a new religion. Western educators in the Orient have not always realised the boomerang effect of their teaching: that it would undermine their own countries' imperial pretensions.

France expected political and economic assets to accrue from her cultural activity, and the activities of the British Council have sometimes been inspired by similar motives. But in far more systematic fashion than these erstwhile rivals Russia pursues an ideological campaign whose end is political domination.

When an alien civilisation makes its impact it tends to impose its moulds of organisation, thought and art. But underneath this crust

the older culture lives on, its outlines clear for all who care to look. If we view the newly created states of the Middle East as evolving, at greater or lesser speed, towards something European in standards and institutions, we may be making a mistake. The European camouflage barely conceals the older civilisation, which continues much the same as for centuries past. Elections take place with votes; uniformed police exist; civil services are modelled on the pattern of Paris or Whitehall. The eye rests on concrete buildings which might equally be found in New York or San Francisco; while the productions of Hollywood (not to mention other forms of Western entertainment) are abundantly available in all the larger towns. These things are superficial trappings.

Though elections and parliaments are alien to the Middle East, the Islamic world has its democratic tradition. All believers are brothers, according to the teaching of Mohammed, and as brothers, are entitled to dignity and respect. Islam has never accepted the caste system. Even under the worst tyrannies the highest careers have always been open to the poor man's son (or even the slave's) provided he had the necessary intelligence and drive. At the same time the extremes between privileged and unprivileged, rich and poor, are far greater than in Europe.

Especially in Iran, and to some extent elsewhere, power is wielded by great families, who usually own much land—though they seldom reside on their estates—and whose bailiffs wring the maximum rent from their undernourished and illiterate peasants. Absorbed in the social life, diversions and politics of the town, they are not easily distinguished from the moneyed families who have built up their wealth through trade or finance. In tribal territories like Sa'udi Arabia and Cyrenaica a similar situation exists: the chief families of the greater tribes are those who wield most power.

In Egypt and the other Middle East countries feudalism has been giving way to nationalism. But there are more powerful ideological forces at work than nationalism. Communists in particular know how to exploit the passion of nationalism to secure their own form of domination.

(b) From the Old World Order to the New

WE LIVE IN A TIME of rapid transition from one world-order, which is collapsing, to another which has not yet taken its place. This is the key to understanding what is going on in the Middle East.

We may roughly define the Middle East as the Arabic-speaking countries, plus Turkey and Iran.[1] Practically all this area until just over a century ago lay within the borders of the Ottoman Turkish Empire and Persia.[2] These provided a rough system of law and order, and gave the political framework for a largely Moslem society, in which however the rights of non-Moslems were fairly satisfactorily safeguarded. Government was autocratic and usually inefficient, but there was not much of it. Local authority was more important than central. Landlords or their agents rather than government officials determined the lot of the peasants, who were (as they still are) the majority of the population. Along with the much smaller number of town labourers at the bottom of the social scale, they endured poverty and oppression as they had all down the ages. A considerable number (far more than today) were bedouin, for whom life also was a constant struggle against a hard and relentless environment. Large areas—Egypt and the rest of North Africa—were ruled by pashas or beys, or in Persia came under nobles and tribal chiefs. Almost the sole interest of the rulers lay in collecting some taxes or a yearly tribute, and in drawing rents from the lands which they owned or could control.

The system was bad, and there was much suffering and injustice. But it was generally accepted and provided the background for a life which had its graces and culture for the better-off, and even for the poor had certain compensations which inherited faith and an ancient civilisation can provide. Not least of these were, and still are, the enchantment of language: the sonorous *suras* of the Koran

[1] Cyprus could also be included, and certainly should be if the military origin of the present use of the phrase is decisive—referring to the area for which G.H.Q. Middle East was responsible during the Second World War. But I am not dealing with Cyprus in this study, nor with any land west of Egypt or south of the Sudan.

[2] I follow older usage in calling Iran 'Persia' when treating the country historically, and reserve the term 'Iran' for dealing with it in its contemporary setting.

declaimed in the mosque, the verse of the Persian poet Sa'adi, the universal delight in the storyteller. Since the system was generally accepted, and almsgiving and other charitable works were encouraged by religion, the violent class-divisions which afflict modern states were not evident, and there was an appearance of harmony and balance.

The impact of the West meant that this system was undermined. It was partly replaced by the new world-order which the European powers were setting up, based on a brisk and growing international trade and on European ascendancy over non-European peoples. This world-order included the great colonial empires, vastly extended by the partition of almost all Africa between the European powers in the latter part of the nineteenth century. In the Ottoman, Persian and Chinese Empires, it secured privileges for the Europeans in the form of capitulations and concessions. The new empires and spheres of influence of the European powers, together with the rest of their system of world control, were guaranteed by the superior force and technical knowledge which they could deploy and especially by Britain's control of the seas. As far as the ocean routes were concerned, the 'Pax Britannica' was a reality; and the peace which the Royal Navy imposed at sea (for instance, by the abolition of piracy and of the slave trade) had its counterpart in a fair measure of peace and good administration maintained by the European powers over a large part of the land surface of the globe.

The price of these benefits was the privileges and profits of the Europeans. The continuance of this order depended on the 'concert' or agreement of the European powers, both in avoiding conflicts among themselves and in preventing any challenge to their supremacy by non-European peoples.

In the Middle East, the European ascendancy was maintained at the expense of the older imperial order of the Ottoman Empire and Persia. In part it was superimposed on it, with the régime of capitulations, consular courts, commissions of debt and spheres of influence. This system, whereby the Europeans gained financial and juridical privileges (leading to a measure of economic and political control), had its attractions for many of the local people. The hostility of the Arabs to Turkish domination led them to seek

the protection and privileges of the European powers—this applied particularly to Christian Arabs in the Levant—while the misgovernment by Turks or partly Turkish aristocracies (as in Egypt) made the poorer classes often ready to welcome the advantages of European administration.

But even before the First World War, this European system was being challenged. Nationalism had made its appearance throughout Asia and the Middle East. The war itself did much to discredit the system. It presented a spectacle of the European powers indulging apparently in a war of annihilation—the 'concert' was irretrievably shattered. It led to hardships and some injustice in parts of the Arab world, particularly in Egypt, which antagonised elements formerly friendly to the West. It led also to a deliberate encouragement of nationalism, notably by Britain, as a force which could be harnessed to help overthrow the Turks, just as the notion of national self-determination, powerfully preached by President Wilson after the United States entered the war, served to dismember the Austro-Hungarian and Russian Empires. Parties were being formed which borrowed the Western catchwords of democracy and freedom, and whose demands were for independence and the overthrow of foreign supremacy.

Between the wars, and more especially since the Second World War, the old order has been in full dissolution. Two attempts at replacing it have been made, first by the League of Nations, and then by the United Nations. The first attempt failed, and the second cannot yet be said to have succeeded. Both have depended, like the older system, on the concert of great powers (though now not exclusively the European powers). In the case of the United Nations, no such community of interests and no common principle exist between the communist bloc devoted to the world revolution and the remaining member states. The nearest approach to the old Concert of Europe is the Atlantic Alliance—but that has been so constructed as to exclude practically the whole of Africa and Asia from its sphere of operation.

If some new order is to be established after the painful period of transition through which the world is now passing—assuming that we will neither annihilate ourselves nor fall back into the depths of

a dark age—it will be shaped in large part by the forces of nationalism. But nationalism must be something more than a violent protest against the old order, or an expression of collective self-esteem. It has to be harnessed, as has begun to happen in the Middle East, to constructive tasks of rehabilitating and rebuilding the nations. This spirit, losing its exclusiveness, and looking also to the well-being of neighbours, could mark a turning-point in history.

Nationalism is a great force, but there are even greater forces in the field—those represented by the modern ideologies of which communism is the most obvious example. Communism, in its Russian (and more recently its Chinese) garb, is making a bid to reshape the world in accordance with its own concepts, and in the Middle East it has found a fertile field.

The sequence in the Middle East has roughly been as follows. The old imperialism of the Ottoman and Persian Empires was challenged by the imperialism of the West and Russia in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries; this in turn has been challenged by nationalism, and by the twentieth-century imperialism of Russia allied with the communist ideology. There is also the hope—which to be effective needs to be backed by an ideological force at least as potent as communism—that all these imperialist and nationalist conflicts will be resolved in a new world-order under a supra-national authority accepted by all. Whether this authority should be represented by the United Nations or some similar institution is a further question.

Ever since World War I Britain has been trying to ride two horses—support of an international authority (the League or the United Nations), and national or imperial self-interest. The Suez intervention was the last attempt at this impossible feat, the last kick, as it were, from both horses. Now a new policy must be found.

Historically our interest has always lain in having efficient, friendly states in the Middle East which could look after themselves while guaranteeing us facilities for trade and transit. Our soundest and most successful approach has been when we have tried to build these countries up, our weakest when we have attempted to dominate them by our superior strength. With the shifting of the balance of power to our disadvantage, and with the growth of nationalism in

the Middle East, the latter policy is more than ever revealed as impracticable. The question is really how to make a new start in reverting unconditionally to the policy of building up nations who for the most part are well disposed to be friendly once we cease to boss them or pull the strings to our advantage.

For us, as for them, the most urgent need is the renewal of social and political life, a new foundation for a new structure. Without a new birth of freedom in the West, the renaissance of the East will be retarded, or indefinitely postponed. 'Unity is the grace of rebirth.' The West united in this spirit will have the answer for the deep divisions of the Middle East.

Chapter Two

GREAT POWERS CLASH

(a) Power Politics and Ideology

AS EARLY AS THE END OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY Russian aims in the Middle East began to come clear. Russia had bitten off the Crimea and the Black Sea provinces north of the Pruth, and had temporarily acquired territory even further south. In 1800 Georgia was bequeathed by its last ruler to Russia, and before long there were encroachments southwards at the expense of the rich north-western provinces of Persia. In Central Asia Russia had reached the borders of Turkestan, and British statesmen soon perceived that Russian influence was coming uncomfortably near Afghanistan and the northern defences of India.

But far less alarm was felt in Britain on this account than that occasioned by Napoleon's Egyptian expedition of 1798, and his imaginative plan for threatening India by an advance through the Middle East. His occupation of Egypt and Palestine was doomed by Nelson's victory at Aboukir Bay, but Napoleon's attempt educated British statesmen in the strategic importance of the Middle East. From then on it became a maxim of British policy that no other power should have territory or influence in that area whereby the land or sea routes from England to India might be threatened.

Because Russia was on the offensive and Britain on the defensive, the relation of Britain to the peoples and states of the Middle East tended to be quite different from Russia's. Russian expansion showed itself in absorbing adjacent territories and in bringing under control those which were further away. This latter process was carried through either by satellites which it was hoped might be obedient, or by fostering internal divisions in the countries con-

cerned, thereby opening them up to political, economic and cultural penetration.

Britain, on the other hand, was mainly concerned to build the Middle East countries up so that they would be strong enough to keep out any other power. Since British resources, especially in manpower, were limited, British policy avoided trying to control territory directly, except for short periods and then with the expressed aim of doing so only until sufficiently strong and stable governments had been created.

In addition Britain also sought opportunities for trade and finance, but in this respect British interests were no different here than elsewhere in the world: her traders and investors wanted profits and dividends and were satisfied when the local governments were capable of maintaining the order necessary for trade, of guaranteeing the interest on loans, and of safeguarding a measure of prosperity as an essential condition of both trade and finance. It was only when these conditions were not fulfilled, as in Egypt under the Khedive Ismail, that commercial rather than strategic interests led Britain to intervene.

In the conflict between the two powers the position of Russia had always been strong. Her central situation enables her to have the advantage of interior lines, and to thrust outward at any point in the Eurasian land-mass which she dominates. Britain loosely holding the extremities, parried these successive thrusts, both by supporting those countries which were directly threatened as well as by building up spheres of influence further in the rear.

Other powers intervening in the area have been courted as allies by the two rivals, until the point where the intruders have directly threatened both Russian and British interests. At this point the rivals, usually at one another's throats, become brothers-in-arms, and their respective statesmen for a brief moment proclaim in hollow tones the eternal sacredness of Anglo-Russian friendship. Thus Russia and Britain drew together, along with other powers of Europe, to prevent the further extension of French influence in the 1830s and '40s, which was linked with the successful imperialist policy of France's ally, Mohammed Ali of Egypt. The united front of the powers dashed the hopes of both France and Mohammed Ali by

forcing the latter to evacuate all but his African possessions. Similarly the opening of the twentieth century saw Britain and Russia draw together against the threat of the Kaiser's imperial pretensions, extending through Turkey, which had become virtually a German dependency, towards the Persian Gulf by way of the Berlin-Baghdad railway and other enterprises. The Anglo-Russian war alliance of 1914-17 was repeated, again in the face of German expansion, in 1941-45.

Ever since the eighteenth century, when British and Russian interests began to conflict, the struggle has raged almost entirely on the diplomatic level. The 'cold war' has only once blazed into actual hostilities, in the Crimean War of 1854-56.[1]

Though the struggle between the two rivals was mainly for power and gain, important principles were also at stake. Russia was an autocracy which had inherited the organisation and traditions of Byzantium. The Russian state, like that of Byzantium, was 'totalitarian' in tendency: the church, for example, was considered by the authorities to exist almost solely as a support for the state, and was completely subject to it (Peter the Great had deposed the Patriarch to make himself head of the church). In culture and ideas Russia was the child of Byzantium, half Greek, half Asian, and despite the powerful influences from Western Europe under which she had come, differed markedly from the countries of the West, particularly from Protestant Britain.

The conflict between Britain and Russia was therefore not merely a struggle for power: it was also a war of ideas. Russian state organisation and outlook had much in common with those of her Asian neighbours such as Turkey and Persia. The Tsars preferred the neighbour states to be, like Russia, autocracies based on military power and a more or less inefficient bureaucracy. Britain, on the other hand, often desired to strengthen the Middle East countries by moulding them in her own image: she encouraged movements of reform designed to replace autocracy by constitutional monarchy based on parliamentary institutions and an incorruptible civil service.

[1] 'With Russia we are just as we were, snarling at each other, but neither wishing for war.' Lord Palmerston to William Temple, 1834. (Quoted in Philip Graves: *Briton and Turk*, p. 20.)

Whereas Russia worked to preserve oriental despotism, Britain fostered liberal democracy (though Britain, whose policy has frequently been empirical and marked by opportunism, often supported despotic régimes when it seemed expedient to do so).

Along these lines the conflict between the two great rivals has proceeded: Russia seeking to absorb, to penetrate, to divide and rule; Britain bolstering up Russia's potential victims by proclaiming the watchwords of democracy and freedom. Both powers in their struggle have used the weapons of culture, finance and armed might in order to win over or control the countries under dispute; both have regarded these countries primarily as pawns in the game rather than as ends in themselves.

Only since the Bolshevik Revolution has Russia been able to proclaim an ideology which rivals that of liberal democracy in putting forward apparently progressive social and political aims. In so doing she has strengthened herself enormously by arming herself with a weapon far more potent than any of Tsarist days—while retaining the other weapons, as well as the aims, of the pre-revolutionary era. Thus she has been able to count on people who support her policy in every Middle Eastern country, because they are adherents of the communist ideology. In this way she has stolen a march on Britain, who, as the nineteenth century wore on, could count on a growing number of enthusiasts for democracy and westernisation as elements in most Middle Eastern countries looking usually for British support.[1] But while it would be stretching the facts to call the pro-British elements in Middle Eastern countries a British 'fifth column' in the days before World War I, the communist elements in these countries today are expected to play the part of the fifth column for Russia.

Since the dominating issue between the two empires has been power, critics of Britain dismiss her liberal and democratic aims as hypocrisy or propaganda. But this is a mistake. British statesmen have indeed been concerned with power, but also with ideals of freedom and the well-being of other peoples. To concentrate on one aspect of British policy to the exclusion of the other is to do an injustice either to the underlying realism of British statesmen or to

[1] The Persian and Lebanese liberals for the most part looked to France.

their equally important idealism. For the British view has not merely been that, in the long run, Machiavellianism does not pay, but that in this world principles of freedom and justice are no less real—perhaps more real—than power or wealth. The fascination of British policy lies in unravelling the twin threads of moral aims and material ambitions.

Anglo-Russian interests first clashed at the western tip of the strategic crescent which lies between the Balkans and the Indian frontier. With Peter the Great, Russia's longing to possess Constantinople became crystallised. Strategically too, Russia, rapidly growing into a great power, could not tolerate that her southern exit through the Dardanelles should be controlled by another state.

The Russian objective was control of the larger part of the area which Turkey occupied on the map; the opportunity lay in the power-vacuum created by increasing weakness, a vacuum which the interested powers abhorred. As early as 1802 the Russian Foreign Office had observed that two alternative methods existed for reaching the desired objective: 'on the one hand, the policy of partition; on the other the maintenance of a feeble power at Constantinople under a Russian protectorate.'[1]

Turkey provided a convenient buffer between Russian and British spheres of influence. But in the seventeenth century she had entered on her long decline. Her outlying provinces were wrested from her, and the European nations began to exert a grip over her by gaining the commercial and legal privileges of the capitulations. These took both civil and criminal cases concerning European nationals, or between European nationals and Turkish subjects, out of the Turkish courts, and put them in the hands of the consuls, or consular courts, of the European powers.

It was in following the second alternative mentioned by the Russian government that a useful weapon was found in religion. Since the conquest of Constantinople in 1453, the Greek Orthodox and other Christian churches, as well as the Jews, had been organised as semi-autonomous communities known as nations (*millets*). In claiming to protect these churches and the minorities they repre-

[1] J. A. R. Marriott: *The Eastern Question*, p. 246.

sented the European powers found another way of strengthening their hold on the enfeebled body politic of Turkey.

First among European powers to gain privileges and influence in Turkey had been France, but Russia soon overtook her. After a victorious war Russia imposed on Turkey the Treaty of Kutschuk-Kainardji in 1774, whereby she not only gained control of the northern coast of the Black Sea, but obliged the Sultan 'to protect constantly the Christian religion and its churches.' Henceforward Russia claimed a right to ensure the protection of the Sultan's Greek Orthodox subjects, and so began a process of gaining influence within the Turkish Empire by using the church as an instrument of policy. Other powers, notably France (who claimed to protect the Catholics), followed suit, but Russia has pursued this policy more consistently than her rivals, and still continues to do so as opportunity offers.

In 1850 an opportunity was presented by the diplomacy of Napoleon III, whose objectives and aims in the Near East were similar to those of Russia. Napoleon championed the dormant claims of the Catholic monks to the custodianship of the Holy Places at Jerusalem and Bethlehem; the Tsar, with equal ardour, countered by championing the claims in this matter of the Orthodox Church. The first rounds, which concerned the immediate issue of the Holy Places, were won by France. Russia therefore replied by enlarging her claim, to one of protecting all the Orthodox subjects of Turkey, which was to be embedded in a formal treaty. This was strongly opposed by Britain who, in the words of the Foreign Secretary, saw that, if this claim were accepted, 'a perpetual right to interfere in the internal affairs of Turkey would be conferred upon Russia. . . . Fourteen millions of Greeks would henceforth regard the Emperor (Tsar) as their supreme protector, and their allegiance to the Sultan would be little more than nominal, while his own independence would dwindle into vassalage.'[1]

At the same time Britain refused to do a deal with Russia on the basis of agreeing to partition the territories of the 'sick man' (in the Tsar's phrase) between them, in case 'he should slip away before all necessary arrangements have been made.' Opposition both to this

[1] Lord Clarendon to Lord Stratford, May 31, 1853, In Marriott, op. cit., p. 257.

scheme and to Russia's claims regarding the Orthodox Church eventually led to the Crimean War, whereby Britain, France, Turkey and Piedmont temporarily set limits to Russia's advance at Turkey's expense.

Tsar Nicholas I's concern about the Holy Places was indicative of a continuing Russian interest in the Levant. Russia aimed to offset France's claim to a special position there by virtue of protecting the Catholics. The Protestants—fruits of recent missionary endeavour —looked to Britain (latterly also to America) as their protector, but they were too few in number to provide an adequate stepping-stone to power.

The Bolshevik Revolution led to the temporary abandonment by Russia of her aims in Turkey and the Levant. But since the end of the Second World War Russia has turned once again to the attack, and again one of her weapons is the concern for religious minorities. The church in Russia, purged by years of persecution of elements not desired by the communists, is once more regarded as a suitable instrument in their hands. Ecclesiastics of all denominations have been invited from Middle Eastern countries to confer with Russian clergy within the U.S.S.R. The full blast of Soviet propaganda, in which Russia poses as a friend of religion, has been directed to turn these people into sympathisers with Soviet ideas, or even as outright supporters of Soviet policy. The new line began when the Patriarch Sergius was sent at the head of an official Russian Church delegation in 1945 to visit Cairo and the Holy Places at Jerusalem. Russian interest in the education of Orthodox children has also been shown, and a scheme was initiated of building schools for 40,000 pupils.

To the communists Islam is another church, to be used in the same ways for their own ends. Therefore the same strategy is followed as in the case of the Christian churches—to undermine the moral influence of Islam, while using (or failing that, neutralising) it as a factor in the seizure of power. Parallel with the measure of religious freedom granted in 1941 to the emasculated Orthodox Church and the subsequent election of a Patriarch, the Moslem religion has recently been given some encouragement in Russia, and Soviet Moslems have been allowed to choose a Mufti.

A new propaganda campaign was opened in 1944, and has been

proceeding cumulatively ever since. For a long time the Lebanon was the main channel for a spate of communist literature in Arabic. The Soviet embassies at Cairo, Beirut and other capitals, equipped with outsize staffs, are centres of this activity, as are Soviet and satellite consulates. Communist propaganda takes many forms, and to aid its appeal in the Middle East, communist agents are trained to pose as good Moslems, and in this guise to spread their ideas. Many Moslems of this type are on the staffs of the Soviet embassies and legations.

After World War II, for the first time since the revolution, Soviet Moslems were allowed to make the pilgrimage to Mecca (the trip was of course a state-organised affair, the pilgrims being carefully handpicked by the authorities). Attempts have been made to attract students to the Moslem University at Bokhara which, however, is far from overtaking the prestige of the thousand-year-old Azhar at Cairo. Trial balloons have been sent up, such as a reported project to re-establish the caliphate, this time on Soviet soil.[1]

On the religious level, Russian policy has not scored any striking successes so far. Devout Moslems consider the materialistic doctrines of Marxism as utterly in contradiction to their own religion. An Azhar student who presented a thesis which tried to prove the similarity in aim of Marxism and Islam was denounced as a heretic. Nor is there much chance that the masses can be weaned from their ingrained attachment to Islam. But on the ideological and political levels, communism makes a strong appeal, particularly to the intellectuals, and it is along these lines that Moscow's policy is proceeding.

[1] Sultan Abdul Hamid II (1876-1909) revived the claims of the Sultan as Caliph in order to pose as a great Islamic leader. By advertising the benefit to pilgrims of what was to be a stategic railway linking Damascus with Medina (and eventually Mecca), he obtained one-third of the cost of construction by voluntary donations from all parts of the Moslem world. 'He had a number of picked emissaries scouring the Arab world in the guise of preachers whose real mission was to sow or fan discord between the feudal chiefs and the heads of the larger nomadic confederations. . . . He subsidised agents to provoke disturbances of the peace in order to provide visible pretexts for the punishment of some recalcitrant chieftain or leader marked down for vengeance.' (G. Antonius: *The Arab Awakening*, p. 72.)

(b) Turkey and Persia as Spheres of Conflict

EGYPT IS THE CLASSIC EXAMPLE of a Middle Eastern country where European penetration culminated in a protectorate. Turkey, though exposed far earlier than Egypt to European influences, did not suffer the same fate owing to the rivalry between the powers, particularly Britain and Russia. For the same reason Persia also has preserved a precarious independence.

Rivalry between France and Britain seemed likely at one time to prevent the complete ascendancy of either power in Egypt at the expense of the other. But France's weakness, marked by her defeat in 1870-1, left the field open for Britain. Events followed a clear-cut pattern of successive stages: Anglo-French economic and financial penetration leading to attempted financial control; military occupation by Britain for imposing this control and establishing law and order (especially the protection of Europeans and their property); administrative reform under British direction, accompanied by westernisation in other spheres (education, health); finally (since Britain was the controlling power) the creation of institutions designed to lead up to a form of parliamentary democracy. It was hoped, as this stage was reached, that Egypt would become a sound and stable state, fit for independence on a democratic basis.

In the case of Turkey and Persia the same broad pattern emerges, but with the difference that no one power was sufficiently in control in either country to foster a steady evolution. Both countries adopted westernisation as a means of saving themselves from extinction, but Turkey's attempt, which began earlier than Persia's, has gone much further.

Both countries began with the institution most necessary for self-defence, the army. Westernisation here brings about other results than the purely military: staff colleges and technical schools have made army officers from Mohammed Ali to Gamal Abdel Nasser the pioneers of nationalism and reform. They also involve in the long run a whole paraphernalia of Western institutions: hospitals, medical schools, roads, railways and telegraphs, a Western-type educational system and a reasonably efficient civil service.

Just as Mohammed Ali got rid of the Mamelukes of Egypt by

massacring them, his contemporary, Sultan Mahmud II of Turkey, 'liquidated' the Janissaries. This corps, originally recruited exclusively from Islamised children of the Ottoman Empire's Christian subjects, had been in its prime the finest military force of its day. But like all other Turkish institutions, it had suffered decay. To make way for a force on the Western model and up to Western standards of efficiency, Sultan Mahmud caused the Janissaries to be shot to pieces by their own guns and their barracks burnt down (1826). The creation of a new army, supervised increasingly by Prussian, later German, officers, proceeded apace. Although set on foot while the War of Greek Independence was still in progress, it was strong enough three years later to save Constantinople from the Russians, and 'undoubtedly saved Turkey from extinction during the last century.'[1] The most remarkable officer produced by its military college, Mustafa Kemal, saved the Dardanelles from the British in 1915, and eventually revolutionised on Western lines what was left of Turkey in order to ensure its survival in the twentieth century.

While the westernised army in Turkey has proved a strong enough nucleus around which the new state could grow up, the same cannot be said of Persia. There military reform was ineffective, except for the Persian Cossack Brigade, officered and trained by Russians. In Tsarist days the Cossack Brigade was mainly an instrument for enforcing Russian policy, but, like the Turkish army, it too produced its nationalist saviour in the person of Reza Khan.

In both countries administrative reform was halting. As everywhere in the Orient there was for long no distinction between the civil list of the monarch and the state budget proper. There were no accounting systems worthy of the name, and the taxes, arbitrarily extorted by those to whom they were farmed out, crushed the poor while the rich escaped—until their fortunes were confiscated by the ruler, a not unusual occurrence. But Sultan Mahmud and Nasr-al-Din Shah (1848-96) played a similar role to that of Mohammed Ali in borrowing some reforms from the West, though they never went far enough to ward off the West's financial control.

As in Egypt, European financial penetration increased rapidly

[1] A. J. Toynbee: *The Western Question in Greece and Turkey*, p. 19.

in the nineteenth century, and soon led to direct intervention. The rulers, making use of European financial resources for lavish borrowing, which was in large measure squandered, soon found themselves unable to meet their obligations. The powers then took control of the customs, as they did in Egypt, in order to raise revenue for meeting the interest payment on loans from their nationals. Russia took over Persia's customs in 1828, while in Turkey the government lost control of various sources of revenue to a council of foreign bondholders in 1881 (by which time the total national debt was estimated at £250,000,000—a colossal sum if revalued at current rates).

But no single power was sufficiently dominant effectively to reorganise the finances and the administration in general. Both countries suffered from the internal weakness brought on by the capitulations and other privileges secured by foreigners, and by these foreigners' quarrelling over advantages which they sought to gain at their rivals' expense. Thus Germans vied with the French to gain supreme economic control over Turkey. Between 1882 and 1914 their share of the Turkish government debt rose from 5 per cent to 20 per cent, besides large-scale industrial investment such as that in the Baghdad Railway. The French, however, maintained their position through control of the Ottoman Bank, which raised its loans in Paris.[1] In Persia financial control was likewise divided: British interests, in the person of Baron Julius de Reuter, gained a concession for establishing the Imperial Bank of Persia in 1889, while two years later a similar banking concession was given to the Russians. Economic competition took place also in other fields: the concession for building and operating the telegraph system went to Britain, while the Russians gained control over the Caspian fisheries, valuable for their caviar.

The resentment aroused among Persians by the concession to a British subject of a monopoly for the production, domestic sale and export of tobacco in 1890 was so great that the Shah was obliged to cancel it—an event which marked the beginning of a fall in British influence, and the growth of a new national spirit in Persia. It also marked a victory for Russia, who hastened to support the Persians

[1] J. Parker and C. Smith: *Modern Turkey*, p. 34.

against Britain over this issue. Although this was partly offset by the Shah having to borrow £500,000 from the (British) Imperial Bank of Persia to pay the compensation for cancelling the concession, the Russians overbid Britain again by making Persia a loan of £2,400,000 (1900) guaranteed by receipts from the customs, on condition that the British loan should be paid off at once, and Russia become Persia's sole creditor. This initiated a period of Russian dominance, and the partial disintegration of the Persian state. In the circumstances it is remarkable that the oil concession in the south was made to a British subject, William d'Arcy—in the north the concession naturally went to the Russians.

On the constitutional side attempts were made at reform, but, as in Egypt, two tendencies can be noted: one, the desire of genuinely enthusiastic westernisers, like Midhat Pasha in Turkey and some of the leaders of the constitutional movement of 1906 in Persia; the other, that of rulers like Ismail in Egypt or Abdul Hamid in Turkey, who were ready to initiate constitutional reforms as a sop to the Western powers, while using them as a front behind which they could continue unhindered on their despotic course. This ruse was used several times in Turkey, notably in 1877, in order to win over British support against Russia, who was threatening military aid to Serbia, Montenegro and the Bulgarians in their war against Turkey. A conference of the powers and Turkey met at Constantinople to deal with the crisis, and as it 'was about to open its proceedings in the hall of the Admiralty overlooking the Golden Horn a cannon fired the first of 101 rounds. "Gentlemen," explained Safret Pasha, the senior Turkish delegate, "the cannon you have heard is the signal for the promulgation by His Majesty the Sultan of a Constitution guaranteeing the rights and liberties of all the subjects of the empire without distinction. In the presence of this great event I feel that our task is superfluous." '[1] Disraeli was fooled by this trick. 'The new Sultan,' he told Lord Salisbury, 'really promises.' He failed to realise that such promises were seldom translated into performance. Other friends of Turkey had already discovered in the case of Abdul Hamid's predecessors that 'the Sultan's zeal for

[1] Philip Graves: *Briton and Turk*, p. 38.

reform was in direct ratio to his desire for self-preservation.'[1] Abdul Hamid himself did not wait long before the inspirer of his reforms, Midhat Pasha, was dismissed, exiled and finally strangled. The constitution remained suspended for the next 30 years.

The 'Committee of Union and Progress' which overthrew Abdul Hamid in 1908 was more sincere in creating the Turkish parliament (assembly) of that year. The 'Young Turks', who carried through this 'revolution', represented in a militant form the dynamic factor of nationalism which one of their number, Mustafa Kemal, was eventually to harness in reconstructing Turkey as a modern state. For the time being however, he took only a minor part, and soon withdrew from politics to devote himself to his military career. The programme of westernisation and nationalism of the Young Turks was in any case impracticable if linked with a policy of preserving the empire, since to admit the national claims of the non-Turks, or even to give them equal democratic rights, would soon have led to their demand for independence. There seemed some chance that the Arab provinces would remain loyal, since many Arab leaders were at the time ready to accept staying in the empire as long as their areas were granted wide powers of local government and adequate representation in the Assembly at Constantinople. But the speedy revolt of the Balkan provinces, leading to the Balkan wars, showed the probable outcome of such a policy. At the same time internal troubles provided an excuse for the Young Turk leaders to impose a dictatorship.

The movement of 1906 in Persia, partly inspired by the 1905 revolution in Russia, led to the promulgation of the constitution which is still in existence. All the influential groups—the westernised intelligentsia, the merchant community, the religious leaders—drew together to force the Shah to accept the constitution, which set up parliamentary government on the Belgian model. This development was welcomed by the British, but strongly opposed by the Russians, who encouraged the Shah to go to extremes in flouting the constitution. They set the Persian Cossack Brigade in motion to restore the unbridled tyranny of the Shah by means of a *coup d'état*. In the face of such blatant intervention and the continued bickering of the

[1] Marriott: *Eastern Question*, p. 14.

two powers, the constitutional régime had little chance of flourishing. Although it has continued in existence, the Majlis (parliament) was for long a playground for Persian notables in their games of power and intrigue, or a rubber stamp for the measures of Reza.

In any case the social foundation for democratic government no more existed in Persia than it did in Ottoman Turkey or khedivial Egypt. Nor did Persia feel the guiding hand of any strong and enlightened westerner, such as Egypt found in the person of Lord Cromer, and Turkey for a period (1841-58) in Stratford Canning (Lord Stratford de Redcliffe), the 'Great Ambassador', as the Turks called him.

Unfortunately Stratford's attempts to persuade the Turks to transform their obsolete empire into a stable westernised constitutional monarchy were fruitless, and his successors had far less influence than the Russian ambassador Ignatieff. After Kaiser Wilhelm II initiated his forward policy in Turkey, German influence became supreme, especially as exercised by von Bieberstein, who became ambassador in 1897.

Both countries nearly suffered partition and mandatory control at the hands of European powers. Britain, having raised hopes among the liberals in Persia by first supporting the constitution in 1906, then earned their well-merited disgust by doing a deal with Russia in 1907. By this, Persia was divided into two spheres of influence, Russian in the north and British in the south, separated by a narrow 'neutral' zone. This arrangement might have culminated in partition, but for Russia's collapse in 1917. The British-organised South Persian Rifles then virtually took over the entire country, and Lord Curzon, as Foreign Secretary, drafted a treaty (accepted by the Shah but not ratified by the Majlis) which would have turned Persia into a British protectorate (1919). Curzon, preoccupied with guaranteeing India's flank against Bolshevik penetration, hoped to regenerate Persia as a buffer state by following the prescription which had been attempted in Egypt. This involved British control of army, police, administration and finance by means of a military mission and advisers with full powers in the ministries. Britain would have put up a two million pound loan, and there would have been joint

Anglo-Persian development of railways and other means of transport.

Negative reactions to this treaty in America foreshadowed the role which America was to play in Persia, displacing Britain, a generation later. In the event it became clear that Britain had already overstrained her resources of wealth and manpower. The axe of retrenchment was falling, and when Reza Khan came forward to give the death-blow to the British scheme, Britain accepted the *fait accompli* without a murmur.[1] If the aim was the strengthening of Persia as a buffer state against Russia it was cheaper and easier for a Persian to do it, even if his method had nothing in common with parliamentary democracy and constitutional monarchy (in fact Reza soon turned the last of the Qajars off the throne and installed himself as the first Shah of the House of Pahlevi).

Similarly regarding Turkey. After she joined with Germany in 1914, the Allies had turned to the policy originally sponsored by Russia of carving the sick man up (though England did not abandon her traditional policy without regret). Russia was to have gained long-coveted Constantinople and the Straits, and to compensate for this Britain and France were to gain territory and spheres of influence in the former Arab provinces of the empire. Most of Anatolia was to be divided up among Russia, Italy, France and Greece. After the first phase of the Russian Revolution in March 1917 successive liberal governments at Petrograd denounced all war-time annexations, a gesture later confirmed by the Bolsheviks. But the other powers would each have received their pound of flesh as laid down in the abortive Treaty of Sèvres of 1920 (like the Anglo-Persian Treaty of the same period, it was signed by the ruler but never ratified by the Assembly). An Allied commission sitting in Constantinople was to watch over the Straits, which were to be demilitarised, while Anatolia was to be further whittled down by the creation of two new independent states of Armenia and Kurdistan.

This plan was thwarted by the resurgence of Turkey under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal. Kemal obtained arms from the Bol-

[1] Harold Nicolson, then Counsellor at the British Legation, claims that it was 'largely' due to the British Minister that Reza was enabled to climb to power. See A. Millspaugh: *Americans in Persia,* p. 25, note.

sheviks and by raiding Allied stores. He resisted the French in Anatolia and drove the Greek army into the sea. As in the case of Persia, Britain realistically changed her approach to suit the occasion, and after narrowly escaping a war with Kemal when his troops violated their zone of occupation at Chanak (1922), proceeded to recognise the new order by the Treaty of Lausanne (1923).

Kemal put through a series of westernising reforms: the abolition of both sultanate and caliphate and the removal of clerical influence from politics; the substitution of a legal system based on the Swiss model in place of the Islamic law; the introduction of the Latin script in place of Arabic; the emancipation of women; and the beginnings of industrialisation. These have eventually led on to the transition to parliamentary democracy.

The National Assembly, which had been part of the 1876 constitution restored by the Young Turks in 1908, had soon been perverted by them as a cloak for their own despotism. But with the defeat of 1918, the prestige of the ideas of parliamentary democracy had increased, and elections for a new National Assembly had taken place the following year. This Assembly had come out in support of Kemal's programme (this was shortly after Kemal had initiated the nationalist movement in those areas of Anatolia not occupied by the Allies). On the arrest of its leaders by the Allies and their deportation to Malta, the remaining deputies had escaped to join Kemal at Ankara, soon to be declared the new capital. There, it and its successors voted Kemal's reforms through, but the Assembly soon ceased to be a democratic body. The only sizeable opposition party, the Progressive Party, was dissolved in 1925, and a year later those leaders whom Kemal considered as irredeemably opposed to him were hung. His encouragement of an experimental opposition (Liberal Republican) Party in 1930 was shortlived, and Kemal ruled as President through the People's Republican Party until his death in 1938.

His successor, Ismet Pasha, who had assumed the name of Inönü, took the next step towards democratic government. Shortly after World War II he supported the efforts of Celal Bayer and other dissidents of the People's Republican Party to set up a new (Democratic) Party. After gaining 62 seats in 1946, despite rigging of the

election by the government, it went on to a decisive victory with a majority of 329 in 1950. This was facilitated by a new electoral law, approved by both major parties, which provided for completely free elections with secret ballot and the public counting of votes. The Democratic Party maintained this position in the election of 1954, due partly to its more liberal attitude to Islam (for instance permitting facilities for religious education in state schools).

The dream of Stratford Canning and others has in this way at last been accomplished. Instead of the effete and obsolete Ottoman Empire there is a Turkey, truncated it is true, but vigorous and independent, and enjoying something of the blessings of parliamentary democracy. Atatürk (as Kemal called himself) was an agnostic who worshipped the goddess 'Western Civilisation'[1]—so that it is a Turkey, outwardly at least westernised, which stands at mid-twentieth century. Perhaps its modern institutions are not yet all that the Western reformer, or Atatürk himself, would have wished, and in Turkey itself considerable misgivings have been aroused by the democrats confiscating all the property of the People's Republican Party (December 1953), closing its branch offices, and taking over its paper *Ulus*, originally founded by Atatürk. In 1954 a Press Law was passed increasing the penalties for libel or spreading inaccurate information 'calculated to endanger the political and economic stability of the country'—this has led to the imprisonment of journalists writing for the opposition. But when all is said, Turkey can make good her claim to be a modern nation, fully aware of her wider responsibilities.

Nevertheless the Turks are not convinced that Russia has abandoned her old intentions. This anxiety—and a good deal of respect for their old friend, Germany—had prevented them from taking an active part on the side of the Allies in World War II, in spite of the treaty they had signed with Britain and France in October 1939 which bound them to come to these countries' help in case of aggression in the Mediterranean area by a European Power. In fact

[1] For instance: 'Resistance to the flood-tide of civilisation is in vain; she is pitiless towards those who ignore or disobey her. Civilisation pierces the hills, soars in the skies, sees and illuminates and studies all things, from the invisible atoms to the stars.' Quoted in G. L. Lewis: *Turkey* (Benn, 1955), p. 110.

they allowed thinly disguised German naval auxiliaries to go through the Straits into the Black Sea, in defiance of this treaty and—so the Russians claimed—of the Montreux Convention.

The Montreux Convention of 1936 (still in force) was the successor of the Treaty of Lausanne, so far as the Straits were concerned. This had placed certain limitations on the passage of warships, those governing war conditions being somewhat different from those in peace-time; it had demilitarised the Straits, and had set up an International Straits Commission, responsible to the League of Nations, for supervising its enforcement. The Montreux Convention permitted Turkey to fortify the Straits, and turned over to the Turkish Government the duties of the International Straits Commission. In other words, it was up to Turkey to apply the restrictive clauses on the passage of warships through the Straits, and in war-time Turkey had absolute discretion in this matter, subject only to the overriding decisions of 'the Council of the League of Nations'.[1] . . .

Russia refused to renew the non-aggression treaty she had had with Turkey, and went on to demand a revision of the Montreux Convention. This demand followed along the lines of the secret agreement between Russia and Germany of November 1940 (the period of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact), knowledge of which had already alarmed Turkey about Russia's intentions. It had looked to a revision of the Montreux Convention which would take all restrictions on the passage of the Straits off Russian warships, 'whereas all other Powers except the other Black Sea countries, but including Germany and Italy, would in principle renounce the right of passage through the Straits for their naval vessels.'[2] Further, the new arrangements were to be guaranteed 'by the establishment of a base for land and naval forces of the U.S.S.R. within range of the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles by means of a long-term lease.'[3] With the end of the war these demands came into the light of day. Besides special rights for her own warships, Russia demanded that she and Turkey should jointly organise the defence of the Straits. The year before,

[1] J. C. Hurewitz: *Diplomacy in the Near and Middle East,* II, Document 60, Convention (Montreux) on the Turkish Straits Régime, Article 21.
[2] Hurewitz, Document 67, Secret Protocol No. 2 (3).
[3] *Ibid.* Schulenburg to the German Foreign Office, November 26, 1940.

Russia had already demanded the cession of Turkey's eastern provinces of Kars and Ardahan (June 1945).

On these points Turkey refused to enter into discussions with Russia, on the grounds that she could accept no modification in the Montreux Convention (except for the substitution of the United Nations for the League), unless with the consent of the other main co-signatory, Britain. Britain was naturally not disposed to accede to Russia's requests, while America, though not a signatory of the Convention, showed where her sympathies lay by sending friendship missions of American warships to Turkey. This was followed up by application of the Truman Doctrine and Marshall Aid to Turkey (also to Greece), in March 1947, just after Britain had made known her inability to continue on the same scale her extensive military and financial contribution to the security of these countries.[1]

Such a step was necessary if Turkey was to be saved from bankruptcy, and enabled to modernise herself sufficiently to be viable economically and in defence matters. The Russian threat was causing her to keep a million men under arms, a far bigger burden than she could maintain out of a population of 23 million, and one that took too many peasants of working age out of agriculture. American aid has shored up her economy (though it has not yet had the effect of making it really sound), but in terms of defence Turkey's effectiveness has greatly increased. Her swift shouldering of responsibility in the Korean War, with the despatch of a brigade of over 5,000 troops (subsequently raised to 7,000) signalised a valuable addition to the U.N. fighting force. After some delay Turkey's application for admittance into NATO was accepted (ratification of this step was completed in February 1952), and Izmir (Smyrna) was chosen as the headquarters of the new South-East European Command. Since then a further chapter in Turkey's history has opened with her Treaty of Friendship with Pakistan (February 1954), which became the basis of the Baghdad Pact.

[1] To Turkey had gone, since the end of the war to the beginning of 1947, 400 aircraft for the Turkish Air Force, and naval vessels and equipment worth over £2½ million. G. L. Lewis: *Turkey*, p. 140.

Chapter Three

ENTER AMERICA

(a) Prelude

THREE FACTORS have brought America into the Middle East—Zionism, strategy and oil. For long the State Department avoided recognising the Middle East as a vital sphere of interest—it was a British sphere, and the Americans could count on Britain following a policy with which in general (though by no means always in detail) they were in broad agreement.

In World War I America took the first steps towards world leadership. Spurred on by Wilson's vision and enthusiasm, the State Department began to frame something which might have become a Middle East policy, before its schemes were swept away by the retreat to isolation. America underwrote the Balfour Declaration (and subsequently agreed to the British Mandate over Palestine); sent the King-Crane Commission to investigate the possibilities for a settlement of the Arab territories of the Turkish Empire; showed an active interest in the question of the Dardanelles; supported Lloyd George's blue-print of an Armenia under American mandate; and reacted violently against the abortive Anglo-Persian treaty of 1919. The last point is perhaps the most significant: for while American senators denounced the treaty as the virtual annexation of Persia, 'American oil interests in the Middle East looked with active jealousy on their British rivals.'[1]

Apart from a continuing interest in Palestine, which reflected the influence of New York's two million Jews, and a sympathetic view of private missionary and cultural enterprises such as the American University of Beirut, the State Department's attitude to the Middle

[1] Philip Graves: *Life of Sir Percy Cox*, p. 258.

East remained one of indifference during the twenty years which preceded Pearl Harbor. Only then the necessity of buttressing the British and Russian war-efforts led to American intervention in the Middle East.

To begin with, this was purely military, and concerned the question of supplies, particularly by way of Persia to Russia. Here the Americans co-operated with and virtually took over from the British the herculean task of shifting millions of dollars' worth of goods along Reza Shah's mountainous trans-Iranian railway and by the difficult roads from the Persian Gulf to the Caspian. Lend-lease supplies by this route turned the tide of battle and made Russia's victory at Stalingrad possible.

Lend-lease was also needed to secure the minimum degree of well-being in the Middle East countries necessary for their continued service as bases of the Allied war-effort. America had to help Britain to prevent living-costs in the Middle East from soaring to the point where flaring discontent might prejudice the security of camps, workshops and lines of communication. To this end goods were pumped into these countries, while productivity and distribution were streamlined through the agency of the Middle East Supply Centre, an Anglo-American organisation.

Meanwhile American businessmen, including some of those who were helping operate MESC, were keeping a wary eye open for possibilities of using lend-lease as a spearhead for opening the area permanently to greatly increased trade with America. Oil-men too were hunting concessions, and had marked out one in South-east Iran, till Russian intervention made the potato too hot for the State Department to hold. (In Sa'udi Arabia American oil interests had been well established before the war.)

With the crumbling of both Britain's world position and her local paramountcy in the Middle East, America had to face the responsibilities which she had hitherto avoided. Especially after 1945 it was clear that she had power, economic and to some extent political, both in Palestine and Sa'udi Arabia, and by implication in the Arab world as a whole; but Britain still had the responsibility. The sign that the new realities of power were beginning to be recognised was the turning over by Britain to America, in 1947, of the responsibility

for arming and economically rehabilitating Greece and Turkey. But in Palestine and Iran Britain continued to exercise responsibility without adequate power until the bankruptcy of her policies was revealed. This was shown when the end of the Palestine Mandate was the signal for the Arab-Israeli war and the uprooting of 800,000 Arabs, when Britain's position in Iran collapsed at a push from Mossadegh, and when the country finally floundered into the quicksands of the Suez adventure.

America has not yet discovered a Middle East policy, because no clear principle has yet been worked out for harmonising policy in the three fields where it is liable to be at cross-purposes—Israel, the oil-interests, and strategy. This explains the blunderings and frustrations of American policy, and the continuation of the unstable period since the weakening of British power at the end of World War I—an instability which lays the area increasingly open to Russian and communist penetration.

(b) America and Oil

AMERICA HAD TAKEN THE FIRST STEPS towards obtaining a share of the Middle East oil industry soon after World War I, when the State Department requested Britain and France to apply the 'open door' policy regarding the oil resources of the Turkish Empire.[1] British and German interests, brought together by the efforts of C. S. Gulbenkian, had formed the Turkish Petroleum Company, which had gained from the Turkish government a promise of an oil concession in Mesopotamia in June 1914. The British and the French, together with Gulbenkian (who clung on to his 5 per cent interest whatever the metamorphoses of the company), had agreed that the German 25 per cent share in the T.P.C. should be transferred to French interests—as part of a deal in which Britain's share was the oil-bearing region of Mosul and Kirkuk, to be allocated to Iraq under British mandate. After considerable pressure the

[1] Hurewitz II, Document 30, p. 77.

Americans were allowed in, several oil companies combining for the purpose in the Near East Development Corporation.

This gave the American oil-interests concerned a share in the exploitation of oil in Iraq, where the territory covered by the T.P.C. concession lay[1] (renamed Iraq Petroleum Company in 1929). But by the 'Red Line agreement,' into which the component companies of T.P.C. entered in 1928, the Americans, like their fellow-members, were restricted from obtaining concessions in other parts of the former Turkish Empire, except with the consent of the other T.P.C. members.[2] Because of this the Gulf Corporation were unable, in 1928, to take up a concession for Bahrein, since the I.P.C. (formerly T.P.C.) would neither take up the concession itself nor let Gulf have it on its own. Later, however, Standard of California—not a party to the Red Line agreement—was allowed in, with British rights safeguarded by the creation of a new Canadian company (Bahrein Petroleum Co., or 'Bapco') in which Standard participated.[3]

This led on to American exploitation of the highly productive oil-fields in Sa'udi Arabia, though the original American companies in I.P.C. were excluded from participating in the concession there owing to the Red Line agreement. After the war, however, they announced that they considered these restrictions annulled, and made an agreement to take up shares in Aramco, the successor of Standard in Sa'udi Arabia. This action was validated only after a prolonged legal struggle against it by two members of I.P.C., the Compagnie Française and Mr. Gulbenkian. In the event, the Aramco fields in Sa'udi Arabia became so profitable that the American companies lost interest in obtaining sources of production elsewhere in the Middle East, notably in Iran, where at one time they had been trying to effect an entry.

[1] The T.P.C. also had the right of first refusal on any new concession in the area.

[2] In 1931 the concession was revised to restrict the area to the Mosul and Baghdad vilayets east of Tigris, in return for having a free hand there instead of merely claims to certain plots throughout the whole of Iraq.

[3] S. H. Longrigg: *Oil in the Middle East* (O.U.P., 1954), p. 102.

Chapter Four

PERSIAN OIL

(a) The Powers and Persia

OF ALL THE MIDDLE EAST COUNTRIES Persia more than any other was the testing-ground for nascent American policies. Elsewhere Britain was too well entrenched for America to play an independent role, but in Persia the situation invited decisive intervention on the part of the newcomer to the Middle East arena.

The first steps towards American intervention in Persia had been unofficial. In 1910 the Persian Government asked for an American mission to put the country's finances in order. It was also hoped that profitable financial links might be developed with America, and that America might act as champion of Persian rights in the face of Russian and British encroachments. So originated the ill-fated mission headed by W. Morgan Shuster, which arrived in Iran in 1911. It departed a few months later, as a result of a Russian demand backed by the threat of marching on Teheran. Although the State Department had been at pains to point out that this mission was in no way official, the Russians suspected that it was the thin end of the wedge of American intervention. When Shuster showed he meant business by organising a gendarmerie in order to enforce payment of taxes, including those owed by protégés of Russia, the Russians decided it was time for him to go. The British too, having recently agreed with Russia on the sphere of influence policy (1907), were in no mood to support Shuster, and in fact found his request for a British officer to organise his gendarmerie extremely embarrassing.

The second American financial mission, also unofficial, under Dr. Arthur C. Millspaugh, had more success. It arrived in 1922, and

coincided with Reza's rise to power. But its existence, and certainly its effectiveness, depended on the despot's backing, and when Reza began to use his own forceful methods to exact money from Persians for his own purpose, the mission's programme was at once in jeopardy. By then the country's financial administration had been overhauled, and this made possible Reza's numerous constructive enterprises, such as the trans-Iranian railway, carried out by capital raised entirely within the country. Millspaugh's protest to Reza about his exactions produced only a negative response, and in 1927 he and his American associates resigned.

America's third chance in Persia came with World War II. Reza's flirtation with the Nazis gave Britain and Russia little option but to intervene. In August 1941 they occupied the country, Russia the north and Britain from Teheran southwards. Reza was deported to Johannesburg, where he died not long after. America's entry into the war speeded the flow of lend-lease, led to the Americans taking over the railway, and to their having an ever larger share in running the economy of the country. It was logical that, since finance was the key to the entire administration, another American mission should attempt the needed reforms to make the country an efficient base and line of communication. Dr. Millspaugh was again invited to head the mission.

Twenty years of Reza's rule had not made his task any easier. State monopolies had multiplied, to the advantage of unscrupulous individuals and cliques who operated them under political guarantees. The bureaucracy had become even more swollen and inefficient. The sense of responsibility among government servants, politicians and public was at a low ebb, while tax-evasion had become a highly developed art.

To be successful Millspaugh's attempt to bring order out of this chaos depended on two conditions: first that he should have adequate backing from Washington, and secondly that he should have enough expert personnel, American or other, to carry the job through. Neither of these conditions was fulfilled. The State Department had not yet decided on a clear policy for Persia: hence its directives were inadequate, and it sometimes failed even to

acknowledge Millspaugh's requests that these be clarified. It signally failed also to provide Millspaugh with the necessary personnel.

Nor did it give him the needed backing when Russia, in 1944, increased pressure to get rid of the mission. Russia had viewed the mission in the most unfavourable light from the start, and refused its officials freedom of access to the Russian-occupied zone, or freedom of movement if they somehow succeeded in getting there. It met all requests by the mission for help with the same unqualified obstruction. Russian agents, working through the communist-front Tudeh[1] Party, had no difficulty in forming an alliance with numerous elements among the politicians and merchants who found their graft and illicit profits threatened by Millspaugh's projected reforms. A violently hostile press campaign, especially in those papers which were under Russian influence, coincided with moves in the Majlis to delay or render ineffective Millspaugh's reforms. Finally a bill was passed through the Majlis depriving the mission of all effective powers, and Millspaugh resigned.[2] (February 1945.)

The crises which led to Millspaugh's resignation took place during a period when official American interest in the Middle East appeared to be dying down. A policy of no commitments was the order of the day. As long as the American duel with Russia was being carried on with what seemed a measure of success in the Far East, the State Department was disposed to regard the Middle East as a neutral area so far as aims which might conflict with Russia's were concerned.

This policy was decided upon in spite of the veiled cold war, which had been going on unremittingly in Iran[3] underneath the external forms of war-time co-operation. Every artifice had been used by the Russians to consolidate their hold on Iran by keeping the grain of the agricultural territories they occupied in the north and so producing an artificial famine in Britain's zone in the south[4]; by

[1] The Common Man.

[2] See his apologia, *Americans in Persia* (Brookings Institution, Washington, 1946). From the Persian side Millspaugh's approach seemed pushful and dominating.

[3] As mentioned before, Iran is used for 'Persia' in the immediate past, as this usage, introduced by Reza Shah, has become established.

[4] Offset later by a 'gift' from Russia to the southern provinces of the amount of grain which had constituted the normal import from the north.

using every means of propaganda and cultural penetration, such as the Teheran medical conference of 1945; and by vetoing whenever possible news which might favour the West, while ensuring that the numerous papers which they encouraged printed solely, or at least prominently, the Tass reports.

Too little solidarity between Britain and America was manifested at this stage. Both countries indeed suggested an earlier withdrawal for their troops than that which the powers had agreed upon by treaty with Iran, and had tried to bring Russia into the arrangement. When Russia refused, the American troops were nevertheless withdrawn, while the British kept a token force in the country.

This neutral phase of American policy ended abruptly with Russia's failure to withdraw her troops even when the treaty date, March 2, 1946, arrived (the British force was duly withdrawn). The arena of conflict between Russia and the Anglo-Saxons was transferred to the Security Council, where one of the most heated debates took place. Britain and USA pressed for satisfaction, but the wind was rather taken out of their sails when it was announced that Russia had agreed to evacuate her troops by May and that Iran's case against Russia was therefore settled.

But from the American side the matter was far from settled, since two conditions were attached to the Russian agreement to withdraw. The first was acceptance of an oil concession covering the northern provinces, which Russia had first demanded in 1944; the second was the recognition by Teheran of the Soviet-sponsored 'Democratic' government of Azerbaijan.

Russia's demand for an oil concession in Northern Iran was motivated by cold war strategy rather than by a serious hope of increasing her oil supplies. It was almost certainly designed as a means of preventing the Americans and British from gaining concessions in the south in addition to that held by the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company—it may have been an unforeseen dividend of this policy that it led to the eviction of AIOC from its concessions and the temporary exclusion of the Western oil interests in general from Iran. But whatever the objectives, it was in the extreme nationalists that the Russians found an unwitting instrument ready to their hand.

On this point Iran offers a close parallel to other countries of the Middle East.

Russia's bludgeoning demand for an oil concession in Northern Iran, made in 1944, was the response to the negotiations initiated by Royal Dutch Shell and two American companies for concessions in the south outside AIOC's area.

This was not the first time that American companies had tried to gain an entry into the oilfields of Iran, though the AIOC had successfully blocked their previous attempts. In vigorously opposing the Sinclair Company's bid to obtain a concession in Northern Iran in the 'twenties and 'thirties, AIOC had taken its stand on concessionary rights which, it claimed, it had legally obtained. If the Americans were to be successful in securing the annulment of the concession on which their claims were based, they argued, it would simply mean a weakening of the legal rights of concessionaires all round. The Americans were convinced. Accepting the view that in the long run it was far better to support legality than make a short-term gain at its expense, they withdrew their claims in the north.

This was despite the fact that, at that stage, the Iranians would have liked an American company to hold a concession in the north. To them America was a distant but friendly power without imperialist designs, whom they would readily have had as a buffer against their powerful Soviet neighbour.[1] But AIOC regarded the Americans as rivals, and realised that Teheran might want them as a counterpoise against the company as much as against the Russians.

The terms offered by Russia looked generous: a 25 years concession to a joint Soviet-Iranian company, in which Russia was to own 51 per cent of the shares and Iran 49 per cent, to be followed by a further 25 years agreement during which the shares were to be held on a fifty-fifty basis. Profits were to be divided proportionately to the shares held. But Iranians feared that the reality would be different from the appearance, since a similar agreement on the Caspian fishing rights had worked out gravely to the disadvantage of Iran. Experience of Russian bulk purchase of rice and other produce at low prices during the war in return for a trickle of goods at

[1] Shwadran, p. 101.

exorbitantly high prices confirmed Iranians in their view of the one-sidedness of commercial bargains with the USSR.[1]

The Russian demand was rejected by the Iranian government on the basis of a declaration that no further concessions were to be considered until all foreign troops had quitted Iranian territory. It was at this point that Dr Mossadegh came on the scene to take his part in the struggle for Iranian oil. As a strong nationalist, his first action in regard to oil policy was to the disadvantage of Russia. His object was to frustrate the Soviet aim of making the Iranian government break the declaration on oil concessions, and so meet its request for a concession in Northern Iran. While the Russian mission was stoking a fierce press campaign against the government, and the communist-front Tudeh party was staging mass-demonstrations in Teheran and elsewhere, Mossadegh rushed through the Majlis a bill to the effect that no further oil concessions or agreements at all were to be made with any foreign company or government (Dec. 2, 1944).

This action by Mossadegh illustrated his real motives: he was not specially anti-Western nor was he pro-Russian. He was at heart an exponent of the increasingly fashionable doctrine of 'neutralism' embraced by weak but nationalistic countries striving to make their independence a reality. The effect of his action was to exclude America (as well as Russia) from entering the oil industry in Iran, at least for ten years until the Consortium agreement of 1954.

In spite of strong pressure, the government managed to postpone a decision on the Russian concession till after the war. It was then granted by Premier Qavam-es-Saltaneh, on his own authority, in return for the Soviet undertaking to evacuate their troops from Iran —though at the same time the 'Democratic Republic' was proclaimed in Azerbaijan. But over Azerbaijan also Qavam showed a degree of wiliness which eventually winkled the Russians out of that position as well. After the withdrawal of Russian troops in April 1946, the 'democratic' government of Pishavari (an old Iranian communist and Tudeh man) continued to function, more or less inefficiently. Some attempts were made to win over the populace to a régime which

[1] All the caviar produced was sold in bulk to Russia at a low price, then put on the market at the much higher world prices, gaining a profit of several hundred per cent.

would have separated Azerbaijan from Iran, linking it instead with the Soviet Republic of Azerbaijan to the north—and the task did not seem too difficult in view of the differences in race and outlook between the Azerbaijanis and the Iranians proper, and the long-standing grievances of the Azerbaijanis against absentee Iranian landlords and against the corrupt and autocratic central government.

Nevertheless when Qavam finally challenged the Pishavari government by moving troops into Azerbaijan, in December 1946, he encountered almost no opposition. The 'democratic' leaders fled to Russia, and the Azerbaijanis cheerfully accepted their reincorporation into Iran. Even had the Russians genuinely wished to keep control of Azerbaijan, they were faced with a dilemma by Qavam. He pointed out to them that without elections a Majlis could not be assembled, and without a Majlis there could be no ratification of the oil concession—and he made it clear that there would be no elections until they could be held in Azerbaijan as in the rest of Iran.[1] But if it had not been for strong American backing, it is doubtful whether Qavam's cunning would alone have brought about the desired result.[2]

When eventually the Majlis was elected, a measure to ratify Qavam's promise of a concession in the north to the Russians was brought before it, but it failed to secure the necessary votes. A further attempt by Qavam—almost certainly designed to court failure—to pilot the concession through the Majlis, after renewed Russian pressure for its ratification in September 1947, led to his fall from power three months later. These events reflected general Iranian mistrust of Soviet aims, a mistrust stiffened by a promise of

[1] Russia had had to face a similar dilemma when communist agents and troops had engineered a breakaway from Iran of Gilan, the province neighbouring Azerbaijan, in 1921-22. 'Russia had to choose between two methods: either the cultivation of good relations with the central government and the gradual infiltration of Iran with communist propaganda through the Soviet Embassy in Teheran, or high-handed direct action aiming at the sovietisation and detachment of several Iranian provinces in connivance with discontented elements of Iran.' (Lenczowsk: *Russia and the West in Iran*, p. 60.)

[2] Some years after these events ex-President Truman observed, referring to Russia's persistence in keeping troops in Azerbaijan: 'I personally saw to it that Stalin was informed that I had given orders to our military chiefs to prepare for the movement of our ground, sea and air forces. Stalin then did what I knew he would do. He moved his troops out.' (*The Times*, September 26, 1957.)

strong American backing in case of Russian intransigence in forcing on their demands[1] (by contrast the British advocated appeasing the Russians by accepting). The concession was finally proclaimed null and void by a law of October 22, 1947, passed unanimously, except for two communist votes.

This law further laid it down that no concession or share in a company would be granted to any foreigner whatsoever, and added a hint of the later policy to be directed against the Anglo-Iranian concession with the words: 'In all cases where the rights of the Iranian nation, in respect of the country's natural resources, whether underground or otherwise, have been impaired, particularly in regard to the southern oil, the Government is requested to enter into such negotiations and to take such measures as are necessary to regain the national rights, and to inform the Majlis of the result.'[2]

(b) The Anglo-Iranian Dinosaur

The Anglo-Iranian Oil Company was a survival from a past age. Its earliest charter dated from 1901, but it belonged to the phase associated with the nineteenth century, of capitulations, concessions and unequal treaties. In this sense, until the arrival of Reza Shah Pahlavi, Iran was of the nineteenth century—a country famous for its exquisite craftsmanship, but still deep in the pre-industrial age, with no defences against the economic imperialism of the West or the more ostensibly political imperialism of Russia.

[1] 'The United States has dedicated its full energy and resources to freeing the peoples of the world from the fear of aggression. Our determination to follow this policy is as strong as regards Iran as it is anywhere else in the world. Patriotic Iranians . . . may therefore rest assured that the American people support fully their freedom to make their own choice.' (G. V. Allen, American Ambassador to Teheran, September 11, 1947.)

[2] S. H. Longrigg: *Oil in the Middle East,* p. 146. One other important American influence dating back to this period should be mentioned—the excellent work of Brig.-Gen. Schwarzkopf, former head of the New Jersey State Police, in reorganising and training the gendarmerie, 24,000 strong at that time. Its quality was shown when it had to take over the northern provinces and Azerbaijan; had it not been up to its job Teheran might have had the greatest difficulty in regaining control of these areas. Similarly an American military mission took on the organisation and training of the army; by 1947 over £6 million of American surplus war stores had been made available to it.

In 1901 a British financier, W. K. D'Arcy, was granted a concession for 60 years over half a million square miles in south-west Persia by the Shah's government. A company was formed, but exploration proved costly. Four years later fresh capital was contributed by the Burmah Oil Company, and in 1908 the first important discovery was made at Masjid-i-Sulaiman, in the foothills of the Zagros mountains about 120 miles north-east of Abadan at the head of the Persian Gulf. To exploit this promising field—which has since produced over 100 million tons of oil—the Anglo-Persian Oil Company was formed in 1909.

It was not until 1912 that oil could really be extracted in quantity, however, and more money was needed. Meanwhile, the 'naval race' with Germany made the Admiralty anxious about its supplies for the Navy's new system of oil firing. Early in 1914 the British Government was persuaded to put up £2 million to gain a majority interest in Anglo-Persian—an investment which has paid the country rich dividends and has brought the British Government assured supplies of oil at a very reasonable rate.

The production of oil in Persia went steadily forward, with infusions of capital from private sources vastly exceeding contributions from the British Government, which, however, retained a majority of the Ordinary Shares. Whereas in 1914 fewer than 300,000 tons of oil were produced, in 1938 the figure had jumped to over 10 million tons, and by the time of the stoppage in 1951 had approached 32 million tons—the largest production of any single Middle Eastern country, and fourth in the list of world producers of oil.

Since the oilfields were remote from the capital, in country largely desert and devoid of the amenities of civilisation, their exploitation was bound to lead to a peculiar situation. Oilfields meant workers and foreign technicians, and this implied a place where they could live. When to the oilfields was added, at Abadan, the largest refinery in the world, together with additional thousands of technicians and workers, it was inevitable that the company should give the appearance of a community distinct from the rest of Iran.

As the twentieth century wore on the company became a modern dinosaur. In the geological age in which he originated the dinosaur was perfectly at home and well adapted to his environment: he was

a formidable and impressive creature who could deal with most ordinary opposition by crushing it with his majestic foot. But when a new age took the place of the old one, and world conditions underwent a fundamental change, the dinosaur could not adapt himself. He became extinct.

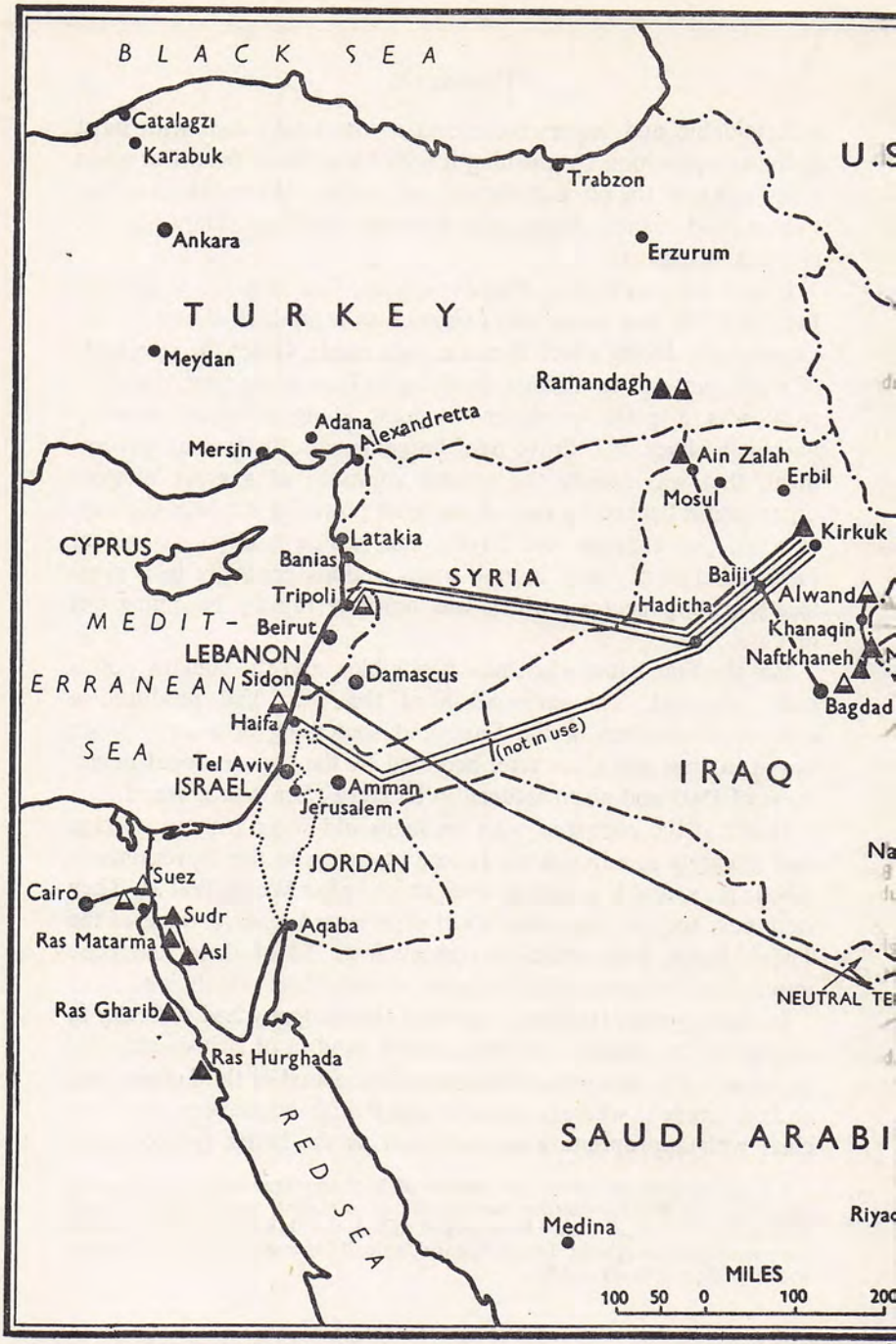
It was not exactly the dinosaur's fault. That was the tragedy of the AIOC. It had come into existence as a product of certain circumstances, during which it met certain needs. Given the standards of work, pay and conditions obtaining in Iran at the time, the company was a good employer—at least along nineteenth-century paternalist lines. If it drove hard bargains with the Iranian government, that was merely the normal approach of a great Western organisation backed by one of the most powerful states of the day. It could pay expenses for buying and leasing land to a dissident local tribal chief;[1] and it took many actions generally in a nineteenth-century context, which was however rapidly becoming out of date.

But the time came when new winds blew and the climate, politically, changed. The nationalism of the West had produced a counter-nationalism in the East, and something of a renaissance began in Iran and elsewhere, heralded by the constitutional movement of 1905 and given leadership by Reza after World War I.

Not that the company went on in its old ways without making real attempts at adjustment. It paid attention to the Government's labour laws, and it accepted trade unions after World War II. They were new and raw, and their most experienced leaders, those of the Tudeh Party, had turned to communism: 53 of them had been imprisoned by Reza, which helps to explain their orientation.

In dealing with Iranians in general the company had difficulty in getting off its pedestal. All but a small handful of British-educated Iranians in the firm were delegated to the second or third class (later named 'grade'), whereas most of the British employees were first class with appropriate amenities such as the better type of com-

[1] A sound decision, since the Sheikh of Mohammerah and his tribesmen were near at hand, whereas the central government, with pitifully weak forces at their disposal, were hundreds of miles away. It was left to the Sheikh, for example, through the British Consul, to call for troops from Iraq to deal with the Sikh strikers in 1922.


BLACK SEA
Catalagzi
Karabuk
Trabzon
U.S
Ankara
Erzurum
TURKEY
Meydan
Ramandagh
Adana
Alexandretta
Mersin
Ain Zalah
Erbil
Mosul
Kirkuk
CYPRUS
Latakia
Banias
SYRIA
Baiji
Tripoli
Haditha
Alwand
MEDIT-
Beirut
Khanaqin
LEBANON
Naftkhaneh
ERRANEAN
Sidon
Damascus
Bagdad
Haifa
SEA
(not in use)
Tel Aviv
IRAQ
ISRAEL
Amman
Jerusalem
JORDAN
Suez
Cairo
Sudr
Aqaba
Ras Matarma
Asl
NEUTRAL TE
Ras Gharib
Ras Hurghada
RED SEA
SAUDI ARABI
Medina
MILES
100 50 0 100 200



on a map in the United Nations Review of Economic Conditions in the Middle East, March 1951, with some revisions.

pany houses.[1] At the start, of course, management and technicians had to be British (or anyway European) because no qualified Iranians existed; but later when Iranians with qualifications became available, they could not expect promotion to the highest level.

Many problems facing the company were, however, almost insoluble. The turnover of labour was necessarily high where recruitment was, in large part, from neighbouring tribal areas, whence men came for a few months' employment before returning to their traditional occupations. Only a small proportion of the labour force was permanent, the rest was casual, hired by contractors for short periods to undertake particular jobs.

Again there was the difficulty of transporting building materials to an area whose local resources were almost nil, a seriously limiting factor in any housing programme. Perhaps a more equitable distribution of houses could have been possible—less difference between the houses graded I, II and III (for the respective categories of employees). But an absolute shortage of houses there was always liable to be. And the job of housing could not be left to the local authorities or the central government, whose resources were far more limited than the company's. The same considerations applied to the provision of medical services, hospitals and schools, which were all provided by the company. Medical services, as far as possible, were extended to those beside company employees and their dependants (in 1950 30,000 were employed at Abadan alone), but there were still many people in the oil areas who, in this respect, could not well be provided for.

Despite these deficiencies, which it noted, the ILO commission of 1950 was able to give the company considerable credit for its achievements in these fields, and for the improvement of its labour relations.[2] These in fact were not the main questions in the minds of responsible Iranians—more important to them was the question of the division of profits as between the company's takings and the royalties to Iran. The latter were compared unfavourably with the much larger amount in taxes which the British government received

[1] One of the things the Iranians so much resented was the founding of two clubs, one for the British to spend their evenings in, and one for the Iranians.

[2] International Labour Office Report (Iran), 1950.

from the company, as well as its privilege of taking as much oil as it required at a discount.[1]

Ultimately, too, there was the question of control. As long as the oilfields and Abadan, and the whole paraphernalia of the company, existed as an almost independent entity, Iranians felt that they should have a bigger say in making policy for such a giant concern on their own territory.

(c) The Mossadegh Crisis

The company's production steadily expanded, and its large profits provided the capital for financing operations and subsidiary companies throughout the world.[2] This incidentally was one of the Iranian government's grievances, that (as they construed the concession) all operations connected with the marketing of oil should take place in Iran, or if they took place abroad through the investment of the company's capital elsewhere, the profits thereby made should be liable to royalties to Iran—a point which the company, somewhat understandably, refused to concede.

By 1930 output was twenty times what it had been in 1914, but thereafter the world economic crisis resulted in a falling off of demand. On these grounds the company informed the government of Reza Shah that there would only be £306,872 of royalties for 1931 (there had been well over a million the year before), despite the British government's receipts of nearly a million in income tax from profits which totalled over three and a half million. This was the signal for Iran to press for a revised agreement, and ultimately to denounce the concession. Britain brought the matter before the League of Nations, which used its good offices to facilitate a settlement (1933). By this, the company's concession was reduced to 100,000 square miles in the south, but its life was extended to 1993.

[1] This naturally reduced the company's revenue, and therefore the royalties received by Iran.

[2] Such as the formation of the National Oil Refineries Ltd., in 1921, with a capital of £200,000, later increased to £3 million, whose function was to construct refineries in Britain. L. P. Elwell-Sutton: *Persian Oil* (Lawrence & Wishart, 1955), p. 49.

Teheran now received a royalty based on tonnage of oil exported or sold locally plus an additional payment based on annual profits distributed by the company.[1] Soon afterwards the company changed its name to Anglo-Iranian, in accordance with the official adoption of Iran as the name of the country.

In the first years of the Second World War production had to be curtailed owing to the difficulty of providing tankers and equipment to maintain operation, but it expanded greatly in the later stages to meet the demands of the British armies in the Middle East and Italy. After the war, output continued to rise quickly until by 1950 it had reached 32 million tons a year, keeping Iran still in the lead among the new rivals in the Middle East. In that year Anglo-Iranian paid some £16 million to the Iranian government. Oil profits jumped, and it was apparent that, but for the wish of the British government that dividends of United Kingdom companies should be limited, the payment of a larger Ordinary dividend would have been justified.

Instead it was maintained at 30 per cent, and larger sums were allocated to the Company's General Reserve. Iran conversely received less in royalties than it otherwise would have done. The Iranian Government was therefore informed that if it considered itself unjustly affected by this limitation, the Company would discuss any proposals to remedy the matter.[2] The outcome was the Supplemental Oil Agreement (July 1949), which was accepted by the Government, but never ratified by the Majlis. It was never debated on its merits there, since Dr Mossadegh and his National Front followers monopolised the proceedings, and the measure was talked out. The Majlis was dissolved, and there were further delays until a special commission of the Majlis was set up to examine the agreement. The appointment of that commission, under the presidency of Dr Mossadegh, who was supported by Hossein Makki and

[1] 'The new basis of royalty, together with a guaranteed minimum payment, protected the Persians against loss during bad trading years, whilst the right to participate in the profits assured them of increased revenues in the good years.' J. F. A. Swanston: *Persian Oil Dispute* (World Review, September 1951).

[2] AIOC had earned about 150 per cent in 1949 and paid out in dividends only 30 per cent. Statements by Eden and Churchill in Parliament, June, July 1951 (B. Shwadran: *The Anglo-Iranian Oil Dispute:* Middle Eastern Affairs, June-July 1954, p. 194, note).

other National Front representatives, really spelt its doom. In December 1950 the Prime Minister, General Razmara, was obliged to withdraw the bill to legalise it. The opinion of the American Ambassador, Dr Grady, is worth mentioning (although in Anglo-Iranian circles he was considered to be strongly biased against the company), that if, at this stage, the AIOC had offered 'a number of non-monetary concessions (which) could have been granted . . . without difficulty,' Razmara would have been able to push the agreement through.[1]

On December 31, 1950, the Sa'udi Arabian Government and Aramco concluded a 'fifty-fifty' agreement, providing for the equal sharing between government and company of the profits from the company's operations in Sa'udi Arabia.

This granting of more favourable terms by the Americans to a neighbouring country had the effect of stiffening the Iranian attitude. Such an arrangement had been discussed in the negotiations of 1948-49, but had fallen to the ground because the Iranian negotiators demanded half the profits on all the activities of the AIOC, whether inside or outside Iran.[2]

Soon after this the oil commission under Dr Mossadegh advocated the nationalisation of the oil industry (March 1951), a proposal which was endorsed by the Majlis. Mossadegh's opponent, Razmara —a marked man for the extremists, both as a supporter of the Shah, and for his public statement that Iran could not run a nationalised oil industry—was assassinated on March 7, 1951. His murderer was a member of the Fedayan-i-Islam,[3] a follower of the extreme nationalist and anti-British religious leader, the Ayatollah Kashani. Before March was out the Tudeh Party engineered a series of strikes in the oilfields at Bandar Mashhur and Abadan. There was intimidation, violence and some loss of life, both British and Iranian. But the Teheran Government declared martial law in the affected areas and brought the situation under control.

It was patent that Dr Mossadegh and his followers were inflexibly resolved upon nationalisation and on April 26 the oil commission

[1] U.S. Foreign Policy Bulletin, December 15, 1951.
[2] Sir Reader Bullard, *Foreign Affairs*, April 1953, p. 464.
[3] Devotees of Islam.

unanimously approved a bill to give effect immediately to this principle. For a country whose processes are normally leisurely, this was a very fast pace—too fast, indeed, for Hussein Ala, the Prime Minister, resigned on the following day, to be succeeded by Dr Mossadegh himself. Mossadegh promptly brought in his bill for nationalisation, secured Majlis' consent for it and on May 1 it received the Shah's signature.

Britain's attempt to bring the matter to arbitration was a failure. The Iranian Government's view was that nationalisation of industry was the sovereign right of every nation and transcended every other right or duty, and that no international authority was competent to investigate the matter.

Until this stage America had been unable to take a hand in the situation. The American attitude contrasted with that of Britain and the AIOC. The latter regarded the crisis as a primarily commercial matter, a question of maintaining on a basis of legality their privileged position in regard to Iranian oil. The Americans, on the other hand, tended to regard the oil question in its global setting as one incident in the cold war, and believed that correct handling of it was necessary, not primarily to give satisfaction to AIOC and the British Government, but to prevent any weakening of the Western position in Iran, in Russia's favour.

Correct handling, in their view, implied making considerable concessions to Iranian feeling, and, in fact, going as far in recognising Iranian claims as was compatible with maintaining the Western position, which by implication meant keeping the oilfields going under Western supervision. Not that the Americans were interested in the oil as such—they were obtaining all they wished at the time from their fields in Arabia and the Persian Gulf.

At the same time, apart from wishing to see a more flexible attitude by Britain and the company with a view to securing as speedy a settlement as possible, the State Department did not have much of a policy.[1] Dr Grady may not have reflected its views

[1] 'The role of the U.S. in the Iranian oil crisis was, to say the least, difficult and uncomfortable, perhaps impossible. Basically, it had no well-thought-out policy for dealing with the crisis, and perhaps could not have had one, for the State Department, like the British Foreign Office, apparently did not foresee the rapid development of events.' B. Shwadran: *The Middle East, Oil and the Great Powers* (Praeger, 1955), p. 151.

(usually more diplomatically expressed in public) in condemning 'the stubborn uncompromising attitude of the Oil Company' and 'the colonial formula never to "weaken" by conceding anything that is not in the agreement.' Grady's view was that the State Department should have taken up the Iranian situation a good year before it did, as a problem that vitally concerned America, and that it should have put pressure on the British Government which, in his view, was behind 'the colonial approach' of the AIOC, so that it abandoned its policy which he condemned as 'obsolete and certain to be ineffectual.'[1]

One problem of the American administration was that, unlike the British Government, it was not in the habit of co-ordinating its policy closely with that of the oil companies. In fact, owing to the Anti-Trust laws it could not officially countenance co-ordination among the oil companies themselves. This was one reason why such governmental co-ordination of oil policy with the companies as had developed during the war was still-born.[2] The British Government came up against this fact in March 1951, when it discovered 'the apparent impossibility of obtaining rapid and effective joint action by the American oil industry to assist in meeting a world deficiency of oil threatened by the strikes in the oilfields and at Abadan.'[3]

However a change in American policy was now due. The Iranian oil industry was nationalised by the Majlis in March 1951, and in April the first tentative steps were taken by the American Government to develop oil policy in concert not only with the American companies, but also with the British Government and oil-men. An Anglo-American conference was convened at Washington (April 9, 1951) which included both oil-men and politicians,[4] and an attempt was made to persuade the British to accept the principle of nationalisation. Eventually, at the end of May, they did so. The Americans for their part decided not to send American technicians to operate the Iranian industry in the event of the withdrawal or

[1] U.S. Foreign Policy Bulletin, December 15, 1951.
[2] Notably in the formation of the 'Petroleum Reserves Corporation' (Elwell-Sutton, oj. cit. 131).
[3] *Economist*, June 16, 1951, p. 1465.
[4] Elwell-Sutton, p. 213.

expulsion of the British.[1] The State Department also came out in support of Britain's contention that the Iranian Government should abide by its legally contracted obligations to AIOC—it was against 'unilateral cancellation of contractual relationships and actions of a confiscatory nature.'[2]

Full American weight was thrown behind the proposals brought by two representatives of the company (as government-appointed directors representing also the British Government), in June 1951. In these proposals the plan of establishing an Iranian 'National Oil Company' already appeared, in which AIOC's Iranian assets were to be vested, and then re-transferred to a new company formed by AIOC. This company was to have a number of Iranian directors on its board, and would operate on behalf of the National Iranian Oil Company.[3] Though this was virtually the old company in a new guise (and was still a long way from the internationally-owned operating and marketing companies which Iran eventually accepted), it seemed the nearest to a compromise which at the time both parties might have accepted.

But despite Dr Grady's pleading with Mossadegh to give it careful consideration, it was speedily rejected. Mossadegh continued to put into effect the nationalisation law and the subsequent enabling act. The company's premises were taken over by the National Iranian Oil Company, and AIOC's personnel withdrawn from outlying areas. Production of the Abadan refinery was reduced to the comparative trickle needed for supplying the markets of Iran. The virtual paralysis of this great industry came when tanker-captains refused to sign receipts that the oil they had taken on board was the property of the National Iranian Oil Co. and the tanker fleet was withdrawn (June 1951).

The last major attempt of the British Government to reach a compromise was the despatch of a mission led by R. R. Stokes, Lord Privy Seal, in August 1951. Its proposals marked a further step

[1] At a meeting of representatives of the American oil companies with G. C. McGhee, an Assistant Secretary of State (an oil expert with experience in Turkey and elsewhere) on May 14, 1951. (Elwell-Sutton, 225.)

[2] *Aide-mémoire* of Grady to Mossadegh, May 25, 1951.

[3] Proposals quoted by Shwadran, op. cit. p. 115. Interim financial arrangements, while negotiations were proceeding, were to be £10 million down given by the company, and £3 million per month from July onwards.

towards what was the eventual solution—though without the international element. All AIOC's Iranian assets were to be vested in the NIOC, which should, however, delegate its functions to (a) a purchasing organisation which should undertake the marketing of Iranian oil on a long-term contract, say 25 years, and (b) a producing organisation, 'which, under the authority of the NIOC, will manage on behalf of the NIOC the operations of searching for, producing, transporting, refining and loading oil within the area.'[1] Iranians were to be represented on the Board of Directors of the operating organisation and non-Iranians employed as far as was necessary for efficient operation.

In the event it became clear that no proposals would satisfy Mossadegh, whether the employment of British technicians formed the rock of obstruction, or whether it was the question of compensation. The efforts of Truman and Attlee were no more availing than those (as governments changed) of Eisenhower and Churchill. Short of resorting to force—and Herbert Morrison as Foreign Secretary indulged in some mild sabre-rattling—there seemed no possibility of a settlement; and the Americans made it clear that they would not support Britain in a policy of force. The only other method of applying pressure was through imposing a commercial and financial embargo on Iran (September 10, 1951). But more important than these measures was the drying up of Iran's oil trade. With the cessation of oil-shipments from Iran, and the withdrawal of the facilities operated by the international companies for marketing on a world scale, the major source of the country's income disappeared.

Against this background various political moves took place which were doomed to futility. Britain's taking of the case to the International Court of Justice resulted in an injunction to the Iranian Government not to interfere with the functioning of the AIOC until the Court's judgment should be given. This was ignored by the Iranian Government who denied the Court's competence, a position with which the Court itself later agreed, when it considered the case in June and July 1952. No more was gained by Britain's reference of the case to the Security Council, since Russia backed the Iranian

[1] Quoted in Shwadran, p. 121.

plea that the dispute was solely the affair of Iran and that any action by the Security Council constituted an interference in the affairs of a sovereign country. Since support from other members of the Council was hesitant, Britain had to abandon its case.

America continued to play throughout the part of the honest broker, though without much success, despite Truman and Acheson taking a hand in reasoning with Mossadegh during his visit to the U.S.A. for the Security Council's meeting (October 1951), and Truman's earlier despatch of Averell Harriman as his personal representative to Teheran (August 1951). So anxious was America not to show undue bias that dollar aid under Point Four, besides military aid, continued to be given to Iran in various forms (the State Department was chary of forcing Iran further into the Soviet embrace). It was only just before Mossadegh's fall that there was a marked stiffening of America's attitude, in connection with supplying dollars to offset Iran's loss through the cessation of her oil-exports. When Mossadegh appealed to President Eisenhower either to put pressure on Britain to accept Iran's terms, or to provide enough dollar aid to prevent the economy of the country from collapsing, Eisenhower replied that he did not propose to spend the American tax-payer's money 'so long as Iran could have access to funds derived from the sale of its oil and oil products if a reasonable agreement were reached with regard to compensation, whereby the large-scale marketing of Iranian oil would be resumed.'[1] This message of the President's drove Mossadegh to further extremes and so speeded the crisis which brought about his fall.

As long as Mossadegh could gain personal triumphs in pursuing his oil policy he was in a virtually unshakable position. But when it seemed to be leading nowhere, and the financial stability of the country was endangered, there were many who began to question his wisdom. Rising prices, shortages, riots, and a series of dictatorial actions by the Premier underlined the point.

The core of the opposition to Mossadegh, even at times when the country seemed most completely behind him, was the Shah and the army. Mohammed Reza Pahlavi had inherited an army which had been built up by his father to a strength of 90,000—a large number

[1] Quoted in Shwadran, p. 143.

in relation to the country's needs and its wealth. It had always had a sense of personal loyalty to the Shah, and this continued during the Mossadegh period, with the exception of those officers who came under communist (or Tudeh) influence.

Mohammed Reza came to the throne as a young man of 21 in difficult circumstances, with the country under foreign occupation. Educated largely in Switzerland, he had acquired liberal ideas, but had to go slowly in applying them in practice. Soon after his accession he turned over most of his father's fortune to a philanthropic trust, the Pahlavi Endowment Organisation, and in 1951 gave instructions that the lands which had come under the Organisation, should be divided among the peasants who tilled them. Such measures gave rise to anxiety among most of the landowners, well-entrenched and conservative-minded as they were—anxieties which were increased by the Shah's visit to America in December 1949.

The landlords therefore lined up with Mossadegh in approving measures designed to limit the powers of the Shah. On the other hand they were not prepared to see Mossadegh set himself up as a dictator instead. Mossadegh's moves to curb the Shah's powers were likely to be unpopular anyway, if pressed at all far, since the Shahdom as an ancient institution, is surrounded by an emotional aura.

Mossadegh's support in fact was narrow, except when he could rely on another emotive force in the shape of nationalism. When his policies ceased to stir nationalist emotions on a wide scale, the Shah and the army were able to step in against him. Aided by the army, and with public opinion once more on his side, the Shah was able to exert the considerable powers which he held[1] and swing the country on to a different tack.

[1] The Constitution of 1906 left 'great powers to the monarch. The Shah has the right to introduce legislation in parliament, and the influence which he exerts over it is far from negligible. Half of the 60 members of the Senate, the upper house of the parliament, are appointed by the Shah and half are elected. His court minister is a member of every cabinet, and he has of course extensive powers of appointment in the executive branch of government. All bills must be approved by him before becoming law.' L. V. Thomas and R. N. Frye: *The United States and Turkey and Iran* (Harvard, 1951).

The Senate, though authorised by the Constitution of 1906, was first elected only in 1951, an event which was considered to enhance the Shah's position.

Another important element in the state—which had also played a decisive part in the earlier phase of nationalism half a century before—was the religious leadership. Among the mullahs the most notable part was played by the Ayatollah Abol-Qasem Kashani (he had been kept under arrest by the British during the war). His powerful support of Mossadegh, in a country where religion still plays a major part, gave him much needed backing. Kashani was thought to be implicated, through the Fedayan-i-Islam organisation, in the murder of General Razmara. When, in August 1952, Mossadegh obtained dictatorial powers from the Majlis, Kashani became the Majlis' president.[1] Five months later, however, his breach with Mossadegh over the issue of extending the latter's powers showed how far the Premier's support was crumbling. Mossadegh was forced to rely increasingly on the support of the left.

The Shah had made an attempt, in July 1952, to displace Mossadegh in favour of the ageing Qavam-es-Saltenah—but this had failed since the alliance between the Tudeh Party and the nationalists supporting Mossadegh was still intact. After an abortive military coup, another attempt, in August 1953, made on the Shah's behalf by General Zahedi,[2] with a group of officers whom he had secretly organised, was successful (August 19, 1953).

America quickly came to the help of the new government. In addition to continuing Point Four aid to the tune of $23 million, the USA also made an emergency grant of $45 million to Iran (September 5, 1953). The next year American aid ran at $74 million and has continued around that level—in addition to military supplies. The American intention has been to shore up Iran's economy until the restoration of the oil industry makes it viable once again. The idea of a Seven Year Plan has been revived—it died during the Mossadegh era—and under American auspices should make a big difference to the country's economy.[3] Meanwhile American aid had been supplemented by a World Bank loan of $75 million (January

[1] At the same time Razmara's assassin was released.

[2] Having been active in the German interest and Britain's enemy, he had been interned by the British during their wartime occupation of Iran.

[3] For instance for Khuzistan (the province where the southern oilfields are located) the plan is to develop irrigation and so restore the agricultural production of what was in ancient times a prosperous area—until the irrigation system broke down.

1957) to produce the finance for the Seven Year Plan until the oil revenues come in again.

Despite the reluctance of the American oil-companies to become involved, the American Government was determined to restart the oil industry as a means of winning the cold war in Iran.[1] The American Government had by 1953 developed a sufficient co-operation with the oil-companies to make this possible—co-operation or gentle suasion such as had been shown by the government-inspired decision of the companies not to supply technicians to replace AIOC's dismissed employees in May 1951, and by the later decision to take all measures, along with AIOC and other companies in their fields outside Iran, to step up oil production in order to replace the supplies of oil from Iran. This latter programme had in fact been carried through so successfully that, at the end of 1953, it was not easy to see how a place could be found again in the world markets for Iranian crude, still less for the products of the Abadan refinery.[2]

The continued expansion of the demand for oil and the arrangements which the international companies can make through their marketing network are, however, solving the problem. At the same time Iranian aspirations have been respected in the Consortium agreement of October 1954, whereby Iranian oil is produced and marketed, since ownership of the fixed assets and oil deposits throughout Persia is accepted as being vested in the National Iranian Oil Co. To make this agreement possible, the State Department had to move carefully with the Attorney-General, to bring about the necessary co-ordination of policy by the oil companies without their coming under prosecution for breach of the Anti-trust laws. Although American influence had been decisive in making the

[1] 'The United States Government was anxious to find a solution to the Iranian dispute as quickly as possible, but the five American companies were not overtly eager to join the Consortium without some special inducements. Since they represented the major Middle East oil producers, they were reluctant to accept additional oil to market. I. H. Carmical, the petroleum expert of *The New York Times,* reported early in February that the United States Government in its eagerness to get the Iranian oil matter settled, had put pressure on the American companies to join the Consortium; as an inducement, Attorney General Hubert Brownell, Jr., under the direction of the National Security Council, had granted the companies immunity from anti-trust prosecution.' (Shwadran, 182.)

[2] In view of the great increase of refining capacity in all parts of the world, e.g., AIOC's plant at Aden.

agreement, American oil companies have only 40 per cent shares in the Consortium, while British interests have somewhat more: AIOC, renamed British Petroleum, has 40 per cent while Royal-Dutch Shell, which is 40 per cent British, has another 14 per cent. The remaining share of six per cent is held by the Compagnie Française des Petroles.

Despite its loss of vast capital equipment and assets, and of several years of production, AIOC (renamed British Petroleum) has retrieved a good many of its losses. By the Consortium agreement Iran takes what amounts to 50 per cent of the profits, while the Consortium companies have the rest. The agreement is expected to run for 40 years, thus actually covering the life of the AIOC concession. While theoretically the company properties now belong to the NIOC, the compensation which the AIOC received or is about to receive amounts to £25 million in direct compensation. The participating companies have agreed to pay AIOC £32,400,000 in three equal instalments; and the company is to receive the equivalent of 10 cents per barrel of crude oil and products exported from Iran by these companies until a total of $510 million has been paid.[1]

America has clearly taken on the role of guide and mentor for Iran, which Curzon had cast for Britain half a century ago. This corresponds with the realities of the situation and was inevitable after Britain's failure to build a mutually satisfactory relationship. At the same time Russian influence has suffered an eclipse. Of all the actors in Iran's drama of the last few years, the Shah is the one who has emerged with most credit, as a mature statesman trying to lead into the twentieth century a country whose social structure and morale have not markedly advanced beyond the condition left by the collapse of the Abbasid Empire seven centuries ago. At the same time, with the republican current running strongly in the Middle East his position is by no means secure, especially as he is only the second of a new dynasty. After his restoration 600 out of 1,500 officers were arrested as communists, and many were executed. In July 1958, a meeting of 5,000 people at Isfahan, clamouring for his overthrow on the model of the Iraq coup, had to be broken up by

[1] Shwadran, 188.

armed police. As long as he is there to try to stamp out corruption and modernise the country, he will find in America his best support.

The booming condition of the oil industry today—despite the under-employment of the Abadan refinery—indicates that the economic basis is assured. Even more important perhaps is the success of the Consortium companies in training Iranians for the managerial and technical positions formerly held by Europeans. It is the growth of this professional element in Iran which, in the long run, will make it possible for a progressive ruler like the present Shah to bring Iran forward into the modern age—assuming that patriotism becomes for them too a motive force for reform and for withstanding corruption. Only such a trend, reaching a revolutionary dimension, can deal with the absenteeism, tax evasion and clinging to outmoded privileges on the part of the aristocracy, not to mention the apathy and other evils which maintain an archaic social order and retard the country's advance towards a new age.

Chapter Five

SA'UDI ARABIA

(a) The Wahhabi Reformation and the Oil Revolution

AMERICAN INFLUENCE which is shaking Sa'udi Arabia to its foundations, is of recent growth, and goes back to the economic crisis which threatened the country under Ibn Sa'ud, the present king's father.

Ibn Sa'ud, starting as a member of a dispossessed sheikhly family, founded his fortunes by seizing the fortress of Riyadh with 15 companions in 1902. Riyadh had formerly belonged to his family, and having re-established himself there Ibn Sa'ud moved on from strength to strength. His warriors, the Ikhwan, were a kind of Arab Ironsides, members of the puritanical Wahhabi sect with whom his great-grandfather had first made an alliance. With their aid he gradually conquered the larger part of Arabia, finally expelling Ali, son of the Sherif Hussein (who had made himself king) of the Hejaz (1926).

His intention was to apply the Moslem Law in his domains and bring about a reformation in accordance with the strict Wahhabi views. Mutilation was the penalty for theft. Wine was forbidden and cigarettes frowned upon. The work of the Ikhwan or brotherhood (as the Wahhabis called themselves), together with the drastic application of the Law, led to security of life and property within Arabia such as was not known for centuries, and for the lowest expenditure on policing of any state in the world. The holy cities too were largely purged of the corruption which bore hardly on the pilgrims, and the arrangements there were made more orderly.

The crisis of Ibn Sa'ud's reign came during the world economic depression of the early 'thirties. The flow of pilgrims dwindled from an average of 100,000 to one-fifth of that figure in 1933.[1] This meant that Ibn Sa'ud lost the largest part of his revenues, for even the comparatively scanty state expenditure could only be maintained by proceeds from these 'invisible' imports. A position of virtual bankruptcy was reached. It was then that Ibn Sa'ud exclaimed to Philby, 'If anyone would offer me a million pounds I would give him all the concessions he wanted.'[2]

The opportunity was seized by Standard Oil of America, with a degree of imagination and vigour which left their rival, the British-dominated Iraq Petroleum Co. out in the cold. Standard's negotiators were despatched with an adequate store of gold sovereigns for immediate presentation—they gave Ibn Sa'ud £30,000 down—while Brigadier Longrigg for IPC was handicapped by the 'slow and cautious' policy of his directors—'in their offers they would speak only of rupees where gold was demanded.'[3]

A considerable effort of prospecting was necessary before oil was struck in adequate quantities in 1938, in the area of Dammam, north-west of Bahrain. In 1941 this was supplemented by another find at Abqaiq, 40 miles to the south-west. At present the chief field is Ghawar, an area further to the south-west some 140 miles long, which constitutes one of the largest single accumulations of oil in the world. By 1951 Sa'udi Arabia held the record for the world production of oil. Average production at the end of 1957 was nearly a million barrels per day.

Of this vast amount some 343,000 barrels were daily piped 1,000 miles to the Mediterranean through ARAMCO's pipeline, which runs north-west near the Iraq frontier into Jordan and thence to Sidon in Lebanon (this pipeline is also in part a British interest since it carries oil from Kuwait). The rest of the oil is pumped to Ras Tanura, the only point on this part of the Persian Gulf where there is deep water close inshore for tankers.

The meagre revenue which King Ibn Sa'ud used to draw from

[1] H. St. J. B. Philby: *A Pilgrim in Arabia* (Hale, 1946), p. 50.
[2] H. St. J. B. Philby: *Arabian Jubilee* (Hale, 1952), p. 176.
[3] K. S. Twitchell: *Sa'udi Arabia* (Princeton, 2nd. ed. 1953), p. 150. S. H. Longrigg: *Oil in the Middle East* (O.U.P., 1954), p. 107.

pilgrims to Mecca and such tribute as he could collect, has been swollen out of all recognition by a torrent of oil dollars. From £100,000 a year the income of the small Sa'udi state of 50 years ago has increased to £150 million.[1] Into the vast expanses of the desert, where until now time seemed without meaning, the twentieth century has burst with a vengeance. Here, even more incongruously than elsewhere, the civilisations of the modern West and the Islam of antiquity jostle each other side by side. Bedouin from remote places look with awe on the huge American air-conditioned trucks and equipment set down improbably on the sands of the Empty Quarter—a region which a short time ago it was a heroic feat to cross, unthinkable for men to live and work in. Equally improbably, vast palaces break the skyline of Riyadh, the one-time modest capital of Nejd, its narrow streets now cluttered with cars furiously hooting, its population—50,000 in 1944, now 250,000 or more—literally bursting out of the now demolished walls. The land is denuded of trees and brushwood for an increasing distance around to supply the capital's insatiable demand for firewood, and the gazelle and oryx retreat ever further into the hills before the murderous hunting forays of princes and sheikhs in their desert cars.

'Within the short space of a single generation Arabia has completely lost its traditional character as a mysterious, forbidden and forbidding, inaccessible and dangerous land, fit only for fools and intrepid explorers to invade,' writes H. St. John Philby, himself one of the greatest of its explorers. 'Fifty years ago it was positively dangerous for Europeans to go outside the walls of Jedda, and in fact some members of the consular corps were murdered by bedouin within a few hundred yards of the Medina gate while out for a stroll in the nineties of the last century. In 1949 the walls were unceremoniously demolished by American bulldozers, and the town now sprawls over an immense area of what was formerly desert to accommodate its present population of about 100,000 souls, as against the 30,000 of 20 years ago. The charming hill-station of Taif, to which the people of Mecca repair for relief from the summer heat of the metropolis, is now a town of 50,000 inhabitants,

[1] Figure for 1957. *Economist*, March 23, 1957.

whereas until quite recently the population was little more than 10,000. And Mecca itself, with a population of about 120,000, has spread out into a number of suburbs for the better accommodation and greater comfort of its once overcrowded citizens. Medina has developed more slowly but is showing signs of a return to the prosperity it enjoyed before the first World War, when it was linked with Damascus by the famous Hejaz railway.

'In the oil country round Dharhan near the Persian Gulf coast, American enterprise, in co-operation with the Sa'udi authorities, has created a group of prosperous settlements in an area which, 30 years ago, was sheer desert with a few miserable fishing villages along the coast. Today this area is the industrial hub of Arabia and the principal source of its modern prosperity, providing work and very good wages for thousands of bedouin who might otherwise have been roaming the desert in search of scanty pasture for their flocks and herds. These workmen, whose ancestors never had any roof over their heads except the sky, have settled down with surprising adaptability to life in tenements in a model town, with schools, hospitals and even recreational facilities provided by the Oil Company. A brand new deep-water harbour has been built at Dammam near the oil centre and from it a broad-gauge railway now runs, via Dharhan and the great oilfield of Abqaiq, to Hufhuf, Kharj and Riyadh.'[1]

The impact has been so direct, rapid and crude, that it is shaking the essentially primitive society of Arabia into dissolution. Unlike other parts of the Arab world there was virtually no Westernised élite to take the main shock of the American impact when it came, and the administrative and financial methods of the government had not advanced beyond the stage befitting a semi-nomadic, patriarchal society.

Morally and spiritually Arabia has shown itself unable so far to resist the materialism of the West, and its spirituality as such has not been of the kind to make a fruitful alliance with the positive values and aims of Western civilisation—its desire to improve the

[1] H. St. John Philby, from his article in *British Survey* of June 1951, adapted from a paper read to the Royal Geographical Society, March 20, 1950 (figures brought up to date).

lot of the ordinary man, to vanquish disease, allay suffering, and build a society of freedom and opportunity for all.

Wahhabism set itself to impose the strictest practices of Islam on fellow-Moslems by force. The Wahhabi Ikhwan (brotherhood) were aggressive and dominating. Fear was their method for driving men to the mosque or the fast. It was an approach valid for bedouin perhaps, but could bring no more than an outward conforming in the holy cities of the Hejaz and in Jedda. The religion of the urban Hejazis was external, the motive for practising it being primarily that of gain, for they made their living off the pilgrims. They had nothing to give to Wahhabism, and the external reforms of the Wahhabis were useless for dealing with their inner materialist motive.

In any case Wahhabism was a spent force before the crisis of the American impact on Arabia began. After the conquest of the Hejaz, Ibn Sa'ud had had no more use for his Ikhwan warriors. He had settled them as farmers, thereby 'curing about 200,000 professional robbers of their passion for depriving other people of their property,'[1] but not all the settlements prospered (it needs much persistence to make even the semi-desert yield regular harvests), and the Ikhwan yearned for their old trade of fighting and raiding. Some of them rose in revolt, and it was only after the fiercest fighting that Ibn Sa'ud could break them. But broken they were, and such power for good as they owned was dissipated.

Despite the military defeat of these Ikhwan, Wahhabism remained the official doctrine of Arabia. But it could not be enforced. Drinking of alcohol could scarcely be kept in check, smoking even less—as for prohibitions on seeing moving pictures (because it was thought that the Prophet had banned all representations of the human figure), this proved quite impossible of enforcement. In general, rules and regulations were far too slight a barrier against the attractions of the American way of life, certainly for the younger generation. 'It proved impossible to keep young Wahhabi Arabia away from the openly shown films and their music and from American sports. Those stern Wahhabi *'ulama* fought a losing battle, human nature being stronger than doctrine. . . . When the

[1] H. St. J. Philby, *ibid.*

rain comes down the barren wadis of Arabia it takes the form of a *sail*—a water-flood—that sweeps everything before it. Some such catastrophe was now bearing down on Arabia as a result of this clash of two so widely different people of such diverse spiritual composition.'[1]

For those who could acquire larger incomes, the American standard of living became the aim, especially in the oil region of the east—gleaming white villas with air-conditioning and refrigerators, cars and garages, where formerly had been mud-built villages amidst a scattering of palm trees. For the privileged members of the royal house it has meant a garish, fantastic burgeoning of palaces, gardens, private 'planes and Cadillacs. Riyadh and its surroundings have been transformed by this highly artificial growth. The royal palace of an-Nasriyya, completed a few years ago at a cost of £4 million, has been demolished to be replaced by another costing £10 million.[2]

There has been little serious development. Ibn Sa'ud always insisted that government income was the personal property of the ruler. With no division between the civil list and state finance there was no proper accounting. Vast sums drained away through his Minister of Finance and through the hands of royal princes and government employees from the other Arab states. The latter salted away much of their money in real estate, in Cairo or Beirut, and Sa'udi princes have followed their example. A great deal of Beirut's almost inexplicable prosperity and development, including at least a million pounds worth of apartment blocks, comes from this source.

With the lack of system there has been gigantic corruption. Aramco has been under constant pressure to produce more money, by raising production and paying a higher rate of royalties. But the increased money in circulation has led to soaring prices. Attempts to offset this inflation have illustrated the primitive approach of the administration, varying from putting the merchants in prison to ordering Aramco to double its workers' wages.

[1] D. van der Meulen: *The Wells of Ibn Sa'ud* (Murray, 1957), p.148.
[2] Van der Meulen, 236 n. Its mile-long approach through gardens demanding a vast quantity of water per day illustrates the reckless use being made of this precious commodity.

Ibn Sa'ud was a great man, and his personality held his kingdom together, but in his declining years he was unable to cope with the problems posed by the torrent of dollars and the violent impact of the West. Though aware of many of the abuses going on under his nose, he was not able to curb them. Of his more than 100 children, 30 sons were styled royal princes, and many of these and their hangers-on were living in a fashion which affronted the king, with his rugged character, his faith, and his simple mode of life. He was bitterly aware of the moral disaster which was overtaking his realm. 'Who would have thought even a few years ago that I should live to see liquor and drugs coming into Riyadh, when we used to condemn even the use of tobacco', he complained in his old age. 'The fault lies not with others but in myself. If it were in my power to choose I would have doomsday now!'[1]

The Americans, with all their good intentions, have been unable to help effectively. They provide ideal conditions for the Aramco workers; training schemes; medical and hospital arrangements; they provide water, despite the ever-sinking water table in Riyadh and other areas;[2] they provide housing, schools and a professional future for the more intelligent. In so far as they can use oil revenue in the areas where they work for development along welfare state lines, they have done so. But for the government they can only advise and warn, and in general their advice is not taken. It has been cogently suggested that had they come to Ibn Sa'ud standing as uncompromisingly for spiritual values as they did for material progress, they might have been able to make a more positive contribution. 'If the Americans had, from the start, insisted on entering the country as confessed Christians with open freedom for their belief, such an attitude would have commanded Ibn Sa'ud's respect. As it was, America came to this land of religion without the right to build churches, to have ministers of religion living among them,

[1] Philby: *Saudi Arabia* (Benn, 1955), p.351.

[2] In two years the water table of Riyadh sank more than 30 feet. The Americans' propaganda drive, with the aid of a specially made film, failed to convince the Sa'udis of the grave danger if the country's water resources continued to be used up so lavishly. The answer at least for Riyadh, so the Sa'udis believed, is a pipeline bringing water 400 miles from the Shatt-el-Arab in Iraq, for which they had secured agreement in principle from Baghdad in July 1957.

and that equivalent of the Muslim *mu'ezzin,* the tolling of bells to announce services. She should have insisted upon these rights which would have put the relations of Christian Westerners with ultra-religious Muslims on a sound foundation. These first Americans discarded one essential element in any real contact, for the Arab who believes will only trust the Christian if he shows that he, too, believes in the One God. They made a profound initial mistake, and even if it is not irreparable the harm it has done will last long.'[1]

Other Middle Eastern societies have been exposed to Western influences only gradually—Westerners, their money, their know-how, their ideas, made a relatively slow infiltration, and Western reforms of government, law and social conditions (even if the consequence of 'colonialist' régimes) provided the necessary framework within which the new forces released by Westernism could lead to progress. It has been the tragedy of Arabia that its contacts with the West, for instance with Britain up to the oil era, were insufficient to create such a framework. The British and other foreigners were for the most part relegated to Jedda, and their possible beneficial influence on the government at the centre was only slight. Philby came nearest to having an influential position at court, but this Englishman, who had become a Moslem for convenience rather than from conviction, was something of an oddity in the entourage of the King. Philby had followed what seemed an attractive destiny in leaving British government service for his life as merchant, explorer and adventurer. His achievements as an explorer stand, but he has admitted the dashing of his own hopes for the Sa'udi kingdom.

(b) Arabia under King Sa'ud

SINCE IBN SA'UD DIED (November 9, 1953), the internal problems of Sa'udi Arabia have, if anything, become aggravated. The impact of the oil wealth on Sa'udi Arabia has been to produce the problem of an over-privileged class, represented by members of the royal family and their hangers-on. Some of Ibn Sa'ud's sons and grand-

[1] Van der Meulen, p. 147.



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sons have done a good job as landowners, but others enjoy their position and wealth without responsibility. Half the oil royalties, or some $120 million, have gone annually in recent years to supporting them. A high proportion of the country's resources of craftsmanship and building materials goes to constructing royal palaces or houses, and equipping them in the most modern manner, which (as well as the need for other American products like cars) involves a large importation of luxuries.

More far-sighted than the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (or perhaps building on their experience), Aramco has set itself to provide lavish facilities for the well-being and training of the new Arab technical and professional class which its operations have called into being. It began with a $26 million plan in 1945-50 for constructing dwellings for their employees and equipping them with running water, drainage, electric kitchens, air-conditioning, and other conveniences.[1] Hospitals, health centres and dispensaries have been opened on a large scale. Education and training have received particular attention at all levels, with the object of creating a reservoir of skilled and managerial manpower.[2] The Americans do not hold the theory that only they are fitted for the responsible jobs. On the contrary, their policy is to build a partnership with Arabs. Half of Aramco's Sa'udi Arabian employees are taking courses of various kinds and a growing number are going abroad for higher education.[3] This is additional to the education supplied by the state, costing around £7 million a year exclusive of considerable sums spent on an increasing school-building programme.[4]

This up-and-coming middle class is swollen by those who indirectly have found new openings as a result of the oil industry. Numerous local firms, in which over 11,000 Sa'udis are employed, are contracting for Aramco,[5] and there are many others engaged on public works, or on work for the court and members of the royal family. Aramco has been aware that its own interests favour a

[1] I. J. Benoist-Mechin: *Arabian Destiny* (Elek, 1957), p.246.
[2] 'Under American guidance the Arabs displayed a sense of initiative and organisation of which they would not have been thought capable 10 years earlier.' *Ibid.*, p.247.
[3] *Petroleum Press Service*, August 1953, p. 286.
[4] *Economist*, March 23, 1957.
[5] *Petroleum Press Service*, August 1953.

balanced economy in Sa'udi Arabia, at least one not merely dependent on itself. 'To this end, Aramco established in 1945 its Arab Industrial Development Department, designed to make it as easy as possible for potential Sa'udi businessmen with at least a modicum of technical training to establish their own plants or shops. Thus a Sa'udi who wishes to establish a laundry and dry cleaning plant in Al Khobar might come to Aramco's AIDD and receive, free of charge, expert technical assistance at every stage of his project. . . . The number of Sa'udi contractors, with businesses ranging from construction firms to trucking companies, who have been aided by AIDD over the past 11 years now reaches into the hundreds.'[1]

The new opportunities for enterprise of all kinds are greatly to be welcomed, but the values which form the philosophy of the new class are more open to question. As in the case of the Sa'udi princes, the new professional class tends to vie with 8,000 American employees of Aramco in their way of life and standard of living. The influence of the desert recedes and with it goes the essence of the Moslem faith (although the formalities may be preserved). In so far as materialism is the ideology of the West, it is tending also to become the ideology of the Sa'udi middle class.

The resulting stresses are inevitable perhaps as growing pains, but they are beginning to take the forms of Western conflict too. Resentment on the part both of the bedouin and the middle class against the *fainéant* luxury of the princes has not so far been vocal.[2] The strike of Aramco employees of October 1953 was confined to 1,700 Palestinians, and was the work of three Iraqi communists whom the government had expelled but failed to keep away. The strike took place not long after the new King's accession to the throne. His forceful suppression of it was perhaps a fair guarantee against a similar occurrence in the near future. At the same time a more stable basis of the new society now growing up in his domain would

[1] H. B. Ellis: *Heritage of the Desert*, p. 243.

[2] Another sidelight on popular grievances is provided by a Sa'udi's observation that 'more and more fathers resented the way in which soldiers, policemen and hangers-on of the King's retinue, when the monarch was out on a trip, "borrowed" Arab daughters for a night and returned them to their families next day.' The author also mentions grievances among the merchants; it is reckoned that the government is in debt to Sa'udi merchants to the tune of one year's revenue from oil. Ellis, ibid, 241.

be assured if he hastened on the programme, which he proclaimed at his accession, for a speedy development of public services and utilities, even if this meant a smaller proportion of the national wealth being diverted to the royal family. Also it is time for the King and his advisers to consider whether a development from the completely patriarchal and dictatorial type of government which he inherited, to some form which allowed the better-educated element to have its say, would not take up some of the present stresses and strains. This again implies an adequate philosophy for a society in transition, as a basis on which this development can be carried through—and this, it can be charged, the West has not yet been particularly helpful in bringing to Sa'udi Arabia.

At an interview with a group of Europeans in March 1954, the King said 'We have been thinking much of your industries in the West. We want their advantages to go to our people now that, after a period of trouble and indigence, we are at last in possession of resources. But we do not want your class-wars and unemployment, poverty in the midst of plenty, and international wars. We feel it was God who gave you the first inspiration to make machines and serve men. The first inventors were unselfish'—he instanced James Watt, who instead of thinking first for his own tea when he saw the kettle boil, thought first, 'how can the great force which lifts the kettle-lid be put to the use of men?'—'But later men who used inventions began to think they were better without God and to exploit his gifts without morals. . . . We would be very glad to help cure materialism in the West, but we need your help to cure ours here first.'

The present King's preoccupations have only been in part with internal affairs. Already over 60, King Sa'ud ibn Abdul Aziz has had to find his way in a world which is changing even more rapidly than did his father's. 'As a personality he strikes one as a perfect blend of East and West and an archetype of the Arab nobleman. Tall and commanding, like his father, soldierly and utterly self-confident, he has the twin attributes of hauteur and generosity which are classically supposed to be the highest attributes of the aristocrat. I have met few people who could afford to relax in almost any company, who could laugh and joke and treat his companions as equals

at one moment: then when the subject of conversation warranted it, could regain complete, austere and dignified ascendancy over the assembly. . . .'[1]

Sa'udi Arabia's support of Egypt over Suez was real, costing her some 36 per cent at least in oil revenue.[2] But the King drew back from associating himself any more closely with the communist bloc, a trend which Egypt seemed to be involved in after 'Suez.' King Sa'ud may also have been alarmed by the republican tendencies of the Cairo-Damascus axis.

In January 1957 he visited President Eisenhower at Washington, a visit which achieved the State Department's object despite Mayor Wagner's official cold-shouldering of the royal visitor at New York. The Dharan air base was secured in American hands for another five years under the same conditions as the agreement of 1951[3]. In addition arms deliveries and dollar aid for their purchase were granted by the American Government. King Sa'ud on his part was satisfied that the President would curb Zionist influence on the State Department. The visit marked the end of a certain coldness which had come between Sa'udi Arabia and America since the former's rather huffish cancelling of a modest aid programme which was being carried out by America under Point Four. This was due to American refusal to mediate the Buraimi dispute with Britain.

Buraimi is a group of oases which has continued to bedevil Britain's relations with Sa'udi Arabia. As so often, Britain can claim legal right on her side, but beyond the principle lies the prize of oil. The trouble began with the arrival of a Sa'udi official with an escort of 40 armed men on August 31, 1953, in Buraimi oasis, which had been accepted in recent years as belonging in part to the Sheikhdom of Abu Dhabi, and in part to the Sultanate of Muscat and Oman —although it was a neutral territory over which neither Sheikh nor Sultan had sovereign rights. As the protecting power of both states, Britain was involved in a matter of external relations, since both

[1] Sayed el-Hashimi: *'Whither King Sa'ud?'* (Contemporary Review, July 1957).

[1] *Economist*, March 16, 1957.

[3] One of the most important conditions is the training of the Sa'udi Arabian Air Force cadets, supplementing the training given by Britain since 1947. (Twitchell, pp. 202, 220 note.)

rulers claimed that their rights in the area were being violated. British-officered levies were sent to oppose the Sa'udi claims. A standstill armistice was arranged until the question of sovereignty was settled, Sa'udi Arabia extending some shadowy historical claims. Eventually in September 1955 the matter was brought to arbitration at Geneva, but this broke down on Britain's objections to the highly partisan fashion in which the Sa'udi-appointed arbitrator, Sheikh Yusuf Yasin (the Deputy Foreign Minister), carried out his task.

Some drama was imported into what might have been an insignificant situation by the rival oil-prospecting teams in the area belonging to Aramco and a subsidiary of IPC. Whether or not there is oil there, the oasis has its importance as the main watering-place and cross-roads in that part of Arabia—and the events themselves have their place in the cold war, as providing yet another stick with which the none too savage British lion can be beaten. Egyptian support of Sa'udi Arabia has kept a quarrel alive which, in the interest of all except Soviet Russia, might well be allowed to die a natural death.[1]

Though coldness towards Britain has continued (a year after Suez diplomatic relations had not been re-established), Sa'udi Arabia has found herself fairly committed to the Western camp. At the same time a sense of unity with the Arab peoples and sympathy with Arab nationalism in general, lead Sa'udi Arabia towards attempting mediation at all points where there is division between the Arab states themselves, and recently between Syria and Turkey.

In pursuit of this policy King Sa'ud has not spared himself in journeying from end to end of the Arab world. In September 1956 he took a notable step towards healing the breach between his family and the Hashemites of Iraq (and between the proponents and opponents of the Baghdad Pact) when he met King Faisal during his yachting cruise, at Dammam. He also met the Iraqui Crown Prince at New York in January 1957, visited Baghdad in May, and met the Iraqi Prime Minister again in September at

[1] A Melamid: *The Buraimi Oasis Disputes* (Middle Eastern Affairs, February 1956). J. B. Kelly: *The Buraimi Oasis Dispute* (International Affairs, July 1957). *Economist,* September 25, 1956.

Damascus. The Damascus visit, and the gatherings at Beirut in which he took part, have been attempts to bring the divided elements of the Arab world together, and the same spirit prompted his journeys to King Mohammed of Morocco and King Idris of Libya. It is doubtful whether he, any more than the State Department, sees a satisfactory outcome of the present precarious situation in Jordan, but so far his policy has been to keep his fellow King (although a Hashemite) on his throne. Along with the other Arab kings he issued an appeal to Egypt in November 1957 to stop the press and radio campaign against Hussein's régime.

Whether this sustained effort at mediation might have any basic effect on the situation remained to be seen. The King's energy in grappling with the problem commanded admiration, but besides energy a practical vision was needed of the pattern which would both satisfy Arab aspirations and secure the viability of their territories, in a world divided and menaced by the cold war. A serious breach between the United Arab Republic and Riyadh was evident (spring of 1958), culminating in an accusation by Colonel Sarraj that Sa'udi finance was behind a plot to assassinate Colonel Abdel Nasser.

It was also uncertain how much unity of aim there was at the Sa'udi Court itself. The Amir Faisal, the King's second surviving brother—who had received a long training in the foreign field in Ibn Sa'ud's day, which Sa'ud himself never did—was proclaimed, on March 27, 1958, to be taking over full legislative and executive powers. Faisal, reputedly a follower of Colonel Abdel Nasser, could be expected to work hand in glove with the veteran Deputy Foreign Minister, Sheikh Yusuf Yasin, who had come to Ibn Sa'ud from Syria after an imprisonment at the hands of the British in the aftermath of World War I. By the middle of 1958 it was not clear whether the jostling for power between the brothers had any greater significance than the promise made earlier in the year to introduce a modern financial system into the kingdom. But the healing of the breach with the UAR and the general co-ordination of policy with Cairo indicated that Faisal was clearly in the ascendant.

Chapter Six

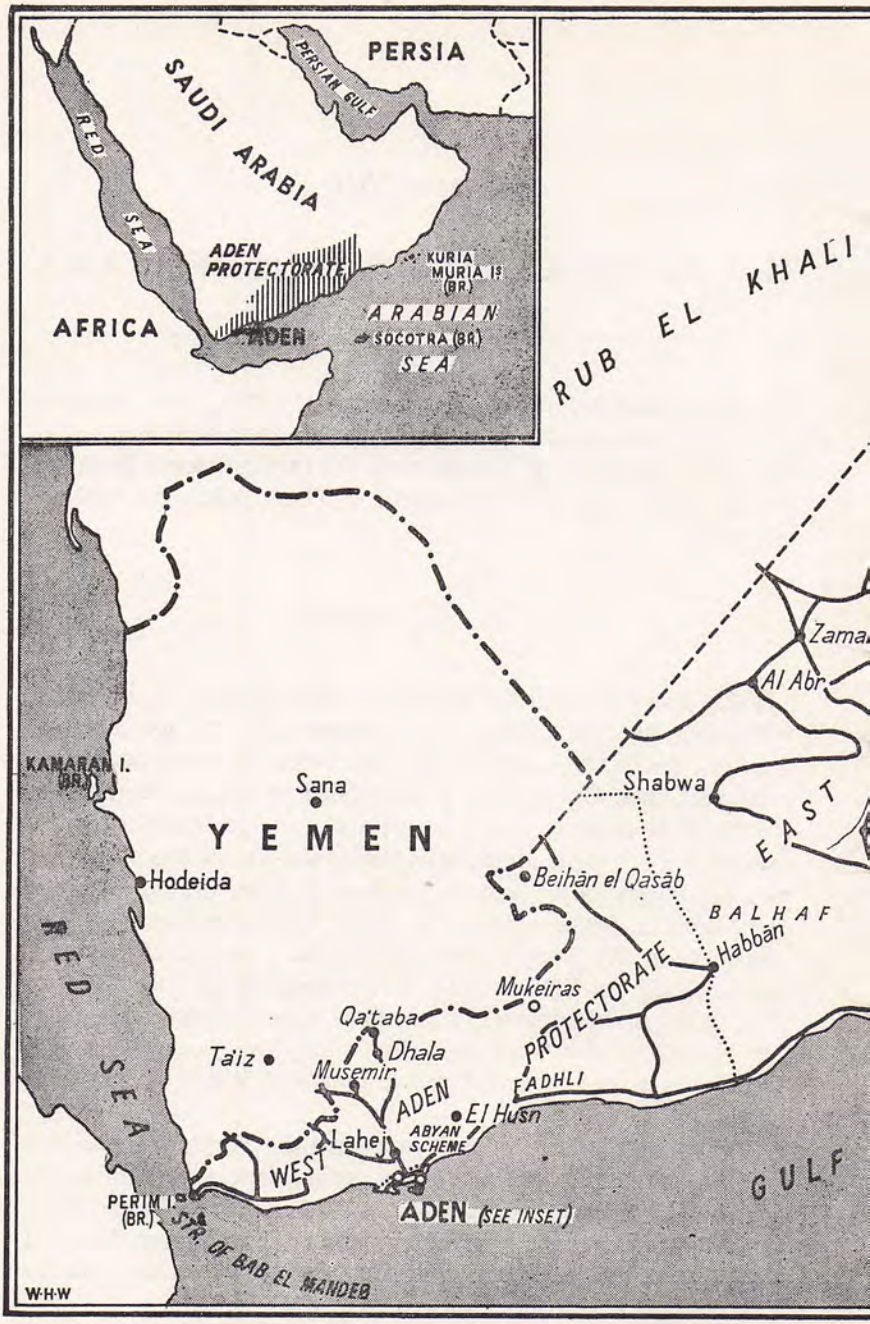
THE SOUTHERN COASTLANDS OF ARABIA

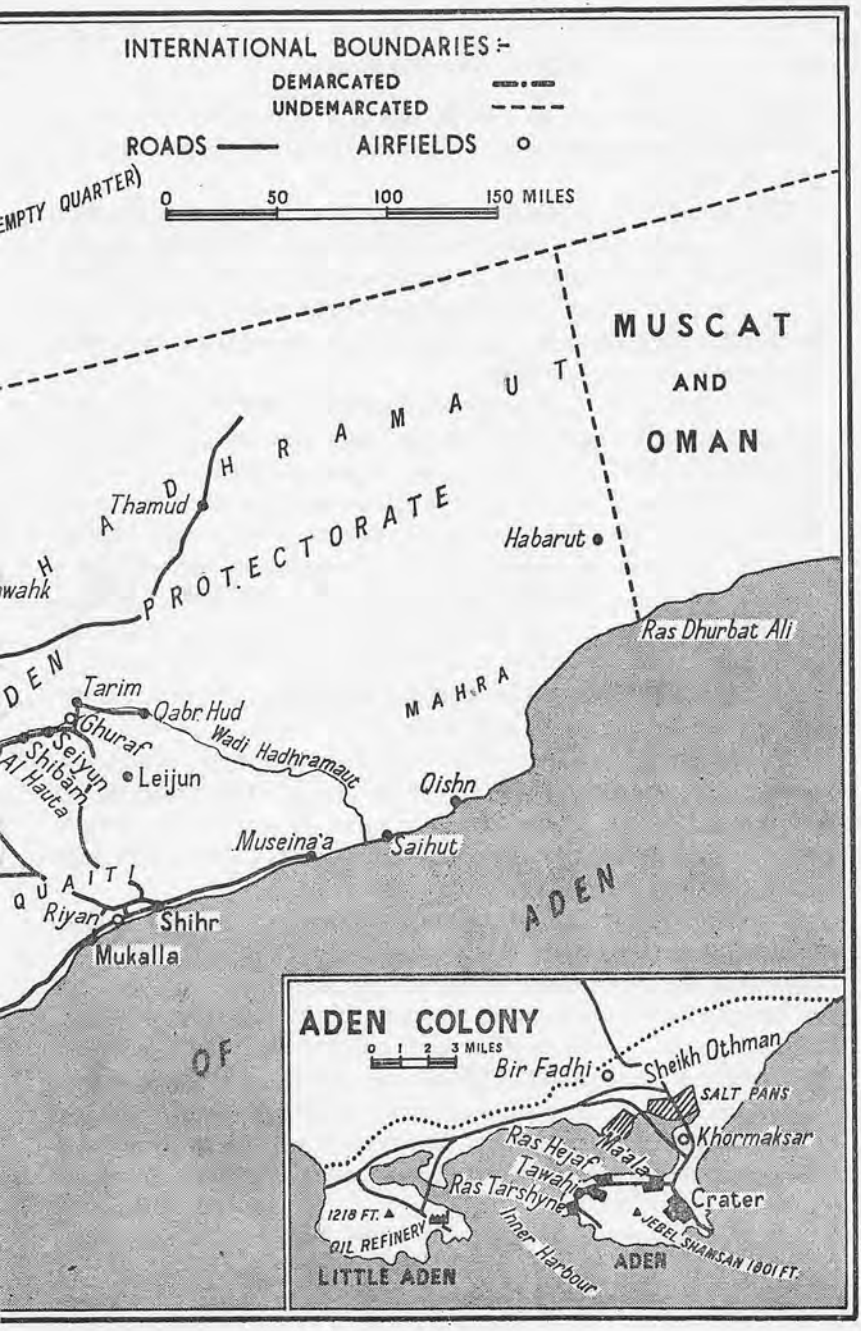
IN THE PENINSULA OF ARABIA the most fertile, and therefore populous, areas are the two corners in the south-west and south-east. The mountains of Yemen catch the tropical clouds from the Indian Ocean; the Qara Mountains of Oman catch the 'Indian' monsoon.

(a) The Yemen

These seats of ancient civilisation, once thriving on irrigation works long since ruined and on the incense trade, are now amongst the most backward in the world. The Yemen is a principality on mediaeval lines. On the west it is bounded by the Red Sea, whose coastlands it controls; on its south and east the boundary is ill-defined, but at varying times in its history the Yemen has also occupied the coasts as far east as the port of Aden (its last effective occupation of this area ceased in 1768). Thereafter Yemen fell increasingly in the Turkist orbit, except for a period of Egyptian intervention from 1818 to 1840. The opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 so improved communications from Constantinople that effective Turkish control—not altogether unpopular—became feasible. The Turks stayed there till defeat in World War I forced their evacuation.

The Imam Yahya, who took over from the Turks, was one of a long line of politico-spiritual rulers, going back to the thirteenth century, belonging to the unorthodox Zeidi sect. The Zeidis, being hardy highland people, have usually been able to impose their will on the more numerous and orthodox Shafeis. There has been no


PERSIA
PERSIAN GULF
SAUDI ARABIA
RED SEA
ADEN PROTECTORATE
KURIA MURIA Is (BR.)
AFRICA
ADEN
ARABIAN SEA
SOCOTRA (BR.)
RUB EL KHALI
Zamar
Al Abr
KAMARAN I. (BR.)
Sana
Shabwa
EAST
YEMEN
Hodeida
Beihān el Qaṣāb
BALHAF
Habbān
RED SEA
Mukeiras
PROTECTORATE
Qa'taba
Dhala
Ta'iz
Musemir
ADEN
ADHLI
El Husn
Lahej
ABYAN SCHEME
WEST
GULF
PERIM I. (BR.)
ADEN (SEE INSET)
STR. OF BAB EL MANDEB
W·H·W


INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARIES :-
DEMARCATED
UNDEMARCATED
ROADS
AIRFIELDS
EMPTY QUARTER)
0 50 100 150 MILES
MUSCAT AND OMAN
HADHRAMAUT
PROTECTORATE
Thamud
Habarut
Ras Dhurbat Ali
MAHRA
Tarim
Qabr Hud
Ghuraf
Seiyun
Shibam
Al Hauta
Leijun
Wadi Hadhramaut
Qishn
Museina'a
Saihut
QUAITI
Riyan
Shihr
Mukalla
ADEN
OF
ADEN COLONY
0 1 2 3 MILES
Bir Fadhi
Sheikh Othman
SALT PANS
Khormaksar
Ras Hejaf
Maala
Tawahi
Ras Tarshyne
Crater
1218 FT.
OIL REFINERY
Inner Harbour
JEBEL SHAMSAN 1801 FT.
ADEN
LITTLE ADEN

census and figures are guesswork, but of a population of three to four million anything from 55 per cent to two-thirds are thought to be Shafeis.[1]

This situation lends itself to despotic rule, but there is another reason for the extreme autocracy of the Imam. Polygamy in the ruling house has resulted in fratricide and parricide on the grand scale. The ruler has to watch closely his brothers and sons, because among this uncompromising people the competition for power leads inevitably to murder and revolt.

The Imam Yahya, however, maintained himself for 30 years before being assassinated in 1948, and built up a strong centralised government. Even the smallest order or permit, such as the movement of a citizen from one part of the capital to another, has to be signed by the ruler. The tribes and prominent families were kept in order by the hostage system, which still continues: near relatives of the Sheikhs and notables, sometimes quite small boys, are kept in different parts of the country under supervision. They are fortunate if their conditions are not squalid and insanitary, as bad as those of the prisoners who, clanking their chains, move about the royal palaces and grounds performing menial tasks.

A strict hold is also kept on Yemeni students abroad, of whom a considerable number are in Egypt (some 200 under training as officers and pilots). Those who have gone to work in the Sa'udi oilfields have their remittances home cut by 10 per cent, which goes into the Imam's treasury.

The £5 million income of the Imam has scarcely yet been applied to development schemes. A vast amount of graft goes on in its collection and expenditure. Though prospectors have been busy, no oil has yet been discovered to augment this income, part of which has been recently paid away in hard cash for the balance owing to the Russians for arms ($20 million worth, of which $19 million was a free gift from the Soviet Government and 'the Soviet people').[2]

The lack of development and the primitive conditions throughout the country have caused a good deal of unrest among the Egyptian-

[1] B. W. Seager, Royal Central Asian Society Journal, July-October 1955, and J. Heyworth-Dunne, Middle East Affairs, February 1958.
[2] *Economist*, February 23, 1957.

educated élite, as well as among those who, on visits to Aden or Europe, have had a glimpse of better things. Demands for change played a part in the risings of 1948 and 1955. The 1948 rising led to the accession of the present Imam Ahmed in place of the murdered Yahya; that of 1955 temporarily brought about Ahmed's enforced abdication—he was restored by the present Crown Prince, Al Badr.[1] (The headquarters of the 1955 rising was in Cairo.) Both risings also had the character of a civil war of Zeidis against Shafeis. In the course of the 1955 rising the capital, Sana'a, was handed over to the tribesmen to be sacked, since when the court has been at Ta'izz.

The chewing of leaves of the qat plant is encouraged by the government, partly for the revenue it produces, partly because it keeps the people out of mischief in their lengthy qat sessions and in the psychological state of contentment which ensues for those addicted to this otherwise mild form of drug.

The hostility of the Shafeis makes the success of Yemen in extending its claims over Aden less probable, since—though there are 60,000 Yemenis in Aden—most of the inhabitants are Shafeis. Nevertheless, even among the Shafeis of Aden and the Western Protectorate, the Crown Prince has a certain following. His hitching of the Yemen wagon to the star of Arab nationalism has certainly been popular. The esteem in which Nasser is held outweighs the low opinion of Yemenis regarding the Egyptians, so that federation with the United Arab Republic has been an acceptable step. Czech airmen have replaced Norwegians in preparation for the bombing of Aden; Russian missions have been active; and the Crown Prince has been fêted in Moscow. Russia may not be able to do much with the Yemen, but the Yemen's nuisance value for the West could be considerable.

[1] As a result of this and other risings 11 of Ahmed's brothers have been murdered, the two remaining being exiled. (They are now reported to have returned to the Yemen.)

(b) Aden and the Protectorates

DURING MOST OF IMAM YAHYA'S rule there were reasonable relations between the Yemen and Britain. A treaty was signed between the two countries in 1934, which recognised the *status quo* in the frontier districts on a temporary basis—for the Yemen never accepted as final the findings of the Anglo-Turkish Commission of 1908 on the boundary between Yemen and the Western Protectorate of Aden. In spite of this, two British officers in charge of frontier matters were able to secure adequate co-operation from the Yemeni authorities, and in general law and order among the tribes-people was kept, with R.A.F. support.

But in the '50s relations quickly deteriorated. Hints that the British authorities in Aden were moving towards the idea of federation for the petty states of the Western protectorate,[1] culminated in proposals to this effect being put to a conference of Sheikhs and Amirs at Government House in January 1954. Reactions were varied, and no further progress towards realising the project has been made, since government policy has been to wait for the Rulers to demand it. Though some are for it, others feel their vested interests are at stake. Arab nationalism also has its attractions. The Sultan of Lahej stands for those who would rather see federation on a wider Arab basis along Nasser's lines than local unity in a British-sponsored group. Nevertheless the sheikhs and sultans who were in London during July 1958 for discussions on federation signified their acceptance of the project. The appeal of Arab unity under Nasser, already accepted by the Imam of Yemen, might overcome the reluctance of some of the inhabitants of the Western Protectorate and Aden Colony to favour the Yemen's claims. One of the strongest links they have at present with the Yemenis is the qat habit. In the Colony, where average expenditure on qat by every adult is £2 10s. per month, the government's attempts to suppress the habit, on the initiative of a group of citizens, are strongly opposed.[2]

[1] Some 30 Sultanates, Sheikhdoms and other tribal units (*The Middle East*, R.I.I.A., 1954, p. 166). Apparently federation was envisaged to include about 18 of the petty states.

[2] *Economist*, May 4, 1957.

Not only for administrative convenience, but for possibilities of development, much is to be said for some form of federation between the little states, autonomous towns, tribes and petty rulers, which stretch from the Sheikh Sa'id Peninsula to the boundaries of the Sultanate of Muscat and Oman. But if federation is, politically, too hot an issue, other forms of co-operation can be encouraged, producing similar benefits. To prevent feuding in the Eastern Protectorate, the consent of all the rulers and tribal notables to a truce was necessary: the British Resident Adviser had to obtain 1,400 signatures, a *tour de force* which he accomplished in 1936. The truce was for three years, at the end of which period it was difficult to obtain the same unanimity. However, the method of settling quarrels by reference to a Board of Arbitration had become enough of a habit for the 10-year extension of the truce, proclaimed by the Sultans, to be generally accepted. It has been called 'Ingram's Peace' after Harold Ingram, to whose patient diplomacy this benefit has been mainly due.

The settling of a feud between the Sultans of Yafai and Fadhli has produced large gains in the small but fertile Abyan oasis, since it opened the way to agreement on installing a modern irrigation system. A government-appointed board was set up to direct the development, and by 1957 the oasis, semi-derelict before, was producing £3 million's worth of first-class long-staple cotton.[1]

There are other fertile stretches in the Protectorates. The Hadhramaut has an extensive river system (though only one river, the Hajr, is continuous from source to mouth), while the Western Protectorate is self-supporting, except in an unusually dry season. But the resources of Southern Arabia, apart from the possibility of oil, are of no interest to Britain, whose concern is with the strategic position of Aden port.

When the East India Company and the British Government were looking around for a coaling station on the route to India, and were in process of negotiating for Socotra, Aden happened to be captured (1839) as a reprisal for the attack on the crew and passengers of a

[1] Roughly an equilateral triangle with sides 20 miles long, containing some 100,000 acres. It is run on the model of the Gezira scheme in the Sudan (see below), as a partnership in which the tenants receive half the returns and the landowners the other half.

British ship which had been wrecked nearby. The opening of the Suez Canal increased its importance, while oil supplies at cheap rates from the Persian Gulf made it a favoured spot for oil fuelling. Its bunkering facilities now rival those of New York. Declared a free port in 1850, it is also the centre of a considerable entrepot and transhipment trade. Its high prosperity has been furthered by the £45 million refinery, rapidly completed by the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (British Petroleum) in 1954 after the withdrawal from Abadan. The city's prosy, provincial architecture, shown up by its setting of blue sea and tawny crags, reflect its decades as a distant part of the Bombay Presidency—it became a Crown Colony only in 1937.

The 'Abdali Sultan of Lahej was the main opponent of British rule, but when it was firmly established after the first troubled 20 years the notables not only accepted the British presence but requested British protection. The successor of the Sultan appealed to Britain to evict the Turks from his fortified house in Lahej (1873), which they duly did (the Turks returned to Lahej in World War I, occupying it for most of the war). It was likewise Turkish aggression which prompted the rulers of Mukalla in the Hadhramaut to ask for British protection which, after several refusals, was granted. Other areas were persuaded to accept British protection, especially as part of agreements for ending the slave trade. As a result British advisers and officers are scattered thinly throughout the territories.

Whatever the future of the protected areas, the Crown Colony of Aden itself is set on the road of constitutional progress. A legislative council was set up in January 1947, with a small elected element (four out of 19 members, excluding the Governor, who acts as President). In December 1958 a revised constitution is planned to come into effect, with 12 elected members out of 23, under a non-voting Speaker. The best hope of a continued connection with Britain lies with the moderate reformists of the Aden Association. But the picture would not be complete without the extreme nationalists, looking to Nasser and Russia. Education has been fostered in the Colony, and a generation or two of Egyptian and Syrian teachers has increased this nationalist orientation. The immediate objective of the main left-wing political party, the United National Front, is

'affiliation' with the Sa'udi and Yemeni 'people' (a hint, here, of the republicanism which is virtually inseparable from Arab nationalism). Another party of similar hue is the All South Arabia League.[1] Britain's policy of standing pat on the *status quo* and allowing few concessions to this nationalism was only having the result of building up nationalism's ultimately explosive force.

(c) Oman and the Sheikhdoms

THE HOPE OF OIL in the Eastern Protectorate of Aden has added a further interest for Britain in the territory, besides that of keeping a buffer for Aden. The same applies to the Sultanate of Muscat and Oman, whose territory adjoins the Eastern Protectorate, and continues round the corner of Arabia.

This old-fashioned principality has been in treaty relations with Britain for 150 years, and its forces are British led. The Sultan's writ has normally run only along the coastal plain, a long narrow strip with a thousand miles of seaboard, backed by mostly barren mountains. Behind these mountains lies a plateau, little cultivated, except for the Qara country and the sparse oases in the south, and the valleys and foothills of the tangle of mountains in the Jebel Akhdar area.

The largest group of oases, Buraimi, partly claimed by Oman, has been the recent focus of attention, while oil prospecting has been going on there and in the neighbourhood of Fahud. Security for these operations was, however, considered less than adequate as long as the Imam of Oman contested the interior from his capital of Nizwa in the Jebel Akhdar and received the backing of Cairo radio in so doing. He was supported by his brother, Talib bin Ali, and Suliman bin Himyar, Sheikh of the Bani Riyan tribe. Two forays by the Sultan's troops under their British officers in 1955 and 1957 were victorious for the Sultan, in so far as his opponents were overcome, the first time with scarcely a shot being fired, the second after some

[1] A close observer writes: 'All the progressive party members I know of would not now want "affiliation" with any parts of Arabia under Kings—in their view all Kings, Sultans, Sheikhs and Amirs are of the devil. The United Arab Republic is the thing and President Nasser is their man.'

sharp fighting. But, despite the Sultan's tour by jeep through the plateau and around the foothills of the Jebel Akhdar in the winter of 1955 to 1956,[1] and the later residence of his Minister of Interior at Nizwa, it is clear that the potential nuisance value of the Imam and his adherents is undiminished, providing good grist to Cairo's mill for its version of the support given by the British imperialists to a 'feudalist' and outmoded régime.

To the north of the Sultanate of Oman lie the seven Sheikhdoms of the Trucial Coast, since 1820 under a measure of British control. A treaty of that date for the suppression of piracy and the slave trade was followed by the Perpetual Maritime Truce of 1853 and the Exclusive Agreement of 1892. This put all the external affairs of the Sheikhdoms under the Government of India and made them virtually British protectorates, now directly under the sway of Whitehall.

Four of these Sheikhdoms are mere villages. Of the other three, Dubai brings in a tidy income of some £1¼ million for the Ruler from trade. Sharjah shares with Dubai a penchant for education, each having three or four hundred pupils at elementary schools. Abu Dhabi's importance lies only in its part ownership of Buraimi, though all the Sheikhdoms hope that one day oil will gush from their lands. Meanwhile this unpromising territory of sea-marsh, sand and heat, enjoys the blessings of the Pax Britannica, still surviving in its nineteenth century guise—the real blessings of peace and of some patchy agricultural development and hygiene, and an ornamental rather than useful Rulers' Council.

Further north lie the oil-rich Sheikhdoms.

Qatar is a dreary peninsula without natural resources other than oil. But oil, extracted by a subsidiary of the Iraq Petroleum Company,[2] has begun to transform the life and conditions of the inhabitants. An income of £5 million a year has recently been coming to the Ruler, who employs a British Adviser (as well as being obliged to refer in many matters to a British political officer). A £3 million hospital has been built, and a number of schools—though the children have to be paid to attend them.

[1] Described by James Morris in *Sultan in Oman* (Faber, 1957).
[2] Petroleum Development (Qatar) Ltd.

Bahrein has had the longest experience of oil, and therefore has seen a gradual development, with oil-revenue steady in recent years around £2½ million. Brought into treaty relations with the East India Company in 1820[1] (its relations being regulated in 1880 and 1892 with the British Government), it has remained politically the premier of Britain's dependencies in the Persian Gulf. Bahrein is a tight little island, with a small archipelago nearby; it has excellent harbour facilities and a natural airport. Nor is it devoid of local resources, having some agriculture at its northern end, which is well watered by springs. It has been the obvious place for the seat of H.M. Political Resident in the Persian Gulf—not to be confused either with the local Political Agent or with Sir Charles Belgrave, the Adviser to the Ruler (and employed by him, 1926-57). Its harbour at Manamah is the Royal Navy's base in the Persian Gulf, and its airfield on Muharraq Island is a staging-post for the R.A.F.

Besides the gradualness and steadiness of the oil revenues, the practical sense of Sheikh Hamad (1923-42) and his successor have made possible the peaceful transition of Bahrein into the modern world. Sir Charles Belgrave and the other British officials have played an invaluable part in building up the administration, reorganising the police force, developing health and education, and looking after the other needs of a twentieth century statelet. Seventy per cent of its revenue comes from oil (30 per cent from Customs) under the fifty-fifty Agreement with BAPCO,[2] which came into operation here, as in Qatar, in 1952. Though its income is reasonable for a state of its size (120,000 population) it finds it difficult to keep up with the wealthier Joneses next door, especially in fabulous Kuwait.

The Company followed a sensible policy of leaving its workers to live in their homes and transporting them to their work, either to the fields in the middle of the island, or to the refinery (which also takes oil by undersea pipe-line from Sa'udi Arabia). But unrest cannot be avoided. As elsewhere, education and wealth are creating new problems, and there have been many critics of the

[1] Bahrein belonged to Persia until the latter part of the eighteenth century, and Persia still lays claim to it—a potential source of discord between Persia and Britain.

[2] See above.

régime. Reforms have come very slowly on the political level—not much more than elected committees for health and education—and, though Belgrave himself pressed for reforms, he became identified with the old régime in the fashionable anti-British orientation. At the time of General Glubb's dismissal from the Arab Legion in Jordan (March 1956) a 'Belgrave must go' movement was set on foot, with strikes, riots and demonstrations, coinciding with a visit by Selwyn Lloyd, the British Foreign Secretary. These were followed up by more serious riots at the time of 'Suez'. The Ruler, however, kept Belgrave on until his retirement the following year.

Kuwait's three-mile bay and harbour is the frontage for a state which now has almost more money than it knows how to spend—some £100 million a year, or £500 per inhabitant (the population has doubled since 1946). Founded a century and a half ago by tribes who moved for a quiet life to this completely barren spot, it has turned out an Eldorado. In order to make both ends meet with resources that were virtually nil, the inhabitants needed all their bedouin toughness, while becoming enterprising pearlers and traders and skilful boat builders. Even for water they were obliged to go 50 miles away to the Shatt-el-Arab. For protection against the Turks they turned, during the last century, to Britain—in 1914 Sheikh Mubarak, formerly host to the young Ibn Sa'ud in exile, allied himself with the British to drive the Turks out of Basra.

Its boundaries were drawn under British auspices in the early 1920's, without knowledge that, beneath its unpromising sands, lay the richest natural oil reservoir in the world, and among the easiest to work, owing to the nearness of the oil to the surface and the virtual absence of 'faultings'. This field at Burgan, covering some 30 square miles, and with a thickness of a thousand feet, promises to keep Kuwait going for years to come.[1] The oil is exploited by the Kuwait Oil Company, half British and half American, under an agreement made in 1933 after years of hard bargaining by British and American oil interests, backed by their respective governments. Kuwait is the fourth largest producer of oil in the world, and second only to Venezuela as an exporter. It is also one of the largest earners of sterling outside the United Kingdom. Another field is being

[1] Longrigg: *Oil in the Middle East*, pp. 112-3.

worked in the Neutral Zone, unallotted as between the Rulers of Kuwait and Sa'udi Arabia, who share the concessionary rights. Kuwait's half-share was made over to a group of American companies operating as Aminoil (American Independent Oil Company), which eventually struck oil in 1953.

Kuwait has been transformed into an area of feverish modern development. Contrasting with this hectic boom town atmosphere, the hammering of the shipwrights at their mediaeval tasks is still to be heard along the beaches. Hospitals, schools and housing estates are springing up. Condensers for producing fresh water from the sea have been installed at a considerable cost, a more expensive way of solving the water problem than piping it from the Shatt-el-Arab, though this is justified by the aim of not being dependent on Iraq (but the rapidly increasing need for water has led to plans for a pipeline all the same).

There is very little proper budgeting—as in Qatar, roughly a third of the royalties goes on development, a third on investment, and a third on current expenditure. The last item tends to rise out of proportion to the other two: in addition to the £10 million spent on education, it costs £40 million to run the public services (at a loss of £10 million per year). Defence is a relatively cheap item, though the privates in its British-trained army receive about £52 a month.

Everyone who can be is being educated, either in Kuwait, where a large number of the teachers are Egyptian and Syrian, or in colleges and universities elsewhere in the Arab world, or overseas. Education has spurred the demand for reform, though this is nothing new. In 1938, before the oil era, the Ruler was nearly unseated because he resisted demands for a council. Perhaps profiting from this experience, the ruling el-Sabah family have shown that they do not intend lightly to lose their position. They apply themselves diligently to government work, and keep as close a control over development as is possible with so many millions flowing around. But the Ruler has his angry young men to deal with in the 'Committee of Clubs', to which most of the reforming societies of the young intelligentsia belong. They exploit such resentment as there is at Kuwait's position under British control—dissatisfaction

which was aggravated by the British monopoly of development work during the first few years after the war. They organised a boycott of British goods at the time of 'Suez', but in general everyone is too busy directly or indirectly making money out of oil to put an urgent priority on altering the political status quo. After cold-shouldering the advances of the short-lived Arab Federation of Iraq and Jordan, it would not however be surprising if Sheikh Abdullah Salem el Sabah seeks to insure his position by entering on his own terms, before it is too late, the United Arab Republic. Such possibilities raise a big question-mark as to the future of Britain's position in the Gulf.

Chapter Seven

FRENCH, BRITISH AND ARAB NATIONALISM IN THE LEVANT

(a) The failure of France and Britain

TO THE ARABS the West European is an *afrangi*, a Frank, a name inherited from the Crusades. In those days lofty ideals coexisted with some fairly sordid motives. More recently trade was the object which brought Europeans to the Middle East, but trade tended to lead on to domination.

The Arabs observed that, though the Europeans shared similar aims, they were deeply divided among themselves in the pursuit of them. These divisions, culminating in World War I, led to the breakdown of the international order, such as it was, which the West had been able to impose on the Arab world.

Peace, law and order had been, for the West Europeans, a condition of trade, and of transit to their markets further east. Peace, law and order—and sometimes the protection of minorities in certain rights and liberties—were clear advantages for the inhabitants of the area. Culture, too, was provided, in the form of teaching institutions, as were hospitals and medical services. The eagerness with which these things were accepted by the inhabitants was a sign that they met a deeply felt need.

The West had brought these benefits in extending its world order over the Middle East. Such success as there was along these lines in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was due to that measure of agreement among the powers known as the Concert of Europe. In the Arab world, mostly included within the Turkish Empire, the concert had operated largely under British direction. It was the

more or less consistent policy of Britain towards Turkey, and her relative success in imposing it on the other powers, which enabled the system to operate.

At the same time there was a good deal of suspicion and distrust on the part of the Arab peoples towards the 'Franks.' There was indeed whole-hearted acceptance by a few, especially among the Christian minority, of what the West had to offer—though this was off-set by the Moslem's mistrust of European values and ideas. To the peoples as a whole the Turks did not merely appear as task-masters or tax-collectors. The law and order which they provided did not go entirely unappreciated, as long as the Turks were accepted as guardians of Dar-al-Islam (the House of Islam), home of the people of the true faith. The Ottoman Empire had its place in a religious, moral and political order, with its beliefs, standards and customs—an order largely accepted, and even positively valued.

The normal British policy in the nineteenth century, of bolstering the Turkish Empire while occasionally pressing for reforms, was therefore in line with the wishes of many of the Empire's Arab inhabitants, in so far as they had wishes capable of being formulated in political terms. Britain's interests were also served, since the Turks permitted the trade which her nationals required (and certain privileges which went with it), and the Turks usually preserved enough law and order for this trade to be satisfactorily carried on. The Turkish Empire also served as a barrier to the extension of Russian influence, and could be handled in such a way as to defeat the objects of other rival powers, notably France.[1]

[1] There is a good deal of justice in the comment of George Antonius: 'The old slogan of the European Concert, so vehemently championed by Palmerston, had been adopted as the basis of an agreed policy for preventing the break-up of the Sultan's empire; and that policy had prevailed throughout the nineteenth century and up to the outbreak of the War. It had all the advantages of a self-denying ordinance without any of its drawbacks, since it had substantially achieved its professed object and yet allowed each of the Powers in turn to rob the Sultan of one or other of his coveted dominions. In the two score years that had elapsed between Abdul Hamid's accession and the War of 1914, the Sultan had had to surrender several rich provinces in Asia Minor to Russia, Cyprus and Egypt to Great Britain, Tunisia to France, Libya to Italy, and Bosnia-Herzegovina to Austria. To say nothing of those Balkan provinces which, with the help of Russia, had succeeded in casting off the Turkish yoke.'—*The Arab Awakening* (Hamilton, 1938), p. 243.

The decline of Western influence in the Middle East has been due to the failure of Western countries to continue conferring on the inhabitants those advantages which their presence once made possible. Instead of peace, law and order, there has been unrest, frustration and finally (for thousands of Arabs) growing insecurity culminating in the loss of their homes. There is the fear that the continuation of Western influence may lead to a further instalment of these woes. The divisions and rivalries of the Western powers have brought about this situation. Conversely the Western powers can do little that is helpful for the inhabitants, let alone regain their former influence, until they find the healing for their own divisions.

* * *

Certainly the European powers were faced by a problem—how to reconcile their interests with the growing nationalism of the peoples under Turkish rule. Britain in the nineteenth century had to make concessions to nationalism in Eastern Europe, even though this interfered with her normal policy of maintaining Turkey's integrity. Philhellenic sentiment, greatly strengthened by Byron's dramatic last gesture, made it impossible for Britain to withhold support from Greece, though the almost accidental sinking of the Turco-Egyptian fleet by the Royal Navy at Navarino (1827) was described by the Duke of Wellington as an untoward event. Similarly liberal opinion in Britain followed with interest the efforts of Serbs, Rumanians and Bulgarians to win their freedom, and, with Gladstone, vigorously encouraged them.

But the nationalism which developed slowly at the end of the last century among the Arabs—by which the Arabic-speaking peoples are meant—was a nationalism much less easy to define than that of the East Europeans. East European nationalism was closely linked with religion, in the Balkans predominantly that of the Greek Orthodox Church. But Christianity gave only a meagre sense of solidarity to the Balkan peoples struggling for freedom from the Turk, as the Second Balkan War was to show; and fostered by distinct languages, particular nationalisms of the West European variety quickly proliferated. But in the Arab world Islam, together with the Arabic language, provided a far stronger bond. Islam reconciled to Turkey

many Arabs, who were ready to accept the Sultan as Caliph. For the Arabs their language has been more than a common tongue, a convenient medium for communication. It is the 'noble Arab language', made holy by the Prophet and the Koran. Its sacred binding power gives that sense of people-hood which is the essence of Arab nationalism—*qawmiyyah*, as distinct from the *wataniyyah* or European-type nationalism, whose aspirations are towards political unity within reasonably well defined frontiers.

The Turks made considerable concessions to the spirit of unity summed up in the idea of Dar-al-Islam. Non-Turks from among the Moslem population could rise to high places in the Empire.[1] Sultan Abdul Hamid's policy of binding the Arabs more closely to Istanbul by playing on his position as Caliph and by promoting the Pan-Islamic idea was not without its effects. Arab rulers or their heirs—nominees of the Sultan (or at least approved by him)—were made much of at the Imperial Court. Such were the Sherif Hussein of the Hejaz, guardian of the Holy Cities, and his family. Where Arab rulers were hostile to the Turk, as in the case of the young Ibn Sa'ud, it was because of local feuds, in which rivals were supported from Istanbul.

Arab nationalism, of the *qawmiyyah* variety, first developed in Syria and Lebanon. Its pioneers were Christians, seeking in the Arabic language some basis of unity with the peoples among whom they lived, as distinct from the principle of religion. Easy contact with Western Europe and the founding of European mission schools and colleges in the Levant soon led to the growth of the idea of secular nationalism in which Christians and Moslems could share. This movement, confined to a small number of the intelligentsia, was

[1] 'Under the Ottoman régime the Arabs formed an important part of the structure of the Ottoman Empire. It is wrong to say that the Arabs were under the yoke of the Turks and that their uprising and the assistance which was rendered to them during the Great War were merely intended to relieve them from such yoke. The fact is that under the Ottoman Constitution they enjoyed all rights and privileges, political and otherwise, on an equal basis with the Turks. . . . The Arabs had a complete share with the Turks in all organs of the State, civil as well as military. There were Arabs who held the high office of Prime Minister and Ministers, Commanders of Divisions and Ambassadors.' Haj Amin al-Husaini, Mufti of Jerusalem, speaking before the Palestine Royal Commission, 1937, quoted in E. Kedourie: *England and the Middle East:* the destruction of the Ottoman Empire 1914-1921 (Bowes, 1956), p. 153.

already at the beginning of the century embracing Moslems equally with Christians. It did not at first look to a breakaway from the Ottoman Empire. All it asked was greater freedom and a measure of local autonomy for Arabs within the Empire.

The Young Turk Revolution of 1908 which overthrew Abdul Hamid was opposed to this trend, as the aim of the dominant Committee of Union and Progress was greater centralisation at Istanbul and the Turkification of the Arabs (an opposing faction, the Liberty and Federation group, believing in decentralisation and autonomy for the Arabs, had too brief a spell of power to make much difference). The centralising, Turkifying trend focused Arab opposition in a number of secret societies, while Arabs abroad met together, as at the Paris Conference of 1913, to define their aims. Even then these were restricted to demands for provincial autonomy, equality of political rights as between Turks and Arabs, and other reforms, such as the recognition of Arabic as an official language in the parliament at Istanbul and 'in Syrian and Arab countries'.[1]

Had the pendulum swung again towards the Liberty and Federation group at Istanbul, the evolution of the Arab provinces towards some kind of federal arrangement with the Turks would have been a possibility. But the collapse of the European Concert in the outbreak of World War I drove the Arabs towards a different destiny.

* * *

Bolstering the Ottoman Empire had been British policy, not only as a means of securing trade and privileges in the Near East, but as the best way of keeping other powers out. Chief of these was Russia, but France was also a continual British preoccupation.

French claims to have a say in the fate of the Arab countries of the Eastern Mediterranean dated back to the Crusades. The first capitulations signed by the Turk with a European power were those of 1535 with France, and not long after France gained the right of protecting the Empire's Catholic subjects. France supported Mohammed Ali of Egypt and his son Ibrahim in their conquest of Turkey's Levantine provinces, and this support was only withdrawn after strong pressure by the 'Concert', under British leadership

[1] N. A. Ziadeh: *Syria and Lebanon* (Benn, 1957), p. 41. Hurewitz, I, Document 107, p. 268.

(1840-1). When fighting broke out in Lebanon in 1860 between Christians and Druzes (a warlike sect derived from Islam), and 14,000 Christians were killed,[1] France seized the opportunity to intervene. The Concert of powers sanctioned the despatch of a French expeditionary force, but quickly turned to persuading Napoleon III to evacuate his troops, after the granting by the Turkish government of a special status for Mount Lebanon. This provided a measure of autonomy for the area under a Christian governor appointed by Istanbul, and assisted by a representative council. Although the Concert succeeded in limiting France's direct political power in Lebanon, the way was opened for a more rapid penetration by French culture, and Western culture in general. A number of Western mission schools and colleges were established, notably the Syrian Protestant College, later renamed the American University of Beirut (1866) and the Jesuits' Université de St. Joseph (1875).

The part of these institutions in stimulating nationalism has been noticed, but they also encouraged dependence on the European powers, the Protestants looking for protection or advancement to Britain, the much more numerous Maronites and other Catholics looking to France. Many Lebanese came to speak French in preference to Arabic, and they turned to France for their culture—an orientation which could (and often did) have political significance.

On the economic level, French banks and businesses took a large share in the development of the Levant: Beirut harbour; the tramways of Beirut, Damascus and Aleppo; electricity and gas companies and other utilities were French. Above all, the French had developed the railway system of Syria and Palestine, and had bargained hard with Germans, British and Turks to make sure that the railways guaranteed them economic predominance in the area. The keenest competition which the French encountered was from the British, since Kitchener had decided that British control of Palestine was necessary for the defence of the Suez Canal, and that a railway, pre-

[1] These events set off a massacre of 5,000 Christians in Damascus by Druzes and Moslems together. These Christians were Maronites, members of an ancient Christian church, having the largest number of adherents (422,000) of the various churches in the Lebanon. At the end of the Middle Ages it accepted communion with Rome, thereby acknowledging the headship of the Pope, while retaining its liturgy in the old Syriac language and certain customs, notably the right of married men to become priests.

ferably from Haifa to Mesopotamia, would be the best way of linking the British spheres in the South-east Mediterranean and the Persian Gulf[1].

These considerations were the background of France's claim to share in the disposal of the area in the event of Turkey's defeat in World War I. Without the coming of the war it is doubtful if France could have transformed her cultural and economic interests into levers of political control.[2] Arrangements to share in the development or exploitation of the Empire (especially its railways and oil resources) could have continued to be made between Britain, France and that important newcomer to this field, Germany. Russia at the time was, herself, too 'under-developed' to enter effectively into this economic fray.

The fatal breach in the Concert took place with Bismarck's policy towards France and the seizure of Alsace and Lorraine after her defeat in the war of 1870-71. That the breach was fatal was not apparent for some years—it might even have been healed had it not been for Wilhelm II's policy of challenging Britain and France at the same time. Even after the Franco-Prussian war it had been possible for the powers, including France, to meet at Berlin in 1878 in order to set bounds to Russia's expansion at Turkey's expense.[3] But the French reaction to Germany of drawing near to Russia, beginning with the Franco-Russian Military Convention of 1892, led to the division of the 'Concert' powers into two hostile armed camps. With

[1] The facts about this commercial and diplomatic bargaining are set out in H. F. Frischwasser-Ra'anan: *The Frontiers of a Nation*, p. 5 (Batchworth Press, 1955). 'The geographical dispersion of the imperial interests of the various powers prepared the way in 1914 for a semi-official division of Turkey into spheres of influence. Later this led to the outright dismemberment of the Empire and to the creation of the post-war frontiers on the map of the Middle East.'

[2] Another motive for the French search for power in the Levant was concern to safeguard her North African territories. To that end France aspired to be a great Mediterranean power and wished to have secure bases in the Eastern Mediterranean to offset Britain's control of Egypt. 'Shortly after the outbreak of the First World War, G. Leygues, himself active in designing French policy, summed up this programme in a speech delivered in the French Chamber of Deputies: "The axis of French policy is in the Mediterranean. One of its poles is in the West, through Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco. It is necessary that the other pole be in the East with Syria, the Lebanon and Palestine".' Frischwasser-Ra'anan, p. 29.

[3] San Stefano, etc.

the Entente of 1904, France drew Britain into her camp. As Russia was already there, Britain had to change her relations with Russia. Hence the agreement with Russia over spheres of interest in Persia, and the weakening of Britain's support for Turkey in the face of Russia's 'aspirations' at her expense—particularly as German influence in Turkey was now predominant.[1] Germany had, in fact, managed to take over Britain's historic policy towards Turkey. It was she who now played the part of strengthening Turkey in the face of the efforts of other powers to bring about her disintegration, and so hoped to exclude, or at least to dominate, her rivals.[2]

Britain, therefore, had to abandon her historic policy of leading the European Concert in supporting Turkey against Russia and of bridling the influence there of France, as of the other powers. Under agreements made during World War I, Russia was to have Constantinople and parts of Eastern Anatolia, besides a share in some kind of international régime for Palestine. France was to have her share in the latter too, but more important, was accorded by Britain the right of direct political control of the coastlands of Syria (including Lebanon) besides a sphere of influence extending eastwards over the rest of Syria as far as Mosul.

In these terms France's interests were recognised in the Sykes-Picot Agreement of 1916, in which Britain also staked her claims to Iraq and the Haifa-Acre sector of the Palestine coast. If these terms were to be carried out it meant nothing less than the balkanisation of the Near East. In the place of one political unit—Turkey, however ramshackle—there were to be several, with their frontiers, vested interests and rivalries.

This agreement has been characterised as 'a shocking document ... the product of greed at its worst . . . of greed allied to suspicion and so leading to stupidity.'[3] On the other hand a recent historian can regard it as 'the last responsible attempt on the part of Europe to cope with the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire, and to prevent the dissolution from bringing disaster.'[4]

Balfour, who became British Foreign Secretary in 1916, explained

[1] See Chapter 2 (*b*).
[2] Frischwasser-Ra'anan, pp. 7, 8.
[3] Antonius, p. 248.
[4] Kedourie, p. 65.

later that when Britain, France and Russia decided to partition the Ottoman Empire, they never supposed themselves to be dealing with three nations (in Syria, Palestine and Mesopotamia) already in existence, ready for "provisional recognition", only requiring the removal of the Turk, the advice of a mandatory and a little time to enable them "to stand alone". They thought in terms of congeries of peoples and sects—Arabs, Jews, Maronites, Druzes, Kurds, but not "nations in the modern sense of the term".[1] And this assessment of the position had been largely correct. The obligation to provide a framework of law and order was part of the thinking of the Allied powers, but it is not surprising that this took second place to the desire to satisfy their economic and strategic aspirations. If law and order had been the main concern the Allies would have agreed to establish direct rule in the areas where disorders (for instance between bedouin and cultivators) were most to be expected, and spheres of influence with, at most, some form of indirect control in those areas where civilisation was most advanced. In fact, political and economic priorities dictated that the settlement as between areas of direct and indirect rule should be made the other way round.[2]

Even so, these arrangements could have been tolerated by the inhabitants for a time, had they been given a clear indication of what to expect at the final settlement. In 1916 the Sherif Hussein of Hejaz—who had formerly used his position as an Ottoman nominee to impose his rule on his fellow Arabs—was persuaded by the British to revolt against the Turks. In return for this he was promised that Britain was prepared 'to recognise and support the independence of the Arabs' in those Arab lands then under Turkish rule, with the exception of 'the two districts of Mersina and Alexandretta and portions of Syria lying to the West of the districts of Damascus, Homs, Hama and Aleppo' since these 'cannot be said to be purely Arab.' There were further provisos that the above promise would only apply to 'those regions lying within those frontiers wherein Great Britain is free to act without detriment to the interests of her

[1] Quoted in Kedourie, p. 135.
[2] Antonius, p. 248.

ally, France' and that Britain reserved a special position for herself in Iraq.[1]

The outlines of the arrangements soon after decided upon by Britain, France and Russia are here sketched somewhat ambiguously, but the ambiguity was of little concern to Hussein who only accepted the conditions under protest. He was apparently informed of the Sykes-Picot Agreement soon after it was concluded,[2] and despite his protest, might well have been ready to accept it, had not Lawrence's ambitions and visions (supported by General Allenby and others) led him to believe that he could gain more than the agreement offered. His proclamation of himself as King of the Hejaz was an earnest of the wider power which he hoped to obtain later.

Lawrence's aim was to secure an extensive Arab state for Hussein, or rather for his family, in particular for Lawrence's protégé, the Amir Feisal. He was inspired by hostility to the French as much as concern for the Arabs—even before he had made contact with Hussein and his family he was planning to 'rush right up to Damascus and biff the French out of all hope in Syria.'[3] But he knew he was involving the Arabs in a gamble, on a set of presumptions or pretences which only an extraordinary amount of luck, in addition to skill, could translate into reality.

Lawrence, fortifying his Arab colleagues' determination with much largesse of gold sovereigns, struck northwards, operating after the capture of Akaba as the right wing of Allenby's army. Allenby made arrangements for the Arab force, ostensibly under command of Feisal, to be the first to enter Damascus,[4] where, with the aid of British officers, Lawrence set up an administration under his—or rather the Sherifian—flag. Feisal hoped to be able to make his régime permanent, even to extend it to the Syrian and Lebanese coastlands, and to this end was prepared to continue accepting British

[1] Hussein-McMahon correspondence. Document 8, 2, in Hurewitz, Vol. 2 (p. 15).

[2] Kedourie (as against Antonius) argues that his information on the subject was complete—p. 97, etc.

[3] *Letters*, p. 196. Letter D. G. Hogarth, March 22, 1915.

[4] Though an Australian troop had accidentally passed through beforehand and had taken the surrender.

tutelage as an alternative to French control (he would have accepted an American mandate under the League of Nations if it had been a practical possibility.) In this policy Feisal was at first supported by the inhabitants, at least by the more vocal leaders. But these were for the most part estranged as months of uncertainty went by, while Britain and France bargained about the final settlement—their estrangement being due as much to the jumped-up position and inefficiency of Feisal's Iraqi and Hejazi followers as to his inability to obtain the great goals which he had set himself.

Despite British insistence that the Sykes-Picot Agreement was a dead letter, due to the defection of Russia and other changed circumstances, the French took their stand rigidly on it. They made certain important concessions—Palestine and the oil-bearing region of Mosul[1] to the north of Iraq were to come under British mandate and in return for these Lloyd George had to allow the French the remaining spheres which they had been promised. Clémenceau told Lloyd George that France would only abandon her claim to Syria-Lebanon if Britain abandoned her's to Iraq—an arrangement that Lloyd George was not ready to accept. The French did not think that an Arab state or states could stand on their own feet—if they withdrew their claims it would merely mean allowing the entire area to come under British influence. Feisal still hoped that with some British backing, he might rule as sovereign in those areas which, according to the Sykes-Picot Agreement, were to be recognised as 'an independent Arab State or a Confederation of Arab States . . . under the suzerainty of an Arab chief'[2]—a state which according to both the Agreement and the McMahon Correspondence was to include the main towns of the Syrian interior: Damascus, Hama, Homs and Aleppo.

Feisal's fruitless diplomacy in Paris and London increased the frustration of the Syrians and the extremism of his personal followers. Law and order, which had only been maintained by British troops, began to break down after their withdrawal (in accordance with the terms of the Sykes-Picot Agreement) and the extremists adopted guerilla tactics on the lines of communication of the French,

[1] The French were to have a share in whatever oil might be exploited.
[2] Hurewitz, II, Doc. 10, p. 19. See also the map in Antonius, p. 248.

now installed in the coastlands. They operated in alliance with Mustafa Kemal's Turkish nationalist forces, who supplied them with arms and ammunition. Feisal, abandoned by the British, had promised to accept France as the mandatory power, but in the face of his inability to persuade his supporters in Syria to accept this policy the French decided on occupation.[1] Feisal's acceptance, in March 1920, of the crown of Syria at the hands of a 'General Syrian Congress' which he had earlier called into being made no difference to the ultimate decision. After a clash with Sherifian troops at the Pass of Meisalun, a French column occupied Damascus, and Feisal was ordered to leave (July 27, 1920).

(b) Birth-pangs of Syria and Lebanon

THE MOOD OF THE SYRIANS at the time of the French occupation can be understood—hostility and frustration, regarding the French, and a feeling of having been badly let down by the British. These sentiments towards the two Western powers have persisted, and now embrace also the Americans—sentiments which events in Palestine have greatly exacerbated.

The territories liberated from the Turk in World War I required a good deal of assistance. The organs of government were rudimentary or non-existent (at least by modern standards). The countries were poor, and their fiscal and financial systems oppressive and chaotic. Much needed to be done, and the French were capable of doing it; they could supply administrators, advisers, educationists, as well as some capital for initiating road-building and other material developments. The trouble was that they were only wanted by a section of the Lebanese while almost all the remaining inhabitants of Syria and Lebanon were hostile.

[1] Force was in any case the only sanction for the mandatory's position in areas of indirect, as much as in those of direct, control. In the area of indirect control France (according to the Sykes-Picot Agreement) had the right to supply 'advisers . . . at the request of the Arab State'—but these advisers (according to Balfour's interpretation) were advisers 'whose advice must be followed.' (Quoted in Kedourie, p. 133).

It is always easy to condemn the colonial—or mandatory—policy of any power by saying it did too little. The 23 years of French rule saw in fact a considerable transformation on the material plane. Developments such as the excellently engineered trunk roads had indeed a military object, but on the purely civil side the planning of the newer parts of Damascus and the construction of some fine buildings, such as the Arab-style Syrian parliament house, show that materially French rule was not without its achievements. The pleasant modern villas and blocks of flats which sprang up in and around the cities were a sign of the rapid Westernisation inspired by France. While much could have been more thoroughly overhauled or even scrapped and entirely reconstructed (like the Ottoman financial system), the framework of modern states with twentieth century institutions was created.

Under French rule the Levant states were reasonably prosperous, in spite of the vagaries of the paper currency which was linked to the fluctuating franc (so much so that the Turkish gold pound continued to be generally used as the currency basis by the inhabitants). Syrians and Lebanese resented, however, the very favourable terms on which the French-controlled *Banque de Syrie et du Grand Liban* was allowed to operate, and considered the dealings of other French concessionary companies, such as those controlling the railways, as too much like exploitation.

In political matters, the only chance the French had of strengthening their position was in trying to build up a following among some sections at the cost of deepening the hostility of others. They followed the old Roman tradition, *divide et impera*; in any case the mistrust between the various religious groups, and the minorities' fears of the Moslems were ample justification for some degree of local autonomy. The old Sanjak of Lebanon was extended to take in a considerable Moslem population; it was divided from Syria, and the rest of Syria was divided again—at one time into no less than five separate administrations. Inevitably these divisions fostered local jealousies and rivalries. Arab nationalism had not become a unifying force to the point where it could bridge over these religious or sectarian gaps. Twenty-three years of French rule were necessary before the people could begin to speak with a united voice. At that

stage there was one issue on which they could unite—the demand for independence.

The enlargement of Lebanon's frontiers gave an almost equal balance to the Christian and Moslem elements, and was carried out by the French on the assumption that they would be needed indefinitely by the Christians as a counterpoise to possible Moslem domination.

But in Syria there was no compact Christian community large enough to form the basis for French power. The bitterness aroused by the manner of the French occupation could not be appeased, and the first years of virtually military government did little to allay it. In 1925 a revolt broke out in the Jebel Druze, the mountain area South of Damascus (whither a large proportion of the Druze community had migrated from the Lebanon in search of independence in the years after the settlement of 1861). This revolt spread to Damascus and almost to Beirut. It was only put down after much hard fighting by the French and two bombardments of the city.

The Syrians continued to be hostile, apart from a few puppets (and the temporary collaboration of other politicians for pecuniary or tactical reasons). The treaties of independence which Britain negotiated with Iraq and Egypt gave them further encouragement. At last in 1936 the French government—the Popular Front under Blum—decided to follow Britain's example. The French had already set up forms of parliamentary government in Syria and Lebanon, and on the somewhat narrow basis which the French-made constitutions permitted, comparatively free elections took place. These returned large nationalist majorities both in the Syrian and Lebanese parliaments, which ratified treaties drawn up on much the same lines (though somewhat less favourable to the new states) as that between Britain and Iraq. Syria and Lebanon were to become independent states, while leaving military and air bases in French hands (in Lebanon the French garrison was not to be restricted to any particular locality). Also French schools and similar institutions were to be guaranteed complete freedom to continue their cultural work, and French economic interests—notably the currency which was linked to the franc, and the French-controlled banks and other enterprises—were to be secured.

The Blum government fell, and the imminence of war provided a strong argument for further postponement. The French Parliament never ratified these treaties. When in 1944 the French were only too eager to make treaties as good as these, the Syrians and Lebanese refused their overtures. They wanted no special connection with France.

Educated Syrians knew enough French history to assess the real motives behind the favour shown by France to the various Christian communities, from the days when Francis I obtained from the Sultan the right to protect Catholics in the Turkish Empire.[1] They had noticed that successive French governments, atheistic or agnostic in complexion, which in France devoted their efforts to breaking the power of the Church, continued in Syria and Lebanon to subsidise French mission schools and colleges. The non-religious character of this motive was even more clearly shown when France established the *mission laïque* (secular or non-religious cultural organisation for founding and carrying on French schools in the Near East), in which no religion of any kind was taught.

On top of the frustration caused by the failure of France to ratify the treaties of 1936, a further incident shortly before the war served as evidence for the Syrians that they were just regarded as pawns by the French in the diplomatic game of world politics. In 1939 the French bartered away their Northern port of Alexandretta, along with the surrounding territory, to Turkey, as a means of buying Turkish friendship (or at least neutrality) in the European war which was imminent. This was done by some sharp work in manipulating a plebiscite whereby the Turkish minority in the region was made to appear as a clear majority.

This explains the apathy with which Syria and Lebanon regarded France's entry into war in 1939. General Weygand was building up a large 'Army of the Levant', when he was flown back to France in order to stem the German break-through of 1940. He failed; France collapsed, and the French authorities in the Levant rallied to the Vichy government. The population was more than ever sullen under the rule of a power which was weak and defeated.

[1] The French claim for a special position in the Levant due to their part in the Crusades was countered by Feisal's question—who won the Crusades?

It is not surprising that the British were enthusiastically received when they entered Syria and Lebanon in June, 1941 to forestall an Axis occupation (the aerodromes were already being used by German planes flying to support the anti-British rebellion in Iraq). The British with a small force of Free French defeated the Vichy-controlled army after five weeks of unexpectedly hard fighting. The Free French, supported by the British, proclaimed the independence of the territories.

In spite of the joint declarations of independence, Syria and Lebanon continued to be ruled by a distressing Anglo-French condominium. Governments of the two states were indeed set up, but they were in no sense representative under the presidency of men who for years had been in French pay. The only effect of these governments was to increase still further the cumbrous machinery of administration, which could only move under the joint operation of three authorities. In the case of censorship, for example, documents were scanned by British, French and Syrian or Lebanese officials in turn before they were released to their destinations. At the frontier, passports were examined by British security personnel, the French 'Sûreté aux Armées,' and the Syrian or Lebanese inspectors.

What the French were not ready to understand was that the British would be held responsible by the inhabitants for what happened in their countries. British statesmen from Churchill downwards never ceased to proclaim that their intervention was due solely to the war and that they had no intention of usurping the privileged position of France. Nevertheless the British troops had been received by almost everyone as liberators, and there was bitter disappointment when it seemed that they were simply there to consolidate the *status quo*.

Before long Britain put pressure on the French to implement the 1941 declaration of independence by holding elections, and these eventually took place in 1943. Strong nationalist majorities were returned which did not cease to claim complete independence in each country. To the astonishment of the French these demands first came to a head not in Syria, which had always been difficult, but in Lebanon, their favourite child. They had not realised how,

even among formerly staunch francophil Maronites, a desire for independence had arisen.

The constitution of 1943 (essentially that of today) followed the precedent of Lebanon's original representative council of 1861 in laying down that elections should be made on the basis of religion, and followed also the provision of the constitution of 1925 that the various religious communities should be equitably represented in public offices. These arrangements could have been a source of friction, and nearly were with a French attempt, resisted by the British, to change the ratio of Christian to Moslem seats unduly in favour of the Christians. Eventually a Christian, Bishara al-Khuri, became President, and Riad es-Solh (a Moslem) Prime Minister. Solh, with the backing of a cabinet representing all the major groups of the country, challenged French authority. Laws were passed for the purpose of abolishing all foreign control and taking into Lebanese hands the various services handled by the French. The French reaction was quick. All the members of the cabinet, except two who escaped, were arrested and clapped in a fortress.

Pressure was immediately exerted by Britain, America and the Arab states (led by Egypt) to secure the reversal of this policy. The cabinet was released, the laws it had sponsored were allowed to stand, and gradually the services controlled by France were handed over to the Lebanese authorities. But, as in Syria, French troops remained in the country, since these provided the one means left to France of constraining Syria and Lebanon to accept treaties which would maintain her privileged position (specified as military and air bases, and security for her cultural and economic enterprises).

In Damascus, the attempts of the nationalists to put pressure on the French, resulting in some violence and bloodshed, seriously embroiled the British with their ally. The war in the Far East was not over, and British policy was to keep the Middle East quiet, because of its importance for communications. When the French resorted to shooting in Damascus to maintain order, the British military authorities took over control from the French, confined their troops to barracks and then escorted them under guard, along with all French civilians, to the interior of Lebanon. French feelings

were outraged by the brusque note in which the British commanding officer notified the French general concerned of his intention, almost as much as by the action itself (May 1945).

Eventually, in 1946, the final act in the drama was played out at one of the earliest sessions of UNO's Security Council. The Syrian and Lebanese governments demanded the evacuation of their territory by all foreign troops—but they were eager that Britain should not evacuate before France, not out of any love for Britain, but from fear lest France, if left alone in the Levant states, should continue to cling to the last strand of her declining power. On this occasion the Soviet Union underlined her new-found interest in the Levant by pressing more strongly than all others her support for Syrian and Lebanese claims. The handful of French and British troops were fiercely denounced as a threat to world peace, and the Russian delegate veteod the otherwise unanimous vote of the council (including France and Britain) approving a resolution to withdraw troops at the earliest moment, on the ground that it was not worded strongly enough. Nevertheless Britain and France agreed, in Bevin's words, to operate the resolution, and the two young states took over full control of their destiny.

(c) Independence in Lebanon

THOUGH STILL 'SISTERS'—as with all the other Arab states—Syria and Lebanon have shown themselves not to be specially attached to each other. The co-operation between the two which was so marked until the departure of foreign troops, thereafter rapidly declined. The economies of the two countries had been co-ordinated under the French, and the agreements of 1943 had kept the same system.[1] But the free trade outlook of the Lebanon merchants, and the country's closer economic links with France, conflicted with the trend in Syria to build up the economy by protective tariffs. In March 1950 the Syrian government addressed an ultimatum to Lebanon either to accept a 'total economic and monetary union of the two

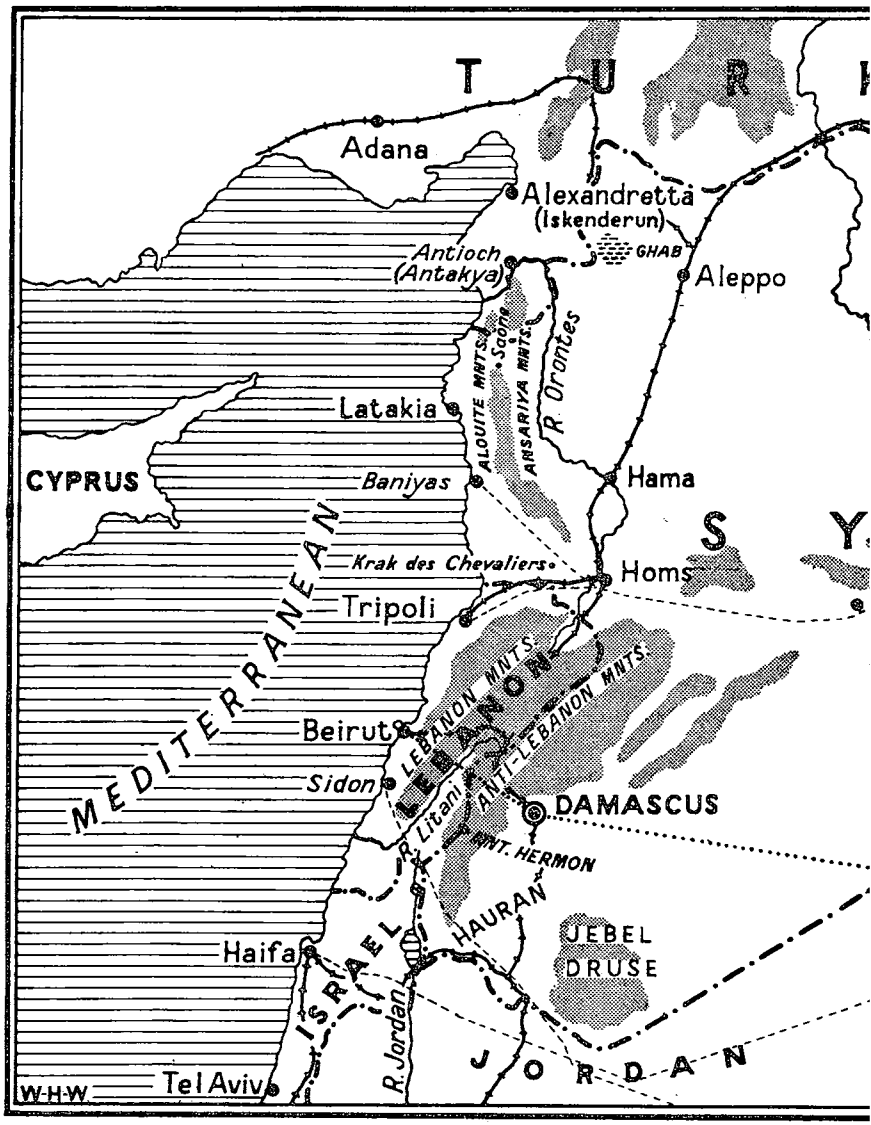
[1] The Lebanese pound remained linked with the franc, while in 1948 the Syrian currency was declared independent.

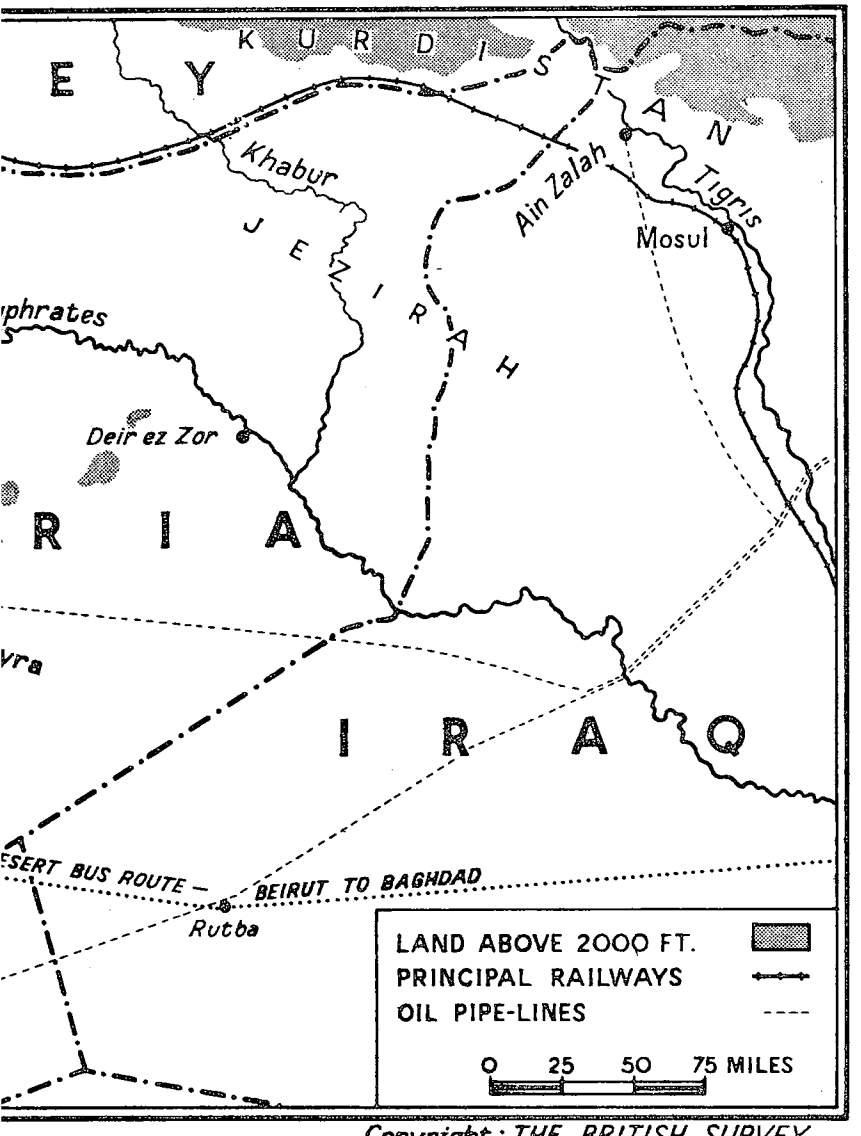
countries'—which meant accepting the Syrian policy of a protected economy, with a larger share to Syria of proceeds from the customs —or to have complete division. Despite Lebanese attempts to negotiate a compromise, Syria denounced the 1943 agreements, since when the two countries have, economically, gone their separate ways.

The line drawn by the French dividing the two republics has hardened, though there has always been a party who wished to abolish it. A landmark in consolidating Lebanon was the gentleman's agreement in 1943, known as the 'National Pact' between Bishara al-Khuri and Riad es-Solh, in which Khuri undertook that his Christian co-religionists would no longer look to France for protection, and Solh that the Moslems would not agitate for union with Syria. Since then Moslems, building up their own vested interests in Lebanon, have for the most part shown themselves as eager as the Christians to keep the state as it is. The party which was most militant for the union of the two countries, Anton Saadeh's Syrian National Socialist Party, fell foul of both. Their leader was handed over by Syria for trial and execution in Lebanon (1949). Recently, however, Col. Abdel Nasser's success and his leadership of Arab Nationalism, backed by Cairo Radio and Egyptian resources, have had their impact. A new and powerful party, or rather combination of parties, has arisen, whose object is to bring Lebanon into the United Arab Republic.

Lebanon, it is said, could settle down as a sort of Arab Switzerland. Over the centuries her mountainous terrain has afforded sanctuary and security for all sorts of sects, Christian, Moslem and others. The country is a patchwork of different faiths and creeds. The divisions within the country are partly along religious lines, but by no means entirely so—some of the worst violence has occurred between members of the same family or clan, who have been carrying on a feud for years.

This underlines the difference between the modernity of Beirut, encouraging the more westernised and liberal-minded element to find a new secular basis for political life, and the medieval background of remote and mountainous districts. Long exposure to the West and the orientation of Christians in that direction—together with the intensive effort of the foreign mission schools—has brought


T U R
Adana
Alexandretta
(Iskenderun)
Antioch
(Antakya)
GHAB
Aleppo
Latakia
ALOUITE MNTS.
Saone
ANSARIYA MNTS.
R. Orontes
CYPRUS
Baniyas
Hama
MEDITERRANEAN
Krak des Chevaliers
Homs
Tripoli
LEBANON MNTS.
LEBANON
ANTI-LEBANON MNTS.
Beirut
Sidon
R. Litani
DAMASCUS
MNT. HERMON
HAURAN
JEBEL
DRUSE
Haifa
ISRAEL
R. Jordan
JORDAN
W-H-W
Tel Aviv



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the Lebanon to the highest standard of any Middle Eastern country for literary and educational attainments. But with all this, a backward, parochial or even feudal mentality persists. This is carried into politics by means of the 'large list' system which (despite recent curtailments) still enables some landowners to have their own following elected to parliament. The inherited group consciousness of the different sects, and their age-old suspicions one of the other, are not fully bridged over except among the most westernised and educated few. So the principle of 'confessionalism' in politics continues—dividing public offices and seats in parliament on a basis of proportional representation between the sects—although progressives from time to time campaign for its abandonment. Most people appreciate the sense of security which having their own (religious) representative in parliament confers—even if, like the Jews, they have only a half-share in one.

This system, based on compromise and a good deal of mutual tolerance, has shown its capacity for weathering crises in the years since independence. It is 'in effect a system of checks and balances in which the reality of power resides in the two strongest communities, the Maronite and the Sunni. Either group, if sufficiently well organised, may bring down a government.'[1]

In practice this rarely happens, because neither main group is strong enough to secure undisputed control; any attempt by one of them to do so would provoke a powerful coalition of opponents. In overthrowing President al-Khuri in 1952 the lead was taken by the Prime Minister, Sami es-Solh. Though Solh according to tradition was a Moslem and Khuri a Christian, the action had nothing to do with confessional grievances. Khuri was in the middle of a second term of office. He took to living in remote grandeur in the renovated palace of Bayt-al-Din, while his family and hangers-on waxed fat by operating a system of graft which spread right throughout the country—at a time when the people were afflicted by a depression and heavy unemployment. Khuri dismissed Solh after the latter had made a spirited protest in parliament against the President's way of handling his affairs, and though he found another Moslem,

[1] *Middle East Journal* (Washington), Winter 1954. Article on 'Confessionalism and feudality in Lebanese politics', by C. G. Hess.

Saeb Salam, to take his place, the latter felt unable to stay in office long, because of an alliance between the main parties demanding the resignation of the President as a first step to reform. Unable to find another Moslem to take over the premiership, Khuri was obliged to resign, installing the Chief of Staff, General Shehab, as temporary Head of State and Prime Minister until a new president was elected. Khuri more readily took this action, since Shehab was a Christian, and duly correct form was reasserted when Camille Chamoun, another Christian, was elected President unanimously by the Parliament.

An easy-going tolerance is the key to much of what happens in Lebanon. Though scandals almost fabulous in scale were connected with the Khuri régime, the fallen President was never brought to book. Another gentleman's agreement had been made between him and those who had ousted him, to the effect that he would be allowed quietly to retire. Such an attitude diminishes unpleasantness in public life, but it also makes it difficult to attack the corruption that goes on. A public scandal may continue for years, like the conditions of Beirut prison and the application of the law regarding prostitution, until the public is shocked by the revelations made in the press—even so nothing much may be done and that may be a long time a-doing.[1]

On the other hand, to temporise over a thorny question like the census may be wise. The census has not been taken for 25 years, and Moslems have often keenly agitated that it should be taken again—on the assumption that the higher emigration rate of Christians along with the higher birth-rate of Moslems would have by now produced a Moslem majority. If this were proved to be so, there would be a strong case for altering the delicate balance which has been established between the 'confessions' in public life. This the Christians wish to avoid at all costs—they like to consider themselves in the majority. In fact so much trouble would be caused by a census if it produced the result assumed by the Moslems, that most Moslems prefer to let sleeping dogs lie—and so year succeeds year without a new census being taken.

[1] Another similar scandal is the growing of hashish, mainly in the Beka'a plain, which is difficult to detect as it is sown amongst corn and ripens before it. The headquarters of the smugglers, who dispose of it with vast profits, is at Zahlé.

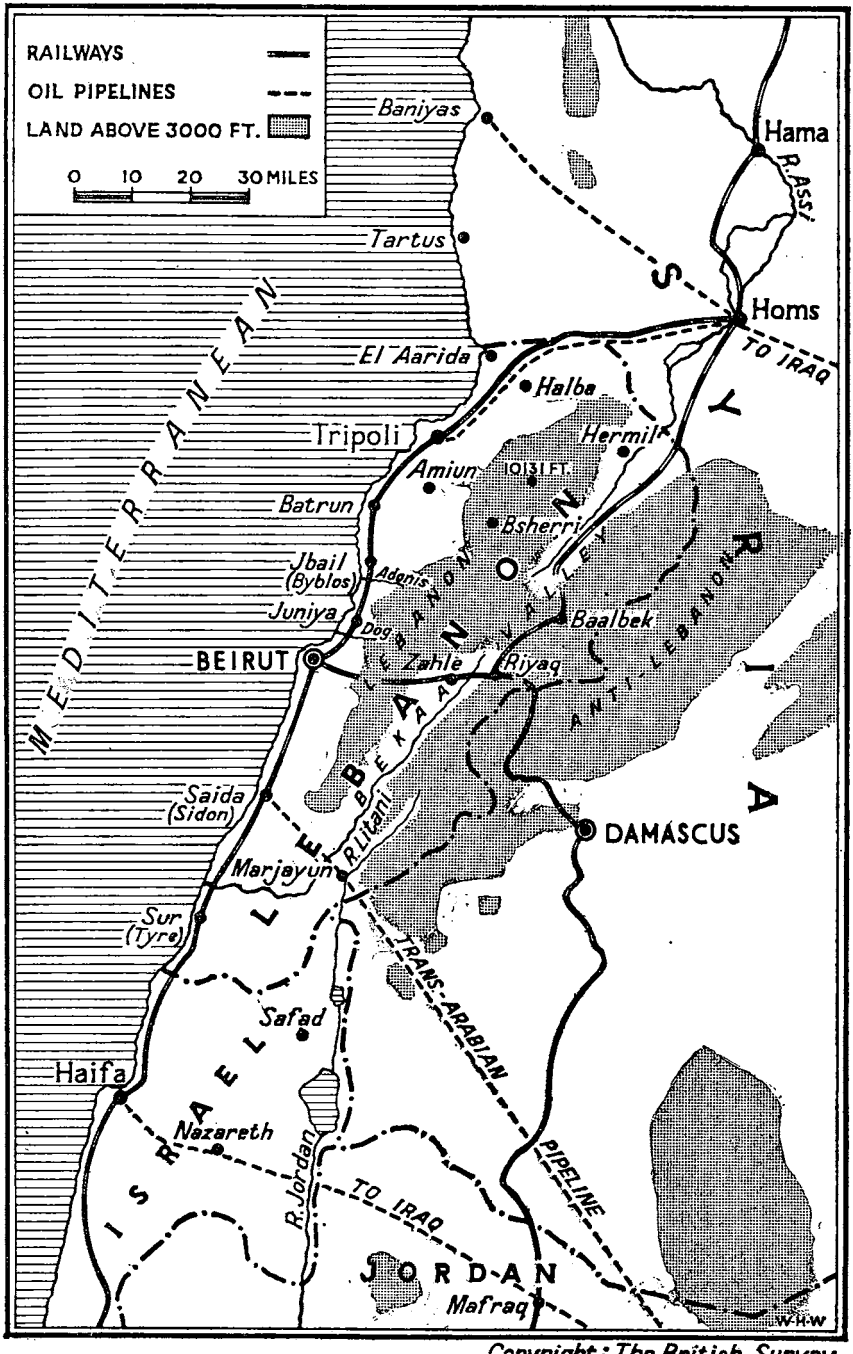
The Communists have had a long connection with Lebanon. Its proportionately large, educated élite, its minority elements, its 'colonialist' régime under the French, all marked it out as a terrain worth cultivating, and for many years Beirut was the centre whence communist literature in Arabic was disseminated throughout the Middle East. Yet in spite of this long start the communists seem to have less chance of swinging Lebanon into the Soviet orbit than they have in neighbouring Syria. Their position cannot, however, be assessed from the results of the election of June 1957. The communists were then supporting the National Front, opposed to the Sami Solh government and President Chamoun, and following an anti-West and pro-Nasser line. As in the case of Syria, it was difficult to see whether they were in any way directing the course of the Arab Nationalist flood, or whether they were simply being carried along by it. In the event the National Front was so soundly defeated, obtaining only eight seats against the government's 50, as to suggest considerable success by the government in quietly rigging the election.

Lebanon was the only Arab country apart from Libya to give an unqualified acceptance of the Eisenhower Doctrine. Eisenhower's roving commissioner, J. P. Richards (special adviser to the President on Middle East Affairs), made Beirut his point of departure for his tour of Middle East capitals with the object of 'selling' the Doctrine to the governments (March 1957).

This fact, and the events of the summer of 1958, indicate the lack of a sense of security among a considerable element of the Lebanese —whether a majority or not it is difficult to say—so much so that they are ready to acquiesce in what is virtually an American protectorate freely offered to the Middle East countries (except for Egypt and Syria, which Mr Richards did not visit).

The doctrine was set forth in a message by President Eisenhower to Congress on January 5, 1957. It was the State Department's response to the collapse in the Suez *débacle* of the Franco-British claim to have a say in watching over the peace and security of the area.

The message stated that the main danger in the Middle East was communist aggression. 'If power-hungry communists should either



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falsely or correctly estimate that the Middle East is inadequately defended, they might be tempted to use open measures of armed attack'. Therefore the United States, besides continuing to develop the economic strength of any nation in the Middle East ('strength . . . dedicated to the maintenance of national independence'), would 'undertake programmes of military assistance and co-operation, including the employment of the armed forces of the United States to secure and protect the territorial integrity and political independence of such nations requesting such aid against overt armed aggression from any nation controlled by international communism.' The policy was endorsed by both Houses of Congress early in March, and by March 16 the government of Sami Solh had accepted, besides the Doctrine itself, some equipment to strengthen the armed forces and $10 million in economic aid.

In May 1958 dissatisfaction with President Chamoun's methods and policy came to a head, and reached the stage of armed revolt (though of a mild variety), encouraged by arms and money from Syria and Egypt. It was a challenge to President Chamoun, and was sparked off by his decision to stand for a second term (declared unconstitutional after the Bishara al-Khuri experience), with all that a second term would mean in his continued exercise of patronage. It was a challenge too to the pro-Western policy of himself and his Foreign Minister, Charles Malik.

The claim that this revolt was being largely engineered from across the Syrian border with arms, money and personnel, led to the despatch of a United Nations Observer group to watch the frontiers (on June 12, 1958). This might have been sufficient to create after a time the necessary atmosphere for the presidential election in July, especially since President Chamoun—his palace had been damaged by the rebels—showed readiness to withdraw his candidature. But he continued to request that the U.S.A. apply the Eisenhower Doctrine and send in troops.

The American Government showed itself unwilling to take this step, until the coup in Iraq of July 14 shocked it into speedy action, and marines from the Sixth Fleet were landed next day at Beirut. Whatever the immediate motives for this dramatic application of the Doctrine, the effect was to persuade enough of the

Lebanese politicians to sink their differences and elect the Commander-in-Chief, General Shehab, as the new President. This gave promise of a return to normal—that is to relative if precarious stability—for another period, welcomed by most Lebanese after the loss of some £15 million during the revolt and strike. The problem that remained was one for the Americans to solve—how were they to withdraw gracefully without losing too much face, when confronted with the virulent denunciations of Russia and the United Arab Republic?

Most Lebanese, like other human beings, want the best of both worlds, Western on the one hand, Arab Nationalist and 'neutralist' on the other. They are a mercantile community, living off trade and tourists, and off the commissions, many very small, from a multitude of currency and other deals—and off the £7 to £8 million remittances sent home by the several million Lebanese abroad (mostly in North and South America, and West Africa). Beirut has prospered enormously, since the Zionist seizure of Haifa closed that port to the transit trade—but how Lebanon manages to be economically viable, let alone how it prospers with such a limited background of natural resources, is difficult to explain. The explanation lies in the commercial flair of the Phoenicians whose descendants have mingled with those able minorities, the refugees and conquerors of the ages. Thrift and luxury, modernity and squalor, idealism and vice, East and West are nicely balanced one against the other—an equilibrium in life as in politics which, however, it may be difficult to maintain.

(d) Nationalism and Communism in Syria

LEBANON HAS HAD HER TROUBLES, but events in Syria have been even more stormy. Lebanon has affirmed her existence as a separate entity, drawing her economic and moral sustenance equally from the Arab world and the West, detached from both without being isolated. Syria on the other hand has never found herself fully as a distinct unit. While Mount Lebanon has been down the ages, like one of her own monasteries, a fortified centre of refuge, Damascus has been a point of dissemination—

capital under the Ommayads of an empire with widespread, universal concerns, and the purveyor of science and learning from Greece to the Moslem world; protagonist of the Arab idea in the Turkey of Abdul Hamid; and the short-lived capital, under Feisal, of a shadowy Arab realm which would stretch (so it was hoped) from the Mediterranean to the Persian Gulf.

These dreams had been shattered by the French régime, but the struggle for independence had given an aim. When independence was achieved, the old leaders and the old parties failed to point the people on to the further objectives. These objectives had to be pursued, not merely because of a tradition, or of a possibly romantic idea, but because of the logic of geography. In her French-made frontiers Syria was not complete, not integrated, and probably would never be so. Damascus is one pole, Aleppo another, Homs and Hama an axis, but not a very strong one, between the two. In the north-west the territory ends raggedly, with Alexandretta standing somewhat as Strasbourg stood for France after the loss of Alsace-Lorraine. Latakia, starting as little more than an open roadstead, is being built up as a port to compensate for that great loss (and for the fact that Beirut is now politically separated from Damascus). In the north-east the Fertile Crescent stretches across the Euphrates to the Jezireh, a Mesopotamian territory differing in outlook and climate from the rest of Syria. Homs and Hama, with their close irrigation culture, symbolised by the ancient groaning water-wheels, are a region on their own as are the Ghouta orchard lands of Damascus, watered by the Barada flowing down from the Anti-Lebanon. South of Damascus again the grain and pasture steppe of the Hauran stretches towards the Jordan frontier, broken by the mountainous Jebel Druze which catches the rain-clouds as they drift up the Plain of Esdraelon.

These lands, and Palestine too, were one-time Syria, and that the Syrians can never forget. Inhabitants of each region have their own parochial outlook, their special economic interests, but under the Turks these were transcended by the sense of belonging to a wider political unit—not Syria merely, but Dar-al-Islam, the Moslem world, as it had shape in the Ottoman Empire. With the coming of Arab nationalism it was the Arab world, or at least historic Syria,

which began to claim allegiance: visions sadly disappointed in the truncated territory which the Western Allies bequeathed.

This urge for wider unity represents therefore both a spiritual and political need. The peoples of present-day Syria could not really find themselves in the state as it was. It could not evoke a loyalty strong enough to transcend the particular interests of the region, it could not create a patriotism to satisfy national feeling. Hence the persistent desire to unite with other Arab lands.

The coming of independence brought these aspirations no nearer fulfilment. Syria moved, through a series of disagreements, steadily further away from her neighbour, Lebanon. Suspicion of Iraq was kept alive by Baghdad's continued orientation towards Britain, and of Jordan by Abdullah's ambitions to incorporate Syria in his domains (for however desirable the end, Abdullah's means involved going about things the wrong way round, from the standpoint of Damascus). Above all, came the crowning frustration of the Palestine war, when the disunity and feebleness of the Arab states was agonisingly demonstrated.

'As Syria was unable to make any progress towards regaining the Sanjak of Alexandretta (now become the Turkish province of Hatay), or to the successful maintenance of a completely independent currency, or to freeing its assets blocked in France, or to assuming a leading role in Arab unity, or to waging a successful war in Palestine, there was little left on which the government could claim the loyalty of the people.'[1] Many of the older leaders, still in power, had combined opposition to French rule with a shrewd feathering of their own nests by methods which did not bear close inspection. Opponents of the old order, they were found to lack the positive qualities—vision, drive and morale—to create the new. Jamil Mardam, Premier since the last phases of the Mandate, found himself powerless when faced by the political malaise. After demonstrations, riots and strikes in Damascus in 1948, Mardam and his cabinet resigned, and a fortnight passed before it was found possible to form another under Khalid al-'Azm.

'Azm's attempt to tackle the economic problem by cutting expenditure on the army produced the first of those military dicta-

[1] Ziadeh, p. 100.

torships which dominated Syrian life for the next six years. Colonel Husni az-Zaim, Army Chief of Staff, arrested the President (Shukri al-Quwwatli), and 'Azm took over power (March 30, 1949). Zaim's reign ended the following August as suddenly as it had begun, at the hands of another Colonel, Sami Hinnawi, who arrested and summarily executed both him and his Prime Minister, al-Barazi. Hinnawi only lasted until December, when a third Colonel, Adib Shishakli, who claimed to be behind both the previous *coups*, arrested Hinnawi and emerged as Syria's dictator.

Hinnawi had attempted to restore the constitutional régime, and this was Shishakli's approach to begin with. Hinnawi persuaded the most respected of the older politicians, Hashim el-Atasi, to take over the Presidency (he had been President before the war), while the transition back to constitutional government was made. In fact power continued to lie with the army, and when Shishakli arrested the cabinet and other politicians in November 1951, and came to the fore as sole ruler shortly afterwards, it simply brought the real facts of the situation into the light of day.

Shishakli failed to keep power because he failed to keep a strong enough following in the army. He tried to broaden the base of his rule by restoring a façade of constitutional government. His backing among the civilians came originally in part from the Ba'ath and Arab socialist parties—the Arab socialist leader, Akram Haurani (who was later to take over leadership of Ba'ath too with the merger of both parties in March 1954) had been working closely with the army in the plotting which had led to Hinnawi's overthrow. But Shishakli lost their support, and they boycotted the elections held in October 1953 under the constitution which he had sponsored.

This was not because Shishakli failed to follow the policies they backed—close relations with Egypt and Sa'udi Arabia as the first step towards unity in the Arab world (and conversely hostility to Iraq and to 'Fertile Crescent unity'). Shishakli simply did not have the popular appeal or the ability of his Egyptian counterpart, Colonel Nasser. He did not prove to be a suitable figure for Haurani and his associates to back.

The army, which had put Shishakli in power, turned him out, in

February 1954. Since then the army has played its part in Syrian politics from behind the stage, from time to time vigorously disclaiming any intention of taking a hand. In fact the left-wing element in the army increasingly came into the ascendant, with Lieut.-Colonel Sarraj (head of the security section), Lieut.-Colonel Nafuri and others of the 'Revolutionary Command Council.'[1] Though left-wing, this group had been supporters of Shishakli—one instance out of many of the lack of any marked dividing line between left and right in Syria. In August 1957 they greatly strengthened their position when the Commander-in-Chief General Nizam ed-Din resigned, since he could not stomach the arms deals which were tying his country so closely to Russia. Colonel Bizri, who was closely associated with the 'Revolutionary Command Council' and with the communist leader Khalid Bakdash, took his place. At the same time, 20 right-wing officers were removed for their part in an alleged 'officers plot' (Bizri had been chairman of the tribunal which tried them).

Haurani and his Socialist Party, strengthened by the merger with the Ba'ath (Arab Renaissance) Party of Michel Aflaq (a former communist), began to move to the centre of the stage. Haurani's pre-war orientation had been towards fascism, but his socialism was a better draw for the poor peasantry of the Homs-Hama area whom he championed (he himself comes from Hama). He adopted a watching attitude at first after Shishakli's fall, and his party did not come into office until a year later. By then it had been strengthened by successes in the elections of autumn 1954 (of the 15 seats gained, five represented Hama; one was gained in Homs in a by-election shortly afterwards). Though he did not himself take a cabinet post, Haurani had more influence in parliament and in the government than any other man not excepting his only real rival, the communist leader, Bakdash. Haurani was elected Speaker in October 1957 (his lieutenant, Saleh Bitar, had been Foreign Minister since the elections of September 1954).

Khalid Bakdash was elected for a Damascus constituency—the first communist deputy in the Arab world—at the 1954 elections. National policy for a time was an amalgam of the Ba'ath and Com-

[1] This title is, of course, borrowed from the Egyptian military régime.

munist Party lines, though Bakdash did not view with favour the application of the Ba'ath programme for the unification of the Arab world along the Syrian-Egyptian axis. Soon after the 1954 elections there had in fact been opposition to Egypt, vehemently expressed by press and public, on the occasion of Colonel Nasser's suppression of the Moslem Brotherhood, which had gained considerable influence in Syria. In November old currents were still running strongly enough for the Foreign Ministers of the Arab League states, including Syria, to approve the acceptance of arms from the West—but the situation began to change rapidly when the pact between Turkey and Iraq was announced (January 1955). Since then the new current, pulling Syria towards Egypt and both towards Russia, has flowed with increasing force.

Shukri al-Quwwatli, who returned from exile in Alexandria in August 1954, was elected President for the second time a year later ('Azm was runner-up with 43 votes to his 91). As one of the old leaders, his backing came from the moderate and right-wing groups—People's Party and Nationalists. Although their influence was receding, Quwwatli found stronger allies in Haurani and the Ba'athists for the step which could prevent Communist domination and at the same time bring nearer the cherished goal of Arab unity —the linking of Syria and Egypt in the United Arab Republic, proclaimed February 1, 1958. His instincts as a moderate counselled him to see in this development the hope of forming a solid Arab union, friendly no doubt to Russia, but not so far in leading strings to her as Bakdash would have it to be.[1]

The background for this momentous step was the aftermath of 'Suez', which enormously strengthened the trends towards Russia and Egypt. It is true that the joint military command negotiated (October 25, 1956) between Egypt, Syria and Jordan failed to function—but the shock of seeing France and Britain lined up with Israel against their close ally Egypt was enough to cause in all circles a violent revulsion against the West. At that point it was possible for a genuine gratitude to be felt on all hands for the £20

[1] The principle of Syrian-Egyptian union, ratified by the Syrian Chamber of Deputies in March 1957, was said to have been previously ratified by Nasser late in 1956. (*Mideast Mirror*, March 17, 1957.)

million worth of Russian arms already received, and it was firmly believed that the whole Arab world, Syria included, was only saved from disaster at the hands of Israel and her Western co-belligerents by the threat of Russian intervention.

The sabotaging of the I.P.C. pipe-line, though apparently an independent action by the army under Col. Sarraj's direction, expressed the mood at the time—besides dealing a shrewd blow at Iraq with its rival policy for Arab unity and its Turkish-plus-Western ties. Considered government policy was to cut the economic links with France and Britain (an embargo had been put on the export of wheat to France earlier in 1956 in protest against her Algerian policy), and in December 1956 trade with Britain was brought to a standstill by the imposing of new currency regulations.[1] Aleppo's protests, together with a painful shortage of foreign currency, induced the government later to remove the ban on exports to France, who proceeded to buy one-third of the available grain—the other third went to the Communist bloc, who had already entered the market for cotton.[2]

Economic agreements made with Russia were the counterpart of military agreements. The latter involved the expediting of much out-of-date 'hardware' (though of sound worth by Middle East standards)[3] and of some technicians, mainly from the satellite countries. On the economic level the aid supplied or promised by Russia puts Syria in the same relation with her as other countries are to America through accepting aid under Point IV of the Eisenhower doctrine. The sum negotiated by 'Azm in Moscow was around £130 million, earmarked for various projects. Of these the development of Latakia port is a necessity for the importing of East bloc goods and equipment; others, like the irrigation works connected with constructing the Yusuf Pasha dam on the Euphrates, or building the railway from Kamishli in the Jezireh to Latakia, had been previously exam-

[1] Britain had secured £600,000 of orders at the Damascus Trade Fair only two months before (*Economist*, November 3, 1956).

[2] Their purchases increased from 5 per cent in 1955 to 40 per cent in 1957 (*The Times*, July 5, 1957). On the other hand most of the 1957 wool crop was sold to America, and the Aleppo merchants were eager to restore normal trade contacts with Britain.

[3] *Economist*, May 18, 1957. The figure given for military aid by August 1957, was £50 million (*Economist*, August 31, 1957).

ined and pronounced sound by the International Bank, and had only been held up for lack of capital.

Previously capital used for the very considerable developments since independence, had been obtained almost entirely within the country. 'Neutralism' had forbidden acceptance of Point IV or other such aid which would, it was thought, have tied Syria to the West. The extent to which Syria had succeeded in pulling herself up by her bootstraps is a tribute to the skill and enterprise of her people. An expanding economy, based mainly on land development, together with a labour shortage in the new areas, has made Syria an 'opportunity state' rather than one apparently on the edge of a socialist or communist revolution. At the same time the Communist Party under Bakdash had long been the best organised in the Middle East (formerly the party in Syria and Lebanon was undivided), and had a remarkable record in the planning of its strategy and tactics.[1] But even had there been no communist party in Syria, Syrian orientation towards Russia would almost certainly have taken place anyway.

After the proclamation of the United Arab Republic Bakdash found it necessary to leave hurriedly for Moscow, though at this stage it is impossible to say whether Bakdash or Haurani will have the greater say in affairs during the coming years. At mid-1958, however, Communism was in eclipse with the suppression of the Communist Party and the expulsion of Colonel Bizri.

Syria has had an anxiety neurosis connected with military encirclement, from Turkey, Iraq, Israel and the West; and union with Egypt may help allay the periodic excitement and tension which gives extremists their opportunity. Despite this complex, there is however a sub-stratum in the nation's life which is sound. One sign of this is the steadiness of the Syrian pound during the past years. Business and administration usually continue in an atmosphere of normality no matter how intense is the crisis that happens to be on hand.

[1] See W. Z. Laqueur: *Communism and Nationalism in the Middle East* (Routledge, 1956), Part 5. Also his article in *Commentary*, November 1957, where he underlines the importance of the communists capturing all three trade union organisations, a process which was completed early in 1957. The Syrian party was also responsible for the printing of all communist literature in Arabic, disseminated through Beirut.

Chapter Eight

THE POWERS AND PALESTINE

(a) Zionism and the British Mandate

ZIONISM is the product of the religious and racial intolerance of the European.

When Christianity triumphed in the Roman Empire and became the official religion under Constantine, the Christians used the machinery of the state to impose on the Jews an inferior status. In spite of the oppression which they had suffered when in revolt, the Jews had enjoyed under the pagan Empire privileges on account of their religion, such as freedom from military service and from certain taxes, which the Christian Empire denied them. Not only were these privileges denied, but many disabilities were imposed.

The inferior status of Jews was part of the legacy which the Christianised Roman Empire passed on to the tribes and peoples who succeeded it. Discrimination against the Jews was, however, spasmodic, and in the early Middle Ages relations between Jew and Gentile were often good. But the series of measures to relegate the Jews to an inferior status, which had been begun under the Christian Empire, were 'pregnant with future evil', for in this way 'the political and economic equality of the Jews was steadily undermined.'[1] The Jews, who had come to the West mainly as traders, found themselves restricted to occupations, such as dealing in slaves or money-lending, which the Church would not allow to Christians.

The call for crusaders to expel the infidel from the Holy Land was accompanied by a renewed outburst against the Jews, as infidels

[1] J. Parkes: *The Jew in the Medieval Community*, pp. 10, 13, 'The laws of the pagan second century had dealt with the menace of a rebel nation. Those of the Christian fourth and fifth were designed to crush a hated religious sect.'

who were supposed to be in league with the Saracens. As the undisciplined rabble surged across Europe it stopped at almost every town to massacre the Jewish inhabitants. Many Jews who survived were expelled from their homes, as in 1290 the entire Jewish community was expelled from England. Those that remained were excluded from the full life of citizens, for 'in a Europe where every civic act was part of a Christian religious ceremony, there was no equality for the Jew, indeed no place for him at all.'[1] The efforts of church authorities were devoted ceaselessly to building and strengthening the barriers between Jew and Gentile. Hitler's Nuremberg Laws were little more than the twentieth century restatement of the medieval legal code regarding Jews which was framed by the Church.

This effort by the Church culminated in the relegation of Jews to the ghettos, where they remained, in Central Europe, from the end of the Middle Ages until the nineteenth century. In the ghetto, cut off from normal contacts with the Gentile world outside, their life became more intense, more different. There they survived as a people by the closeness of their corporate life, by the assertion of their nationhood, and by the vigorous affirmation of their faith and customs. For them the love of Zion which had inspired their earlier poets became more than a sentiment or a dream—it became a passion. It was their lifeline to the world of eternal things from which their Gentile neighbours sought to exclude them.

* * *

During the last centuries Jews were concentrated in Eastern Europe, particularly Poland, where they had been given asylum by the kings after their expulsion from Western Europe. Here they formed an advanced element, more civilised than the surrounding masses, abler in commerce and organisation. To the dislike of an alien element was added fear that the Jewish minority would through its talents gain an ascendancy. At times when feeling against the Jews was strong Tsarist governments (who controlled most of Poland from the end of the eighteenth century) did little or nothing to protect them against ill-treatment or pogroms.

[1] Parkes: *The Jewish Problem in the Modern World*, p. 16.

The impulse behind Jewish nationalism, taking shape as Zionism, was the desire for security on the part of these persecuted Jews. Its prophet was the Austrian-Jewish journalist, Theodor Herzl, who published *The Jewish State* in 1896. The Jews, like Serbs or Bulgars, must find their nationhood. This would be the answer to persecution. Jews as members of a Jewish state, or at least protected by it, could hold up their heads as free men. To carry out these ideas Herzl founded the Zionist Organisation, in 1897.

Palestine was the ancient cradle of the race. Herzl's idea was to raise a huge fund with which to purchase Palestine outright from the Turks. He hoped to win over the other powers to the point where they would exert enough pressure to cause the Turks to sell. Abdul Hamid, being in straits for money, gave Herzl a favourable interview, but the great Jewish financiers did not respond to the idea of putting up the money.

Meanwhile the British Government offered territory in Kenya (then a part of Uganda) for Zionist colonisation. Herzl supported acceptance, but the young chemist Chaim Weizmann led the fierce opposition which rocked the Zionist Congress of 1905. A Zionist mission to Kenya reported that the land was unsuitable, and the offer was refused.

Weizmann combined the enthusiasm for Zionism with devotion to his scientific work. This brought him his political opportunity. From a Russian village he progressed by way of the universities of Pinsk and Berlin to Switzerland. While holding the post of lecturer in chemistry at Geneva he crossed swords in open forum with Lenin and Trotsky, converting many Jewish students from Marxism to Zionism. Later as Reader in biochemistry at Manchester he became naturalised as a British subject. During the First World War he perfected a method of extracting acetone from grain at a time when this material, essential for the manufacture of high explosive, was running short. His name came to be known by the Cabinet—he had already had an important interview with Balfour some years before.

When Russia collapsed, abandoning her claim to share in the spoils of Palestine, strategy and idealism combined to bring the Government (Lloyd George was now Prime Minister and Balfour Foreign Secretary) into line behind the Zionist programme. Some

propagandist appeal to world Jewry was needed, with the two-fold object of disrupting Jewish support of the Central Powers and of winning over American opinion, particularly in financial circles, to all-out aid to Britain. The Balfour Declaration set the seal on Weizmann's efforts, and gave the backing of a great power to Jewish immigration into Palestine. 'His Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it clearly being understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country.'

Britain's undertaking to the Zionists was not merely opportunism. There was the concern for imperial communications and for defending the Suez Canal. But Lloyd George, Balfour, General Smuts, Lord Milner and other men of calibre, warmly approved the Zionist aim for its own sake. The only opposing voice in the Cabinet was raised by Edwin Montague, Secretary of State for India, who feared the effects of Zionism on the position of assimilated Jews like himself.

Lord Curzon, while approving the idea, was cautious about its application. He did not believe that Palestine was economically capable of supporting many immigrants, even if it was developed at considerable expense, while he warned that the existing inhabitants 'will not be content either to be expropriated for Jewish immigrants, or to act merely as hewers of wood and drawers of water to the latter.'[1] He regarded it as practicable to set up 'some form of European administration', which would 'arrange as far as possible for land purchase and settlement of returning Jews', but asked whether it would be wise in a government declaration 'to use language which suggests so much more?'[2]

Zionist visions at that time won the day. Weizmann and his colleagues persuaded the representatives of the victor governments at the Peace Conference, that since Palestine, as they alleged, had

[1] D. Lloyd George: *The Truth about the Peace Treaties* (Gollancz, 1938), p. 1129.
[2] Ibid. 1131, 1132.

contained a population of four million in ancient days, it could well carry sufficient immigrants to bring the population to that figure in a comparatively short period. They gained their point: the Balfour Declaration was written into the Mandate, and the British Government, as Mandatory, was committed to accepting the Zionist Organisation as an official government agency concerned with (among other things) effecting 'close settlement by Jews on the land.' (Article 6.)

Zionist strategy was to bring immediately into Palestine so many Jews from Russia and Eastern Europe that they would become the majority, and that this should happen at such speed that the Arabs would not have time to build up any effective opposition. In this the Zionists were thwarted by the Bolsheviks' resistance to Jewish emigration.[1] Nevertheless their attempt to encourage large numbers of immigrants for Palestine—they were thinking in terms of 70,000-80,000 a year—speedily aroused Arab hostility, and brought about the situation in which Arab, Jew and Briton were forced to play parts as ill-fated as any in Greek tragedy. A year before the Mandate was confirmed, Winston Churchill, then Colonial Secretary, pointed out the dangers in the report he made to the Imperial Cabinet on June 22, 1921. 'It is not that the Jews in Palestine were unpopular—they were not; it is not that the numbers that are coming in—7,000 or 8,000 a year—are really introducing a serious or imminent change in the character of the country—they do not; but the Zionists, in order to work up enthusiasm for their cause, have to go all over the world preaching the return of thousands and thousands of oppressed peoples from the persecuted countries of Europe, Russia, the Ukraine, Poland and so forth to the Promised Land. This terrifies the Arabs. . . . The idea they have in their minds is that they are going to be swamped and overwhelmed by hundreds of thousands of Bolsheviks from Central Europe.'[2]

[1] 'Weizmann was emphatic that if the Bolshevik Revolution had not occurred there would have been a Jewish majority in Palestine by 1930. It was the Russian Jews who were then the real Zionist movement and could have provided the money and the personnel; but the iron curtain came down, the Bolsheviks were violently anti-Zionist, and the Russian Jews were thenceforward cut off from world Jewry.' Richard Crossman: *Palestine Mission* (Hamish Hamilton, 1947), p. 135.

[2] D. Lloyd George, op. cit., p. 1191.

At that time, in 1921, the brief moment was already past when it seemed that statesmanship might secure the National Home without antagonising the Arab world. Feisal's concern had been to gain the crown of Syria and he had not regarded the Zionist aims in Palestine as important. He had met Weizmann at New Year 1919, when he agreed that their two peoples could live together in Palestine. He undertook to aid the development of the National Home, provided that the promises made by the Allies of independence for the remaining Arab territories, as specified in the McMahon letters, were fulfilled.[1] But, by agreeing to divide the liberated part of the Arab world between themselves and the French, the British soon made it impossible for Feisal or any other Arab leader to accept the Jewish colonisation of Palestine.

Even before Britain secured the Mandate over Palestine, the Arabs—or rather, those who were vocal—became apprehensive. Zionists did not conceal the fact that their aim was, as Weizmann put it, to 'make Palestine as Jewish as America is American or England is English.'

The provisions of the Mandate for Palestine differed from those for other territories in that the Balfour Declaration had been written into its text. While the aim of the Mandates generally was expressed as being that of furthering 'the well-being and development' of the peoples to the point where they could 'stand by themselves under the strenuous conditions of the modern world', the aim for Palestine was, in the first place, 'to secure the establishment of the Jewish National Home'. It was a secondary aim that 'the development of self-governing institutions' was mentioned, while—a poor third—came the proviso for 'safeguarding the civil and religious rights of all the inhabitants of Palestine, irrespective of race and religion.'[2] To secure the main object of establishing the National Home, Article 4 of the Mandate set up 'an appropriate Jewish Agency', and the Zionist Organisation was recognised as such.

The order of priorities, as revealed in Article 2 of the Mandate, undoubtedly expressed the real aim of both the Zionists and the British Government. Years later, when testifying before the Royal

[1] G. Antonius: *The Arab Awakening* (Hamilton, 1945), pp. 284-6, 437-9.
[2] Article 2 of Mandate for Palestine.

Commission of 1937, Lloyd George said: 'The idea was . . . that a Jewish State was not to be set up immediately by the Peace Treaty without reference to the wishes of the majority of the inhabitants. On the other hand, it was contemplated that when the time arrived for according representative institutions to Palestine, if the Jews had meanwhile responded to the opportunity afforded them by the idea of a National Home and had become a definite majority of the inhabitants, then Palestine would thus become a Jewish commonwealth.' The policy was to delay the according of representative institutions until such time as the Jews, having become a majority, could govern Palestine 'democratically'. Unlike the case of other mandated territories, the according of self-government was not to be contingent upon the development of the existing inhabitants to the point where they could 'stand alone', but upon the establishment by the Jews of a majority.

This was always the basis of the Arab case against the Mandate and Britain's interpretation of it. They refused to agree that Palestine should be considered as a special case, different from a mandated territory like Iraq, whose advance towards self-government was so much more rapid.

The legal and moral rights of the respective claimants to Palestine, Jew and Arab, have been canvassed over and over again. Once their right to build up a National Home in Palestine had been written into the Mandate, the legal basis of Zionist policy was unassailable. As for Britain, in retrospect her statesmen can be judged as lacking in foresight, but at the time of the issuing of the Balfour Declaration there was no intention of dispossessing the existing Arab population to make room for Jewish immigrants. Even the ultimate political separation of the territory from the Arab world was not considered as a wrong alongside the proposed creation of a large Arab state (or confederacy of states) under Feisal. What shattered this possibility was the fact that the Sykes-Picot Agreement was not dead, and that the French would maintain the claims which they had staked in it.

The British statesmen acted in all sincerity, but they were the victims of the Zionists' enthusiasm and of their exaggerated view of the possibilities of Palestine. The Zionists in turn were the prisoners

of an ancient idea, the destined return of the Jews to Jerusalem—'the mystical association that no difference of politics nor time nor humanity itself can alter between the Jewish people and the land of Palestine.'[1]

The Zionist concentration of Jewish political aims on Palestine has led to disastrous consequences for Jewry as a whole. A relatively small number of Jews have found sanctuary in Israel, but of these a large proportion (notably the refugees from other Arab lands, like those from Baghdad and North Africa), have had to face a painful uprooting and loss of property which, but for Zionist policy in Palestine, would never have been necessary. Many regret their former life, and are depressed by the harsh struggle for a livelihood in Israel; they would far prefer to settle in America or some other country which is economically promising.

The gainers have been those who found a refuge from Nazi persecution. But the probability is that far more Jews would have been saved from the gas-chambers had not Zionist propaganda caused the American public, and to a lesser extent the British, to regard Palestine, not the Anglo-Saxon countries, as the place to which Jewish refugees should go.[2] When considerations of global strategy prompted the British government to try to regain Arab friendship, at the beginning of the Second World War, by restricting Jewish immigration, there was less pressure from the public than might have been expected to open an alternative escape route for the Nazis' victims to Britain, or via Britain to countries overseas.

Similarly the Jews, in desperate straits in Europe, put far too much hope in Palestine as their haven, at a time when Britain (in accordance with the White Paper policy of 1939) would allow either no visas at all, or only a few thousand. The result was the tragedy of the refugee ships, whose overcrowded human cargoes were kept on board insanitary vessels sometimes for weeks—and then might be sent back to the country of origin. The *Struma*, a Danube cattle-boat

[1] Lord Melchett: article on Weizmann in *Twelve Jews*.

[2] 'Between 1880 and the beginnings of the First World War about three million Jews fled from Eastern Europe, the majority of them to the U.S.A.; but of these only 50,000 went to Palestine.' A. Koestler: *Promise and Fulfilment* (Macmillan 1949), p. 294. In 1924 America barred all but a relatively small quota of immigrants from Eastern Europe.

of 180 tons with 769 passengers was kept for over two months at Istanbul while the authorities waited for word from the British government as to their disposal—then it was sent back to the Black Sea where it sank, with the loss of all except one aboard. If these ships won clear to Palestine, they might still be turned back, or the passengers transported to camps in Cyprus or Mauritius. After months or years in virtually prisoner-of-war conditions they might gain access to their 'National Home', but only with a raging hatred of the occupying power. The *Patria*, to which refugees had been transhipped for the voyage to Mauritius, was blown up by some of them in Haifa harbour (November 1940).

By taking over Palestine on the terms she did under the Mandate Britain committed herself to a policy which was rapidly proved impracticable, which earned her the resentment of both Jew and Arab, and which has helped to plunge the Arab world into a predicament from which no favourable outcome can yet be seen. Nor has the establishment of Israel led to any long-term solution of the Jewish problem, since the manner in which the new state came to birth has so far precluded the possibility of normal relations with its neighbours.

(b) The Failure of the Mandate

THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT often found occasion to interpret the Balfour Declaration in a sense which would allay Arab fears. Churchill as Colonial Secretary inspired a Government statement in 1922, that 'the terms of the Declaration do not contemplate that Palestine as a whole should be converted into a Jewish National Home, but that such a Home should be founded *in Palestine*.'

The statement went on to point out that the main aim of establishing this National Home had already been achieved. 'This (Jewish) community has its own political organs; an elected assembly for the direction of its domestic concerns; elected councils in the towns; and an organisation for the control of its schools. It has its elected Chief Rabbinate and Rabbinical Council for the direction of its religious affairs. Its business is conducted in Hebrew as a

vernacular language, and a Hebrew Press serves its needs. It has its distinctive intellectual life and displays considerable economic activity. This community has in fact "national" characteristics. When it is asked what is meant by the development of a Jewish National Home in Palestine, it may be answered that it is not the imposition of a Jewish nationality upon the inhabitants of Palestine as a whole, but the further development of the existing Jewish community, with the assistance of Jews in other parts of the world, in order that it may become a centre in which the Jewish people as a whole may take, on grounds of race and religion, an interest and a pride."[1]

If the Zionists had been content with this interpretation, and had not aimed further than the setting up of a cultural centre for world Jewry, little friction with the Arabs might have been caused. Their antagonism to the idea of a Jewish state was violently expressed as early as 1920 and 1921 in the riots of those years, though while the fortunes of the National Home were in doubt they were on the whole quiescent. There was little trouble during the period of the first High Commissioner, Sir Herbert (later Lord) Samuel. Despite the fact that he was a Jew and one favourable to the Zionists, he brought to his task fairness to both parties and concern for the well-being of all the inhabitants, Arab as well as Jewish. Even less unrest was evident during the régime of Lord Plumer (1925-8). So thin was the trickle of Jewish immigration and so severe the economic plight of the Palestine Jews (due in large measure to the currency collapse in Poland whence a majority of the immigrants came), that in one year (1927) the National Home lost more members than it gained.[2]

But by 1928, the Jewish Agency's success in raising funds, particularly in America, led to a notable increase in immigration. Even without the stimulus of Hitler to bring about a mass emigration of Jews from Europe, Palestine was on the way to becoming a serious problem, but Hitler ensured that the Jewish question in its most acute form was exported to the entire Arab world. For tens of thousands, even millions, of Jews it became the overriding object to escape from the gas-chambers and the concentration camps. They

[1] Hurewitz, Documents II, p. 103.
[2] Jewish immigrants, 2,713; emigrants, 5,071.

had to remake their lives after the breaking up of their homes, the murder of husband, wife or lover, the violation of their bodies, and the whole range of insults which had met them daily, from the stark 'Jews are not desired here' on the board outside the town to the crude obscenities of Streicher's *Stürmer* placarded in front of every ruined synagogue. They had been denied their claim to be Germans or Austrians; it was only left to them to reaffirm the fact that they were Jews and as such to long for refuge in the only country where a Jewish national community existed by right, not on sufferance, under guarantees of international law.

The growing immigration quotas and the considerable number of illegal immigrants increased Arab tension, and extremists, headed by the Mufti of Jerusalem, plunged their country into a state of war. The Mufti, Haj Amin el Husseini, was the leader of the most powerful clan. Like many other Arab nationalists he had been an officer in the Turkish Army, but went over to the Arab side in the revolt. After World War I he began building up an Arab youth movement, and under cover of doing intelligence work for the British set on foot the anti-Zionist agitation which brought about the riots of 1920 and 1921. When this came to light he fled to Transjordan, being sentenced in absence to 10 years' imprisonment. Sir Herbert Samuel decided however on the bold but risky course of attempting to win his support of the Mandate, by placing him in a responsible position under the mandatory power: in 1921 he was made President of the Supreme Moslem Council, whereby he became the official leader of the Moslem community and controller of the *wakfs* (religious endowments), which meant that considerable sums were available to him. He also became, after a brief course at the Al Azhar (Moslem) University at Cairo, Mufti of Jerusalem, an office whose main function is legal (interpreting the Sharia or Moslem law), but with similar standing to that of a bishop.

Incited by the Mufti and other leaders, the Arabs declared a general strike in 1936, which continued more or less in effect, and in every town, for six months. Trains were blown up, Jewish settlements invaded, Jews and British police murdered, while bands of Arab irregulars, under the Turkish-trained soldier of fortune, Kaukji, operated in the north from beyond the borders, coming

down from the hills to ravage, kill and loot. There was a brief lull in the revolt while the Royal Commission of 1937 under the chairmanship of Lord Peel pursued its inquiries. Its findings were published in a volume (the 'Peel Report'), where, after admirably setting forth the background and history of the troubles, it advocated the division of the country into a small Jewish state, a larger Arab state, and a considerable area which was to continue under Mandate. Though the Zionists showed willingness to discuss the proposal, the Arabs would not hear of it, and in December 1937 the revolt blazed forth again more fiercely than ever with the murder of a British official and his police escort. The Cabinet, however, adopted the recommendations, and another commission ('Woodhead') came out to demarcate the boundaries of the Arab and Jewish states, in accordance with the decision for partition which the previous commission had put forward and which the Cabinet had adopted. But although the tone of its report (published 1938) was to negative partition as a solution owing to the technical difficulties which it listed, Arab opinion was in no way reassured.

Eventually military repression wore down the revolt and in 1939 it gradually fizzled out. Its end was hastened by the divisions between the Husseini party and other elements, who, no less than Jews or British, found themselves the target of the Mufti's terrorists. The breakdown of communications and security made most Arabs tired of violence. All except the extremists around the Mufti were ready to accept the new situation created by the White Paper of 1939. Munich had occurred the previous autumn, Hitler had just occupied Prague, and it was clear that world war was imminent. The friendship, or at least the neutrality of the Arab world was essential to Britain for strategic reasons, but would not be secured unless her Palestine policy was changed in favour of the Arabs; whereas the 'co-belligerency' of the Jews was in any case assured, if war broke out, as a consequence of Hitler's anti-semitism.

The 1939 White Paper, in reasoned and statesmanlike terms, shut the door of Palestine on all but a fraction of the millions of Jews for whom escape from Europe was the only alternative to persecution, torture and death. 75,000 Jews were to be admitted within five years—25,000 as soon as possible, the rest at the rate of 10,000

a year. Further immigration was to be conditional on Arab assent—which meant that it would cease. The ceiling for the Jewish inhabitants was thus to be placed at one-third of the number of Arabs; while the development of self-governing institutions, which the White Paper also envisaged, would place them under the control of the Arab majority. By the Land Transfer Regulations of 1940 severe restrictions were also put on the purchase of land by Jews from Arabs.

The White Paper helped to keep the Arabs quiet, even if it did not win their support during the war. But there were already signs of a new outburst of terrorism, this time on the part of the Jewish extremists. As the war ended the British found themselves back again in the days of the rebellion, but now it was the Jews who were trying violence as a means of changing the policy of the British Government.

During the months of the Arab revolt when the country was virtually out of control, the Jews suffered badly. In the absence of the security which the Mandates Commission held that Britain should have provided, Jews were murdered, their collectives invaded, their young forests uprooted, their cattle maimed. The British were too busy to prevent them from building up stocks of arms and ammunition and developing the Haganah ('defence'), the Jewish militia. During the war, most of the 25,200 Palestinian Jews with the British forces (many of whom were eventually organised in the Jewish Brigade) had their training in Haganah.

Even before the 1939 White Paper the beginnings of Jewish terrorism could be observed. The Irgun Zvei Leumi ('National Military Organisation') and the Stern Group who split from it, set the British against the Jewish community as a whole. To the recognised leaders of the Jewish Agency they were a thorn in the flesh. Their methods were akin to banditry and thug tactics, and when serious fighting developed they proved to be of little use.

The fact that they came to exist at all was in large part due to the paralysis which was settling over British policy in Palestine. The obligations to both Zionists and Arabs, and the motives for supporting each party against the other, were so contradictory and so strong, that it became increasingly difficult for the government either

to make policy, or to maintain the confidence and respect of the governed. When government weakens and loses respect, the thugs have a chance of taking over, or at least are not kept under as they are when conditions are stable. Britain's policy tended to undermine the comparatively moderate leadership of Weizmann and the Jewish Agency. As terrorism increased the British reaction was to take drastic steps against the moderates, such as arresting the Jewish Agency leaders in June 1946. It was a measure of Ben Gurion's stature that he was able to assert his leadership, and organise the armed forces of the embryonic state, in the face of the difficulties caused by the terrorists' bid to steal the show.

The Zionists realised that time was not on their side. The Arab birth-rate was one of the highest in the world, while that of the Jews conformed to the European average. This 'internal immigration' explained the great increase of the Arab population[1] between 1918 and 1946 (from 600,000 to over 1,200,000) and made it progressively more difficult for the Jews to overtake the Arabs—a fact not foreseen in days when Ottoman misrule, bad hygiene and the enforced enlistment (and subsequent death or venereal infection) of a high proportion of young men kept the population low. The Jews in D.P. camps represented an immediate reservoir of potential immigrants. If some settled future had been provided for these unfortunates either in Europe or elsewhere, there would have been scant hope of the Zionist programme ever being fulfilled.

British policy after the war was to stand pat on the 1939 White Paper. The 75,000 'certificates' of the White Paper had been exhausted, but a further 1,500 immigrants were to be allowed each month. This was a major switch for the Labour Party, who took office in August 1945. Until then it had been supporting the full Zionist programme—unlimited immigration, and a Jewish state in the whole of Palestine, in accordance with the resolution of the Zionist Conference at the Biltmore Hotel, New York, in 1942. But having attained power, the Labour leaders were brought by the Foreign Office advisers face to face with the antagonism of the Arabs

[1] The fact that so many more babies survived than before was in part due to Jewish health services and the general raising of the level of public health which the presence of such large numbers of European Jews necessitated.

—a fact which they had apparently not previously evaluated—and the prospect of jeopardising the entire British policy of friendship with the Arab world if a pro-Zionist course were followed. They felt that they had been taken in (Bevin himself had been wisely cautious) and something of a rebound against their previous Zionist sympathies was noticeable in the Cabinet.

The dry announcement in September 1945 that the White Paper policy was to be persisted in was a severe shock, not only for the D.P.'s who wished to go to Palestine as soon as possible, but for the Zionists who were impatient to see the creation of their state. The rigorous blockade by the Navy to intercept ships with illegal immigrants showed that the government meant business. On one occasion a batch of would-be immigrants was deported back to camps in Germany.

Not only the terrorists, but the accepted Jewish leaders rebelled against this policy, which naturally seemed nothing but heartless. The Palmach, spearhead of the Haganah, took a hand in bringing these immigrants ashore illegally and dispersing them among the settled Jews. Competing to out-do the moderates, the Irgun blew up the wing of the King David Hotel which housed the government secretariat. British repression of both moderates and terrorists turned Palestine into the semblance of a police-state, where 95,000 troops were tied up to keep control.

Ernest Bevin, who had taken over as Foreign Secretary in August 1945, committed himself to solving the Palestine problem. He considered that America had to be brought in and encouraged to face her responsibility in the Middle East, where her stake as a world power, not to mention her oil interests, were rapidly becoming as great as Britain's. American Jewry was largely pro-Zionist, and Zionist publicity and pressure had swayed the American government ever since Woodrow Wilson's day, to champion its cause in Palestine. But now, Bevin calculated, America's growing interests might lead the Administration to take a common line with Britain in bringing about some solution.

Since no solution was going to be acceptable to all parties, force (or at least its threat) would be needed to impose it, while everything, he hoped, would be made easier if America would help to

undertake the economic development of the area so that Arabs as well as Jews would be benefited. America could help, if need be, with force as well as finance. It was also a shrewd move to involve America directly, so that she would be deprived of the luxury of standing on the sideline to encourage the Jews and criticise the British.

Bevin's policy was well conceived, since the State Department's views coincided with his. The main concern both of the State Department and the Pentagon was to avoid antagonising the Arabs, for this would lay the Arab world open to communist and Russian penetration. Just before Roosevelt's death there was a sign that the pro-Zionist policy of the White House might be modified, since Ibn Sa'ud's uncompromising antagonism to a settlement favourable to the Jews (which he made clear at his meeting with Roosevelt in 1945) had obliged Roosevelt to assure him that he would not support a policy opposed by the Arabs. But Bevin reckoned without the rugged individualism of President Truman, who was determined to follow a line of his own, which coincided with that of the Zionists. It was supported by the Democratic Party leaders, who were convinced of the necessity of outbidding the Republicans in order to keep the Jewish vote. At one stage in the discussions on Palestine Truman called in the ambassadors and other experts on Arab affairs, among them some well-known missionaries. They all urged him, for the sake of peace in the Middle East and America's standing there, not to follow the Zionist line, but he replied that he could not alter his plans 'because of the New York vote'.

The Secretary of State, Byrnes, complained that foreign policy—which in this matter Truman took out of his hands—was being determined 'by the contributions a particular block of interests might make to the party funds.'[1] This may have weighed with Truman as much as those philanthropic feelings which he has described[2] in prompting him to press for the immediate admission of 100,000 Jewish D.P.s into Palestine—a point to which he stuck, and which he publicly proclaimed, with almost obstinate consistency.

[1] Quoted by Francis Williams: *Ernest Bevin* (Hutchinson, 1952), p. 259.
[2] H. S. Truman: *The Truman Memoirs* (Hodder & Stoughton, 1956), Vol. II, Chapters 10, 11, 12.

This recommendation was made by Earl G. Harrison, the American representative on the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees, whom Truman sent in June 1945 to investigate the conditions of 'non-repatriables.' In his preliminary report of August 1945, Harrison also pointed out that some of these D.P.'s would prefer to emigrate to America, Britain and the Dominions, or South America, though he said the numbers were 'not large.'[1]

But from the British point of view, whether the numbers of Jews who were ready to go elsewhere was large or not, it would have been a great relief not only to the Jews so placed, but for British policy in Palestine, if the doors of the U.S.A. would have been open to them—those doors which had been almost closed for such immigrants since 1924. Bevin's plan was therefore to involve the Americans by bringing them into a committee for investigating two questions: first, the prospects of placing 'non-repatriables' in 'Palestine or *other countries outside Europe*',[2] and, second, the problems of Palestine in the event of further Jewish immigration being recommended. But Truman insisted that the focus should be on Palestine and urged the necessity of speed. 'The British were none too happy with our reaction,' he commented later. 'Bevin wrote to Byrnes, insisting that the inquiry should extend to places other than Palestine as potential settlement areas for European Jews. We held to our point of view, however . . .'[3]

Bevin's attempted solution was the most practicable, in that it would not have aroused too much opposition from the less intransigeant Arabs (the extremists would never have been satisfied with anything less than their control of the whole of Palestine). At that date Azzam Pasha, Secretary-General of the Arab League, Nuri-es-Said of Iraq, Abdullah of Jordan, and the anti-Husseini moderates in Palestine, were prepared to agree that Palestine should give some further relief to Jewish victims of the Nazis, provided other

[1] Hurewitz, II, 252. See also Crossman, p. 88: 'I had often asked myself whether these people would still want to go to Palestine if America opened its doors. I soon learnt that this question was academic. They knew and I knew that America was not prepared to open its doors. It could not be expected that desperate people would give objective answers to purely hypothetical questions.'

[2] Terms of reference of the Committee, in Crossman, p. 215. (My italics.)

[3] Truman Memoirs, II, p. 151,

countries played their part.[1] They might even have been prepared to go a step further, and swallow (after making suitable gestures of rejection) the creation of a Jewish state in a part of Palestine. As foreseen by the White Paper of 1937, this was the only possible solution which would give the Jews security in a National Home in Palestine, without too grievously harming the Arabs in whose country that 'Home' had been built.

Unfortunately the members of the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry (perhaps because they had had no previous experience of the problem) plumped for a solution which was in reality none at all, that 'Palestine shall be neither an Arab state nor a Jewish state', but a unitary bi-national state under British Mandate as before, pending its transition to a United Nations trusteeship. However, the restrictions on immigration imposed by the White Paper of 1939, and the Land Transfer Regulations of the following year, were to be rescinded. As far as the problem of resettling Jews went, the Committee reckoned that there were some 391,000 for whom homes outside Europe should be found. Of these, 98,000 were in assembly centres in Germany and Austria, and in immediate need of transfer elsewhere—a figure close to the 100,000 of Earl Harrison and President Truman. Hence the Committee's recommendation that 100,000 certificates for entry into Palestine be immediately issued.

In the exchanges between Attlee and Truman which followed the issuing of the Committee's report, Truman continued to harp on the need to issue the 100,000 certificates. He also, acting on the advice of his Joint Chiefs of Staff, firmly refused to make American forces available for implementing an agreed policy—and in any case it did not seem possible to agree on one, since Truman did not view with favour the federal type of solution proposed by the experts, who were trying to work out something on the basis of the Committee's Report. Without further consultation with the British, Truman published a statement, in October 1946, calling for the issue of 100,000 certificates in accordance with the recommendation of the Committee's report, while ignoring the other proposals which made up its context.

[1] J. Kimche: *Seven Fallen Pillars* (Secker & Warburg, 1950), p. 156.


THE
ARAB-ISRAELI
WAR
PRESENT-DAY BOUNDARIES
PRE-WAR BOUNDARIES - SEE INSET MAP
MAIN JEWISH AREAS
JEWISH SETTLEMENTS
BEFORE HOSTILITIES
LIMITS OF JEWISH ADVANCES
INITIAL ARAB ATTACKS
LEBANON
SYRIA
L. Huleh
Acre
Safad
GALILEE
Haifa
L. Tiberias
PLAIN OF ESDRAELON
Nazareth
Jenin
SAMARIA
Nablus
R. Jordan
MEDITERRANEAN SEA
Tel Aviv
Jaffa
Lydda
Ramleh
Rehovot
Latrun
Jericho
AMMAN
Isdud
Deir Yassin
JERUSALEM
Bethlehem
Faluja
JUDAEA
Hebron
Gaza
Rafah
Beersheba
El Arish
Abu Aweigila
Auja
NEGEB
Bir Hamah
Qusseima
Bir Hasneh
SINAI
EGYPT
Eilat
Akaba
0 10 20 30 MILES
JORDAN
U.N. PARTITION PLAN
Safad
Haifa
Tel Aviv
JERUSALEM
PALESTINE
TRANS-JORDAN
Gaza
EGYPT
ARAB AREA
JEWISH "
WHW

At the news Bevin went into 'one of the blackest rages'[1] which had been known to overtake him. He accused Truman in the House of Commons of wrecking his policy, which in turn 'outraged' the President.[2] With this deep division between the statesmen of the two powers who alone could give an adequate lead in the Near East, it was not surprising that in the next stage of the Palestine problem the paralysis of policy gave place to chaos.

Bevin abandoned his plan of imposing some solution which would provoke the minimum of opposition from both sides. He blamed the American Zionists for the pressure they put on Truman—pressure which Truman admitted to be extreme—and determined to make no move which would further alienate the Arabs. His turning of the Palestine question over to the United Nations in February 1947 was done not with the object of finding a solution by that means, but as a way of shuffling out of a responsibility. Britain announced her intention of giving up the Mandate and withdrawing her troops, but during the interim period would not use these troops for imposing a settlement, such as might be worked out by the U.N., unless it was acceptable to both sides.

No such settlement could be made, as the British Government knew. Truman had said that America could provide no troops to enforce a settlement. The United Nations had no forces of its own, and could only impose a settlement if one or more of the powers concerned agreed to use their own forces for the purpose. The alternative to imposing a settlement was to let the rival claimants to Palestine fight it out, and this became British policy.

Britain rejected the partition plan of the United Nations Special Commission on Palestine (December 1947), and rejected also the plan agreed by the United Nations sub-committee for the boundaries of the new Jewish and Arab states and for the transfer of power. In this, as in the subsequent debate of the General Assembly when a two-thirds majority voted in favour of the partition plan, the British representative found himself opposing an almost unique combination of Russia and America—a situation only repeated later at the time of 'Suez'. Britain refused to allow the United Nations commis-

[1] F. Williams, *Ernest Bevin*, p. 260.
[2] Truman Memoirs II, p. 164.

sion for supervising the transfer of power to enter Palestine, and, while continuing the naval patrol to prevent illegal immigration or the importing of arms by the Jews, was unable to stop armed bands of Arabs from entering the country.

It was disingenuous of leaders in Britain to claim, both then and at the time of Suez, that the United Nations failed. American policy under Truman (and later Eisenhower) was—whatever its weaknesses—an attempt to work through the United Nations, and build it up as a focus of authority. The United Nations was to be, in the American view, the keystone of an international order which should take the place of the order and the authority, such as they were, which had disappeared with the ending of the Pax Britannica and the collapse of the European Concert. Britain's ambiguous (and over Palestine negative) policy towards the United Nations was of a piece with her earlier policy towards the League. Perhaps because she had once been the main guardian of the old order Britain did not find the incentive to become a creator of the new.

(c) The Arab-Israeli War

FOR SOME MONTHS before the British pulled out, war was raging in Palestine. The area of British control was restricted to 'Bevingrad'—the compound in New Jerusalem containing Government House and the main administrative buildings—and to Lydda airport, Haifa, some camps and fortresses, and the main roads between these places. 'The Arab Liberation Army' under Kaukji and local Arabs carrying on guerrilla tactics (particularly ambushing the roads to the Jewish settlements) were on the attack, and the Jewish forces, which had not yet come out fully into the open, were on the defensive. One of their main tasks was running convoys through in home-made armoured cars to their settlements.

The Arabs were deeply divided. Within Palestine itself the old feud between the ex-Mufti's party and the others persisted. There was little unity of aim. The main plan was to make the situation impossible for the Jews by continuous guerilla and resistance tactics, based on the Arab towns and villages where the fighters could exist indefi-

nitely by merging with the civilian population. But this came to nothing when, with the withdrawal of the British, the Arab population either withdrew themselves (as they did from Haifa after the Arab commander had slipped away),[1] or fled before the Jewish forces. Panic among the Arabs was encouraged by the massacre perpetrated by the Irgun and Stern Gang in the village of Deir Yassin near Jerusalem in April 1948, when 254 men, women and children were murdered and their bodies thrown down a well. By the time the war ended, between 700,000 and 800,000 Arabs were homeless refugees.

The ex-Mufti of Jerusalem, Amin el Husseini, still saw himself as the future ruler of an all-Arab Palestine. Since leaving Palestine during the Arab revolt of the thirties he had made first Beirut and then Baghdad his centre. From there he had continued to organise his network of anti-Zionist and anti-British intrigue. After the suppression of Rashid Aly's revolt in Iraq (1941) the Mufti escaped to Iran; from there, when the British and Russians occupied the country, he made his way via Turkey to Germany. There he ardently supported the Nazi war-effort and helped to organise Moslem storm-troopers in the Balkans. Falling into Allied hands at the end of the war, he was kept in semi-confinement by the French in a small country-house near Paris, where he continually received visitors from the Arab world. In June 1946 he made another of his famous escapes, shaving his beard to aid his disguise, and landed at Cairo from an American Dakota.

In Cairo he found fertile soil for his pretensions, directed as they were against Abdullah of Transjordan, whose close ties with the British and well-known ambition to enlarge his domains had long made him suspect in Egypt as in Syria. His Greater Syria project was for federal union with Iraq (where his nephew and great nephew were respectively Regent and King), with Syria and Lebanon and Palestine. If such a scheme were realised in practice it was clear

[1] It has not been fully established that the second exodus of Arabs from Haifa was on instructions from the ex-Mufti or other leaders outside the country, though it seems probable. The first exodus was due to panic. In many cases the Arab inhabitants seem to have had the impression that the best plan was for them to leave their homes during the fighting and return shortly afterwards (as they assumed it would be) when it was over. At the capture of Ramleh, for example, the inhabitants insisted on leaving.

that Abdullah, not the Mufti, would be in control. In opposition to this plan Egypt naturally found itself in alliance with Ibn Sa'ud, since Ibn Sa'ud and Abdullah were old enemies.

This rift had wrecked the effectiveness of the Arab League right from the start—the League that now took belated steps to plan the invasion of Palestine by the armies of its members as soon as the Mandate ended.

The 'League of Arab States' had been formed with British encouragement in the latter part of the war. Its origins went back to the sympathy felt in the Arab countries for the Palestinian Arabs, and contacts between some of the leaders of the revolt of 1936-7 and politicians in Egypt and elsewhere. Britain had given some stimulus to the idea when the government invited Arab leaders to London to discuss proposals for a Palestine settlement in 1938. Apart from this Britain's support for the idea of Arab unity was lukewarm until 1941, when she needed to make some move which would gain support among the Arabs in the face of Axis blandishments or threats. In this sense Anthony Eden's statement in Parliament in May 1941 has some similarity to the Balfour Declaration—though this time Britain was aiming at the support of Arab opinion. 'It seems to me both natural and right that cultural and economic ties between the Arab countries, yes, and political ties too, should be strengthened. His Majesty's Government for their part will give their support to any scheme that commands general approval.'

To implement the idea Nuri es-Said of Iraq was first in the field, with his memorandum proposing a union based on the countries of the Fertile Crescent (Greater Syria plus Iraq), but the initiative was soon seized by Egypt. The main difficulties facing the promoters of Arab unity were the long-standing feuds between personalities, notably Abdullah of Transjordan and Ibn Sa'ud. But Ibn Sa'ud was ready to recognise that Egypt, as the most advanced of the Arab states, should take a leading part. Farouk, aided by his able *Chef de Cabinet*, Ahmed Hassanein, managed to steer the negotiations along until he had the two rivals, Ibn Sa'ud and Abdullah, agreeing with each other and himself in laying the foundations of the Arab League.

Egyptian influence continued dominant at the conference at

Alexandria in October 1944, under the chairmanship of Nahas Pasha. By the following March a constitution was agreed in which the founder states, Egypt, Sa'udi Arabia, Transjordan, Iraq, the Yemen, Syria and Lebanon, were to join in a loose confederation, but there was no question of any state giving up a particle of its authority to a supernational body. A special annex underlined the concern of League members for Palestine, whose 'external manifestations of independence have continued to be obscured by overriding circumstances,' and another stated in so many words the aim of the League to work for the independence of other parts of the Arab world under foreign control. A third appointed Azzam Pasha Secretary-General (Azzam was an Egyptian of Libyan origin). A clause of the constitution placed the permanent seat of the League in Cairo.

Arab courtesy and politeness can conceal, temporarily, the deep divisions below the surface. The meetings of League representatives at Alexandria, or as guests of King Farouk at Inchass Palace, were merely a façade. Azzam's relative moderation and unremitting efforts to bring the parties closer together were doomed to failure.

At the same time Ernest Bevin, the Foreign Office, and apparently their military advisers, thought that the Arab League forces would be strong enough to secure at least all the parts of Palestine allotted to the Arabs by the United Nations, if not to push the Jews into the sea. But the strengths of the Arab armies had, for prestige reasons, been greatly inflated, and their effectiveness, except in the case of the Arab Legion of Transjordan, was far less than appeared on paper.[1] In reality the Jewish and Arab forces were more evenly balanced than appeared, the main limiting factor for the Jews being the shortage of arms and ammunition, though the picture was completely altered in this respect when, at the end of the Mandate, they were able to import arms freely.

There was no clear idea on the part of the framers and agents of

[1] Israel, very short of arms, was in process of forming an army of about 60,000, but at the end of the Mandate could only put about 15,000 into the field. The Arab armies were better equipped, and could dispose of some 70,000 to 80,000 effectives, but succeeded in putting only some 25,000 into the field. E. O'Ballance: *The Arab-Israeli War, 1948* (Faber, 1948), ch. 4 and p. 138.

British policy as to what was going to happen. The official policy both of Whitehall and the Palestine Administration was strict neutrality. Though the Mandate over Transjordan was ended in 1946, and the country granted formal independence (and an increased British subsidy) with the title of King for Abdullah, he was not encouraged in his 'Greater Syria' ambitions. The furthest that Bevin would go was to acquiesce in Transjordan occupying the adjacent portion of Palestine which was part of the Arab state proposed by the United Nations—'but do not go and invade the areas allotted to the Jews.'[1] Transjordan had been able to acquire a small quantity of modern arms after the war, but Britain continued the policy of rationing ammunition—and in any case the subsidy (£2,500,000) was not large enough to buy much 'hardware' in addition to financing many of the general services of the state.[2] General Glubb, who was technically an official of the Transjordan Government (and not on secondment to them), was given no briefing by Britain as to what action he should take with Abdullah's forces on the ending of the Mandate.

Azzam had managed to raise £4 million for the hostilities, from which he allotted Transjordan £250,000 and so helped Glubb and the Legion to acquit themselves as they did.[3] But Glubb had to refuse his invitation to become Commander-in-Chief of the Arab Forces—it would have been impracticable for him to have tried to assume control of any of the Arab forces besides the Legion and possibly the Iraqis (who had to make their way through Transjordan to reach the front). This was proved to be the case when Abdullah assumed this title. Even though, when the fighting began, Egyptian forces moved up into contact with the Legion in the Hebron-Bethlehem area, there was no liaison at any level between commands or units, but rather sullen hostility. The meeting at Amman on October 25, 1948, between Abdullah and the Prime

[1] Bevin at an interview with the Premier of Transjordan, Taufiq Pasha Abu al Huda and General Glubb, early in 1948. J. B. Glubb: *A Soldier with the Arabs* (Hodder & Stoughton, 1957), p. 66.

[2] No extra sum was allotted to Transjordan by Britain, despite the imminence of the war, and the existing sum was only sufficient to maintain the Arab Legion on a peace time basis.

[3] He promised up to £3 million but no more than the £250,000 was ever paid. (Glubb, p. 85.)

Ministers of Egypt, Syria and Iraq, which had been called to review the situation in the light of Egypt's recent defeat, quickly developed into recriminations by Abdullah against Nokrashy of Egypt for the seizure of the arms which the British had despatched to him from the Canal, followed by promises of help by Jamil Mardam of Syria which everyone present knew could not be fulfilled.[1]

Before the Mandate ended, Kaukji failed in his attempt to capture the settlement of Mishmar Haemek, key to the Plain of Esdraelon, while the Jews managed to seize Safad, ineffectively defended by his irregulars and by a Syrian force under Colonel Shishakli. This showed that little could be expected from 'The Arab Liberation Army' when the fighting really began. Despite their initial gains, the performance of all the Arab armies in the war was far below what their well-wishers had expected, with the exception of the Arab Legion.

On May 14, 1948, Sir Alan Cunningham, the last British High Commissioner, left Jerusalem for Haifa where he was taken aboard a British warship. The British flag was hauled down, and there was a race between the Arabs and Jews to occupy the buildings, forts and camps on the heels of the retreating British. At 4 p.m. on the same day, Ben-Gurion read out the proclamation of the State of Israel in the Municipal Museum at Tel Aviv, and a few minutes later the new state was recognised by the U.S.A.

The United Nations Plan gave to the Jews about 5,500 square miles, and to the Arab State about 4,500 square miles of Palestine.[2] The basis of the plan was political partition with economic union; in Jerusalem there was to be a Board of Jews, Arabs and United Nations members responsible for the organisation and administration of the economic union of the two States. The partition map looked like a jigsaw puzzle. The purpose was to leave in the Jewish State

[1] The meeting referred to by Sir John Glubb (p. 200) is the same as that described by Sir Alec Kirkbride in *A Crackle of Thorns* (Murray, 1956), p. 159 seq. 'Jerusalem was dismissed as saved, and the talk turned to more pleasant matters such as the final offensive which was to sweep the Jews into the sea and how the Jewish property would be divided between the Arab Governments which had sent armies. . . .'

[2] This paragraph is taken, with permission, from N. Bentwich: *Israel and Her Neighbours* (British Survey series, No. 99, 1952).

almost all the existing Jewish settlements, and at the same time to provide a corridor between the Arab territory in western Palestine and the neighbouring Arab States of Egypt, Jordan and the Lebanon. It was estimated that at the outset over 40 per cent of the total population in the Jewish State would be Arab, but it was expected that immigration would soon give a substantial Jewish majority.

The Arab governments, apart from Transjordan, were all under the ex-Mufti's influence, and therefore quite intransigent. They refused to negotiate any compromise, and steadily voted against all proposals for a solution in the United Nations, with the exception of their own solution for a unitary Arab state. With the end of the Mandate they moved their forces into Palestine, but as there was no co-ordination of command, except in the case of the Iraqis and the Transjordanians, their operations were not very effective. Though the Egyptians came up the coastal road with an imposing army 40,000 strong, including a small force of Sa'udis, they became stuck at Isdud, 20 miles from Tel Aviv (they also moved some of their troops round to the Hebron and Bethlehem area). The Syrians made a small penetration in the north. The Arab Legion rapidly took over the central section of the Judaean upland country, extending at places like Ramleh and Lydda down into the coastal belt—all territory allotted to the Arabs by the U.N. When it became clear that the main fight would be for Jerusalem, Glubb handed over a large part of his front to the Iraqis and concentrated on holding Latrun, which covered the road from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, and on strengthening resistance in the Old City of Jerusalem against the Jewish attack. Most of the New City fell fairly quickly to the Jews (much of it was a Jewish residential area), but the Jewish quarter of the Old City was captured by the Arabs. The United Nations' Plan to set up an International Trusteeship in Jerusalem was, naturally, a dead letter, since there was no force to support it. With no administration, and with fighting in the streets, the situation was chaotic.

On the day the Mandate ended, Count Bernadotte was appointed as United Nations' mediator. After a month he succeeded in negotiating a cease-fire—the momentum of both sides, as well as ammunition, was almost exhausted. During a four weeks' truce the Israelis rapidly armed themselves, Russia giving powerful assistance by en-

abling them to buy quantities of armaments from Czecho-Slovakia.[1] They also succeeded in buying enough planes to form a small but effective air-force.

The Arab armies were unable to strengthen themselves in the same way. Glubb's efforts to obtain arms from the Suez Canal Base were frustrated for the second time when the United Nations resolution on withholding arms from either side was enforced by Britain (the Russians, though voting for the resolution at Lake Success, took no steps to make Czecho-Slovakia observe it). So eager was Britain to show itself a good U.N. member that the British officers seconded to the Transjordan army were withdrawn. (Glubb, his second-in-command, Brigadier Lash, and a few others, being Transjordan civil servants or 'on contract' stayed on.)[2] Glubb, on his own responsibility, kept on the active list (though without financial provision) the infantry garrison companies which had been raised for duties in Palestine during the latter part of the Mandate, and which should have been disbanded, and succeeded in bringing back to the colours some men of the former Transjordan Frontier Force. But though short of men and ammunition the Arab Legion succeeded in holding its front during the second round of fighting (July 9 to 18, 1948), with the exception of the Ramleh-Lydda salient—the position at Latrun was held through the remarkable action in which one six-pounder gun, manned by several men who were killed one after the other, knocked out the Israeli vehicles.[3] Even so the Israelis were on the point of outflanking the position, when the second cease-fire brought relief to the defenders in the nick of time. Operations had been restarted by the Arab governments against the advice of the military—in the event the Egyptians were unable to move, and Kaukji had to withdraw his 'Liberation Army' into the hills of Upper Galilee.

By this time it was clear that the Israeli army was a first-rate fighting force, commanded by officers who knew their business thoroughly. In the third round, in October, a well-planned operation knocked

[1] Ben-Gurion sent a message of thanks to Stalin, November 6, 1948. Glubb, p. 212.
[2] O'Ballance, p. 136.
[3] Glubb, p. 170, says five tanks were knocked out. But the Israelis state that, at the time, they only possessed two Cromwells without ammunition.

the Egyptians out of their position in the south, except for the partly Sudanese 6th Brigade in the Faluja 'pocket', and forced them to withdraw their troops in the coastal area from Isdud to Gaza. They also widened their corridor to Jerusalem, south of Latrun, conquered Beersheba, and were stopped from taking Hebron as well by the arrival of an Arab Legion force. In the north, Kaukji and his 'Liberation Army' were bundled over the Lebanese frontier.

The final Egyptian defeat took place during December 22, 1948 to January 7, 1949, when (by-passing the Faluja pocket) the Israelis swept down in an arc from Beersheba to the neighbourhood of El Arish, cutting off all the Egyptian forces remaining in Palestine. Britain warned the Israelis off Sinai, which was considered virtually a British protected area (the British were in the Canal Zone by virtue of the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty of 1936), and the warning might have led to further action with the shooting down by the Israelis of five British planes on reconnaissance over Sinai, had not the Israelis already begun to withdraw. The Egyptians did not invoke the Treaty with Britain, because they considered that they had not entered into it as equals, and were in process of trying to rid themselves of it. Abdullah, however, invoked his treaty with Britain, to secure occupation by a small British force of Akaba, his country's only port, at the tip of the Gulf of that name (January 1949).

After weeks of devoted and patient efforts to bring about a settlement, Count Bernadotte was assassinated in Jerusalem on September 17, 1948, by four men wearing Israeli uniforms—reputedly members of the Stern Group, though they were never brought to justice.[1] Bernadotte's plan for a settlement was a variant of the U.N. partition scheme, which the Israelis thought too favourable to the Arabs. His lieutenant, Dr. Bunche, took over, and during the winter negotiated a series of armistices between each of the Arab combatants (except Iraq) and Israel. While the negotiations between Jordan[2] and Israel were taking place at Rhodes, Israeli troops occupied the remainder of the Negeb, which the U.N. partition had allotted to them, as far

[1] G. E. Kirk: *The Middle East*, 1945-1950 (Survey of International Affairs, O.U.P., 1954), p. 285.

[2] Proclaimed the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan by the Transjordan Parliament, December 13, 1948, including Old Jerusalem and the newly acquired territories to the west of Jordan and the Dead Sea.

as the Gulf of Akaba at Eilat[1] after brushes with the Arab Legion. Israel also secured a strip of varying width around the Jordan-held Territory in Central Palestine. The Jordanians had been obliged to treat on this point since the withdrawal of the Iraqi forces left them with far too long a frontier to hold on their own.

The four armistice agreements between Israel on the one hand and Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan and Syria on the other, fixed a provisional frontier on the lines which each party held at the time. They provided also for demilitarised areas on the border, for the withdrawal and reduction of the troops, and the return of prisoners of war.[2] They were stated to be of a purely military nature, and intended to provide a stage between truce and final peace. Each of them contained a provision for the establishment of a Mixed Armistice Commission composed of five members, two from each party, and a Chairman from the staff of the Truce Supervision Organisation of the United Nations, whose task it was to supervise the execution of the provisions of the Agreement.

Another article of the Armistice Agreement with Jordan provided that a special committee, composed of two representatives of each party—without any representative of the United Nations—should be organised immediately to work out improvements of relations. Attempts to give effect to the provisions of this article broke down. The Israel and Arab sections of Jerusalem were rigidly divided by a barbed-wire curtain.

After the first three armistice agreements were made, the Conciliation Commission brought together Arab and Israeli representatives at Lausanne to discuss terms of peace. The Arabs, who had violently resisted the partition plan of the United Nations, were now prepared to consider it as a basis of negotiations. They urged also that the Arab refugees, who were by then estimated at 700,000, should have the right of return. Israel was prepared to consider taking over the 200,000 refugees in the Gaza strip if that area were transferred to her; and she suggested also the possibility of admitting up to 100,000 of the refugees into her territory. No agreement

[1] The name they gave to the post they set up there, since developed into a port.

[2] Some of the following section is taken from Bentwich (see note above).

was reached; but in fact a considerable number of Arabs returned in the next years to their homes in Israel and by 1955 the number of Arab inhabitants was nearly 200,000, being 12 per cent of the total population.

Israel was admitted to the United Nations in May 1949, and henceforth could speak there with her own voice.

In April 1950, Britain recognised *de facto* the partition of the Jerusalem area between Israel and Jordan, and it was stated that the Anglo-Jordanian treaty of 1948 guaranteeing Jordan's territorial integrity would apply to the whole territory east of the Jordan-Israel armistice line, or any modification of it on which the two parties might agree. On the other hand, Egypt and Sa'udi Arabia, influenced by the former Mufti of Jerusalem, tried to have Jordan expelled from the Arab League, because of the incorporation of the Arab sector of Western Palestine in that Kingdom. A compromise resolution was adopted by the Arab League that Jordan held the territory as a trustee for the League.

In May 1950, Britain, America and France issued the Tripartite Declaration by which they confirmed their opposition to the development of an arms race between the Arab States and Israel. All applications for arms or war material from those countries was to be considered in the light of their legitimate self-defence and their part in the defence of the whole Middle East. The three countries went on to declare their unalterable opposition to the use of force, or threat of force, between any of the States. Should they find that any State was preparing to violate the frontiers or the armistice lines, the three Governments would, consistent with their obligations as members of the United Nations, immediately take action both within and outside the United Nations to prevent the violation.

(d) Israel

DAVID BEN-GURION has dominated Israel since its inception. Zionism for him has always meant Jews who were prepared to go to Palestine and build a Jewish state there with their own labour. He left Plonsk in Poland at the age of 20 in 1906 to work on the land in the

new type of all-Jewish settlement in Palestine which employed no Arabs and which defended itself against marauders without the help of Circassian guards. Zionism and socialism have been his twin stars, and he early combined these aims by joining the left-wing party Paole Zion (the Workers of Zion).

He put his faith in the Young Turks after their revolution, but was imprisoned for his pains in Jerusalem after war broke out. Expelled from Palestine, he found his way to America (where he married), and joined up in the British Army in Canada. At the end of the war he was in Egypt, whence, after demobilisation, it was only a step to Palestine again.

The next years saw him building up Histadruth (the General Confederation of Labour) to its practically total control of Jewish workers and concern with all their activities in Palestine. His membership of the two linked bodies, the World Zionist Organisation and the Jewish Agency Executive (1933), and his chairmanship of them (1935) made his position almost impregnable. His main rival was Weizmann, of whose more subtle and opportunist approach he was suspicious. By 1942 he had moved to first place in the Zionist hierarchy, when he battled successfully for the 'Biltmore Resolution' —a Jewish state in the whole of Palestine—against the more moderate demands of Weizmann. Later Ben-Gurion had to climb down from this position, and came near to Weizmann's gradualist policy. But the two men were at cross-purposes, and Weizmann, now 73 years old, resigned at the Basle Conference from the Presidency of the Zionist Organisation (1946) though two years later he was chosen to be the first President of Israel (he died on November 9, 1952, to be succeeded by Izhak Ben Zvi, who comes from the same part of Poland as Ben-Gurion, and has been closely associated with him at almost every stage of his career).

Ben-Gurion saw to it that the Prime Minister had the real power, not the President (as Weizmann had wished, on the American model). As Prime Minister he has governed Israel ever since it became a state with the exception of the period December 1953-February 1955, when his associate Moshe Sharrett (formerly Shertok) was in office.

Ben-Gurion's policies could sometimes be called extreme, and

sometimes moderate, but whether apparently moderate or extreme were merely variations of tactics in pursuit of the aim of an Israel strong through military might, through having as large a population of Jews as possible, through economic efficiency, and through recognition and acceptance by her neighbours, imposed if necessary by force of arms.

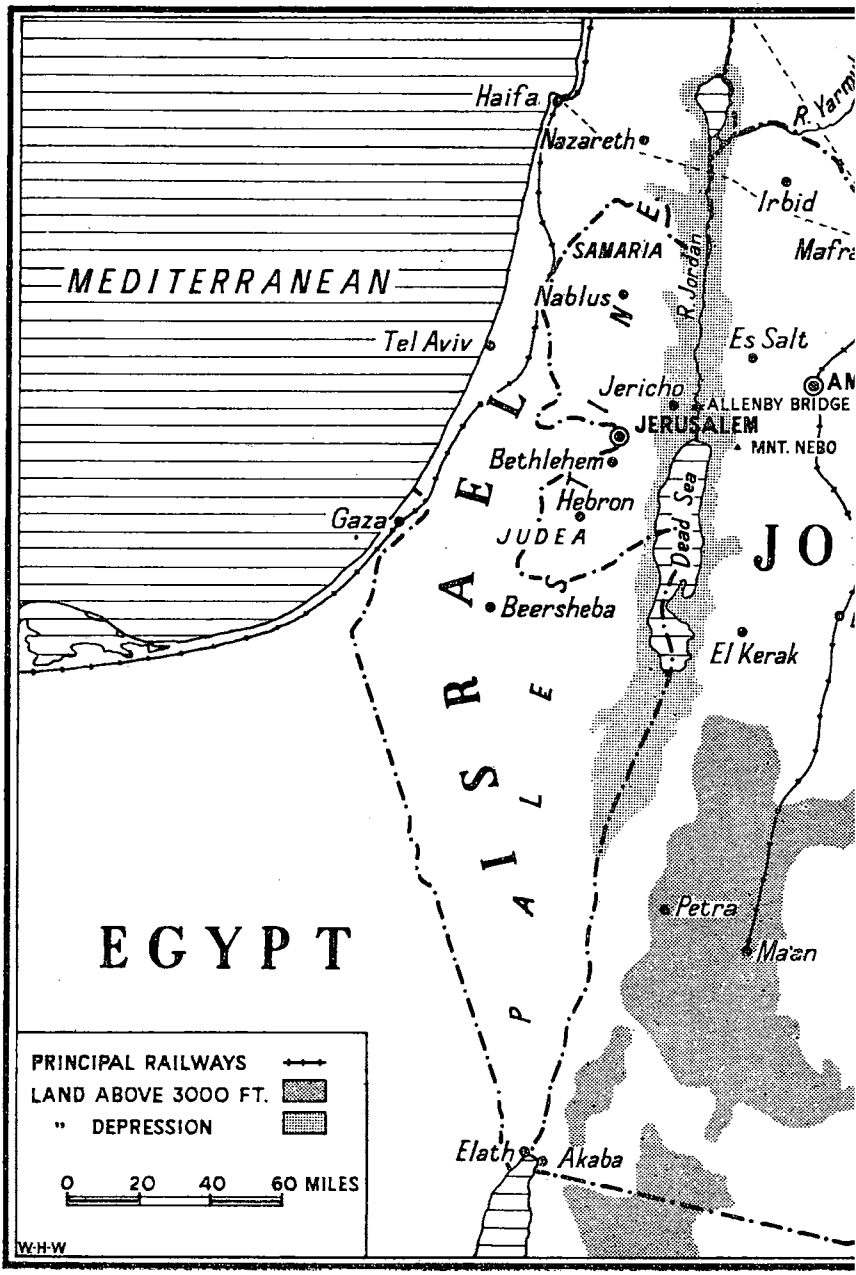
After taking an 'extremist' line at the Biltmore Conference in 1942, he changed his tactics to the 'moderate' policy of accepting a Jewish state in part, not the whole of Palestine. At the end of the war his policy varied from co-operation with Britain to defiance—as when Haganah was directed to undertake sabotage in June 1946.[1] He then swung back to restraining Haganah, while leaving Irgun and the Stern Group to pursue the more obviously terrorist activities, but he could not tolerate the existence of private armies for long. In June 1948, he showed his determination to put an end to their independent activity by ordering the sinking off Tel Aviv of the *Altalena* which Irgun had chartered to bring volunteers and sorely needed arms for themselves.

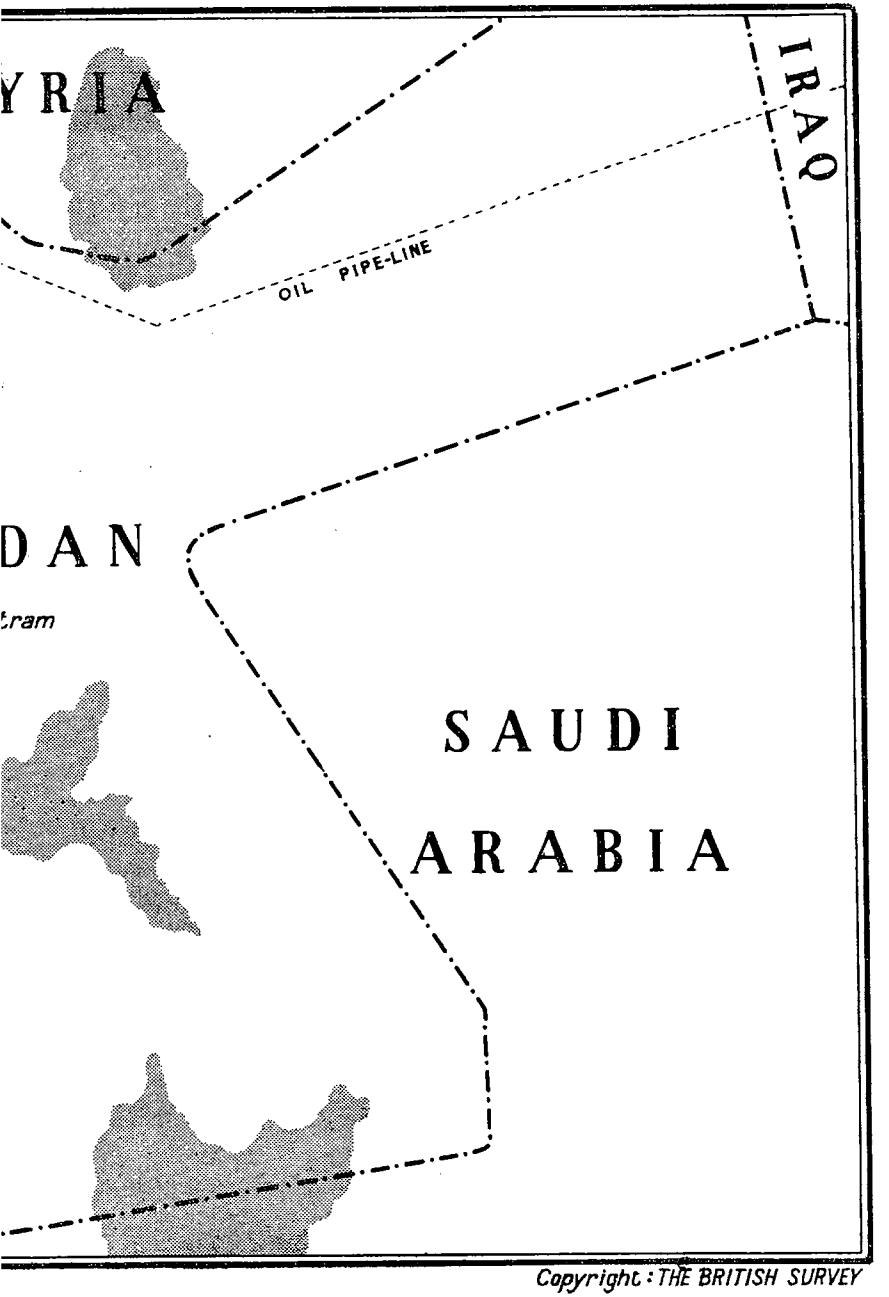
This action dramatically asserted the government's control of the extremists—in fact Ben-Gurion's control. Terrorists no longer operated as independent bodies. If the Arabs were to be removed it became the army's job to do it. Later many of the bedouin were driven from the Negev after it was taken from the Egyptians (other bedouin were moved from time to time from their preferred habitat to other areas).[2]

After accepting the armistice in 1948 the same variation of policy was pursued, from a 'tough' one of reprisals to a more 'moderate' one of relative quiescence and co-operation with the United Nations Truce Supervisory Organisation (UNTSO). The object of UNTSO was both to reduce border incidents, and to take them out of the political arena by facilitating their speedy handling by the local com-

[1] Earlier in the same year he had felt free to assure the Anglo-American Committee that the Jewish Agency had not control of Haganah and was only concerned with defence ('haganah' in Hebrew) in general. But even when in Paris, in 1946, he was in touch by wireless with Haganah. In November 1947, he became Chairman of the Jewish National Council of Palestine in charge of security and defence—in other words, Commander-in-Chief of the Jewish armed forces, and organiser of their entire war-effort.

[2] See Cdr. E. H. Hutchinson, U.S.N.R.: *Violent Truce* (Calder, 1956), ch. 4.


MEDITERRANEAN
Haifa
Nazareth
R. Yarmuk
Irbid
SAMARIA
Mafraq
Nablus
R. Jordan
Tel Aviv
Es Salt
Jericho
ALLENBY BRIDGE
JERUSALEM
MNT. NEBO
Bethlehem
Hebron
Dead Sea
Gaza
JUDEA
Beersheba
El Kerak
ISRAEL
PALESTINE
Petra
Ma'an
EGYPT
Elath
Akaba
PRINCIPAL RAILWAYS
LAND ABOVE 3000 FT.
" DEPRESSION
0 20 40 60 MILES
W.H.W



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manders on both sides of the line. But though such local commanders' agreements were made from time to time, and apparently worked successfully for a month or two,[1] they did not last long.

It was to Jordan's interest to have a peaceful frontier, for her army—expanded as it was from 6,000 to 23,000 between 1948 and 1950[2]—could still barely do more than hold on if it came to a large-scale Israeli attack. Jordan took stringent measures to prevent refugees and others infiltrating. Most incidents of this kind were due to peasants trying to harvest fields or orchards which were their property, though across the line. People from Jordan would also try to visit relatives from whom they had been cut off. More difficult to deal with however were the raids by murder-gangs resulting in the indiscriminate killing of men, women and children. These were often organised by the ex-Mufti or paid for with Egyptian or Sa'udi money. In some cases the attackers made good their escape to Syrian territory, before they could be caught.

With a modicum of good-will local commanders' agreements could settle all but the worst cases on the spot, but such agreements between Jordan and Israel were soon denounced by the Israelis. Further they were inclined to walk out of the Mixed Armistice Commissions and refuse co-operation if cases were not quickly settled in their favour.

The immediate object of their reprisal raids—apart from the plain motive of revenge—would seem to be as a deterrent, but in this they have not been successful. Rather they have built up the desire for revenge among the Arabs. Nor has there been more success in the further objective of forcing the Arab states to recognise Israel officially and make peace. Another objective of this policy could be the weakening of Jordan with a view to her ultimate dissolution or at least her retreat to the east bank of the river.

Among the worst Israeli raids was the Qibya incident of October 14-15, 1953, when (in the words of the report of General Bennike,

[1] For instance the agreement on the Israeli-Jordan border from February to May 1952.

[2] Glubb, p. 336. A National Guard on a local basis, to defend the frontier villages, was also formed.

Chief of Staff of UNTSO) 'between 30 and 40 buildings were completely demolished, among which were the school, the water pumping station, the police station and the telephone office. . . . Bullet-riddled bodies near the doorways, and multiple bullet-hits on the doors of the demolished houses indicated that the inhabitants had been forced to remain inside until their houses were blown up over them. . . . By the time the Acting Chairman (of the Mixed Armistice Commissions) left Qibya, 27 bodies had been dug from the rubble. The villagers . . . believed that the number of dead might reach 60. . . . Witnesses were uniform in describing their experience as a night of horror, during which Israeli soldiers moved about in their village, blowing up buildings, firing into doorways and windows with automatic weapons and throwing hand-grenades.'[1]

One of Ben-Gurion's achievements has been that, despite the intense preoccupation with defence in Israel, he has kept control of the state and the army firmly in civilian hands—for most of the time in *his* hands (as Prime Minister he has also been Minister of Defence). Israel is an armed camp. At the age of 18 all Jews begin 2½ years' national service; for women, if single and with a primary education, it is two years. For both men and women national service is mainly military training, though some of it may be spent on public works like land reclamation. After serving with the colours there are yearly refresher exercises. It is reckoned that some 30 per cent of the budget is spent on defence (the actual figures are not published).

The principle of civilian predominance is carried to the point that no serving officer can stand for parliament (the Knesset). In other respects too the democratic institutions are built on the British model—responsibility of the Cabinet to the Knesset, procedure in the Knesset (including question time), also an independent judiciary, habeas corpus and similar legal safeguards for the individual. There is also a dash of continental influence in the semi-circular seating arrangement of the Knesset, and in electoral procedure. A point that is open to criticism is that legal decisions on the rights of citizens (particularly if they are Arabs) can somewhat easily be

[1] Report made before the Security Council, October 27, 1953.

set aside on grounds of military necessity,[1] while the Arab areas in the north are still under military government.

Democracy is something that evokes enthusiasm among Israelis, but—partly because of the seriousness with which they take it—it involves a large number of different parties, in proportion to the population. 'It is not surprising that numerous parties should arise. That they should be perpetuated is probably to be explained by the fundamental characteristics of the Jewish make-up. The inability to compromise is usually taken to be one of these characteristics; but just as important is the passion for having an ideological basis for social and political behaviour. . . . Members of parties—like Mr Gladstone—seem to speak as though they were God's agents.

'This craving for ideology explains in part another highly significant fact about Israeli parties—their all-pervasiveness. Parties cater for the whole man.'[2] They publish papers, organise health services and crèches for their members, and run communal settlements. This feature of Israel's parties is an outgrowth of the tradition established in Turkish times, when 'the Jewish communities had to provide for themselves the economic, educational and social services that the state normally provides.'[3]

The adherence to principle, and inability to compromise tend to the creation of a large number of parties, and this became inevitable when, for election purposes, the whole of Israel was taken as one electoral area. Members are elected on party lists, and any party can have a member as long as it can muster the requisite number of votes in the country as a whole (for the third Knesset 7,300).

Mapai, Ben-Gurion's party, is the largest, with socialist aims of building a welfare state. The elections of 1955 gave Mapai 40 seats (out of 120), with Herut as the next biggest and leading opposition party. Herut is the party once called Revisionist, demanding a Jewish state in the whole of Palestine, including Transjordan. The

[1] For example, the Military Governor of the Beersheba area, enforced the movement of the es-Sani tribe from El Lagiya, despite the provisional judgment of the courts against him, taken there by the chief of the tribe. (Hutchison, p. 33.)

[2] A. Hadwin: *Politics in Israel* (Anglo-Israel Association, 1956), p. 10.

[3] Ibid. The religious question as such, i.e. the claim expressed by the religious parties that the Jewish Law (for instance regarding the Sabbath) should be fully applied in Israel, emphasises this condition.

Irgun was the militant body of the Revisionists, and, after its suppression as a military force, Irgun founded Herut.

Mapai is closely linked with Histadruth. This combines the functions of an all-inclusive trade union almost monopolising the field of labour, Arab as well as Jewish, and of a corporation which organises the industrial life of Israel in every aspect where labour is concerned. It deals with wages, conditions, insurance schemes, development programmes including land-settlement, and recruitment for the various branches of industry. Histadruth, with its banks, savings societies, life insurance company, sick fund (for half the population), schools and kindergartens (several hundred), theatres, publishing houses and sports clubs, its building company, its factories producing glass, bricks, soap and other products, its marketing, retail and agricultural co-operatives and its communal settlements, is almost a state within the state. 'Half the population has all its physical and cultural needs, from the cradle to the grave, provided by the General Federation of Labour. . . . Histadruth is both a trade union and the greatest single capitalist employer in Israel. Its members embrace 75 per cent of all wage-earners who, with their dependants, represent more than half the country's total population, and the absolute majority of the electorate.'[1] It is evident what a powerful basis this organisation provides for the political position of Ben-Gurion.

The 'Law of the Return' gives every Jew the constitutional right to live in Israel. Few have come out of pure Zionist convictions, like Ben-Gurion—perhaps 5,000 or so[2]—most have come because they were forced out of their homes by government action or local feeling stirred up by the Arab-Israeli war. As tens of thousands of Jews poured out from Iraq, the Yemen and North Africa (more recently from Egypt, since 'Suez') the futility has been exposed of the British Government's qualifications which it wrote into the Balfour Declaration—viewing with favour the establishment of a National Home for the Jewish people in Palestine, 'it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious

[1] A. Koestler: *Promise and Fulfilment* (Macmillan, 1948), p. 291. These figures have changed since the passage was written.
[2] B. Litvinoff: *Ben-Gurion of Israel* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1954), p. 10.

rights of other non-Jewish communities in Palestine, *or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country.*' The worthlessness of both pledges has been demonstrated equally by the flood of Arab refugees from Israel, and the other flood of Jewish refugees from the Arab lands—which for previous centuries had given them peaceful refuge from the intolerance of 'Christian' Europe.

This 'ingathering of the exiles' brought about a doubling of the Jewish population in the first two and a half years since independence and the process has continued since though at a slackening tempo.[1] The first big immigration came from the survivors of the concentration and Displaced Persons camps in Germany and Central Europe, when some 350,000 from Europe were absorbed. But from 1950 the greater part were Oriental immigrants from the Yemen, Iraq, Syria and latterly North Africa. Over 300,000 have come from those countries where living was made precarious because of the new Arab hostility.

The ultimate aim is to raise the Jewish population to five million,[2] but the economic difficulties in the way are enormous. The attempt was made in 1957 to raise the immigration figures to 100,000 but in the event only 89,000 were brought in (a considerable advance over the 1956 figure of 55,000, though this was itself a big increase over the figures for the preceding years).[3]

To settle each immigrant and immigrant family so that (if age and health permit) they quickly become productive, costs about £1,000 per person[4] or £3,000 per family. The cost of a large-scale housing and agricultural programme, like 'Operation Lachish,' involving the building of 40 villages and the irrigation and reclamation of 170,000 acres of land, was reckoned at some £30 million.[5] The proliferation of little white houses throughout the cultivable areas (which have been more than doubled) is impressive, as is the expansion of Tel Aviv and other towns, and the laying of large-bore pipe-

[1] The Jewish population has increased altogether two and a half times in 10 years. In May 1957, the figure was 1,872,000 (at the end of the Mandate 665,000).

[2] Mr Shimon Perez, Director-General of Ministry of Defence (*The Times*, May 6, 1957).

[3] 1955 36,000, double the 1954 figure.

[4] Litvinoff gives a figure of £900 in 1954.

[5] L. F. Rushbrook Williams: *The State of Israel* (Faber, 1957), p. 83.

lines from the Jordan in the north and from the Yarkon to irrigate the Negev. A new road and oil pipeline have been built to Eilat on the Gulf of Akaba, and Eilat itself has something of the air of a boom town—although the Gulf has not yet been permanently opened to Israeli shipping. The harbour at Tel Aviv has been developed, industries have been started, forests planted, schools and training establishments (notably for agriculture) have been opened. Oil has been struck in the Negev,[1] cotton and other new crops have been introduced.

Economic capacity has never been the criterion for setting immigration figures. Yet Israel has had to cut her coat to suit her cloth in this respect, to some extent. Immigration was reduced because of financial stringency in the early 'fifties, when bankruptcy was only staved off through vigorous controls of investment and consumption, and by the success of the drive initiated by Ben-Gurion in America to raise $500 million in bonds and make good the deficit in financing the immigration and development programme of the following years.

Even with a considerable dose of austerity, the gap between imports and exports could not be closed—though thanks to controls and some increase of productivity, the gap was reduced in 1954 to $208 million from the figure of $333 million in 1951. But it rose again to $252 million in 1955 and in 1956 was up to the $300 million mark.[2] Austerity as a policy has its limitations in Israel, because the workers and professional people of European origin or background cling to a European (in fact a West European) standard of living, the demand for which is enhanced by the Welfare State theories of Ben-Gurion's party, Mapai, and of Histadruth. This theory has been translated into practice in part by linking wages to the cost of living. In 1955 *per capita* income was reckoned at $520—rather more than in Holland, rather less than in France.[3] Despite this level, people have a struggle, though working hard, to maintain what they con-

[1] The Heletz oilfield was producing 5%-6% of Israel's needs in 1957 (*Middle East Economic & Financial Service,* August 1957). The rate of production was about 80,000 tons per year. (*Petroleum Press Service,* September 1957.)

[2] O. Remba in *Commentary*. November 1956. *Economist,* January 5, 1957.

[3] Rushbrook Williams, p. 112.

sider a reasonable standard of living. Because of this, and the uncertainty of future improvement, eight per cent of the new immigrants have gone elsewhere,[1] and many others would leave too if there were countries ready to receive them, and if the government abandoned its policy of restricting emigration.

The wage-freeze, such as it was, was broken in 1956, partly by a strike of the white-collar unions, but ultimately by a change in policy on the part of Histadruth and Mapai. This coincided with a fall of exports, and was followed in 1956 and 1957 by further blows at the economy in the form of American sanctions to oblige Israel's withdrawal from the Gaza strip and the areas occupied in the invasion of Sinai (these cost Israel $46 million, with a further loss of around $37 million due to the increase in the price of oil).[2] Since then access to oil has itself begun to be a problem, for on top of the refusal of Iraq to let oil flow along the pipe-line to Haifa—a refusal which has been maintained since the end of the Mandate—the National Iranian Oil Company has refused to sell oil, after an initial shipment to Eilat. Increasing difficulties have led the American and British oil companies, of which the last was Shell (1957), to dispose of their marketing organisations in Israel.

Capital has been generously flowing into Israel, but some of it, instead of going into development schemes, has merely buttressed the standard of living. Of this capital, the German reparations agreement to give Israel $822 million worth of goods and services is due to be fulfilled by 1965-7. American governmental agencies had given over $400 million by the end of 1955, with an equivalent sum from gifts and loans by associations, firms and private individuals. But the American grant-in-aid which ran for several years at $70 million has since been reduced.

Despite these infusions of capital, a fairly rapid inflation of the currency has been taking place. The cost of living in September 1957 was about 270, compared with the base of September 1951 (=100).[3] The cost of production, already high by world standards, is constantly rising, which makes it extremely difficult for Israeli exports

[1] Ibid, p. 106.
[2] *Economist*, February 23, 1957, p. 649.
[3] *Petroleum Press Service*, September 1957.

to compete with those of other countries on the world market.

The prospects of Israel becoming self-supporting in the foreseeable future seemed remote in 1958. The *Economist* reported that 'ambitious new projects have proved both very expensive and poor dollar earners.'[1] Unless a major change took place in the relations between Israel and her neighbours, it was difficult to see how much progress in this direction could be made. The Arab boycott was costing the country $40 million annually (for instance in heavier expenses for importing oil), and, until this ended, the natural area for Israel's market, in the Middle East, was virtually closed.

Perhaps the main object of Israel's foreign policy has been to bring about peace with the Arab States, with the resulting advantages of normal trade relations and a reduction of the annual expenditure on defence. Immediately after the Arab-Israeli war some settlement more permanent than the series of armistices might have been possible, but neither America nor Britain had the will—and possibly not the means—to compel or cajole the belligerents to make a settlement. The Arab states were at cross-purposes on the point. Jordan might have been ready to make a peace, but Egyptian opposition (enhanced by her influence both within Jordan and other Arab countries) nullified this possibility.

Israel's relations with Egypt were embittered after Farouk abdicated, and Neguib became head of the State. Ben-Gurion held out a hand and declared his earnest wish to make peace. The offer was rudely rebuffed; trouble flared up time and again, particularly over the demilitarised area of Auja and over the Egyptian action in maintaining a strict blockade of Israel by sea in spite of the armistice. Ships carrying innocent cargoes, such as meat or petrol, through the Suez Canal with an Israeli destination, actual or suspected, were held up, as were ships seeking to pass through the Gulf of Akaba to Eilat, though it was an international waterway. A resolution of the Security Council condemned the Egyptian action as a violation of international law, but Britain, who (as the power occupying the Canal Zone) was in a position to take action in support of the United Nations, refused to do so. The organisation by Egypt of fedayeen raids from the Gaza strip and the Sinai border encouraged

[1] *Economist*, June 1957, p. 1116.

Ben-Gurion to try direct action again, and on February 28, 1955, a large-scale reprisal raid was organised in which 38 Egyptians were killed and one-third of Gaza's water-supply was blown up.

Nasser has stated that this was the occasion which impelled him to consider turning to Russia for arms, so breaking the arms rationing system imposed by the Tripartite Agreement of 1950 (America, Britain and France), whose object was to keep a rough equality of arms as between Israel and the Arab states. This may have been a question of timing more than a new decision—it is unlikely that the Arab states had not already considered going to Russia if they were unable to build up a preponderance of arms by obtaining them from the West. In any case once this new development had begun, tension was bound to increase, and Israel followed the same policy as before in dealing with it. It was only a step from the punitive raid on Gaza of February 1955 to the preventive war in Sinai of October 1956.

The settled Arabs within Israel are mostly well-treated, and today their housing, hygiene, farming methods (and hence productivity and income) have considerably improved. There are many Israelis who are sympathetic to and understanding of the Arabs both inside and outside Israel, either because they are cultivated, liberal-minded people, or because they are Jews whose families have previously lived for generations in the Arab lands. But to the Arabs, at least those outside its borders, Israel is still an alien element, of the same species as the 'Western imperialists', who has conquered a portion of their land. The frustration of the Arabs living in Israel is expressed in voting Communist—for instance Nazareth is a solid Arab enclave in Israel, whose City Council is almost entirely Communist.

Little progress has been made with the repatriation or resettlement of the Arab refugees, whose numbers, increased by a heavy birthrate in the camps, are estimated now at over 800,000. Israel ignored the U.N. resolution of December 11, 1948, that she should accept back those refugees who wished to return to their homes, and instead the United Nations voted considerable sums for their relief.

'The Voice of Egypt' and other similar propaganda has distorted or exaggerated *ad infinitum* the attitude which Israelis in general have had towards the Arabs. Yet right from the beginning

of Zionist colonisation there has been a determination to stand without compromise for their own attitude and way of life as marks differentiating them absolutely from their Arab neighbours. 'The Jews made no effort to bring European culture to the Arab masses, nor to adapt themselves to those aspects of oriental life which would have enriched their own cultural pattern and at the same time made them appear less provocatively alien to the country. . . . Their dress, food, manners and general way of life were transplanted like a prefabricated pattern from their lands of origin. Some of these were improvements in the country's way of life; others unfitting and in bad taste. There was no cultural symbiosis between the two races. The Jews came as conquerors. . . . Nevertheless, had they shown a little more discretion and less self-righteousness, more adaptability and a broader interpretation of their pioneer mission—the effort, even if rejected, even if ultimately hopeless, would have made a great difference, particularly for the later internal development of the State of Israel. For the narrow and self-satisfied cultural isolationism with which Israel became imbued during this period of prenatal conditioning has left a strong mark on its character and spirit.'[1]

Israel has drifted not only into cultural isolation but political isolation too. After the brief moment when both Russian and American support brought the new state to birth, Israel has been abandoned by the one and (through the Sinai invasion) has come near being estranged from the other. The attempt of Sharrett as Foreign Minister to woo Russia and then embark on a neutralist course, moderately favourable to Russia, produced few gains except for the selling of Russian or satellite oil to Israel at somewhat high prices. In 1953 Israel's diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union were broken off, because of extreme irritation provoked by an anti-Zionist and anti-Jewish campaign carried out there and in the satellites. When the campaign was stopped after Stalin's death, relations were renewed. But finally Russia jumped firmly down on the Arab side of the fence, with the shipments of arms to Egypt and

[1] Koestler, pp. 34-35. The positive side of Israeli culture has been in large part the fruit of the revival of Hebrew as a living language. Israelis are indebted for this to Ben Yehuda, whose son is now completing the last volume of his massive dictionary.

Syria, and with a large-scale propaganda campaign to win the Arab world.

At the same time Israel could not be included by the Western powers in the negotiations leading to the Baghdad Pact. Her only friend is France, and it is questionable whether relations with her will, in the long run, bring more good than ill. Israel's isolation is almost complete, and if America, swayed by oil interests and strategic needs rather than by sentiment, abandons her protégé, the future of the young state will look bleak indeed.

(e) Jordan

THE COMPLEMENT OF ISRAEL, at the end of the Arab-Israeli War, was Jordan. Israel was largely maintained by America (both public and private agencies), Jordan by Britain, and in part by America too. In 1958 the British share of keeping Jordan (meeting between a half and a third of her deficit) devolved on America.

Of the 850,000 refugees[1] from Israel (now amounting to something like one million due to natural increase) over half fled to Jordan. The vast majority are not gainfully employed, and are kept alive by such funds as are available to the United Nations Work and Relief Association (over half of which have come from America), at the cost of 6d. a head per day. Even without the refugees, which constitute two-thirds of its population, Jordan could scarcely have been viable as a modern state. As Transjordan, with a population of 700,000 at the time of the merger with the 'west bank' territories of Palestine, it could scarcely exist without British aid, certainly not with the apparatus of a modern state (the Arab Legion was entirely paid for by Britain).

Originally Transjordan was part of the Vilayet of Damascus in the Ottoman Empire, and was included in Palestine for the purposes of the Mandate until the Amir Abdullah entered it with a contingent of bedouin in 1921 on the way north to strike a blow against the French on behalf of his deposed brother Feisal. Churchill, then Colonial Secretary, and T. E. Lawrence, who were conferring at

[1] UNWRA established its basic census figure as 880,000 in 1951.

Cairo, agreed in consultation with the High Commissioner for Palestine, Sir Herbert Samuel, to suggest that Abdullah stay there as ruler rather than create further difficulties with the French. To the dismay of the Zionists the territory was detached from the rest of Palestine. It was earmarked to serve as a reserve for the resettlement of Arabs who might be crowded out by Jewish immigrants—a function for which, however, it did not in the event have the resources to fulfil.[1]

The British government granted £120,000 a year for paying the police force which already existed, on paper, under the command of Captain F. G. Peake, a former companion in arms of T. E. Lawrence. The police force was necessary to put down inter-tribal feuds and the raids of the bedouin, especially those of the fiercely puritanical Wahhabi fraternity, who were supporting Ibn Sa'ud in his campaigns to extend his realm throughout Arabia. The grant was the beginning of those sums which by 1956-57 had increased to £12½ million paid by Britain—replaced a year later by £14 million from America (besides £5 million from Sa'udi Arabia and £500,000 from Britain). In addition £7 million was contributed through UNWRA in 1957 to keep the refugees. Jordan had come to live on charity to the tune of more than £26½ million per year, of which £14½ million went on armaments.

While Abdullah was alive, or at least until the Arab-Israeli War of 1948, Transjordan was a contented principality, for which a small British subsidy (£2 million in 1948) and a handful of British officers and officials[2] were adequate to provide law and order. The bulk of the inhabitants were peasants and bedouin, the peasants confined to the strip of cultivable land, at the most 18 miles wide, running down the western frontier of the state for some 130 miles. Amman was scarcely more than an overgrown village, though its population had already increased to 40,000 in 1948 (now over 200,000 with the influx of refugees).

Having spent some of his formative years in the cosmopolitan atmosphere of Istanbul, Abdullah had a certain largeness of out-

[1] Kirkbride, p. 19.
[2] Six civilian officials in 1948.

look. Cultured and tolerant, with warm human sympathies, Abdullah governed his little state in benevolent patriarchal style. He accepted his dependence on Britain without reservations, and stalwartly maintained this attitude through good times and bad. He made sure of keeping a close understanding with his British officials and advisers.

Abdullah was assassinated on July 20, 1951, by a Palestinian, instigated by relatives of the ex-Mufti, Haj Amin el Husseini.[1] Abdullah's eldest son, Tallal, succeeded to the throne, but was obliged to abdicate a year later owing to a mental breakdown (August 11, 1952), and was replaced by his son Hussein. Hussein was not of age (18 by Moslem law) to exercise his powers, which were carried out by his uncle as regent, and even after his return from Sandhurst and his coming of age in April 1953, took little part in politics until the period of crises began in the autumn of 1954.

The merger with the west bank territories, together with the influx of refugees, more than doubled Jordan's population. Even without the unemployed refugees (and comparatively few, except the better-educated, have found work) the country was economically worse off than before, having lost its natural trade route through Haifa. Many of the former Palestinians—some 100,000—who still lived in their old homes, had however lost their lands or their markets or both, and most of the frontier villages had therefore become impoverished. One of these, Qalqilya, had before the Arab-Israeli War a population of 10,000 cultivating 50,000 dunams (12,000 acres). Its population increased to 18,000 through the influx of refugees, but it lost 43,000 dunams by the cease-fire line cutting them off from the fields, leaving only 7,000 dunams for the much bigger population.[2] Qattana had land carrying 300 cows and 3,500 sheep before the war. After the cease-fire it was able to keep only 17 cows and 300 sheep.[3] The catalogue could be continued. The unemployed in the frontier villages and the far larger number of completely destitute refugees continued to cherish the hope—encour-

[1] Glubb, p. 280.
[2] A. Z. Gardiner, Politico-economic Adviser for Near Eastern, South Asian and African Affairs, before a sub-committee of the U.S. Senate, May 20, 1953 (U.S. Government Printing Office, 1953), p. 6.
[3] Lias, p. 207.

aged by their political leaders—that one day they would be able to return to their homes and lands in Palestine, in accordance with resolution 194 of the General Assembly of the United Nations (December 11, 1948), that refugees should be offered by Israel the choice of returning to their homes or of being paid suitable compensation for their losses.

The refugees and the frontier villages had plenty of grievances and bitterness, but the leading element opposed to the régime was drawn from the well-educated and better-off Palestinians, men who were strongly nationalist, sometimes communist, and with little attachment to their traditional faith. Some of these formed the Communist Party as an underground movement, and the left-wing republican Ba'ath Party. The Ba'ath was connected with the party of the same name in Syria, and aimed at the union of Jordan with Syria and Egypt. Since both communists and Ba'athis were illegal and suffered from the same restrictions, they made common cause. Despite repression and the imprisonment of some of its leaders, the Communist Party made headway through organising a Popular Front.[1] Another element in this opposition line-up was Sulaiman Nabulsi's National-Socialist Party.

The struggle was for the control of parliament, which had been declared the seat of power in September 1951, during King Tallal's brief reign (the cabinet was to be responsible to parliament, no longer to the king). The communists, led by Abdul Rahman Shgair, took advantage of the government's relaxing its repressive measures during the election period, October 1954, to incite mob violence. Encouraged by rhetoric and money, refugees were glad to seize the opportunity, and sympathising school-teachers were paid to bring their pupils out into the streets. Piles of rocks for ammunition had been prepared on the flat roofs of houses, and arrangements made to put up barricades. Although the riots on election day, October 16, 1954, were swiftly put down by the Arab Legion, the pattern was set for action which Egypt, Sa'udi Arabia and Syria were quick to take, in league with the growing opposition forces.

The government attempted to trim its sails to the wind by arranging a revision of the Anglo-Jordanian Treaty of 1948—the main

[1] Laqueur, pp. 124 seq.

target of the opposition—but this failed (November 1954). A new opportunity came a year later, when Celal Bayer, the President of Turkey, suggested while on a state visit to Amman, that Jordan should enter the recently negotiated Baghdad Pact. King Hussein and his government agreed to do so, and in this connection re-opened the question of revising the Anglo-Jordanian Treaty, while asking Britain to help in enlarging and further equipping the Arab Legion. General Templer, Chief of the Imperial General Staff, was sent out from London to negotiate the details (December 5, 1955).

At this point Egypt and Sa'udi Arabia stepped in, determined to prevent Jordan rallying to Iraq, the opposite pole of power among the Arab states. 'The Egyptian broadcasting stations, particularly "Voice of the Arabs", poured forth a stream of propaganda, incitement and abuse. The Egyptian newspapers, which arrived by air every day, carried heavy banner headlines with the same slogans. The Egyptian Embassy in Amman worked day and night, interviewing politicians, threatening and cajoling and distributing literature and propaganda. . . . The Sa'udi Embassy paid money freely to the Jordan newspapers, members of Parliament, agitators or anyone else from whom they hoped for help.'[1] A split developed in the cabinet between the west bank Ministers who were doubtful about entering the Baghdad Pact, and those who favoured this step. On December 14 the four west bank Ministers resigned and the government fell. General Templer returned to England, and the day after (December 15) riots began in the west bank territory, soon spreading to Amman.

After five days of rioting in the towns,[2] Hussein and those Ministers who stood by him gave way. Negotiations with Britain and those for entry into the Baghdad Pact were called off. Sulaiman Nabulsi, who had been imprisoned, was released, and began organising a 'National Committee' at Jerusalem to carry through the opposition policy. This policy was put constantly to the king by Major Ali abu Nuwar, whom he had recalled from Paris (where Glubb had sent

[1] Glubb, 394.

[2] British and American property was destroyed, as was the model farm near Jericho initiated by Musa el-Alami.

him as military attaché to keep him out of the way). Nuwar became his chief A.D.C. and confidant.

For somewhat over a year, Hussein tried to ride the whirlwind by following the course set by the Ba'ath-communist bloc. On March 1, 1956, General Glubb and his two principal British assistants were dismissed and expelled at a few hours' notice. Ali abu Nuwar did not immediately take over his position, but waited for a decent interval of 12 weeks before Hussein made him commander of the Legion. At the elections in October 1956 Nabulsi's National-Socialist Party came out in the lead with 14 seats (against one in the previous parliament),[1] and in alliance with the National Front and Ba'ath members, and some independents, formed a strong group. Nabulsi became Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, with Rimawi, the Ba'ath leader, as Minister of State for Foreign Affairs. A week after the election the Anglo-French intervention at Port Said took place, which greatly strengthened the hand of the Nabulsi cabinet in pursuing its policy of 'positive neutrality'.

A joint command was established with Egypt, Syria and Sa'udi Arabia, under General Hakim Amer of Egypt (October 25). This step had been encouraged by Israeli reprisal raids during an extremely troubled period on the border (in the raid of October 10-11 two infantry regiments supported by armour and artillery demolished the fortified police station at Qalqiya, killing 48 Jordanians for the loss of 18 Israelis). Though Jordan did not intervene against Israel during the latter's invasion of Sinai, Sa'udi and Syrian troops took up positions inside its borders, ostensibly to help defend it against Israel.

The promulgation of the Eisenhower Doctrine on January 5, 1957 (ratified by Congress in March), was countered by a new outburst of anti-British and anti-American rioting, in the course of which one of the British officers of the Legion was stoned and shot by a mob at Zerqa, and the American Baptist Mission Hospital at Ajloun in northern Jordan was looted and burned down. On the assurance of Egypt, Syria and Sa'udi Arabia that they would replace the British subsidy, the Nabulsi cabinet called for the ending of the

[1] Total seats 40.

Anglo-Jordanian Treaty, and this was duly negotiated (March 1957). British troops were to be withdrawn in six months.

Meanwhile King Hussein began to have doubts as to the wisdom of the course which was being pursued, and tried to take action independently of his cabinet, for instance by proposing a meeting of heads of the Arab states at Amman. Nabulsi objected to these proceedings, and parried Hussein's warnings against the danger of communist infiltration in the guise of nationalism. Nabulsi was insistent on establishing diplomatic relations with Soviet Russia on ambassador level; Hussein wanted them only on the *chargé d'affaires* level. Hussein wanted to accept American aid; Nabulsi was opposed to it. Finally Nabulsi wished to dismiss 20 pro-Hussein senior officials.

On April 10 Hussein dismissed Nabulsi, only to be threatened by a military coup organised by his new commander-in-chief, Ali abu Nuwar. With the radio and press campaign from Egypt and Syria at its height, Hussein was in imminent danger of being toppled from his throne, if not killed. But the loyalty of the bedouin units to the throne saved the situation for him. On the night of April 13 fighting broke out between loyal and mutinous units of the Legion at Zerqa, the main depot, 14 miles from Amman. Hussein immediately drove there, with Ali abu Nuwar in his car, and was met *en route* by one of the bedouin units who greeted him with acclaim. At Zerqa he personally intervened to stop the fighting. Ali abu Nuwar was sent next day into exile.

Two days later a virulent Egyptian and Syrian radio campaign, and much activity by their (and the Sa'udi) agents, culminated in the threat of a general strike and rioting unless the king dismissed certain palace officials and suspended the courts of inquiry which had been set up to purge the army officers. But Hussein called in the bedouin units to control all movement in Amman and Jerusalem, and declared martial law. He ordered the arrest of some 200 opponents (or suspected opponents) of his régime, among them Sulaiman Nabulsi. Others, like Rimawi, fled to Damascus.

Though Hussein did not invoke American aid, the Eisenhower Doctrine was virtually applied. On April 25 the U.S. Sixth Fleet moved at short notice from France and Italy to the Eastern Mediter-

ranean. The 60,000-ton aircraft carrier *Forrestal*, the heavy cruisers *Salem* and *Des Moines*, and the battleship *Wisconsin* and 12 other vessels carried out manoeuvres in the open sea near Beirut harbour. The U.S. Secretary of the Army, Brucker, stated that troops could be parachuted into Jordan 'in a matter of days'. As further proof of its sincerity the American government made a $10 million grant to Jordan (April 29).

Meanwhile Hussein flew to Riyadh (April 28) to confer with King Sa'ud, in order to challenge—successfully—the attempt of President Quwwatly and an Egyptian delegation two days before to line Sa'ud up with their plan for bringing him 'back to the Arab fold'. While Egypt and Syria refused to honour their promise of paying a regular subsidy to Jordan, Sa'ud punctually performed his, and further showed his solidarity with Hussein by a week's visit to Jordan in June. American concern was further underlined by her spectacular flying in to Jordan of anti-tank guns and other weapons (September 9) though the motive for the operation was not any sudden need on the part of Jordan, but American reaction to the build-up of Soviet arms in Syria.[1]

Four months later a new situation was created by the proclamation of the United Arab Republic. As a riposte to this, Hussein and his cousin Feisal of Iraq drew together to proclaim the Arab Federation (of their two countries) on February 14, 1958. Hussein was to be Deputy Head of State to Feisal; the parliaments of the two countries were to be merged, but there would be regional autonomy except for non-federal matters. How far federal policy would override regional decisions was not clear—how far the merger was fact as well as form. The revolution five months later in Iraq in any case nullified the whole scheme.

Deprived of his Iraqi ally, and with virtually only his bedouin troops left to rely on, Hussein's position was badly undermined. Infiltration of hostile elements from Syria, plots—real or imagined—among the officers, and the exhortations of Cairo Radio for his removal as a tyrant and imperialist lackey impelled him to the step

[1] The action was taken shortly after the return to Washington of Loy Henderson, Deputy Under-Secretary of State, who had gone on a mission of investigation to Istanbul, where he met Turkish leaders and the kings of Jordan and Iraq. He also visited Beirut.

of asking for British intervention. Following the lead of the Americans in sending troops into Lebanon, the British Government ordered a parachute brigade to be flown from Cyprus to Amman (July 17, 1958). Too many of the potential opposition in Jordan had been locked up for this to provoke much of a hostile response among the people, but Britain's action seemed to promise little more than a brief respite for the hard-pressed ruler and his precarious state.

Chapter Nine

IRAQ

(a) Crisis and Opportunity

OF THE COUNTRIES OF THE MIDDLE EAST, Iraq shares with the Sudan the brightest prospects of long-term material progress. Iraq has a relatively small population (five million) together with the potential for large-scale agricultural development and the finance with which to undertake it. Though industry, apart from the oil industry and building construction, is embryonic, secondary industries of many kinds are likely to flourish as the standard of living rises (the textile and clothing industries employ almost as many workers as the oil industry).[1] Iraq's first major flood-control and irrigation projects have been completed, and these, along with the equally important drainage schemes, are opening large new areas for cultivation. More peasants to work this land will be needed, but a sizable labour force is already being employed on a further instalment of development projects, while the building programmes in the cities—hospitals, schools, bridges, and now workers' housing estates, not to mention the large amount of private building—attract an increasing number of peasants from the country districts to serve as unskilled labour.

Their lot on the land has been for the most part hard, landlords and moneylenders taking anything up to three-quarters of their often meagre crops, and their living conditions have been squalid. Even though they may have to live in the insanitary shanty-suburbs and city slums, the pay is better and living conditions little (if at all) worse than those to which they have been accustomed. Sheikhs,

[1] 11,500 in the oil industry, rather less in textiles and clothing: *Middle East Affairs*, April 1956. A 1958 estimate was 15,000 in the oil industry, 27,000 in other forms of industry.

whose peasants (their status not far removed from serfs) are decamping to the towns,[1] are beginning to feel the pinch and may have to find a more modern relationship with their peasants and be ready to give better terms and conditions if they are to maintain adequate labour on their lands. With untended acres on their hands they are likely to find themselves the target for the land-reforming zeal of the military government at Baghdad.

Meanwhile the social and political structure of the country groans and cracks as it is submitted to stresses as severe as any that have afflicted peoples elsewhere. Part of the trouble is that Iraq is not a homogeneous nation like Egypt, but is a patchwork of diverse and often mutually hostile elements. Town dwellers and tribes, some nomadic but mostly settled; non-Arab Kurds in the north and 'Marsh Arabs' in the south; and a number of minorities such as Christians, Jews, Yezidis and Assyrians. Even within themselves the communities are deeply divided—Sh'ia (the majority) against Sunni Moslems, Sheikhs-turned-landowners against their peasants, the educated few against the illiterate masses; sometimes soldiers against politicians.

(b) Mandate, Independence and War

THE STORY OF IRAQ has been one of flux and storm. A stagnant and backward province of the Turkish Empire, it was liberated during the First World War after costly campaigns by British and Indian troops, in the course of which an entire army was captured by Khalil Pasha at Kut. With the collapse of Turkey in 1918 the country was occupied up to and including Mosul.

A make-shift (but reasonably efficient) British war-time administration was built up by Sir Percy Cox, the Chief Political Officer of the Expeditionary Force (subsequently Civil Commissioner) and his indefatigable assistant, Colonel (later Sir Arnold) Wilson. Composed mainly of young army officers, with a core of British civil servants from India and a fairly large Indian staff, it introduced into Iraq

[1] 'The rural exodus is now proceeding at the rate of 10 lorry loads a day for Baghdad. This movement has already weakened the authority of the Sheikhs and reduced their incomes.'—D. Warriner: *Land Reform and Development in the Middle East* (R.I.I.A. 1957), p. 153.

the framework of a modern state. The Shi'a holy cities of Karbala and Najf were centres of constant intrigue, run by a corrupt oligarchy preoccupied with making money off pilgrims. The loyalty of the Shi'as was towards Shi'a Persia rather than Iraq. The Kurds in the north, though Sunni Moslems, despised and hated the Arabs, whom they regarded as an inferior race. The bedouin of the desert lived by raiding farmers and shepherds, and owed allegiance to none save their tribal leaders. Other minority groups, Christians and Jews, mistrusted each other and the Moslems. Poor roads over long distances lessened the chances of unity. Mosul in the north, 220 miles from Baghdad, had no natural links with the capital. It was only incorporated in Iraq after lengthy military and diplomatic struggles with Turkey.

As early as 1920 Britain was obliged to begin relaxing her grip on the country. The expense of maintaining a civil service largely staffed by British officials except at the lowest levels, besides a large occupying force, was beyond Britain's means. Wilson stood out for running Iraq as a colony, but the government at home decided to speed its progress towards independence. Though the first steps in that direction were announced in the middle of 1920, the people of Iraq had gained the impression that Wilson's policy would prevail. This, and the announcement that Britain had been granted the Mandate over Iraq, led to an extremely tense situation there, which the Iraqi officers, who had been serving with Feisal and Lawrence, were able to exploit. They were the more eager to raise the cry of independence for Iraq, since their own position at Damascus was beginning to look insecure as French aims in regard to Syria were revealed.

The revolt against British rule which they and the town intelligentsia stirred up amongst the tribes, in the summer of 1920, was put down with some casualties and considerable cost.[1] It was an unnecessary and embittering episode, since the decision had already been made to move ahead towards the transfer of power: a policy which became effective when Cox relieved Wilson in October 1920. With an able group of officials to assist him, among them Gertrude Bell as his Oriental Secretary, he began the work of building rapidly

[1] £40 million.—S. H. Longrigg: *Iraq 1900 to 1950* (O.U.P., 1953), p. 123.

an Iraqi administration and creating a constitution on the British model—constitutional monarchy and parliamentary democracy.

In setting up a monarch in Iraq the British government was able to salve its conscience over Feisal, their protégé as ruler of Syria, whom the French had dispossessed. Feisal's candidature for the throne of Iraq was canvassed by his Iraqi followers and the British administration. Together they secured a measure of support for him, and a well-staged welcome on his arrival.

The choice was a happy one. With considerable diplomatic skill and powers of leadership, Feisal steered the country through the first difficult years, balancing nicely his grateful dependence on Britain with loyalty to his Iraqi henchmen. On the one occasion when he failed to reconcile Iraqi nationalism and British interests, at the time of the treaty negotiations of 1922, he was saved from an impossible situation by a providential attack of appendicitis. While he was recovering Sir Percy Cox pushed the necessary legislation through, and from then until his untimely death in 1933, Feisal presided over the infant state with distinction.

British interests—oil and communications—were secured by the treaties of 1922 and 1930. The treaty of 1930 led to the termination of the Mandate and the admittance of Iraq as a fully independent country to the League of Nations. Britain maintained her air bases at Shu'aiba and Habbaniya, 'on the understanding that the presence of those forces shall not constitute in any manner an occupation' (art. 5), and had full rights of using communications and of sending warships up the Shatt-el-Arab. In return she was to train the Iraqi forces, it being stipulated that these were to conform to the British pattern in methods and equipment.

For a short period, from 1920 onwards, Iraq was run on the colonial principle of indirect rule, with Sir Percy Cox as High Commissioner holding the reins, and the British Advisers in the various ministries and Inspectors in the provinces serving as the channels of his will. But power was speedily transferred from the High Commissioner to the King, from the Advisers to the Ministers, and from the Inspectors to the provincial governors.

Iraq's constitution, like the one which Egypt acquired at about the same time, was an artificial importation from the West. Only the

form was democratic. Though the King was in theory a constitutional monarch with strictly limited powers, his real power was great. There was a parliament, but elections, as elsewhere in the Middle East, were managed by the sheikhs and the government of the day, and the members always represented the interest of the 40 or 50 governing families. Politics was an affair of rival cliques of the ins and the outs, with the King (or the Regent) playing a considerable part. The Nuri regime was built on this unstable foundation.

As in most other Middle East countries, it is difficult to find any popular basis for a genuinely democratic regime. Great strides have been made in overcoming illiteracy, but the educated element, capable of taking more than a personal or local view of affairs, is a tiny minority. It is composed of the rising professional and middle class in the towns—the civil servants, lawyers, doctors, teachers, technicians, business men and officers. But since seats in the town are distributed in the same proportion to inhabitants as in the country districts, this élite can claim to be badly under-represented—Baghdad, Basra and Mosul have altogether only 20 deputies out of 135. In the country districts and especially in the central Amara area, the sheikhs are in control. They have been represented in the Chamber by a solid conservative block (30 sheikhs were returned in September 1954) whose aim was to stifle all progressive legislation. In consequence the frustration of the under-represented and often under-paid intelligentsia became acute, showing itself in extreme nationalist or left-wing parties.

In 1936 General Bekr Sidky seized power after turning out one of the most stable-looking governments which the country had enjoyed. Bekr had made a name for himself as the officer chiefly responsible for the massacre of a large number of the Assyrian minority—men, women and children—in 1933. (The Assyrians were, from the government point of view, a troublesome element, refugees from Turkey in World War I, and dangerous because of their martial qualities and contempt for the Arabs.) The Assyrians, or at least, their leader, the Mar Shamoun, had been provocative, but Sidky's methods, though they found favour in Iraqi eyes, caused perturbation abroad. At home the support which he had won initially from the progressive urban minority speedily ebbed away. Although he

did not interfere much with the day-to-day administration of the cabinet under Hikmat Sulayman, which took office after the *coup*, he continued the ban on the parties, and had his own nominees returned to parliament at the next election. He was implicated in further acts of murder and violence, while the drinking and low morals of himself and his associates forfeited the respect of the better elements.[1]

There was general relief when he was assassinated in his turn in August 1937, but the fairly stable period of the succeeding government was ended by intrigues among the officers culminating in the seizure of power by the four generals of the 'Golden Square' in April 1941. They set up as Prime Minister Rashid Aly el Gaylani, respected as a man of eminent family who had already held important posts, and who until then had been bent on following a neutral policy as between Britain and the Axis. But he now rode high on a wave of nationalism, inspired in part by the highly successful pan-Arab propaganda of Dr Sami Shawkat, the Minister of Education.[2] It was natural that—with Britain's fortunes in the World War at their lowest ebb, and the prestige of Nazi methods and aims at its height—the new régime was openly pro-Axis. The Regent, Amir Abd-al-Ilah,[3] faithful to the British connection, was forced to flee, smuggled out of Baghdad in the American Minister's car, and the British Air Force garrison at Habbaniya was attacked. German planes began to operate from Mosul airfield in support of the new government, and some arms were brought across Turkey by train. But the arrangements which the Axis were beginning to improvise for an airlift by way of Vichy-controlled Syria did not have time to mature, and in any case Hitler was reluctant to commit forces in the Middle East until he had dealt with Russia, where his campaign was shortly to open. The excellent work which the German Minister Grobba and the Italian Gabrieli had done for their countries at Baghdad came to nothing in the event of Hitler's war-time strategy. Habbaniya was saved by the small garrison and by the scratch force, including

[1] Longrigg, p. 253.
[2] M. Khadduri, *Independent Iraq* (O.U.P. for R.I.I.A., 1951), p. 160.
[3] A son of the Amir Zaid, Feisal I's brother, he became Regent for the four-year-old Feisal II, on the death of Feisal I's son, King Ghazi, in a car accident (April 1939). Feisal II came of age in May 1953.

a regiment of the Arab Legion, which was hurriedly despatched across the desert from Transjordan by the British, while another British and Indian force worked its way up from Basra.

Thereafter Iraq played its part in the communications system whereby British and American war-material was conveyed by way of Iran to Russia. During most of the time that this operation was proceeding General Nuri es-Said was in power (October 1941-June 1944). But the end of the war initiated a period of financial stringency, high inflation, hardships and real starvation for the masses (largely due to the cornering of grain by wealthy merchants), and low morale in political circles. The Russian Legation in Baghdad was the centre of communist propaganda and subversion, and its hand was seen in strikes at the oil-installations at Kirkuk (mid-1946) and at the port of Basra. The Russians were also playing a major part in Kurdish separatism, their influence being particularly strong in Sulamaniya, where the communist-front National Liberation Party had its headquarters.

There was a short-lived attempt by the Regent, at the end of 1945, to bring the political parties to a more realistic and democratic way of doing things. He called the senators and deputies together and appealed to them to help in the formation of parties with full freedom, for the strengthening of the parliamentary regime. But this came to nothing when Nuri quietly killed the moderately reformist Suwaidi ministry (May 1946).

An ideal situation for subversive activity existed, with large unemployment among the masses and frustration on the part of the intelligentsia, aggravated by conditions in which inflation had reduced their incomes by anything up to 75 per cent. Immorality and corruption seemed to be undermining the governing element, such as it was, and had made deep inroads into education: school discipline was disappearing and examinations were becoming a farce. The army was unpopular and service something to be avoided at all costs. In Palestine the army seemed incapable of offensive action,[1] while the whole Palestine *débacle* led to a further lowering

[1] Though in the circumstances it provided a valuable service to the Arab cause merely by holding a length of the frontier which it took over from the Arab Legion.

of morale. Alibi thinking and evasions of responsibility in ministerial circles for the country's problems—unrest, disease and floods—were the order of the day.

Schoolboys, students, the unemployed and the ill-paid workers could be brought out into the streets on the slightest pretexts, fired by nationalist or left-wing and anti-Western slogans. The large proportion of disgruntled intellectuals and insecure minorities[1] provided the bulk of the left-wing leadership, among whom there were a fair proportion of convinced communists.[2] The use of the mob by them —and equally by the right-wing extremists—reached its highest point in the riots of January 1948, in protest at the revision of the Anglo-Iraqi Treaty which had just been negotiated with Ernest Bevin at Portsmouth by Saleh Jabr and his Foreign Minister, Fadhil Jamali, supported by Nuri es-Said.[3]

Saleh Jabr was a leading Shi'a politician, too often divided from Nuri on personal grounds, though close to him in general outlook. The Government was overthrown by mob action on an unprecedented scale—strikes, rioting, demonstrations—which the police were powerless to check, and which indeed their early action by shooting did much to aggravate. During the ensuing days, as the disorders increased, the police were not backed up by their superiors or the army. Jabr and his colleagues, assuming all was well, had stayed on in London for a few days' holiday, but returning at this point found the situation beyond control.[4] They resigned and fled the capital, while the Regent, against whom the demonstrations had been in part directed, disavowed the treaty and installed a caretaker government.

Next year Nuri was back in power, and remained there until his assassination in 1958, with short intermissions by cabinets rather

[1] 130,000 Jews left for Israel in 1950-52 (20,000 remained). The Christians are some 150,000 strong.

[2] See Laqueur: *Communism and Nationalism in the Middle East*, Chapters 14, 15.

[3] The treaty was attacked because it linked Iraq with Britain in mutual defence arrangements, including the stationing of small British contingents at Habbaniya and Shu'aiba. Though the bases were to be handed to Iraq and the British personnel were to be under Iraqi command, British forces were to reoccupy them only in case of war. An Anglo-Iraqi council was to undertake the development of strategic plans, etc. (Longrigg, p. 344).

[4] About 50 people were killed, and between 100 and 200 injured on this occasion, among them many of the police themselves. (Longrigg, p. 345.)

more liberal in tone—those of Tawfiq-es-Suwaidi in 1949-50 (which included four of Nuri's supporters as well as his rival Saleh Jabr),[1] and of Fadhil Jamali (September 1953—June 1954). During the first of these the Development Board for utilising the swelling oil revenues was set up, while during the Jamali Ministry steps were taken towards taxing the landowners and dividing up the large estates, though in the event there was too little support to carry through these overdue reforms.

Although riots continued periodically thereafter, the turning-point in a material sense had been reached by 1951. The treasury was filling up with oil revenues (a 50-50 profit-sharing agreement was negotiated with the companies, along the lines of Aramco's with Sa'udi Arabia) and the financial crisis was over. As the money began to flow into the irrigation and building projects the demand for labour increased. By 1955 the intelligentsia were finding themselves in demand, with a shortage of graduates and technicians, even though 20,000 Palestinian refugees had helped to fill the gap.[2]

(c) Oil and Development

IRAQ'S OIL HAD BEEN EXPLOITED since 1926 by the group of companies then known as the Turkish Petroleum Company. Claiming implementation of a Turkish promise of a concession just before World War I, the T.P.C. (in which the French had taken over the German share) made an agreement with the Iraq Government in 1925, and after a year of exploratory work struck oil at Kirkuk in 1927. A year later the company was reorganised with American participation as the Iraq Petroleum Company:[3] Anglo-Iranian, Royal Dutch Shell, Compagnie Française des Pétroles and the American group (Near East Development Company) 23¾ per cent each, and the Gulbenkian interest 5 per cent. Soon the Kirkuk field showed itself one of the richest in the world. By 1958 production was running at the rate of 24 million tons a year, two-thirds of Iraq's total output.

[1] The last cabinet post which Jabr held—he died in June 1957.
[2] *International Journal*, Summer 1957 (article by F. C. Bagley), p. 202.
[3] See Chapter 4 (*b*). Anglo-Iranian is now British Petroleum.

Subsidiary companies of I.P.C. are the Mosul Petroleum Company, which has a concession of 40,000 square miles in the north producing a little over a million tons a year, and the Basrah Petroleum Company, which has about 100,000 square miles in the south (Zubair and Rumaila). Output from these fields, some eight million tons, is pumped to Fao on the Persian Gulf; another line is being considered to Kuwait, where the sea is deep enough for large tankers.

It is little use to produce oil unless it can be transported economically to the markets of the world. As soon as it was clear that Kirkuk was a major field, an agreement was made with the Iraq and neighbouring governments for the building of a double pipeline from Kirkuk to Haditha, whence one branch turned south-west across Transjordan and Palestine to Haifa and the other across Syria to Tripoli and the Lebanon. This great engineering feat, over a distance of some 1,200 miles, mostly desert, with pumping stations at intervals to propel the oil, was completed by 1934. A refinery was also built at Haifa to deal with crude oil for Europe, where refining facilities were then scarce.

The closing of the Mediterranean by Italy's entry into the Second World War in 1940 and the neutralisation of Syria under the Vichy Government caused the Tripoli terminal to be shut down, though deliveries on a reduced scale were continued through the southern branch to Haifa. However, after Allied forces had taken control in Syria in 1941 and the rising in Iraq had been quelled, production was raised to the capacity of both lines, although all but six wells at Kirkuk had been plugged.

After the war the capacity of the western lines was increased and a branch built to Banias in Syria—a useful counter to excessive demands for transit dues from the Lebanon. A refinery was also built at Tripoli to replace the Haifa plant, which was closed in 1948 as a result of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

The Government's revenue from oil has jumped from £5 million in 1950 to nearly £100 million in 1955. But this new-found wealth hangs by a thread—the long, fragile pipelines to the Mediterranean. Today the output is limited not by the capacity of the wells but by the risks of transportation. There has been trouble from the

Lebanon during the last two years when it has tried to 'squeeze' the I.P.C. for higher transit dues. In 1956-7 there was a loss of three-quarters of the oil revenue while the pipe-line across Syria was out of action owing to its having been sabotaged during the Suez crisis.

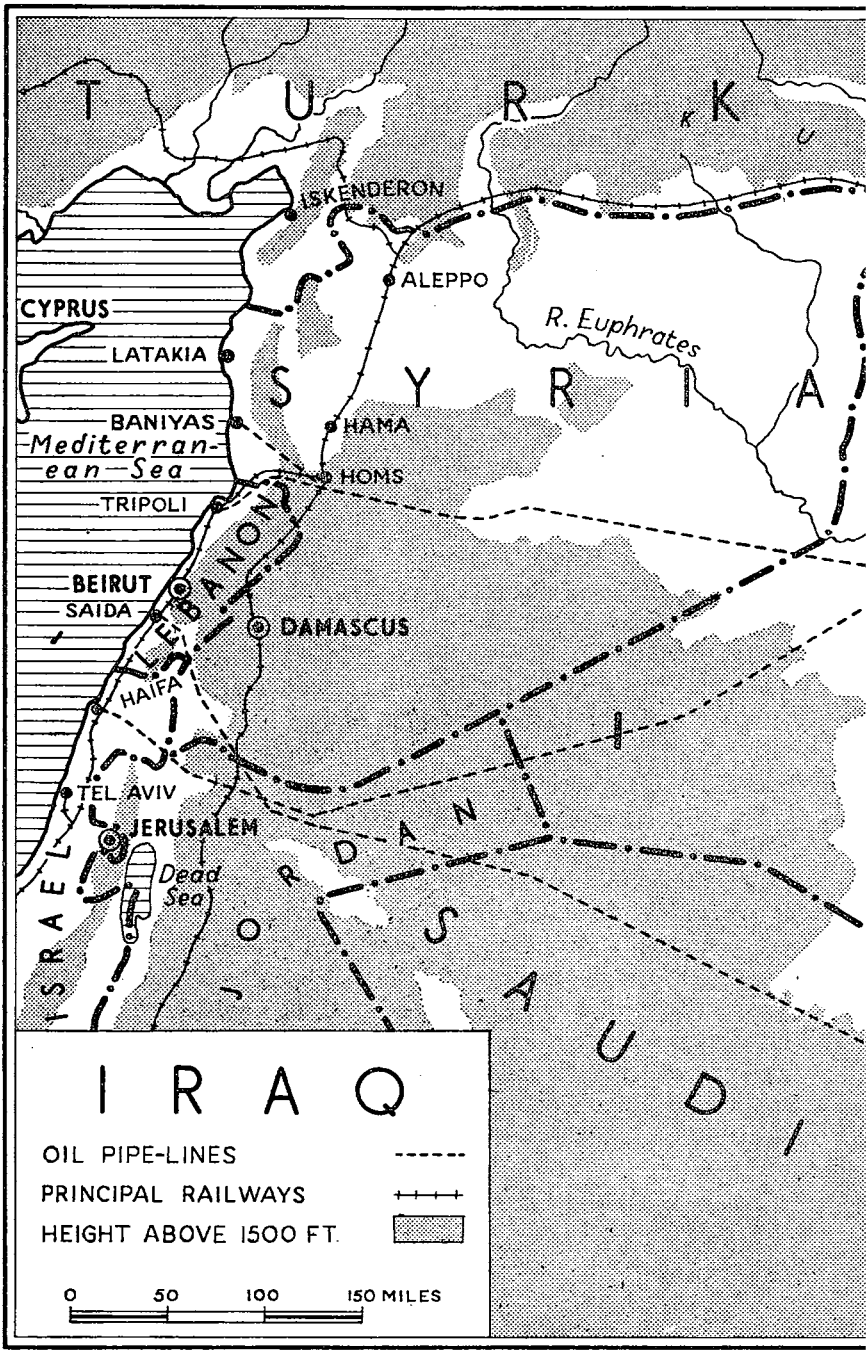
Although the flow through the pipelines was restored to normal by June 1958, the total share of Iraq in Middle East oil exports dropped from its figure of 20 per cent in 1956. Since the gap in its production was made up from other oil producing states, it may never recover its old place in oil exports unless production elsewhere is cut back.[1] However, until now the Company has been able to meet its commitments, providing rising revenues for the Iraq Government, up to £90 million in 1958.

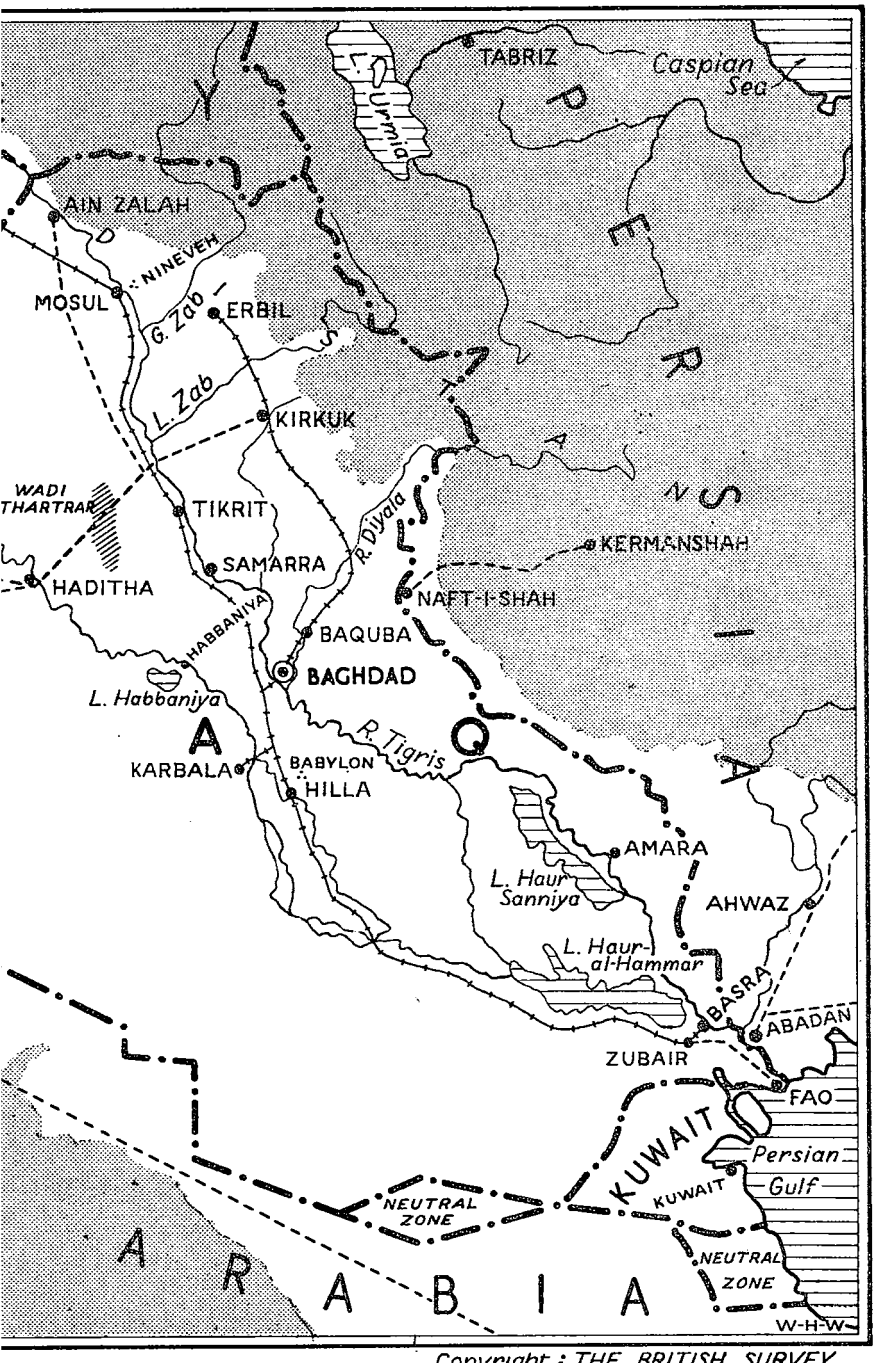
Of this considerable sum 70 per cent has gone into the account of the Development Board. The original intention was to divorce the Board from the rapid changes of government, and place it under a permanent Director. But this was altered in 1953, when the post changed hands, as it did again twice in the following year. In spite of this the blue-prints of the Board's committee of management—consisting until the summer of 1958 of five Iraqis, an American and an Englishman—have been carried through.[2] An able team of younger ministers such as the brilliant Oxford-educated economist Nadim el-Pachachi at the Ministry of Economics, directed the development at cabinet level.

By 1956 the first big projects (outlined half a century before by Sir William Willcocks for the Turkish government) had already been completed—the barrage at Samarra for diverting the Tigris flood-water into the immense Wadi Tharthar depression, and the Ramadi barrage for diverting the excess of the Euphrates into Lake Habbaniya. It is safe to say that the flood of 1954 which inundated a large part of Baghdad and the country round about, doing damage estimated at £36 million, will not recur again—when a similar flood threatened in 1957, two-thirds of the river went into the Wadi

[1] *Economist*, March 29, 1958.

[2] Xenophobia has not prevented the employment of other foreign technicians as needed, for instance an Englishman in charge of the Bridges and Highways Department, a Dutchman of Mining.


T U R K
ISKENDERON
ALEPPO
CYPRUS
LATAKIA
R. Euphrates
S Y R I A
BANIYAS
Mediterranean Sea
HAMA
HOMS
TRIPOLI
BEIRUT
SAIDA
LEBANON
DAMASCUS
HAIFA
TEL AVIV
JERUSALEM
Dead Sea
ISRAEL
JORDAN
SAUDI
IRAQ
OIL PIPE-LINES
PRINCIPAL RAILWAYS
HEIGHT ABOVE 1500 FT.
0 50 100 150 MILES



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Tharthar. The taming of the Euphrates was also demonstrated when the completion of the Ramadi barrage only 10 days before the flood was due in April 1956 prevented another disaster. Other works like the Dokan dam on the Little Zab, will complete the water-control arrangements, still further enlarge the already ample irrigated territory, and make possible hydro-electric development. Equally important are the drainage schemes, which will bring much of the marsh land into cultivation, thereby ending the picturesque culture of the Marsh Arabs. Elsewhere drainage will remove much of the salt which, seeping to the surface in the absence of proper drainage, has returned vast areas to desert.

These schemes have cost millions,[1] and a growing sum has been devoted to building hospitals, schools, bridges, roads, and more recently, housing. In 1954 Lord Salter was asked to survey the development programme as a whole, in order to adjust the phasing of its different sections in the light of long-term aims. His report stressed the need for moving from an engineer's approach, designed to provide more of the basic material elements (land, water and power), to one paying more attention to the human factor. 'A survey indicates only what land could be developed if there were the settlers, properly equipped with knowledge and all they need for success, to cultivate it. It may provide an engineer's plan to make enough land cultivable to support a population of 20 millions. But the total population of Iraq is, in fact, only a little over five millions. Neither natural increase, nor any probable and permitted immigration, will even double that number for many years to come. The engineer makes a plan for developing the land. But Iraq's task is to develop a nation. The land exists for man, not man for the land.'[2]

Lord Salter's advice was largely taken. The programme for workers' housing was revised upwards, being quadrupled to £24 million in 1955,[3] and two years later the foundation stone of the first low-cost workers' estate was laid at Baghdad. One suggestion was

[1] Though only one-third of its total revenue was spent by the Board during its first four-year period. (Warrinder, p. 128.)
[2] *The Development of Iraq:* a plan of action (London, Caxton, for Iraq Development Board, 1955), p. 49.
[3] *Economist,* April 28, 1955.

that more Iraqis should be given higher education and technical training abroad. (The project of uniting the various academic institutions at Baghdad into a university is also on the point of being realised.) But still more needs to be done—and it is a question of morale as well as of training—if the men are to be forthcoming to staff the hospitals away from the main cities, and take on other important if less desirable posts, and so carry out the reforms, for instance in health matters, which are urgently needed.

Another conclusion of the Salter Report is difficult to apply, that land reform and other measures should be undertaken in order to increase the efficiency of the cultivators, which also means improving their lot. The main need is not more land, but better farming, and this can only be attained if the privileges of the more oppressive, feudal type of landowner are curtailed, and more peasants given ownership, or tenancies on better terms, of their farms. On the present system a peasant cultivating pump-irrigated land can scarcely produce more than £100 worth of produce in a year, and this he will have to divide with the landlord, leaving him around £50, of which a good deal will already have gone in advances.[1] In the south the landlord's share is even higher, between 66 per cent and 75 per cent. Though rents are lower on lands of dry-farming, the peasants are little better off, except in the Kurdish districts.[2]

Attempts to settle peasants as owners of the vast tracts which are still legally state-land have proved difficult to carry out, since the tribal sheikhs or their bailiffs (sirkals), or village headmen, have all too often succeeded in obtaining the title of such land—though formerly it was occupied and worked by the tribe or village as a whole. If the powers of government were strong in an area where land-registration was proceeding, the peasants might be given a good start with holdings, or their equivalent, which they could claim to have been cultivating for 10 or 15 years. Otherwise the claims of the cultivators could go unheard or unenforced by the government, in

[1] 'The same peasant moving from the land can earn over £100 per annum, not including what other members of the family may also earn.' E. A. Kinch: *Social Effects of the Oil Industry in Iraq* (International Labour Review, I.L.O., March 1957. p. 193).

[2] Warriner, p. 138.

the face of pressure by the sheikhs on their 'people', which has gone as far as turning them out or threatening to do so if they showed themselves persistent.[1]

The representatives of these sheikhs in parliament formed the backbone of Nuri's Constitutional Union Party, and he could not go far with policies which displeased them without forfeiting essential support. He left the land-tax virtually non-existent: the landowners enjoyed the increased land-values resulting from flood-control and irrigation schemes without paying anything back to the state in return.

Until the revolt of July 1958, Nuri succeeded in keeping control of the apparatus of government, though his régime came near to toppling as a result of the riots during the Suez crisis (November 1956), which the police only just managed to keep in hand. Full employment and rising wages made it less easy to bring men out into the streets who would lose a day's pay and risk trouble with the police—whose morale was in any case improved. Prospects of good posts in an expanding economy for qualified men encouraged students to take their studies seriously rather than lend themselves to political agitation (though the reverse side of the medal was the discontent among civil servants and technicians at the bungling that was going on—largely inevitable in a rapidly growing economy short of trained men at all levels, but aggravated by Nuri's lack of interest in administrative matters). This discontent was not offset by the belated rises in the pay of civil servants. On the credit side of the régime, people began to recognise the gains from the Development Board's plan, and Development Week, first staged in April 1954, became a successful annual event in publicising the fact that—contrary to bazaar gossip—oil revenues did not simply go into the pockets of the rich.

The arrest of communist leaders in 1947 and the execution of five of them two years later, together with the mass arrests of 1949, seemed only to have a temporary effect. In 1950-3 communist

[1] 'The prescriptive rights of the cultivators have been so regularly overridden that the right to settle on state-land is now a privilege. In the space of a generation the landowner's power of possession has become the right of exclusion.' Warriner, p. 161.

membership increased, while among the 3,000 population of the prison-camps communist domination and recruitment proceeded almost unchecked, despite all the efforts of the authorities. But there have been serious divisions in the communist ranks, and their leadership has been weak.[1] It is a party of intellectuals with little following among the workers and none among the peasants. Efforts to build up a popular front have produced little result: no potential Mossadegh has appeared on the right, while Kamil al-Chadarchi, with his National Democratic Party on the left, merging into a 'National Front', proved no match for 'the Pasha'.

After losing some seats in the elections of June 1954, when the National Front secured 14 seats (10 of them from the town voters of Baghdad and Mosul), Nuri lost no time in re-establishing his position. Three months later new elections were held, while 18 newspapers were suspended and Chadarchi's party banned. Nuri secured power with a comfortable majority—94 of his own party and 29 independents. After stringent anti-communist legislation had been passed (including penalties of deportation and loss of citizenship), Nuri felt strong enough to re-authorise political parties (August 1957). But this was a meaningless gesture as long as he maintained control of his elaborate network of spies and police, thereby repressing all movements hostile to his régime.

One reason for Nuri Pasha es-Said's hold over the country was that he was both soldier and politician. Of lower-middle class origin, he came from an almost similar background[2]—though of a different generation—to that of his Egyptian rival, Colonel Nasser, and like him received the most important elements of his education as an officer. While serving with the Turkish Army, including spells at the Military and Staff Colleges at Istanbul, Nuri came in touch with officers who were enthusiastic Arab Nationalists, and himself joined the secret society, *Al-Ahd* (the Covenant). He was among the more distinguished of the 300 or so Iraqi officers who took part with

[1] 'The Iraqi Communists have revealed in the course of their history an unusual degree of incompetence and disunity, lack of purpose and direction, and a marked deficiency of political acumen and experience.' (Laquer, p. 202.)

[2] Nuri's father was a clerk in the accounts department of Baghdad province, Nasser's an assistant postmaster of a village in Upper Egypt.

Feisal and Lawrence in the advance to Damascus in World War I, and on the collapse of Feisal's regime there returned again to Baghdad as Chief of Staff of the new Iraqi army, in 1921.

Since then he had been 13 times Prime Minister, 10 times Minister of Defence, and 10 times Minister of Foreign Affairs. Politicians and generals have come and gone, but Major-General Nuri es-Said seemed to be going on for ever. He often preferred to drive from the back-seat, installing some friendly colleague as Prime Minister, and even when holding high office did not attempt to compete with the royal family in dignity and state. His strength lay mainly in his ability to take a strategical view of Iraq's place in the Middle East and so in the world as a whole, and in his qualities as a tactician in manipulating the parliamentary institutions and political personalities of Iraq. He had no pretensions in the field of social reform beyond a determination to carry through such development of the country as the oil royalties made possible, and hoped that somehow the acute tensions, resulting from the gulf between the haves and the have-nots, would be resolved in the process.

This was a gamble which did not succeed. The fact that Nuri had to contend with was that he and the royal family had been restored by British bayonets after the rising of 1941. That rising had not generally been considered in Iraq as an affair of Axis machinations, but as a genuine nationalist movement.

The linking of Iraq and Jordan in the Arab Federation (February 14, 1958) might have strengthened the régime if Sa'udi Arabia and Kuwait had agreed to come in, but both refused. Nuri had no other cards left to play—he could only beg the Western powers to honour the trust he had put in them by dealing firmly with the question of Israel, but this was not their policy. The Arab Federation in the event only proved a weakness, for the attempt to buttress Jordan by moving troops there deprived him of some of his more reliable support. The plot which Brigadier Abdul Karim el Kassem and Colonel Abdel Salam Aref, with other officers, had been planning for three years, was carried out in the small hours of July 14, 1958.

It took off the lid which Nuri had been sitting on for so long. For a short time mob fury revenged itself on the representatives of the

old order. Nuri fled in disguise as the steel doors in his house were dynamited, but met his death at the hands of the mob in a Baghdad street. The British Embassy was looted and burnt, though with the loss of life of only one member of the staff. The royal family were killed when shooting began between the palace guard and rebel troops.

Revenge gave place to enthusiastic acclamation of the new order by vast crowds who surged along, day after day, to the square outside the Ministry of Defence where Brigadier Kassem, now Prime Minister, had his office. Otherwise the capital and the country quickly returned to normal, and security was again complete. Kassem won confidence by his quiet manner and evident sincerity, by his record of competence as a commanding officer and fairness with his men, and by his reputation as a self-disciplined Moslem believer who eschewed smoking, drink and women.[1] Aged 44, he belonged to the professional element of the generation younger than Nuri's, who had come to feel an increasing frustration at the policies of the old régime. It was natural that solidarity was speedily shown with the United Arab Republic, when Colonel Aref, as Deputy Prime Minister, made with Colonel Nasser at Damascus an agreement for mutual defence and 'complete co-operation in the international field' (July 19, 1958). At the same time the government expressed itself as eager to maintain good relations with the West and to continue the existing arrangements for the oil industry and for oil exports to the Western world.

(d) Arab Unity and the Baghdad Pact

MORE THAN IN INTERNAL DEVELOPMENT, Nuri's abiding interest was in foreign affairs. In 1919 he had sent to the Hejaz delegation at the Paris Peace Conference a memorandum—which was duly passed on to Lloyd George—in favour of uniting the liberated Turkish provinces of Syria and Mesopotamia under one government.[2] Feisal I supported his ideas of Arab federation, and in 1932 had

[1] *The Times*, July 15, 16, 28, 1958.
[2] Kedourie, p. 180.

proposed an Arab conference at Baghdad.[1] In World War II Nuri was first in the field with his Greater Syria scheme—the union of Syria, Lebanon, Palestine and Transjordan, linked with 'an Arab League to which Iraq and Syria will adhere at once and which can be joined by the other Arab states at will.'[2]

But Egypt took over the lead in realising this project. Since then the historic rivalry between the Nile Valley and Mesopotamia, dating back to ancient times, was apparently being repeated. With the appointment of Azzam as Secretary-General, the Arab League became virtually an instrument of Egyptian policy. The coming of the military régime to power in Egypt made no difference in this respect, and a brief visit by Nuri to Cairo soon after the take-over did not encourage closer relations on either side.

Nuri's establishment of authoritarian rule in October 1954, coincided with the first moves which led to the Baghdad Pact. Initially Nasser was not against this development. He only took up a hostile attitude when the Western powers and Turkey put pressure on him to bring in Egypt as, in his view, a junior partner.

It became known in November 1954, that Britain and America had, after some bickering, agreed on a common policy for the defence of the Middle East. It was to encourage the enlargement of the existing Turko-Pakistan Pact so that the Arab states and Iran should be included. Nasser's response was to arrange for a meeting of the Arab Foreign Ministers in Cairo, where he put forward an alternative policy 'that all arrangements for strengthening the defence of the Middle East area should be channelled through the existing Arab League Security Pact; only when Arabs had thus demonstrated their own unity and independence would they turn to the West for some unspecified form of support.'[3]

This was followed by a meeting in Cairo in January 1955 of the Arab League Prime Ministers (except for Nuri who pleaded ill-health). Nasser's case was that 'Egypt realised that the defence of the Middle East must be founded on co-operation with the West. But Arab opinion needed a period of education after a long era of

[1] Longrigg, p. 264.
[2] See above.
[3] *British Survey*, April 1956 (article by Lord Birdwood).

colonial subjection. Arabs themselves should first build up their own economic and defensive strength so that they could enter a partnership not as poor relations but as equals.'[1]

Nuri, however, would not accept these arguments, though the two emissaries whom he belatedly sent to Cairo equally failed to convince the other Arab representatives of his point of view. Thereafter Nuri went his own way, and Iraq signed with Turkey the Pact of Mutual Co-operation at Baghdad on February 24, 1955, replacing an existing Treaty of March 1946.[2] It was joined by Iran the following October, and received its blessing from America, though for various reasons the latter did not become a full member, only entering the Economic and Military Committees.

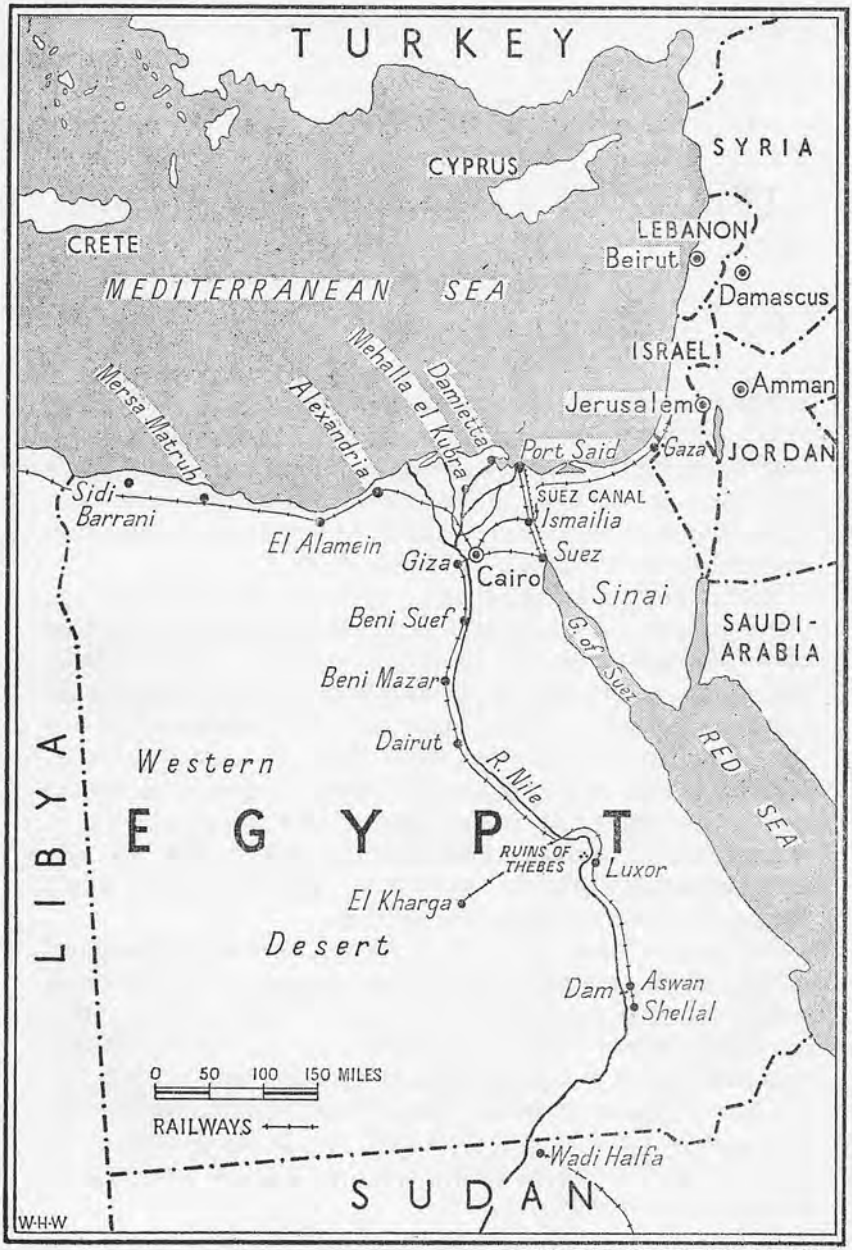
This was not the decisive step in turning Egypt away from the West, though it may fairly be said to have begun the process. Equally important in this connection were three events which followed the signing of the Pact in quick succession—the large-scale Israeli raid in the Gaza Strip of February 28, 1955, Nasser's participation in the Bandung Conference in April, and the Russian guarantee to Syria in the same month against possible Turkish aggression.[3]

Another event, early in 1955, which contributed to swinging Nasser away from the West, was the brusque refusal of the U.S.A. to send Egypt a consignment of arms for which, after 15 months of negotiations, all arrangements had been made. Nasser's purchase of arms from Russia later in the year was a logical consequence.

Britain's adherence to the Pact (April 4, 1955) offered her a convenient way of revising the Anglo-Iraqi Treaty of 1930 without giving up all her former rights. A Special Agreement was signed which to some extent took the place of the still-born Treaty of Portsmouth of 1948. Article 1 pledged the two Governments to co-operate for defence. By Article 8 Britain promised that, in the event of an attack or threatened attack on Iraq, it should at the latter's request 'make available assistance, including if necessary armed forces to help defend Iraq. The Government of Iraq shall provide all facilities and assistance to enable such aid to be rapid

[1] Birdwood, op. cit.
[2] Hurewitz, II, Documents 107 and 108, pp. 390 ff.
[3] See A. Humbaraci; *Middle East Indictment* (Hale, 1958), pp. 202, 203.

and effective.' The withdrawal of British forces was to be completed within one year after the date of signature. Meanwhile a number of British personnel together with two squadrons of the R.A.F. remained to assist in training Iraqi forces and in the maintenance of equipment.



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Chapter Ten

BRITAIN, THE NILE AND THE CANAL

(a) Two British Occupations and Three Colonels

EGYPT HAS LONG BEEN THE LEADING POWER in the Arab world by virtue of her position, her wealth and her culture. In point of wealth Iraq is overtaking her, but economics do not necessarily decide leadership. In the race to lead, the human element is decisive. Leadership, not only of Egypt, but of Arab nationalism in general, has been captured by Gamal Abdel Nasser.

Nasser has been inspired in large part by the life of another officer, Colonel Arabi of the Egyptian Army, who put himself at the head of the nationalist movement of *his* day. Nasser has studied carefully the strange parallels between the events attending the growth of the immature nationalism in Egypt then, and of its fully-fledged descendant now. The most obvious point where the parallels diverge, however, is that the intervention of the Western powers in Egypt in Arabi's day led on to Arabi's fall and the British occupation, whereas the intervention of the Western powers over the Suez Canal issue led to Britain's diplomatic defeat, and to placing Nasser in a position more unassailable than before.

The intervention of 1882 was not due primarily to the Suez Canal (which had been opened in 1869), but to the concern of the Western powers for Egypt's financial situation; a concern which they expressed on behalf of their nationals—bankers and financiers—who had invested money in Egypt. At the same time, if Egypt had not been important because of her strategic position, considerably enhanced by the cutting of the Canal, it is doubtful whether the powers, notably Britain, would have intervened to the point of turning Egypt virtually into a colony.

Egypt had long been all but independent of Turkey, even before another Colonel who left his mark on Egypt, Mohammed Ali, took over power after the first British Occupation (1801-1803). He was an Albanian who came to Egypt as a Turkish officer with the Anglo-Turkish force which came to drive out the French troops left by Napoleon in 1801. He mutinied successfully against the Turkish Governor, who remained there after the British had evacuated, and subsequently overthrew the survivors of the previous ruling group, the Mameluke Beys. He was then recognised as Governor (Wali) of Egypt by Turkey, with the title of Pasha. Egypt remained officially a province of the Turkish Empire until 1914.

Mohammed Ali bent his efforts to strengthening Egypt as a military state, with an army powerful enough to conquer the surrounding territories. Egypt became stronger and relatively prosperous under his rule, though the intervention of the European powers—the 'Concert' under Britain's leadership—robbed him of ultimate success in his designs (France had supported him). But in strengthening Egypt he was obliged to adopt European methods and techniques. The organisation of the army, and the beginnings of public health and educational development, were the work of French experts.[1] The communications system—roads, navigation, railways—was mainly undertaken by British engineers. He also used the services of foreigners for developing irrigation and cotton-growing, and for trying to start industries, which mostly failed.

He had misgivings about the future status of his adopted country, and foresaw that the cutting of the Suez Canal—a project which he steadily opposed—would bring little or no advantage to Egypt, but would probably lead to her falling directly under British control. He co-operated with Britain in developing Egypt's overland communications, already important as the link in the fastest route from Britain to India,[2] but strongly approved Palmerston's opposition to the French enthusiasts for the projected Canal.

[1] As was the infant science of Egyptology.

[2] The invention of the steamship had made navigation easy up the Red Sea, whereas previously sailing-ships made headway only with difficulty against the prevailing northerly winds. By mid-century only heavy cargoes were going round the Cape, i.e., those which it was too costly to unload at Alexandria, and ship again at Suez. J. Marlowe, *Anglo-Egyptian Relations,* 1800-1952 (Cresset Press, 1954), pp. 42, 43.

Napoleon's expedition of 1798 had opened the eyes of British statesmen as to Egypt's importance. Since then the British had regarded it as vital for their communications, and had decided that neither France nor any other power should have a predominant footing there. If these conditions were fulfilled, Britain would be satisfied without exercising direct control. Palmerston expressed this in homely metaphor. 'We do not want Egypt,' he said 'any more than any rational man with an estate in the north of England and a residence in the south would wish to possess the inns on the North Road. All he could want would be that the inns should be well-kept, always accessible, and furnishing him, when he came, with mutton-chops and post horses.'[1]

The situation changed with the cutting of the Suez Canal, and Britain's attitude changed accordingly. Britain speedily became the biggest user of the Canal, while Egypt's financial difficulties soon provided the opportunity for Britain to acquire a measure of financial control. Whereas Mohammed Ali had carried through his programme of modernisation without pledging a piastre of Egypt's credit, his successors were not so wise. Said, the friend and supporter of de Lesseps, had begun the process of borrowing from European bankers; Ismail (who succeeded him in 1863) continued it on a princely scale. A great deal of the money borrowed was used for building the Canal and for other productive enterprises, but there were no responsible international or government agencies, like the present-day World Bank, to supervise the business of investment in 'backward areas' on a basis that was fair both to lender (or donor) and recipient. Left to private enterprise the system was abused by both parties, and the most respectable financial houses, like Rothschild's, advanced funds on terms which, though highly favourable to the lender, were insufficiently secured, and which could only lead to the bankruptcy of the debtor government. Throughout the Middle East and elsewhere this situation was the prelude to intervention by one or more of the powers on behalf of their nationals who were creditors, leading on to a measure of financial and political control.

Ismail 'the Magnificent' was a spendthrift of the first order, whose sumptuous ways were designed to put himself on a par with

[1] Lord Cromer: *Modern Egypt* (Macmillan, 1911), p. 72.

the sovereigns of Europe, an aspiration which he seemed to be fulfilling at the time of the opening of the Suez Canal (on this gala occasion and subsequent entertaining something like a million pounds of borrowed money were spent). Egypt's public debt increased from £7 million at his accession to £100 million 13 years later. Much of this money had never actually come into the Treasury, since it remained, as discount rates, in the hands of the European investors. Of the rest, some had been spent constructively—most of the £11,500,000 which Egypt spent on building the Canal must have come from this source (a share of financing this project which far exceeded the £4,500,000 subscribed by the French and other European investors).[1] Many millions had also gone to other developments: 'nearly 1,000 miles of railway, 8,000 miles of canals, and 5,000 miles of electric telegraph line were constructed between 1863 and 1879. During the same period the cultivable area was increased from 4,000,000 to nearly 5,500,000 feddans, the population from 4,800,000 to 5,500,000. . . . A modern harbour was constructed at Alexandria. A system of public education was established and some 4,500 schools opened.'[2]

At the same time unreckoned millions were squandered on Ismail's harem, his favourites, his pleasure-trips abroad, on anything on which his fancy lit. There was no accounting in the modern sense. The Khedive—a title which Ismail bought from the Turkish Sultan —made no distinction between a Civil List and public expenditure.

Bankruptcy was only staved off in 1874 when Ismail sold his ordinary shares in the Suez Canal Company (44 per cent of the total) to Britain for nearly £4 million—a sum larger than their market price, which Disraeli was inveigled into paying, with the aid of Messrs. Rothschild. These shares would eventually have brought to the Egyptian treasury dividends running at £1,500,000 per year—which instead went to Britain. The preference shares, giving a 15 per cent entitlement, found their way later to a French bank,[3]

[1] Marlowe. The total *interest* 'paid up to September 1873 on account of sums borrowed by the Egyptian Government in connection with the Canal exceeded £6 million,' p. 72.

[2] Marlowe, p. 90.

[3] After Ismail's deposition they were sold for £880,000 to the *Crédit Foncier* by the Anglo-French controllers.

so that Egypt until recently received nothing in return for the heavy financial outlay and provision of labour for the Canal.

Two years after the sale of Ismail's ordinary shares, the Egyptian Government was bankrupt. Ismail was obliged to accept control of Egypt's finances by an international Commission of the Debt, supervised by two Controllers, one French and one British. These Controllers were given posts in the Egyptian Cabinet as Ministers of Finance and Public Works, with a view to organising the financial affairs of Egypt in such a way that the European creditors would be satisfied. But they found their control hampered by the efforts of Ismail to frustrate it, until France and Britain secured his deposition by the Ottoman Sultan, who was nominally his suzerain (1879). He sailed off in the 'Mahroussa' to Italy, with his harem and a good store of valuables, just as his grandson was to sail off in the royal yacht of the same name, to the same destination, 73 years later.

His son and successor Taufiq was readier to play the part of what would nowadays be called a Franco-British 'stooge', but found his position undermined by a movement which began as an army mutiny, led by Colonel Ahmed Arabi. Originating as a protest against the unequal treatment in promotion of Egyptian officers to the advantage of Turks and Circassians, it soon became a powerful movement against the European 'Dual Control' and the numerous privileges, under the capitulations, which were enjoyed by Europeans and by those gaining the nationality of one or another of the European powers. An important group representing the intelligentsia of the country, among them Sheikh Mohammed Abdou, the pioneer of modernist Islamic thought and reform, joined the officers and demanded a constitution and the restriction of European control of the budget.

This Constitutionalist movement in Egypt was similar to the later Persian movement which led to the Constitution of 1905. The same remarkable man, Jamal-al-din al Afghani, the pioneer of Pan-Islamism, had a part in inspiring both. But whereas Britain's action in Persia was decisive in bringing the Constitution to birth, 30 years before in Egypt it was equally decisive in making it abortive.

The programme of the Constitutionalists was to endow with real power the Chamber of Notables created by Ismail in 1866, when he

was posing as an enlightened liberal monarch eager to grant his country the democratic institutions which were becoming fashionable. Apart from meeting for a month each year, and having the right to hear and advise on government policy, the Chamber was virtually a façade. Rivers Wilson, the autocratic British Controller of the Debt, refused to appear before it, although as Minister of Finance he was a member of the Egyptian Government. In 1881 the moderate nationalists were however ready to accept the backing of the Dual Control in gaining increased powers for the Chamber, as a counterweight to the growing extremism of Arabi and the army. But this development was frustrated by the initiative of the French Government—baneful precursor of the part which France was to play in the Suez crisis 75 years later—in causing a joint Franco-British Note to be sent to Cairo, to the effect that the position of the Khedive was to be supported against all such steps for the limiting of his powers.

This intervention threw the Constitutionalists on to the side of the army. Moderate influences were at zero, hostility to the Western powers at its height. Arabi, now virtually at the head of affairs, was weak and indecisive. Anti-foreign feeling culminated in a massacre of some 50 European nationals at Alexandria (June 1882). The Concert of Europe came into action again, France, Germany and Italy all supporting intervention by Britain. Admiral Seymour, commanding the British squadron which had been sent to Alexandria, provoked a *casus belli*, and his guns demolished the city's fortifications (July 1882). Soon after, a British force entered the Suez Canal and landed at Ismailia, putting Arabi and his army to flight in a brief action at Tel-el-Kebir (September 13, 1882). British troops were to stay in Egypt until the evacuation of the Suez Canal base (July 1955).

(b) Britain and Egypt

THE BRITISH OCCUPATION OF EGYPT began in opposition to the dynamic and progressive elements in the country. Britain found herself buttressing a corrupt and discredited court, which was identified with an increasingly outmoded and inequitable social system. In this

the landowning pashas, almost feudal in their outlook and privileges, played the leading part. Another privileged class were the Europeans, whose economic and juridical rights under the capitulations Britain was pledged to uphold—a system under whose protecting devices every kind of shady deal could be undertaken.

Britain's power of bringing positive, radical change to Egypt was, therefore, strictly limited, despite the good intentions of her representatives. Major Evelyn Baring, later Lord Cromer, who as Her Majesty's Agent and Consul-General presided over Egypt's destinies from 1883 to 1907, was an administrator of the highest order, and in the early years at least had a brilliant team of British officials to assist him. Statesmanship was for him the art of the possible: but in his mind the possibilities were limited not merely by the 'hybrid form of government' which he had to operate 'involving all the disadvantages of governing the country directly without any of the advantages,'[1] but also by his own scepticism of the potentialities of Egyptians for governing themselves.

In any case at the beginning of the occupation the British Government had no reforms more radical in view than those which would make the country financially sound, so that its commitments could be met, and its government become strong enough to impose the law and order necessary for it to play its part as a link in the chain of imperial communications. Britain insisted that the occupation was temporary, and repeated statements to this effect at frequent intervals. Order was immediately restored, but there was danger of anarchy setting in again, if British authority was too quickly withdrawn. So the British stayed on, and with every year a new motive for their staying began to have increasing force. Cromer and his colleagues advised Whitehall against withdrawal until the benefits of British rule had some chance of being permanent.

The obvious prosperity of the people after a few years of Cromer's government was Britain's justification for her presence. There was no legal basis for the occupation: legally Egypt was still a province of the Turkish Empire, and Cromer officially had no more standing than the Consul-General of any other power. In Cromer's view

[1] Cromer writing in 1884, quoted in Lord Zetland: *Lord Cromer* (Hodder and Stoughton, 1932), p. 117.

Britain's right to be in Egypt was moral, not legal. 'A great nation cannot throw off the responsibilities which its past history and its position in the world have imposed upon it,' he wrote. 'The special aptitude shown by Englishmen in the government of Oriental races pointed to England as the most effective and beneficent instrument for the gradual introduction of European civilisation into Egypt.'[1]

Harsh and unjust taxes were swept away, and the whole financial system was overhauled. Landlords were deprived of the right of life and death over their tenants. The central government was reorganised, and a police force and army were established along modern lines. Canals were dug, roads and railways built. A wave of prosperity swept the land. 'The country,' as Cromer put it, 'being by nature endowed with great recuperative power, and being inhabited by an industrious population, responded to the honesty of its rulers.'[2]

In setting Egypt on the road to progress Cromer's battle was not merely against the crowd of Egyptian, Levantine and European self-seekers who battened on the industry of the peasants. Opposition came also from the governments of Europe. During most of his period in Egypt Cromer was embarrassed by the powers who, under the treaty rights of the capitulations, could intervene in financial and administrative matters and throw spokes in the wheels of reform. France was the greatest trouble-maker among the powers, and her opposition did not cease until the general settlement of Anglo-French relations in 1904.

Under the capitulations all the interested powers had to agree unanimously before any tax could be imposed on their subjects resident in Egypt, while by other agreements they held a tight grip over the expenditure. When Cromer's colleague, Sir Colin Scott-Moncrieff, insisted on the payment of the labourers who were building the new irrigation system, instead of their working as forced labourers under the lash, the powers refused consent to the necessary expenditure. It was only by Sir Colin's threat of resignation and a good deal of diplomatic pressure that this reform became possible.

Such progress as occurred under the British occupation was partly due to the contact which, with or without the British, was bound to

[1] *Modern Egypt*, p. 256.
[2] Ibid, p. 817.

take place between West and East in the realms of science, ideas and organisation. But the point at which Britain's failure to establish a real partnership with Egypt was most glaring was in the inadequate facilities she provided for the up-and-coming intelligentsia to share in the advancing culture of Europe. Seven years after the occupation began only £6 million more were being devoted to education than under Ismail,[1] and the whole of this sum went towards increasing primary schools. It is true that state education in England itself was a novelty, but its application in Egypt was directed only to training government clerks and officials, not to educating the *élite* on whom the country's future most of all depended. As time went on a few Egyptian students were sent to universities abroad, mainly in France and Britain, apart from those who went privately, but a move towards establishing a modern university[2] had to wait until Prince Ahmed Fuad, one of Ismail's sons, and other public-spirited Egyptians, began to agitate for this end in 1909, and its fruition did not take place until Egypt achieved nominal independence, with Fuad as King, in 1922. Even the founding of secondary schools lagged far behind the country's needs.

The fact that there were too few Egyptians with advanced training was Britain's justification for staffing the higher ranks of government with European—and increasingly with British—officials. 'In 1920 the Milner mission found Egyptians in less than one quarter of the higher posts. Reviewing the changes since 1905, it found that the proportion of Egyptians in *all* posts had increased from 45 to 51 per cent. In the *higher* posts, however, they had declined from 28 to 23 per cent. . . . The proportion of British in such posts increased from 42 to 59 per cent.'[3]

Not only were Egyptians thereby hampered in the task of progressively taking over the direction of their country, but the nationalist movement, when it developed, was too much the product of frustration and irresponsibility. Before World War I secondary schoolboys,

[1] See the figures in M. Rifaat, *The Awakening of Modern Egypt* (Longman, 1947), p. 227.

[2] The ancient Azhar has continued essentially as a Mediaeval Islamic institution, partially reformed by Mohammed Abdou and others.

[3] M. Berger: *Bureaucracy and Society in Modern Egypt* (Princeton, 1957), pp. 30 ff.

as later the students, were drawn on by political leaders as the human reservoir for all demonstrations in the cities, to the further detriment of education, until the habit was recently ended by the military régime.

Cromer—a man who can bear comparison with any of the great proconsuls of history—viewed the problems of Egypt as an administrator rather than as a statesman. His concern for keeping administrative and judicial standards high blinded him to the equally important need of training Egyptians in responsibility. 'The British imperialist,' he said, 'is always striving to attain two ideals, which are apt to be mutually destructive—the ideal of good government, which connotes the continuance of his own supremacy, and the ideal of self-government which connotes the whole or partial abdication of his supreme position.'[1]

The method of indirect rule which was applied could have led on to a gradual transfer of power, but as operated by Cromer the Egyptian ministers and civil servants were kept so firmly under the wings of the British Advisers and Inspectors, that it became increasingly difficult for Egyptians of ability—other than those who were ready to be cyphers—to accept office. Such Egyptians instead began to form a potent nucleus of opposition to British rule, when the period of political apathy initiated by the Occupation came to an end at the turn of the century.

Its ending was partly due to the death of the Khedive Tewfik (1892), who was conscious that he owed his throne to British bayonets,[2] and the accession of Abbas II whom no such sentiments inhibited from a course of continuous, if sometimes veiled, opposition to the British régime. But Abbas was intent on building up a position for himself, a plan which did not entirely suit the nationalists, who looked to the development of democratic institutions as a means of bringing their own influence to bear on events. Cromer and his successors made some attempt to canalise this nationalism into constitutional channels, and to this end the founding of the Hizb-al-

[1] *Ancient and Modern Imperialism*, p. 118.

[2] One day, as Sir Ronald Storrs relates, Tewfik, sitting in his palace, grew pale. 'Listen,' he muttered, 'I hear the cries of the sais before the carriage of Baring. Who knows what he is coming to say to me?' (*Orientations*, p. 52.)

Umma party was encouraged as an alternative to the extremist Hizb-al-Watani of Mustafa Kamal. The old Chamber of Notables had been succeeded in 1883 by a Legislative Council and Legislative Assembly, the former partly and the latter wholly elected by indirect suffrage. But apart from the Assembly's having a deciding vote on fiscal questions, the functions of these institutions were purely advisory, and their role was mainly ornamental. The one notable action of the Assembly was its refusal in 1909 to ratify an extension of the Suez Canal Company's concession for a further 40 years (after its prospective termination in 1968).[1]

The addition of provincial councils, which the reforms of 1883 had provided, was delayed until 1909, but this, together with further reforms in 1913 which merged the Council and Assembly, had little effect. The pace was too slow and the régime's actions too indecisive to capture the imagination of those with political aspirations. 'They wish to gallop,' said Cromer, in his farewell speech at Cairo in 1907. 'I consider that a steady jog-trot is the pace best suited to advance the interests of the country.'[2] As a safety-valve a free press was allowed, whose influence on the development of nationalism was apparently underrated. The future nationalist leader, Saad Zaghlul, was indeed picked by Cromer at the end of his time to hold the newly created post of Minister of Education; but, partly because he was discouraged by the dour and self-willed Dunlop, who was British Adviser to the Ministry, partly because his gifts were those of the demagogue rather than the administrator, Zaghlul soon left the government. By 1914 he was leading a compact opposition group of 66 in the Assembly, and was generally recognised as the spiritual heir of Mustafa Kamal (who had died in 1908).

Had the 'jog-trot' towards self-government advocated by Cromer been kept up, the country might have had a smoother course. But the weakness of British policy during the ensuing years was that it failed to be consistent. The jog-trot turned suddenly to a gallop—then, just as the steed was taking the bit in its teeth, it would be reined back equally suddenly on its haunches. Sir Eldon Gorst, Cromer's successor (1907-11), tried to liberalise the régime, but was

[1] Rifaat, p. 223.
[2] Quoted by Cromer in the introduction to *Abbas II* (Macmillan, 1915).

disappointed in the response to his efforts. 'The policy of ruling Egypt in co-operation with native ministers,' he wrote in his last report, 'is incompatible with that of encouraging the development of so-called representative institutions.'

His successor, Lord Kitchener, coming to Egypt with great prestige as the conqueror of the Sudan, reverted to autocratic methods. His main concern was to improve the lot of the peasantry, for whom he had a high regard after commanding many of their number in the army. His heart was in this work, and he showed his personal interest in their well-being by his frequent visits in his special train to different parts of the country.

The peasants had been among the chief beneficiaries of the régime. As well as enjoying quite unwonted security against injustice from the tax-collector or the press-gang, their standard of living had appreciably risen, reaching its peak soon after the beginning of the century. But thereafter the high birth-rate (over 40 per thousand), and the fall in the productivity of the soil in certain areas, brought on the slow but steady impoverishment of the masses. Undernourishment became marked, and from the end of World War I the working capacity of the Egyptian labourer fell by 25 to 30 per cent.[1]

The phase of increased prosperity for the peasant was partly due to the progress of irrigation. The increased water-storage resulting from, notably, the building of the Aswan Dam in 1902[2] brought perennial irrigation to many areas instead of basin irrigation as heretofore. But perennial irrigation, making possible two crops a year, began to exhaust the soil, while yields also fell because of inadequate drainage and the consequent water-logging of the subsoil. The constant presence of water in canals and ponds brought the scourge of bilharzia, an enfeebling parasitic disease, to the peasantry, while malaria also had a similar effect. When the prevalent eye-diseases, due to filth and flies in the thoroughly insanitary conditions of the Egyptian villages or urban slums are added in,

[1] The living standards of the peasantry have fallen since 1917—since that date the *total* consumption of tobacco, coffee, meat, textiles, cereals, has decreased. '20 million people are consuming less than 13 million did then.' E. Monroe, *Middle East Contrasts, Egypt and Iraq*, in International Journal, Spring 1953, p. 93.

[2] Its height was raised in 1912 and 1933.

together with the other diseases coming from the lack of pure water, it is not surprising that the general level of health of the poorer Egyptians came to be rated as around the lowest in the world.

Large-scale irrigation also made possible a big increase in the cotton crop, and this brought good cash returns both to peasants and landowners. But less grain was cultivated, so that with the restrictions of imports in World War I, there was some shortage of food. Inflation hit the salaried classes and the peasants badly. The friendly feeling of the peasants and others towards the régime had already been shaken by the draconian sentences passed after the shooting affray near Denshawai village in 1906, and the alienation of the peasants was almost completed by the methods of recruiting them into the Labour Corps and requisitioning their camels and donkeys in World War I. The resentment of the more politically conscious elements increased with Britain's declaration of Egypt as a Protectorate in 1914, and the tardiness of the British Government at the war's end to make any concession to nationalist feeling.

Two days after the Armistice Zaghlul led a deputation ('Wafd') to the British Residency demanding permission to go to London in order to negotiate for Egypt's independence. The standing of the government and the moderates was shaken when Sir Reginald Wingate, the High Commissioner, advised London to receive him—advice which was turned down, as was a similar request later by the Prime Minister to make a visit himself. Mass demonstrations and the murder of soldiers and officials underlined the need for a more realistic policy. But the British Government vacillated, repression alternating with conciliation. Zaghlul and his associates were deported to Malta, then suddenly released.[1]

General Allenby, with the laurels of his Palestine and Syria campaigns fresh on him, was sent as a strong man of prestige to deal with the situation. He recommended that a new start be made in granting the demand for self-government. In 1922 Egypt was formally declared independent, though there was little immediate change in Britain's position in the country. The Residency relaxed control over internal administration, but the British garrisons

[1] Zaghlul was later deported again, in 1922, to the Seychelles.

remained, and Britain still claimed the right of protecting the interests of Europeans. The iron hand showed itself once again through the velvet glove when Sir Lee Stack, who held the dual position of Commander-in-Chief of the Egyptian Army and Governor-General of the Sudan, was murdered in Cairo (November 1924). Allenby, besides demanding an indemnity, ordered the withdrawal of the Egyptian army units from the Sudan, and reserved the right to divert an unspecified amount of water from the Nile to the Gezira cotton plantations near Khartoum. This threat to their water-supplies was to make Egyptians more sensitive about the future of the Sudan than they might otherwise have been.

The granting of independence, albeit limited, had the effect of reproducing once more the triangular political game which had already twice been played in Egypt, at the beginning of Tewfik's reign and in the days of Abbas II. With the accession of Fuad as king (he had already been five years Sultan under the Protectorate) the Palace once again became a power, for Fuad's leanings were fully as autocratic as any of his predecessors'. A parliamentary régime was instituted, with a constitution on the Belgian model,[1] and at the first election Zaghlul's party, the Wafd, was returned with a large majority. Fuad detested parliamentary government in general and Zaghlul in particular, while Zaghlul on his side was equally unable to brook interference with his power. As a counterpoise, Zaghlul towards the end of his life moderated his anti-British attitude (an attitude which incidentally had been entirely without rancour in his personal dealings with the British), and this paved the way, after his death in 1927, for the Wafd under the leadership of Nahas Pasha to lean at times on the Residency for support. Had it not been for the tact with which Allenby, and to a lesser extent his successor, Lord Lloyd, helped to hold the ring, this experiment in parliamentary government would certainly have broken down at an early stage.

Parliamentary government in Egypt bore only a remote resemblance to its prototype. The King in Egypt was a real centre of power—in 1928 Fuad dismissed parliament and did without it for a

[1] Later modified in 1930 at Fuad's instance, to make the influence of the Palace more effective.

year and a half. The changes in the constitution in 1930 enabled Ismail Sidky Pasha to create a parliament of his own nominees, with which he governed Egypt for four years, dictatorially but efficiently. The government could almost always rig the elections, through its power of appointing mudirs (provincial governors) and omdehs (village mayors), who ensured that their nominees were returned to parliament.

When Fuad died in April 1936, leaving his son Farouk still a minor, the three-cornered struggle was temporarily resolved in favour of the Wafd. The Wafd appointed its nominees to the Regency Council, thereby temporarily gaining control of the Palace. It won a huge majority at the elections, and was able to carry through its policy of negotiating a treaty with Britain (August 1936). The effect of the Wafd's leanings towards Britain was shown in the remarkably good terms which the latter secured, though undoubtedly these would have been less favourable had it not been for the concern felt in Egypt regarding Mussolini's African aspirations (he had just annexed Abyssinia).

The question of the Sudan, which had been the main stumbling-block to the signature of an almost identical treaty six years before, was shelved. The Occupation was terminated, though troops (10,000) and the R.A.F. (400 pilots) were permitted to stay on in the Canal Zone in peace-time. Until the Egyptian Government built quarters for them there they were to remain in their garrisons in and around Cairo and Alexandria (they were still there when war broke out three years later). In the event of war, Britain and Egypt were to be allies, the aid from Egypt to consist in making available to Britain all ports, aerodromes and means of communication, and Egypt's road system was to be improved.

On her side, Britain promised the speedy abolition of the capitulations (effected at Lausanne the following year), the abandonment of her claim to represent foreign interests in Egypt, and the sponsoring of Egypt's membership of the League of Nations. As a whole the Treaty recognised the realities of the relationship between the two countries as it then stood, and also of the international situation. The maturer and more responsible national feeling in Egypt, and the growth of some mutual confidence between the two countries,

were the fruits of the preceding period of relative calm and orderly (if barely constitutional) government.

When war broke out three years later, the Treaty was found to provide a framework within which Britain's war-effort could be successfully deployed. Internal security was complete, and a large labour force was mobilised, thanks to co-operation from Egypt which went to the limit short of a declaration of war against the Axis.

Meanwhile the three-cornered fight between Palace, Wafd and Britain was resumed. A few months after Farouk came of age, the Wafd was dismissed and there was a succession of Palace-dominated minority governments. But the Wafd was by far the strongest party, with its country-wide committees dating back to the time of Zaghlul and the more recent accession of many of the landowning pashas, who saw in its ascendancy the best guarantee of the status quo. Nahas also looked to Britain, and held to the fulfilment of the Treaty pledges, in opposition to the Court which favoured Italy and by implication the Axis.

The reality of British power, and the consequent fetters on Egyptian sovereignty, were shown when Sir Miles Lampson, the High Commissioner, went with a squadron of tanks to Abdin Palace in February 1942, in order to force on King Farouk a government of the Wafd. In the British view the Wafd alone could be certain of keeping the country steady during the difficult phase for the Allies through which the war was passing. The British assessment of the situation may have been correct, and certainly the Nahas government remained loyal to the terms of the Treaty even at the darkest moment before Alamein; nonetheless nationalistic feeling was inflamed by the use of force against the King, who for a time became something of a symbol for Egyptian aspirations.

By the end of the war, however, Farouk was rapidly losing such popularity as he had had. The corruption of the régime was finally shown up by its military impotence against Israel in 1948, which was put down to the miserably inadequate supply of transport, armaments and equipment caused by malversation and embezzlement on the part of people in high quarters.

The acute moral and political malaise which had overcome other

Middle Eastern countries during the aftermath of the war was particularly evident in Egypt. Living costs had soared and there was much unemployment. Socialist and communist ideas were gaining ground—though the Communist Party, vigorously suppressed and itself deeply divided, was no great danger. Pashadom was under fire, but it was buttressed by the Court, and there was no radical party to challenge it. The Wafd, which might have played this role, was by now thoroughly corrupted also and, with its racketeering on the cotton market and involvement in other shady deals, was as much a part of the decaying system as were the Court and the Pashas. When it came to power again in 1950 its social reform propaganda was proved to be hollow, and its faint-hearted efforts to impose a graduated income tax were ineffective. No plan was devised by any party for using the £400 million sterling balance for capital development. Instead, released in instalments by the British Treasury, it simply went to finance current expenditure—which despite this aid ran into a deficit of £42 million.[1]

Added to these frustrations was Britain's slowness in meeting national feeling with some thoroughgoing revision of the Treaty. The political atmosphere was favourable for this, after the war, but too many months were allowed to drift by before any move was made to transfer G.H.Q. and the numerous British garrisons from Cairo and Alexandria to the Canal Zone.[2] It was almost too late to restore confidence when, in May 1946, Attlee announced that the total evacuation of British troops was to be an objective of the negotiations which were now on the point of beginning. Nevertheless the business-like Ismail Sidky Pasha came near to bringing the negotiations to a successful conclusion (he was presiding over one of a succession of minority governments which Farouk instituted after dismissing the Wafd in 1944). The main stumbling-block was still the Sudan, where Egyptian claims that it was a province under the Egyptian crown conflicted with the British intention to allow the Sudanese the right of self-determination.

[1] M. Colombe: *L'évolution de l'Egypte,* 1924-50 (Maisonneuve, 1951), p. 270.

[2] The Citadel was handed over to the Egyptian Army in July 1946, and it was announced that G.H.Q. would be transferred to the Canal Zone by the end of the year.

But not even a strong man like Sidky could carry through a policy insulated from mass emotion, which was rapidly mounting to hysteria. It had been too easy for the entire generation of political leaders since Zaghlul (Sidky was an exception) to divert attention from the practical needs of government and reform to anti-British feeling and xenophobia in general. This continued playing on the emotions of the masses with the object of maintaining or gaining power had produced a Frankenstein which its creators could not control.

It showed itself above all in the fanaticism of the Moslem Brotherhood. This was originally a religious organisation, founded by a schoolmaster, Hassan el-Banna. It favoured a return to the strict practices of primitive Islam in personal and political life, but it soon became a subversive and conspiratorial society whose main approach to solving the country's problems was by assassination. It was considered responsible for the murder of a Prime Minister (Ahmed Maher), of a leading pro-British Wafdist (Amin Osman), and of Selim Zaky, the Commandant of the Cairo Police. When Nokrashy, the Prime Minister after Sidky, took steps to suppress it, he was himself assassinated (December 1948). Eventually it was curbed, its prominent members imprisoned, and its Supreme Guide, el-Banna, mysteriously murdered.

A return of the Wafd to power as a consequence of an unrigged election (1950) led to no improvement in the situation. The 1936 Treaty was denounced (1951), and a 'liberation army' of students, professional thieves, and anyone else who could be gathered together, was directed against the British in the Canal Zone.

The British reinforced their position—their 80,000 troops were far in excess of the numbers allowed by the Treaty—and did their best without Egyptian labour which, as a consequence of agitation, was withdrawn. Retaliatory measures culminated in the capture of the Ismailia police barracks after a gun-fight in which 50 auxiliary police were killed.

The next day, 'Black Saturday' (January 26, 1952), the mobs, led by the 'Socialist' group of Ahmed Hussein and the Moslem Brethren, murdered Europeans and burnt down the Turf Club, Shepheard's Hotel, European shops and places of entertainment. It

was not until the evening that the army was called in to restore order, when the centre of Cairo was looking like a city after the blitz.

In fact the army remained as the sole potential source of law and order in the country. Its humiliating defeat by Israel had stirred many of the officers, particularly the younger ones, to feel that they must take action to save the country from chaos. The secret society of 'The Free Officers', as they became, had already been founded by Gamal Abdel Nasser before World War II. It grew rapidly in influence and numbers during the Palestine War when Nasser and several of his colleagues (among them the present Commander-in-Chief, Hakim Amer, and the Minister of Interior, Zakaria Mohieddin) were at the front. Before long it was able to come out into the open, while keeping secret its plans for a *coup d'état*.

As the crisis rapidly deepened in 1952, these plans were advanced. The conspirators included as their front man the older, highly respected Brigadier Mohammed Neguib, who had been unanimously elected as President of the Officers' Club in the face of Farouk's nomination of one of his favourites. At 11 p.m. on July 22, 1952, Hakim Amer, revolver in hand, led a few men to capture all the senior officers of the General Staff, who happened to be in conference. Government buildings, the telephone exchanges and the radio station were occupied. Neguib announced the *coup* over the radio, a new government under one of the old politicians, Ali Maher, was installed, and three days later Farouk was forced to abdicate in favour of his infant son. The general detestation of his régime was shown by the fact that no one opposed his going.

(c) The Military Régime and Social Reforms

THE 'FREE OFFICERS' represented the dynamic element in the Egyptian state, the struggling lower middle and professional class—mostly of peasant stock—state employees like Nasser's father (an assistant postmaster) who were able to give their sons an education which might bring them to the University, the Military School or the Police College. The old Turkish aristocratic families who sent their

sons into the army were few, and when the army came to be expanded after the Treaty of 1936, it was the new lower middle class element who predominated.

Nasser's powerful personality, coolness, flair for decision, and ability to take long-range views, marked him out as the leading spirit among the younger officers. While capable of dissembling his thoughts and plans under a mask of engaging frankness and *bonhomie*, he has been spurred by much genuine idealism and a sincere desire to promote the well-being of Egyptians and of the Arab world in general. At the same time he has a down-to-earth shrewdness, and all a peasant's suspicion of the motives and acts of others. His progress has also been determined by a nice calculation of means for securing his own power and authority.

Neguib's huge success in public relations, both in Egypt and abroad, made it difficult to jettison him when he had, in the view of Nasser's Junta, outlived his usefulness. Up to a point, he was ready to fall in with the radical programme of the young officers, and after a few weeks replaced Ali Maher as Prime Minister (later, on the abolition of the monarchy, he became President). The reason for the dismissal of Ali Maher was his dilatoriness in carrying out the land reform programme, which was a political necessity for the Junta, as well as being the first instalment of the social programme inspired by their genuinely radical sentiments.

These sentiments, together with Arab nationalism, made up whatever elements of an ideology the Junta possessed at the time of the take-over. Major Anwar al Sadat refers to the 'lectures and public debates' which were being held in the army in the period preceding the *coup*; the study of social reform, he says, gave the lives of the young officers 'new meaning'.[1] As most of their families were of peasant stock, and as they still kept in close touch with their relatives in the villages, a square deal for the peasant was high on the list of reform. But equally important was the blow against the royal family, pashadom and feudalism which division of the great estates would effect.

The latter aim was speedily achieved, the former only to a small

[1] Colonel Anwar el Sadat: *Revolt on the Nile* (Allen and Wingate, 1957), p. 86.

extent. The law limiting the size of estates to 200 feddans (in some cases to 300 if two lots of 50 feddans were made over to two children) was by no means punitive, since 200 feddans is a considerable estate in Egypt, in view of the productivity of the soil. But it was followed immediately by another law virtually ending the system of waqfs—estates in mortmain, dedicated to charitable and religious purposes, or more often to the well-being of the founder's family—a system which enabled the big estates to be kept intact, and the Crown to gain control of vast lands. In any case the lands of 'the Mohammed Ali dynasty' were confiscated not long after; the resources accruing to the state in consequence were devoted to the ambitious programme of welfare and health reform.

This programme again was directed largely to improving the lot of the peasants, though the town worker was not neglected either. The land reform did something to improve the lot of perhaps 10 per cent of the peasants directly, in terms of land redistributed to families (three to five feddans per family)—but the number so benefiting was necessarily small, since only some half a million feddans were available for redistribution when the time came. This was largely because landowners sold off a great deal of their land which was liable to confiscation before the law took effect. This anyway brought down the price of land, which together with rents had become immensely inflated in the years before the *coup,* owing to the relentless pressure of the growing peasant population on the land, and the monopolistic control of the land enjoyed by a comparatively small number of large landlords.[1]

The peasants in general benefited by the fall in rents,[2] a gain which was widespread, whereas the raising of families to the level of a yeoman class by directly receiving confiscated lands was the lot of only relatively few. Some peasants were also worse off than before —those who had worked as labourers on big estates, where the land was now farmed by the new yeoman family without hired labour. To deal with this problem and others connected with the already serious over-population, the government intensified efforts to reclaim

[1] 34.3 per cent of the cultivable land was held by proprietors with more than 50 feddans. (Warriner, p. 24.)

[2] Connected with the fall in the price of land, by 50 per cent, due to sales before nationalisation. In 1954 the price of land, and rents, began to rise again.

land, notably in the Tahrir (Liberation) province won from the desert along the west of the Delta. Tahrir has been one of the régime's show-pieces (although the 'conspicuous waste' policy of the first Director caused him to be relieved of his office). It is an area of model villages inhabited by hand-picked, standard-dressed fellaheen, impressive for the fine health and physique which adequate food and hygiene have made possible for themselves and their children.

The contrast between the glistening new villages of Tahrir and the rural slums which make up the villages elsewhere in Egypt could hardly be greater, but these have not been neglected. On the morrow of the *coup* many of the most forward-looking of the younger generation of civilians, notably those belonging to the Al-Ruwwad Graduates' society, offered their assistance to the régime, and these have been the mainstay of the Permanent Council for Public Welfare Services founded in October 1952 as a co-ordinating body for all health, educational, housing and village uplift policies (it paralleled the Council for the Promotion of National Production, which was set up at the same time). The Council for Welfare Services has remarkable achievements to its credit, such as doubling the number of hospital beds, but its most imaginative reform has been the building of 250 Combined Rural Centres.[1] These have brought new life to many remote districts which previously had been completely neglected in all matters of welfare planning. Each Centre is a sizeable building, suitably planned in a modern idiom, and comprises a health unit (run by a doctor with special training); a school, training centre and workshops for rural crafts; a social unit with assembly hall, library and showroom for agricultural and medical exhibits; a co-operative society; and houses for the Centre's employees. Great attention has been devoted not merely to the buildings, but to training men and women who work there, and the fact that the government has sparked off the enthusiasm to bring university graduates and others as doctors, nurses, social workers and teachers to the depths of the country is a new thing in Egyptian history.

[1] Of these, 134 were already staffed and functioning in October 1957. The aim is to provide one such centre for every 15,000 inhabitants—ultimately 864 centres when the scheme is completed. *Report of the Permanent Council of Public Welfare Services* (Government of Egypt, 1955). Also Eva Garzouzi: *Old Ills and New Remedies in Egypt* (Dar al Maaref, Cairo, 1958), pp. 125 ff.

These developments, along with others such as the rapid provision of pure (piped) water to the villages, and the draining of the insanitary ponds, have the effect of making Egypt's birth-rate problem even more acute. A tentative beginning has been made at the Combined Rural Centres and other institutions in encouraging and advising on methods of family limitation, but so far there has been very little response. The ordinary Egyptian is as wedded as ever to early marriages and large families, and when through land distribution or for some other reason a family finds itself better off, one of the first effects is that the men marry earlier, and perhaps take more than one wife. Easy divorce and the tendency of older men to resort to it and take younger wives—while neglecting the progeny of earlier marriages—increases the problem.

The task of the Council for Promoting National Production is to increase the national wealth to the point where the extra 300,000 mouths per year can be fed, and where possibly the standard of living may begin to be raised to the point where a natural demand for smaller families will assert itself. The productivity of the land has indeed been maintained in spite of the breaking up of the big estates, partly because peasant-owners work their land better than share-croppers or ill-paid labourers, partly because of the introduction of co-operative methods of farming and marketing, which virtually have kept all the advantages of the large estates, but in a different form—the state in effect taking the place of the landlord as the co-ordinating agency for the various operations.[1] But this increased productivity (which has especially affected the confiscated Wafd lands) makes only a marginal difference where the satisfaction of the growing population's needs are concerned, and even the large irrigation and industrial programmes, which completion of the High Aswan Dam would make possible, would do no more than prevent the present standard from falling even lower than (for the vast majority of Egypt's population) the already desperately low one.[2]

[1] See Warriner.

[2] One field in which development has been proceeding faster than population growth, since 1952, is education. The drive for school building and for combating illiteracy has produced impressive results. There are now (1957-58) over 750,000 more pupils at school than under the previous régime. (Garzouzi, pp. 22 ff.)

In the field of reform one clear gain was brought to Egypt by the military régime. Farouk, Madame Nahas and the Wafd party boss Serag ed-Din were particularly notorious for their share in the morass of corruption which had infected so many from the highest to the lowest in the land. The Junta carried through an effective cleansing, and if the problem has not been entirely solved, Egypt is no different from other countries in this respect. At least it is nowhere near its former dimensions.

(d) The Sudan

IN THE EXTERNAL FIELD the first problems waiting for the régime to solve were those which had blocked all previous progress—the Sudan and the Suez Canal base. In helping to solve the first of these Neguib performed his last service before being jettisoned by Nasser.

In most respects the Sudan could not present a greater contrast to Egypt. It is a relatively empty country with great agricultural resources for its growing population to exploit. It is also unlike Egypt in that its population is not homogeneous, the negroid tribes, still largely primitive and pagan in the south, differing markedly from the Arabic-speaking Moslems of the north.

In the thirties of the last century the Sudan—a vast territory equal to a quarter of Europe—was conquered for Egypt by the sons of Mohammed Ali. But, except for a brief period at the beginning, Egyptian rule was only effective in the neighbourhood of the scattered garrisons. The country remained the prey of slave dealers and of marauding bedouin tribes.

Ismail Pasha used the services of British, American and other European officers to bring some measure of order into his vast dependency. Most famous of these was Colonel, later General Charles Gordon, who grappled with an almost impossible situation in the provinces of the south, and for a short time was Governor-General of the whole country. But the legacy of Egyptian misrule was too great to be speedily removed by a handful of Europeans. Discontent broke out in the form of a religious rising, led by Mohammed Ahmed, who proclaimed himself the Mahdi or Messiah. A small Egyptian force under a British officer, Colonel Hicks, was

cut to pieces, and the Egyptian garrisons were left beleaguered or without support.

This was the situation when Britain occupied Egypt in 1882. Egypt seemed enough of a burden and the British Government decided to take up no commitments in the Sudan, except to advise evacuation of those garrisons which were still accessible. This was dictated by the policy of reducing all possible expenditure till Egypt should be paying her way.

Though Major Baring (later Lord Cromer) strongly opposed the appointment, Gordon was entrusted with the mission of evacuating the remaining Egyptian troops and civilians from Khartoum. Gordon was a Victorian knight-errant who had found employment in the fight for right against wrong, as he saw it, in China and Palestine as well as in the Sudan. The soul of honour, deeply religious, but individualistic and impulsive, he had caught the imagination of the British newspaper-reading public, and his choice for heading the mission to Khartoum was enthusiastically proclaimed. In fact, his appointment was in large part due to the Government's desire to cash in on Gordon's popularity, for cabinet ministers realised how little reliable he was likely to be.

As the clearer heads had foreseen, Gordon could not bring himself to abandon Khartoum, and with it the whole Sudan, to anarchy and barbarism. He hung on at Khartoum, hoping that a relief force would be sent as the prelude to setting up some kind of stable government which would resist the Mahdi's onset. After much pressure and a long delay, Gladstone reluctantly decided to send a relief expedition. The drama was intense—Gordon in Khartoum rallying a handful of Egyptian troops and the starving population, while the Mahdi's hordes repeatedly attacked the town from all sides. Meanwhile the relief expedition slowly proceeded the hundreds of miles from Wadi Halfa on the Egyptian frontier along the Nile, the whole world watching the outcome of the race. When two river steamers of the relief force arrived opposite Khartoum the Egyptian flag was not to be seen on the wreck of Government House, and the town was desolate. Gordon had been killed only two days before (January 26, 1885).

The relief expedition was at once withdrawn, but Britain had been

aghast at the catastrophe, and Gordon's heroism and tragic end stuck in the public mind. The reconquest of the Sudan was a popular move, when it was undertaken 13 years later. The misgovernment of the Mahdi and of his successor, the Khalifa, would have continued longer, had not the French turned covetous eyes towards the Sudan. In the general 'scramble for Africa' Britain was determined that the Sudan, like Egypt, should not be occupied by any European power except herself. In the event Britain did not stake her claim any too soon. There was a tense diplomatic moment when General Kitchener, commander of the victorious Anglo-Egyptian army, had words with the French Major Marchand at Fashoda, on the head-waters of the Nile, which Marchand's column had occupied after an epic march across the desert. The matter was settled by pressure from Whitehall on the Quai d'Orsay. France's position in face of the growing might of Germany meant that friendship with Britain was more important than imperialist adventures in Africa, and Marchand was ordered to retire.

The conquest of the Sudan was not a purely British affair. The British Treasury was determined that the enterprise should be done on the cheap; hence Egypt supplied two-thirds both of the troops and finance that were needed for the campaign. This led to the thoroughly unsatisfactory régime of Egypt, complete with capitulations and other such obstructions, being introduced into the Sudan. Cromer hit on the idea of a Condominium under joint British and Egyptian rule, whereby the problem was shelved.

This compromise, though satisfactory at a time when Egypt was virtually a British colony, could not last very long. The independence movement under Zaghlul claimed from the first Egypt's sovereignty over the Sudan. The question of its status contributed to the poisoning of Anglo-Egyptian relations for many years.

Egypt's claim to the Sudan was not merely due to having conquered it in the reign of Mohammed Ali, or to have shared with the British in reconquering it later. The claim was also financial, in that Egypt in the earlier years paid considerable sums towards the expenses of government and to laying down the basic rail, road and port communications. The Egyptian Government also paid the units of the Egyptian army, including their British officers, who were part



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of the garrison troops. A fair proportion of Egyptians also took part—though in junior posts—in the administration.

A further consideration is the fact that the flow of Nile water on which Egypt literally depends for her existence is partly controlled from the Sudan. Extra water for irrigating land in Egypt depends in part on building dams in the Sudan—the projected high dam at Aswan, for instance, would if fully carried out involve flooding the Sudanese town of Wadi Halfa and a tract of land many square miles in extent. Virtually all future schemes for flood control or irrigation for the benefit of Egypt are going to affect the Sudan, whether the actual works are constructed within Sudanese territory, or beyond (as in the case of the Owen Falls dam near Lake Victoria). For both countries to gain the greatest benefit from such schemes, and not to penalise each other by wasteful competition for water-supplies which are ultimately limited, a high degree of co-operation is necessary. A tangible witness to Egypt's vital interests is the Jebel Aulia dam, some 30 miles above Khartoum: Egypt supplied the money both for constructing it and for compensating the 70,000 Sudanese families who were displaced by the resultant flooding. The danger of having a hostile power controlling the upper Nile was vividly brought home to the Egyptians by Allenby's maladroit inclusion—as a punitive measure—into the communication which he handed to Zaghlul after Sir Lee Stack's murder in November 1924, of the clause concerning the irrigation of the Gezira area, that it would be increased 'to an unlimited figure as the need may arise.'[1]

This question of water control provided a strong reason for Egypt attempting to seek a close political link with the Sudan, but, understandably, prestige was as important a factor as economics. The slogan 'Unity of the Nile Valley' was a ready rallying cry both for Farouk and the politicians in bidding for popular support. The trouble with their case was that few Sudanese felt really close affinities with the Egyptians. For most Sudanese it was difficult to believe that the sacrifice of independence involved would be compensated by association with a state whose political and social achievements did not impress them. Even the Northern Sudanese are only partly related to the Egyptians by race; they are darker skinned, and

[1] Hurewitz, II, Doc. 43 (2).

become increasingly negroid in type the farther one proceeds up the Nile. The equatorial regions of the Sudan are inhabited by primitive tribesmen, pagans ruled by chiefs and witch-doctors, except where missions have converted them to one or another of the Christian creeds. Only with the coming of independence have Arabic and Moslem influences made much penetration.

The majority of the Sudanese are Moslems who—taking their religion as seriously as they do—tend to regard the Islam of Egypt as decadent. Their often derogatory view is coloured by the fact that they (even the educated minority) have the virtues of less sophisticated peoples—courage, simplicity and honesty.

In the work of government the Condominium was for the most part a fiction. The Sudan was a British colony, perhaps the most efficiently run of all. The higher administrative posts (numbering some 800 towards the end) were staffed entirely by British personnel —army officers at the beginning, with a gradual transition to civilian officials. They established a tradition of honest and efficient government in the interests of the Sudanese people—'an administration,' as an Arab nationalist remarks, 'whose integrity and freedom from corruption are unparalleled in the Near East.'[1] Much of this was due to the steady and often imaginative work in building up the country initiated by Kitchener himself as Governor-General and by his successor, Gen. Sir Reginald Wingate.

The success of British administration in the Sudan was partly due to the fact that it started with a clean sheet. Nothing worthy of the name of government had been left over by the previous régime which had to be considered or adapted in framing new laws and institutions. For the same reason there was no population problem—as in Egypt. The country was left by the dervishes relatively empty: about 1½ million people, compared with what was reckoned to have been 8½ million before their rule[2] and over 10 million today.[3] Just as the Cromer period in Egypt led to a rapid increase in prosperity, so half a century of British rule has brought a degree of contentment and wealth to the Sudan.

[1] E. Atiyah: *An Arab Tells His Story* (Murray, 1946), p. 175. Atiyah was himself for some years in the Sudan Civil Service.
[2] H. MacMichael: *The Sudan* (Benn, 1954), p. 73.
[3] 10,200,000 according to the census of 1955.

For these reasons the Egyptian drive for a political link with the Sudan, backed by a good deal of money and every artifice of propaganda, had only a temporary success.

When Kitchener inspired the building of Gordon College immediately the reconquest was completed, and raised by appeal the necessary funds for the purpose in Britain, cynics scoffed, saying that the real need was for primary schools. The primary schools were indeed established, Gordon College itself functioning as not much more than a primary school in an outsize building to begin with. But Gordon College has outgrown itself several times over, hiving off primary, secondary and technical schools in all directions —and has now been transformed into a University. It has turned out a growing number of graduates who, like their predecessors of Gordon College days, represent the political élite, and have increasingly taken over the posts in the civil service—though not until towards the end of the British régime were they advanced to senior positions.

In local government the principle of indirect rule was successfully applied in the provinces, where the powers of the chiefs were maintained and strengthened. Training in the democratic process began through local councils in 1922, though it was not until 1944 that Sudanese began to have some part in the responsibilities of central government, with the setting up of an advisory council for the Northern Sudan (affairs of the South were rigorously excluded from its competence).

In December 1948, after some stalling due to failure to secure Egyptian consent, this council was turned into a Legislative Assembly with 10 nominated and 65 elected members. In 1952, General Neguib's accession to power in Egypt eased the progress towards self-government for which it was legally necessary to have the consent of both co-domini. Neguib's mother was Sudanese, and having been brought up at Khartoum he was able to appreciate the Sudanese point of view. He broke the deadlock which had existed for years in the discussions between Britain and Egypt on the Sudan by inviting the Umma Party delegation, on their way from Khartoum to London, in October 1952, to consult with him. The Umma were opposed to a link with Egypt so that Neguib's agreement with

them to accept the principle of self-determination cleared the way for elections in which the Umma's strength, relative to that of the pro-Egyptian Ashigga Party, could be freely tested.

In the following year (November 1953) the elections were held under a new constitution which had been worked out by a Sudanese committee under a British chairman. The inauguration of Parliament in January 1954 led to a transitional period, supposed to be for three years, during which Sudanisation of the services was to be carried through, and the future status of the country was to be determined (in the event the whole process was greatly speeded up). Although the elections gave a majority to the Ashigga (National Unionist) Party, the trend towards complete independence was strongly setting in. The effectiveness of Egyptian money and of Major Saleh Salem's energetic propaganda and picturesque stunts was found to be temporary. The Ashigga were in any case never so strongly pro-Egyptian as at one time seemed to be the case. Most of their members were more concerned with preventing the leader of the Umma, Sayed Sir Abdel Rahman el Mahdi Pasha, a posthumous son of the Mahdi, from making a bid for the crown of an independent Sudan. When the Prime Minister, Ismail el Azhari, recognised which way the tide was running, he dismissed from his post of Minister of Works Sayed Mohammed Nur-el-Din, the leading member of his cabinet who stood uncompromisingly for a link with Egypt, and went to Cairo to present the Junta with the facts of the new situation (July 1955). An attempt there, which he considered overbearing, to talk him round simply led to his rebounding even more decisively in the direction of independence.

On August 4, 1955, the Committee on Sudanisation reported that its work was complete (only 153 British civilians, mainly teachers and technicians, were left not under notice), and on August 16 Parliament unanimously adopted a motion that arrangements for self-determination should be put into effect forthwith, and that all British and Egyptian troops should be withdrawn within 90 days. This unanimity made the fairly elaborate arrangements for the transfer of power look irrelevant. These had been worked out after much haggling between Britain and Egypt: their main feature had been the setting up of an international commission to supervise the

process, since the Egyptian Government, with the high hopes it then held of the Sudanese Parliament opting for a close political link with Cairo, did not trust Britain to refrain from throwing her weight against such a decision. But with the new look at Khartoum, Colonel Nasser, with his accustomed realism, began to switch his policy towards one of friendship with a completely independent Sudan, instead of one based on control through some kind of political link. As an earnest of his intentions he sent on long leave Major Saleh Salem, the Minister of National Guidance and Sudan Affairs.

At the end of August 1955 the plan presented by Parliament to the Co-domini for fulfilling its aspirations, was that there should be a national plebiscite, supervised by the international commission, for determining the country's status. This was agreed to by Britain and Egypt, but by the time they had worked out details of the revised commission to do the supervising, Parliament objected to the arrangements, and proceeded to enact the necessary measures for declaring the country's independence without the formality of a plebiscite (December 1955). The solidarity of public opinion on the point was emphasised by a joint statement on the part of Sayed Ali el Mirghani, patron of the Ashigga Party, and Sir Abdel Rahman el Mahdi of the Umma, to the effect that they were completely united in their view of independence as the goal for the country. On December 12 Britain withdrew the Governor-General, Sir Knox Helm, and a week later the Sudan Parliament agreed on a committee of five representative citizens to act as the Head of State. On January 1, 1956, the Sudan formally became a sovereign independent state.

Since then the Sudan has pursued a steady course. The major problem in the long run may turn out to be the relations between the politically advanced Moslem Northerners and the more backward southern tribes of partially christianised pagans. The mutiny of some of the troops in the southern province of Equatoria, and risings in various places leading to the murder of 300 Northern Sudanese, in August 1955 (before independence was declared), was a disquieting sign, and the 'Black Hole' affair of Kosti had also wide publicity. But in both cases the government's prompt investigation and judicial measures did much to restore confidence.

The political unity which was a feature of the last spurt for independence has not lasted. Not long after that aim was achieved the National Unionist Party (Ashigga) split. Sayed Ali el Mirghani, the former rival of Sir Abdel Rahman el Mahdi, withdrew his support from the government, and his followers formed a separate party (People's Democratic Party) which soon joined up with el Mahdi's Umma. This alliance, whether permanent or not, between the two men whose behind-the-scenes influence is still potent, can make and unmake governments: having carried Azhari and his party through with united backing to independence, they now (July 1956) brought about his downfall. The resulting government (Umma and P.D.P.) was confirmed in office by the elections of February-March 1958, though the opposition Southern Liberal Party, standing for a federal constitution, was greatly strengthened. The Northerners have no intention of granting the 2,500,000 Southerners a federal relationship with the north, as this, they believe, would be only the first step towards a demand for complete separation.

Britain still has an economic stake in the country with interests—mostly the outcome of the highly successful Gezira scheme[1]—in growing and purchasing cotton; while Sudanese knowledge of the English language and English ways, and membership of the sterling bloc, gives Britain something of a privileged position in building up trade in general. But far more important in the long run are the less tangible links of friendship and goodwill.

Britain's departure, politically, has cleared the ground for a better relationship than before. As long as Britain was governing the country there was the inevitable reaction against rule by foreigners on the part of a people who were finding their feet. Few Sudanese could escape from some feeling of inequality, of being kept out by British exclusiveness from being given as full a part as they deemed

[1] A vast cotton-growing scheme covering a million irrigated acres between the Blue and White Niles near Khartoum. It has been operated as a partnership between the government, two commercial firms (whose participation ceased in 1950) and the local peasants (who were exclusively given the right of buying land when it was irrigated). It was projected under Kitchener's Governor-Generalship in 1900, but did not come into being fully until 1925 with the construction of the Sennar Dam. It contributes over 50 per cent of the government's revenue. M. Abbas: *The Sudan Question* (Faber, 1952), pp. 7 ff.

possible in the running of their country, and this feeling was occasionally heightened by real or imagined snubs. The Sudanese of the capital tended to resent the Olympian detachment in which the British administrators lived in their houses in Khartoum, surrounded by their spacious gardens, and the fact that the British formed their own circle, had their own club and assumed the air of privileged people. Nevertheless, there is a large fund of goodwill towards Britain, and a growing number of Sudanese come to London and other cities for education or training in various fields. Most of them are Northern Sudanese, for whom the moral values of Islam are still operative. In Britain they find much which they appreciate, but they are also disappointed by the spectacle of what seems to them a civilisation in decline.

Immediately the Sudan achieved independence it became a member of the Arab League, but it does not feel its interests too greatly involved in Arab affairs, from which it preserves a certain aloofness. It showed a formal solidarity with the other Arab League countries in condemning the Suez action of November 1956, but is by no means a supporter of Egyptian policy in general. Formally, too, its foreign policy tends towards neutralism—in the discussions with the American Ambassador-Extraordinary, Mr. Richards, concerning the Eisenhower Doctrine in April 1957, the Sudan Government signified their willingness to receive American aid, as long as there were no 'strings' attached, and they were equally free to accept aid also from communist countries. There is a militant and active Communist Party which encourages the neutralist trend, and as with the Sudan's neighbours, Russia and China are taking pains to woo the Sudan with all their possible blandishments.

(e) Nasser's Egypt in the Cold War

THE CRISIS WHICH SWEPT NEGUIB FROM POWER blew up before the Sudan question was finally settled. With the declaration of Egypt as a republic (June 18, 1953) Neguib had become President—he was already Prime Minister—but eight months later Nasser and his following forced him to resign. At this there was a genuine outcry, manifested by demonstrations, while the Sudanese reaction made it

evident that agreement there might be jeopardised by his fall. The Junta were eager to rid themselves of him, since he insisted on taking the reins into his own hands and refused to be swayed by their decisions, but he was nevertheless reprieved and reinstated in his offices. The Sudan agreements were signed—but Neguib's attempts to find a basis for his personal power by recalling the old political parties were foiled by Nasser's moves at the end of March 1954. A general strike was inspired, ostensibly against the decision about the parties, Neguib's supporters among the more aristocratic elements of the army, notably the cavalry, were dealt with, and he was obliged to hand over the premiership to Nasser. His dismissal from the presidency did not take place until after the dissolution of the Moslem Brotherhood.

Policy towards the Brotherhood had been one of the main causes of clash between Neguib and the Junta. Contacts between Junta members, such as Major Anwar el Sadat and the Supreme Guide, El Banna and others, had been close. The Brotherhood's proclaimed aim of a purification of society and the state by a return to the strict practice of Islam came near to the ideas—as yet only partially formed—of the Junta. When the other parties were dissolved, the Brotherhood, as a 'movement', was permitted to flourish. But fundamentally its ideas clashed with the secularism which was dominant in the Junta's outlook. Nasser had always been wary lest too close relations might lead to the Free Officers being swallowed by the Brotherhood, and the latter's persistent attempts to gain further power made the decision to dissolve them inevitable.

An attempt at assassinating Nasser while he was making a public speech at Alexandria (October 26, 1954), provided the occasion for taking action against them. Demonstrations duly occurred in the course of which the Brotherhood's Headquarters in Cairo were burned down, and the organisation was suppressed. A fortnight later Neguib was relieved of all his offices and placed under house-arrest (November 15, 1954). A 'People's Tribunal'—not the first to stage a propaganda trial under the military régime—condemned some of the Brotherhood's leaders (six to death, eight to life-sentences), and at least 1,000 members were imprisoned.

These actions created many enemies for Nasser. His conclusion

of the agreement with the British for evacuation of the Suez Canal base (October 19, 1954) in some ways improved his position, when it was clear that the British were actually leaving, but fanatical nationalists were against him for having made an agreement of any kind with the British. The agreement was described by the British Ambassador as a 'skinny bird' which needed a great deal of mutual confidence between Britain and Egypt if it was to grow into a handsome fowl. It left the £40 million worth of equipment and installations on a care and maintenance basis supervised by civilians under Messrs. Wimpey, the whole being under direct Egyptian control. The base was to be 'reactivated' and reoccupied by British troops in the event of an attack on an Arab League State or Turkey, by a power other than Israel. The toughest fight in the negotiations had been over persuading the Egyptians to include Turkey in these conditions, and the British to accept that the maintenance men should be civilians, not uniformed.[1]

A brief honeymoon ensued between Britain and Egypt as equal partners, but while relations remained cordial as long as the troops continued to come out of Suez, Egyptian opposition to the Baghdad Pact (winter 1954-5) showed how transient this pleasanter relationship was likely to be. The large-scale retaliatory raid by the Israelis on Khan Yunes in the Gaza strip (February 1955) reintroduced the Israeli question in an acute form, since the army's weakness which was then advertised brought criticism and lost Nasser much prestige in the one place, the army, where he could least afford to lose it. Nasser was tempted to retrieve his standing by turning to Russia for arms—thereby breaking down the arms rationing imposed by the Western Powers under the Tripartite Pact of 1950—and this temptation was increased by the sedulous attentions he received at Bandung in April from Chou en-Lai, Nehru and others. From then on 'positive neutrality' according to the Bandung line became the basis of Egypt's foreign policy, and the outpourings of Cairo Radio were stepped up to support it accordingly. It was a policy of thorough-

[1] The Agreement also gave Britain the rights of 'overflying, landing and servicing facilities for notified flights of aircraft under Royal Air Force control,' at former R.A.F. bases, now to come under Egypt, in the Canal Zone. The agreement was to last for seven years. (Hurewitz, II, Document 105, p. 383.)

going subversion in Jordan and other countries, to be carried through by agents in the guise of military attachés, embassy employees and the numerous Egyptian teachers abroad. The other side of it was the build-up of Egyptian armed strength from Soviet sources, a step which was initiated with Mr. Shepilov, the Russian Foreign Minister, in August 1955—a trading agreement without 'strings', which however could only be met on the Egyptian side by cotton exports (and this was soon to mortgage Egypt's cotton crop for several years ahead).

There had been times in the previous months when Washington had appeared ready to satisfy some at least of Nasser's demands for 'hardware' in return for cash (Nasser had steadily refused to accept gifts of arms on the basis of entering America's 'Mutual Security' arrangements)—but these possibilities had come to nothing, partly because America already had too much of the one commodity which Egypt could export, cotton, and partly because the Zionist lobby was still a power at Washington. The same fate befell Nasser's attempts to obtain a large dollar loan for starting work on the High Dam at Aswan.

This gigantic project had been pronounced sound by the leading irrigation and engineering authorities. It was regarded as the best alternative to that of Egypt's chief irrigation expert, H. E. Hurst, for 'century storage', which depended on a number of international agreements with all the countries from Uganda to Egypt for the construction of a whole series of dams, and was therefore politically difficult to achieve. The High Dam only necessitated Sudanese consent, but—despite Sudanese doubts—it seemed that this might be forthcoming. Hurst himself endorsed the plan, which from Nasser's point of view had far greater propaganda value than 'century storage,' and was built up as such in a nation-wide campaign which penetrated into every school and institution. The International Bank signified readiness to advance a loan ($200 million) if America did the same, and this, in the autumn of 1955, the State Department seemed eager to do. It was prompted in this direction by the apparent intention of Russia to enter the competition with America for buying influence through economic aid. It was difficult to make out how much, if anything, the Russians promised in this

connection, or whether they encouraged Nasser with half-promises and talk of possibilities which were not firm. In any case Nasser played the Russian interest up with a view to getting better terms from the West, and was therefore the more taken aback when America refused his eventual firm request for the $56 million which he had understood had been offered. Britain at the same time (July 19, 1956) withdrew her $14 million share of the loan.

In view of the propaganda in Egypt about the project, this was a stinging blow to Nasser's prestige, suggesting that Mr. Dulles intended to shake him, and perhaps to topple him, as being a leader who was, from the Dulles standpoint, unreliable. With the final evacuation of British troops, celebrated by the immense Liberation Day parade in Cairo only a few days before, Nasser seemed to have gained enough popularity to make up for his previous lack of it, but he could not afford another blow to his prestige. He reacted quickly and a week after the 'great refusal' of Dulles he proclaimed the nationalisation of the Suez Canal and the taking over of the Suez Canal Company's staff, buildings and assets. (July 26, 1956.)

It had apparently been the intention of the Egyptian Government in any case to take over the Canal before the expiry of the concession in 1968. The foreign character of the Company, with its headquarters in France, and the large sums of interest which it furnished annually to its foreign shareholders, together with its monopolistic control of the Canal, made it appear in Egyptian eyes as just another relic of the colonial era. The view was that the Company would run down its physical assets before the eventual date for handing them over to Egypt, besides investing the bulk of its swelling capital elsewhere. It was not trusted. Embryonic staff plans were made for taking it over, but Nasser's need of a prestige blow greatly advanced the operation. An engineer and former military colleague of Nasser's, Colonel Mohammed Yunes, was put in charge of the *coup*, which was so effectively carried through that the Canal continued working without a hitch. The company's employees stayed on under a threat of imprisonment, but when the threat was withdrawn and most of the foreign pilots and other officials left, the Canal still continued to operate smoothly despite prophecies of disaster.

The events which led on to 'Suez' belong as much to British domestic history, and to the fateful involvement of the French in Algeria, as to the history of the Middle East. The vocal group of Conservative backbenchers who opposed what they termed the 'scuttle' from Abadan at least had most of their party with them in lambasting the Labour Government for its policy at that time. But over the evacuation of the Suez Canal base, when they were in opposition to a Conservative Government, their nuisance value was considerable, and it needed all Churchill's prestige and his weighty statement that 'the strategic importance of Egypt and the Canal has been enormously reduced by modern developments of war'[1] to keep them under some control. These were the men whom Eden had to keep on his side, if they were not to sway a majority of the party.

At this juncture it happened that his views coincided with theirs. Like Chamberlain in his dealings with Hitler, and Bevin over Palestine, Eden had struck an attitude of being the conciliator and peacemaker for the Middle East. After years of adulation from a section of the press, Eden's handling of the harsh realities of the Arab World was not to justify the expectations which had been held for him. Three years before he had had a serious operation and though he seemed to have recovered, his health was in reality precarious (he was 58). He was inclined to be overstrung, and consequently to lose his temper. His ill-fated outburst to General Papagos, when the latter had wished to bring the help of his government to a solution of the Cyprus question, was paralleled by his anger against Colonel Nasser. For him, as much as for Nasser, personal prestige was at stake. This view of the situation demanded a show of firmness and a readiness to pursue a 'tough' line at all costs, a role which Eden was not fitted to sustain—far less indeed than his antagonist in Egypt. Eden's powers of judgment and of decision speedily atrophied, despite the appearances to the contrary which were maintained for a few weeks.

Economic sanctions were immediately applied, and Egyptian assets and sterling credits were frozen. But military action was also considered, and might have been speedily undertaken had the armed services been in a position to do so. Both the British and French

[1] In his speech in the House of Commons, July 14, 1954 (Hansard, C.497.)

Governments began to move ships, troops and material, and commando-type training was set on foot with the object of seizing Alexandria and striking direct at Cairo. But this plan was abandoned when it became apparent that the cumbrous military machine would take weeks, if not months, to be prepared for this action,[1] while politically the difficulties in its way came to be more clearly recognised. Eden had to restrict himself to branding Nasser as Enemy No. One: 'Our quarrel is not with Egypt, still less with the Arab World—it is with Colonel Nasser,' as he proclaimed in his broadcast of August 8. 'We cannot agree that an act of plunder which threatens the livelihood of many nations will be allowed to succeed, and we must make sure that the lives of the great trading nations of the world cannot, in future, be strangled at any moment by some interruption of the free passage of the Canal.'

The logic of this statement pointed to a reoccupation of the Canal Zone, since even if some new agreement were made concerning the free navigation of the Canal, reinforcing or replacing the Constantinople Convention of 1888, it could only be enforced against a threat to disregard it by a power or powers which actually controlled the waterway—and since the evacuation of the last British troops from Suez, Egypt was the controlling power. Nasser insisted that he stood by the Convention, that he had proved it by keeping the Canal open, and that it was against Egypt's interest to do otherwise. But Eden, and the large following that thought likewise—including the Labour shadow Cabinet for the first weeks of the crisis—wanted something more substantial than Nasser's promise. They were convinced that some form of international control was required, exercised by a committee similar to the Board of Directors of the Suez Canal Company, in which the French and the British had the major say.

The French insisted on this. Their *amour-propre* was more deeply touched than the British, since the Canal was a French creation, and the Canal Company, despite its 'universal' flavour, largely a French concern. To re-establish their position on the Canal they

[1] Only two landing-craft were immediately available. The rest of the D-day flotilla had either deteriorated beyond repair, or were scattered around the world.

were quite prepared to provoke a situation justifying military intervention. The rebellion in Algeria made it necessary, in their view, to crush Nasser, since the incitements of Cairo Radio were known to be backed up by supplies of arms to the insurgents.

The Americans, however, took a different view. For them the Canal was not a vital waterway, nor had they had any control through the Company's Board of Directors. What happened to the Canal was not of cardinal importance either in the Dulles-Eisenhower strategy for dealing with world communism—the major concern in foreign policy—or in the strategy for the presidential election that autumn. Dulles, with his long experience as a corporation lawyer, was inclined to make a legal approach to the question, and was not prepared to back forceful action unless Egypt was found in breach of international law—and while Egypt might be mostly at fault in breaking the contract, in law she had, as a sovereign power, the right to annul a concession operating on her territory, especially as compensation was promised. The only case that could have been brought against Egypt in the International Court would have been if Nasser had violated the Constantinople Convention by closing the Canal or impeding the passage of shipping.

But this he was careful not to do. Even when most of the non-Egyptian pilots withdrew on September 14 with the encouragement of the Company[1], Colonel Yunes contrived to keep traffic going at only a slightly reduced rate. There was only one state whose shipping was barred from the Canal, Israel, but this ban had been imposed by Egypt since the Arab-Israeli war. Israel had complained to the United Nations about this, and the Security Council had several times condemned Egypt's action. But nothing had been done to enforce its decision, since the only power in a position to enforce it was Britain, and Britain had refused to oppose Egypt on this issue.

Britain was therefore in a weak position to press for satisfaction

[1] Egypt withdrew the threat of imprisonment against them and the Company officials if they refused to continue to work, early in August. On August 14, M. Georges Picot, Director-General of the Suez Canal Company, said in Paris: 'I could tomorrow end all traffic on the Canal if I chose to give the order of repatriation.'

through the United Nations. As British policy over Palestine had shown, Britain had no consistent principle of working through the United Nations or making its decisions effective. For her, the United Nations was a diplomatic channel which could be used or ignored according to the situation. On this point British policy differed from American, since American policy was to work through the United Nations, as in the case of Korea.

But at the start of the Suez crisis, Dulles no more than Eden, favoured a resort to the U.N. He thought that direct negotiations with Nasser, backed by the mobilisation of public opinion—'moral force' as he called it[1]—would bring agreement with Egypt to set up some kind of international authority for the Canal.[2] He realised that patience and persistence would be needed, and pressed for the calling of a conference of the principal Canal users as the best way of focusing the necessary 'moral force'.

The conference of 21 nations, including Russia, duly met at Lancaster House, London, on August 16. At the end of the week, what were virtually the Dulles proposals were agreed by 18 of the participants. Menzies, the Australian Prime Minister, was deputed to take them to Nasser. As was expected Nasser turned them down on the ground that the proposals, if effected, 'would take the Canal out of the hands of Egypt and put it into some other hands.' Instead of proposals which he had either to accept or reject, he called for negotiations and asked that a negotiating body be formed for reviewing the Convention of 1888 and other questions at issue.

For France and Britain the failure of the Menzies mission signified the ending of the attempt to gain their objective by diplomacy, and cleared the way for a solution by force. A new phase in the military preparations began shortly before Nasser received Menzies, when a detachment of French paratroopers moved to Cyprus (August 29), and General Stockwell—already designated as operational commander—flew to Algeria for talks with his opposite number, General Beaufre.

[1] His broadcast from the White House, August 3, 1958.

[2] This was evident from the statement agreed by Dulles with Eden and Pineau after their first conference on the Suez crisis: 'The present action involves far more than a simple act of nationalisation. It involves the arbitrary and unilateral seizure by one nation of an *international agency*.' (My italics.)

To put the brake on Britain and France, Dulles tried another gambit, but it was so hastily thought up that it barely served his purpose, the Suez Canal Users' Association (SCUA). His idea was an organisation, of shipowners rather than states, which could put pressure on Nasser and at the same time make itself independent of him by imposing a boycott on using the Canal. At the least, as long as the question as to whom the dues were to be paid was unsettled, they could be paid to the Association.

Eden, however, took Dulles' idea as one which could supply the needed *casus belli*, and with the aid of the French it was quickly transformed into a militant plan. As he explained it to the House of Commons, recalled in special session (September 12) from the recess, the Association would organise the traffic through the Suez Canal and collect the dues. It would pay to Egypt whatever proportion of the dues it deemed adequate, and would request Egyptian co-operation in working the Canal.[1] If this was refused, Egypt would be held to be contravening the Constantinople Convention, in which case, as Eden said, 'the British government and others concerned will be free to take such further steps as may be required, either through the United Nations or by other means, for the assertion of their rights.'[2]

'By other means' meant force, and both the Opposition and Mr. Dulles became alarmed. Eden was obliged to admit the need of going to the United Nations before resorting to force, but reserved the right to use force 'in an emergency'. Dulles successfully drew the teeth of SCUA by laying it down that no American ship would be allowed to shoot its way through the Canal. At the second London Conference (September 19-21) it became clear that there would not even be enough nations ready to support a boycott.

The next move of Britain and France was to take the dispute to the Security Council. There, during a number of sessions from October 5-13, most of them secret, six principles were agreed between Britain, France and Egypt—for the first time during the crisis genuine negotiations took place, between the Foreign Secretaries of

[1] The Ministry of Transport explained next day that SCUA would run the Canal by wireless from two blockships at either end. The observation of M. Georges Picot of the Suez Canal Company was that this would be like running a railway with engine-drivers but without signalmen or station-masters.
[2] *Hansard*, September 12, 1956, C.11.

all three countries. They affirmed Egyptian sovereignty, and the need for free and open transit through the Canal. They stated that 'the operation of the Canal should be insulated from the politics of any country.' More important, the manner of fixing the tolls was to be decided by agreement between Egypt and the users, and a fair proportion allotted to development: if there were disagreement on this, or about the compensation due to the Company, settlement should be made by arbitration. The full resolution had a second part, laying down procedure for applying these principles. This was vetoed by Russia, but the six principles were accepted.

Progress towards a genuine settlement seemed to have been made, since Egypt's admission of the principle of arbitration was a real concession. This was as much as the West was likely to obtain, since it was clear that Nasser would accept no agreement which had sanctions written into it in case he broke it, although such an agreement was the Franco-British aim. The Egyptians suggested a meeting at Geneva to work out the final details. It seemed that the Dulles policy of patient and persistent negotiation had succeeded.

This might have been the case had not the Israelis decided that the time had come for a major operation against Egypt—whether a large-scale raid or an all-out preventive war was not finally settled until it was launched. The trend in Jordan since Glubb's dismissal was alarming: the projected Egyptian-Syrian-Jordan joint command, eventually established on October 25, was already in the air. Russian arming of Syria and Egypt was ominous; the scale of it, and the siting of the Egyptian strong-points in Sinai, indicated that a preventive war was being planned. After the UN meeting in October, fedayeen raids both from the Gaza strip and Jordan increased.

Early in October the French were apprised of Israel's intention or at least of the possibility of her action. In the event of finding that an Arab state or Israel 'was preparing to violate frontiers or armistice lines,' they were bound, under the Tripartite Declaration of 1950, 'immediately (to) take action, both within and outside the United Nations, to prevent such violation.'[1] But the French ignored the Tripartite Declaration, which indeed had ceased to have much

[1] Hurewitz, II, Doc. 92, p. 308.

meaning both because of Russia's export of arms and because of the growing rift between America and its European allies. Instead they promised French support to Israel and speeded sending her Mystère jet-fighters and other armaments.

The day after the Foreign Secretary, Selwyn Lloyd, returned from handling Britain's case at the United Nations, he took off again with Eden for Paris (October 16). There they were closeted for six hours with the French Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Messrs. Mollet and Pineau, with no one else in attendance. It was probably then that the decision was made to intervene in Egypt in the event of an Israeli attack. In the absence of information it cannot be said that definite action was planned together in the light of a decision which Israel had actually made. Israel's intentions may have been expressed tentatively; the timing of her operation had apparently not been settled; and the British were even left in doubt as to whether it would be against Jordan or Egypt, or possibly both.

For the next fortnight the main British diplomatic effort was directed to preventing an Israeli attack on Jordan, which Britain categorically stated she was bound to assist under the 1946 Treaty. Fedayeen raids from Jordan were met by a severe Israeli retaliation against Qalqilya. With the success of the pro-Egyptian parties in the Jordan elections of October 21, and the negotiation of the Egyptian-Syrian-Jordan joint command by General Amer at Amman (October 23-25), tension mounted further. Eisenhower and Dulles pressed restraint on Ben-Gurion, and convened an emergency meeting of the Tripartite Committee at Washington (October 27, 28). But the French and British divulged no knowledge of Israeli plans at the Committee, while (as the Americans later charged) the contacts between the French and British representatives and their American opposite numbers at Tel Aviv underwent a deep freeze at this time.

One more element came to be added to a world whose political atmosphere was already supercharged. After four days of freedom in Hungary, the Russian tanks surged again into Budapest on October 23, and savage repression began. Despite the urgent need for the whole free world's moral force to be directed to supporting Hungary, it was fatally dissipated by the chain of events which focused attention on the Middle East.

Britain's siding with France and Israel in an attack on Egypt was a dramatic reversal of her Middle East policy, and was at best a colossal gamble—jeopardising, as it was bound to do, the Baghdad Pact and the other alliances and agreements, however precarious they were, which still constituted a network of power and influence in the area. The more successful the intervention in Egypt, the more shattering the effect would be on Britain's position elsewhere—a consideration which did not apply to France, who had long since lost almost all she had once possessed of position and goodwill. Even the destruction of a potential Soviet strong-point in Egypt could not compensate for the more important defeat which the West was bound to sustain, *vis-à-vis* the communist bloc, on the ideological plane, at a moment when, with the Russians crudely repressing a popular rising in Hungary, it should have been a time of victory.

With their eyes myopically set on the Canal and Nasser, the British statesmen seemed unaware of the larger consequences of their action. They seemed to ignore what most of the world would regard as a resurgence of the old imperialism, even if opinion would be clearest on this point in the up-and-coming 'neutralist' grouping of the Afro-Asian states. They ignored the breach with America and the deep rift within the Commonwealth which their actions would precipitate—or if they did not ignore these eventualities, they imagined the risk of them to be worth while.

In the event it was moral force—to use that Dullesian phrase once again—which brought France and Britain to a halt—the moral force of the powers big and small, Arab, Afro-Asian, and South American, together with the outraged reaction of the U.S.A. and the opposition of half the Commonwealth—not to mention the vehement opposition of half the public in Britain itself. This factor, as it could operate through the channels of public opinion, and particularly through the United Nations, was one which the British statesmen underrated, casting grave doubts as to whether they were aware of the realities of the contemporary world—differing in several important respects as it did from the old world which had ended in 1914.

There were two other realities against which Britain and France impinged—the power of America to apply economic sanctions, and

the capacity of Russia to threaten unleashing the Third World War.

Because of the cumbrousness of the allied military machine, its intervention had to be co-ordinated with that of the Israelis, if it was to be effective at all. By the end of October there was a formidable concentration at Cyprus of British and French troops, paratroops and planes; but since Cyprus lacked adequate harbourage, most of its naval component had to be assembled 1,000 miles away, at Malta. The time which this force would take to proceed to Port Said was determined by the cruising-speed of its slowest vessels—in this case the six knots of certain landing-craft—and this imposed a voyage of a week. The French and British Governments were in the difficulty of setting afoot what was to be described as a 'police action' for separating the two combatants, without having the 'police' near enough to do the job. So had times changed since 1882, when a naval force was able to settle down off Alexandria for several weeks before starting its operation.

The French had indeed wished to follow the modern method of a parachute drop whereby the Canal would be swiftly seized from end to end. But the British were more cautious. Nasser's MIGs and other planes would first have to be destroyed, then ground forces brought in by sea, while others would be dropped by air. Further, round-the-clock bombing of military objectives, it was thought, would speedily cause Nasser to topple.

But a whole week of bombing before the ground forces appeared would be too long. To reduce the time, the naval force was to sail from Malta before armed intervention had been declared. Since its movements were secret, it was thought that the public would overlook this fact.

Embarkation took place and preparations were completed on October 27. The next day Israel announced a partial mobilisation, and on the 29th the Israeli army crossed the Sinai border in force. In a lightning campaign on the model of its fastest exploits in the Arab-Israeli War, it overran the static defences of the Egyptians, and having once punched through the toughest point of Egyptian resistance in a hard fought two-day battle at Abu Aweigila (November 1-2) turned the campaign into a rout. The Egyptians were bundled

out of Sinai as unceremoniously as they had previously been pushed from the Negev. With Israeli and Egyptian forces approximately equal at 30,000 men (Nasser having previously withdrawn half his army to the Nile), the Israelis had all the advantages of mobility, training and morale. They were soon within a few miles of the Canal.

Meanwhile, in London (October 30) the Egyptians and Israelis were presented with an ultimatum. They were both to withdraw their forces 10 miles from the Canal to permit an Anglo-French occupation of Port Said, Ismailia and Suez. This occupation was to be temporary in order to separate the combatants and guarantee freedom of transit through the Canal. The Israelis, already 100 miles within Egyptian territory, were bound to agree, the Egyptians to refuse.

The next day the bombing of Egypt began. Nasser's Air Force disappeared: the planes were either destroyed at the aerodromes or flew off to Sa'udi Arabia. Cairo radio station was destroyed—but the Allies could not profit as much as they might have from the unwonted air silence since the entire Arabic-speaking staff of the Sharq-al-Adna station in Cyprus had resigned.

There followed four agonising days, while the Anglo-French air squadrons blasted selected targets in Egypt, before the fleet carrying the ground forces arrived off Port Said. During this time extraordinary efforts were made by the Opposition in Britain—and indeed by all, of whatever party, who condemned the armed intervention —to stop the action. Feeling ran so high that the House of Commons was the scene of unprecedented verbal violence, bordering on hysteria. For the first time in 30 years, the Speaker was obliged to suspend a sitting (November 1). Anthony Nutting, the Minister of State dealing with Middle East and United Nations questions, resigned as did a junior minister, Sir Edward Boyle. An immense crowd assembled in Trafalgar Square on Sunday, November 4, for a protest meeting, subsequently marching to Downing Street where they practically besieged the Prime Minister and Messrs. Pineau and Bourgès-Manoury (the Defence Minister), who had come over to obtain a clear decision on whether the ground forces were to go into Port Said the next day.

Meanwhile, unusually swift action was taken through the United Nations. On the day the Franco-British ultimatum was received, the Egyptian Foreign Minister cabled the Security Council, asking for immediate consideration of the 'threat of force by the British and French Governments to occupy Egyptian territory.' His request arrived just after the British and French had twice used the veto—for the first time—in voting down a resolution moved by America condemning Israel for violating the Egyptian-Israel armistice agreement, and calling on her immediately to withdraw her forces. The Americans were outraged by this unprecedented use of the veto by her European allies, and supported a Yugoslav resolution for an emergency session of the Assembly under the 'Uniting for Peace' resolution of 1950. This was the first time a resort was made to this procedure, originally designed to nullify Russia's strategy of paralysing the Security Council through the veto, by transferring its functions in such a crisis to the Assembly. The French and British objections—which on this issue did not have the force of a veto—were disregarded, and the Assembly met on November 1. Sharply condemning the Franco-British action, Dulles introduced a resolution calling for an immediate cease-fire and repeating the demand for Israel to withdraw behind the Armistice lines. In the small hours of November 2 the resolution was carried (after a sitting noted for the bitter condemnation by almost all delegates of France and Britain), by 64 votes to 5—the minority consisting of France, Britain, Israel, Australia and New Zealand.

Canada had abstained on the vote, and immediately after, Lester Pearson, the Canadian delegate, suggested that arrangements be made for despatching a U.N. force 'large enough to keep these borders at peace while a political settlement is being worked out.' The proposal was warmly supported by America, and when it was expressed in a concrete resolution introduced by Canada the following day, it was passed by 57 votes to none—though Britain, France and the Soviet bloc were among a group of 19 abstainers. The resolution called for the Secretary-General to submit a plan within 48 hours for setting up 'an emergency international United Nations force'.

Within 24 hours the plan was prepared and approved—the same

19 abstaining. Several of the smaller countries agreed to furnish contingents, and General Burns, the U.N. Truce Supervisor in Palestine, was appointed its commander (November 5).

Despite British abstention on these votes the British delegate had already (November 1) stated on government instruction that Britain would be delighted if the United Nations would take over 'the physical task of maintaining peace in the area.' The way was therefore open for Britain, without too much loss of face, to beat a tactical retreat, in which case France would be bound to follow suit.

The U.N. arrangements for an emergency force were passed on the same day that the Anglo-French ground forces landed. Port Said was partially occupied without difficulty, though the capitulation of the city was delayed for 24 hours by Cairo's overriding a local cease-fire which the Governor was prepared to negotiate. Meanwhile, however, Nasser had signified readiness both to accept a cease-fire and receive the U.N. emergency force. Israel, too, accepted an unconditional cease-fire.

The ostensible objects of the 'police action' by France and Britain had been achieved, and this made it even more difficult for them to complete their further objective, the seizure of the entire Canal. On top of this, Egypt had blocked the Canal (locking up £50 million of shipping), while a pumping-station on the I.P.C. pipe-line across Syria had been blown up. It was clear that Britain (and Western Europe as a whole) were to be starved of oil unless America came to the rescue—and that meant an urgent need of dollars at a time when, during October, the sterling area's gold and dollar reserves had declined by $84 million and were still declining rapidly. America would not help unless Britain quickly called off her attack. To this threat was added another from Russia, of rockets on Britain and France, and 'volunteers' for Egypt. From Eden's point of view, perhaps not the least important danger was that a sizeable revolt was brewing both in the Cabinet and in the Conservative Party as a whole. Eden, whose stamina and powers of decision were now completely undermined, could do nothing but give way. The cease-fire came into effect in Egypt at midnight on November 6, by which time the Anglo-French forces had reached El Cap, 25 miles along

the road from Port Said, with the forward patrols barely a kilometre from Ismailia.

The breakdown in Eden's health, necessitating three weeks' holiday in Jamaica from November 21, preceded his resignation on January 9, 1957, and the slow change of British policy under Harold Macmillan. The cost of 'Suez' was being counted, and still is. Far greater than the millions spent on the operation, and on taking oil round the Cape and from America, was the drop in British prestige throughout the Middle East (except in Israel), and its virtual extinction in Egypt.

In Egypt French and British assets and businesses were taken over. Some of their nationals were expelled, with permission to take only a small sum and personal belongings with them; others left as soon as possible. (All but a fraction of the Jewish residents too, many of them families of long standing in the country, were obliged to leave.) This exodus, though hasty, was in the main orderly. Even during the bombings Englishmen were able to walk about Cairo in safety: order was completely maintained. But the taking over of the French and British schools and cultural institutions marked the end of an era.

The two countries and Israel attempted to bargain for guarantees concerning the future régime of the Canal and for curbing Egypt's warlike intentions against her neighbour, but these failed. The French and British withdrew their forces by Christmas 1956 without conditions, and by March the Israelis were similarly back behind the old Armistice lines. The U.N. force had taken over as the ill-fated allies withdrew, and this was the only tangible guarantee which Israel had as a barrier to renewed fedayeen attacks by Egypt, or an outright war. The Egyptian gun-emplacements at Sharm-el-Sheikh, overlooking the entrance to the Gulf of Akaba, were indeed destroyed, and a U.N. contingent placed there, but free use of the Gulf by shipping bound for Israel seemed as far away as ever.

Not only did Nasser survive the onslaught, but his policy continued virtually unchanged both at home and abroad. Steps were taken to proceed with a modified version of the High Dam. The new constitution, held up by the crisis, eventually came into operation, and in January elections took place from a list of candidates,

thoroughly weeded out beforehand by the government. The parliament, though an emasculated institution by British standards, has, however, shown itself capable of useful criticism. It serves to canalise opinion favourable to the régime, and may 'earth' some of the tensions fairly harmlessly.

Of these, the chief is due to the critical attitude of the non-military intelligentsia. The army Nasser succeeds in controlling partly by giving the officers salaries and privileges which make them feel an élite personally indebted to the régime; partly by building up another organisation among the officers on the cell-pattern completely dependent on Nasser, but distinct from that of the old 'Free Officers', which is now in full decay. With most of the latter who were formerly his close associates or fellow-members of the Junta, Nasser now has little contact. Many of them are on the shelf, some under house-arrest. Only the Commander-in-Chief, Field Marshal Hakim Amer, his political adviser, Wing-Commander Ali Sabry, and his Minister of the Interior, Major Zakaria Mohieddin, are really close to him.

But it is the civilians in the administration, indeed in state service of any kind, in whom a nascent spirit of revolt tends to smoulder. They feel put upon by having to serve under soldiers and—whatever their official position or ability—to play second fiddle to officers whom they inevitably regard as less qualified than themselves. The middle class as a whole feels the pinch, for the luxuries, albeit small ones, to which they have been used (their usual brand of tea or tobacco) may be no longer available, or only at black market prices. They are worried too by the continuing inflation.

The students tend towards communism (a minority towards the Moslem Brotherhood). Though the Communist Party has continued under the ban and thousands of communists are in prison-camps, there is still plenty of propaganda circulating, or to be obtained cheaply at the bookstalls. Large numbers of youths are permitted to go to 'festivals' at Moscow and elsewhere. The prison-camp population (16,000 in 1954) presents its own problems, since the camps are turned into training grounds by communists or Moslem Brethren.

In foreign affairs Egypt has lost temporarily since Suez, the

alliance of Sa'udi Arabia. Jordan has more dramatically revolted against Egyptian leadership. But in both cases the switch has been made by the rulers, while the people may be as pro-Nasser as ever. That he has a large following almost everywhere is unmistakable, capable of stirring up trouble of formidable proportions, whether it be in Lebanon or against Aden and the British-protected areas of Arabia.

How far Nasser has reached towards fulfilling the role of which he has spoken[1]—a role which had been wandering around looking for an actor—still remains to be seen. He has indeed filled the part of the leader of Arab Nationalism, but he has not yet made Egypt the accepted leader among the Arab nations. The accession of Syria in the United Arab Republic, and the more tenuous association of the Yemen, bristle with economic and psychological difficulties which cannot easily be overcome. But throughout the Arab world these steps have been hailed as a triumph. More questionable still is his connection with Russia. His forthright refusal in Moscow in May 1958 to accept the next steps which the Kremlin had prepared for him—notably recognising the East German republic—showed again his determination to maintain full independence of action and genuine neutrality as between East and West. Whether he succeeds in this aim depends largely on the Western powers. In August 1958 France took the first step to restoring relations by agreeing to pay £20 million of compensation to Egypt.

Six years after the *coup* which brought him control in Egypt, it is too soon to forecast whether Nasser will succeed in resisting the corrupting effects of power, or whether he will bring the new kind of leadership to the Middle East which it so desperately needs.

[1] *The Philosophy of the Egyptian Revolution.*

Chapter Eleven

CONCLUSION

THE MIDDLE EAST can be viewed either as a focal point in the cold war and a battleground between the Powers, or as the home of millions of our fellow-men whose needs both spiritual and material are crying out to be met.

On the material plane, oil revenues have brought new hope to countries whose prospects were otherwise meagre, while the attempts to raise agricultural production through modern methods and increased irrigation have had considerable success. In some countries like Egypt, where the material future of the masses looks bleak, there may be unexpected developments. The lowering of political and economic barriers would make much more rapid progress possible, and could lead on to an imaginative use of oil revenues for the good of the area as a whole.[1]

Even with the wealth and economic possibilities brought by oil, the Middle Eastern countries need material and technical aid on a large scale if they are to rise above their chronic low standard conditions. Until recently the Western countries had the monopoly in bringing such aid, but now the initiative is moving to Russia. 'In November 1957 the Soviet Union agreed to provide $175,000,000 to finance machines and equipment for sixty-five projects in Egypt, including iron smelters, steel mills, shipyards, textile mills and other enterprises. Czechoslovakia has agreed to provide Egypt with $56,000,000 in credits for industrialisation.'[2] Equally the Western monopoly for providing the higher education and technical training which cannot be had in the Middle East is being broken into by Russia. The Minister of Education of the United Arab Republic signed an agreement with the Russians in May 1958, whereby the U.A.R. is to send 300 groups of students and trainees annually to

[1] Emile Bustani: *Doubts and Dynamite* (Allan and Wingate, 1958).
[2] Report to U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee by C. D. Dillon, Deputy Under-Secretary for Economic Affairs, 1958.

Soviet universities, higher institutes and research centres, while the Soviet Union is to send teachers and scientists to universities in the U.A.R.

In their efforts to gain prestige and influence the Americans have spent vast sums in granting material and technical aid, but even in this respect, as in others, American policy has fluctuated because the aim has been obscure. The Eisenhower Doctrine has been simply the extension of America's post-war policy of drawing a line through the various troubled areas of the world and saying, 'Thus far and no farther'. It is questionable whether it has been a factor in keeping the Middle East clear of armed intervention by Russia, since it is doubtful how much this ever was, or will be in the near future, the real problem.

Whereas the Western nations have often been divided on important issues of policy, the planners in the Kremlin can look at the Middle East as a whole and frame a general policy for it, because they make their decisions in accordance with an ideology whose aims are concerned with the total situation (as they see it) in the world. The State Department also tries to see the Middle East in relation to the cold war. But to counter communist moves is one thing (for China's influence too is growing in the Middle East); to have a positive aim for the Middle East in terms of an ideology for democracy which is world-wide in scope, is another.[1]

An ideology 'is significant only if it makes those who profess it act in a way they would not otherwise do'.[2] An ideology in this sense, concerned with global issues, implies a faith in a set of basic principles, together with a determination to remake the world in accordance with them. Communism is an ideology of power—its adherents aim at replacing 'capitalism' by a new economic and social order. This alone does not explain the appeal which communism has in the Middle East today—far more this is due to communism's alliance with nationalism, and the fact that it provides a crude substitute for a spiritual faith. In any case ideas—communist, socialist, nationalist, religious—are the decisive factor in the Middle East,[3]

[1] Paul Campbell and Peter Howard: *America Needs an Ideology.*
[2] R. Carew Hunt in *Problems of Communism,* March 1938, p. 14.
[3] 'Prestige in the Middle East today rests on ideas, not armies' (Professor Sir H. A. R. Gibb, in 1949).

and the 'free world' will only carry weight there if it shows that it has a worthwhile idea to offer.

Fundamentally the West has a far better idea than communism —not just liberal-democracy, parliaments, government by discussion and the rule of law, excellent though these things are. It is respect for the individual and for the nationhood of nations, small as well as great. It means a genuine concern and caring for the other person and his country.

Although our ideals are irreproachable, we need to see more clearly the difficulties we make for ourselves, which hinder our efforts to persuade other people of their value. 'O wad some po'er the giftie gie us, to see ourselves as others see us'—something needs to knock the scales from our eyes, so that (speaking as an Englishman) we see ourselves with our patronising and condescending airs, our ingrained sense of superiority, and our dutiful desire to dominate.

These are characteristics which are noticed even by our friends in the Middle East—let alone those who are less friendly. But a necessary first step to becoming different is to realise the kind of person one is. The readiness to admit our mistakes and as far as possible to put them right is the first stage in building the necessary confidence, and this is also the surest way of dealing with the frustration and bitterness of which we have been the often unwitting cause. If this were to happen, the West, in the words of Premier Abdalla Khalil of the Sudan, 'would discover an immediate response from the Arab world. Instead of intensifying bitterness, she would cure it; instead of multiplying hatred and misunderstanding she would heal it; instead of suspicion and fear of her motives she would find that justice and honourable understanding can be born.'

Are we not mistaken in assuming that it is primarily material interests that are at stake in the Middle East? 'Everyone talks of oil and strategy, but no one talks of the people', was a recent comment by Dr Nasrollah Fatemi, the Iranian oil expert. Russia's success in the Middle East has come not only from choosing a line which was bound to be popular, nor from putting across her propaganda with skill. The Russians have also paid attention to people, and deployed immense effort to win them. Personalities visiting Moscow have super red-carpet treatment, while the ordinary visitors

—youth delegations, technicians or officers, who are invited to the other side of the Iron Curtain—are looked after with the greatest care.

It needs a good deal of character to resist the blandishments that are offered. The approach to one young Arab nationalist of a famous family while he was at a British university was through a girl, who used her friendship with him to offer suggestions about policy for his country's students. But a challenge to put his life on a sounder basis led him to break off this relationship, and this enabled him to see what was involved in her suggestions that he should lead a sizeable youth delegation from his country to the Moscow Festival. With a new standard in mind for his country's youth, he worked swiftly with the Prime Minister to call off the Moscow trip and substitute another policy.

This young man found something in Britain and America which challenged him in his Moslem faith—and there are many in the Middle East today who are trying to find reality through their ancestral beliefs. The new stirrings in Islam, from Turkey to the Sudan, and from Morocco to Pakistan, have reached the point of affecting government policy in various ways (particularly interesting in this respect is the attempt of the Turkish Government, with its secular Kemalist tradition, to come to terms with the new spirit, for instance in making provision for religious instruction in schools). It is precisely on this point, however, that the ideologues of Moscow are out of their depth. For years a fervent campaign has been carried on among the Moslem peoples in the USSR to weaken and denigrate Islam, and though Moscow has a habit of dealing in contradictions, it does not find it easy to carry through a policy abroad which makes room for this new spirit in Islam.

This spirit takes various forms, but in its most characteristic expression it is not narrow and intolerant but liberal and world-wide in its view. 'All people are brothers whatever religion they have', proclaims a Turkish writer of this new school,[1] and the Ayatullah Mojtahedi of Nishapur (Iran) speaks of 'the light of hope for every country . . . the application of a universal moral standard

[1] See P. J. Vatikiotis in *Tensions in the Middle East* (editor P. W. Thayer), p. 169.

which will remove from society the causes of disintegration and bloodshed, and create unity'.

Many fervent nationalists have something of this spirit, as appears in a number of articles in *Al-Adaab*, the Beirut monthly review, attempting to formulate an 'Arab ideology'. Sa'adun Hammadi, for instance, speaks of Right (*al-haq*) as the final aim of Arab nationalism, since the tendency towards Right in the heart of every man is expressed, at its highest, in a nation bringing its special gifts to the service of a common humanity.[1]

Moscow is on unfamiliar ground in dealing with these manifestations in the Middle East, but the Western countries—if their professed ideals mean anything—should be well able to move in harmony with them. Every year thousands of Arabs, Iranians and Turks come to the West on business or as students, yet only a few find the kind of positive challenge such as had a decisive effect on the young nationalist mentioned above. It is the same story when the West comes to the Middle East. In the words of one of the most respected Lebanese: 'America is in danger of making all the mistakes that England and France have made in the Middle East. The Sixth Fleet may help us for the moment, but these young sailors roll ashore, patently conscious that they come from the richest and strongest nation in the world, which is conferring great gifts upon the poor benighted and needy races elsewhere—and then we have to sweep them off the streets in the morning and cart them back drunk to their boats'. He went on to say 'American juvenile delinquency and race conflict undercut all Western efforts. Every race riot or injustice is fully reported. We don't want to be like that.'

Most thoughtful people in the Middle East would agree that the democratic way of life is a desirable goal, provided it can be attained without those blemishes which are part of the Western practice of it. Democracy has some reality in Turkey, but in other Middle Eastern countries, even where there are parliamentary forms, the methods are authoritarian. This is inevitable, because (as we have seen only too clearly in Europe) democracy can only exist in a country when there are enough people with the iniative, honesty and sense of responsibility to make it work. Democracy is a matter of

[1] See article by Nissim Rejwan in *The Middle East in Transition*, p. 151.

character and standards, and these are largely the product of home life. An increasing number of the up-and-coming professional and middle class, who are taking on leadership in the Middle Eastern countries, are aware of this fact. They realise, for example, that much depends on a change in the position of women, and in new standards in home and family life, and many of them are setting themselves to apply these standards in practice. If we in the West can help in this evolution, it is only by example—on the political level in national policies, and on the personal level in our relationships. If in our own countries we can strengthen 'those inner authorities on which the life of democracy depends', if we can effectively fight corruption, racialism, loose morals and Machiavellian methods on our own home ground, we shall be in a fair way to pass on to the peoples of the Middle East those things of which they stand in most urgent need. But no amount of fine words, or speeches about freedom on our part, can help in the least.

A sense of purpose is basic to a sound morale. The peoples of the Middle East need to have an idea as to where they are going; but so equally do we. They, if any, are well placed to bring about the great reconciliation which must ultimately come about between East and West, and to work out the new social forms which will render obsolete the sterile conflict of capitalism and communism.

Political or economic 'solutions' which do not touch the root of the difficulties merely lead to new problems taking the place of the old. The political pieces in the game may be arranged in a certain way, but new leadership is necessary on the part of a dynamic few who are committed to bringing healing to the nations. It was precisely this factor coming into such a situation in the far west of the Arab world, Morocco, which led to the return of Mohammed V to his throne in October 1955, in an atmosphere of calm détente which few had thought possible, in view of the bloodshed and disturbances which had shaken the country only a short time before. In this case the chain reaction which led to the request by El Glaoui, the Pasha of Marrakesh, for the return of Mohammed V, and his public apology to the latter, began with a French *colon* who apologised to a young nationalist leader for his attitude of superiority. There were several circumstances pressing El Glaoui to take this step,

but without this hitherto missing factor he might have postponed it indefinitely. Similarly at the United Nations General Assembly in August 1958, when there were many good reasons why the Arab states should find a solution to their deadlock, it needed an initiative in a new spirit by men like Abdel Khalek Hassouna, the Secretary-General of the Arab League, to show the way to an unexpected agreement.

The *colon* and the statesmen were bringing to the hard facts of politics the approach called for by the Arab leader who said: 'the problems of government which confront the statesmen will not be solved without the secret of a change of heart. It will lift men everywhere above the hates and jealousies fostered by selfish interests, and recall them to the creative inspiration which comes from obedience to the Will of God'.

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