THE MIDDLE EAST BETWEEN THE WORLD WARS

By Joseph T. Stanik

World War I and the subsequent peace settlement were fateful developments in modern Middle Eastern history. During this critical period, civil, military and religious leaders grappled with imperial politics and the growing momentum of modern nationalism. Most of the Arab world labored under the yoke of European imperialism during this era, while some nations, such as Turkey, Persia (later Iran), and Saudi Arabia, attained full independence. It was also at this moment that the Arab-Israeli conflict began in earnest, marked by the emergence of Zionism and large waves of Jewish immigration to Palestine. Turkish nationalists, led by a charismatic general, drove off Western occupiers, terminated the feeble Ottoman Empire, and established a secular republic. In Iran, soldiers and civilian leaders ended British and Russian dominance over the country and replaced the weak Qajar shah with a military strongman who implemented a program of modernization.

Chapter Glossary

Aliyah: Term used to describe the immigration of Jews to Palestine/Israel.
Allies: (1) International coalition that fought and defeated the Central Powers during World War I; major Allied powers included the British Empire, France, Russia, Italy, Serbia, Japan, and the United States; (2) international coalition that fought and defeated the Axis powers during World War II; the five major Allied powers were the British Empire, France, the Soviet Union, China, and the United States.
Arabian American Oil Company: Known by the acronym ARAMCO, developed and operates the oil industry in Saudi Arabia; now solely owned by Saudi Arabia.
Arab Mandates: Arab territories of the defeated Ottoman Empire governed by France (Syria and Lebanon) and Great Britain (Iraq, Palestine, and Transjordan) on behalf of the League of Nations; the stated aim was to prepare the mandates for eventual independence, but was viewed by many as veiled colonialism.
Armenian Genocide: Policy carried out by the Ottoman government (1915-1920) to remove approximately two million Armenians living in the empire and suspected of supporting the Allies, particularly Russia; an estimated 1.5 million Armenians died and many others were expelled from the country.
Axis: States fighting the Allies during World War II; comprised of Germany, Italy, Japan, Bulgaria, Hungary, and Romania; defeated by the Allies.
Balfour Declaration: Statement of the British foreign secretary in 1917, supporting the establishment of a Jewish national home in Palestine.
Central Powers: States fighting the Allies during World War I; comprised of Germany, Austria-Hungary, the Ottoman Empire, and Bulgaria; defeated by the Allies.
Der Judenstaat (The Jewish State): Pamphlet written by Theodor Herzl (1896), in which he proposed a Jewish state as the best solution to anti-Semitism.
Fourteen Points: U.S. President Woodrow Wilson’s peace plan during World War I called for self-determination of all peoples and establishment of a League of Nations.
Gallipoli: Unsuccessful Allied campaign in the Dardanelles (1915-1916); its strategic goal was to open the Turkish Straits as a supply route to Russia.
General Syrian Congress: Convened in Damascus in 1919 and declared an independent Arab Kingdom of Syria in 1920, with Faysal Ibn Husayn as king.
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and secularization. In the Najd region of Arabia, a young man from a centuries-old ruling family led a band of religiously motivated tribal warriors to unite most of the Arabian Peninsula under the House of Sa’ud. In this chapter, we will examine the experiences of the European-controlled Arab Mandates, trace the rise of Zionism which led to the creation of modern Israel, and investigate the unique and significant cases of independent Turkey, Iran, and Saudi Arabia.

The Arab Mandates

The colonial powers, Great Britain and France, had propped up the ailing Ottoman Empire throughout the 19th century, but as Allies in the First World War they did little to prevent the empire from joining the Central Powers. They did not hold Ottoman military strength in high regard and, most significantly, they coveted Ottoman territory. Having decided that the opportunity to break up the empire had arrived, they advanced their imperial interests, usually in cooperation with each other. The British sought secure lines of communication to India, while the French wanted all of Syria. Each Ally appreciated the other’s aims in the region, but each was committed to maintaining a substantial presence in the region vis-à-vis the other. Their desire for Ottoman lands assured the final demise of the empire.

During the war, both Arabs and Jews believed that specific British documents—the Husayn-McMahon Correspondence in the case of the Arabs and the Balfour Declaration for the Jews—served as the bases for their presumptive states. Yet to win the war and preserve their empire, the British government made several contradictory pledges. They promised to support an independent Arab state carved from the Arab lands of the Ottoman Empire, while offering much of that territory to the Jews and French. In the case of the latter, Great Britain placed an extremely high value on continuing the wartime alliance with France, another colonial power that hoped to retain its empire. The Balfour Declaration and the Anglo-French entente regarding imperial goals effectively negated the
promise made to the Arabs under the Husayn-McMahon Correspondence.

After the war, the victorious Allies were confronted with two conflicting views of the postwar Middle East: U.S. President Woodrow Wilson’s Fourteen Points, which espoused self-determination, and European imperial aims, laid out briefly above. In many cases, Arab nationalists would not achieve full independence in their countries until after World War II. Instead, they witnessed the transformation of Arab lands of the defeated Ottoman Empire into mandates, entities that would be administered and prepared for independence by the Great Powers of Europe, namely Great Britain and France, who neither acknowledged the national desires of the Arab people nor sought their consent. The 1916 Sykes-Picot Agreement, a secret understanding between Britain and France, was the key instrument that divided the region into zones of European control. France was granted hegemony over Syria, Lebanon, and southern Anatolia, while Britain was awarded Iraq, Palestine, and the future Transjordan. The Balfour Declaration, issued in 1917, signaled the British government’s support for the establishment of a Jewish homeland in Palestine and sparked a century-long dispute over the territory inhabited today by both Israelis and Palestinians.

Arab nationalists felt double-crossed by the Great Powers and moved to form their own independent government, the Damascus-based General Syrian Congress. Meanwhile, Wilson, whose Fourteen Points supported Arab self-determination, appointed a commission to investigate the situation on the ground and ascertain Arab public opinion regarding national sovereignty. The King-Crane Commission found that the Arab population sought an independent Arab state and warned that implementation of the Balfour Declaration would lead to conflict between Arabs and Jews. At the Paris Peace Conference, the Allies did not take up the commission’s report. In early

Notable Figures

Arthur James Balfour: British foreign secretary (1916-1919); issued the Balfour Declaration (1917), an official statement supporting the creation of a Jewish national home in Palestine.


Eliezer Ben-Yehuda: Newspaper editor and lexicographer of the Hebrew language; after immigrating to Palestine in the late-1800s, revived Hebrew as a modern, spoken language.

Sir Percy Cox: British Indian Army officer and long-serving diplomat; as acting minister in Persia, negotiated an agreement with the Persian government that would establish a British protectorate over the country; the agreement was rejected by the Persian parliament.

Theodor Herzl: Journalist and founder of political Zionism; after witnessing anti-Semitism in France in the mid-1890s, advocated a state governed by Jews.

Abd al-Aziz Ibn Abd al-Rahman al-Sa’ud (Ibn Sa’ud): Arab warrior and political leader; brought most of Arabian Peninsula under Saudi rule; first king of Saudi Arabia (1932-1953).

Muhammad Ibn Abd al-Wahhab: Founder of the Wahhabi sect, a puritanical Muslim movement, in Arabia in the 18th century; formed an alliance with the influential Sa’ud family that lasts to this day.

Abdullah Ibn Husayn: Son of Sherif Husayn of Mecca; major participant in Arab Revolt during World War I; amir and later king of Transjordan (1921-1951).

Faysal Ibn Husayn: Son of Sherif Husayn of Mecca; leader of Arab Revolt against Ottoman rule during World War I; king of Iraq (1921-1933).

Mustafa Kemal (Ataturk): Turkish general, nationalist leader, and the republic’s first president (1923-1938); his program of westernizing reforms transformed the country.

Reza Shah Pahlavi: Persian military leader and founder of the Pahlavi dynasty; as shah (1925-1941), carried out a series of modernizing reforms, including changing the country’s name to Iran.

Woodrow Wilson: 28th president of the United States (1913-1921); advocated the principle of self-determination at the 1919 Paris Peace Conference following World War I.
1920, the Syrian Congress declared an independent Arab kingdom and selected Faysal Ibn Husayn, the politically astute son of Sherif Husayn of Mecca and, along with T.E. Lawrence, a prominent leader of the Arab Revolt against the Ottomans, as the country’s ruler. At the San Remo Conference, which convened immediately after the Arab proclamation, the Allies formally established the French mandates in Syria and Lebanon and the British mandates in Palestine and Iraq. Arab independence abruptly ended when invading French forces seized control of Syria and forced Faysal to flee the country.
These developments, and many that followed, still haunt the Arab world today. To maintain order in the Iraq Mandate in the face of anti-colonial insurgencies, the British installed Faysal as king in 1921. In 1932, the British ended the mandate and granted Iraq limited independence; for example, Britain retained the right to defend the country from external threats. The early 1940s were tumultuous, highlighted by a pro-Axis coup d’etat in 1941 that threatened to give great influence (and access to Iraqi oil) to the Germans. British forces intervened, installed a friendly government, and buttressed the Hashemite monarchy, which governed until 1958, when it was violently overthrown, and the Republic of Iraq was proclaimed.

Meanwhile, the French employed a “divide and rule” strategy in the Syria Mandate (initially including Lebanon), which deepened sectarian divisions and rivalries among the local population of Christians, Sunni and Shi’ite Muslims, Druze, and Alawi. The French carved out a separate Lebanon Mandate, which was governed by a bare Christian majority, created short-lived Druze and Alawi mini-states, and favored the Alawi in positions of military and civil leadership in Syria. The Syrians frequently rebelled against French colonial authorities during the mandate era but would not achieve their independence until after World War II. (Lebanon was awarded its independence in 1943.) The legacies of the French-mandates are readily evident in Lebanon’s confessional-based parliamentary government, its long sectarian civil war between a growing Muslim population and ruling Christians, and the current Syrian civil war, in which the governing Alawi elite is battling for survival against several rebel factions—secular, ethnic, and religious.

Transjordan was originally part of the Palestine Mandate. In 1920, Abdullah Ibn Husayn, brother of Faysal, occupied Amman with a force from the Hijaz and prepared to raid French-held Syria. In an attempt to stabilize the area east of the Jordan river and pacify Abdullah, British officials installed him as the amir of Transjordan, which was subsequently detached from the Palestine Mandate. The British hoped that the local tribes would accept Abdullah as their ruler, since he was a member of the Hashemite clan of the Prophet Muhammad. In 1928, Transjordan became a separate mandate, and in 1946 the British granted independence and elevated Abdullah to king.

The Rise of Zionism and the Creation of Israel

Zionism, a movement that emerged in the late-19th century, united the theological desire of the Jewish people to return to their biblical homeland with the modern political idea of creating a Jewish state. Despite some theological underpinnings rooted in a notion of “return,” Zionism is more of a political ideology than a religious movement. It can be defined as the belief that the Jewish people, like others in Europe at the time, had the right to establish their own nation, free from persecution. A
Zionist is a person who supports the establishment of such a nation. By the end of the 19th century, leaders of the movement decided that the Jewish homeland would be in Palestine. It is also important to note that not all Zionists are Jews, and not all Jews are Zionists. Ultra-Orthodox Jews believe that only the Messiah (not political leaders) can lead the Jewish people back to the Promised Land. Many evangelical Christians are Zionists, because they believe that the migration of all Jews to the Promised Land must precede the return of the Messiah. Indeed, many non-Jews support the right of the Jewish people to establish a homeland in Palestine. It can be argued that every American president starting with Harry Truman has been a Zionist, because each has pledged to uphold the security of the State of Israel.

Prior to the late-19th century, the Jews of Western Europe were primarily concerned with maintaining their identity and traditions and surviving in diaspora. Starting in the late-18th century, they experienced greater tolerance and started assimilating into European society, where they would be viewed as citizens of the countries in which they lived. By the 1800s, their social status had improved considerably. In Eastern Europe, however, anti-Jewish sentiment was more widespread. In late-19th-century Russia, the czar permitted pogroms, or organized persecutions, against the Jews, which led to “cleansing” areas of their Jewish populations. As a result of these devastating pogroms, an increasing number of Jews migrated to Palestine in what became known as the First Aliyah (migration) (1880s-1903). The olim (migrants) aimed to create a socialist utopia, but Palestine proved to be a harsh, unhealthy, and unfriendly environment for the settlers. Consequently, few olim remained permanently in Palestine, and Jewish migration declined sharply.

named **Theodor Herzl**, who had witnessed a new wave of anti-Semitism in France, wrote *Der Judenstaat (The Jewish State)*, advocating a modern state for the Jews. He and other Zionist leaders established the Jewish National Fund to purchase land in Palestine from absentee Ottoman landlords whose land had been rented for generations by Palestinian families. The *olim* of the Second Aliyah, which began in the aftermath of the 1905 Russian Revolution, worked diligently to establish basic institutions in Palestine, such as schools, factories, *kibbutzim* (communal farms and industries), and political organizations. They founded the city of Tel Aviv, and the lexicographer **Eliezer Ben-Yehuda** revived Hebrew as a modern spoken language. (See “Diversity & Pluralism: Languages in Connection” in this volume for more detail on this fascinating linguistic revival.)

The First World War further spurred political Zionism. Jewish communities and Zionist organizations had an important presence in the major Allied capitals, namely London, Paris, and St. Petersburg, where Zionists sought support from the warring powers. The British-Zionist relationship culminated in November 1917 with the Balfour Declaration, which, as detailed above, committed the British government to the establishment of a “national home for the Jewish people” in Palestine. It further pledged that the civil and religious rights of the non-Jewish population in Palestine and the political
The British never succeeded in establishing a set of institutions to govern the Arab and Jewish communities, address their demands, and advance their communal interests.

While the British were officially bound to the Balfour Declaration, its vague language and the difficulty of governing an increasingly divided populace in the Palestine Mandate inevitably resulted in unrest and violence. Despite some efforts to regulate immigration, waves of Jews continued to arrive in Palestine in large numbers, especially after Hitler's rise to power in Germany. The Arab population was increasingly angered by and resisted further Jewish settlement. The British never succeeded in establishing a set of institutions to govern the Arab and Jewish communities, address their demands, and advance their communal interests. Britain's failure to effectively govern the mandate exacerbated the divide between the growing Jewish population and Palestinian Arabs, and also led to conflict between the Zionists and British authorities.

With another world war on the horizon, the British sought better relations with the Arab world in order to enhance the security of strategic communications, such as the Suez Canal, and maintain access to vital sources of petroleum. In 1939, London issued a White Paper that essentially negated the Balfour Declaration by severely restricting Jewish immigration and promising an independent Palestine within ten years. Arab leaders, wanting immediate independence, rejected the paper, but most rank-and-file Arabs hailed it as a victory; on the other hand, the Zionists maintained their tenuous alliance with Britain against Nazi Germany but felt betrayed.

In February 1947, with violence escalating, the British turned the Palestine question over to the United Nations. The U.N. Special Committee on Palestine studied the conflict but could not agree unanimously on a solution to resolve the issue. In November, the U.N. General Assembly approved the committee's majority recommendation: the establishment of separate Arab and Jewish states. The Arab world roundly condemned the U.N. decision. Nevertheless, on 14 May 1948, the British mandate came to an end, and David Ben-Gurion, a Zionist leader who became Israel's first prime minister, declared Israel's independence. Israel's Arab neighbors--Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, Syria, and Transjordan--attacked the next day. Thousands of Palestinians fled their homes, many believing that they would soon return. That day, still vividly remembered by Arabs each May 15, is known as the Nakba (catastrophe). In 1949, a set of U.N.-negotiated armistice agreements, but not a peace settlement, was reached between Israel and Egypt, Transjordan, Lebanon, and Syria. The agreements established boundaries between Israel and the bordering Arab states that would stand undisturbed until 1967. The momentous events of the first half of the 20th century, namely the
failure of the British mandate in Palestine and the violent birth of the State of Israel, remain central in the consciousness of Palestinians and Israelis to this day.

**Mustafa Kemal Ataturk and the Republic of Turkey**

The First World War and the turmoil and suffering that followed were disastrous for the Ottoman Empire. Over 3 million people living under Ottoman rule died between 1914 and 1922; approximately 1.5 million were Armenians, who perished during mass deportations, regarded by many as the Armenian Genocide. The economy was prostrate; farms and villages were devastated; and brigands, many of whom were unemployed war veterans, roamed the countryside.

One of the most famous campaigns of the entire war took place at Gallipoli (1915-1916), where the Ottoman military led by General Mustafa Kemal thwarted an Allied invasion of the Dardanelles. The months-long battle elevated Kemal to national hero and laid the groundwork for his leadership of republican Turkey. When the Ottomans signed in October 1918 the humiliating Mudros Armistice, which allowed the Allies to occupy Istanbul, the Turkish Straits, and major portions of Anatolia, unrest and dissatisfaction among veterans’ societies abounded. This prompted the government in May 1919 to send Kemal to pacify the groups in eastern Anatolia, but instead he joined them, took charge, and soon formed a proto-national government. He called for complete independence, sovereignty over territories with a majority Turkish population, and an elected government. He also called for popular resistance to Turkey’s foreign occupiers: the French, Italians, British, Greeks, and Armenians. That same month, the Greeks landed with Allied approval an army to secure the Aegean Coast of Anatolia. Their march eastward galvanized Turkish resistance and by 1922 led to a crushing defeat, the pivotal event in the establishment of an independent Turkish republic with its new capital in Ankara.

Kemal was elected the country’s first president. He abolished the caliphate, which had been resident in Istanbul since the early-16th century, and declared Turkey a secular state. His reform agenda, known as Kemalism, was a vigorous program of modernization and secularization. His secular measures included the abolition of Islamic law, religious courts and schools, and Sufi orders. Sunday became the day of rest, and the country adopted the Western calendar. Women were guaranteed equal rights in marriage, divorce, and inheritance, and they could vote and run for public office. Free, compulsory education was mandated, and a secular curriculum was implemented. Arabic script, used in Ottoman Turkish, was replaced with the Roman alphabet. Pursuing a program of state capitalism, the government expanded and modernized the railroad, mining, textile, steel, cement, glass, and paper industries. Finally, in 1934, the Grand National Assembly decreed that every family adopt a Turkish surname; Mustafa Kemal was given the name and honorary title of “Ataturk” (father-Turk).
Ataturk died in 1938. His victories over the country’s enemies, establishment of the republic, and far-reaching reforms fostered great pride within the Turkish nation. Kemalism remains an important ideology, albeit contested by many Islamists and others in Turkish politics and society.

Iran under Reza Shah Pahlavi

After World War I, Britain’s foreign policy was consumed with safeguarding access to sources of petroleum and forging links between far-flung parts of the empire, such as the “Cairo to Cape Town axis.” The British attempted to bring Persia into the imperial system, which would establish “connectivity” (continuous territory under British control or dominance) from Egypt to India. In 1919, Sir Percy Cox, the British acting minister in Tehran, formally negotiated a British protectorate over Persia, but the Persian parliament, the Majlis, rejected the treaty.

The Persians did not regard Communist Russia as great a threat as Czarist Russia had been and, in 1921, signed a Treaty of Friendship with the Soviet Union, advancing commercial relations. That same year, a military strongman, Reza Khan, began his rapid ascent to power. By 1925, he had become the dominant national authority, and the Majlis proclaimed him shah (Reza Shah Pahlavi). Inspired by and in dialogue with Ataturk, Reza Shah Pahlavi also instituted a comprehensive set of social reforms to modernize his country. Promoting secularism, he instituted a French legal system, confiscated clerical property, imposed European dress, established secular schools, and initiated compulsory primary education. In contrast with Ataturk, he did not abolish the Arabic alphabet, but in 1936, he abolished the veil for women, which caused great discontent.

One of Reza’s enduring legacies is his advancement and revival of pre-Islamic Persian culture. He instituted the ancient solar calendar, took the dynastic name Pahlavi, which was the name of the Persian language before Islam, and gained international recognition of the country’s name as Iran, which recognized its Aryan (Indo-European) origins.

He also rid the country of foreign troops, subdued rebellious tribes, raised a professional army of over 100,000 troops, streamlined finances and tax collection, and built over 15,000 miles of roads and a
railroad system. The Trans-Iranian Railway was the epitome of Iranian independence, with all construction funds raised from higher tariffs and taxes on tea and sugar. His new elementary and secondary schools competed with traditional religious schools, and he also inaugurated Tehran University. Significantly, he succeeded in breaking the power of the nomadic tribes that resisted central authority.

As World War II approached, the British were very concerned about Germany’s very close commercial ties with Iran. When the war broke out, Reza declared his neutrality, but the Allies were still very concerned that Germany would maintain its influence in Iran. After Hitler invaded the Soviet Union in 1941, the Allies put enormous pressure on Reza Shah to abdicate. He stepped down in favor of his 21-year-old son Muhammad Reza, who, given his age and lack of experience, was regarded by the Allies as more compliant than his father. Muhammad Reza Shah Pahlavi, who would become a close ally of the United States, maintained his grip on the throne until his ouster during the fateful 1979 Islamic revolution led by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini.

**Ibn Sa’ud and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia**

From the 16th to early-20th centuries, Arabia existed on the fringes of the Ottoman Empire. In the mid-18th century, the Wahhabis, under Muhammad Ibn Abd al-Wahhab, formed an alliance with the influential al-Sa’ud family of the Najd region of central Arabia. The Wahhabis followed the Hanbali school of Sunni jurisprudence, the strictest and most austere of the four Sunni schools. The Sa’ud-Wahhabi movement gained immediate dominance over the other central Arabian tribes, and the Sa’ud family established a ruling dynasty. While the 19th century brought turmoil and tribal rivalry over control of Arabia, in the early-20th century, Abd al-Aziz Ibn Abd al-Rahman al-Sa’ud (later known as Ibn Sa’ud) forged a kingdom that united nearly all of the Arabian Peninsula. He acquired his state through conquest, which included ejecting Sherif Husayn from the Hijaz, and exercised power through a large ruling family and extended tribal federation. The British recognized him as the king of this vast domain, and in 1932 his state was officially named the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. He enjoyed close, friendly relations with Great Britain and later the United States.

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Teaching the Middle East: A Resource Guide for American Educators

Between the World Wars
Ibn Sa’ud sought Western technology and expertise yet demanded respect for his country’s traditional culture and society. In 1933, he granted the Standard Oil Company of California (Chevron) a concession to explore for oil. In 1938, the California Arabian Standard Oil Company (CASOC), a Chevron subsidiary, discovered oil in commercial quantities at Dhahran, but full-scale production was delayed until after World War II. In 1944, CASOC became the Arabian American Oil Company (ARAMCO); by 1950, ARAMCO and the Saudis agreed to a 50-50 split of the profits. The following year, the United States and Saudi Arabia signed a mutual-assistance defense agreement to provide for the security of the country’s strategic oil assets.

Under Ibn Sa’ud’s leadership, the Saudi government began investing the country’s growing oil wealth in comprehensive social services and infrastructures such as schools and colleges, roads and railroads, reservoirs, ports, telephone and telegraph lines, a postal system, and hospitals. The production of oil inevitably affected the economic, social, and cultural life of the country and created tension between modernizing reformers and the Wahhabi establishment. Within three decades following World War II, Saudi Arabia had attained one of the highest per capita incomes in the world, and the Sa’ud family had become very influential leaders in the Arab world. Ibn Saud ruled until his death in 1953; his sons have governed ever since. Wahhabi influence is still dominant, but the kingdom is slowly and cautiously carrying out a number of social reforms.

In the next chapter, we will examine the end of the colonial era in the Middle East, focusing on Egypt’s long struggle for independence, the creation of the State of Israel, and inter-Arab political affairs during the early decades of the Cold War.
Discussion Questions/Essay Topic

**Directions to Teacher:** Have students read the following excerpt from *The Jewish State* by Theodor Herzl (*The Middle East and Islamic World Reader*, revised edition, edited by Gettleman and Schaar, pp. 165-68) and answer the five questions below in one or more complete sentences. Review student responses, checking for understanding.

**Student Instructions:** Compose a well-thought-out short essay that addresses the following questions informing your audience about the topic we have been studying. Be sure to include specific references to the text(s) that are correctly cited, use proper grammar, and include introductory and concluding statements and transitions where appropriate.
1. According to Herzl, what are the conditions that preclude Jews from staying where they live?

2. What is Herzl's plan for the Jews, which is “perfectly simple”?

3. Herzl argues that the departure of the Jews to a new land must not “be a sudden one.” What will the “poorest” Jews (the first to go) do in their new country?

4. In Herzl’s view, immigration must be carried out with “sovereign right,” not through “infiltration.” Explain why.

5. Explain Herzl’s view toward establishing the Jewish state in Palestine.

For Further Exploration

Flash Forward: Today's Jewish Aliyah and the fight for the Palestinian Right of Return

Have students spend time exploring the following websites, which represent two agencies who facilitate the process for today’s olim to move to Israel and start new lives there.

The Jewish Agency for Israel
http://www.jewishagency.org/aliyah
The Jewish Agency for Israel’s mission states that it “brings Jews to Israel, Israel to Jews and helps build a better society in Israel and beyond.” Their vision is to “ensure the future of a connected, committed, global Jewish People with a strong Israel at its center, and inspire Jews throughout the world to connect with their People, heritage, and homeland, and empower them to build a thriving Jewish future and a strong Israel.”

Nefesh B’Nefesh
http://www.nbn.org.il
In cooperation with the Israeli government and The Jewish Agency for Israel, Nefesh B’Nefesh is dedicated to revitalizing Aliyah from the USA, Canada and the UK by removing or minimizing the financial, professional, logistical and social obstacles of Aliyah and the move to Israel.

Then, have students explore these two links for a sense of the Palestinians’ fight for recognition of their “Right to Return.”

The Palestinian Right to Return: Why Palestinians Have a Right to Return Home
A thorough examination of the legal rights of all those displaced by the creation of the state of Israel in 1948.

Al-Awda, The Palestine Right to Return Coalition
http://al-awda.org
A broad-based, non-partisan, democratic, and charitable organization of grassroots activists and students committed to comprehensive public education on the rights of all Palestinian refugees to return to their homes and lands of origin, and to full restitution of all their confiscated and destroyed property in accordance with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, International law and the numerous United Nations Resolutions upholding such rights.

**Opinion/Persuasive Essay**

Using the above sites as a starting point for research, think about who is and isn’t allowed to move to Israel at the present moment. Using what you’ve learned from this chapter and supplementing with additional research, write a 1,000-word essay defending either present-day Aliyah (Jewish immigration to Israel) or the Palestinian Right to Return. Support your argument with legal and/or other evidence.
Teaching Tool
Kemalism’s Reforms and Society

Halide Edib (1884-1964) was a Turkish novelist, nationalist, and advocate for women’s rights. She served in the Turkish army during the Greek war and was a strenuous supporter of the new republic, but she soon clashed with Ataturk over the political direction of the country. She argued for democratic institutions, but he insisted that the achievement of his far-reaching reforms come first. The government soon accused her and her husband of sedition, prompting them to flee the country. They returned after Ataturk’s death. In her critical account of Kemalism (The Middle East and Islamic World Reader, revised edition, edited by Gettleman and Schaar, pp. 127-32), she writes: “The nature of the leading reforms effected by the dictatorial regime in Turkey confirms, as will be shown, the assumption that they are the continuation of Westward movements long under way and are not any sudden departure from the main line of progress which the Turks have taken.”

Discussion Questions/Essay Topic

Directions to Teacher: Have the students read the aforementioned excerpt written by Halide Edib.

Student Instructions: In a well-thought-out short essay, identify and describe three reform efforts, mentioned in Edib’s essay, that were begun before Mustafa Kemal Ataturk undertook his program of modernization, known as Kemalism.
Teaching Tool
The Rise of Saudi Arabia

Students read the following excerpt from *Our Faith and Your Iron* (1963) by William A. Eddy:

[Background: Arabia entered the modern world in the twentieth century when the conquests of Abd al-Aziz Al Saud (Ibn Saud) united much of the peninsula as Saudi Arabia. Late in the 1930s, the discovery of vast reserves of oil brought the first modern industry to the country. Although World War II prevented the immediate development of Arabian oil, Saudi Arabia was saved from financial disaster. Its national income increased from millions to hundreds of millions of dollars annually. Until Arabian oil became a major industry after World War II, the rule of Ibn Saud was that of a tribal sheik. Any of his subjects could visit him to discuss personal problems. The following selection describes Ibn Saud and how modern life clashed with tribal life in Saudi Arabia. Its author, Colonel William A. Eddy, USMC, was the first United States Minister to Saudi Arabia. Eddy served in the Middle East during World War II and was Franklin D. Roosevelt’s interpreter during the President’s 1945 meeting with Ibn Saud at the Suez Canal.]

Back in 1944-1946, Ibn Saud explained to me his simple rule of thumb in dealing with our godless, materialistic West: We Muslims have the one true faith, but Allah gave you the iron which is inanimate, amoral, neither prohibited nor mentioned in the Koran. We will use your iron, but [you] leave our faith alone.

Ibn Saud spelled this out in conversation. The Koran regulated (from the cradle to the Resurrection) all matters of faith, family, education, marriage, inheritance, property, and home, which must not be touched by unbelievers. Our patriarchal authority and the veiling of women are none of your business. On the other hand, you have much which we need and will accept: radio, airplanes, pumps, drilling rigs, and technical know-how. This acceptance of technology was far in advance of his people, and the King had to fight many battles with bigots to win support for his suspected friendship with Christian governments and his cordial partnership with the Arabian American Oil Company [Aramco].

Colonel William A. Eddy, USMC (kneeling); King Abd-al Aziz Ibn Abd al-Rahman al-Sa‘ud; and President Franklin D. Roosevelt on board the **USS Quincy** in the Great Bitter Lake of the Suez Canal; February 14, 1945. Col. Eddy served as interpreter at this meeting.
Fortunately for the old King's peace of mind, he died before learning that his “Faith and Iron” could not coexist insulated from each other for long. With the machine comes the educated machinist, and with the engine the enlightened engineer, who wants the more abundant life to which we were raised, freedom and education for his wife and daughters, the right to raise his voice in politics, religion, and sex—the three topics of every campus. However, Ibn Saud was a brave pioneer in bringing in the “iron” which provided oil, income, railroads, transport, and, above all, more water [to] his thirsty land. But the opposition to him, for years, was stubborn and fierce.

Photography, for example. Islam takes seriously and literally the Second Commandment to make no graven image nor any likeness of any living thing. Sculpture and painting, impudent attempts to imitate the Creator, are [forbidden], sweeping away the idols of the polytheists [believers in many gods] who flourished in Arabia before Mohammed, but also casting a blight on all the fine arts so far as live subjects are concerned. And yet, Ibn Saud was convinced by the engineers that photography was essential, especially aerial photography to locate roads and geological foundations. When American photographers began to operate with his permission, he was denounced by bigots for [betraying] Islam. He summoned his detractors and convened the ulama…and put forth questions: Painting and sculpture are idolatry, but is light good or bad? The judges pondered and replied that light is good; Allah put the sun in the heavens to sight men’s path. Then asked the King, is a shadow good or bad? There was nothing in the Koran about this, but the judges deduced and ruled that shadows are good, because they are inherent in light, and even a holy man casts a shadow. Very well...said the King, then photography is good because it is nothing but a combination of light and shade, depicting Allah’s creatures but leaving them unchanged. The battle was won in the King's characteristic way, by persuasion and not by force. The King again fell afoul of the bigots in the mosques when he introduced the wireless telephone, for him a godsend in his vast desert land...as it put him and his officials in instant touch with events in remote oases, and made it easy to eliminate tribal wars and banditry. The orthodox were horrified. For a man's own voice to be carried hundreds of miles, as clearly as though he were speaking in the next tent, meant that Satan and the jinn were carrying the sound. Black magic at the best and [the devil] at the worst. Our King has sold his soul to the devil of the American unbelievers! So the King gathered the rebel theologians and told them to divide themselves into two groups, one to remain with him at the capital of Riyadh, and the other to go to Mecca, 400 miles away. At the appointed hour, some days later, the King bade one of the mosque Imams [prayer leaders, to] read a chapter of the Koran at Riyadh into the transmitter, and one of the Mecca group then read it back, with the text attested as audible at both ends by many witnesses. “What does this test prove, except your guilt?” asked the critics. The King replied, “Read your Koran. Does it not say that the devil and his [followers] cannot pronounce even one word of our Holy Book? This miracle therefore is not of the devil but of nature.” Another battle won.

**Discussion Questions/Essay Topic**

**Directions to Teacher:** After the students complete reading the excerpt of William A. Eddy’s *Our Faith and Your Iron* (above), have them answer the following four questions in one or more complete sentences. Review student responses, checking for understanding.

**Student Instructions:** Compose a well-thought-out short essay that addresses the following questions informing your reader about the topic we have been studying. Be sure to include specific
1. Explain King Abd al-Aziz al-Saud’s (Ibn Saud’s) give-and-take relationship with the West.
2. What does the author, William A. Eddy, say about the future of that relationship?
3. Explain how Ibn Sa’ud goes about winning his battles with the *ulama* over photography and the wireless telephone.
4. In your opinion, was oil a blessing, a curse, or a combination of the two for the people of Saudi Arabia? Explain your answer.
Sources and for Further Reading

General References:


Readings on the Interwar Period:


MEPC (Middle East Policy Council) Resources

“The 1973 War: Link to Israeli-Egyptian Peace” by Ofer Israeli

“The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: Lessons for a Breakthrough” by Galia Golan

“The Original “No”: Why the Arabs Rejected Zionism, and Why It Matters” by Natasha Gill

“Revisionist Zionism: The Founder, His Disciple, and Their Chief Adversary” by Michael Rubner

“Terrorism and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict” by Jerome Slater

“The Troubles in Syria: Spawned by French Divide and Rule” by Ayse Tekdal Fildis

“Turkish-Israeli Relations: Their Rise and Fall” by Umut Uzer

“Twilight of Colonialism: Mossadegh and the Suez Crisis” by Ofer Israeli
Common Core/Standards

Common Core/Standards/College, Career, and Civic Life (C3)

Anchor Standards Reading

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.1
Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.4
Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.10
Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.

Anchor Standards Writing

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.1
Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.2
Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.4
Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.5
Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.8
Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the usefulness of each source in answering the research question; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism.
and following a standard format for citation.

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.9**
Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.10**
Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

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**Anchor Standards Speaking and Listening**

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1**
Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9-10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.4**
Present information, findings, and supporting evidence clearly, concisely, and logically such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and task.

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.6**
Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.

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**Social Studies ELA Standards by Subject/Grade (9-10)**

**Reading: Informational Text » Grade 9-10**

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.1**
Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.4**
Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone.

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.10**
By the end of grade 9, read and comprehend literacy nonfiction in the grades 9-10 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range. By the end of grade 10, read and comprehend literary nonfiction at the high end of the grades 9-10 text complexity band independently and proficiently.

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**History/Social Studies » Grade 9-10**

Between the World Wars
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.1
Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, attending to such features as the date and origin of the information.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.4
Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary describing political, social, or economic aspects of history/social science.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.10
By the end of grade 10, read and comprehend history/social studies texts in the grades 9-10 text complexity band independently and proficiently.

ELA Writing» Grade 9-10

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.9-10.1
Write arguments focused on discipline-specific content.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.2
Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.9-10.4
Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.9-10.5
Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.9-10.8
Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the usefulness of each source in answering the research question; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.9-10.9
Draw evidence from informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.9-10.10
Write routinely over extended time frames (time for reflection and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

NCSS Themes

1. Culture
Through the study of culture and cultural diversity, learners understand how human beings create, learn, share, and adapt to culture, and appreciate the role of culture in shaping their lives and society, as well the lives and societies of others. In schools, this theme typically appears in units and courses dealing with geography, history, sociology, and anthropology, as well as multicultural topics across the curriculum.

2. Time, Continuity and Change
Through the study of the past and its legacy, learners examine the institutions, values, and beliefs of people in the past, acquire skills in historical inquiry and interpretation, and gain an understanding of how important historical events and developments have shaped the modern world. This theme appears in courses in history, as well as in other social studies courses for which knowledge of the past is important.

5. Individuals, Groups and Institutions
Institutions such as families and civic, educational, governmental, and religious organizations, exert a major influence on people's lives. This theme allows students to understand how institutions are formed, maintained, and changed, and to examine their influence. In schools, this theme typically appears in units and courses dealing with sociology, anthropology, psychology, political science, and history.

NCSS C3 Framework

D2.Geo.5.9-12.
Evaluate how political and economic decisions throughout time have influenced cultural and environmental characteristics of various places and regions.

D2.Geo.6.9-12.
Evaluate the impact of human settlement activities on the environmental and cultural characteristics of specific places and regions

D2.Geo.10.9-12.
Evaluate how changes in the environmental and cultural characteristics of a place or region influence spatial patterns of trade and land use.

D2.His.1.9-12.
Evaluate how historical events and developments were shaped by unique circumstances of time and place as well as broader historical contexts.

D2.His.4.9-12.
Analyze complex and interacting factors that influenced the perspectives of people during different historical eras.

D2.His.5.9-12.
Analyze how historical contexts shaped and continue to shape people’s perspectives.


Analyze multiple and complex causes and effects of events in the past.

D4.3.9-12.

Present adaptations of arguments and explanations that feature evocative ideas and perspectives on issues and topics to reach a range of audiences and venues outside the classroom using print and oral technologies (e.g., posters, essays, letters, debates, speeches, reports, and maps) and digital technologies (e.g., Internet, social media, and digital documentary).