Trouble in the Middle East: two soldiers of the United Nations Emergency Force stand guard in the Gaza Strip, between Egypt and Israel (1957).

Webb McKinley

TROUBLE IN THE MIDDLE EAST

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CONTENTS

Introduction:
The Two Vows 3
I What It's Like 7
II And Oil 22
III The Ancient Past 27
IV Enter the Arabs 34
V The Ottoman Empire 52
VI Arabs and Jews 65
VII World War I 69
VIII Trouble in Palestine 85
IX The Birth of Israel 91
X Nasser and the Arabs 104
XI The Non-Arab States 136
XII Israel and the Arabs 144
XIII The Suez-Sinai War 154
XIV The Six-Day War 163
XV The Quest for Peace 174
Index 197

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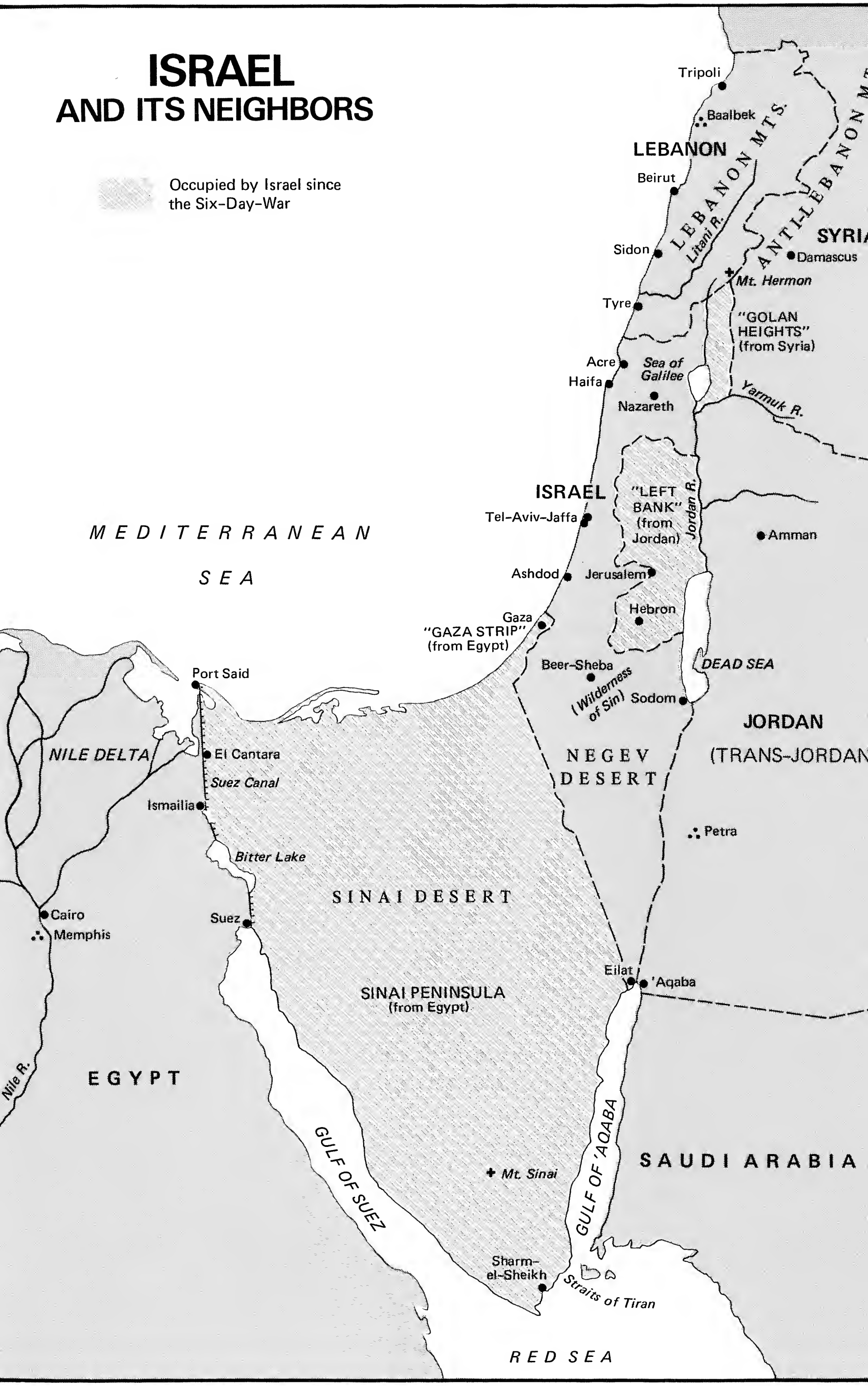
TROUBLE IN THE MIDDLE EAST



ISRAEL
AND ITS NEIGHBORS

▨ Occupied by Israel since the Six-Day-War

Tripoli
Baalbek
LEBANON
LEBANON MTS.
ANTI-LEBANON M
Beirut
Litani R.
SYRIA
Sidon
Damascus
Mt. Hermon
Tyre
"GOLAN HEIGHTS" (from Syria)
Acre
Sea of Galilee
Haifa
Nazareth
Yarmuk R.
ISRAEL
"LEFT BANK" (from Jordan)
Jordan R.
Tel-Aviv-Jaffa
Amman
MEDITERRANEAN
SEA
Ashdod
Jerusalem
Hebron
Gaza
"GAZA STRIP" (from Egypt)
DEAD SEA
Beer-Sheba
(Wilderness of Sin)
Sodom
Port Said
JORDAN
(TRANS-JORDAN
NILE DELTA
El Cantara
NEGEV DESERT
Suez Canal
Ismailia
Petra
Bitter Lake
SINAI DESERT
Cairo
Suez
Memphis
Eilat
'Aqaba
SINAI PENINSULA (from Egypt)
Nile R.
EGYPT
GULF OF 'AQABA
SAUDI ARABIA
GULF OF SUEZ
Mt. Sinai
Sharm-el-Sheikh
Straits of Tiran
RED SEA

Introduction

THE TWO VOWS

The vows were made two months and three days apart, but they clashed like the sound of swords.

When the first vow was made, a few fires still burned in Jerusalem, and smoke and dust from the battle hung in its usually crystal air.

"We have returned to our holiest of holy places," the soldier said, "never to be parted from it again."

The words were spoken by General Moshe Dayan, defense minister of Israel, as he stood for the first time in nineteen years before the Wailing Wall. It was 2:00 P.M. on the third day of the Six-Day War between Israel and its Arab neighbors, and for Dayan they were words of triumph. Only four hours previously, Israeli troops had broken through St. Stephen's Gate into the old, Arab-held city. It had been a punishing battle. Jordan's Arab Legion was the best of the fighting forces, and the Legionnaires were fighting for a prize they, too, held dear.

It was the sacred city and the sacred area prized by three religions, and the Jews' Wailing Wall was in the very heart of it.

Three more days of fighting were ahead; thousands were still to die in this swift war. Nonetheless, for Israelis, the emotional peak had been reached. They had taken all Jerusalem, the city of God. For the first time in nearly two thousand years, the Jews—not the Romans, Greeks, Arabs, or Turks, not the British or Jordanians—were in control of the holiest of holy places.

So, on June 7, 1967, Dayan stood there. It was at the western wall of the holy area, believed to be the only remaining part of the Second Temple, which the Romans had destroyed in A.D. 70. First, in keeping with Jewish tradition, Dayan wrote a note—a prayer for peace in Israel—and inserted the paper in a crack between the large, honey-colored stones. Then he made his vow, ". . . never to be parted. . . ."

The second vow, an Arabian vow, was made the following August 10, in a modest stone palace in Amman, the capital of Jordan. On the eve of his fifteenth anniversary as ruler of this desert state, Jordan's King Hussein said: "We are determined not to cede any part of our beloved land or any stone of our sacred Jerusalem. Jerusalem is the sacred city to Arabs, Moslems, and all believers in the world. Jordan," he said, "is determined to die" to regain it.

These were words as defiant or desperate, as Dayan's were triumphant. Spoken two months after the end of the June war, the words were uttered from the depths of humiliation. The Jews had returned to Jerusalem, and the Arabs had, for the first time since the Crusades, been denied it. Worse for them, this was their third defeat in nineteen years at the hands of the Israelis—and this time they had lost much more than their pride. Not only was Jerusalem gone, but also Jordan's entire West Bank, the richest part of the country and the Arabs' only gain in the first Palestine War in 1948. Egypt had lost the Sinai peninsula. The Suez Canal was closed. The Gaza Strip, with its teeming refugee population, was in Israeli hands. So was Syria's tactically favored Golan Heights, looking down on the Jordan Valley and the Israeli settlements beside the Sea of Galilee.

So, two vows were made: one to stay in Jerusalem and one to regain it at all costs. Did these two men—the soldier and the king, the Jew and the Arab—mean them? True, words are often

Israeli soldiers crowd around General Moshe Dayan.

like the desert winds in the Middle East. They blow and are gone. In the Arab world, in particular, they are often intended only as local zephyrs to cool the home audience. But these vows were made by men known for conviction and courage. Their words had the ring of sincerity and the force of history behind them.

Five years later, in 1972, the king backed away a little from his do-or-die stand. He proposed a new status for Jerusalem in which Jews and Arabs would share, or perhaps divide, sovereignty. But it was an empty-handed gesture, and Dayan scorned it as "worse than absurd," and other Arab leaders rejected it angrily. The two vows were there, as if entrenched in history.

With their stark contrasts of aim and promise, they might have symbolized, in a way, the story of the Middle East, its hopes and tragedies, the deep split in its personality, the tremendous difficulties that have confronted the peacemakers, and the dangers for the rest of the world.

They were only symbolic of the dangers, of course. The peril did not lie so much in a showdown between Israel and Jordan, but in another general Israeli-Arab war. Strife in the Middle East continually becomes larger than itself. The supercountries—the United States and the Soviet Union—waited in the wings, supporting the actors with varying enthusiasm, whispering cues, and going quite frequently unheard.

I

WHAT IT'S LIKE

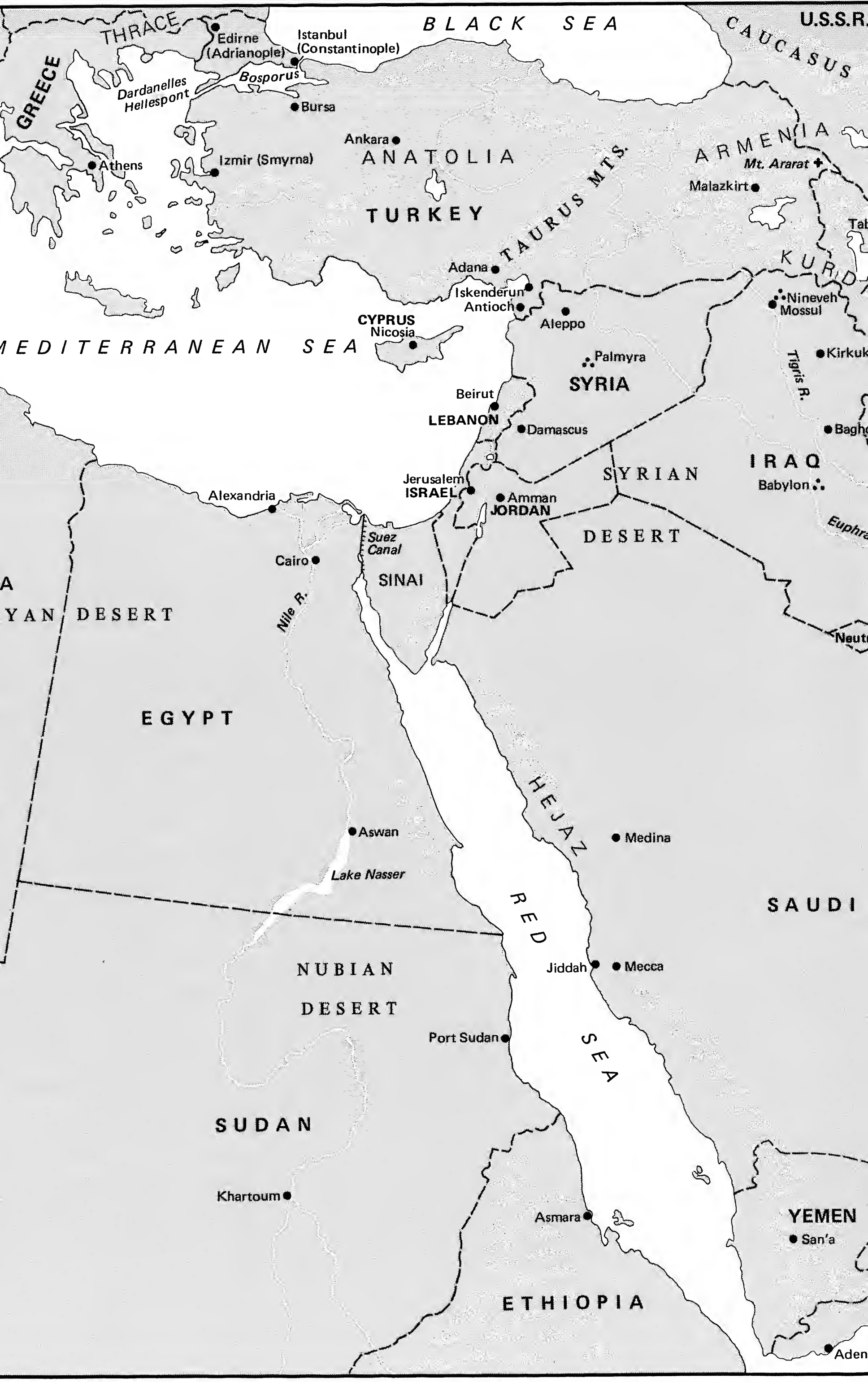
The first foreign power to try to influence events in the Middle East may well have been the snake in the Garden of Eden. At any rate, outsiders have long felt compelled to meddle in the region's affairs for reasons mischievous, moral, economic, or imperial, or simply because it was there.

We must look in closer detail at some of the reasons for trouble in the Middle East: the birth of three great religions in the area; the clashes of ancient dynasties; the geopolitical visions of such men as Alexander the Great and Napoleon; the rise of rival nationalisms; the modern quest for oil; and the overshadowing struggle today of the Arab nations and Israel.

First of all, however, what exactly is the Middle East? What, if anything, does its location have to do with the endless fascination it has held for men? What kind of a place is it?

More than anything else, it is a crossroads. It stands as a land bridge between the continents of Europe, Asia, and Africa, and is at the same time a part of them. There is no exact definition of its limits. Former United States Secretary of State John Foster Dulles once described it as embracing Morocco, Pakistan, Turkey, and Ethiopia, and all the land in between.

Today, less expansively, it is usually meant to include only the Arab lands of the eastern Mediterranean and western Asia, plus Israel and the non-Arab Moslem states of Turkey and Iran. Yet even this modest embrace makes the Middle East a very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Edirne (Adrianople)
Istanbul (Constantinople)
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CAUCASUS
U.S.S.R.
GREECE
Dardanelles Hellespont
Bosporus
Bursa
Ankara
Athens
Izmir (Smyrna)
ANATOLIA
TURKEY
TAURUS MTS.
ARMENIA
Mt. Ararat
Malazkirt
Tab
KURDI
Adana
Iskenderun
Antioch
Aleppo
Nineveh
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Kirkuk
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Damascus
Bagh
IRAQ
SYRIAN
Babylon
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Alexandria
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Cairo
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HEJAZ
Aswan
Medina
Lake Nasser
SAUDI
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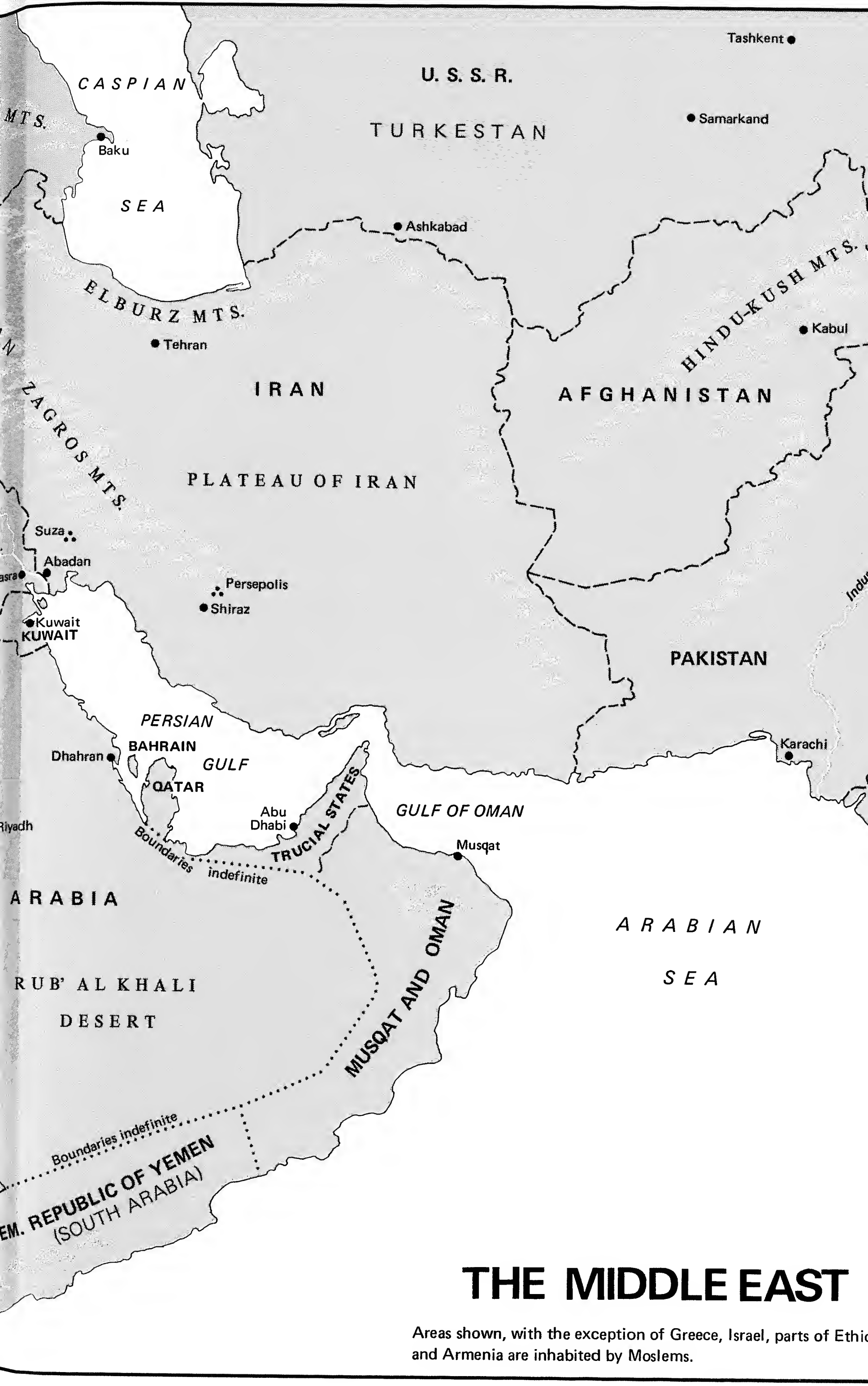
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HINDU-KUSH MTS.
Kabul
AFGHANISTAN
ZAGROS MTS.
PLATEAU OF IRAN
Suza
Abadan
Persepolis
Shiraz
Kuwait
KUWAIT
Indu
PAKISTAN
PERSIAN
GULF
BAHRAIN
Dhahran
QATAR
Karachi
Abu Dhabi
TRUCIAL STATES
GULF OF OMAN
Musqat
Riyadh
Boundaries indefinite
ARABIA
ARABIAN
SEA
MUSQAT AND OMAN
RUB' AL KHALI
DESERT
Boundaries indefinite
EM. REPUBLIC OF YEMEN
(SOUTH ARABIA)

THE MIDDLE EAST

Areas shown, with the exception of Greece, Israel, parts of Ethic
and Armenia are inhabited by Moslems.

big place. At its northwestern corner, the great Turkish city of Istanbul stands with its mosques and minarets on the European shore of the Bosporus, an outpost in the Balkans. At the opposite corner, the southeastern tip of Iran touches the Indian subcontinent, the border of Pakistan. From north to south it ranges from the Soviet Union to the Sudan (which is often considered part of the region), far down in East Africa. If its map were overlaid on the Western Hemisphere, it would cover nearly all the United States.

Most of the Middle East's northern borders have natural frontiers of seas or mountains. Turkey is bounded by the Black Sea and by the rugged mountains of its eastern frontier with the Soviet Union. In its far point stands the mysterious Mount Ararat, seldom seen by foreigners. It is more than 16,000 feet high and still regarded by some explorers as the spot where Noah's Ark came to rest after the flood.

Mount Ararat looks down on Soviet Armenia and the border of Iran, a three-nation meeting in one of the most inaccessible corners of the world. But it is an important corner. Here, in a sense, is the farthest outpost of the western world; it is administered by Turkey as a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

A part of the northern Iranian border is formed by the Caspian Sea, which provides a green and narrow coastline famous for the prized rice it produces, while the sea itself is famous for its caviar. The Elburz Mountains separate the Caspian seacoast from the rest of Iran and its modern capital, Tehran. On the east, across a high, dry plateau, the country is bordered by Soviet Central Asia, Afghanistan, and Pakistan.

Iran and Turkey form the so-called northern tier, a sort of buffer between the Arab states and the Soviet Union. The Arab countries, themselves, and Israel, are for the most part located in a huge peninsula marked by the Persian Gulf on the east, the Arabian Sea on the south, and the Red Sea and Mediterranean on the west.

In the northern extension of the peninsula are the countries that are sometimes called the Levant, which comes from a French word meaning "rising"—in other words, east: Syria, Lebanon, and Israel along the Mediterranean coast. Inland from them are Iraq and Jordan. Greece, Turkey, and Egypt are sometimes included as part of the Levant.

Both Syria and Lebanon have mountainous coastlines; in fact, Lebanon *is* a mountainous coastline with a narrow valley on the inland side. South of Turkey, Syria extends east, across the steppes and desert to Iraq. Its capital, Damascus, is an oasis of sorts, separated from the sea by the Lebanon Mountains. Some 50 miles from Damascus, on the other side of the mountains, is Beirut, the gaudy and vigorous seaside capital of Lebanon.

Down the coast from Beirut, past banana plantations, sunbaked fishing villages, and the ancient ports of Sidon and Tyre, lies Israel. A road winds beside the sea, but a traveler is stopped well before the border. The barrier is raised only for the rare passing of an official from one side of the Middle East crisis to another.

With the sea on one side, and Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, and Egypt on its other borders, Israel is thus isolated in the region, or nearly so. Geographically, however, it is very much part of the area. Its port of Haifa, for example, served as the sea outlet for virtually landlocked Transjordan (now Jordan) in the years before the new state of Israel was born, and many old caravan routes passed through Palestine to the sea as well.

From Tel Aviv and the adjoining Jaffa on the coast, the land rises eastward to Jerusalem, a natural fortress on a plateau. Standing on one of its hills on a clear day, it is possible to see across the Judean wilderness to the shimmer in the distance, the Dead Sea, which is the lowest spot on earth. Jerusalem is some 2,550 feet above sea level, and the coast of the Dead Sea is more than 1,200 feet below. At the salty sea's northern end is the outlet of the Jordan River, whose tributaries start in the Arab highlands to the north. Except for its meandering course (from an airplane it looks like a frantic

Apartment buildings rise above slums in Beirut, Lebanon.

snake) and its downward rush, the Jordan is a most unpretentious stream. Yet this, too, is a very important part of the Middle East and its current crisis. The use of its waters has been the concern of presidents and kings, and forms one of the lasting disputes between Israel and the Arabs. The riverbed itself has been one of the world's touchiest borders.

The area west of the Jordan River, which looks on a map as if it had flowed around Jerusalem, is called the West Bank. From the first Palestine War in 1948 until the third in 1967, this was part of the kingdom of Jordan. To an American or European, the West Bank does not look inviting, but compared with the Jordanian hinterland east of the river, it is a lush garden. Irrigated in part by the waters of the Jordan River, the area furnished Jordan with most of its home-grown food. Held after 1967 by Israel, it has been another of the crisis points of the region.

Jordan has only one port, and that a tiny one. Named ʻAqaba, it lies at the head of the gulf of that name, next to the busy Israeli port of Eilat. Both are outposts, cut off from the rest of their respective countries by desert. Eilat, in particular, is nonetheless a point of great strategic meaning to Israel, as its link with Africa and non-Arab Asia and as the port for its life-or-death intake of oil. One needs to know about Eilat to understand why Israel places such value on Sharm el Sheikh, the fortress at the tip of the Sinai peninsula that controls the entrance to the Gulf of ʻAqaba.

Israel and Syria meet only at a narrow corridor overlooking the northern end of the Jordan Valley. Before 1967, Syria was in possession of the highlands known as the Golan Heights. They looked down on the lowlands at the northern end of the Sea of Galilee which were farmed by Israeli settlers. Border skirmishes were so frequent there that the *kibbutzim,* or communal farms, were often placed in a state of siege by Syrian artillery.

Oil flows out and wealth flows in to Kuwait.

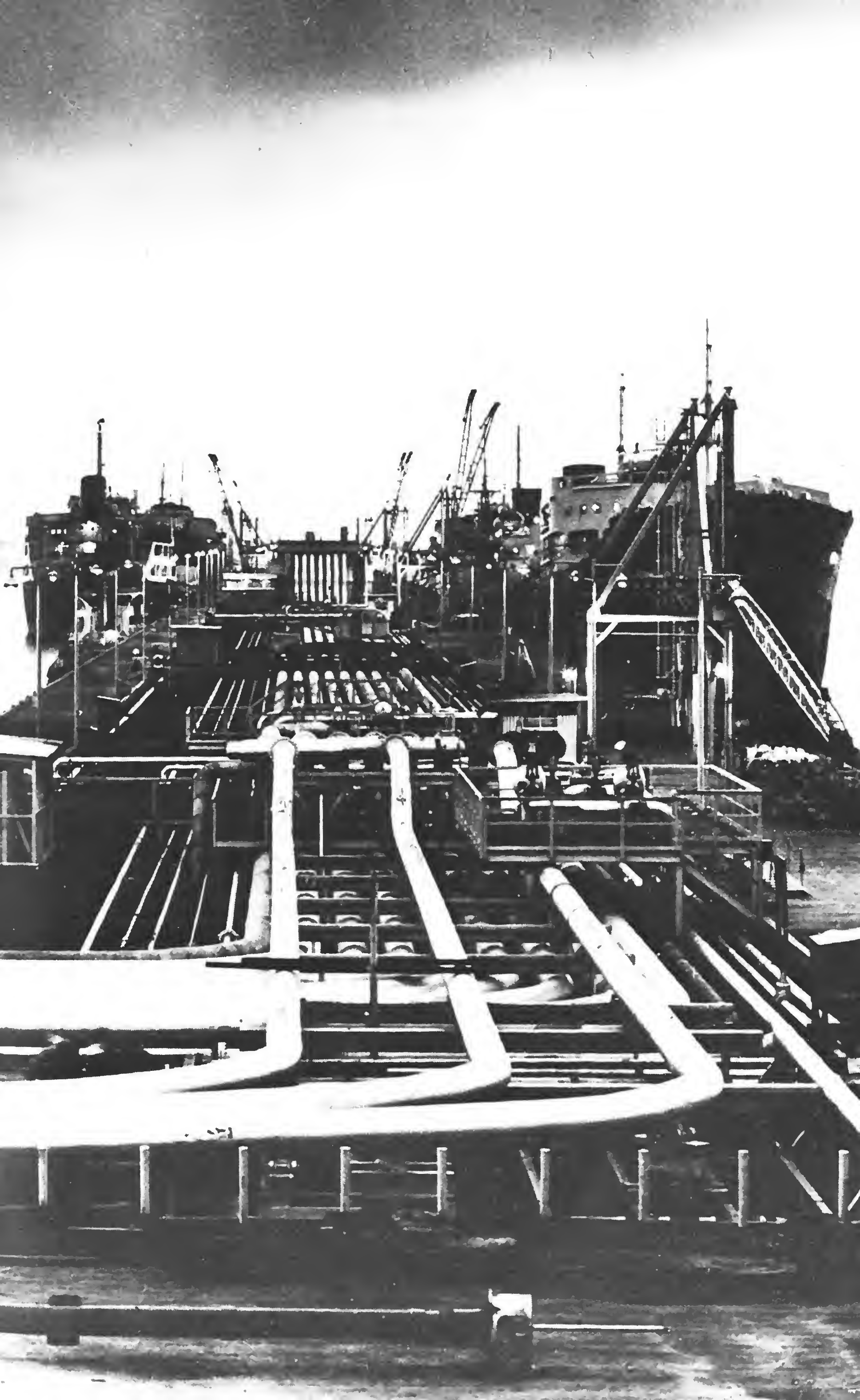
Thus, the Golan Heights, seized by the Israelis in 1967, is another piece of disputed real estate in the Middle East.

Iraq, lying east of Jordan and Syria and also bordering on Turkey and Iran, is, like Jordan, nearly landlocked. Its port of Basra, at the head of the Persian Gulf, is a key in the Middle East oil industry. But Iraq does not give the impression of shut-off aridity that Jordan does. Compared with other Arab states, Iraq is richly endowed with water from the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. Indeed, as these two ancient rivers join in the south of Iraq, the country becomes a palm-fringed marshland.

South of Iraq and Jordan is the vast Arabian peninsula itself. Here there is no hint of marsh, and not much of palm. In the entire area, as big as the eastern third of the United States, there is not one year-round river. Travelers flying over it in the summer sometimes see what appear to be rain showers several thousand feet above the desert. But not a drop reaches the sand. It evaporates in the sky above the desert. In the southern third of the peninsula, the huge Rubʿ al Khali (Empty Quarter) desert is so forbidding that until recently no westerner ever had crossed it.

The kingdom of Saudi Arabia dominates the land expanse stretching from the Red Sea to the Persian Gulf, nearly as big as Texas and Alaska combined. Its main commercial city, Jidda, steamy and burdened by the heat, is located on the Red Sea; its capital is Riyadh, an oasis-island in the middle of the Arabian desert; its oil towns are such cities as Dhahran on the Persian Gulf, where western oilmen (in this case, Americans) have built air-conditioned communities complete with bowling alleys and swimming pools.

Although Saudi Arabia dominates the southern part of the peninsula, there are other countries, ranging from the spectacular to the eccentric. On the coast of the Persian Gulf is Kuwait, a small wedge in the desert, which is often called the



world's richest state because of its oil wealth. South of Kuwait lie numerous exotic, obscure, and sometimes wealthy sheikhdoms: the islands of Bahrein; Qatar (pronounced undeservedly "Gutter"); oil-rich Abu Dhabi, one of the Trucial States, so-called because under strong British encouragement the sheikhdoms signed truces to stop fighting one another and practicing piracy.

Musqat and Oman on the southeast, Yemen on the south and southwest stand at the extremes of Arabia. All are barely of this age. Until recently, caustic journalists often commented that Yemen was just emerging into the sixteenth century; a Christian traveler reported in the 1930's that Yemenis would only confront him with dark glasses so that their eyes would not be defiled by an infidel. But Yemen is actually one of the more favored countries of Arabia. On a high plateau ringed by cool, rain-producing mountains, it was known to the ancients as *Arabia Felix,* or Fortunate Arabia.

At the northern end of the Red Sea at the northwestern corner of the Arabian peninsula is a sub-peninsula—the Sinai. A wasteland, known for little except Moses's wanderings in biblical days and Israeli tank victories over Egyptian forces in modern times, the Sinai peninsula is, nevertheless, of utmost importance in the Middle East today. The Sinai reaches down between Asia and Africa like an arrowhead—the Red Sea, the Gulf of Suez, and the Suez Canal on the west, and the Gulf of 'Aqaba on the east.

At its southern tip, below the biblically named Wilderness of Sin, is the windy fortress of Sharm el Sheikh, which controls the entrance to the Gulf of 'Aqaba and Israel's southern port of Eilat. On the Sinai's western coast is the Suez Canal, the world's most important waterway until its closing in 1967 when Israel captured the Sinai peninsula.

On the northern Mediterranean coast of the Sinai is the Gaza Strip, which is crammed with Palestine refugees. Like the rest of the peninsula, this was seized by the Israelis in 1967, and it has remained an unhappy pawn in the Middle East crisis

Street scene in the Gaza Strip

—hardly wanted by either side for itself but important because of its location.

Politically at least, Egypt (now formally the Arab Republic of Egypt) in recent times has been considered the leader of the Arab states. However, except for the Sinai peninsula, Egypt is not in Arabia but in Africa. Historically, its leaders have often been more concerned with African neighbors than with purely Arab countries. Yet Egypt's geography puts it squarely in the affairs of the Middle East. It is the link between the Red Sea, the Indian Ocean, and the Mediterranean. Although sometimes challenged today, Cairo is still the intellectual capital of the Arab world and its only true metropolis.

Other states, such as the Sudan in East Africa, Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco in North Africa, might also be included in the Middle East, for they have many overlapping interests. All are members of the Arab League. But the area as defined is big enough to satisfy most geographers and geopoliticians.

Stretching from the southern shores of Europe to the tropics, the Middle East is big enough to contain as varied a population as in any part of the world. It is a cliché to think of this region in terms of Arabs and Jews. Actually, it is much more. Two of the most populous and important countries in the area—Turkey and Iran—are not Arab, although their peoples are predominately Moslem. Turkey, in fact, is the largest country of the Middle East, with a population of about thirty-six million, whose ancestors were a Turkic people from Central Asia.

Egypt is the largest of the Arab countries, with an estimated population of thirty-four million and growing fast. All in all, the Arab countries as defined above have about seventy million people. Israel has a permanent population, excluding people living in occupied Arab areas, of about three million, of which some three hundred thousand are resident Arabs.

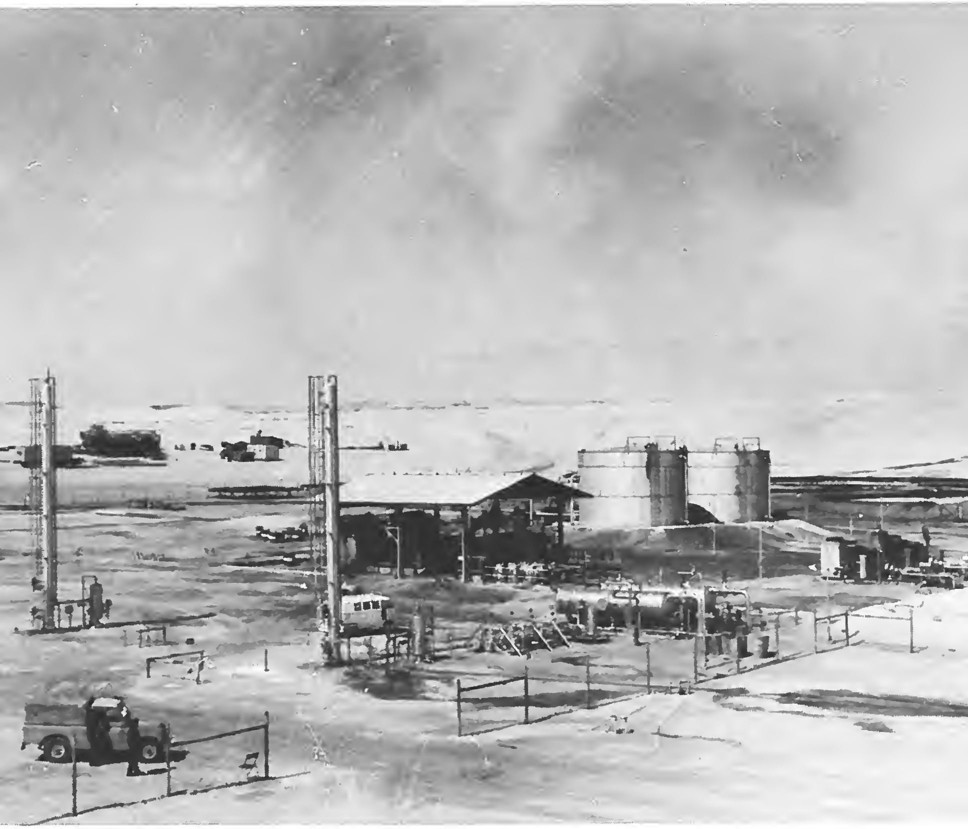
In the Arab heartland itself, there are many stoutly non-Arabic people. Iraq has been trying for years alternately to squelch and placate its more than one million Kurds, a rugged race living mostly in the mountains and insisting on national identity. Syria, too, has its Kurds; and both countries contain a people whose name rings like an echo from the ancient past—the Assyrians. Another tough, independent group of highlanders—the Druze—live in Lebanon, Syria, and Israel, where many serve in the Israeli army. Throughout the Arab world are Armenians, who were driven from their mountain homes during World War I by the Turks and are now playing an important role in the life of the Middle East. In Jordan, some leading military figures look like proper Britons, with fair skins and flaring moustaches. These are the Circassians, whose ancestors were first brought into the area as Christian slaves from the mountains of Georgia in the Caucasus.

Only two countries in the region have a high density of population. They are Israel, with 362 people per square mile, and Lebanon, with 629. Everywhere, people cluster closely around sources of water, as the Egyptians do in the fertile Nile Valley.

Behind this population cluster is the overriding fact of the Middle East's aridity. Mostly desert, only about 5 percent of its land can be cultivated without irrigation. So dry is the desert that the Moslem holy book, the Koran, permits Bedouins to perform their daily ritual washings with sand. Even along the Mediterranean coast where annual rainfall may equal that of New York, the summers are absolutely rainless.

Thus, the population clusters where there is water. Nowhere in the world have rivers played greater roles in the life of the land. Civilization dawned on the banks of the Tigris and Euphrates as they flowed through ancient Mesopotamia (now Iraq) and beside the life-giving Nile as it wound its tremendous course through Africa to the Mediterranean. Even the small, rambunctious Jordan River has played a leading role in the life and the disputes of the states bordering its banks.

As the Middle East is dry, so is it hot. Except in the mountains or along the seacoast, the summers are scorching. The average daily high temperature in the summer at Dhahran, on



The Middle East is hot and dry. Shown here is an oil field in the Libyan desert.

the Saudi Arabian gulf coast, where American oilmen live, is 118 degrees in the shade. In the sun the temperature may reach 165 degrees. Baghdad in Iraq may be the hottest big city on earth, with an average summertime high of 110; and Cairo in Egypt, with 96 degrees, is not one of the cooler spots. Middle Easterners often speak of the sun as a malign power, a power that in former times was worshipped. The Alexandrine poet Cafavy wrote of his native land, "Our pallid Egypt the sun scorches and scourges . . . and exhausts it with thirst and disease."

And yet, by contrast, winter temperatures on the inland plateaus of Turkey and Iran are harshly cold, and almost daily in the winter months the local papers print stories of unwary shepherds being frozen to death.

Geographers and historians speak of one part of the region as "The Fertile Crescent." They are speaking, of course, in relative terms. It is rather crescent-shaped and somewhat fertile. For thousands of years it has been the most desired land, where the earliest civilizations arose and where men found the most friendly earth in their struggle to survive. It is still a source of great contention.

The eastern horn of the crescent is formed by the Tigris and Euphrates rivers in Iraq. The top arc stretches across Syria and bends down through Lebanon and Israel. The western horn is the Nile Valley in Egypt. In this crescent, water from rivers and rainfall from the sea permit farmers to grow valuable crops: dates, citrus fruits, melons, grain, cotton, green vegetables, grapes. To the biblical nomads trudging across the desert, these were the lands of milk and honey.

II

AND OIL

Milk and honey is a meager enough bounty in a part of the world not greatly blessed by nature. But nature did give the Middle East one giant natural resource—oil.

Of all the dates and places in Middle Eastern history, there is one that is almost unknown. Yet it marked a change in the course of the world. It was May 26, 1908, and the place was in Persia (now Iran). There a British company made the first big find of oil in the region.

Today the Middle East is by far the greatest oil-producing area in the world. Oilmen sometimes shake their heads in wonder at the abundance of this precious fluid in a region otherwise unblessed. In other parts of the world, prospectors often drill more than one hundred wells before making any significant find. Along the Persian Gulf, thirteen major reservoirs of oil were discovered in the drilling of only seventeen "wildcat" wells.

The figures alone can tell the story. The Middle East in 1970 produced nearly 5 billion barrels of oil—averaging 13.5 million barrels a day. The United States, an oil-producing giant itself, has an annual output, by comparison, of 3.5 billion barrels.

And yet, all this is fairly recent. The ancients told vague stories of oil beneath the earth. But when the Bible mentioned in one fanciful passage "ten thousands of rivers of oil," it was talking about the product of the olive tree. That was the oil that lit the lamps of the ancient Holy Land.

Not until the invention of the internal combustion engine, and more particularly Great Britain's foresight that its warships would be fueled by oil not coal, did the search for the black fluid in the Middle East take on urgency. After the first major find in Persia, a familiar figure came on the scene, and in a familiarly prophetic role. Winston Churchill, then Britain's first lord of the admiralty, urged his government early in World War I to protect and expand its interests in the area because of the strategic value of its oil. With Persia the first producer, oil production began in Iraq in 1927. The Persian Gulf area itself was, however, still an unproven field.

In 1932, an American geologist located the first well on the islands of Bahrein. Three years later other Americans, after considerable rivalry from Great Britain, established that there was oil in commercial quantity beneath the sands at Dhahran, on the Gulf coast of Saudi Arabia. Three years after that, in 1938, the Americans brought in an impressive gusher and started Saudi Arabia on the road to riches.

The Persian Gulf is now a producer of fabulous proportions. The small state of Kuwait alone, in 1970, averaged more than 2.7 million barrels a day. Early in 1971 its average had reached more than 3 million barrels a day.

As the demand for oil grows and supplies inevitably grow smaller, the Middle Eastern fields could prove to have even greater meaning. As of 1970, this region held 67.4 percent of all the oil reserves in the western world. So far as experts could estimate, it possessed 56.4 percent of the entire world's reserves, including those of the Soviet Union and China. Tiny Kuwait has, under its sands and just off its shores, more than 10 percent of the world's reserve supply.

Presently the United States imports only minor quantities of Middle Eastern oil. Western Europe and Japan, however, are desperately dependent on it: western Europe imports 75 percent and Japan 90 percent of its supply from the region.

Oil pipelines in Iran, one of the world's leading oil producers

Fourteen countries in the Middle East, including Egypt, produce some oil; only Lebanon and impoverished Jordan of the recognizable states have none at all. The leading producers are Iran, Saudi Arabia, Libya, Kuwait, Iraq, and Abu Dhabi—all relatively distant from Mediterranean seaports. Thus, there have been three oil routes to Europe: by pipeline across the desert; by tanker through the Suez Canal; and by tanker around the southern tip of Africa.

Wars or threats of wars in the Middle East have brought Europe more than once to the edge of serious fuel shortages. After the 1967 Israeli-Arab war caused the closing of the Suez Canal and the temporary shutdown of the American-owned Trans-Arabian Pipeline (Tapline), adjustments were made by using larger tankers on a longer around-Africa route. But not without cost. One economist figured that the closing of the Canal added $1.1 billion in 1970 for shipments to Europe and the United States in tanker rate increases.

Whatever the troubles, oil has transformed the Arab world and Iran in relatively few years. Royalties and taxes poured about $4.5 billion into their treasuries (excluding Libya) in 1970, and even more will follow.

Kuwait not long ago was a backward country known for pearl divers and shrewd traders. Today its skies glow golden at night from natural-gas flares; its ministries are crowded with obsequious visitors from abroad; and its money helps finance guerrillas against Israel. It is one of the world's most complete welfare states, so complete that a Bedouin can get free medical care for his camel—although few camels are left there.

Oil money is being used to finance a so-called white revolution in Iran, a revolution that is educating its people, reforming its farmlands, and building new industries. Contributions from oil states keep Jordan financially alive. Investors from the Gulf sheikhdoms put up Beirut's fancy apartments and striking office buildings.

Oil money has put American and European technicians into air-conditioned communities in the desert, and has taken Arab youths from the desert to western universities.

All this it has done, but oil has not been a pure blessing in the Middle East. It has accounted for revolutions and *coups d'état* and attempted *coups* too numerous to tell. Because it has been a strategic goal in the maneuverings of foreign powers and of the Middle East states themselves, it has helped to create turbulence in the area. It has also paved a golden way for some foolish extravagances, of which the late King Saud of Saudi Arabia, with his fleets of Cadillacs and Oriental comforts, was a notable practitioner.

Nevertheless, as one writer recently said, it has made the Arabs the richest poor people in the world, and no one is going to turn the money down. Quite apart from this, Middle Eastern oil has brought enormous profits to western companies, which for two decades split the profits 50-50 with the host countries. That ratio now has been changed in favor of the host countries. The Gulf states themselves stand to gain an extra $1.2 billion from an agreement worked out in early 1971.

So, the golden flow will continue, and probably increase.

III

THE ANCIENT PAST

That the distant past lies just below the surface, closer than oil, in the Middle East today, is a truth of historical fact as well as political fancy.

A plow strikes a rock in a Turkish field, and the peasant finds a relic of old Rome. Schoolchildren on tours at Troy, where Greeks fought a war half myth and half history for control of a strategic waterway, come home with ancient coins found where they picnicked.

History, standing like a witness behind the daily headlines of the Israeli-Arab struggle, is summoned to testify about who should live in Palestine. Pyramids and the Sphinx lie in the desert of the outskirts of Cairo, echoing the speeches of the former president of Egypt, the late Gamal Abdel Nasser, and the men who followed . . . "we have been here thousands of years. . . ."

On a limestone cliff overlooking the Dog River, half an hour's drive north of Beirut, conquerors for more than three thousand years have left their carved messages: Ramses II of ancient Egypt, Nebuchadnezzar II from Babylon, Marcus Aurelius of Rome, Selim I of the Ottoman Turks, and British and French soldiers from World War II.

There is more visible, living history in the Middle East than in any other part of the globe because men have been recording it there for a longer period of time. Its past is so much a part of the present that the government of Iraq recently changed the name of Mosul province to Nineveh, the Assyrian city destroyed in 612 B.C., because Nineveh was better known.

Civilization came out of the night of prehistory in the Middle East.

Dawn began breaking at about the same time in the lower Mesopotamian Valley, in what is now Iraq, between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, and along the Nile Valley in Egypt. It was in the third millennium B.C.

In Mesopotamia there were first the Sumerians, followed by the empire-builder Sargon, the Akkadian. In the sweep of centuries, the names of great cities and rulers stand out. Babylon was built beside the Euphrates, and Hammurabi, the great lawgiver, held sway, with his title of King of the Four Quarters of the World. "Lasting water I provided for the land," he wrote, ". . . Its separated people I united." His words, inscribed in stone sometime around 1800 B.C., have a contemporary sound today.

Across the Tigris from present-day Mosul, the Assyrians appeared and brought Nineveh to the acme of its power. Then that, too, disappeared, destroyed in the region's incessant wars, and a new Babylon emerged with its hanging gardens, to please the queen of the imperial Nebuchadnezzar.

Farther to the east were the Medes and the Persians. Cyrus united them and began his conquests toward the Mediterranean. Reclining in luxury in his palace at Babylon, a successor to Nebuchadnezzar saw the handwriting on the wall—"Thy kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians,"—and he ignored it, and the Persians came. Babylon fell, and Cyrus ruled all west Asia. About 530 B.C., Cyrus turned toward Egypt, a land with a recorded history already some twenty centuries old.

Historians number Egyptian dynasties I through XXX. The Step Pyramid at Saqqara, near Cairo, was built during Dynasty III, probably between 2700 and 2650 B.C. As civilization arose in Egypt, it was centralized and relatively orderly—made so because the life of the land depended on the Nile and the measurement and control of its annual floods. So it was, at first, an inward-turning civilization. But beginning with Dynasty XVIII, the pharaohs (or kings) turned away from isolation and marched outward. They conquered cities in Palestine, Phoenicia (modern Lebanon), and Syria; then let them slip away (even as modern Egypt saw its union with Syria disappear in 1961); fought to regain them and were beaten by Nebuchadnezzar; and finally in Dynasty XXVI, in the sixth century B.C., were conquered by Cambyses II, the son of the Persian Cyrus. This was the end of imperial Egypt and the greatest extent of the Persian Empire. As the Bible told it, the Persians reigned "from India even unto Ethiopia."

The wars of the Greeks and the Persians, the comings and departures of conquerors, are marginal to the Middle East as we see it today. Some mighty ruins stand as memories, such as the royal palace of the Persian Darius at Persepolis, near the modern Iranian city of Shiraz. Some of the ancient ruins passed for centuries almost out of men's memories. Only about two hundred years after the fall of Nineveh, the Greek general and historian Xenophon passed by its ruins and failed to recognize them.

The memories of the Hebrew people, however, are strong, and their traditional story is pointedly part of the backdrop to the Middle Eastern scene today.

The patriarchs—Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—were traditionally leaders of Semitic nomads, related to the other peoples of Mesopotamia, moving generally from east to west in the Fertile Crescent. They sojourned in Egypt, and in the thirteenth century B.C. made their exodus to the land of Canaan. Canaanites were already there, in a series of city-states on or near the Mediterranean seacoast.

There was some peaceful coexistence and some military conquest at the expense of the Canaanites and later the Philistines. There was some intermarriage, too, but the twelve tribes were bound together by their belief in one god, Jehovah.

Under the pressure of recurrent wars with the Philistines, the Hebrews formed a monarchy under Saul. Finally, his successor, David, broke the power of the Philistines, captured the fortress Jerusalem, defeated other tribes such as the Ammonites and Moabites, and established the kingdom's rule as far east as the Euphrates, as far north as Lebanon, and as far south as the Gulf of ʿAqaba.

It was the greatest extent ever for the kingdoms of Israel and Judah. Some Arab propagandists today insist that these are the boundaries Israel would like to restore—a charge the Israelis derisively deny.

After a period of splendor under David's son, Solomon, the united monarchy split apart in the tenth century B.C., and fell into the wrangles and intrigues not unknown in the area today. In 722 B.C. Sargon II of the Assyrians conquered the Northern Kingdom—Israel. In 586 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar II of Babylon swept over Judah, destroyed Jerusalem, burned the temple of Solomon, and, like Sargon, took the Hebrews into captivity.

The tribes were thus scattered and the independent kingdoms were ended. The Diaspora, or dispersal, of the Jewish people from the Jerusalem they held so dear had begun.

Babylonians, Assyrians, Persians . . .

Conquerors have come and gone in the Middle East with an almost rhythmic pattern. Many have left no mark except destruction; they have waved the sword and the torch and vanished. But Alexander the Great of Macedon in his brief life put an imprint on the region that lives vividly to this day.

Standing as a memorial to Alexander is the city of Alexandria in northern Egypt. It is a stagnant city now but once, while Europe groped in the Dark Ages, it was a seat of learning and culture. The Turkish port of Iskenderun (formerly Alexandretta) was founded to commemorate the victory that opened the Middle East to the Macedonian conqueror. Alexander was

responsible for the spread of Greek, or Hellenistic, culture throughout the area, and the dynasties that followed him ruled from Egypt deep into Central Asia.

Alexander was only twenty-one years old when he set out across the Hellespont (today the Dardanelles) to war against the Persians in 334 B.C. He was only thirty-two when he died in the Babylon palace built by Nebuchadnezzar. But in those eleven years he conquered lands to the edge of India.

The importance is in what he left behind. One of his generals, Seleucus, founded the Seleucid dynasty in Syria. Another, Ptolemy, started a dynasty in Egypt. Both lasted until the coming of the Roman legions nearly two centuries later, the fall of Queen Cleopatra taking place with considerable drama and the aid of the legendary asp.

The orderly minded Romans never did achieve the cultural penetration of Alexander and the Greeks. Roman works, nonetheless, are magnificently alive in sunlit places far from Rome: the huge temples at Baalbek in Lebanon; lonely columns on the coast of Asia Minor (Turkey); the amphitheater at Amman, now the capital of Jordan.

The temples are testaments to the prosperity of the eastern Mediterranean under the Romans. But there was also war. Then, as now, one trouble spot was Jerusalem.

The Jewish people were still there, some having been allowed to return to their homeland from Babylon. They had, in fact, won brief religious and political freedoms in the Maccabean revolt against the Seleucid Kingdom of Syria. But the Romans had conquered Jerusalem in 65 B.C., and eventually had installed Herod the Great on the throne of Judea.

They were troublesome subjects, the Jews, insisting on their own religion and believing in their own identity. Herod restored the temple, but he crushed any who opposed him or Roman rule politically. After his death, a full-scale rebellion flared. The Jews seized Jerusalem and the Jewish War of A.D. 66–70 began. Rome sent two future emperors—first Vespasian and then his son Titus—and three of their best legions to subdue the rebels. The land was devastated, and in the summer of A.D. 70, Titus ended the war by taking Jerusalem after another desperate siege. His legionnaires burned the city, set the temple aflame despite his orders, and slaughtered thousands of the inhabitants. The historian Josephus said that 115,800 corpses were taken out of the city gates by the Jews in three months.

That was the end. Old Israel and Judah existed no more. The Romans changed the name of the country to Palaestina, and Jewish people were barred from Jerusalem. Only the Wailing Wall was left standing on the west side of the old temple. The Jews were once again dispersed.

Rome ruled in the Middle East for a total of five hundred years. When the western empire crumbled before the barbarians, an empire was left in the east with its capital at Constantinople (now Istanbul). The Christian emperor Constantine established this as a capital in A.D. 330 and fortified it as the gateway between Europe and Asia. The Byzantines, Roman in name but Greek in language and culture, ruled their eastern realm in confusion for a thousand years. Most of what is now the Middle East soon slipped from their grasp. Forces from the east—Persians, Arabs, Turks, Mongols—pushed against their ramparts. But they endured until 1453 when the Turks finally broke through the gates of old Constantinople and ended the last vestige of the Roman Empire.

IV

ENTER THE ARABS

When Imperial Rome faded in the west and the Byzantines took up the rule of the Middle East, the Arabs had not yet appeared on the scene as a significant force. In what is now Syria, Jordan, and southern Iraq, obscure Arab dynasties held sway. They engaged in nomadic warfare, profited from the trade routes, and cooperated generally with the masters from Rome and Constantinople by helping protect the eastern flanks of the empire.

In Palmyra, a town northeast of Damascus, and in Petra, which is located in a fortresslike chasm south of the Dead Sea, people of Arabic stock built prosperous cities whose remains are admired and even held in awe by travelers today.

Most of the Arabs still lived, however, in the Arabian peninsula, wandering the sands as herdsmen in search of water or leading caravans from India and Africa up through the deserts to Damascus.

Like the Hebrews, Canaanites, Babylonians, and most other peoples of the Middle East, the Arabs were Semites ("Arab" is a Semitic word meaning "desert," or its inhabitants), known to their neighbors but isolated and protected by the vast desert. They worshipped idols and made pilgrimages to sacred stones.

This was the world of the Arab in A.D. 570, when Mohammed was born. Looking back across the centuries, it is hard to believe that a man's life and vision could so galvanize a simple people that in fewer than one hundred years they would conquer most of the known world and spread their language and a new religion across it. Yet this is the force that came out of Mecca, Mohammed's birthplace.

The town was a way station on the caravan route along the Red Sea, and it possessed a certain sophistication. The leading Meccans had seen Damascus, and a few had even been received in the lavish Byzantine court at Constantinople. Mecca was also something of a place for pilgrimage. Inside a stone building called the Kaaba rested a black meteorite and 365 idols held sacred by the pagans who came there to worship.

Mohammed grew up and became a caravan leader. At the age of twenty-five, he married Khadija, a rich widow fifteen years his senior and the owner of the caravan. Thus affluent, he had time for climbing the mountains outside Mecca and meditating. One day, at the age of forty, Mohammed fell asleep in a mountain cave and received a vision of the Archangel Gabriel. Feeling this was his call to be a prophet and teacher to his people, he began preaching. "Arise and warn," the voices told him.

For a religion that was to spread with such explosive force, Islam started slowly. For years Mohammed had only a few-score converts in Mecca. Scorned, persecuted, and threatened, he and a small band of followers at last escaped from Mecca to the green oasis town of Yathrib to the northeast, arriving there on September 20, 622. The town was to be known as Medina, and the Moslem calendar that is still used in a large part of the world had commenced.

That was the turning point. Seven years later the Prophet (as Mohammed became known) returned to Mecca at the head of ten thousand armed men to end the *hegira* (the flight from Mecca to Medina), and was greeted by a populace that accepted Islam. The Kaaba was taken as the house of God, built by Abraham, and its idols were cast away.

By the time Mohammed died in 632, most of the tribes of

Arabia had submitted to the new religion, but the great foreign conquests had not begun. What was it that the Prophet had taught?

One hears the message now, resounding amplified from minarets or muttered in a dark street: "*La ilaha illa-l-Lah*"—"There is no god but Allah."

God is one, and Mohammed is the Prophet, the messenger, in fact, the "seal of the prophets." Abraham, Moses, and Christ are also prophets, but Mohammed is final. The Koran, the holy book, is the word of God dictated to the Prophet by the angel Gabriel. There is prayer, five times a day, and a pilgrimage to Mecca once in a lifetime, and fasting from dawn to sunset during the holy month of Ramadan. Finally, there is *jihad*, or holy war, with death on the battlefield in service of Allah assuring the warrior of paradise and all its privileges.

Islam owes much of its philosophy to Judaism and some to Christianity. The Koran tells many of the same narratives as the Old Testament: creation and the fall of man, the flood, the destruction of Sodom. It mentions Abraham seventy times, devotes a chapter to the story of Joseph, and respects Jews as "People of the Book."

The physical, geographic heart of the Middle East crisis today, the Jewish Wailing Wall in Jerusalem, has a religious significance to the Moslems also. It is related that before the hegira, Mohammed was borne in a miraculous night ride to Jerusalem on a strange steed named al-Burak, a steed with the face of a woman and the tail of a peacock. From Jerusalem, the Prophet was taken into the seventh heaven for a view of the heavens. Al-Burak remained tied to a spot near the Jewish holy place, the Wailing Wall. Thus, the Jewish holy place became to the Moslems a holy place of their own, and Jerusalem became a holy city, third in line of holiness to Mecca and Medina.

After Mohammed's death, Moslem warriors began to drive beyond Arabia. Under the banners of the first caliph (the Prophet's successor), with Arabian horses and camels as their

Premier Abdel Nasser (left) of Egypt and King Ibn Saud of Saudi Arabia at noon prayers in Cairo, 1957 transport, two columns spread out across the desert, one toward the Euphrates and one toward Syria, in Byzantine territory. In 635 the Arabs laid siege to and took Damascus; in 636 they nearly wiped out a Byzantine army in what is now northern Jordan. Saying a sad, "Farewell, O Syria, what an excellent country this is for the enemy," the Byzantine emperor Heraclius retreated north across the Taurus Mountains into Asia Minor. For Syria, one thousand years of Greco-Roman rule had ended. Farther south, Jerusalem surrendered in 638, and the Arabs were in control of all Palestine.

The other column, spearing northeast toward the Euphrates, had equal success. In 637 an Arab commander marched into what was then the Persian capital of Ctesiphon, close to the site of modern Baghdad.

Thus, Islam spread. Within ten years the Arabs had not only conquered Syria, Palestine, and the lands as far as the Tigris and Euphrates, but had overrun Persia, subdued Egypt, and were heading east along the Mediterranean into what is now Libya.

These early victories were achieved, for the most part, under the second caliph, Omar I (or Umar). He was a tall, thin man from the desert, given to going barefooted and wearing a plain woolen cloak. Simple and pious, and known for his generosity, he may have been the greatest of the caliphs in Islam's long history. His personal qualities, too, helped the remarkable spread of Islamic beliefs, for in most places the conquered people gave ready obedience.

There were other reasons, too, for the Arabian successes: religious zeal, the current weakness of the Byzantine and Persian empires, the explosive force of an Arab people long pent up in their desert and desiring, literally, greener fields.

The Arabs also showed a certain tolerance. Although Islam was a militant religion, it did not force itself on conquered Christians or Jews. Those who would not accept it, but kept to their own faiths, were subject to a poll tax but not military duty. The tax proved a handy way of financing the Moslem armies, which at the outset had gone unpaid.

One event concerning the intricacies of Moslem leadership should be noted. After Omar was killed at the age of sixty-three by a Persian slave, and his successor Othman was assassinated by a Moslem enemy, the cousin and son-in-law of the Prophet was chosen as the fourth caliph. The selection of the son-in-law, Ali, soon provoked a civil war in Islam and a great battle, known as the Battle of the Camel. Ali's forces won, but Islam was divided from that time on, first politically and then religiously. Ali himself was assassinated with a poisoned saber in 661. Those who favored his descendants formed a sect known as the Shi'a, or Shi'ites, as opposed to the orthodox, or Sunni, Moslems. Shi'ites to this day remain a separate and sometimes dissident group, notably in Iraq.

In Syria, Damascus prides itself on being the oldest continuously inhabited city in the world. It was perhaps two thousand years old when the Arabs stormed through its gates, but it reached the peak of its glory as the capital of the Arab Empire.

The conquests had been halted by the split within the ranks during Ali's caliphate. When Ali died, his rival, Muawiyah I, became the next successor to the Prophet, and he has been called the real founder of the Arab Empire.

Muawiyah was an organizer and a very adept handler of men. He is said to have described his own policy in these words: "I apply not my sword where my lash suffices, nor my lash where my tongue is enough. And if there be one hair binding me to others I let it not break: if they pull I loosen and when they loosen I pull."

With this kind of flexibility, he seems to have been the only Arab caliph against whom there was never a rebellion.

Muawiyah came from the Omayyad branch of the Prophet's family in Mecca. When he became caliph he was already governor of Syria, with his headquarters in Damascus. There

Courtyard of the Omayyad Mosque in Damascus, which prides itself on being the oldest continuously inhabited city in the world

he established his new capital and the Omayyad dynasty in 661.

Machiavelli, the cynical Italian who wrote a book concerning government as it existed, probably had the Moslems in mind when he said, "Armed prophets have conquered and unarmed ones failed." Muawiyah armed his soldiers of the Prophet. He recruited Syrians, Yemenites, and other Arabs. He built a navy, sent his officers out to resume the advance, and when he died, the advance continued under his successors.

The Arab conquests reached their greatest extent under the Damascus Omayyads. In their short span—the dynasty ruled for only about ninety years—their armies marched west to the Atlantic Ocean and crossed the Strait of Gibraltar into Spain; north to the walls of Constantinople; and east into Central Asia and the borders of India.

One invading army crossed the Pyrenees mountains into France, captured Bordeaux, and finally was stopped at Tours by Charles Martel. It has been called one of the most crucial battles in the history of the world, for it ended the Moslem advance into Europe. Blocked there and worried by resistance in Spain, the Arabs turned back. The year was 732—just one hundred years after the death of the Prophet in Medina.

The Omayyad caliphs were soldiers and conquerors. Some clung to the traditions of the desert, such as 'Umar ibn-'Abd-al-'Azīz (Omar II), who owned one shirt, lived on lentil soup, and like the earlier Omar I went barefoot. A few were given to earthly pleasures, such as Yazid II, who pined to death after his favorite singing girl choked on a grape he had tossed into her mouth; or his son, Walid II, who swam in a pool of wine, swallowing as he stroked. (His reign ended violently after fifteen months, and his head was stuck on a lance and paraded around Damascus.)

The end of the Omayyad line was reached in 750 under a rigorous, woman-shunning, wine-abstaining caliph known as Marwan the Ass. A rival clan, the Abbassides, had arisen and had lofted a black banner of revolt in the east. Marwan and the Omayyads were defeated in a battle at the Zab River in Iraq, and all members of the royal family were tracked down and exterminated.

Although an Arab kingdom of the Omayyad line was to last in Spain until the eleventh century, in the Middle East the dynasty was ended.

The battle of the Zab is another that has been termed one of the decisive battles of history, because it turned the eyes of the Arab world toward the Orient. Under the Omayyads, it had been a Mediterranean empire, a continuation in a geographic sense of the Greco-Roman world. But the Abbassides came to power with help from the East, including the Persians. Their home base had been on the Euphrates, and soon after they seized the royal line, ignoring Damascus, they built a new capital on the Tigris, on the site of an ancient town called Baghdad.

This placed the hub of empire between East and West, on what had been the border between Rome and Persia. The new empire drew, as a result, from both East and West, brought an important Persian influence into Islam and its culture, and in effect "easternized" it.

Seeing Baghdad today, a traveler wonders. The modern city is a dusty place, so hot in summer that an unaccustomed visitor gasps in disbelief when he steps outside, and despite its modern buildings, the city has a certain underprivileged look. Although today's city is not the fabled Baghdad of *Thousand and One Nights,* in the ancient Baghdad of the Abbasside dynasty, Scheherazade could indeed have told her tales.

There, in the same valley where some of the great capitals of the ancient world had arisen, the Abbassides built a circular city around a circular palace with a golden gate. It was a golden capital in the golden age of the Arabs. While Europe

The old and the new in modern Baghdad

was rough and half-barbarian, Baghdad was a brilliant and bejeweled center of learning and luxury. Its only rival was Constantinople, the Byzantine capital. Baghdad's merchants sent ships to India and China, and along the wharves on the Tigris were Chinese junks laden with porcelains and silks.

Baghdad's scholars translated and preserved in Arabic the Greek philosophers and savants. In a House of Wisdom erected by one caliph, mathematicians devised a system of reckoning and of writing numbers, which today is still called Arabic numerals, and invented algebra—an Arabic word. In many fields—astronomy, medicine, and botany among them—their discoveries advanced man's knowledge.

It was a splendid, learned city that made the tales of *Thousand and One Nights* seem almost true, and it reached its prime under a caliph whose name in the minds of Arabs sums it all up—Harun al-Rashid.

Harun, who reigned from 786 to 809, was a living symbol of the Baghdad of those days. He reveled in its luxury, befriended its poets and artists, and left the day-to-day administration of his government to a talented vizier, or chief minister. But he was no aimless playboy. He toured the provinces and won the hearts of his subjects. And he could be a tough opponent. Once when a Byzantine ruler sent him an ultimatum demanding repayment of a tribute, he returned the letter with these words: "From Harun, the Prince of the Faithful, to Nicephorus, the Roman dog. I have read your letter, you son of a heathen mother. You will see and not hear my reply." He mobilized an army and eventually forced the unhappy Byzantine to plead for peace.

Like other dynasties, the Abbassides reached their peak early and then slowly declined. The outlying provinces began breaking off even before the end of Harun's reign—first Spain, then North Africa. In the East, Harun's heirs turned over part of Central Asia to a governor aptly known as Tahir the Ambidextrous, who set up his own rule.

And as with other empires, mercenaries began to be hired to do the soldiering: an ominous preface of things to come. In this case, the mercenaries were the Turks, a hardy, warlike people first appearing in the history of the Middle East as they migrated westward from their steppes in Central Asia.

Initially the Turkish tribesmen were hired as palace guards. They grew in numbers and influence, while the Abbasside caliphs—now far removed from the desert life of their own ancestors—frittered away their time and powers. There were wars with the Byzantines, revolts in the provinces, and always increasing threats from the Turks, who had been brought in to keep order. Then the last of the great Abbassides, Mutawakkil, was slain by the Turkish mercenaries. A puppet was put on the throne, and the great days were over. It was 861, still only 229 years from the Prophet's death.

The Omayyad and the Abbasside were the two dynasties that brought the greatest glory to the Arabs, that spread Islam from the Atlantic Ocean to India and the Arabic language over North Africa and western Asia. The conquests had been astonishingly fast; the golden days had been brilliant and beautiful; the world had been permanently changed. Now came descent and confusion.

Once the power of the Abbassides had passed, the Middle East was in disarray. A new dynasty, the Fatimids, ruled in Cairo, and Cairo had taken over as the ascendant city in the region. The Seljuk Turks, the Turkish branch that had overthrown the regime in Baghdad, unified the greater part of the Middle East for a few decades, but that union, too, soon shattered. Syria and Palestine, the Holy Land, was divided into patches of petty states.

Probably the most vital factor in the situation of that confused time was this: the same Seljuk Turks who had moved in on Baghdad and had established a short-lived unified regime in the Fertile Crescent area had also moved north. They had defeated the Byzantines in a crucial battle at Malazkirt in 1071. They had occupied most of Asia Minor, thus leaving the Christian emperor in Constantinople threatened and isolated.

So, Emperor Alexius Comnenus called for help. It was a Christian appeal to Christian western Europe, specifically to Pope Urban II in Rome. Thus began the Crusades, the first example of European military and political interest in the Middle East.

There have been numerous motives given for the Crusades, some quite saintly and some cynically economic. All were probably true. Christians had been plodding to Jerusalem under holy impulse since the twilight days of the Roman Empire. When the enlightened Harun al-Rashid and other rulers like him controlled Palestine, the pilgrims could travel in relative safety. Now, with Turks and Arabs, Seljuks and Fatimids contesting for control of the Holy Land, travel there was definitely more hazardous. In any case, Jerusalem was then a Moslem city, and some recent Moselm rulers had been fanatically anti-Christian.

Europe was also beginning to feel its own importance; Italian city-states such as Venice yearned for more commerce, and the Orient beckoned.

So, the Crusaders came for different reasons; but they came in waves that succeeded one another for nearly two hundred years. The First Crusade was authorized by Pope Urban II in 1095, and the last took place in 1270. In the beginning, the Crusades seemed like an aimless migration that moved across Europe accompanied by pillage and the massacre of Jews. When the first two groups reached Asia Minor, the Seljuk Turks quickly annihilated them.

But the first organized Crusade, led by lords from France, defeated the Seljuks, marched south along the Mediterranean coast, and besieged and captured Jerusalem in 1099. The fall of the Holy City was not a saintly spectacle. The Crusaders massacred nearly all of its forty thousand inhabitants, Moslems and Jews alike.

christian

With this bloody beginning was founded the Kingdom of Jerusalem, a strange, unlikely, becastled kingdom pasted like a superficial European decal on an Oriental backdrop. But under its European kings, Jerusalem experienced surprising prosperity and moderately good government, which lasted in the city itself for nearly one hundred years and in other parts of the Levant, such as Tripoli, Acre, and Antioch, for another one hundred.

The Crusades produced many memorable encounters. One of the most vivid meetings was that of European noblemen, adventurers, and soldiers with Saladin (in Arabic, Salāh-al-Dīn). In the minds of Arabs today, Saladin is still perhaps their greatest hero, a brilliant soldier, a good ruler, a romantic and chivalrous opponent of the Crusaders.

Gamal Abdel Nasser in Egypt was called "the modern Saladin" when he rallied the disheartened Arabs, or tried to rally them, after their defeats in the wars with Israel, but it was an inept comparison. For all his worth, Nasser was not a victor. Saladin was. For that matter, Saladin was not strictly speaking an Arab, but a Kurd who had taken over as ruler of Egypt from the floundering Fatimids.

In a famous battle in 1187 at the Horns of Hattin above the Sea of Galilee (close to the spot where Christ had preached the Sermon on the Mount), Saladin led the Moslems to their first notable victory over the Crusaders. He destroyed the Christian army, captured the king of Jerusalem, and soon thereafter took the Holy City itself.

The history of the rest of the Crusades is one of siege, capture, and frequently countersiege and recapture of the castle-fortresses built by the Europeans. The romantic events stirred Europe and brought to the shores of the Middle East its greatest kings, Richard the Lion-Hearted of England and Philip Augustus of France. Richard and Saladin never met one another, but it was a romantic age and they exchanged chivalrous amenities: Saladin sent Richard drinks iced with the snows of Mount Hermon, while Richard tried in vain to arrange a marriage between his sister and Saladin's brother.

When the last of the Crusaders were driven out of the Levant, about two hundred years after they had first arrived,

Nasser, speaking at a news conference in Cairo in 1967, was called "the modern Saladin."

the Middle East was not much changed. Memories of the Crusades live in the form of medieval castles and ramparts scattered along the coasts and on strongpoints on hills: Tyre, Acre, and the huge and lonely Crac des Chevaliers castle that could house two thousand retainers in a mountain pass above Tripoli.

It was Europe that felt the impact. The Moslem world was the more civilized then, and the Moslems looked on the Christian invaders as "animals possessing the virtues of courage and fighting, but nothing else." Europe, on the other hand, benefited from the opening of trade with the East and from the contact with a more advanced culture.

Saladin was long dead, of course, when the Crusaders left, but he, too, had left his monuments: the citadel that still dominates Cairo and, less happily and quite indirectly, the Mamelukes, a new line of sultans in Egypt, Syria, and the Holy Land.

The Mamelukes are unique in the history of the Middle East. Originally they were brought in, like the Seljuk Turks had been brought into Baghdad centuries before, as slaves or mercenary soldiers. Rugged people from the Central Asian steppes, they continually regenerated their race by importing youths from the wandering tribes and training them, as they had been trained, as soldiers and horsemen.

As in Baghdad, these Turks had started as protectors and had become masters, particularly after Saladin died. They were so masterly that Saladin's widow, colorfully known as Shajar-al-Durr, or Spray of Pearls, married a Mameluke commander. For the next three centuries this military line was to rule the region harshly, but at first effectively. Their greatest boon to the area was accomplished early: they held off the Mongols.

Of all the migrations or invasions from the east that changed the pattern of the Middle East, the most terrible were those of the Mongol tribes from eastern Asia. Under the redoubtable Genghis Khan, they had overrun Central Asia and part of Persia between 1219 and 1224. In the middle of the century, led by Genghis's grandson, Hulagu, a new wave stormed into Baghdad and looted, burned, and razed it in one of the goriest chapters of history. They slaughtered hundreds of thousands of its inhabitants, trampled the caliph to death beneath their horses, and turned the libraries, hospitals, and golden domes of that still great city to rubble.

If one looks at Baghdad today and wonders what happened to the glories of Harun al-Rashid and the great Abbassides, he can remember the Mongols.

The invaders swept on into Syria, sacked Aleppo in 1260 and took Damascus more or less peaceably. Then they wheeled south toward Jerusalem, but near Nazareth they were met by a Mameluke army, which had moved up from Egypt to stop them. The Mongols were beaten. The Mamelukes had made their greatest contribution.

Not that the area was finished with the Mongols and related hordes. There had even been talk of a Mongol-Christian alliance to force the Moslems out of the Holy Land, but to no avail. On their own, the barbarians came back in 1299—twelve years after their defeat at Nazareth—but were stopped again.

Finally, a little more than a century later, Tartar hordes under Tamerlane (or Timur the Lame) swept westward again and completed the ruin begun by the first waves.

Tamerlane came, in fact, like a tidal wave. Nothing but destruction was left behind him. The irrigation systems that the Persians and Arabs had built up through the centuries were destroyed—not to be restored in some areas to this day. Damascus was overwhelmed, and one hundred thousand Damascenes were massacred. Baghdad again fell, and Tamerlane erected 120 towers there, built of human skulls.

Yet the Mameluke rule survived and kept its realm. It had had its strong rulers—Baybars, who had driven the Crusaders out of most of their remaining fortresses; and the puritanical al-Nasir, who made Egypt one of the great powers of the fourteenth century. But as the Mameluke sultanate neared its end, it tottered in greed and ineptitude. No less than twenty-nine sultans ruled in the last one hundred and twenty-eight years, a record hardly to be approached today. The Mamelukes had taxed the land dry.

There was a new force waiting in the wings—a force that was to stay on the Middle Eastern stage for five hundred years and set the scenes as we know them today.

V

THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE

The Ottoman Turks were not precisely new to the region. Like so many before them, including their cousins the Seljuk Turks, they had arisen from Central Asia and had followed the migration pattern westward across the steppes toward the better lands.

Around 1300 they had found their way into the northern part of Anatolia, or Asia Minor, where they had set up a small state under their leader Osman. They had encountered little opposition.

The whole region at that time—not only Asia Minor but the entire reach from Europe to southern Arabia—was unstrung. The Byzantine Empire clung to life in Constantinople, but it was visibly dying, the result, in part, of incessant wars with the Persian Empire. The Mameluke regime to the south was declining. Battered by the Mongols and often attacked by the Byzantines, the Seljuk Turks had lost their power.

So, the Ottomans, newer and more vigorous, had a role to play. And they began it very quickly.

In 1327 the Ottomans established their first capital at Bursa, which is now a resort and watering place for wealthy Turks near the Sea of Marmara. Then they moved northward, across the Turkish Straits, into Europe itself. They captured a large part of Thrace (including what are now parts of Greece and Bulgaria), and set up a new capital at the old Roman fortress city of Edirne, renamed Adrianople in 1829.

Constantinople was now isolated. Not only were the Byzantines cut off from Europe and their potential Christian allies, but the Ottomans were seizing most of Asia Minor. For a time they were checked—crushed, in fact—in Asia Minor by the seemingly irresistible Tamerlane, who laid waste to that land as he had to Baghdad, Damascus, and whatever had been in his path. When Tamerlane returned to Central Asia to die, however, the Turks revived. In 1453 the beleaguered city of Constantinople fell to the heirs of Osman. From that time until the end of World War I, the Ottoman line was to rule, at one time over great parts of Europe as well as Africa and the Middle East. Thirty-six sultans followed as lineal descendants of Osman. The last stepped off the throne in 1922.

Conquerors, when they break through the outer ramparts, spread fast throughout the land. From their early march into Europe, before Constantinople fell, the Ottomans had learned about the use of gunpowder and firearms, and they used the knowledge well. With modern arms, they conquered Greece in 1456, Serbia in 1459, and the Balkan states of Bosnia in 1463 and Herzegovina in 1483.

Moving east, west, and south, the Ottoman armies expanded the empire to northern Mesopotamia, Egypt, Syria, and the west coast of Arabia by 1520. In Europe they conquered Belgrade in 1521 and Hungary in 1526.

Great names were inscribed in the annals of Constantinople: Mohammed II, "the Conqueror," who had ridden on a white horse into the city when it fell; Bajazet II, who expanded the fleet; Selim I, acknowledged even by the Turks to be a brutal tyrant; and perhaps the greatest of all of the Ottoman line, Suleiman the Magnificent.

It was Suleiman who brought Turkey to its greatest glory. His empire extended from the Ukraine north of the Black Sea to the Danube River in Europe; from Algeria in North Africa to the tip of the Arabian peninsula on the Persian Gulf; and south into Egypt to the Tropic of Cancer. The Ottoman Empire at his death in 1566 embraced more than twenty nationalities and some fifty million people, compared with England's four million.

With reason, Suleiman could address himself in this way to the king of France:

"I, who am sultan of sultans, sovereign of sovereigns, the dispenser of crowns to the monarchs on the face of the earth . . . to thee who art Francis, king of the land of France."

Suleiman was one of those rare men of history whose energy radiated to whatever field he turned. His armies conquered; but any visitor to Istanbul can remember him today for the great mosque of Suleiman built by the masterly architect Sinan at his command. To Turks, he was known as "the lawgiver." He built the walls of Jerusalem that stand today, improved the water supplies of Mecca and Jerusalem, and formed an alliance with France that lasted four hundred years.

"Solyman," the poet Byron said, "the glory of his line."

So, a warlike beginning was followed by a dynamic first century—then centuries of neglect. It is tempting to say that the Middle East slept out the final four hundred years of the Ottoman Empire, while Europe awakened to its possibilities. This much is true: Turkish rule over its far-flung empire soon became lackadaisical. Its peoples in all their diversity were lulled by the new unity after hundreds of years of turmoil. When finally they began to rouse themselves, they looked around to find the Middle East a backwater, the Ottoman Empire moldering, and European powers the real masters of the land.

Even under the magnificent Suleiman the omens were being written. One of the recorders of his time wrote that he tried to get some business done in a government office. "I gave them greeting; they would not take it," he reported, "as it was not a bribe."

The Ottoman system of administration was certainly one of the causes of the decline and torpor. Somewhat like military systems today, it was based on the undoubtedly true idea that people are imperfect. Thus, everything, down to the last copy and the final stroke of the pen, must be laid out for them—and there must be no loopholes.

As a British historian has noted, it was "one of the most elaborate and artificial systems ever shipwrecked by the difference between theory and practice."

With all this, the Ottoman Empire was an essentially tolerant regime. The Turks were actually in a minority. It did not matter if a man was a Syrian, a Palestinian, or a Kurd. He was a part of the empire and could reach the highest office in it. Many Kurds, like Saladin their ancestor, became military commanders; and just as they are employed today in many Arab countries, the quick-minded Palestinians held high administrative posts.

Paying no heed to nationality, the Turks let the so-called millet system take care of personal administration in the provinces. This was based entirely on religion. Each grouping—Roman Catholic, Greek Orthodox, Jewish, Armenian—had its own millet and religious leader, whom the government recognized as the person to handle marriages, divorces, and other civil matters.

The Turks also were inclined to give the non-Turkish provinces considerable scope in their own affairs, particularly in the more distant or isolated areas. As an example, the Druze emirs, or princes, in the Lebanon Mountains ran their fiefdoms almost as independent kingdoms. Even in Egypt, the defeated Mamelukes had more hand in the government than did their Turkish conquerors.

The word "pasha" is used today to describe a man who lives grandly, amid luxury and authority. The Ottoman pashas, or provincial governors, began with great power that gradually weakened along with the empire. Their main role was to raise money for the government, but many also raised it for themselves. The provinces were squeezed dry for money. A pasha would descend on a city, and if its tax quotas were not met, his troops would burn crops, drive off the cattle, and kill the tribesmen.

In Jerusalem, inhabitants paid taxes for the privilege of burying their dead. A Christian resident of the Holy City wrote that it would be impossible to satisfy the demands for money "even if the stones and soil . . . were turned into silver."

That, in effect, was the reason for a province's existence: to provide money for the government, its army, its top-heavy bureaucracy, and its rulers.

The pasha was, of course, a distant figure to the Arab peasant. To him, the Ottoman Empire was personified more in the rural police sergeant. On one occasion when a pasha of Baghdad happened to see a soldier beating a peasant, he intervened. The peasant got on his knees and exclaimed, "May God prolong your life, O Pasha! May you rise to yet higher rank! Someday, if God wills, may you become a sergeant in the police!"

So, the empire languished while Europe raced on. There was stability in the region, in a way, but the pattern of future instability was being set. In Damascus during the first 180 years under the Ottomans, there were 133 governors. Intellectually, the city stagnated—it is said that early in the nineteenth century there was not a bookshop in either Damascus or Aleppo (now in northern Syria).

The population decreased, the land declined. Nomads were allowed to roam with their goats over the terraced fields of Palestine, destroying the fields for crops and setting in the process of soil erosion. Trees were cut down on hills that had been wooded. Egypt's population dwindled to about two and a half million, less than a third of its size under the Roman Empire, and the fields that had made it the empire's breadbasket produced hardly enough to support the people. If not precisely a vacuum, the region was at any rate a low-pressure area, and it was inevitable that stronger forces would move in.

In the seventeenth century, Britain was building up a thriving trade with the East, and the East India Company had established posts on the Persian Gulf to trade for silks from Persia and on the coast of the Red Sea to trade for coffee from the Yemen. France was vying for the Orient trade and had a preeminent position in Egypt. Both countries were engaged in an intense struggle for the wealth of India. Nations thought in those days in imperial leaps, and lesser nations were only pawns in their games.

Napoleon was not the first to believe that control of Egypt could mean control of the empire. Nearly a century before him, the German philosopher Gottfried Leibniz had written to the king of France that Egypt was the key to control of the east and to victory in the battle for Indian trade.

But Napoleon was the first to act on that theory. By 1798 the Ottoman Empire had only a vestige of control over Egypt, the Mamelukes once again having become dominant in its affairs. So, with scarcely a bow in the direction of Constantinople, Napoleon landed in that year near Alexandria, quickly defeated the Mamelukes and took possession of Cairo.

These were hardly equal battles—the medieval Mameluke cavalry against modern French arms directed by the genius of Napoleon—and the campaign itself was short. Alarmed by this move into the Middle East, Britain and Russia joined forces with the Ottoman Empire against Napoleon. A British fleet routed the French in the battle of the Nile, cutting the French supply line. Napoleon marched into Palestine and was checked in a siege at Acre. His army was stricken with the plague. And only thirteen months after he had landed in pursuit of a world empire, Napoleon slipped away, leaving his army and a force of scholars and scientists behind him.

Short as it was, the Napoleonic intrusion was another of those episodes in history that leave things completely and permanently changed; "the ending of the long Egyptian night," as the Egyptian historian Ghorbal put it.

First, there was the work of the French scholars, a remarkable study entitled *Description of Egypt,* with piercing insights and scientifically measured judgments that awakened some Egyptians to the modern world. More directly, the French invasion awakened the British to the fact that Egypt stood astride its imperial lifeline to India. More directly still, the French caused the arrival of one of the more intriguing characters of Arab history—Mehemet Ali, the founder of modern Egypt.

He was not an Arab, but an Albanian, who served as an officer in the Turkish force sent by the Ottomans to oppose Napoleon in 1799. In the drawings illustrating the histories of those times, he appears as an old man, with a huge white beard, a turban, and an eyebrow cocked quizzically at the viewer. But he was a young man when his force had been completely routed by Napoleon, and he had escaped by running into the sea, from which he was rescued by a British boat.

It was not a promising beginning, but with the French gone, Mehemet Ali, by 1805, had made himself the military master of Egypt, as well as its pasha. Napoleon was his hero, and he had his own dreams of empire, an Arab empire. So, he made the first modern attempt at Arab unity.

With impressive energy and the aid of his equally talented son Ibrahim, Mehemet Ali operated at first by paying lip service to the nervous Ottoman emperor. He put down a revolt in Arabia, and came to the Turks' aid to put down another revolt in Greece. Then, because he had been promised them for his help, he made a conquest of Syria and Palestine. His forces under Ibrahim were, in fact, threatening Constantinople itself —when Russia stepped in, a Russia always quite ready to come to the aid of the Turks if it meant getting a foot on the Turkish Straits controlling the Black Sea. This started one of those imperial chain reactions, alarming Britain and France. Eventually, Mehemet Ali was ceded Syria and Palestine, Ibrahim became the governor, and the crisis was over.

In the long run, it was British opposition that ended the imperial ambitions of Mehemet Ali. For by this time, Britain was thoroughly engaged in the Middle East, blocking Russia here and France there (the French had most of the time been cheering for Mehemet Ali and Ibrahim).

Britain was not anxious to see the Turkish Empire taken apart. One reason was stated by the British minister at Naples, who wrote: "Turkey is as good an occupier of the road to India as an active Arab sovereign would be"—and he meant, of course, a less dangerous occupier.

Eventually, British and Ottoman forces combined to force Ibrahim and Mehemet Ali out of Syria and Palestine, and they retired to Egypt. There they settled in and their royal line took root. Enduring through future British occupation and two world wars, the hereditary royalty of Egypt finally ended in the person of a fat king named Farouk, who was overthrown by a young lieutenant colonel named Nasser in 1952.

Mehemet Ali was ahead of his time. Although he was not an Arab and did not even speak the language, he had the idea of Arab unity. While his accomplishments may have been provoked by personal ambition, it is nonetheless true that under this forceful Albanian and his son, the Arab people in Syria, Palestine, and Egypt felt the breath of a new era. Ibrahim in Syria spoke often of the Arabs' past greatness, and of himself he said: "I came to Egypt as a child and my blood has since been colored completely Arab by the sun."

Historian George Antonius has called it a false start, and commented that Mehemet Ali failed not only because of British opposition but also because the Arabs themselves at that time felt no national identity. It was, however, a shadow of things to come.

Mehemet Ali was ahead of his time in another respect. He devoted tremendous energy to modernizing the country. Irrigation canals were built, lands were renewed, machinery imported, new industries encouraged, schools expanded. All these efforts in the final summation were also failures. Again, however, he had foreshadowed the future.

Egypt was now very much a part of the modern world and its affairs. Napoleon and Mehemet Ali, one followed by the other, had awakened it from its long night, and had set the stage for the next great step—the digging of the Suez Canal.

This had been an ambition of pharaohs and conquerors from earliest times, the linking of the Mediterranean and Red seas through the narrow Isthmus of Suez. In the long past a canal had been dug connecting the Nile River and the Red Sea. It had been abandoned and later restored by the Persian conqueror Darius. Since the eighth century, however, there had been no waterway between the seas. Now the French were pressing to build one.

The British were opposed to the whole idea and obstructed the project from the start. Relying on their navy, they felt that the sea routes around Africa to India were adequate, and they were wary of anything that would give other powers quicker access to the East. Despite opposition, Ferdinand de Lesseps, a French diplomat well acquainted with Egypt, won approval for the scheme from the Said Pasha—one of Mehemet Ali's numerous sons who was then ruling Egypt. (Mehemet Ali is said to have had ninety-five offspring.) De Lesseps then went to Constantinople and gained approval from the Ottoman sultan, still nominally the suzerain of Egypt. Fifteen years later, in 1869, the Canal was opened as a French warship led a line of sixty-seven vessels into the waterway from the Mediterranean, and an Egyptian fleet moved northward from the Red Sea.

It was one of the grandest occasions of the nineteenth century, celebrated by six thousand guests, including most of the crowned heads of Europe.

England had nothing to do with all this, except to oppose it. The Canal had been built by the Suez Canal Company, most of whose shares were subscribed to by France and Egypt, with eighteen other countries holding a few. England held none, but was strongly concerned and had moved to counter what it considered this threat by acquiring new outposts in southern Arabia on the route to India.

If opposition had been a mistake, events at any rate allowed England a second chance. The khedives of Egypt

Port Said, at the northern end of the Suez Canal (viceroys to the nominal Ottoman ruler) had been remarkably wasteful with money following Mehemet Ali. Ismail Pasha, khedive when the Canal opened, went on one of history's great spending sprees in an extravagant attempt to bring the best of the modern world to his country. By 1875 his foreign debts were a staggering £91 million, and he could not meet his obligations. So, he sold Egypt's shares in the Canal company to Britain with the wry and undoubtedly true comment that "this is the best financial and political transaction ever made even by a British government."

It was a step that would have almost limitless meaning for Britain in the years ahead. In the long run, it led to a direct British stake in that vital bridge between East and West: Egypt and the Suez isthmus and Palestine. Its more immediate consequence was to make Britain the occupier and ruler of Egypt.

At first the British and French shared what was called "dual control" of Egyptian finances to protect their investments. Then when Egyptian nationalism somewhat unexpectedly asserted itself and a native, anti-foreign government came into power in 1881, the British reacted by landing a force at Alexandria. Egyptian opposition was shattered, France dithered, the dual control was ended, and the British agent and consul general became the real ruler of Egypt.

It was thoroughly in keeping with the times. Foreign powers—England, France, Russia—were involved in intrigue in virtually every corner of the Middle East, fighting wars over implied threats on distant lands, seeing deep motives (perhaps quite correctly) in the visit of a rival diplomat to a local prince. A quarrel over who should protect the holy places in Jerusalem had been a pretext for the Crimean War in 1854–1856 when Britain, France, and Sardinia opposed Russia, which was still striving for a place on the Mediterranean. By a convention with Turkey, Britain began administering Cyprus, as a convenient base in the eastern Mediterranean, in 1878. Russia also was attempting to extend its influence south through Persia, while Britain was shoring up its own outposts on the Persian Gulf and exploring for oil in Iraq and Persia.

Finally, Germany began to awaken to the strategic value of the region, and before long, with its *Drang Nach Osten*—Drive to the East—it was to become Britain's chief rival in the imperial sweepstakes. This it did by supplanting France and Britain in the favors of Abdul-Hamid II, the current sultan in Constantinople, and by using railroads as imperialist weapons. There was, indeed, more intrigue and alarm surrounding the German building of the railroad from Constantinople to Baghdad than ever has been produced by fiction about "The Orient Express."

Benjamin Disraeli, the British prime minister who bought the Suez Canal shares, might have been summing up the atmosphere of the times when he talked of "secret emissaries in every corner."

Lord Curzon, to become the British viceroy of India, portrayed the imperial psychology in an august sweep with this dictum: "I should regard the concession by any Power of a port upon the Persian Gulf to Russia (that dear dream of so many a patriot from the Neva or the Volga) as a deliberate insult to Britain, as a wanton rupture of the status quo, and as an international provocation to war; and I should impeach the British minister who was guilty of acquiescing in such a surrender as a traitor to his country."

Lord Cromer, the British consul general and *de facto* ruler of Egypt, spoke of the "imperious and irresistible necessity of acquiring defensible frontiers"—a phrase not unknown today.

Out of all this intrigue and empire building, this imperialism, three underlying facts stood out: that the Ottoman Empire under the despotic Abdul-Hamid was not only "the sick man of Europe" but was dying; that Britain had a stake it considered of utmost importance in the eastern Mediterranean; and that everyone had a stake, or wanted one, in the Persian Gulf.

Thus, the Persians, like the Turks, were pawns in the European rivalry—helpless witnesses to their own weakness after the days of greatness under Cyrus and Darius of old, and Shah Abbas the Great in recent times.

In Constantinople, where the Ottomans were playing out their days, there were still the trappings of old glory. The magnificent mosques and ornate palaces stood beside the Bosporus; the royal court could still dazzle a European with its luxury. Annie Brassey, an observant Briton who had voyaged there on her husband's yacht, wrote in her diary how she had seen the sultan leave his palace for worship at a mosque in a flotilla of five caiques, each propelled by twenty-four oarsmen adorned in purple and gold and wearing scarlet fezzes.

On December 5, 1878, she saw the sultan take another route to worship: He was mounted "on a pure white Arab steed whose pedigree, I believe, dates back for many thousand years. The sultan did not sit his horse badly, but appeared to be in a great fright." He was a "nervous man," she wrote, "with the constitutional family dread of plots."

Those were prophetic notes. For new forces were plotting against the frightened, corrupt, and reactionary Abdul-Hamid. Many years later, in 1908, revolutionists succeeded in overthrowing him, and the empire was given a last chance for life, under the leadership of a group known as the Young Turks.

Their idea was to breath fresh, liberal, western ideas into the sick empire. Formed not only of Turks but a "medley of races," they proclaimed as their first object "good government for the empire on the basis of racial fusion."

But it was too late. A new Middle East already was growing under the tattered cover of Ottoman rule. New nationalisms were rising, and although it lingered on, the old imperialism—Ottoman and European as well—was already doomed.

VI

ARABS AND JEWS

The Arabs, at last, were beginning to stir.

In the slow centuries under the Ottomans, the Arabs had shown no signs of national consciousness. They thought of themselves not in terms of race or nation, but as believers in Islam living in certain towns or localities.

For that matter, they were far from being one nation. In them lingered the blood of Greeks, Persians, Turks, Kurds, and Crusaders, and ancient Egyptians, Phoenicians, and Assyrians. The so-called pure Arabs had come out of the Arabian desert and had spread their religion and, to a lesser extent, their language; but they, too, had mingled.

What "Arabism" or unity amounted to was not so much race as an idea. It was described later in a flowery passage by Michel Aflaq, founder of a Pan-Arab party called the Baath, which is still very active on the Arab scene. Arab nationalism, he said, "spreads its wings over all those who have shared with the Arabs their history and have lived in the environment of their language and culture for generations, so that they have become Arab in thought and feeling."

This awareness of being Arab was spread at the start, strangely enough, by American and French missionaries. During the short-lived but liberal regime of Mehemet Ali and his son Ibrahim, Christian teachers had been allowed to do their work in Lebanon and Syria. At that time Beirut and Damascus had been at an intellectual standstill; books were rarities reserved for the privileged; the written language was almost unknown to most Arabs. The missionaries imported presses to print Bibles and textbooks for their schools. As book knowledge spread, literary and scientific groups were formed under American and French patronage, and out of these came an increasing sense of Arab identity.

In 1866 the Americans founded the Syrian Protestant College in Beirut, a pioneering institution that was to become the American University of Beirut and was to play a leading part in the growth of Arab nationalism and the education of its leaders.

The role of the missionaries can be summed up by the growth of literacy, and the consequent dizzying multiplication of newspapers in the region. Between 1904 and 1914 the number of newspapers rose in Lebanon from 29 to 168, in Syria from 3 to 87, and in Palestine from 1 to 31. Which is not to say, of course, that all the new readers or even a majority of them were converted Christians.

It seems strange, given the supposed Arab fondness for conspiracy, that this was a minor activity during all the Turkish rule. During the tyrannical regime of Abdul-Hamid II, a few secret Arab societies were organized but they were more obscure than secret. Not until World War I engulfed the region, after the Young Turks had raised false hopes of giving the Arabs a new voice in the empire, did stronger societies take over. By that time Arab nationalism was truly on the rise—although among a very small elite of the population—and the Arab revolt was being born.

In Palestine, in the meantime, the Jewish people were nearing an epoch-making turn in their own long history. During the centuries since the Roman General Titus captured Jerusalem and burned their temple, and while the Arabs had thundered out of the desert to conquer and then decline, the Jews had never forgotten Jerusalem.

Most of the Jews had been dispersed and had found new homes throughout the world. But some Jews had always remained in the Holy Land, tolerated for the most part, but poor and inconspicuous, living as tradesmen and artisans and small farmers. Late in the eighteenth and early in the nineteenth centuries their numbers had dwindled to a few thousand, clustered mostly in the northern part of the country.

Despite the low estate of the Jews, European statesmen had for their own reasons been promoting the idea of returning the Jews to the Holy Land. Shortly after Napoleon had landed in Egypt and declared himself a Moslem, he traveled to Palestine and proclaimed the Jews to be its "rightful heirs." In 1840, the British foreign secretary, Lord Palmerston, was worried by the "evil designs" of Mehemet Ali and his son and their short-lived Arab kingdom in Syria and Egypt. In line with the British policy of holding the amenable Ottoman Empire together, Palmerston wrote to his ambassador in Constantinople that "it would be of manifest importance to the Sultan to encourage the Jews to return to, and to settle in, Palestine."

In any case, Jews were beginning to arrive from Europe in increasing numbers. By 1845, there were about twelve thousand Jews in Palestine, and the influx was growing, propelled more by Europe's nineteenth-century anti-Semitism than by the strategic thinking of statesmen. By 1882, there were twenty-four thousand Jews in Palestine, and the immigrants had formed a few struggling farm communities. That year was, in fact, a turning point, for it was then that the first modern settlers began arriving from Russia. In those hard, early years they were helped by money from wealthy European Jews, but it was an unorganized trend, without a leader.

Then came Theodor Herzl and his book.

Some historians have compared *Der Judenstaat* (*The Jewish State*) to a "thunderclap" or a "pistol shot." Written by a thirty-six-year-old Austrian journalist, and published in 1896, it galvanized a trend into a cause, gave European Jews new hope, and led to the unremitting drive that brought forth in 1948, against all obstacles, the state of Israel.

Herzl was not the first to write about a return to Israel. What made him different from earlier authors was his zeal and inspired sense of mission.

The Israeli statesman Abba Eban has described Herzl and his role in these words: "An extraordinary, powerful, and energetic individual had tapped the latent springs of Jewish unity and brought to expression the hidden resources of the Jews as a whole."

It was a messianic book, with this message. "The Jews who wish it will have their State . . . The world will be freed by our liberty, enriched by our wealth, magnified by our greatness." He wrote, "Let sovereignty be granted to us over a portion of the globe large enough to satisfy the rightful requirements of a nation; the rest we shall manage for ourselves."

Herzl became, thus, the father of Zionism. So dynamic was the effect of his book that within a year after its publication a Zionist congress drew members of the world Jewish community to Basel, Switzerland, to debate their future. From this came the proclamation that "the aim of Zionism is to create for the Jewish people a home in Palestine secured by public law."

When the congress was finished in 1897, Herzl looked into the future and said, "At Basel I created the Jewish State. In five years perhaps, and certainly in fifty, everyone will see it." It would be quibbling to say that he missed by only one year.

The impetus and leadership given by Herzl speeded the move of Jews to Palestine and enlarged the land they owned. An organization was formed to channel money to Palestine and land was bought from Arab owners who were willing to sell. The city of Tel Aviv was founded, looking in early pictures like a dilapidated beach town with tents and shacks.

By the start of World War I there were about 85,000 Jews in Palestine, living beside about 604,000 Arabs. Herzl was dead —he had died in 1904 after eight burning years spent carrying his mission to leaders in London, Constantinople, and the capitals of Europe. But others had taken over, and a turning point in the destiny of the Jews was near.

VII

WORLD WAR I

World War I was like an enormous electric charge in the Middle East. In its fury, it shocked the region out of one age and into another. It was as if all the events that had been slowly developing—the weakening of the Ottoman Empire, the awakening of the Arabs, the influx of the Jews—were suddenly propelled forward at a hundred times their old pace. When the war was over, the old empire was dead, new states had been born, the Arabs had been promised their independence, and the Jews had been promised their home. And because those two promises overlapped and opposed one another, Arabs and Jews were set on a course that would surely lead to future strife.

When the war began in 1914, the major question in the Middle East concerned the Ottoman Empire: would it stay neutral or would it become an ally of Germany and the Central Powers? That was answered early. The Young Turks went with Germany.

The empire at this juncture still embraced a large part of the Arab world, including the Arabian peninsula, Mesopotamia, Palestine, Syria, and—formally if not in fact—Egypt. It was a Moslem world, and the sultan in Constantinople was its caliph, successor to the Prophet. Soon after the Turks' entry on the side of Germany, the aging sultan, at the Young Turks' behest, issued a call to *jihad*—a holy war against Britain and its Allies.

The threat to Britain was real. It had some seventy million Moslem subjects in India, and its lifeline to the subcontinent was surrounded by the Moslems of Egypt and the nearby deserts. In this tense and potentially fatal situation, the Arabs held the balance—and the Arab most clearly in the middle was Sharif Hussein ibn-Ali of the Hejaz, whose desert domain included Islam's holy cities of Mecca and Medina. He was an autocratic, clear-eyed, dignified old man with kingly ambitions, and a direct descendant of Mohammed the Prophet. More than any other Arab leader, Hussein could deflate the idea of jihad, for he was keeper of the holy places, and a holy war without him and his line would be an empty exercise.

Well before Turkey had entered the war, the British had foreseen this, and early in 1914 had been in contact with Hussein through his son, Abdullah. But now negotiations began in earnest. To assure himself of Arab backing, Hussein sent another son, Faisal, to Damascus to sound out the Arab nationalist underground there. Faisal found the Syrian Arabs ready. Hussein stalled the pressing Turks with one hand, and exchanged a series of ornate and frequently vague letters with Sir Henry McMahon, the British high commissioner in Cairo. At last, early in 1916, there emerged an agreement.

Hussein, acting for the Arabs, would raise an army and fight the Turks.

The British would support the independence of the Arabs after the war in an area bounded by the thirty-seventh parallel (roughly the southern border of Turkey) in the north; Iran and the Persian Gulf in the East; the Gulf of Aden and Arabian Sea in the south; and the Red Sea and the Mediterranean in the west. A coastal belt of Syria, meaning essentially what today is Lebanon, and some land to the north of it was excluded, and the status of Palestine was left vague. Britain reserved to itself special privileges in what is now Iraq. Britain would also finance the Arab revolt.

The Arabs insist to this day that the British went back on their word in the Hussein-McMahon agreement. They say that the agreement included Palestine in the area promised for Arab independence. The British say that Palestine was left out. There is no way of proving either argument—and in any case, the British broke the pledge in a sweeping, spectacular—although at the time secret—way within six months. This was the Sykes-Picot Agreement, an under-the-table deal between Britain and France, whose mention can bring fire to the eyes of Arab students today.

The Sykes-Picot Agreement was the old imperialism at work. Signed by Sir Mark Sykes and Georges Picot, it, in effect, cut up the Ottoman Empire between Russia, Britain, and France. Russia was to get eastern Turkey and part of northern Iraq; to France would go most of Syria (including Lebanon) and part of southern Turkey; Britain would get southern Iraq. A large area in the center would be split into French and British zones of influence. Palestine would be internationalized. Only part of the Arabian peninsula would be left to the Arabs for their dreamed-of kingdom. In polite terms, it was a contradiction. Less politely, it was a double cross.

As Winston Churchill put it a few years later, the Sykes-Picot pact "greatly confused the issue of principles." But at the time, this agreement to share the postwar spoils was not known to the Arabs.

So, the Arab revolt began in 1916 in the sandy Hejaz. It was a guerrilla war, and although a sideshow to the titanic battles in Europe, it made a contribution to Allied victory. The raids against Turkish communications and outposts, often organized and led by the onetime Oxford scholar and archaeologist T. E. Lawrence, tied up Turkish troops and protected the flank of British soldiers marching north toward Jerusalem and Damascus.

On October 1, 1918, Arab cavalry, led by Hussein's son Faisal, galloped into Damascus, and the Arabs believed their day of freedom was at last at hand. The war was nearly over, the Turks were beaten, the pledge was believed.

The British had made another pledge during the war—this a public one. In the third of the agreements that, after bitter argument and more pushing of pawns around the peace table, were to shape the future Middle East, they had promised to make Palestine a home for the Jews. This was the most crucial pledge of all.

Long before the war, Theodor Herzl had brought his case for a Jewish nation before British leaders. There had been a British offer of a home in East Africa; it had been turned down. There was talk of Cyprus and the Sinai. The Zionists aimed directly, however, at the Holy Land, and their aim was not to be shunted off.

Dr. Chaim Weizmann, a Russian-born scientist then lecturing at the University of Manchester, had become the leading Zionist in England after Herzl's death. And he had won a key friend in Lord Balfour, who had been prime minister in 1902–1905 and in the wartime year of 1917 was Britain's foreign secretary.

For that matter, there was sympathy and support for Zionism in the top levels of that British government, including Prime Minister David Lloyd George. In the United States this support found echo in President Woodrow Wilson and leading members of his administration.

In Britain's case, it was part sympathy and part hard realism. The country was battling for its life against the Central Powers. It needed help where it could find it, including the help of world Jewry, in the United States, in Russia, whose czarist government had been overthrown by the Bolshevik Revolution, and in Germany itself.

Moreover, Britain had long played with the idea of returning the Jews to Palestine. There, a friendly and progressive people would help insure Britain's interests in that vital bridge of the empire.

The words of Lord Palmerston nearly eight decades before had foretold Britain's strong strategic interest: "it would be of manifest importance . . . to encourage the Jews to return to, and to settle in, Palestine."

For all these reasons, and despite the opposition of many prominent Jews in Britain and the United States who feared Zionism would set them apart in their own countries, Britain acted. Lord Balfour, on behalf of the government, issued the famous Balfour Declaration, in the form of a letter to British Lord Rothschild:

> Dear Lord Rothschild,
>
> I have much pleasure in conveying to you, on behalf of His Majesty's Government, the following declaration of sympathy with Jewish Zionist aspirations which has been submitted to, and approved by, the Cabinet.
>
> His Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country.
>
> I should be grateful if you would bring this declaration to the knowledge of the Zionist Federation.
>
> Yours sincerely,
> ARTHUR JAMES BALFOUR

The letter was dated November 2, 1917.

It was this fateful document, hailed on the one side and endlessly lamented on the other, that was to lead to the founding of the state of Israel. Even though it was not all they wanted, the declaration was an undoubted triumph for the Jews and a blow to the Arabs. In later years Abba Eban called it "the decisive diplomatic victory of the Jewish people in modern history."

Arabs then formed about 90 percent of the Palestine population. Whether through flimflam or self-deception, Hussein and other Arab leaders thought Palestine had been promised to them. Accordingly, the old emir asked the British to explain things. Britain sent an officer to Jidda, a port on the Red Sea, to assure Hussein that "Jewish settlement in Palestine would only be allowed insofar as would be consistent with the political and economic freedom of the Arab population." For the time being, Hussein was satisfied.

Later, the British arranged a meeting between Weizmann and the emir Faisal, which proved to be friendly. Before the Zionist leader's arrival in the Arab world, in fact, Hussein had published a greeting to him in his Mecca newspaper, urging Arabs to welcome the Jews as brethren and to cooperate with them for their mutual benefit.

When the war ended, therefore, Britain was responsible for three promises it could not keep because they conflicted with one another. They had been made in the stress of war, in a fight for survival, with an attitude that maybe everything could be straightened out later. There were the commitments with France in the Sykes-Picot pact (Russia was no longer part of it); with the Arabs in the McMahon letters; and with the Jews in the Balfour Declaration. The unscrambling of these arrangements was done at the postwar peace conferences in an attitude that combined embarrassment and even shame with offhandedness. And, of course, they were never quite unscrambled.

To the Paris Peace Conference came the emir Faisal, representing his father, Hussein, with T. E. Lawrence at his side, clad theatrically in flowing Arab robes. For the Arab from the Hejaz, Paris was a befuddling experience, and the Arabs fared poorly.

Gone, first of all, was the grandiose idea of a great Arabian Hashemite kingdom, stretching from Turkey to the Arabian Sea, under Hussein. The British politely informed Faisal that "other ideas" had been discussed with the French. Pressured by the British on one side, by his Arab constituents in unhappy Damascus on the other, and ignored and insulted by the

French, Faisal eventually made his doomed claim and went back to the Middle East.

Weizmann and the Zionists also were in Paris, pressing their case, opposing the Arabs' claim to Palestine, and going along with plans for a British mandate. Their major aim was to have the Balfour Declaration's promise made part of the peace treaties. At a hearing Weizmann was asked what was his idea of a "national home" in Palestine, and he replied it was to create there "a nationality which would be as Jewish as the French nation was French and the English nation English."

The rebuffed Faisal went to Damascus, the real political center at that time of the Arab world and the heart of the Arabs' struggle for independence. Damascus had suffered and bled during the war; the Turks had uncovered an Arab nationalist movement and had put to death its leaders—men from families still prominent in Syrian and Palestinian affairs. The war had given a great shove forward to Arab nationalism generally. And although Damascus was then nearly starving, it was in a defiant and independent mood.

In this frame of mind, the Damascus nationalists took matters into their own hands. They met, elected Faisal their king, and proclaimed the independent, constitutional monarchy of Syria. At about the same time, in an equally independent mood, the Iraqis in Baghdad elected Faisal's brother, Abdullah, the king.

To this, and to the need to settle definitely the division of the former Ottoman Empire, the British and French responded with a new conference to be held in San Remo, on the Italian Riviera. This conference shaped the map of the Middle East along the lines existing generally today, except for the area of Israel.

These were the results:

Britain was given the mandate to administer Iraq and Palestine. Included in the Palestine mandate was the Balfour Declaration, which stipulated the establishment of the Jewish national home. Iraq's was to be a temporary mandate, leading toward a fully independent state.

France, in recognition of special French interests dating back to the Crusades, was given the mandate to administer Syria, including Lebanon. This, too, was meant to be temporary and to lead toward Syrian independence.

Arabs greeted the news from San Remo with anger and uprisings. In Palestine, the Arab population of Jerusalem, hearing a propaganda barrage from Damascus, attacked the Jews in what may have been the first political riot by Palestinian Arabs against the Jewish newcomers. In Syria, after clashes between Arabs and French outposts, the French moved on Damascus with planes and tanks, beating down Arab resistance and entering Damascus to commence their mandated rule. Faisal himself fled to Palestine.

The most serious resistance was in Iraq. There emotion burst into a full-scale revolution against the British. Despite the presence of 130,000 British troops plus reinforcements, the revolt lasted five months and cost the British 2,500 casualties.

These events took place for the most part in 1919 and 1920, and they clearly could not be tolerated. "It is no good patching with the present system," Lawrence wrote to a friend at the time. "We are big enough to admit a fault and turn a new page."

The page was turned by Winston Churchill, newly named to head Britain's Colonial Office, with Lawrence aiding him. Churchill called a general British conference to make another try at settling the Middle East problems, and the delegates met in Cairo in 1921. Painting watercolors by the pyramids to refresh himself, the new colonial secretary proceeded during working hours with some masterly strokes on the Middle East map. A new state, Transjordan, was created across the Jordan River from Palestine and offered to Abdullah, the recently named king of Iraq. This was done to make room for Faisal, who had been deposed by the French from the Damascus throne, as the new king in Baghdad. The mandate form of government in Iraq was replaced by a treaty of alliance.

Everything fitted in neatly enough. Abdullah and Faisal accepted their new roles, and Lawrence prepared to retire with the statement that he "must put on record my conviction that England is out of the Arab affair with clean hands."

There was one act left. White-bearded Hussein stayed in his desert, king of the Hejaz, but alone, neglected, disillusioned, and unforgiving. His idea of a Hashemite Arab realm had vanished; rival princes of the desert pressed in. He was now sixty-eight, and he hastened his downfall with a grand final gesture. He proclaimed himself caliph of Islam. The Hejaz already was threatened by a powerful neighbor, the emir ibn-Saud of the warlike and puritanical Wahabi sect. The Wahabis now attacked. Hussein abdicated in favor of his son Ali, who soon followed his father in exile. Ibn-Saud was victorious, and a new kingdom was born—the kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

The Arab provinces of the old Ottoman Empire were thus meted out and settled after Churchillian tinkering. The lineage of the Prophet, the Hashemite line, reigned with British permission in Baghdad and the dusty desert capital of Amman. The House of Saud reigned in most of Arabia. The French, by force of arms, were established in Syria, including its province of Lebanon.

The Allies had at the same time been trying to dispense with the Turks themselves, and they were not charitably inclined.

The Turks had been the enemy. They had been driven back in the Arab lands; but in the north they had fought with great bravery and success on the Gallipoli Peninsula, close to the site of ancient Troy, and had handed the British a costly defeat in their attempt to seize the Turkish Straits. During the war, the Turks had also uprooted two million Armenians (whom they feared disloyal) close to their Russian border and had massacred six hundred thousand of them, to the horror of the West.

Therefore, the Turks were to pay. They were handed a humiliating peace treaty (the Treaty of Sèvres) that would strip off an independent Armenia and all the Arab lands, set aside another section of land for a future Kurdish state, give the sea-port of Smyrna (now Izmir) and most of Turkey-in-Europe to Greece, and limit Turkish independence in the land that was left.

When the Greeks, their old foes, landed a force at Smyrna, this was the last straw. The tough and independent-minded Turks would not take it, and the man to lead them in defiance was on hand. He was Mustafa Kemal, who was to become Kemal Atatürk (Father Turk), perhaps the greatest of his race since the first Suleiman, and one of the most forceful figures of the twentieth century. He was a professional soldier, the hero of the Dardanelles, a general with the defeated troops in the east. A remarkable campaign became the war of Turkish independence. Mustafa Kemal rallied the Turkish army, forced the French and Italians out of footholds in southern Turkey, routed the Armenians in the east, settled the eastern borders with a peace treaty with the new Soviet Union, and then turned westward against the Greeks. The Greek army, which had been threatening Kemal's capital at Angora (Ankara), was defeated in a series of bloody battles culminating in 1922 in another terrible episode at Smyrna, when the Greeks and the city's Greek population were pushed into the Mediterranean while the city was burned and looted.

The Turks in that year deposed the last sultan, Mohammed VI, ending some six hundred years of Ottoman rule, and established a republic. Freed of their old and ramshackle empire, the Turks were renewed and vigorous and ready to demand a better peace. This they got in the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne. The borders of Turkey were established as they are today, with the exception of the Turkish addition of the province of Hatay in the northeast corner of the Mediterranean, gained from French-controlled Syria in 1938.

Mustafa Kemal, renamed Atatürk, held power as virtual dictator of Turkey until his death in 1938. He was imperious and hard living, and he literally ordered his awed countrymen into the twentieth century. From the great to the small, he broke the power of Islam in Turkey and separated church and

Kemal Atatürk looks from a train window in Istanbul, 1932.

state; he banned the Oriental fez and replaced it with the European cap. Recognizing the Arabic script as a bar to educating the Turkish people, he banned that language and introduced the Roman alphabet. (He called a conference of intellectuals to work out that problem, and asked how long it would take. Fifteen years, they said. Do it in six months, he ordered.)

Atatürk in his autocratic way even tried to establish an opposition party, but he could not. People would throw away their fezzes and learn the Roman alphabet if he said so; they would not oppose him, even if he told them to. But when he died, his old military comrade and later premier, Ismet Inönü, was elected president and led the Turkish republic into a democratic system.

World War I did not so thoroughly shake and change Persia as it did Turkey, but Persia's postwar pattern was somewhat similar. When the war ended, Britain hoped to extend its influence in the oil-rich country. But the Persians, like their neighbors the Arabs, were sensing a revived nationalism, and refused to give the British the treaty rights they sought.

A Persian strong man in the Atatürk mold, Riza Khan Pahlavi, entered the scene. A cavalry trooper and later commander of the Cossack Division, he helped to overthrow the old government in 1921, made himself prime minister in 1923, threw out Ahmed Shah of the Kajar dynasty, and was proclaimed his successor—Riza Shah Pahlavi of the Pahlavi dynasty—in 1925. Following Atatürk's lead, he strove to modernize his country and rid it of foreign influence. Evidence of this fact was the change of the official name of the country in 1935 to Iran, replacing its old Hellenistic name of Persia.

Atatürk came closer to achieving his ends than did Riza Shah. The shah's country was older, more backward, and more resistant to change. But Iran was, nevertheless, shaken out of

Atatürk (left) with the shah of Persia, 1934

Mohammed Riza, the present shah of Iran

its age-old lethargy. When he was forced to abdicate under British-Russian pressure in World War II, Riza Shah passed on his task to his son, Mohammed Riza, the present shah.

The war produced dynamic changes in every country of the Middle East. Dissatisfied and restive as they were, Iraq and Syria were set on the road that would lead to independence; the new state of Transjordan was created; most of the Arabian peninsula was united in the new kingdom of Saudi Arabia; a Jewish national home was recognized in Palestine and would lead to the state of Israel many years later; Turkey became a republic; and Persia overthrew its old rulers and began to modernize.

Egypt, too, was picked up in the maelstrom and put on a new course. But at first it seemed that the war merely set back the clock in Cairo. In all the wartime dealing and secret pacts, Egypt had not once been mentioned. Britain was in control, and continued British rule was taken for granted. The country had become, in fact, a British protectorate late in 1914.

Egyptians had felt the winds of nationalism, however; they had not ignored Britain's promises to the other Arabs. When the war ended and British troops remained in full control, there were riots and the rise of nationalist leaders centering around a new political party, the Wafd. Finally, an Egyptian delegation was allowed to present its claims at the peace conference in Paris—to no avail. Following more riots and a deadlock in negotiations, Britain in 1922 proceeded to end its protectorate and proclaim Egypt independent.

It was an independence, of course, with very strong strings attached. Britain remained in charge of Egypt's defense, and in control of the security of the Suez Canal and other imperial communications. A note was sent to other foreign powers warning them not to meddle in Egyptian affairs. There was no mention of Egypt joining the League of Nations. It was a unilateral declaration, and Egyptians received it with something less than joy.

VIII

TROUBLE IN PALESTINE

Arabs and Jews, as well as others concerned with the Arab-Jewish conflict, look at the dispute with different sets of glasses. What each sees may be the same object, but it is viewed in an entirely different focus. This was the case with the Balfour Declaration, and eventually with the entire tragic history of Britain's Palestine Mandate between World War I and 1948.

The one side—the Arabs and their supporters—examined the Balfour Declaration and at first saw in it, albeit uneasily, a vague statement about a Jewish national home and a definite promise to protect Arab rights. The other side—the Jews and their supporters—saw it at least as leading to a Jewish commonwealth, a Jewish majority, and some form of statehood—to a Palestine as Jewish as the English nation was English, in Weizmann's view.

So, from the start there was misunderstanding; the ominous riots of Arabs against Jews in 1920 were only shadows of things to come. Both sides have since accused Britain of bad faith during the life of the unhappy mandate. In reality, the British were caught between two converging nationalisms on a sure course of collision. The British left behind them a sad trail of commissions and reports and attempts at conciliation and, in the long run, a case history of well-intentioned futility. But one wonders if any government in this spot at this time could have done any better.

There had been an early warning of trouble. A commission led by Americans, Dr. Henry C. King and Charles Crane, had been sent to Syria and Palestine by President Woodrow Wilson during the peace conference to study the Middle East situation. In their report on Palestine, made public years later, they "found much to approve in the aspirations and plans of the Zionists." But they also reported that "the non-Jewish population of Palestine—nearly nine-tenths of the whole—are emphatically against the entire Zionist program."

The commission warned against unlimited Jewish immigration, which the Zionists desired, and said the Zionists' plan of purchasing land from Arab landlords would lead to "a practically complete dispossession of the present non-Jewish inhabitants."

"Anti-Zionist feeling in Palestine and Syria is intense and not lightly to be flouted," it concluded. "No British officer, consulted by the Commissioners, believed that the Zionist program could be carried out except by force of arms. The officers generally thought that a force of not less than 50,000 soldiers would be required even to initiate the program."

The British found the going as tough as predicted. After another outbreak of Arab violence, and an appeal by an Arab delegation in London, the government issued a White Paper in 1922 under the name of Winston Churchill, still colonial secretary. It was intended to again define British policy, and to placate the Arabs. It criticized Weizmann's by-now-famous statement about the future Jewishness of Palestine.

The idea, Britain said, was to found a Jewish home *in* Palestine, and not "that Palestine as a whole should be converted into a Jewish National Home."

Even though the paper acknowledged that the Jewish people were there "as of right and not on sufferance," the Zionists considered this a "serious whittling down" of the Balfour promise.

The Churchill paper was followed by many more anxious reports and hopeful remedies, but the tension grew steadily. There were bursts of violence by an increasingly aroused Arab population. In 1929, alarmed at what they took to be Jewish encroachment on their holy place and whipped up by fanatics, the Arabs went on a countrywide rampage, killing 133 Jews and destroying 6 farm settlements.

This led to an attempt by Britain to restrict immigration and the transfer to Jews of Arab land, much of it owned by rich absentee Arab landlords willing to sell at good prices to the Jewish Agency. But there was soon to be a frightening urgency to the flow of Jews to the national home. In 1933 Hitler and the Nazis came to power in Germany; anti-Semitism was deepening in Poland and Rumania. Human needs overrode everything else, and the latest British attempt to impose controls was dropped.

One way of telling the history of Palestine in those years could be with figures, for as Jewish population went up, so did Arab passions. According to official reports, the Jewish population rose from 58,000 in 1919 to 83,800 in 1922, to 172,000 in 1931, to 320,400 in 1935. In the same period the Arab population, also growing as the result of a high birthrate, expanded from 642,000 in 1919 to 940,800 in 1935. That meant, however, that the percentage of Arabs in the total population declined from about 90 percent to about 74 percent.

In roughly the same period, Jews invested the equivalent of $400 million in Palestine, in setting up new industries and increasing Jewish-owned land between 1922 and 1939 from about 148,000 acres to 384,000 acres. Although they sometimes tried, the Arabs never were able to stop their own people from selling off the land.

Seeing their majority decline and their land slip away, the Arabs turned more and more against the British. In 1936 they grouped five political parties together into an Arab Higher Committee and placed at its head the Grand Mufti (or religious counselor) of Jerusalem, Haj Amin el-Husseini. To those who knew him later as an old man in Beirut, he was quiet, cautious, and cool. Then, however, he was sharp-eyed and fanatical, an ardent nationalist.

With their tempers fanned by Haj Amin and others, the

Arabs soon escalated from riots and demonstrations to desperate revolt. At first there were the small-scale attacks on Jews, by this time hardly unusual. Then came a general strike, and then, flaring over the countryside, general guerrilla warfare that for a time virtually paralyzed Jerusalem. By the end of 1937, the uprising had caused the deaths of 1,624 Arabs, 92 Jews, and 69 British. While the Jewish community kept its hands off and under notably good control, the British battled the revolt with thousands of troops and harsh military justice. In one year 75 Arabs were sentenced to death by hanging. In the midst of it, the British deported many Arab leaders and forced Haj Amin to flee into an exile that brought him to Hitler's Berlin during World War II.

The rebellion lasted until the outbreak of the war was imminent. The rebellion did not help the Arab cause or, in the long run, hinder the Zionists. It did produce still another royal commission that was notable for one reason: for the first time a report was issued proposing the partition of Palestine into Jewish and Arab states. And in 1939 there was one more White Paper, which became to the Jews a hated document. This paper broached the idea of creating an independent Palestine state after a ten-year cooling-off period, and in the meantime strict controls on Jewish immigration and land purchases. Both sides rejected it. Both were alienated.

But World War II brought a truce; by this time, obviously, only a truce. The Arabs were inflamed; the Zionists were determined and driven by the tragedy of Jews in Europe. It was a strange and bitter fact that the coming of war in the Holy Land awaited only peace in the rest of the world.

World War II did not lash the Middle East as it did Europe and Asia. Except for the battles on the North African desert, it did not touch the region directly, nor did it bring the vast changes that World War I had brought.

While slaughtering Jews in Europe, the Nazis did their best to woo the Arabs, but the response was lukewarm. The British were meeting this threat with force, not with reports and boards and commissions. Egypt was a great staging area and Cairo was a major Allied headquarters. The country had a façade of independence and had been a member of the League of Nations since 1937, but when Britain had reason to bring in a strong pro-Allied government, the King of Egypt, Farouk, was told to accept it or abdicate. He accepted.

Iraq, with an independence not much stronger than Egypt's and a League member since 1933, was the only Arab state to pay serious heed to the Nazi suitors. The Grand Mufti, Haj Amin, had settled there, bringing his anti-British, anti-Zionist fanaticism to Baghdad. To a fanciful British visitor, he looked like "a just-fallen Lucifer" in Baghdad's conspiratorial atmosphere.

In 1941, when Britain's fortune was at low ebb in the war, the pro-Nazi politician Rashid Ali al-Gailani seized power and appealed for German help. It was a fateful moment of the war for Britain. But the Germans were otherwise occupied and sent no aid. Instead, the beleaguered British and remaining loyal Iraqis got help from the fellow Hashemite state of Transjordan. This small state's Arab Legion, under British General Sir John Bagot Glubb, rushed across the desert in American trucks and assorted private cars and relieved the besieged garrison at Lake Habbaniya. Glubb's Bedouin warriors, with their flowing robes and long hair, were dubbed "Glubb's Girls" by the amazed British, but they had, nevertheless, saved the day.

The only two Middle Eastern countries completely changed by World War II were Syria and Lebanon. They went into the war as a mandated territory and emerged as two independent states.

During the 1930's, France had divided the mandate into separate divisions, of which Lebanon was one. When France fell before the Nazi invaders in 1940, Vichy French collaborators took over and cooperated, willingly or not, with the Germans. Britain, playing now in dead earnest in the Middle East, invaded Syria and prodded the Free French, or followers of Charles de Gaulle, into declaring Lebanon and Syria independent.

After thoroughly Levantine wrangles that included general strikes in Beirut, anti-French riots, and French arrests of nationalist leaders, Lebanon and Syria became independent in fact as well as name, but under military control. In 1945, when victory was won in Europe, the French made one last stab at dominance in the area. French troops landed in Beirut and ignited fighting and rioting in both Lebanon and Syria. Winston Churchill again stepped into Middle Eastern affairs, issuing what was, in effect, an ultimatum for a cease-fire. The French reluctantly complied. By the end of 1946 all foreign troops had withdrawn from both countries.

IX

THE BIRTH OF ISRAEL

The map of the Middle East that had started taking shape during World War I was now nearly complete—except for Palestine.

Although the war had brought a truce between Arabs and Jews, it had also given a driving urgency to the trek of Jews to the Holy Land. Fleeing from the ghastly death camps in Europe, Jews could have no sympathy for immigration quotas and waiting lists. But quotas there were, and the British were trying to enforce them.

Overcrowded refugee ships were bringing waves of illegal immigrants to the shores. When they could, authorities rounded them up and deported them. One ship, the *Patria,* was about to remove 2,000 Jews from Palestine to the island of Mauritius when it was blown up by Jewish terrorists in Haifa harbor, with the loss of 268 lives. Another ship, the Danube River steamer *Struma,* had been held up in 1942 in Istanbul and was turned back into the Black Sea when the British said they would not admit its passengers. It sank, and 763 lives were lost.

The plight of the refugees, particularly the sinking of the *Struma,* shocked the Allied world. It spurred American Zionists, whose influence in the movement had been growing, to call a meeting in New York that was attended by Weizmann and David Ben-Gurion, head of the executive committee of the

Jewish Agency. Out of this meeting, as proposed by Ben-Gurion, came the so-called Biltmore Program, which became the official policy of world Zionism. It demanded the establishment of a Jewish state in all of Palestine, unlimited immigration under control of the Jewish Agency not the British, and the creation of a Jewish army.

At the same time there was a hardening of the line in Palestine and a rise in anger. Very early in the war Weizmann had assured the British government that the Zionists would contribute in every way possible to the war effort. More than forty thousand Palestine Jews were serving in the British armed forces. Now extremists began to stir.

There were two armed groups in the underground, plus one unofficial but tolerated organization. The last was the Haganah, the Jewish Defense Force that had been active before the war in defending Jewish communities against Arab attack. Although illegal, it was an open secret, a shadow army about forty-five thousand strong that was to become the military arm of the Jews' fight for independence. Within the Haganah was the Palmach, about two thousand strong, a crack commando group that had, in fact, been partially trained by the British.

Farther underground was the Irgun Zvai Leumi, with a strength of about three thousand, the military arm of an extremist political group, which used terrorist tactics initially against the British administration. Finally, there was the Stern Gang, a splinter—and a ruthless one—from the Irgun.

All the groups had managed to accumulate stocks of weapons from sources right at hand, military-arms dumps of the British army and air force. The Jewish people, and not only the terrorists, were arming themselves, as Ben-Gurion had warned them to, to prepare for the fighting to come.

In an attempt to compel the British to open the gates to all Jews, the terrorists launched a campaign late in the war, blowing up railroad yards and assassinating one high British official. But this was only distant thunder.

By 1945 the sounds of the coming storm were close at hand. It seemed as if the clouds of war rolled over Palestine as they left Europe, darkening its mood and carrying an electric tension as the outburst neared. Britain was standing in the middle, caught between Arabs and Jews and now facing ever-growing pressure from the United States.

Peace as it came to Europe revealed the desperate condition of the Jews. Refugee camps in West Germany teemed with victims seeking escape. Soviet armies occupied eastern Europe, further impelling the Jews to leave.

The illegal flow into Palestine was great; in seven weeks in the summer of 1945 some eight thousand were smuggled into the country. But legal entry continued at a comparative trickle as the British tried, despite all pressures, to avoid further offense to, or uprooting of, the Arabs.

In October, 1945, President Harry Truman of the United States entered the picture with a call for Britain to allow immediately the entry of one hundred thousand displaced Jews. The harassed British Labor government, new in office, heard this advice with chagrin; America was offering neither money nor men to help the increasingly chaotic Palestine, but from this time forward it was urgent with its advice.

There followed an Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry, whose report led to nothing but more Arab and Jewish hostility. The Arabs were turning ever more against the West and against the Jews, while the Jews were building their wrath against the British. Watching from Cairo was the Grand Mufti, Haj Amin, who had escaped from Europe. In Lebanon, Arabs went on a rampage, killing one hundred Jews. In Tel Aviv, Jews burned British buildings and looted shops, and schoolchildren spat at British soldiers and called them "English bastards."

The voices of moderation were growing very faint. Chaim Weizmann, polished and steady, was losing out among the Zionists to the more stirring and belligerent appeal of David Ben-Gurion.

Acting against a Zionist campaign of "incitement and violence," Britain arrested several of its leaders, including the future Israeli premier, Moshe Sharett. Terrorists responded by widening their activities and in 1946 blew up a wing of the King David Hotel in Jerusalem, killing ninety-one persons—Jews, Arabs, and British.

And still the stream of Jews flowed in through the escape routes from Europe. In the United States, Zionist organizations campaigned all-out for funds and were supported by a sympathetic American public, with the result that a major share of the financing for the influx of Jews came from America. And again President Truman appealed for the admission of one hundred thousand "displaced persons," complaining about the "striped-pants boys" in the State Department who insistently advised him to think of the long-run dangers in the Arab world. The President wrote that the diplomats did not seem to "care enough about what happened to the thousands of displaced persons."

All attempts at compromise failed. A joint United States-British plan for a federal state was turned down resoundingly by both sides. There seemed no hope. Thus, to the drumbeat of violence, beset on all sides, Britain, the same country that a century ago had seen in Palestine the safe and secure linchpin of its empire, laid the Palestine question before the United Nations.

In that spring, summer, and early fall of 1947, both the Arabs and Zionists sent their most persuasive campaigners before the forum of the United Nations—and the Zionists clearly won, as they had before and would again. A special committee was set up to study the situation and produce a solution. While the U.N. group was in Palestine, it witnessed the arrival of the ship *Exodus*, with 4,550 illegal immigrants aboard, and saw three passengers killed in an attempt to force a landing.

The special committee called for partition into separate

Jewish and Arab states, and—in a burst of rose-tinted optimism—a ten-year treaty of economic union between the two sides. Although it was far less than the Zionists wanted, they favored it as the best plan available. The Arabs were totally against it. In a rare moment, the United States and the Soviet Union found themselves on the same side—in support of the Zionists.

In any case, the outcome was in great doubt until the final minutes, but after frantic lobbying at the United Nations and in Washington, eight doubtful votes were swung to the partition plan and it passed with the necessary two-thirds majority of the General Assembly. The date was November 29, 1947—another date etched deep in Middle Eastern history.

Few outsiders at the time considered it a workable plan. In addition to the economic union scheme, it would divide Palestine in this way: The Arabs would have three loosely linked parts of the country—one in the north in what is called western Galilee; one in the center corresponding roughly to the West Bank area today; and a strip running along the coast past Gaza and turning inland and running along the Egyptian frontier about halfway to the Gulf of ʻAqaba. The Jewish state would include eastern Galilee, surrounding the west bank of the Sea of Galilee, a coastal strip from Haifa to below Tel Aviv, and most of the Negev desert down to the Gulf.

What this boiled down to would be an Arab state of about 4,500 square miles, containing about 800,000 Arabs and 10,000 Jews; and a Jewish state of about 5,500 square miles with 500,000 Jews and about 400,000 Arabs.

Jerusalem and Bethlehem would be internationalized and under the trusteeship of the United Nations.

The decision to partition Palestine was hailed joyously by the Jews as the fruit of two thousand years of steadfastness in exile. But it heightened the anger of the Arabs at the West, and they said they would oppose it by force. They blamed Britain for failing to take their side; they accused the United States of being the chief financier and backer of Zionism.

In their view it was all wrong. Amid postwar talk of the self-determination of peoples, they had been given no chance at self-determining, although they then outnumbered the Jews in Palestine by two to one (1,320,000 to 640,000). They looked back through the years and could see only broken promises and retreat.

Almost immediately the scale of fighting increased. In two months there were nearly twenty-eight hundred casualties, more than half of them Arabs. Faced with this, Britain washed its hands of the affair, and announced that its forces would be withdrawn on May 15, 1948. On that day the mandate would end.

Thus, at 5:00 P.M. in New York on May 14, one hour before the British would depart, the General Assembly met to act on a resolution for a mediator. Then the delegates learned that the new state was already in existence, and had been since 10:00 A.M., New York time.

At that time (4:00 P.M. in Tel Aviv) David Ben-Gurion had risen before a special meeting of the National Council in the Museum of Modern Art and announced the establishment of a Jewish State to be called Israel. He had talked of the Jewish people in their trek across time, and his hope for goodwill with Israel's neighbors, and had proclaimed the state "with trust on the Rock of Israel."

Sixteen minutes later in Washington, President Truman gave Israel America's recognition, beating the Russians by three days.

On that day began the first Israeli-Arab war.

Irregular Arab forces had been fighting in Palestine since the first of the year. Now, as the British withdrew, regulars from Egypt, Syria, Transjordan, Iraq, and Lebanon moved across the border and in, they confidently believed, for the kill.

On the face of it, it was overwhelming—the infant state of Israel, with less than a million people, surrounded by scores of millions of Arabs; the ill-equipped Haganah against the regular soldiers of five countries. As they were to learn later, things were not that way. The Arabs were disorganized, misled, unprepared, overconfident, and undermanned.

The Arabs had no effective organization or leadership.

Evacuating the city of Jaffa during the first Israeli-Arab war

They were inexperienced in government. Syria, Lebanon, and Transjordan had been fully independent for only two years; Egypt and Iraq until very recently had been under close British tutelage. Except for Transjordan's British-led Arab Legion, their armies were content to trust more in Allah than in logistics or training.

Sir John Bagot Glubb, the British commander of the Arab Legion, tells of a meeting in Amman with the secretary-general of the Arab League two days before the war started. The Syrian army was mentioned, and Glubb remarked that the Syrians were reputedly not well trained.

"Perhaps not," the official said, "but what is more important is that they are very enthusiastic."

The Arabs never did manage to get adequate forces onto the field. When the war began, their armies at home totaled 70,000 to 80,000, but only 20,000 to 25,000 were sent to Palestine. Official figures never have been given, but even at the height of their buildup, the Arab forces are believed never to have exceeded 55,700.

With total mobilization and total will, Israel began with a Haganah force of perhaps 60,000, which later was built up to about 75,000. Some estimates, including those of Glubb, raised Israeli strength to 120,000. In contrast to the Arabs, few of whom were experienced in combat, the Israelis also had a backbone of some 20,000 soldiers who had served in western armies in World War II.

At the start, despite all this, the Israelis were disorganized and desperately short of equipment, and at the same time, of course, faced with the need to set up a civil government while fighting on three fronts. The Arab armies made good early progress, one Egyptian force getting to the southern outskirts of Jerusalem, while Glubb's legionnaires moved into the Holy City from the east. But it was an early and superficial picture.

In less than a month the United Nations Security Council, branding the Arabs the aggressors, ordered a truce; and for Israel the greatest danger was past. When the Arab governments, riding high on airy claims, resumed the fighting after four weeks, the Israelis were better armed and better organized. They took the offensive and held it through another "shooting truce" until the fighting stopped early in 1949.

By this time the Arabs were in disarray and disunity. Jordan's Arab Legion had been the only force to fare well against the Israelis. It had taken and held the "old city" of Jerusalem, including the area around the Moslem shrines, the Aqsa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock, and the Jews' Wailing Wall; and the West Bank area set aside in the partition plan for the Arab state. King Abdullah of Transjordan had long been ambitious to expand his little kingdom, and the war had given him the chance to do so.

The Egyptian forces on the other hand had been humiliated. Egypt had appealed to the other Arab states late in 1948 for help to relieve the pressure. The response was not overwhelming. So, the Egyptians declared they had been "deserted" and signed an armistice in February, 1949. A month later Lebanon followed, and a month after that Jordan (theoretically the kingdom remained Transjordan until 1950 when the eastern part and the West Bank were declared united). Syria was the last to sign, in July, 1949.

The armistice agreements left the Israeli borders just about where the battle lines were when the fighting stopped—in other words, Israel gained important pieces of territory. It now possessed about three-fourths of the old Palestine, including all the areas that had been laid out for the Palestinian Arabs except for the sizable bulge of the West Bank that was won by Jordan.

From first to last, the United Nations had played an important, but difficult, and sometimes futile role. Only five days after the war had started, the Security Council appointed Count Folke Bernadotte of Sweden as U.N. mediator for Palestine. The ill-starred Bernadotte supervised the two truces in the fighting, and grew increasingly unpopular with the Israelis, who felt he favored the Arabs. On September 16 he recom-

Count Folke Bernadotte (center) of Sweden, U.N. mediator, speaks with the prime minister of Egypt in 1948. Dr. Ralph Bunche of the United States stands to the mediator's left.

mended a change in the partition boundaries that would have given most of the Negev desert to the Arabs; the next day he was assassinated by the Stern Gang. Dr. Ralph Bunche of the United States took over Bernadotte's duties and, under constant Israeli criticism, guided the armistice talks on the Greek island of Rhodes to their finish.

This first and most furious of the Israeli-Arab wars had effects on the Middle East almost as great as those of World War I. It was as if a giant cymbal had sounded in Palestine, with vibrations and echoes spreading from country to country and lasting for decades. They are heard today, scarcely diminished.

The war had established beyond doubt that the new state of Israel was a vital force that would not go away simply because Arab propaganda told it to. The war showed the Arabs the tawdry qualities of their regimes and the inefficiency and greed of the home front that helped do in the Egyptian army at the war front (where a young Major Nasser had fought hard and bravely in the bitterness of defeat). The war drove the Arab world farther from the West, gave new territory to Jordan, and created a seethingly unhappy Palestinian majority that would convert Jordan into a crisis state. Finally, and most importantly, the war bequeathed to the world the Palestine refugees.

As the Israelis were obviously the winners, the Palestinian Arabs were the real losers in the war. They had been left without homes, supplanted by a new people they considered usurpers. If the rest of the Arabs were humiliated but relatively intact, the Palestinians were uprooted and rancid with despair. Why did they flee? How many were there in the beginning? The answers are endlessly debated. The Israelis have said that the Palestinian Arabs were urged to flee by the Arabs, to clear the paths for the oncoming victorious Arab armies, and that finally they fled in mass hysteria for no particularly valid reason. The Arabs contend that their Palestinian brothers were brutally driven out, terrorized by massacres and threats. The Israelis say there were only about a half million in the first place, the Arabs say one million. What is the truth?

The first United Nations estimates, in November, 1949, placed the numbers of "destitute Arabs" at 940,000; but that figure included those who had stayed in place and needed quick attention. Most writers place the number of uprooted Palestinians at between 600,000 and 800,000, the majority grouped in the West Bank of Jordan and the Gaza Strip.

What made them leave? Probably a whole range of causes: belief in quick victory, Israeli pressure, mass hysteria, lack of leadership, terrorism, massacres, and the normal reaction of civilians to flee before advancing armies.

The first to go were those who might have provided leadership. Before the actual outbreak of the war, during the flare of Israeli-Arab clashes late in 1947, some 30,000 well-to-do Arabs packed up and left for Beirut and other havens. Also before the war, on April 1, 1948, the Jewish Irgun attacked an Arab village near Jerusalem, and massacred 254 men, women, and children—a fact that struck terror among the Arabs. There were other massacres later, and not all on one side.

Generally, there was no pattern. The Jewish mayor of Haifa urged the Arabs to stay, after sound trucks had warned them to leave. Around Lydda and Ramleh, near Tel Aviv, some 60,000 Arabs were ordered to leave. In Nazareth an Arab mayor stuck to his town and his people stayed with him and were unharmed.

Whatever the causes, or how many the numbers, the great percentage of Palestinians did flee, and the Israelis were undoubtedly glad to see them go. When the fighting stopped, there were only about 120,000 Arabs living within the new boundaries of Israel. The rest of them, like the Jews centuries before, were scattered, dispersed, throughout other countries. It was an Arab diaspora.

X

NASSER AND THE ARABS

In the turbulent times of the Middle East since the first Palestine War, the Israeli-Arab struggle has been a dominant theme, but by no means the only one. Kingdoms have gone and republics have taken their places; the major figure of Gamal Abdel Nasser has appeared and left a new heritage; there have been civil wars and a startling United States intervention; Britain has retreated from the scene; the Soviet Union has entered; revolutions and *coups d'état* too numerous to mention have flared into brief and confusing moments of world attention; states have grown in population, in economy, and, perhaps, in political maturity.

It is impossible to isolate the Israeli-Arab theme entirely from the rest. It winds in and out of most of the above developments; and it is no doubt true that the Middle East would be an entirely different place without it. But this is a convenient place to follow the parallel course of the Arab and Moslem states in the region after the first Palestine War.

When the war ended, King Farouk was sitting rather heavily on the Egyptian throne, a portly, pleasure-loving monarch who accepted luxury as his due in life. He had sent the Egyptian army into Palestine expecting an early victory that would prop up his prestige. Its defeat at the hands of the Israelis foredoomed him.

Egypt was then a country stretched tight between the extremes of richness and poverty. Farouk, a descendant of Mehemet Ali, lived in his choice of palaces and enjoyed his choice of almost anything else. The aristocracy was a thin, European-educated veneer covering a nearly starving population. Foreigners in Egypt basked in special privileges, with their own law courts and tax exemptions, and a system called "capitulations" that had at first been meant to attract foreign investors but had ended by creating great tensions in the country. Living in a separate world was the great mass of peasants, or *fellahin,* huddled in the fertile strips along the Nile, weakened by disease, scratching out livings with the aid of water buffalo on tiny farms.

In the Suez Canal Zone, the British were standing fast with a large garrison of troops, despite the Egyptian government's attempt to abrogate the treaty and throw them out. And the Canal itself was owned and operated by foreigners.

This was the situation when the beaten Egyptian army dragged itself home from Palestine. As previously mentioned, Nasser had fought there—had been, in fact, one of the few Egyptian heroes. Unknown to the government, he was also a member of a secret group called the Free Officers Committee. First formed in World War II to oppose the British occupiers, the committee was now aiming to seize power in Egypt.

It was only a question of time before Farouk would fall. His end was hastened by an unhappy day in Cairo's history known as Black Saturday. With the increasing agitation to remove the British, tension had risen between the Egyptians and the British garrison troops along the Canal. Assassinations of British soldiers were frequent. Finally, a battle was fought in January, 1952, at Ismailia, a halfway station on the Canal, between the British and Egyptian auxiliary police. Sixty-four Egyptians were killed. In Cairo an anti-British mob rampaged through the foreign quarters, burning such landmarks as Shepheard's hotel and killing British and other foreigners.

The violence caused Farouk to dismiss the government and in effect to create a political vacuum. Six months later, on July 23, 1952, in a pattern that was to be followed time and again throughout the Middle East, a Revolutionary Command Council of the army seized control of the government. Three days after that Farouk was sent into exile on his yacht *Mahroussa,* leaving behind his palaces, a collection of pornographia still admired by tourists, and his formal abdication.

Behind the Revolutionary Command Council, of course, was Nasser, although this fact was not then known. The front man was the popular and respected Major General Mohammed Naguib. As a lieutenant colonel, Nasser was considered too junior to assert control, and he did not take charge publicly for nearly two years.

Gamal Abdel Nasser was thirty-four years old when he and his nine fellow officers engineered the *coup* against Farouk. Until he died eighteen years later, Nasser was the central figure in the Arab world—loved by the masses, hated and feared by more conservative Arab leaders, mistrusted and often misunderstood by the rest of the world. He set the tone for the new and emerging Arab states, became the symbol of their defiance of "imperialism," and led them on the path of nonalignment between East and West. To many persons in the West, he was mostly a maker of speeches filled with bloody vows of vengeance against Israel. To the Egyptian fellahin, he was the man who was giving them self-respect and a better life. Whatever he was, he was a major personality to the Arabs, to the Israelis, and to the world. Most of all, however, he was an Egyptian.

Nasser came out of the Egyptian masses, the son of a postal clerk whose own father had been a peasant. As a boy he had marched with a mob demonstrating against the British, and had gotten lumps on his head for his efforts. As a leader of Egypt, he spent some of his first years trading lumps with the British, but he started from the premise of helping Egypt, of bringing his own country up in the world. There is no evidence that he thought in terms of Arab unity or Pan-Arab nationalism until much later.

Nasser waves to the crowds after becoming president of Egypt.

The new government's first important act is testimony to Nasser's original aims. Less than two months after the revolution, a decree was issued on land reform. Most of the fertile land in Egypt had been owned by wealthy, Europeanized landlords who lived only occasionally on their great estates. The new law limited the estates to 208 acres and provided for the distribution of seized land to the peasants. This reform was quickly followed by other measures to increase irrigation from the Nile waters, to set up a "Liberation Province" as a showcase for land reclamation in the Nile delta, and to finance a study for a new high dam near Aswan on the upper Nile, about 400 miles south of Cairo.

Nasser became in time nearly a dictator in Egypt. But he began only as the "first among equals" of the Free Officers, with considerable political opposition. For several years, as a matter of fact, the Free Officers insisted that they intended to restore a constitutional regime. In reality, they went immediately to work to get rid of their opponents. They banned the Communist party and threw its leaders in prison. Turning in the other direction, they weakened and finally outlawed the powerful Moslem Brotherhood, a dangerous and reactionary foe. All this was not done overnight, and not without risk, but it resulted in making Nasser and the Revolutionary Command Council the nearly unchallenged rulers of Egypt.

For a time, the older General Naguib, fifty-one at the time of the revolution and supposedly only its amiable stooge, appeared to seek power on his own. Although he had been by far the most popular man of the revolution, he was deposed as president of the republic late in 1954. There was no one left to protest.

Nasser often said during his years of rule that Britain's long sway in Egypt had left Egyptians feeling "like second-class citizens." He seemed, however, to harbor no grudges against Britain or the West. In his first years, in fact, he appeared to be exactly what the Americans in particular were looking for as a replacement for the corrupt Farouk—a west-

An Arab riding a camel watches as the waters pass through the sluice gates of the Aswan high dam.

ward-trending, modern-thinking leader to pull Egypt out of the sand.

He and his fellow officers showed their flexibility early in foreign affairs in dealings with Britain. There were two tough problems inherited from the old regime.

First, there was the Sudan, which by long-standing treaty was theoretically co-administered by Britain and Egypt as the Anglo-Egyptian condominium. In the Farouk era, Egypt had insisted on "Nile Valley Unity"—in other words, Egyptian rule of the Sudan. Naguib, who was still the surface leader, and Nasser cut away the old trappings and agreed with Britain to offer the Sudan self-determination, believing that Sudan would choose union with Egypt. In any event, it was a fuzzy issue. The Sudanese did elect a pro-Egyptian government, but soon after its installation it veered away from Egypt. In 1955 the Sudanese government proclaimed its full independence—a fact duly recognized by Egypt and Britain.

The second problem was the old one of the Suez Canal, a problem whose tensions had helped to undo Farouk. The Free Officers proved amenable on this, too. One year after the revolution the government signed an agreement with Britain calling for evacuation of British troops within a specified number of months, but continued maintenance of the Canal by British technicians. The agreement also acknowledged that the Canal was an "integral part of Egypt" and reaffirmed the important Constantinople Convention of 1888. This key document—still very much part of the Middle East scene—declared that the Canal must remain open to ships of all nations in peace or war, and that it must never be subject to blockade. In practice Britain had barred the Canal to enemy shipping in both world wars, and since the birth of Israel, Egypt had placed restrictions on Israeli-bound shipping.

In any case, Britain stuck to the agreement. On June 18, 1956, the last British soldier left Egyptian territory and the Egyptian flag went up over Port Said. It was the first time in more than seventy years that Egypt had no foreign troops on its soil.

For the United States, those agreements amounted to a sterling start. In two years Nasser had removed two rankling problems. And by the late summer of 1954 he was going so far as to issue policy statements condemning the Soviet Union and Communism, and expressing friendship with the West. A promising beginning. What went wrong?

One statement foreshadowed future trouble. It carried this message: "Left alone, the Arabs will naturally turn toward the West to ask it for arms and assistance."

That is where it all came unstuck. For the Arabs, in Nasser's opinion, were not left alone, and they did, indeed, turn to the West for arms—and they were turned down.

Washington and London had been thinking in the early 1950's of forging some sort of Middle Eastern defense organization. It would have the aim of defending the region against Russian and Communist inroads, and hopefully it would include Egypt. But that approach had been abandoned in 1953 when Egypt strongly opposed it. Then Premier Adnan Menderes of Turkey signed an agreement in 1954 with Pakistan and in 1955 with Iraq to lay the basis of the Baghdad Pact. It was a "northern tier" alliance that eventually would link Turkey, Iraq, Pakistan, Iran, and Britain, with financial aid and other backing from the United States but no formal American membership.

When he heard about the pact, Nasser took it as a personal blow and a threat to the Arabs. It conflicted with the ideas he was forming of Arab unity, since it included an Arab country (Iraq) in an alien alliance. Furthermore, it set up Iraq, Egypt's ancient rival, as a favorite of the West. Most of all, it stood against everything the nationalist Arabs were driving for —namely, to be rid of foreign influence.

Nasser reacted violently. Cairo radio sent waves of abuse beaming across the Arab world, attacking Iraq's pro-western Premier Nuri al Said as a lackey of imperialism and a traitor, and storming at all those who sided with the West. It was evident that a serious break was occurring between Nasser, Britain, and the United States.

Adnan Menderes of Turkey (left) is greeted by United States Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, 1954.

At about that time, early in 1955, tension was building up with Israel. There had been small border skirmishes along the Gaza Strip for several years. In February, 1955, Israel launched a heavy raid, in retaliation for earlier Arab forays, killing thirty-nine Arabs. The attack stung Nasser only four days after the Turkey-Iraq pact had been signed in Baghdad, and it had a momentous impact.

As he had stated a few months previously, Nasser had been trying to get arms from the West. The United States had granted about $40 million in economic aid to Egypt, and had been talking about a $20 million deal for weapons. But nothing had resulted. So, Nasser turned toward the Soviet bloc. In September, 1955, he concluded an agreement with Czechoslovakia that provided Soviet arms for Egyptian cotton. Thus, through that channel began the flow of Soviet planes, tanks, and guns to the Middle East. It was a deal with enormous consequences for the region and for the world.

The first and most predictable result was seen immediately. Nasser became a hero in the Arab world. With Soviet weapons this new Saladin would lead the Arabs to victory against Israel and against all who opposed them. And, of course, it made the Russians seem like the true friends of the Arabs. (In Cairo, for instance, a shirtmaker named his son Mohammed Molotov, after the Soviet foreign minister.)

Another direct result involved the Aswan dam, a second Russian success and another significant western loss in the contest for Arab friendship.

For years it had been an Egyptian dream to build a high dam across the Nile at Aswan. Since 1902 there had been a low dam there, and it had achieved spectacular results in a limited field. Now with Egypt's population booming, the Egyptians turned to the dream with more urgency. As seen earlier, one of the first moves of the Free Officers after overthrowing Farouk had been to finance the planning of a high dam.

Going ahead with the project, they had gotten—after much haggling—an offer of $56 million from the United States, another of $14 million from Britain, and a tied-in offer of $200 million from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (the World Bank) to help finance the high dam.

After hearing of the Czech arms deal, however, Washington was beginning to have doubts. United States Secretary of State John Foster Dulles had passed on warnings to the Egyptians that America could not be expected to help with their economy if Egypt mortgaged its cotton crop to the Soviet bloc for arms.

The finale is still debated, and is regarded as a turning point in the Middle East's current history. While negotiating with Washington, Nasser also was seeing what he could get from the other side and was asking Moscow what help it would offer with the dam. The controlled Cairo press and the government radio were continuing to blast the United States and the West over the Baghdad Pact and American support of Israel.

In this atmosphere, Nasser asked his ambassador in Washington to see Dulles and ask where the financing for the Aswan project stood. The envoy, Ahmed Hussein, called on the secretary of state and was seen emerging from the meeting holding his hands to his ashen-colored face. Dulles had taken a deep breath and said "No." The deal was canceled. Because the financial arrangements had all depended on United States aid, the World Bank and the British offers were quickly withdrawn, and an angry and vengeful Nasser concentrated on the Russians.

Eventually, the Soviet Union picked up the tab, granting Egypt loans of more than $300 million and providing thousands of engineers and technicians for the high dam. Fifteen years later, after Nasser had died, the billion-dollar project was formally dedicated by Egyptian President Anwar Sadat and the Soviet chief of state, Nikolai Podgorny. It was a tremendous propaganda victory for the Russians, and despite some ecological doubts, an economic boon for the Egyptians. Ultimately it was meant to increase Egypt's farm fields by about 2 million acres by reclaiming land from the desert, and to generate 10 billion kilowatt-hours of electricity for the country's villages and industries.

Those, however, were long-range results. There was one much more immediate consequence to Dulles's slap at Nasser. The American "No" was given on July 19, 1956. One week later, after promising "blow for blow and slap for slap," Nasser announced that Egypt was nationalizing the Suez Canal.

If the Czech arms deal had made Nasser a hero to the Arabs, this announcement made him, for a while at least, a demigod to the Arab masses. And it made him at least half-devil to the alarmed nations of the West. In England Prime Minister Anthony Eden called a special session of Parliament and arranged an emergency meeting with French Premier Guy Mollet. The now-nationalized Suez Canal Company was still owned largely by the British and French. More important, both nations viewed the Canal almost symbolically as a lifeline.

For Britain, the nationalizing of the Canal seemed the ultimate insult. British days of greatness were over: India was gone; English Middle Eastern mandates were finished; its crown colony on the eastern Mediterranean island of Cyprus was in virtual revolt; and its last soldiers had departed only a month before from the Suez Canal Zone (a fact which may have had a great deal to do with Nasser's timing). So, with France following its lead, Britain responded as it had done in the old days. It dispatched more troops to Cyprus. Nasser would be taught a lesson.

A great deal of diplomatic activity seethed, with Dulles in the center of it. But the hard facts of life were gathering on Cyprus. The British paratroopers were there and the French marines, and even a French admiral.

Nobody was questioning the legality of Nasser's act, or whether the Egyptians had the know-how to actually operate the Canal (much to the surprise of the British and French, who thought the Egyptians simply could not cope with it, the operation of the Canal was running smoothly). It was, looking back, more a matter of doing something about Nasser, from the British view.

This was the prelude, of course, to the Suez-Sinai War of 1956, in which the British, French, and Israelis—in apparent coordination but each for his own reason—invaded Egypt.

Striking on October 29, the Israelis, in one hundred hours, swept across the Sinai desert to the eastern edge of the Canal. On October 31, the British and French began bombing airfields and other military targets in Egypt. On November 5 the British and French landed in Egypt and seized the northern end of the Suez Canal. But it was a short-lived victory.

The United States put heavy pressure on the British to cease and desist, and with the Soviet Union, backed a resolution in the U.N. General Assembly demanding evacuation of Egypt by the three countries. Eventually, the attackers left, while the Egyptians trumpeted the sounds of victory. Nasser came to appear in Arab eyes not as the loser but as the winner. The Russians were credited with befriending the Arabs, and the role of the United States was forgotten.

It was this turnabout sort of performance that characterized Nasser's career. Unlike Saladin of the Crusaders' time, he was more often than not a loser in showdowns with the West or with Israel. Yet, he came out of each loss somehow the stronger. As in 1956—slapped down by the United States over the Aswan dam, beaten in a brief war—he nevertheless emerged as a greater hero than ever, and with his country the undisputed owner of the Suez Canal, albeit a canal that would remain blocked for five months with sunken ships.

In this era in the Middle East, there seemed to be a rankling case of split personality in most Arab countries. Many of their governments were anti-Nasser. But in almost every shop or home a picture of Nasser would occupy a place of honor on the wall, festooned with flags and slogans of Arab unity. True, he had started as an Egyptian nationalist. But now he was the Pan-Arab leader, and the Arab world was thirsting for some kind of unity as a cure for all its ills.

Nasser himself was pounding on the theme in his speeches. Cairo radio was beaming the call to all parts of the Arab sphere.

No country was more directly in the path of this beam, or more split in its personality, than Jordan, the unlikely desert kingdom created by Winston Churchill in 1921. From its start, Jordan had been subsidized by the British. It was poor, had no natural frontiers, and was, in fact, a contrived kingdom. The 1948 Palestine War had left it a winner of sorts, because King Abdullah had managed to gain the bulge west of the Jordan River and half of Jerusalem for his realm. But it had been a doubtful gain. Unlike the other Arab countries, Jordan had granted citizenship to Palestinians, refugees and otherwise. Of the little kingdom's population of some 1,500,000, about one-third were bitter Palestinian refugees and another third were resident Palestine "West Bankers," almost equally resentful about the course of things. They were particularly resentful at being ruled by their more rustic brethren on the other side of the river and by a king who came from the Arabian desert.

Abdullah had added to his dangers by undertaking at one time secret negotiations with the Israelis for permanent peace. The word had gotten out. Now to Arab nationalists, particularly to Palestinians, he was a traitor, a secret friend of the Israelis, and an imperialist agent.

Abdullah's days were numbered. On a Friday in 1951, he went to the Haram al Sharif Mosque in Jerusalem, where Mohammed was supposed to have flown to heaven on his winged horse. As the king began to pray, an assassin slipped beside him and killed him with a shot in the head, narrowly missing Abdullah's sixteen-year-old grandson, Hussein, who was by his side. The echo of that gunshot was to resound for years in the Arab world, for many Arabs took it as a warning of the fate of any leaders who would deal with the Israelis.

For a brief time, the rule of Jordan passed to the old king's son Talal. Soon, however, he was forced to abdicate because of mental illness. In his place came to the throne the young Hussein, son of Talal, grandson of Abdullah, and great-grandson of

King Hussein of Jordan (right) and his cousin King Faisal II of Iraq, 1953

the first Hussein of the Arab revolt against the Turks in World War I.

The new King Hussein was seen at first as only a callow teen-ager, undersize, rash, with all the odds against him. He seemed to make all the wrong moves. A few months before the 1956 Suez-Sinai War he enraged the British and annoyed his elders in the West by firing the capable British General Sir John Glubb as head of his Arab Legion. Then, in less than a year, he found himself in a controversy with Nasser, and ominously surrounded by pro-Nasser advisers. The Cairo press scornfully called him "the little king." He was only twenty-one, and his Hashemite kingdom of Jordan seemed near the end—two-thirds of its population was from Palestine and all were screaming for Nasser.

It was then that Hussein showed the mettle he was to exhibit time and again in the coming years to keep his kingdom together. Uncovering a pro-Nasser plot to overthrow him, he fired his prime minister and appeared, in person, in the midst of a revolt at an army barracks to assert control over the army. He deposed the army's chief of staff, who proved to be the plot leader; fired the next in line when he, too, proved to be involved; tried another premier and found him wanting; picked an octogenarian to head the government; and rallied loyal forces in the army to put down strikes and riots in the cities. Finally, he brought the strife-torn kingdom under control. He eased out Syrian forces that had come all-too-helpfully into Jordan from the north; and the world began to recognize that there was a tough, if very young, force in charge of things in Jordan.

The king had a difficult time. Only a doughty soul could stay in charge of such a beleaguered kingdom. As the years passed, crises came as steadily as the seasons on the desert. Hussein rode them out with the same tough spirit, and sur-

vived assassination attempts almost exotic in their number and variety. One enemy tried to slip poison into his medicine; the Syrians tried to shoot down his plane; pro-Nasserites planted a bomb in his prime minister's desk, with another timed to go off when they figured the king would be coming to see what had happened; and assassins shot at his car on several occasions. Hussein's voice grew deeper and his hair thinner, and he suffered from stomach ulcers—but his determination never weakened.

An American ambassador once compared him to a wartime fighter pilot, cocky, optimistic, fast with his reflexes, acting first and thinking next, living dangerously—but skilled and brave, and fond of living.

As head of a kingdom only a generation older than himself, he had what many thought an old-fashioned idea of statehood. "Our Jordanian family," he often said when speaking of his country. It was a patriarchal phrase, a concept from the desert tribes. There, in fact, lay his strongest support. The Palestinians and West Bankers by and large opposed him. The people of the East Bank and the Bedouins of the desert kept him in power. It was the Bedouin soldier of the Arab Legion, his face fiercely blackened for battle in the desert tradition, who stood against the mobs and the guerrillas time after time to help keep Hussein on the throne.

But for all his old-fashionedness, Hussein was also a modern man of the West—more so than any other well-known Arab leader. His first marriage to a serious-minded Egyptian a few years older than himself failed. He then married an English army officer's daughter, who had worked as a telephone operator in Amman. He was educated in England, made frequent trips to London, Washington, and New York, and enjoyed such western hobbies as water-skiing, ham radio, and auto racing.

This pro-British feeling and general western outlook frequently brought Hussein squarely up against Nasser. In the minds of the Arabs, although he was hardly comparable, he was sometimes lined up with the archaic and jaded King Saud of Saudi Arabia or his more progressive successor, King Faisal.

It was a question of kings versus presidents, kingdoms versus republics. It was also a question of a strong-minded ruler who said he heeded the call for Arab unity as much as anyone, but refused to have his state become submerged in the process.

Jordan was—and is—a somewhat special case in the Middle East, because its very existence has continually been challenged. Such was never the case with Syria, a country intensely proud of its role in Arab history. Damascus was the capital in the time of the great Omayyad rulers, when the Arab Empire spread in the century after Mohammed's death to its greatest extent, from Spain to Central Asia. The Syrians consider themselves the true heirs of "Arabism." They remember that before Europe divided up the spoils after World War I, Syria was an area embracing almost all the land between Egypt and Turkey, including Palestine and the upstart Jordan.

Perhaps it was because of this Pan-Arab feeling that the Syrians heard the call of Nasser so strongly. Perhaps it was because of the lamentable bumbling of their own governments.

Since becoming fully independent after World War II, Syria had become almost synonymous with instability. With at least American encouragement, an ambitious colonel named Husni al Zaim had engineered a *coup d'état* in 1949 to oust the old government under President Shukri al-Kuwatly, whose reputation was stained by the Palestine War. This unfortunately set a pattern, or established an art. In Damascus, whatever other military virtues may have been lacking, the military *coup d'état* was refined to its most exquisite form—swift, precise, and quite often bloodless. Each new set of officers plotting to save the country would know exactly what to do on taking over—the seizure at dawn of the defense ministry and the radio station, the closing of the borders, the communiqués to the rest of the Arab world pledging brotherhood, the martial music, the denunciation of the old regime, and as soon as things looked safe (usually about 2:00 P.M.), the announcement that bakers, pharmacists, and doctors, and anyone else who might be needed, could go to work.

Colonel Zaim fell and was executed, to be followed by

Colonel Hinnawi, to be followed by Colonel Shishakli, three *coups* in the year of 1949. Shishakli lasted until 1954; then he, too, was ousted by the army, which then put in a civilian government. But life under the civilians proved only slightly less hectic.

Nasser by this time was the acknowledged leader of Egypt, and Egyptian radio was heard in Syria. While Nasser's influence was growing under the banner of Pan-Arabism, the Communists were also gaining strength, allied for a time with a left-wing Socialist party known as the Baath (the Arab Renaissance Socialist party).

In 1956, Syria made an arms deal with the Czechs similar to the Egyptian deal of the preceding year. By 1957, worried western diplomats were reporting to their capitals that Syria was thoroughly penetrated by Communists and was in danger of going all the way into the Soviet orbit. The country had obtained a $140 million loan from Moscow, and Russians were aiding in nineteen development projects. Colonel Afif Bizri, a known Communist, was named the army's chief of staff.

The atmosphere in Damascus was now virulently anti-West and fully pro-Moscow, so much so that the left-wing but non-Communist Baathists became alarmed. They began talking with Nasser about union with Egypt. This was another refinement of the Arab political scene: Nasser may have been getting arms and aid from Moscow, and making speeches against London and Washington, but at home he was bluntly anti-Communist. Communists languished in Egypt's jails, while Cairo radio lauded their colleagues in Moscow and Prague.

So, there were two reasons for the Baathists' journeys to Cairo—Pan-Arab passion and fear of the Communists. Contrary to the impression at the time, Nasser did not favor the project. It was the wrong place and the wrong time. He thought the Syrian move was premature, and he had his doubts about uniting with a country so ardent but changeable. Syria, however, seldom does things halfway. In effect, it rushed into the arms of Nasser. All objections, Syrian and Egyptian, were brushed aside. On February 1, 1958, the union of Syria and Egypt was proclaimed by President Nasser and Syrian President al-Kuwatly, who had been back in office since 1955. The United Arab Republic (U.A.R.) was born, and Syria became its "Northern Province"—a province, by the way, that Nasser had never seen.

It was one of those vintage years in the Middle East—1958—when startling events came tumbling one after the other onto the scene. But they had, of course, been approaching for a long time. For example, the founding of the U.A.R. was impelled by Syria's slide toward Communism, which in turn had been helped along by the Soviet Union's growing influence following the events of 1955 and 1956: the arms deals, the Aswan dam affair, the Suez-Sinai War.

Nasser had created a new atmosphere in the region; his Cairo radio beamed a steady stream of Pan-Arabian propaganda into the more conservative Arab states; there was growing dissatisfaction and unrest in the old regimes. Like Jordan and Syria, the states of Iraq and Lebanon were being moved by the Nasser message. Their governments were strongly anti-Nasser and pro-West, but the Cairo voice was getting through to important segments of the people.

In the confused air of the time, Nasser was sometimes seen in the West as a virtual agent of Communism—certainly not because of his domestic actions, but because he publicly opposed the West, often in venomous terms. Conservative Arabs and Israelis called him a Moscow ally if not a Communist.

The region thus was approaching another showdown as Nasser's popularity with the Arab masses grew and his agents stepped up their activities in the more conservative Arab capitals, such as Beirut and Baghdad.

Washington was increasingly worried about the Middle East. Russian influence was on the upgrade, and Syria for a while had been a virtual member of the Soviet bloc. Nasser had not joined "our" side, which in the view of the times was almost the same as joining the other side. So, early in 1957, Sec-

Nasser talks with the chairman of a collective farm during his 1958 visit to the USSR.

retary of State Dulles outlined what became known as the Eisenhower Doctrine, a major instrument of the cold war in the Middle East.

This plan offered United States economic aid and military hardware to Middle Eastern states that subscribed to it. It stated that American armed forces would be used "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."

In other words, the United States would send its military forces to help a country clearly threatened by Communist aggression if the country asked for help. In the mood of the era, that seemed to include any country threatened by Nasser's Egypt. Both Iraq and Lebanon signed up.

On the face of it, the most clearly threatened was Lebanon. This energetic little country is probably the least "Arab" of the Arab states. It has a culture strongly influenced by centuries of association with France and a driving commercial instinct seemingly inherited from the ancient Phoenicians. Its population of less than three million is evenly divided between Christians and Moslems. Its government is a miracle of complication, and is based on the religious split: a Catholic Christian president, a Sunni Moslem prime minister, and so forth.

The people are also divided between eager tradesmen in Beirut, Tripoli, and other cities, and fiercely independent, mostly Christian mountaineers who divide into clans and carry on intricate feuds in their aeries overlooking the Mediterranean.

Lebanon, in a manner of speaking, is always a turmoil looking for a reason; and the reason in the uneasy year of 1958 was Nasser. In a very broad terms, the country was divided between Nasser-oriented Moslems and westward-looking Christians, led by a strong-minded, pro-western, anti-Nasser president, Camille Chamoun.

Chamoun had enthusiastically endorsed the Eisenhower Doctrine, and was thus reviled by the Nasserites as an imperialist agent. Syria's union with Egypt had also put Nasser and his agents right across the Lebanese mountains, and Pan-Arab excitement was high and subversion low in the little land. Adding to all this was the fact that Chamoun was striving for a second term as president and had packed parliament in some dubious elections so he could legally run again with an altered constitution.

There had been riots and shootings. On May 8, 1958, a leftist, pro-Nasser newspaper editor was assassinated—and the situation snapped into a civil war, part political, part religious. The Lebanese nationalists, under Chamoun, accused Syria and the United Arab Republic of channeling arms and men to the pro-Nasser rebels, and after a month appealed to the United Nations to stop the flow. The United States backed Chamoun and said there was "irrefutable evidence" of U.A.R. involvement. But U.N. observers said they could find no such evidence.

At this point, Chamoun invoked the Eisenhower Doctrine. He called in the American ambassador, Robert McClintock, and asked for American intervention. The ambassador said the help would be there in forty-eight hours. As it turned out, the marines arrived in twenty-four hours, on July 15, 1958.

But whether the United States would have acted so fast, or acted at all, if it had been only on Lebanon's request is in doubt. The previous day, however, in Baghdad, an event had occurred that had shocked the western world.

Of all the countries of the Arab Middle East, Iraq was most frequently held up as a model. The Hashemite line continued on the Iraqi throne in the person of young King Faisal II, a cousin of Jordan's King Hussein. It was a pro-western government, a member of the Washington-backed Baghdad Pact, rich in oil, and devoting its oil revenues to long-range development. For years it had been run, in effect, by a capable and adroit old Arab nationalist and friend of the British named Nuri al Said, who had fought alongside T. E. Lawrence in the World War I Arab revolt. "If they just give him time . . ." British and American diplomats used to say, "Nuri will transform this country."

By "they," the diplomats meant the Nasserites, the Pan-Arabists, all the unhappy young men who chafed under Nuri's often harsh rule and the monarchy. And they did not give him time.

Just before dawn on July 14, an army column under command of Brigadier General Abdel Karim al-Kassem, a protégé of Nuri's, seized key points in Baghdad and proclaimed on Baghdad radio the end of the monarchy. Faisal, his uncle Prince Abdullilah, and Premier Nuri were on the point of taking off for a Baghdad Pact meeting in Istanbul—where workers were already putting down a long red carpet at the airport to welcome them. They never arrived. Surrounding the palace, Kassem's forces led the king and the prince into a garden and shot them. Wily old Nuri, sensing that something was wrong, had slipped out of his house at the first whiff of trouble, climbed into a waiting rowboat, and crossed the still-dim Tigris River. He landed on the opposite shore and disappeared into the heart of Baghdad. Some time later—no one is sure when—the mob unleashed by Kassem found Nuri disguised in women's clothing and tore him to pieces.

In this gruesome circumstance was born the Republic of Iraq.

At first, the West misunderstood the Kassem revolt as part of an ominous area-wide plot in which leftist Nasserites would gobble up not only Syria, but Lebanon, Iraq, and King Hussein's Jordan. It was an electric day in the Middle East.

And so, propelled by the plot theory, the United States ran up the flag of the Eisenhower Doctrine, answered President Chamoun's call for help in Lebanon, and sent the Sixth Fleet dashing to the rescue. On the morning of July 15, United States marines went storming ashore on the beaches of Beirut—to be met by Lebanese bathing beauties and profit-minded urchins selling chewing gum. It was the strangest of invasions, but it was not a comic opera. Only nervy work by Ambassador

McClintock prevented a bloody shoot-out involving the marines, the Lebanese army (which had been staying neutral on the home front but would hardly be happy to see an American landing), and the rebels.

McClintock managed to lead the United States forces safely into town, with Lebanese General Faud Shihab at his side, while the notoriously trigger-happy populace looked on in excitement, but with no shots fired.

It is puzzling to look back on this American move and to try to line up the causes and effects. Legally, the marines landed to save Lebanon from Communist aggression, according to the terms of the Eisenhower Doctrine. But it was never proven that Nasser was involved in the Lebanese strife; and it certainly was not a case of "overt armed aggression." Nor was Egypt "controlled by international Communism." Only a few months earlier Syria had joined Egypt to escape just such control.

The United States had landed its troops because President Chamoun had asked for help. In a few months, however, after a compromise was worked out with American mediation, Chamoun was left without a job and a mildly pro-Nasser—or at least neutralist—leader, the Christian General Shihab, was the new Lebanese president.

It was a confused ploy that probably could have happened only in a confusing and ebullient place like Lebanon. But whether it was intended or not, American intervention acted like a dynamite blast that puts out an oil-well fire. After these landings, accompanied by parallel landings of British paratroopers in Jordan at Hussein's urgent call, the Middle East settled down to a period of relative calm that lasted for several years. The region simply seemed too surprised to do anything but breathe deeply.

Lebanon, in fact, seemed to take the whole thing—civil war, landings, and all—as a lesson. Two years later it held another set of general elections in virtual apathy, and eventually installed quite peaceably several of the onetime rebel leaders, including Saeb Salaam and Rashid Karami, as its recurrent premiers. No one by this time was even whispering about union with Egypt, much less about Communist aggression. Such was the ironic aftermath of the American landings.

In Iraq, Kassem set an eccentric course for the new republic. He aimed well away from Nasser's Cairo, but failed to steer clear of other trouble. The Baghdad Pact, of course, was soon ended, and the remaining states—Turkey, Iran, Pakistan, and Britain—regrouped without an Arab member, under the name of the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO). Although Kassem proclaimed neutrality between East and West, he soon got heavily involved with Soviet aid and influence and began to flounder.

Iraq is the most tense and divided country in the Middle East. Its tensions sometimes erupt in such bloody episodes as the mad butchery of the mobs in Baghdad who killed Nuri and the more recent executions of numerous "traitors," including Iraqi Jews. Unlike other Arab states, Iraq has a severe minority problem. In its northern mountains live more than 1,500,000 warlike Kurds, who have been fighting off and on for decades for their independence. The Arab Moslems, who form about 80 percent of the population, are divided between the more privileged Sunnis and the Shi'a sect, a potentially rebellious minority. The country is further split by tribes with local loyalties and by numerous religious minorities, such as the devil-worshipping Yezidis and the Christian Assyrians, victims of one of the area's terrible massacres in the 1920's.

Nuri had somehow kept these boiling forces under control. Kassem could not. His regime was weakened by a persistent revolt of the Kurds. He managed to survive several political plots, including a Communist uprising centered around the northern city of Kirkuk late in 1959. He zigzagged frantically between left and right. He tried to win popularity by announcing in his unpredictable way the "annexation" of Kuwait in 1961, but let the embarrassing episode be forgotten when the British came rushing to Kuwait's aid.

He was unstable, to say the least, and for a time the British and American ambassadors refused to see him. His controlled press called him "the noble leader," and printed his picture on their front pages every day, adorning it with words of praise. But after four years of this, many Iraqis who had been bitter critics of old Nuri were lamenting privately about the "good old days" of the monarchy. Although royal rule was not to be restored, Kassem himself came to his inevitable end in February, 1963. When Baath Socialists, whom he had driven underground, teamed up with the army to overthrow him, he was finally captured and executed. He had fought bravely, and almost alone, in a bunker for more than a day. Iraq's new rulers showed his bloody head on national television to prove that he was dead.

The Baathists proceeded with some efficiency to wipe out the Communist influence in Iraq, killing thousands of known Communists and jailing thousands of other Reds and their sympathizers. For weeks after the revolt the streets of Baghdad echoed at night with rifle fire.

In the meantime, Nasser had had his own troubles with Syria, a country almost as turbulent as Iraq. After the romantic honeymoon began on February 1, 1958, the union of Egypt and Syria began to be irksome to the proud Syrians. As the northern province of the U.A.R., the country became provincial in every way. The Egyptians acted as they had accused the British of acting in colonial days: patronizingly, insensitive to local pride, unwilling to put Syrians in positions of trust. The old political parties of Damascus, including the Baath which had pushed the merger, were suppressed. All decisions were made in Cairo. Only a handful of Syrians were seated in the first unified Parliament. There were soon no Syrian cabinet officers. By 1961, more than twenty thousand Egyptian officials and army officers were assigned in Syria under Nasser's old military friend, Field Marshal Abdel Hakim Amer, and they were lording it over the Syrians. It was a province under tight police-state control.

So, as it had done so often and so expertly in the past, the Syrian army staged another *coup d'état*. One morning, to his vast embarrassment, Nasser found his regime ousted in Syria while he, the anti-imperialist, was being described by Damascus radio as a tyrant and, the very worst of insults, an imperialist! The date was September 28, 1961; the marriage had lasted three and a half years. Damascus radio played martial music, the bakers and pharmacists were ordered back on duty, the old Syrian political leaders returned, and the country happily resumed its unstable ways.

In the long interval between the early 1960's and 1971—when Syria signed up for another, looser version of union with Egypt—the paths of Syria and Iraq were parallel. Both were dominated for the most part by the Baath Socialist party.

After breaking off the merger with Egypt in 1961, Damascus continued its pursuit of the perfect *coup d'état* with a kind of steady zeal. Only six months after taking power, the first post-Nasser government fell in a *coup*. Then early in 1963, one month after the Baath had seized the government in Baghdad, the Syrian Baathists wrought another *coup* in Damascus.

Since then the Baathists have managed to stay in power against heavy odds. Not that the country has been quiet. In the next eight years there were several internal power plays, some of them accompanied by more than usual violence and rough evictions of presidents and premiers. A *coup* in 1966 brought a far left wing of the Baath into power. But the Baath survived as the ruling party, at least in name.

It has thus been a name to reckon with in the central Arab world, the only well-known group in a region not friendly to party politics. What kind of a party is it?

As noted before, Baath stands for Arab Renaissance Socialist party. Theoretically, it is entirely Pan-Arab. That is, its members do not believe in national lines at all, so that a Lebanese Baathist leader might well sit in on governing sessions of the Baath in Iraq. This, in fact, has happened, to the great annoyance of more nationalist-minded Iraqi politicians.

It is also in theory devoutly Marxist. The Baathists are non-Communist and, as has been seen, can deal with ultimate harshness with Communists at home. In 1963 they virtually wiped out Iraq's Communist structure with ruthless executions and arrests. But in foreign policy, they have aligned themselves consistently with the Communist or Communist-leaning countries, perhaps because they have found more ready sources for military supplies there.

The Baathists have also borrowed heavily from the Communists in their way of organization. To gain power in Iraq and Syria, they infiltrated the armies, particularly at the junior-officer level. Their cells, however, extend to all parts of society in all the Arab countries, even though the party has been officially discouraged, if not banned, in all countries other than Syria and Iraq.

In theory, Baathist policies cross national boundaries. Yet, after early cooperation, the Syrian Baathists and the Iraqi Baathists have been markedly different in their policies and often downright unfriendly. The Syrians have stayed to the left of the Iraqis, to the point at times of seeming farther left than Moscow. But as with so much in the Middle East, theory inevitably yields to practice—and the Baathists' overriding aim has been to stay in power; consequently, they have adjusted accordingly.

In Iraq their rule suffered one long interruption. In the fall of 1963, nine months after they overthrew and killed Kassem, they fell to bickering among themselves, with fatal results. The highly adjustable soldier-politician Field Marshal Abdel Salam Aref, who had teamed with Kassem to oust Nuri and then teamed with the Baathists to do likewise to Kassem, led a third successful military *coup;* this time against his old teammates, the Baath. Aref then headed a floundering military government until 1966, when he was killed in a helicopter crash. His brother, Abdel Rahman Aref, took over until the cycle was completed in 1968, when the Baathists returned to power with still another military *coup*.

By contrast to these twists and turns in Iraq and Syria, Egypt traveled a relatively straight, if not very successful, path. Nasser survived the embarrassment of the Syrian break and proceeded with his program in what was still called the United Arab Republic. Work on the Aswan dam continued, more industries were nationalized, more estates distributed. There was undoubtedly unrest or at least unhappiness in Egypt, particularly among the previously privileged class, but there was no significant challenge to Nasser's leadership—not in Egypt and not, for that matter, in the Arab world.

The defeat in Syria had been a matter of timing, but the goal was unchanged. The Arabs, Nasser believed, could be brought together if the "outmoded" regimes were brought down—such regimes as the rich and antiquated kingdom of Saudi Arabia. To this end, his agents continued active.

In the late summer of 1962, he thought he saw an opportunity. The despotic old Imam of Yemen died in his medieval capital of San'a. A week later the Imam's son, Crown Prince Badr, was deposed and reported slain. Nasser quickly recognized the "Republic of Yemen" and dispatched the first of his advisers to the scene. The advisers were followed by troops and the troops by more troops—a drain on Egypt's economy that it could ill afford.

Badr, it was soon learned, was still very much alive and was rallying royalist tribes for guerrilla warfare in Yemen's mountains. Before long, Egypt had sent sixty thousand soldiers to the area, who were trying without success to root out the tribesmen. Troopships were returning with dead and wounded, while the government tried to hush up the toll. Internationally, Egypt gained ill will by resorting to the use of poison gas against the royalists.

The idea behind this new and hapless venture was not so much to win a place in Yemen as it was to get a foothold in a vital corner of the Arabian peninsula. From there Nasser could operate against the more important prize of Saudi Arabia, a prize he had long sought—and for a while it looked ready for the taking.

Since the early 1950's, Saudi Arabia had been ruled by

King Saud, a son of the great Ibn Saud, who had established the desert kingdom soon after World War I. Made rich by oil, Saud lived in palace-ringed luxury, while most of his subjects lingered in unschooled poverty. His extravagances were world famous. To casual visitors, he gave gold watches. When he traveled, he rented the entire floor of a hotel. His chauffeurs drove new Cadillacs until their motors broke down, then abandoned them in the desert. The country's airline was commandeered to move the wives, favorites, and retainers of the royal family from a summer palace at Taif to winter quarters in Riyadh or Jidda. At the same time, other Saudi travelers would sleep on boards on the streets of Jidda, too poor to rent a hotel room.

It was a backward, puritanical, arch-conservative kingdom, where thieves were punished by having their hands lopped off and more serious offenders were beheaded. Despite its huge oil income, under Saud the government was often desperate for money to pay its bills. And added to all this, there was Nasser just across the Red Sea. Saudi schools were staffed mostly by Egyptian teachers, and listening to the voice of Cairo radio was a favorite pastime of the kingdom. The atmosphere in ruling circles was nearing hysteria.

Once before, the more active and progressive half brother of Saud, Crown Prince Faisal, had been called in to straighten out the finances. Now he was again put in control, and he proved to be the savior of the kingdom. He met Nasser's challenge by flying gold and guns to the Yemeni royalists, thus helping them in their frustration of the Egyptian hopes there. At home, he started a crash program of modernization that before long began to make the song of Cairo somewhat less alluring to Saudi radio listeners. In 1964, Faisal became king in name as well as fact by sending the ailing Saud into comfortable exile.

So, the Yemeni adventure became another embarrassment for Nasser, and if anything a more serious one than the earlier union with Syria—which he had not really wanted in the first place. Eventually, he was forced to accept a face-saving compromise and to pull out most of the demoralized Egyptian troops. Left to its own resources, the Yemen remained a republic of sorts, and for a while even declared its own union with Egypt, a union in name only. As for the royalists, they remained in their mountains and were heard from occasionally throughout the years when the Egyptians would claim they were being rearmed by the Saudis.

XI

THE NON-ARAB STATES

Two of the strongest countries of the Middle East have been apart from the Arab struggles, and from the Israeli-Arab strife, although they have by no means been disinterested bystanders. These are the non-Arab, essentially Moslem, countries of Turkey and Iran.

These large, independent-minded, fast-developing nations form what global strategists like to call the northern tier of the Middle East—the rugged highlands standing between the Soviet Union and the Arab states. Despite occasional quarrels, Turkey and Iran have both looked toward the West for leadership and military support. Both are members of the western-backed Central Treaty Organization. Turkey is a republic and Iran a monarchy, but both have the problem of dissatisfied students and intellectuals. And both in recent years have had times of upheaval, although compared with their Arab neighbors, they have been models of stability.

As we have seen, Turkey became a republic when the last Ottoman emperor was deposed following World War I. Its military hero, Kemal Atatürk, had led the country toward modern times with dynamic reforms. Besides scrapping the Arabic alphabet and the Moslem fez and substituting the Latin alphabet and the European cap, he abolished the veil for women, undercut the power of Islam in the state, and made people adopt the custom of having family names. (Heretofore, most Turks had only given names. School and similar rosters had baffling numbers of Mustafas, Ahmets, and Adnans. When Ataturk had a law passed in 1934 requiring surnames, some Turks let their imaginations soar in picking them, and others were bluntly realistic. Thus, many Turks became Arslans, or mountain lions, and some became Ipekcioglus, or sons of silk workers.)

Be that as it may, under Atatürk, Turkey was a dictatorship. Under his successor, Ismet Inönü, it became a parliamentary democracy. No one could equal the influence that Atatürk had on Turkey, but Inönü also put a strong mark on its history. During World War II, he kept the country neutral. In the early postwar years, when both Turkey and Greece were menaced by the Soviet Union, he enthusiastically accepted the Truman Doctrine that armed it for defense against the Russians and their drive for a warm-water port. This led in 1951 to Turkey's adherence to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization as its easternmost member.

Inönü proved himself to be a believer in free elections in 1950, when much to almost everybody's surprise his People's Republican party was beaten at the polls. This was the first real test: would he turn over the government to the winners? He did, and the Democratic party under Adnan Menderes came to power.

Premier Menderes led Turkey for the next ten years, a rather feverish decade for most Turks. Menderes was an energetic, handsome, crowd-pleasing politician, a big builder, a big spender, a big doer, a patriotic Turk, but not an ardent democrat. And not, as it turned out, an orderly economist.

Over the years, he became increasingly irritated with any opposition. So much so that journalists were jailed for writing editorials against him, and political opponents found their ways blocked by a variety of harassments.

The United States government liked him. He was thoroughly pro-American, a loyal ally in NATO, and his government sent an exceptionally brave brigade of Turkish soldiers to Korea to fight with the United Nations forces in the Korean

Atatürk's successor, Ismet Inonu

War. Important American radar bases were built in Turkey to monitor the Soviet side of the border. Thousands of American servicemen were stationed in or near Istanbul, Ankara, and the NATO base at Izmir, where their post exchanges and officers clubs contrasted rudely with the Turks' poverty. In six years the United States contributed nearly $2 billion in aid to the Turkish economy and armed forces.

Turkey was streaked with new highways and dotted with new buildings. But the economy was nevertheless floundering. So poor was the nation in foreign exchange—ready cash to buy from abroad—that the ordinary man could not get Turkish coffee in the land of Turkish coffee. Shops were stripped bare of imported goods. Factories closed for lack of imported parts. Tankers sat in the Bosporus for days, waiting for the government to scrape up the cash so they could unload their supply of fuel for automobiles and industry. Only the black market was thriving.

In this perilous fix, and with the political opposition led by former President Inönü, the Turkish army stepped in on May 27, 1960, and overthrew Menderes. He and members of his government were imprisoned, and more than a year later Menderes and two of his ministers were hanged. In October, 1961, under a new constitution, elections were held and a civilian government was restored, with Inönü as premier.

Turkey's military men from that time forward, however, stayed not far behind the political scene. A military *coup* against Inönü was attempted in 1964 when the army put heavy, but unsuccessful, pressure on the government to intervene in Cyprus, where a virtual civil war was raging between Cypriots of Greek and Turkish descent.

Partly because of Cyprus, Inönü and his Republicans were defeated in an election in 1965, and the government went to the Justice party and its leader Suleyman Demirel, heir to the tradition of Adnan Menderes. For a while Demirel found the going easy. But while the business community appeared to be prospering, students, intellectuals, and left-wing labor unionists became more and more restless. Eventually strikes and riots erupted, along with demonstrations against NATO and Turkey's strong ties with the West. Although the American military presence had been reduced to some ten thousand servicemen, left-wing Turks were annoyed that there were any at all.

Early in 1971, after four American airmen were kidnapped in Ankara by extremists, the outraged Turkish generals again stepped in. They demanded an end to "anarchy" and the formation of a new government "above party politics." Demirel was forced to resign, and President Cevdet Sunay—himself a former chief of staff—called upon an ex-professor named Nihat Erim to form a government.

Still beset by violent underground opposition, Erim attempted to restore the country to a steadier path and to hasten its development—but with the military looking sternly over his shoulder.

Turkey's chief asset is its people, a fact that is both a problem and a strength. The Turks are a virile, courageous race with a strong sense of national pride. The Turkish army is by far the strongest military force in the Middle East. Turkey's leaders have had, however, a difficult time in modernizing the country because it has had no great source of wealth. In the Menderes years, its chief exports were tobacco, hazelnuts, and birdseed.

The Turkish plateau is dry and barren. Flying over it, a traveler sees nothing but bleak plains and mesas and salt lakes for hundreds of miles. In most of Asia Minor, the Turkish peasant scratches a living from unproductive earth, while the goat herd, which may be a major source of his wealth, makes it still more barren with its ravagings.

On the surface—literally on the surface—Iran looks much the same. Except for the fertile area edging the Caspian Sea, it is high, dry, and barren. But beneath the surface, it has the blessing that the Turks have not yet found in any large quantity—oil. Iran in 1970 was the biggest producer of oil in the Middle East, with an average daily output of more than 3.8 million barrels.

Under the rule of Shah Mohammed Riza Pahlevi, the oil income of more than $1 billion a year has been put to work improving the people's standard of living, educating illiterates, irrigating dry lands, and creating new industries. But it was not always that way.

The shah came to a tottering throne after his father was deposed by the Allies in World War II. When the war was ended, the Russians—here, too, searching for a warm-water port—were occupying the northern province of Azerbaijan. Iran seemed in danger of a Communist take-over. Appealing to the United Nations and at the same time negotiating with Moscow, the Iranian government in two tense years forced the Russians out, and then refused to ratify an agreement that would have given the Soviet Union important oil rights. The sovereignty of the country seemed saved, but this was only the beginning of the shah's troubles.

He was still an untested ruler, with limited power, of a backward and deeply divided country. Iran was, in effect, run by a wealthy class of feudal-like property owners, who controlled a great mass of peasants living in desperate poverty as serfs. Reactionary Moslem teachers wielded great influence. At the opposite end of the political seesaw was the strong and menacing Iranian Communist party, the Tudeh.

Into this postwar turbulence stepped the seemingly frail figure of Mohammed Mossadegh, an already aging politician, who was greatly popular with the masses but equally distrusted by the shah and his backers, including the United States and Britain. Led by Mossadegh, the Iranian parliament passed a resolution in March, 1951, to nationalize the country's Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (its only producer), and a month later Mossadegh became premier.

For more than two years Iran was in a state of crisis.

Trying to run its oil industry on its own, the government met with frustration. What oil it produced it could not sell, because Britain successfully blocked the world markets. The United States tried in vain to mediate with Mossadegh in Tehran and in Washington, while the old man, apparently feigning illness, met his top-level negotiators clad in pajamas. The country's economy was severely tested, but politically Mossadegh was gaining strength daily. In early August, 1953, he conducted a national referendum on his policies. Separate voting booths were established for those who stood for him and those who stood against. A total of 99.93 percent of the voters entered the pro-Mossadegh booths.

Supported, at any rate, by a broad coalition of ultra-nationalists, Communists, Moslem fanatics, and merchants, the old premier was at the height of his power. Then suddenly, it seemed, he was overthrown by an army *coup d'état,* and the shah, who had flown to Rome, was back on the Peacock Throne in Tehran.

It is now alleged that the United States Central Intelligence Agency engineered the *coup*. If so, it was an impressive success. For within a year an agreement was worked out that turned the oil operations over to an international consortium of oil companies, and oil revenue began pouring ever more abundantly into Iran's treasury. Equally important, the successful showdown with Mossadegh seemed to transform the shah from a young, uncertain head of state into a forceful and farsighted ruler, capable of dealing with politicians on the home front and the oil industry abroad.

The shah's new competence led in the long run to what has become known as the White Revolution. Launched in 1963 after earlier attempts at domestic reform had failed, this revolution from the throne is unparalleled in Middle Eastern history. Its effects have changed the face of the country and the lives of its people.

Since the reform began, Iran's gross national product—its total production—has risen by nearly 10 percent a year (compared to America's 3.8 percent annual rate of rise). Six huge dams have been completed to irrigate arid areas, and six more dams have been started. In more direct terms, the land reform program has reached three-fourths of Iran's 2.3 million peasant families, allowing them to buy from the government their own small farms. To get the land, the government put limits on ownership—allowing at first no one to own more than one "village," and later restricting it further. The former owners were paid what had been its tax-assessed value, which in most cases was nominal.

To help wipe out illiteracy, students were drafted to serve in a Literacy Corps during their compulsory service. They have taught more than two million children in remote areas to read and write. In a less basic sense, the White Revolution has brought television, automobiles, and traffic jams to Iran. Its aim has been nothing less than transforming a primitive land of serfdom to a modern, industrialized society. The unusual thing about it is that it has already partly succeeded.

XII

ISRAEL AND THE ARABS

Some writers have said that the existence of Israel is to blame for most of the misadventures, unrest, and political tumbling acts of the Middle East. The preceding chapters should show that home-front rivalries with little or no relation to Israel have contributed at least a respectable share. But it is undoubtedly true that Israel is at the heart of the Middle East crisis today, and that there has been such a crisis since the country was created in 1948. Far from fading away, the crisis has been growing more acute with the years. Today the issue of war or peace, not only in the region but perhaps in the world, centers on the Israeli-Arab confrontation and on those arid borders left by the 1949 armistice agreements.

Israel's victory in the first Palestine War in 1948–1949 was not a miracle, unless it be said that the Arabs were touched by a miracle of lost chances and bad coordination. But Israel's survival and growth has indeed been a miracle of nearly biblical stature.

The Arabs were left by the war in a bitter mood. The Israelis were left with high spirits and low prospects.

At the beginning of the war there had been only about 640,000 Jews in Palestine. Soon after it ended, with immigration open to all Jews and growing tremendously, there were 1,014,000. In fewer than three years the population of Israel nearly doubled. Into this land about the size of New Jersey came some 700,000 immigrants during this period, about half of them from Europe. They needed to be fed, sorted out, and settled, and many had to be re-educated and trained for the Israeli way of life.

More than half the land was unwatered desert, where nothing but scraggly brush had ever grown. The hostile Arab countries were clamping down a boycott, and the pipeline that had carried oil from Iraq to Haifa was shut down. There was need for almost everything, more food, more water, more supplies—and more money. Outsiders were saying at this time that Israel was nearly bankrupt, as undoubtedly it was. A leading member of the United States State Department was predicting privately that it would collapse—as it did not.

In this situation, and as they have ever since, world Jewry and principally American Jews came to the rescue. The first fund drives in the United States, in 1949 and 1950, set targets of $250 million a year, compared to an Israeli state budget then of only about $285 million a year. In the first twenty years of the country's life, total aid from fund drives, bond sales, American grants, and West German reparations amounted to well over $4 billion. Throughout its history, Israel has averaged about $200 million a year in contributions from Jews around the world. All in all, it has been the largest amount of outside aid per capita any nation has ever received.

The money has come to a land determined to succeed. Israel was and is a country of western mentality placed in an eastern setting. The Arabs in 1949, after their long centuries of rule by outsiders, were only beginning to step into modern times. Israel was already there. Its population was overwhelmingly literate, and included scientists, artisans, doctors and other professionals, technicians, and tradesmen from Europe. Its government was then, as it still is, staffed largely by European Jews—a fact that has been complained about by other Israelis.

The country also had as its first leader a forceful, visionary man in Premier David Ben-Gurion. Chaim Weizmann, who had done so much to win Israel its existence, was the first president of the new republic, but he was now failing. Ben-Gurion was sixty-two years old when he read the proclamation of Israel's rebirth, a young sixty-two at the peak of his vigor. He had emigrated to Palestine from Poland in 1906, and was a moderate socialist and leader of the Mapai party. He headed a coalition government, but through Israel's first years he was the undisputed leader and living symbol of the Zionist dream.

His vision as well as the unprecedented pouring in of dollars enabled Israel to survive the first years. The story has been told many times over of how Israel conquered the desert and erected new cities and settled Jews from the diaspora in what they considered their ancient home. Ben-Gurion, who planned Israel's future with the faith of a prophet, could sum it up with the phrase from Isaiah: "The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose."

It could be summed up, too, by figures.

In the period from 1948 to the Six-Day War in 1967, the country's population grew by more than 300 percent, to a total of nearly 2,700,000. It absorbed and settled about 1,250,000 immigrants, about half of them from Arab countries. Its farm output grew from about $15 million to $480 million; its land under cultivation from 400,000 acres to more than 1 million acres; its irrigated land from some 75,000 acres to 380,000 acres.

Israel's gross national product rose at the rate of 12.7 percent a year, fourth highest in the world. Its product per man rose from $650 a year to more than $1,500 a year.

The port of Eilat, Israel's important outlet on the Gulf of 'Aqaba, changed from a palm-fringed garrison village to an ebullient city with a cargo flow of an estimated million tons a year. In 1948 the port of Ashdod, near the biblical town of Ashkelon, did not exist at all, not even on a planning board. Today it is an industrial city of some 100,000 population, with a target for the 1970's of handling 4 million tons a year.

The entire Negev desert was a place mostly of sand and rock and Bedouin tribesmen, with a few Jewish kibbutzim, or communal farms, and a picturesque Arab market and camel trading center at Beersheba. Today the Negev is dotted with kibbutzim; it has a growing potash and minerals production worth millions of dollars a year; Beersheba is a city of about 100,000, a university town, and has factories producing chemicals, textiles, ceramics, and industrial diamonds.

These examples are taken more or less at random. The point is that Israel, to be sure with tremendous aid from abroad, has developed at a remarkable rate. This it has done during, and despite, almost constant strife with the Arabs.

For the Arabs, of course, never did agree to a peace treaty after the 1948–1949 Palestine War. Each country came to a separate armistice agreement, one by one, which set up temporary truce lines as the borders with Israel. The idea was that a general peace could then be worked out. So, through all the years the Arab countries have remained in a state of war with Israel, sometimes only in theory, sometimes in fact. Until recently, many simply refused to admit even privately that Israel existed; they would refer to it as "Occupied Palestine."

Looking back, many observers now believe that the best chance for peace between Israel and the Arabs came soon after the war, in the late 1940's and very early 1950's. The cold war between the United States and the Soviet Union had not yet entered the region; Israel was trying to steer a somewhat neutral course between the two; and however bitter the Arabs may have been in their defeat, the lines had not yet hardened and the borders were still relatively quiet.

The two immediate problems in those days were the status of Jerusalem and the refugees. The U.N. partition plan, to which the Zionists had agreed reluctantly and over which the Arabs had gone to war, had called for making Jerusalem an international city. The armistice had left Israel in control of the newer, larger western side of the city, and Jordan in control of the eastern, older side. Now Israel, with its deep emotional attachment to Jerusalem, began objecting to the city's internationalization.

After the war, the sides to the dispute were completely re-

Arab refugees in the Gaza Strip

versed. Israel opposed the whole partition plan, since it obviously would have lost territory by it; and except for Jordan, the Arabs, taking a rueful second look, favored it.

Nonetheless, the United Nations kept trying. Applying for membership, Israel assured the General Assembly in rather vague terms that it would not flaunt any U.N. resolutions. But after it gained admittance, it voted against a new resolution for internationalizing the Holy City, and speeded up its move of government ministries to their new home, Jerusalem. On December 26, 1949, the Knesset (Israel's parliament) began meeting in Jerusalem, and on January 23, 1950, it was proclaimed as the capital of Israel. Obviously, as far as the Israelis were concerned, the matter was closed.

The other pressing question involved the refugees. Between 600,000 and 700,000 Arabs had been uprooted in the Palestine War, and had been left homeless and in danger of starvation. It was an urgent, overwhelming problem. The U.N. General Assembly late in 1948 had passed one resolution setting up emergency relief and another—a key document in the Middle East crisis—calling for the refugees' return.

The second U.N. resolution stated: . . . refugees wishing to return to their homes and live in peace with their neighbors should be permitted to do so at the earliest practicable date, and that compensation should be paid for the property of those choosing not to return. . . ."

Strangely enough, the Arab states voted against the resolution. Later, again with hindsight, they became its strongest advocates, again too late.

There was no doubt of Israel's opposition. While the war was still being fought, Ben-Gurion had declared that "no Arab refugee should be admitted back." After the U.N. passed the resolution, the Israelis first insisted that the refugees would have to be a part of an overall peace treaty. Soon, however, they simply opposed repatriation on the grounds that the refugees would become a dangerous fifth column; and they said that the Arab states should undertake to resettle them. This stand caused President Truman to express his "deep disappointment," after which Israel again changed its stand and offered to accept 100,000 refugees. But the Arabs and most of the U.N. would not accept this.

The United Nations then established, in December, 1949, the U.N. Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA). So optimistic were the times, so near seemed peace, that UNRWA was given authority to exist for only eighteen months, during which it could spend up to $55 million in aiding the refugees. After that, the U.N. expected, everything would be settled by a final treaty. When, in 1950, this did not come to pass, a longer range program was set up for another year. And this was renewed, year after year, as the refugees grew in numbers and their bitterness aged and became stronger. Given the attitudes on both sides, the hard fact was that there probably had been little hope from the start, and a deadlock probably existed almost as soon as any Palestine refugees existed. The deadlock exists to this day, and remains a major obstacle, perhaps *the* major obstacle, to permanent peace in the Middle East.

And yet, many historians have seen in those early postwar years a wasted hope for peace. For there were actually face-to-face talks in 1949 and 1950 between the Israelis and Arabs —or at least one Arab. King Abdullah of Jordan, grandfather of the present King Hussein, was secretly meeting with Israelis, and was beginning to work out a far-reaching separate settlement. But progress was slow, neither side would make the necessary generous concession, word leaked out, and Abdullah hastily broke off contacts. The next year, in 1951, he was assassinated, and there was no one else in the Arab world for a while willing to take on the dangerous role of peacemaker.

During these first years, border tensions had not been high. Under the U.N.-sponsored armistices, Mixed Armistice Commissions (MAC) had been set up to try to keep the peace. There was, for example, an Israeli-Jordanian MAC composed of a U.N. chairman, two Israeli members, and two Jordanian members. Almost immediately, the commissions had been swamped with incidents, usually minor, to investigate. Many Arab farmers had found boundaries separating themselves from their former fields, or even their families. When they tried to cross, they were shot at.

But, inevitably, the incidents began to escalate. Israel, having little use for the U.N. peace teams since the war and frequently disputing their findings, began on its own a policy of retaliation raids in defiance of the U.N. In one raid, an attack on the Jordanian village of Kibya in 1953, some fifty-five Arabs were killed and their houses destroyed. At about the same time, Israel ran counter to the U.N. by going ahead with a project to drain the swampy Lake Huleh in a demilitarized zone north of the Sea of Galilee.

Both actions drew strong reaction from the United Nations, and Secretary of State Dulles suspended aid to Israel until it obeyed the U.N. order to stop work on the Huleh project. Israel complied. The project later was quietly completed. The Tiberias area, along the shores of Galilee, also was the scene of another major Israeli raid late in 1955, when forty-nine Syrians were killed—again causing a U.N. reprimand.

The incursions were not all on one side, of course. In March, 1954, an Arab band killed eleven Israelis riding in a bus near Beersheba, but the U.N. refused to condemn Jordan for lack of proof that it was involved. Then, in the deadly pattern that was being established, Israel retaliated with an attack on the Jordanian village of Nahhalin, in which nine Jordanians were killed.

By this time, the hope for an early peace seemed dim indeed. Surprisingly, however, there were still very cautious attempts at contact. Nasser was now the acknowledged master of Egypt, and in 1954 and early 1955 he sent agents to sound out the Israelis—probably in Paris—on some kind of settlement, if not outright proclaimed peace. That hope flickered and went out, finally, when Israel and Egypt ran into serious trouble on their desert borders.

Along those borders, until 1955, there had been numerous irritations but no alarming outbreaks. The two countries had been in serious contention, however, over Egypt's continued attempt to boycott Israel by blocking use of the Suez Canal and interferring with Israeli-bound shipping in the Gulf of 'Aqaba. Egypt would not let what it considered war cargoes to pass through the Canal for Israel, even though they were aboard foreign ships, and tried to block tankers from carrying oil to Israeli ports. In September, 1954, the Israelis had tried to send one of their own ships, the *Bat Galim*, through the Canal. Egypt had seized it and the crew and had released them only after strong international protests.

In any event, the borders had been quiet for some time when on February 28, 1955, Israel launched its first heavy retaliatory raid into the Gaza Strip, attacking the Egyptian military headquarters there and killing thirty-nine Egyptian soldiers. What made Israel strike is still a question: retaliation for the ship seizure, a succession of small border incidents, the hanging by Egypt of accused Israeli agents involved in the complicated Lavon affair (which aimed to discredit Egypt by bombing United States property in Cairo). Or it may, according to pro-Arabs, have been simply a gesture by Ben-Gurion, who had returned as Israel's defense minister after a year in retirement—a gesture to show Egypt some muscle.

Whatever the cause, it had, as noted earlier, a galvanic effect on Nasser and the world. For it undoubtedly helped propel Nasser into the Czech arms deal. And that led, without many detours, to that fateful series of events in the summer and fall of 1956: the United States withdrawal of the Aswan dam offer; the seizure by Nasser of the Suez Canal; and the three-way attack on Egypt by Israel, France, and Britain, known as the Suez-Sinai War.

The sequence was not necessary or inevitable, but events often must be preceded by excuses. Those, at any rate, were the excuses.

This, in any case, may be oversimplifying history and, for that matter, it is getting ahead of it. After the Israeli retaliation in Gaza, Nasser introduced a ploy of his own: the Egyptian *fedayeen,* or self-sacrificers. These commandos were the forerunners of the Arab guerrillas who came on the scene a decade later. The fedayeen were mostly Palestinians, trained by the Egyptians to cross into Israel in answer to the Israeli retaliation raids. They, therefore, were re-retaliators. They made their first raid in the fall of 1955, and continued their forays until halted by larger events a year later.

There was now unrelenting tension on the borders, increasing anger in Israel over the Egyptian barriers on the Suez Canal and in the Gulf of ʻAqaba, and a loud round of chest-thumping in the Arab press over the deeds of the fedayeen.

And still, despite all this, the peace-seekers were at work, and had even seemed, late in 1955, to be getting somewhere. Or so it appeared to many in the Arab world. The cause at this unlikely time was a speech by British Prime Minister Anthony Eden at the Guildhall in London. He suggested that if some compromise could be worked out on the Israeli borders, Britain, the United States, "and perhaps other powers" would give a formal guarantee to both sides. Nasser said he liked the idea. The Arabs said they liked it. The Israelis said they didn't like it. So, that, too, joined the ghosts of other Middle East peace plans.

XIII

THE SUEZ-SINAI WAR

It was an interlude, a brief and perhaps strange one, for the war winds were now blowing hard over the eastern Mediterranean. The rise of Nasser was a growing worry to the Israelis, the British, and the French. To the latter two, his nationalization of the Suez Canal on July 26, 1956, was a virtual trumpet call to action. As described earlier, there was no legal or operational basis for opposing the move. The Egyptians had the right to seize the Canal, and they were operating it much better than anyone had thought they could. But Nasser, with his defiance of the West and his arms deal with the Soviet bloc, was, in the eyes of Anthony Eden, a very real menace, and Nasser's book *The Philosophy of the Revolution* was as threatening a document as Hitler's *Mein Kampf.*

The French had other reasons as well for wishing to be rid of Nasser. They were striving to hold on to their last North African Arab possession—Algeria—and their pride was hurting over their recent defeat in Indo-China.

For the Israelis, Nasser was also a menace and the man who appeared able, if anyone could, to unite the Arabs against them. He had just formed a military alliance with Syria and Jordan. He was blocking Israeli shipping and sending his commandos across the borders. If at this golden moment he could be brought down, and if Egypt, the leading Arab country, could be made to sue for peace, then the rest might follow in line and that elusive end—recognition and peace—might be won.

Those were some of the thoughts going through men's minds in Israel, Britain, and France as the summer of 1956 wore on. Their common concern about Nasser and the Suez Canal had brought them together, and plans for a joint venture were being laid.

The United States was not told what was happening, although some of it was obvious. Britain was building up its forces on nearby Cyprus and was also allowing France to move a strike force there—all being done with little or no attempt at secrecy.

Against this backdrop, and in spite of last-minute American warnings, Israeli forces launched an invasion of the Sinai peninsula on October 29, 1956, catching the Egyptians by surprise. Nasser, expecting the blow would fall on Jordan, at first thought this was merely another big reprisal operation. He did not order reinforcements until the next day. A few hours after the Egyptian reinforcements arrived, the British and French made their first move by issuing an ultimatum, whose demands struck almost everyone concerned as peculiar. It stipulated that both sides were to withdraw 10 miles from the Canal and to allow British and French forces to move in between the two armies. When the ultimatum was not honored, British and French planes began bombing Egyptian airfields and other targets on October 31.

Four Israeli columns were forking across the Sinai in the meantime, despite some Egyptian resistance at strategic passes, and a paratroop force had dropped within 40 miles of the Canal. Caught in the middle, Nasser ordered the Canal blocked by sunken ships, the bridges spanning it destroyed, and the Egyptian army withdrawn from the Sinai and across the Canal.

On November 5, British and French airborne and ground forces landed at the northern end of the Canal, captured Port Said, and began moving quickly south against very little resis-

Ben-Gurion visits Israeli soldiers during the fighting.

tance. At this point, Nasser's rule appeared shaken. In British headquarters on Cyprus, in fact, a false rumor spread that he had resigned. Cheers could be heard from inside closed rooms, and officers rushed past newsmen muttering "We've done it!" Many believe, however, that if the British and French had not intervened, but had permitted the Israelis to pursue their goal, Nasser would have been overthrown.

But this was not to be. On October 30, the day after the Israelis had struck, the United States took the issue to the U.N. Security Council, and President Eisenhower denounced the moves in a nationwide address.

Britain and France vetoed the resolution prepared by the Security Council, so the United States took the matter before the General Assembly. That body voted, 64–5, for an immediate cease-fire and withdrawal, and for another resolution providing for a United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF). The international pressures on the three invaders were enormous. The U.S.S.R. threatened to send "volunteers" to aid its Arab friends; the United States maneuvered the Sixth Fleet in the eastern Mediterranean. Commonwealth partners urged Britain to back down. To all this, the allies bowed and accepted on November 6 a cease-fire, with Anglo-French forces about 30 miles inside Egypt along the Canal. These forces withdrew as soon as UNEF troops reached Egypt.

For the Israelis in the Sinai, the situation, which foreshadowed their position after the Six-Day War eleven years later, was somewhat different. Their forces controlled the Sinai and the Gaza Strip. Ben-Gurion, who had returned as premier, and Foreign Minister Golda Meir had made statements that the Sinai and the Gaza Strip were rightfully parts of Israel. But the same pressures that had been applied to the British and French were applied to the Israelis. Among their objectives had been freedom for shipping on the Canal and the Gulf of 'Aqaba. So, they demanded something in return for withdrawal.

The United States offered a compromise: it would support the stationing of UNEF troops in the Gaza Strip and at Sharm el Sheikh at the entrance to the Gulf of ʻAqaba; it would insist on freedom of shipping through the gulf as an international waterway. On this basis, most reluctantly, Israel withdrew from the occupied areas on March 8, 1957, and UNEF troops moved into Sharm el Sheikh, along the Egyptian side of the Sinai border and into the Gaza Strip. Israel would not allow the U.N. force on its side of the borders.

Thus ended the Suez-Sinai War. For Britain and France it had been a ruinous misadventure, damaging their relations with the United States, plummeting their reputations among the Arabs, and weakening their governments at home. For the Israelis, it had not been costly in men or equipment. Only 171 Israelis had been killed, and their troops had captured many of Egypt's newly acquired Soviet arms. The attack, however, had hurt their standing in the world community. In return they got —for ten years—freedom for their shipping in the Gulf of ʻAqaba, but not in the Suez Canal.

For Nasser, the war began as an embarrassment, with Israel capturing six thousand of his soldiers. He managed, however, to turn it into a prestige-builder of sorts when the allies retreated ignominiously. In the end, only the Russians were the winners. They had made threatening noises, and the Arabs gave them most of the credit for forcing the allied backdown, despite America's leading role in that power play.

Although they were far from pleased with the outcome, the Israelis did gain a stretch of relative peace for several years after the Suez-Sinai War. Borders with the Arabs remained quiet. With the UNEF in position, fedayeen raids from Egypt ceased. Except for occasional tension over Jerusalem, relations with Jordan stayed calm. The only trouble spot was the Syrian-Israeli border, where the Syrians looked down on Israeli kibbutzim from gun positions on the Golan Heights, but even there incidents were usually minor.

The Arabs in this period leading into the mid-1960's were concentrating on their own problems, which were numerous and often quite dramatic. Israel looked on with interest, alarm,

United States marines wade ashore at Lebanon.

or pleasure as King Hussein fought for his throne in Jordan; Syria and Egypt tried to unite; the royal line ended in the Baghdad bloodbath; United States marines landed in Lebanon; and Syria called off the union with Nasser. Israelis continued to distrust but to be fascinated by Nasser, and to watch warily for signs of Hussein's weakening in Jordan. They let it be known that they would think seriously of moving into Jordan's West Bank if Hussein were overthrown and a militant Nasserite came to power.

The basic issues—the refugees, recognition of Israel, the status of Jerusalem—remained unchanged. The one problem that came to a head during this period concerned the waters of the Jordan River.

In an area so dry, it was inevitable that unfriendly nations with a common source of water would quarrel over it. Israel and the Arabs have been at odds over the Jordan almost since Israel became a state.

As rivers go, the Jordan is not much of a stream, not a stone's throw across, but it is the biggest river between the Euphrates and the Mediterranean Sea. Its headwaters begin near Mount Hermon, between 1,000 and 1,700 feet above sea level. After three streams, the Hasbani, the Banyas, and the Dan, join it, the river goes plunging in a wild ride until it reaches the Sea of Tiberias, or the Sea of Galilee, 686 feet below sea level. The Jordan leaves this lake at its southern end and descends another 600 feet on its course to the Dead Sea.

In 1953 Israel had started work on an irrigation system that would divert some of the water in its territory to the Negev desert, but the project was halted because of Arab opposition. President Eisenhower then sent his personal representative, Eric Johnston, to try to arrange an agreement among the countries for a Jordan River system that would irrigate and give electrical power to the entire area.

The persuasive Johnston won approval from both sides on, as he put it, "the technical level." But the proposal was vetoed "on a political level" by Arab governments fearful of seeming

An aerial view of Tel Aviv

to recognize Israel. The Johnston Plan would have provided about 1 billion cubic meters of water a year to the area, with about 600 million going to Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon, and 400 million to Israel. Jordan would have been the biggest user, with about 480 million cubic meters a year.

When the plan was blocked, Israel went ahead, carrying out its share of the undertaking alone, while Jordan began work on, and later completed with United States aid, a 42-mile East Ghor Canal, which irrigates more than 30,000 acres east of the river.

The Israeli project aimed at pumping water from the Sea of Galilee itself, in amounts prescribed by the Johnston Plan, and piping it south to the Negev desert to support more agriculture. To this, the Arabs objected angrily, stating that the plan would take water away from Jordan and would make the water of the lower Jordan River, south of the lake, too saline for proper irrigation. When the Israelis disregarded the objections and went ahead with their project, the Arab kings and presidents met in Cairo early in 1964 and announced they would go to war "if one drop" were ever diverted by Israel; they then proceeded to devise their own plan to divert the river's headwaters to their own uses, thus shutting off Israel.

The threat was never carried out. Israel began pumping the "Johnston share" out of the Sea of Galilee with no military opposition. The Arab diversion scheme came to an end after Israeli artillery fire stopped the Syrians from working on their part of the project.

Jordan water now flows south to Tel Aviv and into the Negev.

XIV

THE SIX-DAY WAR

The story about the boy who cries "wolf" should be added to the literature of the Middle East. There, its lesson would strike home. Arabs and Jews, living side by side in disharmony, have become so accustomed to awful but empty threats that a real danger often creeps up unseen. This was the case of the surprising Six-Day War of 1967.

There had been no omen more dire than the usual omens in this part of the world to foretell the war. The Arab vows to fight over the Jordan waters had, as expected, blown away, and the Middle East was running its standard course. Nasser was struggling with his budget in the U.A.R., and things were rather worse than usual because the United States had ended its annual $150 million wheat subsidy. Syria was having one of its frequent crises, and its leaders were making belligerent speeches. Iraq was in turmoil. It was, generally, a normal period.

With hindsight, however, one can look back and see how certain events were causing other events, which finally would lead to real trouble.

In February, 1966, a radical left wing of the Baath Socialist party had seized power in Syria and had become in word and deed the farthest-out regime in the region. The radical Baathists, who professed a certain enthusiasm for Chairman Mao Tse-tung of Peking, were nationalizing the unsteady country with an enthusiasm that alarmed even the Communists. They were also making most virulent speeches against Israel and were encouraging a newly emerged Palestine guerrilla group called Al Fatah in its forays into Israel.

Al Fatah was a recent entry in the region, first being heard of about two years previously. It was formed of Palestinians, sponsored by Syria, and discouraged by Jordan and Lebanon. Its guerrillas were making pinprick raids into Israel, and the Israelis were making the expected but usually light retaliations. Then in November, 1966, there was a large retaliatory attack on the Jordan village of Samu, which was suspected of being a guerrilla base. There were heavy Jordanian losses, and King Hussein, although he opposed Al Fatah, found his position seriously weakened.

On April 7, 1967, there was another retaliation worth noting. The Syrians shot at an Israeli frontier tractor, and the Israelis responded massively, with an assault by tanks and planes. In the ensuing battle, six Syrian planes were shot down well within the Syrian border.

These two actions escalated tempers in the Arab world, and nonsupport charges were fired around its capitals. Cairo accused Amman of failing to help the brother Syrians, and Amman asked huffily where the Syrians and Egyptians had been the previous November when Samu had been attacked. (To the latter question, the Jordanians supplied their own answer. The Egyptians, they said, were busy fighting fellow Arabs in the Yemen.)

This stung Nasser. Wait, he said in effect, until next time.

And the next time came soon. On May 12 press reports from Israel, printed in the United States and elsewhere, said the Israelis were threatening major action against Syria unless the sabotage campaign ceased. The next day Egypt received a message from Syria that Israel was building up troops on the Syrian border. This was followed by other reports that Israel was planning a major attack against Syria, and that the Israeli aim was to overthrow the Syrian government. The exact source

Arab volunteers receive instructions in loading rifles.

of these reports is something of a mystery. When the war was over and Nasser was making his excuses, he said: "All of us know how the crisis started. At the beginning of last May there was an enemy plan for the invasion of Syria and the statements by his politicians and his military leaders openly said so. Sources of our Syrian brothers were categorical about this and our own reliable information confirmed it." It is now thought that the source was Russia, but whether the Soviet Union actually believed it or was merely playing its own game is not known.

In any case, the Syrians reminded Nasser of a recently signed Syrian-Egyptian defense pact, and asked for help. The next day, May 14, Egyptian forces were ordered to a state of "battle readiness."

Even now, considering that this was the Middle East, there seemed to be nothing highly unusual. It had happened before. The factors for war had been present for at least a decade, and war had not come. But now the momentum increased, and in rapid-fire order the following events occurred:

On May 16, Egypt informed the Soviet Union, Syria, and Iraq that it would take action against any Israeli aggression. That night the Egyptian chief of staff contacted the Indian commander of UNEF troops and asked him to withdraw his troops immediately from two points—Sharm el Sheikh, the fortress at the entrance to the Gulf of 'Aqaba, and Al Sabha. The UNEF chief queried U.N. headquarters in New York for orders. Early on May 18 Egyptians actually took over three U.N. posts on the frontier and fired two artillery rounds at a fourth. At Sharm el Sheikh only thirty-two members of the U.N. force were posted. The Egyptians ordered them out within fifteen minutes, but their officer declined, saying he had no orders to evacuate.

The official Egyptian demand reached U.N. Secretary-General U Thant in New York later that same day, May 18. He consulted with representatives from Sweden, Canada, India, and Yugoslavia, which were contributing men to the UNEF.

Sweden and Canada opposed withdrawing the troops, on grounds that responsibility for any such action lay with the U.N. Security Council and General Assembly. India and Yugoslavia, however, insisted that Egypt had every right to demand withdrawal, and that their troops would be withdrawn as soon as they were asked, in any case.

After that meeting, U Thant, with no further delay, dictated a letter complying with the Egyptian request. Since then, the secretary-general has been held up as a scapegoat whose ready acquiescence to Egypt cleared the way for the war. Whether he was right or wrong, he did have his reasons. He felt that Egypt as a sovereign state could cancel its permission for the UNEF presence; that, furthermore, UNEF posts were already being occupied by the Egyptians; and that, no matter what happened, India and Yugoslavia were pulling out. So the troops were withdrawn, and the barrier between Egypt and Israel was gone.

These moves were accompanied by great shouts of anti-Israeli propaganda by Cairo radio, whose commentator was calling for the Israelis' "death and annihilation" and predicting "the fateful battle" to come.

The world waited for Nasser's next move. On May 22 Egypt closed the Strait of Tiran at the entrance to the Gulf of 'Aqaba. The Arab world burst forth with patriotic joy and emotion, and Nasser, whose prestige had been slipping, was again its paramount hero. The cry on all sides was for war.

At first the Israelis had not been taking the Arab moves too seriously. On May 18, however, when U Thant agreed to remove the U.N. troops, they snapped to attention. A blockade of the gulf would not be materially fatal to Israel, but it would be a deadly psychological blow. The seventy-two-year-old premier, Levi Eshkol, who had succeeded David Ben-Gurion four years previously, called a cabinet meeting, which, on May 19, ordered mobilization. Reinforcements were sent to the southern border where eighty thousand Egyptian soldiers were massing.

On May 23, while the country grew increasingly alarmed, the United States and Britain advised their nationals to leave Israel. The next day Foreign Minister Abba Eban took off for Washington, making stops en route in Paris and London, to sound out President Johnson on what steps America would take to counter the blockade.

The United States was as surprised as the Israelis, or for that matter the Arabs, at the sudden appearance of a war crisis. Eban was told that America would one way or another break the blockade, but the promise was vague, and Eban left Washington unsatisfied.

There was talk of the United States and other maritime nations getting together to force passage through the strait. The main American thrust, however, was to urge both sides not to take military action while a solution was being worked out. The United States, of course, was making its main pitch to the Israelis, while the Soviet Union was doing similarly with the Egyptians.

In Jerusalem, Israeli military leaders were pressing for a preemptive strike. War would come inevitably, they said: strike first. Eban returned to argue before the cabinet against going to war, pointing to the dangers of Russian involvement and to the futility of the 1956 action. It was up to the cabinet to decide. Their vote, on May 27, resulted in a 9–9 deadlock.

What apparently tipped the scales in favor of war was the trip to Cairo on May 30 of King Hussein. His purpose was to sign a Jordanian-Egyptian defense pact, as he had in 1956 just before the Suez-Sinai War. On June 1 the Israeli military hero Moshe Dayan was brought into the cabinet as defense minister in place of Eshkol, who had been holding that post as well as the premiership. Dayan's advent brought a vast amount of assurance to the worried country. Two days later he outlined war plans to the cabinet, involving a three-prong invasion of the Sinai against Egypt, a holding operation against Syria, and an attack on Jordan if and when the Jordanians fired a first shot. The cabinet approved those plans on Sunday, June 4.

At 7:45 A.M. on June 5 planes took off from Israel to attack Egyptian airstrips. At 8:15 A.M., Israeli ground forces were ordered to go into action.

The Six-Day War was a well-known disaster for the Arabs, their third war with Israel in two decades and their third humiliation. As in the two previous wars, the military balance on the surface had favored the Arabs. On May 23 Nasser had visited his advanced air headquarters and announced "We are ready . . . ," but privately he admitted the Arabs were not. In numbers, the Egyptian army outnumbered Israel's 3–1, while the Egyptian, Syrian, and Jordanian regulars combined had a nearly 5–1 preponderance. The Egyptians and Syrians furthermore were bountifully supplied with Russian tanks and planes, the Egyptians with about 1,200 tanks and 210 Soviet MIG fighters and fighter-bombers, plus other Russian combat and transport planes.

Beneath the surface, however, the advantage was the other way around. Egypt had some 60,000 regulars bogged down in Yemen, and more on the home front for internal security. Syria's army also was dispersed throughout the restless country, while Jordan's well-trained Arab Legion was supported by only a few tanks and a dozen combat aircraft.

By contrast, the Israelis had a ready reserve of more than 200,000 men and the advantage of interior lines of communication. Their greatest advantage, however, lay in their superior use of what they had, and in their unmatched determination to fight for their country.

In Washington, the Central Intelligence Agency had predicted that in the event of war, Israel would win it in seven days.

Although Nasser and the Arabs had said they were ready for anything, that they expected an Israeli first-strike, and that they would not be caught with their planes down, they were, nevertheless, taken completely off-guard. In a few hours the Egyptian air force was almost eliminated, bombed and burned out on the ground. With full air superiority, the Israelis then

Israeli tank damaged by a land mine

cut across the Sinai peninsula with three tank columns that dashed around Egyptian positions and left them for mopping-up forces. The Egyptians were bottled up within the Sinai, the escape passes where they had lost the 1956 war strewn with their shattered tanks. Late on June 8, after four days of fighting, after Israeli columns had reached the Suez Canal, Nasser accepted a U.N. cease-fire. Thousands of Egyptian stragglers were left in the desert. The Sinai was in the hands of Israel.

For Jordan the war was even shorter. A few hours after the Israelis struck against Egypt, Jordanian guns began lobbing shells into Israel. This was the go-ahead and the Israelis struck, capturing the Jordanian Old City of Jerusalem in less than forty-eight hours and sweeping across the West Bank to the Jordan River by nightfall on June 7. King Hussein asked for a cease-fire.

Syria had agreed to a cease-fire on June 9, but in this sector the real fighting did not begin until the Israelis were finished with the Egyptians and Jordanians. Despite the Syrian appeal, Israel said they were continuing to shell border villages, and that "defensive action" had to be taken. This consisted of a seemingly impossible assault up the Golan Heights, the fortified positions overlooking the Israeli farm communities north of the Sea of Galilee. From these heights Syrian artillery in years past had often fired on the Israelis below. After a fierce two-day battle the objectives were taken, and Israel agreed to stop hostilities at 8:30 P.M. on June 10.

The June war had lasted six full days. The CIA had been a day off in its prediction.

The Arabs had not lost a war so completely and at such cost for a century. Their air forces had been wiped out, Russian equipment worth some $2 billion had been destroyed or captured. Jordan's Arab Legion, which as in the first Palestine War had fought the best and the hardest, had lost more than 15,000 men. Some 20,000 Egyptians were killed or died on the desert. Against these losses, only 679 Israelis were killed.

Worse, if anything could be worse for the Arabs, they

Israeli troops carry two young refugees across the Jordan River.

were humiliated. This time there was no way to escape it, although Nasser tried for a time to save face by insisting that the British and Americans had given Israel air support.

The question arises whether Nasser would have attacked if the Israelis had not moved first. The answer probably never will be known. Many who were in the Arab world, particularly those who were in Cairo at the time, say he would not have, that he was playing poker and was bluffing, that he had sent his vice president, Zakaria Mohieddin, to Washington to offer a compromise just as the Israelis had struck. But his words taken at face value certainly promised war, and whether or not he intended it, other Arabs were crying for it.

Many observers now believe that events simply got out of hand. The June war of 1967, the war that so radically changed the face of the Middle East, was, they say, the result of bad guesses, foolish bluffs that got called, and brinksmanship that lost its balance and went over.

The map of the Middle East had been the same since the armistice lines between Israel and the Arabs were drawn in 1949. Now in six days the map had been re-drawn.

XV

THE QUEST FOR PEACE

Since the Six-Day War ended on June 10, 1967, the Israeli-Arab Middle East has been in a painful, halfway condition. It has been not quite at war, but certainly not at peace. Armies have not gone sweeping across borders, but warplanes, bombs, shells, and commandos have. And the borders themselves—they are not borders; they are lines where the fighting stopped.

That is really where the Israeli-Arab struggle stands today: where the fighting stopped. In spite of all that has happened in the years since then—the rise of the guerrillas, the struggles in Jordan, the death of Nasser, the work of the peacemakers, the talks, the hopes—the two sides stand where they were that June 10. They stand there as if stopped by a signal, unable or unwilling to move.

When the fighting stopped, the Israelis were in possession of vital chunks of Arab land—26,476 square miles of it. Their soldiers held Egypt's Sinai peninsula, including Sharm el Sheikh and the east bank of the Suez Canal; the Gaza Strip; the West Bank bulge of Jordan; the Syrian Golan Heights; and the entire city of Jerusalem.

It did not seem at first that they would keep it all for long. For one reason, Israel had acquired more than one million Arabs in the conquered territory, including nearly six hundred thousand refugees in Gaza and the West Bank, and, as Moshe Dayan said, the country could not safely absorb a new population of "hostile" Arabs.

More than that, Israel's most influential friend, the United States, had been committed to protecting the "territorial integrity" of all nations in the Middle East, which means Arab as well as Israeli territory. Dayan himself had said on the first day of the fighting that "we have no aim of territorial conquest."

But he was among the first to visit the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem and to vow that the Israelis never would part from it again. The government felt the same way. On June 28, it formally united both sections of the Holy City, with the expressed disapproval of the United States, Britain, France, and other countries. Israel said it was only "administrative" and was not necessarily permanent; but before long it was unmistakable that the ex-Arab side of Jerusalem had been annexed, that it was part of Israel, and that it would stay that way.

The loss of East Jerusalem, as the Israelis called it, plus the burden of new refugees and the separation of the West Bank brought Jordan close to ruin. The West Bank had been the kingdom's chief agricultural area, and the Old City contained most of the Christian holy places and was a major source of tourist dollars.

Egypt, besides losing most of its Russian military equipment, suffered financially by about $250 million a year as a result of the closing of the Suez Canal, as well as losing the growing production of its Sinai oil wells.

But the biggest blow to the Arabs, as noted before, was neither in money nor geography. The Russians quickly began rearming Egypt, and by the year's end had nearly completed the job. As for the lost land, the Arabs expected—and still expect—to get it back. But the psychological effect of the defeat was devastating. It gave the Arabs a sense of frustration that was worse than they had ever known. For the third time they had fought the Israelis and for the third time they had been trounced. What could they do?

The Palestinians themselves had for some time been trying to supply an answer. They were scattered throughout the Middle East, some 2,500,000 of them.

The popular picture today of a Palestinian is of a man

Palestinian troops training in Syria

huddled in a squalid refugee camp, barely existing on a ration of a few cents a day supplied by the U.N. As far as it goes, that is true. But they are by no means all miserable objects of charity. Actually, the Palestinians as a group are the intellectually elite of the Arab world. They have been termed the best educated and most advanced. They have furnished to the Arab world not only many of its leading intellectuals, but also top professional men—physicians, lawyers, engineers, and civil servants. From their ranks have come hard-driving, imaginative industrialists, bankers, tycoons. With irony, the Palestinians are sometimes called "the Jews of the Arab world."

Their one strong tie, binding together the ramshackle refugee camps and the modern offices, has been their origin, Palestine, and their burning desire to undo what they consider the wrong done them, by dissolving the state of Israel.

From these ranks came Al Fatah. For this was the militant Palestinians' answer. In effect, it was "Let us take a hand in our own fate."

As we know, the Al Fatah guerrillas had emerged in the mid-1960's as a new factor in the Israeli-Arab strife. They had started in the camps, brought together by some of the idealistic and/or bitter young men educated with scholarships at universities. They had been at first the protégés of the Syrians, and with their raids had provided a steppingstone to war by inviting Israeli retaliation. Now the guerrillas were becoming a major force.

Al Fatah, under the direction of Yasir Arafat, assumed the leadership in the movement. Arafat did not look like a leader—paunchy, ill-shaven, unhandsome—but he was an expert demolitions man and a clever and apparently courageous commando. The Arabs grasped at the guerrillas as the answer to continual defeat. Here at last were people who were trying to *do* something in place of nearly two decades of debate, defeat, and despair. To the Arabs, Al Fatah were men of action, spurred by an ideal. They were pictured in posters charging into the night, guns in hands. They became the heroes of movies. (When their bombs or land mines killed Israeli women and children, as they did at times, the Israelis, of course, took the opposite view.)

Al Fatah was no longer sponsored by Syria; instead, most of the Arab world, wealthy states and wealthy men, poured money into its treasury. Palestinians in some states were taxed 5 to 10 percent of their salaries to help the cause.

The guerrillas established bases in Jordan and swaggered armed on the Amman streets in camouflage uniforms like members of a sovereign force, but owing no allegiance to King Hussein. Their bases on Mount Hermon in the south of Lebanon became for a time virtually an independent fiefdom.

Al Fatah was the richest and best organized of the groups, but there were numerous other guerrilla bands. All in all, in the summer of 1970 when the guerrilla movement was at its height, there were perhaps fifty thousand guerrillas and eleven so-called major groups, covering most of the political spectrum. One, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), was Marxist, well to the left of Al Fatah, and led by Dr. George Habash, a Christian physician, who had been educated, as were many of the prominent Arab leaders, guerrilla and otherwise, at the American University of Beirut. In the far left corner was the Maoist, pro-Peking Communist organization, the Popular Democratic Front. The Syrians, grown wary of Al Fatah, now had their own group, Al Saiqa.

Al Fatah specialized in raids into Israel. Dr. Habash's PFLP believed in operating on a wider front, and had hijacked three international airliners, in 1968, 1969, and 1970, as well as attacking other planes connected with "imperialist" regimes on the ground at European airports.

Now, shortly after 1 P.M. on September 6, 1970, to bring worldwide attention to their cause, the PFLP was about to start the biggest hijacking operation of them all.

The operation began when a black-haired, sloe-eyed Palestinian student, Leila Khaled, and her companion, Patrick Arguello, boarded an El Al Israel Airlines 707 jet in Amsterdam bound for New York. That Khaled was already a heroine in the

Arab world, having helped hijack a TWA plane in 1969, was unknown by the Israeli crew. Arguello was not an Arab, but a United States citizen with a Nicaraguan father. Although he had spent most of the previous year studying in Geneva, his American student friends did not know that he was wanted in several Central American countries for "clandestine activities." And no one, not even his friends, knew him to show any interest in Arab causes.

The first part of the operation proved a failure for the PFLP. When the two leaped up after takeoff to seize the Israeli plane, Khaled was overpowered and Arguello fatally wounded by a security guard. The plane made an emergency landing in London.

At the same time, however, a TWA 707 leaving Frankfurt for New York and a Swissair DC-8 from Zurich to New York were taken over by guerrillas and headed toward the Middle East. A short time later a huge Pan American 747 jet also bound for New York was seized and headed eastward after takeoff from Amsterdam. The 747 jet was ordered to Cairo where it landed and was blown up by PFLP agents to show their disdain for Nasser, who seemed willing to negotiate about Israel, instead of trying to destroy it.

The TWA and Swissair planes were brought to a precarious landing on an abandoned desert airstrip 45 miles northeast of Amman. On Tuesday, September 8, a BOAC VC-10 was commandeered after takeoff from Bahrein and flown to the same strip. So, there on the desert, while five nations bargained for their release, the three airliners' 417 passengers and crew were held hostage. A full-scale Middle East crisis came blowing onto the scene with tragic consequences.

This was close to the ultimate challenge to King Hussein. The guerrillas had been flouting his authority openly, and only three months previously had been locked in a showdown with his army that cost two hundred lives. At a meeting in Amman in July, they had defied his acceptance of an American peace plan. Now, within his domain, they were threatening the lives

Hijacked BOAC airliner in the Jordanian desert

Wreckage of the three airliners

of hostages from a dozen countries unless their demands for freeing guerrilla prisoners held in Europe and Israel were met.

Jordanian army tanks surrounded the strip in a nerve-racking encounter, while in various capitals negotiations were held. First the guerrillas freed a group of women and children. Then they agreed to let all but fifty-four of the hostages be brought into Amman and released. The planes were then blown up.

Hussein moved against the guerrillas. He brought in a military government and proclaimed martial law. The next day a full-scale battle erupted within the seven-hilled city between Hussein's fiercely loyal Bedouin army troopers and the guerrilla groups, including Al Fatah.

The battle became international on September 20 when a strong force from Syria, 200 tanks and some 2,400 men, crossed the border and started toward Amman. Syria claimed they were Palestinians, too, members of the Palestine Liberation Army, which it had nurtured. To the Jordanians, they were Syrians and invaders, and against them Hussein threw an outnumbered armored brigade. For a time his kingdom appeared near an end. Then into the roaring battle he ordered his small, rebuilt air force, and the turning point was reached. Pounded from the air, the Syrians retreated across the border with heavy losses. In Amman, the army gradually rooted out the guerrillas.

This was the deflating point, as well, for international pressure that had been building up. As Hussein fought to stay in command, the United States had been standing ready to intervene on his behalf if necessary, and to rescue American nationals from the kingdom. The Israelis also had been watching warily, apparently with an eye toward stepping in to prevent a pro-guerrilla regime from taking over.

The final toll of the bloody fighting never has been announced. According to the guerrillas, some 15,000 died. The Jordanian government put the figure only in the hundreds. According to the International Red Cross, some 700 died in hospitals after the fighting ended.

Yet in all this, by a seeming miracle, none of the hostages was harmed. Of these, the last rescued were the fifty-four kept throughout the fighting in a refugee camp, from which they emerged on September 25, expressing no pleasure at their captivity but a certain sympathy for their captors' motives.

If the goal of the original hijackers, the PFLP, had been to get worldwide publicity, they achieved it. Reports of the action from correspondents cooped up during the fighting in the Intercontinental Hotel in Amman had been read avidly throughout the world. But to the guerrilla movement, the wild operation and the Jordanian civil war it provoked proved to be seriously damaging.

And there was one consequence that brought the Arab world to a depth of sorrow. Hoping to smooth over this disastrous rift in Arab affairs, President Nasser called a summit conference in Cairo. He was a sick man, with a bad heart and serious diabetes, although the gravity of his condition had not been known publicly. He induced Hussein and Arafat to sign an agreement of amity. On September 28 the conference was over, and the utterly tired Nasser told a friend, the journalist Mohammed Hassanein Heikal, that he could now get a long sleep. Late that afternoon, at the age of 52, Nasser suffered another heart attack and died.

The Arabs literally were stricken with grief. He had been the *rais,* the boss. He had not been another Saladin, as some fanciful writers had sometimes said, for he had lost battles, not won them. But he had had the genius to rally the Arab world and to give the common Arabs the spirit of dignity they so desperately wanted.

The guerrillas had banded together in the first place, hijacked the planes, and defied Nasser and Hussein because they opposed the very idea of negotiations about Israel. In their despair they wanted war. The solution for them had nothing to do with withdrawal of troops or accommodations about refugees. Their goal was to destroy Israel and to put in its place a new, non-religious state, where the refugees could return and where, they said, Jews and Arabs could live side by side.

Until that happened, every raid, every Israeli retaliation, every outrage, even every Arab blunder would help their cause —they believed. For these would insure strife and would lead to the final war.

But since 1967 Nasser and Hussein and many other leading Arabs had spent much time talking peace. Here in summary are the highlights of the search for that distant goal:

Late in August, 1967, the Arab leaders (minus Syria and the militants) held another "summit" conference, this time in Khartoum. The conference produced for the public the usual tough line about Israel but was, in fact, more realistic. Missing from the final communiqué, as one clue, was the customary pledge to destroy Israel. In its place was a call for "unified efforts . . . to assure the withdrawal of the aggressor forces." The same conference provided a means for keeping Egypt and Jordan solvent by pledges of donations from Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and Libya: $266 million a year to Egypt; about $100 million a year to Jordan.

Before the Khartoum conference, Hussein had already stated publicly that he would be willing to make peace with Israel. There were widespread reports that he had gone so far as to meet secretly with the Israelis—a step that had led to the death of his grandfather, Abdullah.

Except for the militants, such as Syria and the guerrillas, there was a comparatively soft line growing in the Arab countries. Nasser himself was mellowing after three losing wars and was said to be willing to negotiate a settlement with Israel through the United Nations.

It was in the U.N. that the most important step was taken. On November 22, 1967, the U.N. Security Council passed unanimously a British resolution that still forms the basis of peace talks in the region. With a preamble emphasizing "the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war," the resolution called for:

Arab summit conference in Khartoum, 1967

"(1) Withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from territories of recent conflict.

"(2) Termination of all claims of states of belligerency and respect for and acknowledgment of the sovereignty, territorial integrity, and political independence of every state in the area, and their right to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries free from threats or acts of force."

The resolution also affirmed the necessity:

". . . for guaranteeing freedom of navigation through international waterways in the area; for achieving a just settlement of the refugee problem; for guaranteeing the territorial inviolability and political independence of every state in the area, through measures including the establishment of demilitarized zones."

Secretary-General U Thant was asked to name a special representative to contact the states "in order to promote agreement and to assist efforts to achieve a peaceful and accepted settlement in accordance with the provisions and principles in this resolution." To this task was assigned Dr. Gunnar Jarring, the Swedish ambassador to Moscow.

Israel and the Arab states involved, except for Syria, agreed to the resolution. Why, then, was there no peace? The reason simply was that the two sides did not agree on what it meant. The resolution had been vague about withdrawal of armed forces "from territories of recent conflict." The key word "the" was missing. It did not say "*the* territories"—so, in the Israeli view, this could mean "part of the territories."

The Israelis also insisted that first there had to be a peace agreement *before* other matters, such as the refugee question, and, in fact, withdrawal from occupied areas, could be undertaken. The Arabs insisted on withdrawal *first.*

That is where the matter stood late in 1967, and that is where it stands with fairly minor variations today.

The greatest change has been in the increasing roles of the United States and the Soviet Union in the Middle East, and in the obviously greater danger, therefore, that a super-power

Israeli military officials march through the old city of Jerusalem.

confrontation might take place in the region. Neither side was seeking a confrontation. Both were, in fact, trying to avoid one.

After the 1968 United States elections, as President Nixon's administration took office, it was pledged to pursue a more "evenhanded" approach to the problem. The United States has traditionally been a friend and supporter of Israel's. When the state of Israel was born, President Truman had been strongly pro-Israeli and had played a major role in its recognition. The Republican administration of President Eisenhower had followed a more middling path, to the point of supporting the Arab side in the U.N. in the Suez-Sinai War and pressuring Israel to withdraw from the Sinai and Sharm el Sheikh in 1957. The pendulum swung back toward the Israelis when Lyndon Johnson became President, and his administration made several efforts at promoting peace. In the Six-Day War, United States-Arab relations reached a low point as the Arabs in their frustration blamed American support of Israel for most of their troubles. At this time the American public's sympathies were strongly pro-Israel. Several Arab states, including Egypt, Syria, and Iraq, broke diplomatic relations with the United States.

In the late 1960's Nixon and Secretary of State William Rogers were trying the "evenhanded" approach in hope of improving relations with the Arabs and winning their support for a peace agreement. Late in 1969, in pursuit of such an agreement, Rogers presented a major peace effort in a speech that outlined what has become known as the Rogers Plan for the Middle East.

Following the framework of the November 22, 1967, U.N. resolution, the plan called for the withdrawal of Israelis from occupied areas except for "insubstantial alterations required for mutual security" in borderlines. It also underlined America's continued support of an internationalized Jerusalem, with open access to all, and roles for both Jordan and Israel in the city's administration.

In the U.N., the Big Four talks with the Soviet Union, Britain, and France, and with the Arabs and Israelis, the United States has continued to try getting the sides together. At the same time it has tried to keep what it considers a balance of military power in the area. The Soviet Union's dispatch of weapons to Egypt and Syria has been matched by the supply of American weapons, including Phantom fighter-bombers, to Israel.

This has resulted, of course, in a two-way stretch for United States policy in the Middle East, with the Arabs complaining bitterly about Americans talking peace and supplying bombers. Soon after the Rogers Plan was introduced, as a matter of fact, American-made Phantoms became involved in a serious escalation in the confrontation.

The Arabs, as has been said, were showing some dovelike views, but a near war was being fought along the Suez Canal. The Russians by this time had rearmed Egypt with planes, guns, and armor worth $2 billion, while the Americans were delivering fifty promised Phantoms to Israel. Artillery duels were being fought over the Canal through most of 1969; the Egyptian cities of Ismaila and Suez were evacuated and nearly destroyed. In retaliation against Egyptian cross-canal attacks, early in 1970 the Israelis made deep-penetration bombing raids into Egypt. The raids, in one of which nearly one hundred factory workers were killed, were made by the American-supplied Phantoms. This fact not only increased Arab hostility to the United States, but also caused an increase in Soviet involvement in the conflict.

To counter the raids, the Soviets furnished Egypt with advanced missiles, called Sam-3s, to use against the Phantoms. Soviet technicians were employed to install the missiles and to teach the Egyptians how to operate them. There was also evidence that Russian pilots were engaging in air combat over the Canal area.

By late 1970 there were an estimated twenty thousand Russians in Egypt. The Soviet Union's involvement in a Middle East war was real, and becoming even more substantial.

In this dangerous situation, the United States managed to bring the Egyptians and Israelis to a six-month truce on August 8, 1970, and, with Soviet help in Cairo, to influence both sides to make later extensions.

Rogers and his State Department negotiators accomplished this by arguing that the United States needed time to convince the Israelis to make concessions. Bit by bit, some Egyptian concessions were being made. Anwar Sadat, who became president of Egypt following Nasser's death, had taken a step far beyond Nasser's position by saying that Egypt would agree to peace with Israel, to respect its borders, and to recognize its sovereignty, if Israel would withdraw from Egyptian territory.

Israel produced nothing to match this, but quietly dropped its demand that Egypt roll back the missiles it had advanced toward the Canal during the standstill cease-fire. Premier Golda Meir also indicated Israel would not demand formal diplomatic relations with Egypt if peace were agreed to.

Sadat then made a further, interim offer. Egypt would reopen the Suez Canal to shipping, including Israeli shipping, if Israeli forces would withdraw from its banks to some unspecified point in the Sinai peninsula, and would allow Egyptian troops to take over their positions. In the following months, Israel kept to a "tough line," agreeing to an Israeli withdrawal but refusing to countenance a crossing by Egyptian armed forces.

Sadat was proving a flexible, clever, and even courageous leader in these moves. It had long been almost axiomatic that no Arab leader could offer to make peace with Israel and survive. There were no early takers to these moves—but, as the diplomats said, they were, at least, signs of "movement." There were, however, many extremely difficult points in dispute.

First, the borders.

The Arabs were insisting that Israel withdraw from all occupied territory—the Sinai and Sharm el Sheikh, the Gaza Strip, the Golan Heights, the West Bank, and East Jerusalem. But the Israelis had bitter memories about their last with-

Anwar Sadat (center) is proving a flexible and clever leader.

drawal agreement. They had bowed to American pressure after the Suez-Sinai War and most reluctantly turned over Sharm el Sheikh, the Gaza, and Sinai to U.N. patrols. But in 1967, on Nasser's demand, the patrols had left and the Egyptians had taken over, thus closing the Gulf of 'Aqaba to vital Israeli shipping.

The Israelis considered their security tied not to guarantees—as proposed by the United States—but to defensible borders. Thus, Golda Meir and the Israelis were making it clear that they would not retreat from certain areas, including Sharm el Sheikh (where the Israelis were, in fact, building a resort with every appearance of permanent intent). They were also seemingly adamant about keeping the Golan Heights and the Gaza Strip, and were insisting on a demilitarized Sinai peninsula and West Bank—to which the Arabs would be hardly likely to agree.

Early in 1972, with the Arabs and Israelis otherwise locked into position, Jordan's King Hussein made a compromise move. He proposed that the West Bank become an autonomous Palestinian state tied to the East Bank of Jordan by a federation —under his rule. Jerusalem would be the capital, and the Holy City would be shared with the Israelis. The United States applauded cautiously, but it was otherwise a forlorn move, quickly rejected by the Israelis and the other Arab states.

Second, the refugees.

That whole question, perhaps the most difficult of all, was hardly being talked about in 1972—although it would have to be settled before final peace could come to the region. In the meantime, the Palestinians were growing in numbers and bitterness.

Third, Jerusalem.

From the first, the Israelis have vowed they would never hand back any part of the Holy City to the Arabs. The United Nations and the United States have been calling for the city's internationalization, but with the Israelis it has for years been a closed matter. East Jerusalem has been annexed. When the final time for a public decision comes, will the Arabs be able to say they accept?

These are the major barriers that make peace a still distant prospect.

Another unknown, although not necessarily another barrier, was thrown into the calculations in April, 1971, when the Arabs announced they were going to try again to unite. Called the Federation of Arab Republics, the new three-way union tied together Egypt, Syria, and Libya in a loose federation with considerable safeguards for the independence of each member. When the union was announced, it was made with martial music and pledges of "no peace, no negotiations" with Israel. To many Arabs and westerners, these pronouncements had the hollow and well-known thump of rhetoric, but the Israelis professed worry.

One worry centered on the person of Premier Muammar Qaddafi, Libya's strong man and an army officer who had helped to overthrow the aged King Idris in 1969. The militant Colonel Qaddafi, born in a desert tent, had ambitions that seemed to reach beyond Libya, and he was accustomed to making speeches of unrivaled vigor against the existence of Israel. Besides the power of his speeches, he had Libya's annual oil income on his side—nearly $2 billion—and some Arabs were inclined to listen to him, or that.

Another unknown was the move about that time of the Soviet Union in supplying Egypt with its latest combat aircraft, the high-flying Mig-23s. These planes, said to be able to outperform Israel's American-built Phantoms at high altitudes, were likely to be piloted by Russians.

What about the future? Will Israel and the Arabs ever really be at peace? The Middle East is too volatile and has too many unknowns. No one can prophesy. Of peace plans there are a multitude, and some would work. They would work, that is, if the Arabs and the Israelis would agree to take the extra steps—perhaps the very small steps—that would make peace possible.

The Middle East confrontation today has its roots deep in the past. Each party invokes history to prove it is right, and is utterly convinced that justice resides only on its side of the border. But the fact is that both sides present strong cases.

History cannot be forgotten. Perhaps, however, its bitter heritage will be left behind as the Arabs and the Israelis turn toward a better future. Then they may find what statesmen have sought for all the long years—"a just and lasting peace" in the Middle East.

INDEX

Abbas the Great, 63
Abbasside dynasty, 42, 44, 45, 50
Abdul-Hamid II, 63, 64, 66
Abdullah, King, 76, 77, 100, 117, 127, 150, 185
Abu Dhabi. *See* Trucial States
Afghanistan, 10
Aflaq, Michel, 65
Ahmed Hussein, 114
Ahmed Shah, 81
Alexander the Great, 7, 30-32
Alexandria, Egypt, 57, 62
Al Fatah, 164, 177-179, 182
Algeria, 18, 53, 154
al-Kuwatly, Shukri, 121, 123
Al Sabha, 166
Amman, Jordan, 4, 78, 99, 120, 179, 182, 183
Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry (on Palestine), 94
Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, 141
Ankara, Turkey, 79, 139
Anti-Semitism in Europe, 87
Antonius, George, 59
'Aqaba, Gulf of, 13, 16, 96, 146, 153, 157, 158, 166, 167, 193
'Aqaba, Jordan, 13
Arab Higher Committee, 87
Arab history in the Middle East, 34-51
Arabian peninsula, 14, 16, 53, 54, 69, 71, 133
Arabian Sea, 10
Arab-Israeli wars, 3-6, 13, 25, 97, 104, 116, 118, 123, 144, 146, 147, 154-162, 163-173
Arab League, 18, 99
Arab Legion, 100, 118, 120, 169, 171
Arab nationalism, sense of, 65-68, 104-135
Arab reaction to birth of Israel. *See* Israel, birth of.
Arab Republics, Federation of, 194
Arafat, Yasir, 177, 183
Ararat, Mount, 10
Aref, Abdel Rahman, 132
Aref, Abdel Salam, 132
Armenians, 19, 79
Ashdod, Israel, 146
Assyrians, 19, 28
Aswan Dam, 113-115, 123, 133, 152
Atatürk, Kemal, 79, 81, 136, 137

Baath party, 65, 122, 130, 131, 132, 163
Babylon, 28
Badr of Yemen, 133
Baghdad, Iraq, 21, 38, 42, 44, 49, 50, 53, 56, 63, 78, 89, 113, 126, 127, 129, 131

Baghdad Pact, 11, 126, 127, 129
Bahrein, 16, 23
Bajazet II, 53
Balfour, Arthur James, 72, 73
Balfour Declaration, 73, 74, 76, 85, 86
Basra, Iran, 14
Bedouins, 19, 25, 120, 146
Beersheba, Israel, 147, 151
Beirut, Lebanon, 11, 25, 27, 65, 66, 87, 90, 103, 125, 127, 178
Ben-Gurion, David, 91, 93, 95, 97, 145, 146, 159, 152, 157, 167
Bernadotte, Count Folke, 100, 102
Biltmore Program, 93
Bizri, Afif, 122
Black Sea, 10, 53, 91
Bolshevik Revolution, 72
Bosporus, 10, 139
Brassey, Annie, 64
Bunche, Dr. Ralph, 102
Byzantine Empire. *See* History of the Middle East.

Cairo, Egypt, 18, 21, 27, 45, 49, 57, 77, 84, 94, 105, 111, 113, 117, 118, 122, 123, 129, 130, 134, 152, 162, 167, 168, 173, 179, 183, 191
Caliphs. *See* Islam.
Caspian Sea, 10, 140
CENTO, 129, 136
CIA, 142, 169
Chamoun, Camille, 125, 126, 127, 128
Churchill, Winston, 23, 71, 77, 86, 90, 117
Circassians, 19
Climate, 19, 21
Constantine, 33
Constantinople. *See* History of the Middle East.
Crane, Charles, 86
Crimean War, 62
Cromer, Lord, 63
Crusades, 46-47, 49
Curzon, Lord, 63
Cyrus I, 28, 63, 72
Cyprus, 62, 115, 139, 155, 157

Damascus, Iraq, 11, 65, 71, 74, 76, 77, 121, 122, 130, 131. *See also* History of the Middle East.
Darius I, 60, 63
Dayan, Moshe, 3, 4, 6, 168, 174, 175
Dead Sea, 11, 160
de Gaulle, Charles, 89
de Lesseps, Ferdinand, 60
Demirel, Suleyman, 139, 140
Description of Egypt, 57, 58
Deserts, 14
Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, 14, 21, 23
Disraeli, Benjamin, 63
Druze, 19, 55
Dulles, John Foster, 7, 114, 115, 125, 151

East Ghor Canal, 162
East India Company, 57
Eban, Abba, 68, 73, 168
Eden, Antony, 152, 154
Egypt, 4, 11, 16, 18, 19, 21, 22, 25, 67, 97, 99, 100, 102, 103, 104-135, 151-153, 174-195. *See also* Arab-Israeli wars, Arab nationalism, History of the Middle East, *and* Peace, search for in the Middle East.
Eilat, Israel, 13, 16, 146
Eisenhower Doctrine, 125, 127, 128
Eisenhower, Dwight D., 157, 160, 188
Eshkol, Levi, 167

Faisal of Saudi Arabia, 120, 121, 126, 127, 134
Faisal of Syria, 74, 76, 77

Farouk I of Egypt, 59, 89, 105, 106, 108, 110, 113
Fatimid dynasty, 45, 46
Fertile Crescent, The, 21
France, interests in the Middle East. *See* Arab-Israeli wars *and* Peace, search for in the Middle East.
Free Officers Committee. *See* Nasser.

Galilee, Sea of, 13, 96, 147, 151, 160, 162, 171
Gaza Strip, 4, 16, 113, 152, 153, 157, 158, 191, 193
Genghis, Khan, 50
Germany, interests in the Middle East, 63
Glubb, Sir John Bagot, 89, 99, 118
Golan Heights, 4, 13, 158, 171, 191, 193
Great Britain, interests in the Middle East, 57-64, 69-84, 105, 108, 110, 111, 118, 129. *See also* Arab-Israeli wars; Israel, birth of; Palestine; Peace, search for in the Middle East; *and* World War I, World War II.
Greece, 11, 53, 58, 137

Habash, Dr. George, 178
Haganah, 93, 97, 99
Haifa, Israel, 11, 91, 96, 103, 145
Haj Amin el-Husseini, 87, 88, 94
Hammurabi, 28
Hebrew people. *See* History of the Middle East.
Heikal, Mohammed Hassanein, 183
Herzl, Theodor, 67, 68, 72
Hijackings, 178, 179
History of the Middle East
  Ancient past, 27-33
  Arabs, 34-51
  Ottoman Empire, 52-64
  World War I, 69-84
  World War II, 88-90
Hussein ibn-Ali, 70, 73, 74, 78
Hussein-McMahon agreement, 70-71
Hussein of Jordan, 4, 6, 117, 118, 120, 121, 126, 127, 128, 150, 160, 164, 168, 171, 178, 179, 182, 183, 185, 193

Ibn-Saud, 78, 134
Idris of Libya, 194
Iman of Yemen, 133
India, 57, 60, 63, 167
Indian Ocean, 18
Inönü, Ismet, 137, 139
Iran, 7, 10, 14, 18, 21, 22, 23, 25, 136-143
Iraq, 11, 14, 19, 21, 23, 25, 97, 99, 111, 145, 188. *See also* Arab-Israeli wars, Arab nationalism, *and* History of the Middle East.
Irgun, Jewish, 102
Islam, 35-51, 70, 78, 79, 121
Ismailia, Egypt, 105, 190
Ismail Pasha, 62
Israel, 3, 7, 10, 11, 16, 18, 21, 67, 68, 144-153, 174-195
    birth of, 90-103
    See also Arab-Israeli wars *and* History of the Middle East.
Israel and Judah, kingdoms of. *See* History of the Middle East.
Israel-Arab relations, 1948-1955, 144-153
Israeli-Arab wars. *See* Arab-Israeli wars.
Istanbul, Turkey, 10, 33, 127, 139
Izmir, Turkey, 79

Jaffa, Israel, 11
Jarring, Dr. Gunnar, 187

Jerusalem, 3, 4, 6, 11, 13, 66-68. *See also* History of the Middle East *and* Israel.
Jewish Agency, 86, 87
Jewish State, The, (Herzl), 67, 68
Jews in Palestine, 66-68, 85-90
Jidda, Saudi Arabia, 14, 73
Johnson, Lyndon, 168, 188
Johnston, Eric, 160, 162
Johnston Plan, 162
Jordan, 3, 4, 6, 11, 13, 14, 19, 25, 97, 99, 100, 102, 103, 147, 150, 151, 174-195. *See also* Arab-Israeli wars, Arab nationalism, History of the Middle East, *and* Peace, search for in the Middle East.
Jordan River, 11, 19, 31, 117, 160, 162
Judaism, 36

Karami, Rashid, 129
Kassem, Abdel Karim al, 127, 129, 130, 132
Khartoum, Sudan, 185
King, Dr. Henry C., 86
Kirkuk, Iraq, 129
Korean War, 137, 139
Kurds, 18, 19, 47, 55, 129
Kuwait, 14, 16, 23, 25, 129, 185

Lausanne, Treaty of, 79
Lavon affair, 152
Lawrence, T. E., 71, 74, 77, 78, 126
League of Nations, 84, 89
Lebanon, 11, 19, 21, 25, 65, 66, 97, 99, 100, 178. *See also* Arab-Israeli wars, Arab nationalism, *and* History of the Middle East.
Leibnitz, Gottfried, 57
Leumi, Irgun Zvai, 93
Levant, 11, 47
Liberation Province (Egypt), 108
Libya, 25, 185, 194
Lloyd George, David, 72

McClintock, Robert, 126, 127-128
McMahon, Sir Henry, 70, 74
Mamelukes, 49, 50, 51, 52, 55, 57
Mao Tse-tung, 163
Mecca. *See* Islam.
Medes, 28
Mediterranean Sea, 10, 18, 19, 60, 62, 63, 160
Mehemet Ali, 58-60, 62, 65, 67
Meir, Golda, 157, 191, 193
Menderes, Adnan, 111, 137, 139, 140
Mesopotamia. *See* History of the Middle East.
Middle East, geography of, 7-21
Mixed Armistice Commissions (MAC), 150
Mohammed. *See* Islam.
Mohammed II, 53
Mohammed VI, 79
Mohieddin, Zakaria, 173
Mollet, Guy, 115
Mongols, 49-50, 52
Morocco, 18
Moslems, 18, 19, 129. *See also* Islam.
Mossadegh, Mohammed, 141, 142
Musqat, 16

Naguib, Mohammed, 106
Napoleon, 7, 57-59, 67
Nasser, Gamal Abdel, 27, 47, 59, 102, 104-135, 151-153, 174, 183, 185. *See also* Arab-Israeli wars.
NATO, 137
Nazareth, 50
Nebuchadnezzar, 28, 32
Nile River, 19, 21, 28, 60, 105, 108

Nixon, Richard M., 188
Nuri al Said, 11, 126, 127, 130, 132

Oil countries of the Middle East, 7, 22-26, 141
Oman, 16
Omayyad dynasty, 41, 42, 121
Ottoman Empire, 52-64, 67

Pahlavi, Mohammed Riza, 84, 141-143
Pahlavi, Riza Khan, 81, 84
Pakistan, 10, 11, 129
Palestine, 11, 66-68, 85-90, 105, 117, 118. *See also* History of the Middle East *and* Israel.
Palestine Liberation Army, 182
Palestine War. *See* Arab-Israeli wars.
Palmerston, Lord, 67, 72
Pan-Arab nationalism, 106, 116, 121, 122, 123, 126, 131
Pashas. *See* Ottoman Empire.
Peace, search for in the Middle East, 174-195
Persepolis, 29
Persia. *See* History of the Middle East *and* Iran.
Persian Gulf, 10, 14, 22, 23, 54, 57, 62, 63
Philip Augustus, 47
Philosophy of the Revolution, The (Nasser), 154
Picot, Georges, 71
Podgorny, Nikolai, 114
Popular Democratic Front, 178, 179
Port Said, Egypt, 110, 155
Pyramids, 28

Qaddafi, Muammar, 194
Qatar, 16

Rashid Ali ali-Gailani, 89
Red Sea, 10, 14, 16, 18, 57, 60, 134
Refugees. *See* Israel, birth of *and* Peace, search for in the Middle East.
Revolutionary Command Council (Egypt). *See* Nasser.
Richard the Lion-Hearted, 47
Riyadh, 14
Rogers, William, 188, 190
Roman rule in the Middle East, 32-33
Rothschild, Lord, 73
Rub' al Khali, 14

Sadat, Answar, 114, 191
Said Pasha, 60
Salaam, Saeb, 129
Saladin, 47, 49, 55
San Remo conference, 76, 77
Saudi Arabia, 14, 21, 23, 25, 26, 185. *See also* Arab-Israeli wars, Arab nationalism, *and* History of the Middle East.
Saud of Saudi Arabia, 120, 134
Selim I, 53
Seljuk Turks, 45, 46, 49, 52
Sèvres, Treaty of, 78
Sharett, Moshe, 95
Sharm el Sheikh, 13, 16, 158, 166, 174, 191, 193
Shihab, Faud, 128
Shiraz, Iran, 29
Sidon, 11
Sinai peninsula, 4, 13, 16, 18, 72, 168, 171, 174, 188, 191, 193
Six-Day War, 163-173. *See also* Arab-Israeli wars.
Smyrna. *See* Izmir.
Stern Gang, 93, 102
Sudan, 18, 110
Suez Canal, 4, 16, 25, 60-63, 84,

105, 115, 116, 152, 153, 174, 190, 191. *See also* Arab-Israeli wars.
Suez Canal Company, 60, 115
Suez, Gulf of, 16
Suez-Sinai War of 1956, 116, 118, 123, 154-162. *See also* Arab-Israeli wars.
Suleiman the Magnificent, 53, 54
Sumerians, 28
Sunay, Cevdet, 140
Sykes-Picot Agreement, 71, 74
Sykes, Sir Mark, 71
Syria, 11, 13, 19, 21, 65, 66, 67, 97, 99, 174, 178, 182, 185, 187, 188, 190, 194. *See also* Arab-Israeli wars, Arab nationalism, *and* History of the Middle East.
Syrian Protestant College, 66

Talal of Jordan, 117
Tamerlane, 50, 53
Tehran, Iran, 10, 142
Tel Aviv, Israel, 11, 68, 94, 96, 103, 162
Thant, U, 166, 167, 187
Thousand and One Nights, 42, 44
Tiberias, Sea of, 160
Tigris-Euphrates rivers, 14, 19, 21, 28, 127, 160
Trans-Arabian Pipeline, 25
Transjordan. *See* Jordan.
Trucial States, 16, 25
Truman Doctrine, 137
Truman, Harry, 94, 95, 97, 150, 188
Tudeh party, 141
Tunisia, 18
Turkey, 7, 10, 11, 18, 21, 111, 121, 129, 136-143. *See also* History of the Middle East.
Tyre, 11

U.S.S.R., interests in the Middle East, 10, 23, 57, 122, 123, 137. *See also* Arab-Israeli wars *and* Aswan Dam.
United Arab Republic, 123-135
United Nations and Israel, 95, 96, 99, 100, 116, 126, 147, 149, 150, 151, 157, 166, 167, 185, 187, 188, 190, 191, 193
United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF). *See* Six-Day War *and* Suez-Sinai War.
United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), 150
United States, interests in the Middle East, 174-195. *See also* Arab-Israeli wars.

Weizmann, Dr. Chaim, 72, 74, 76, 85, 91, 93, 94, 145, 146
White Revolution. *See* Iran.
Wilson, Woodrow, 72, 86
World Bank, 114
World War I, 23, 69-84, 118, 126, 134, 136
World War II, 88-90, 137, 141

Yemen, 16, 57, 133, 134, 135, 164, 169
Young Turks, 64, 66, 69

Zab, battle of the, 42
Zaim, Husni al, 121
Zionism, 68, 72, 73, 76, 86, 88, 91, 146, 147. *See also* Israel, birth of.