

Watch Vigil for Assange

Consortium News broadcast the latest vigil for Julian Assange as the publisher comes under new pressure to be expelled from Ecuador's London embassy, while charges await him in the United States.

The broadcast was Friday night. With Ray McGovern, Chris Hedges, Margaret Kimberly, Suzie Dawson and more:

New Threats to Julian Assange; Consortium News to Broadcast Emergency Meeting Live on Saturday

New threats to the safety of Julian Assange, to be disclosed shortly by Consortium News, have prompted an emergency meeting of his supporters.

New Threats Reported

to Assange to Be Revealed

An alarming series of occurrences have unfolded this week that indicate serious, urgent threats to the physical well-being of WikiLeaks publisher Julian Assange. Those close to the publisher are swiftly moving to address the recent

escalations.

The Unity4J movement is calling an emergency meeting for all movement participants, supporters and the public. This will commence on Saturday November 3rd, 2018 at 3pm EST (midday Pacific), via <https://unity4j.com/stream>

At the meeting, details of these new threats to Julian's life will be presented, along with the unveiling of a new action plan to secure and protect his life, human rights, and freedom.

A special message from Julian's mother, Christine Assange will also be broadcasted.

Julian Assange has been arbitrarily detained in the UK for eight years, six of which he has spent as a political refugee in Ecuador's embassy in London. The United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention has ruled Mr Assange should be immediately freed and compensated. The Inter-American Court of Human Rights has ruled that the UK must facilitate safe passage for him.

#Unity4J is a global mass movement in solidarity with Julian Assange, created in response to Ecuador's gagging of the publisher. Unity4J has been endorsed by more than fifty high profile activists, journalists, celebrities, academics and former US intelligence officials including Chris Hedges, Jimmy Dore, Ray McGovern, Bill Binney and Daniel Ellsberg.

Movement hashtag: #Unity4J Official website: <http://unity4j.com/>

Official Twitter: [@Unity4J](https://twitter.com/Unity4J)

WikiLeaks Legal Defence Fund: <https://justice4assange.com/donate.html>

WikiLeaks support website: <https://iamwikileaks.org>

Courage Foundation: <https://couragefound.org/>

Other credible accounts for Julian Assange updates: <https://twitter.com/suzi3d/lists/assange-updates>

MEDIA INQUIRIES: Media inquiries **and** interview requests should be made to Suzie Dawson, via DM on Twitter: [@Suzi3D](https://twitter.com/Suzi3D), or by emailing info@unity4j.com

Background reading:

Courage Foundation: Assange's protection from US extradition "in jeopardy" <https://www.iamwikileaks.org/2018/05/25/assanges-protection-from-us-extradition-in-jeopardy/>

Conspiracy emerges to push Julian Assange into British and US hands <https://www.wsws.org/en/articles/2018/05/16/assa-m16.html>

The UK's Hidden Role in Assange's Detention <https://original.antiwar.com/cook/2018/02/12/uks-hidden-role-assanges-detention/>

Treatment of Assange is unjust, says former Ecuador minister <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/may/16/julianassange-treatment-irresponsible-ecuador-foreign-minister-guillaume-long>

Ecuador's Ex-President Rafael Correa Denounces Treatment of Julian Assange as "Torture" <https://theintercept.com/2018/05/16/ecuadors-ex-president-rafael-correa-denounce-treatment-of-julian-assange-as-torture/>

Opinion: Ecuador's Solitary Confinement Of Assange Is Torture <https://disobedientmedia.com/2018/04/opinion-ecuadors-solitary-confinement-of-assange-is-torture/>

Being Julian Assange: <https://contraspin.co.nz/beingjulianassange/>

Liars Lying About Nearly Everything

Donald Trump turns out to be a pretty good liar, even if he frequently has no idea what he's talking about, says Phil Giraldi in this commentary. But the prize for lying has to go to the British.

By Phil Giraldi



At least since the time of Marcus Tullius Cicero in the late Roman Republic everyone has certainly understood that politicians lie all the time. To be sure, President Donald Trump has been exceptional in that he has followed through on some of the promises he made in his campaign, insisting periodically that he has to do what he said he would do.

Unfortunately, those choices he has made to demonstrate his accountability to his supporters have been terrible, including moving the U.S. Embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, threatening to end the Iran nuclear agreement and building a wall along the Mexican border. Following through on some other pledges has been less consistent. He has increased U.S. military engagement in Afghanistan and turned the war over to the generals while also faltering in his promise to improve relations with Russia.

The potential breakthrough offered by promising exchanges during phone calls to Vladimir Putin have been negated by subsequent threats, sanctions and expulsions to satisfy hysterical congressmen and the media.

Concerning Syria, Trump last Tuesday said “I want to get out,” promising to [pull U.S. troops out](#) very soon, but was quickly brought to heel by pressure from Congress and a phone call from Israeli Prime Minister

Benjamin Netanyahu that compelled him to change his mind within 24 hours. Israel wants chaos in Syria and its instrument of choice is the American military. Netanyahu has Congress to do his bidding and, for whatever reason, appears to also have Trump under his thumb.

A Pretty Good Liar

So Donald Trump turns out to be a pretty good liar, even if one has to take into account the fact that he frequently has no idea what he is talking about. But the prize for lying at a high level has to go to the British as related to what has been going on both in the Middle East, with Russia, and also in Britain itself.

Former Prime Minister Tony Blair was the first master at dissimulation in 2002 when his intelligence chief Sir Richard Dearlove told him that the Bush White House had decided on war and “the intelligence and facts were being around the policy” regarding Iraq, meaning that it was ignoring the information that did not support its desire to create a pretext for invading the country and removing Saddam Hussein.

Blair presumably could have derailed the ill-fated invasion by refusing to go along with the venture, which was a war crime, but instead he fully supported George W. Bush in the attack. He thereby had a hand in America's worst foreign policy disaster ever. In 2016 an official British government inquiry determined that Bush and Blair had indeed rushed to war together. The Global Establishment has nevertheless [rewarded Tony Blair](#) for his loyalty with Clintonesque generosity. He has enjoyed a number of well-paid sinecures and is now worth in excess of \$100 million.

Creating a Foreign Crisis

Moving along to the present, we have Prime Minister Theresa May. May has been in serious trouble, politically speaking. After losses suffered in the recent parliamentary elections, she is clinging to power and is increasingly unpopular even within her own Conservative Party. So what do you do when you are in trouble at home? You create a foreign crisis that you have to deal with.

If you are someone as venal as former American President and bottom feeder Bill Clinton you accomplish that end by firing off a few cruise missiles at a pharmaceutical plant in Sudan and at some mud huts in Afghanistan. If you are May, you up the ante considerably, coming up with a powerful enemy who is threatening you, enabling you to appear both resolute and strong in confronting a formidable foe. That is precisely what we have been seeing over the past month relating to the alleged poisoning of former Russian double-agent Sergei Skripal and his daughter Yulia.

There is quite a bit that is odd about the Skripal case. Even the increasingly neoconnish *Guardian* newspaper [has conceded that](#) "the British case [against Russia] has so far relied more heavily in public on circumstantial evidence and secret intelligence." And secret intelligence, so called, has all too often been the last refuge of a scoundrel whenever a government is selling snake oil to the public. In this case, Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson rushed to judgement on Russia less than forty-eight hours after the Skripals were found unconscious on a bench in Salisbury, England, too soon for any chemical analysis of the alleged poisoning to have taken place.

Blaming the Kremlin, Again

May addressed Parliament shortly thereafter to blame the Kremlin and demand a Russian official response to the event in 36 hours, even though she had to prevaricate significantly, saying that the apparent poisoning was "very likely" caused by a made-in-Russia nerve agent referred to by its generic name Novichok. She nevertheless rallied the backbenchers in Parliament, who responded with a lot of hearty "Hear! Hear!" endorsements.

When Labour Leader Jeremy Corbyn attempted to slow the express train down by suggesting that it might be wise to wait and see what the police investigation uncovered, he was hooted down. The British media was soon on board with a vengeance, spreading the government line that such a highly sensitive operation would require the approval of President Vladimir Putin himself. The expulsion of Russian diplomats soon followed.

One of the strangest aspects of the Skripal case is that daughter Yulia was released from hospital on Tuesday. She has been held incommunicado and is being “protected” in a secret location by the British government. It is

impossible to know if she wants to return to her life in Russia and is being held against her will, not so much to protect her as to silence her.

Sergei is no longer in critical condition. A cousin Viktoria Skripal [has offered to fly in](#) from Moscow to provide support for her family, but was denied a British visa. Russian television aired a [recording of a phone call](#) between the two cousins in which Yulia said that she was disoriented but improving and that neither she nor her father had suffered permanent damage from the poisoning. The call ended abruptly and Viktoria Skripal believes that it was scripted by the British government on a controlled phone line.

Repeated requests by Russia to obtain a sample of the alleged nerve agent for testing have been rejected by the British government in spite of the fact that a military grade nerve agent would have surely killed both the Skripals as well as anyone else within 100 yards. As the latest British account of the location of the alleged poison places it on the door handle of the Skripals’ residence, the timetable element is also unconvincing. That means that the two would have spent three hours, including a stop at a pub and lunch, before succumbing on a park bench. Military grade nerve agents kill instantly and this one is said to be 8 times more powerful than VX.

A request to have the testing done by the politically neutral Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons is in progress, but there is little enthusiasm from the British side, which does not want a Russian observer to participate in the process. The May government has already established its own narrative and certainly would have plenty to lose if the whole affair turns out to be fabricated. And fabricated it might have been as the nerve agent, if it actually exists, could have been manufactured almost anywhere.

The head of Britain’s own chemical weapons facility Porton Down [has contradicted claims](#) made by May, Johnson, and British Ambassador in Moscow Laurie Bristow. The lab’s chief executive, Gary Aitkenhead, has testified that he does not know if the nerve agent was actually produced in Russia, a not surprising observation

as the chemical formula was revealed to the public in a scientific paper in 1992 and there are an estimated twenty countries capable of producing it. There are also possible stocks of Novichok remaining in independent countries that once were part of the Soviet Union, to include Russia's enemy *du jour* Ukraine, while a false flag operation by the British themselves, the CIA or Mossad, is not unthinkable.

Orwellian Govspeak

The resort to official Orwellian gov-speak by the British is remarkable throughout the process, but is particularly painful reading regarding the treatment of the Skripals' pets, two guinea pigs and a cat. A spokesman for the Department of the Environment reported that *"The property in Wiltshire was sealed as part of the police investigation. When a vet was able to access the property, two guinea pigs had sadly died. A cat was also found in a distressed state and a decision was taken by a veterinary surgeon to euthanize the animal to alleviate its suffering. This decision was taken in the best interests of the animal and its welfare."*

So the presence of squadrons of technicians and cops in the residence did not permit anyone to take a minute to feed the cat and guinea pigs. And the cat was killed as a purely humanitarian gesture – it's "best interest" was apparently to die. Sounds familiar, doesn't it?

Finally, the best argument against the British government's evasions about what took place in Salisbury on March 4 remains the question of motive.

The British would have one believe that Putin personally ordered the killing of a former British double agent who had been released from a Kremlin prison in a spy swap and who was no longer capable of doing any damage to Russia. He did that in spite of the fact that he had an election coming up and would be the host of the World Cup in the summer, an event that he would want to go smoothly. So he deliberately shot himself in the foot on both counts, allegedly because he wanted to send a message to traitors and also because he just can't help himself since he is a vindictive KGB type whose impulses are pure evil. Does that make sense to the reader? It doesn't to me.

An earlier version of this article was published on the Unz Review.

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The Battle for Palestine

From the Archive: On the centennial of the British-French Sykes-Picot deal to carve up the Mideast, it's worth recalling other ways Europe worsened the region's problems, including the Israeli-Palestinian mess, ex-JFK adviser William R. Polk recalled in 2014.

By William R. Polk (Originally published on Aug. 11, 2014)

What we call the "Palestine Problem" is really a European Problem. No European society treated Jews as full members, and most have ugly records of anti-Semitism. Even relatively benign Western governments exploited, segregated or banished Jews (and such other minorities as Gypsies, Muslims and deviant Christians). Less benign governments practiced pogroms, massacres and expulsions. European history reveals a pervasive, powerful and perpetual record of intolerance to all forms of ethnic, cultural and religious difference.

Jewish reaction to the various forms of repression was usually passivity but occasionally flight interspersed with attempts to join the dominant community.

When Jews were attacked by Christian mobs during the Crusades, they suffered and tried to hide; when they were thrown out of such medieval cities as Cambridge, they fled to new refuges; when they and the Muslim Arabs were forced out of Spain in 1492, most found refuge in Muslim countries which were far more tolerant of minorities than contemporary Christian societies; when Eastern (*Ashkenazi*) and "Oriental," mainly Spanish, (*Sephardic*) Jews in small numbers began to reach Germany, Austria, France and England in the Eighteenth Century, many converted to Catholicism; finally, most of the European and American Jewish communities assimilated culturally and by generous public actions sought to prove their social value to their adopted nations.

Generally speaking, they were successful in their efforts in America, England and Italy but failed in France, Germany and Austria. Even when they faced existential threats, there is no record of a serious attempt by European Jews to defend themselves.

In the latter years of the Nineteenth Century, the reaction of the Jewish communities residing in Europe began to change. In part this was because, like other European peoples, Jews began to think of themselves as a nation. This transformation of attitude led to a change from the desire for escape to a temporary haven (*Nachtlager*) to permanent establishment in what Theodor Herzl called a *Judenstaat*, the creation of a separate, faith-based nation-state which was viewed as the permanent solution to anti-Semitism. This was the essential

aim and justification for Zionism.

Nineteenth Century Europeans understood and approved of the concept of nation-states but only for themselves; in France, Germany, Italy, Austria and the Balkans, Europe was reforming itself along national lines. However, no European nation-state was willing to tolerate a resident rival nationalism. So Herzl's call for Jewish nationhood was generally regarded as subversive by non-Jews and was feared by the more established Jewish communities and the religious establishment as a probable cause of an anti-Jewish reaction. These attitudes would remain in contention down to our times.

Keen for Imperialism

Even before the Europeans were imbibing the ideas of nationalism, their ruling classes were thrusting into the Americas, Africa and Asia to create empires. Spain dominated the Americas and was insistent that the ethnic-religious problems of the Old World not be transmitted there so it sought ethnic "purity" of its colonizers; neither Jews nor suspect *conversos* were allowed. England effectively ruled India beginning in the last years of the Eighteenth Century, and the nature of its colonial government, drawn from the middle class, generally precluded Jewish involvement.

On the contrary, when France invaded Algeria from 1830, it opened its doors to fairly large-scale Jewish immigration from Malta and elsewhere. Germany briefly tried to create an empire in Africa but was stopped by the First World War.

Russia meanwhile was consolidating its Asian empire and in parts of it created Jewish zones in some of which people of non-Semitic backgrounds were absorbed into Jewish culture, but, in the western heart of the Russian empire, anti-Semitism was pervasive and violent. By the Nineteenth Century, Russian Jews were leaving in vast number for Western Europe and the United States. In the last decade of the Nineteenth Century almost 200,000 arrived in America alone.

Despite the differences, we can see that while nationalism was the ideology of choice domestically, imperialism captured the imagination of Europeans in foreign affairs. So how did these two ideologies impact upon what most Europeans regarded as "the Jewish problem?"

In England, we see most clearly what some leading politicians thought might be the answer: encouraging the emigration of Jews from Europe to the colonies. One of the early proponents of this, essentially anti-Semitic, policy was Sir Laurence Oliphant. As he proposed, getting rid of the Jews as neighbors – that is, in England – and thus solving the "Jewish Problem" would foster British trade and help Britain consolidate its empire if they established themselves as

colonies in Africa or Asia.

Added to the benefit imperialists identified was the vague but attractive idea held by many fervent Christians that if the Jews returned to the Holy Land, they would become Christian. Thus, support for Zionism seemed to many Europeans to be a win-win policy.

Colonial Neglect

Europeans knew little about the peoples they were conquering in Africa and Asia and did not regard their well-being as of much importance. Americans, let us admit, were even more brutal in dealing with native Americans. So were the Australians with the Aborigines and the South African Boers with the Bantu. Rich, Western societies generally regarded the poor of the world, and especially other races, colors and creeds, as subhuman, without claims on freedom or even sustenance.

This was the attitude taken up by the early Zionists toward the Arabs. Even their existence was often denied. The Zionist leader, Israel Zangwill, described Palestine and Zionist aspirations for it as being “a country without a people for a people without a land.”

Zangwill’s was a powerful slogan. Unfortunately, it masked a different reality. Given the technology of the times, Palestine was actually densely populated. The overwhelming numbers of the inhabitants were villagers who farmed such land as they could water. Water, never plentiful, was the limiting factor.

Nomads lived on the edges but they were always few in number, never as much as 15 percent of the natives. They too used sparse resources in the only way they could be used, by moving their animals from one temporary source of grazing to another as rain made possible.

Until massive amounts of money and new technologies became available from the 1930s, population and land were in balance but, of course, in balance on a lower level than in wetter, richer climates where societies had more advanced technologies.

Oliphant, his successors in the British government and others in the French government were not concerned about what their policies did to native peoples.

The British were keen to take the lands of African blacks and to plunder the Indians of India while the French engaged in policies approaching genocide in Algeria. As focused on Palestine, the British sought to solve the problem of what to do with the Jews at the expense of peoples who could not defend themselves – and to benefit from the work of the Jews rather like medieval kings did – rather than to reform their own attitudes toward Jews.

Thus, as Claude Montefiore, the president of the Anglo-Jewish Association, declared on Nov. 30, 1917, "The Zionist movement was caused by anti-Semitism."

The Deep Cause of War

The two World Wars set the parameters of the "middle term" causes of the struggle for Palestine. Briefly, we can sketch them under four headings: first, the desperate struggle of the British to avoid defeat in the First World War by courting Jewish support; second, the struggle of the British both to defeat the still powerful Ottoman empire and to avoid the danger of mutiny of Muslims in their Indian empire; third, the British attempts to "square" of the triangle of promises made during the war to Arabs, Jews and their French allies; and, fourth, the management of a viable "mandate," as they renamed their League of Nations-awarded colonies.

Taken together, these acts form the "middle term" of the causes of war in our times. They are:

First, in the final period of the First World War, the Russians were convulsed by revolution and sought a separate peace with Germany (the 1917-1918 negotiations that led to the Brest-Litovsk treaty). The Germans' incentive for the treaty was that it allowed them to shift their powerful military formations from the Eastern front to the Western front. They hoped that in one huge push they could overwhelm the already depleted and exhausted Anglo-French armies before America could effectively intervene.

The Allied High Command thought this was likely. Slaughter of the Allied forces had been catastrophic. At the same time, England faced bankruptcy. It had drawn down its own reserves and exhausted its overseas credit. It was desperate.

So what options did the British have? Let us be clear: whether their assessment was right or wrong is irrelevant because *they acted on what they thought they knew*. They believed that support for Zionist aspirations would, or at least might, change their fortunes because *they thought that*:

—The Bolsheviks who had become the Russian government were overwhelmingly Jewish and seeing British support for what was presumably their aspiration for a national home, they would rescind or not implement the contentious and unpopular Brest-Litovsk treaty and so keep the German army from redeploying on the Western front;

—A large part of the officer corps of the German army was Jewish and seeing British support for what was presumably their aspiration for a national home and also being disillusioned by the losses in the war and the way they were discriminated against by the Prussian high command they would either defect or

at least fight less hard; and

–The American financial world (“Wall Street”) was controlled by Jews who, seeing British support for what was presumably their aspiration for a national home, would open their purses to relieve the desperate need of Britain for money to buy food and arms. (Again, these British perceptions may have been far off the mark but they were their perceptions.)

This appreciation was the justification for the Balfour Declaration of Nov. 2, 1917. As then-British Prime Minister David Lloyd George later declared, “The Zionist leaders gave us a definite promise that, if the Allies committed themselves to give facilities for the establishment of a national home for the Jews in Palestine, they would do their best to rally Jewish sentiment and support throughout the world to the Allied cause.”

British Maneuvering

Second, the Balfour Declaration was not a “stand alone” document: Britain had already sought the support of the predominant Arab Muslim leader. Since the Ottoman Sultan-Caliph had declared support for the Central Powers, *Sharif* [“noble descendant of the Prophet”] Husain, who was then the governor of Mecca, was the most venerated Muslim the British could hope to use to accomplish their two urgent objectives: the first was defeating the Ottoman army (which had just captured a whole British division and was threatening the Suez Canal) and the second was preventing what their jittery security service was always predicting, another Indian “mutiny” and/or the defection of the largely Muslim Indian army as a result of the declaration of a *jihad* by the Sultan-Caliph.

To accomplish these twin aims, the British encouraged the *Sharif* of Mecca to proclaim his support for the Allied cause and to organize a “Revolt in the Desert.” In return, the British offered to recognize Arab independence under his rule in most of the Middle East.

The British offer was spelled out by the senior British official in the Middle East, Sir Henry McMahon, in a series of official letters of which the first was dated July 14, 1915. The area to be assigned to Husain was essentially “Syria” or what is today divided into Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, part of Arabia and Palestine/Israel. This initial offer was subsequently reconfirmed and extended to Iraq by a series of separate declarations and acts.

Although the British government had committed itself to support Arab claims for this area, it also began the following year negotiating with France and the Russian empire for this and other parts of the Middle East. An Anglo-French accord was reached in 1916 by Sir Mark Sykes with M. Georges Picot. Their

agreement allocated to France much of what had been promised to the Arabs and designated as an international zone the then Ottoman coastal areas from the Sinai frontier with Egypt including Gaza up to and including the now Lebanese city of Tyre (Arabic: *Sour*) except for a small British enclave at Acre.

Third, as the war ended and the negotiations began in Paris for a Treaty of Peace, the British had to try to explain, hide or revise these three wartime agreements. They were embarrassed when the new Bolshevik government published the hitherto secret Sykes-Picot agreement, but they managed for years to keep the Husain-McMahon correspondence secret. What they could not hide was the Balfour Declaration. However, they began a process of "definition" of their policy that ran completely counter to what the Zionists had expected.

Zionist Goals

The Zionists, from the beginning, were determined to turn Palestine into a Jewish nation-state (Herzl's *Judenstaat*), but, being sensitive to British politics, their leaders denied "the allegation that Jews [aimed] to constitute a separate political nationality." The word the Zionists proposed for what they intended to create in Palestine, coined by Max Nordau as a subterfuge "to deceive by its mildness," was *heimstette* (something less than a state, roughly a "homeland") to be employed "until there was no reason (soto dissimulate) our real aim."

Predictably, the deception fooled no one. As Lord Kitchener had remarked when the Balfour Declaration was being debated in the English Cabinet, he was sure that the half million Palestinians would "not be content [with an Old Testament role as a suppressed minority to be] hewers of wood and drawers of water." He was right, but few people cared. Certainly not then.

The native Palestinians were not mentioned in any of the three agreements: the agreement with *Sharif* Husain dealt broadly with most of the Arab Middle East while the Sykes-Picot agreement shunted them, unnamed, aside into a rather vague international zone and the Balfour Declaration used the curious circumlocution for them as "the existing non-Jewish communities." (However, while focusing on Jewish aspirations and avoiding naming the Palestinians, it specified that nothing should be done that would "prejudice" their "civil and religious rights.")

It was not until 1919, at the Paris Peace Conference, that an attempt was made to find out what the Palestinians wanted. No one in Paris knew; so, strongly opposed by both Britain and France, President Woodrow Wilson sent a mission of inquiry, the King-Crane Commission, out to the Levant to find out. Wilson, already desperately ill and having turned over leadership of the American

delegation to my cousin Frank Polk, probably never saw their report, but what the Palestinians, Lebanese and Syrians told the American Commissioners was essentially that they wanted to be left alone and if that was not feasible they would accept American (but not British) supervision. The British were annoyed by the American inquiry; they did not care what the natives wanted.

The British were also increasingly disturbed that *heimstätt* was being taken to mean more than they had intended. So, when Winston Churchill became Colonial Secretary and as such was responsible for Palestine, he publicly rebuked the Zionists for trying to force Britain's hand and emphasized that in the Balfour Declaration the British government had promised only to support establishment in Palestine of a Jewish homeland. It did not commit Britain to make Palestine as a whole the Jewish homeland.

Echoes of these statements would be heard, because shouted back and forth over the following 30 years, time after time. Ultimately the shouts would become shots.

Irreconcilable Differences

British attempts over the years to reconcile their promises to the Arabs, the French and the Zionist movement occupies shelves of books, filled a number of major government studies and was taken up in several international conferences. The promises were, of course, irreconcilable.

One must admire the candor of Lord Balfour, the titular author of the Balfour Declaration, who, in a remarkable statement to his fellow Cabinet ministers on Aug. 11, 1919, admitted that "so far as Palestine is concerned, the Powers [Britain and France] have made no statement of fact which is not admittedly wrong, and no declaration of policy which at least in letter, they have not always intended to violate."

Fourth, having driven out the Ottoman Turkish forces, the British set up military governments. Knowing about these double- or triple-deals, efforts at concealment, post-facto interpretations, lawyer-like quibbles, linguistic arguments and Biblical allusions, the British commander, General (later Field Marshal, Lord) Edmond Allenby, refused to be drawn into the fundamental issue of policy, declaring that such measures as were being taken were "purely provisional," but the military government quickly morphed into a British colony, defined by the new League of Nations as a "mandate" in which the imperial power was obligated to "uplift" the natives and prepare them for self-rule.

Practical decisions were to be set by the civil High Commissioner. The first such official was an English Zionist, Sir Herbert Samuel, who came into office

to begin large-scale immigration of Jews into Palestine, to recognize de facto a Jewish government (the "Jewish Agency") and to give Jewish immigrants permission to acquire and irrevocably hold land that was being farmed by Palestinian villagers. I turn now to the transformation of Palestine under British rule.

The Deep Cause of War

The Palestine, which the British had conquered and around which they drew a frontier, had a surface area of 10,000 square miles (26,000 square kilometers) and had been divided among three *sanjaqs* (subdivisions of a province) of the Ottoman *villayet* (province) of Beirut. The British had expelled its governors and their civil, police and military officers, who were Ottoman officials, and had established a colonial government.

The population of 752,000 was divided mainly between 600,000 Arabic-speaking Muslims and roughly 80,000 Christians and the same number of Jews. Each group had its own schools, hospitals and other public programs staffed by religiously educated men. The Jews were mostly pilgrims or merchants and lived mainly in Jerusalem, Haifa and the larger towns. Christians, similarly, had their own churches and schools, but unlike the Muslims and Jews they were divided among a variety of sects.

A British study in 1931 found them to include adherents of the Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Greek Uniate (Melkite), Anglican, Armenian (Gregorian), Armenian Uniate, Jacobite, Syrian Catholic, Coptic, Abyssinian, Abyssinian Uniate, Maronite, Chaldean, Lutheran and other churches. Whatever else the land of Palestine produced, it was certainly luxuriant in religion.

The Palestine that emerged at the end of the First World War was also an heir to the Ottoman Empire because the British had decided that Ottoman laws were still in effect. What these laws mandated would play a major role in Palestinian-Zionist affairs so they must be noted. The key point is that in its later years, the Ottoman empire had attempted various reforms that were primarily aimed at increasing its ability to draw tax revenue from the population.

The most important of these changes was the imposition of quasi-private ownership on the traditional system of land ownership. From roughly 1880 onward, wealthy urban or even foreign merchants, money lenders and officials were able to acquire title to lands by agreeing to pay the taxes. Similar systems and similar transfer of "ownership" occurred in many areas of Asia and Africa. "Modernization" often came at the price of legal dispossession. So important was this was a concept and a process in future events that it must be understood.

Land in Palestine (and adjoining Lebanon as in Egypt, India and much of Africa

and Asia) was an extension to a village. Like the houses, the plots mirrored the kinship structure. If a family tree were superimposed on a map, it would show that adjoining parcels were owned by close relatives; the further away the land, the more distant the kin relationship. One could read into the land ownership pattern the history of births, deaths, marriages, family disputes and the waxing and fading of lineages.

Despite the Ottoman changes, villagers continued to plow and harvest according to their system. In fact, they did everything they could to avoid contact with the government. They did so because the collection of taxes resembled a military campaign in which their grain might be confiscated, their cattle driven away, their sons kidnapped for military service and other indignities imposed.

In Palestine as in Syria, Iran and the Punjab where the process has been carefully studied, peasants often agreed to have their lands registered as the possession of rich and influential merchants and officials who would promise to protect them. In short, the new system promoted a sort of mafia.

That was the legal system the British found when they set up their government in Palestine. Ottoman tax records specified that large blocs of villages and their lands "belonged" not to village crop farmers but to the influential "tax farmers."

One example was the Lebanese merchant family, the Sursuks. In 1872, the Sursuks had acquired a kind of ownership (known in Ottoman law as *miri*) from the Ottoman government for a whole district in the Vale of Esdraelon near Haifa. The 50,000 acres the Sursuks acquired was apportioned among some 22 villages. In return for the title to the land, they agreed to pay the yearly tax which they extracted from the villagers in their multiple roles as tax collector, purchaser of shared crops and money lender. They apparently made at least 100 percent profit yearly on their purchase; the land was one of the most fertile areas in the country.

As an English traveler, Lawrence Oliphant, wrote in 1883, this land "looks today like a huge green lake of waving wheat, with its village-crowned mounds rising from it like islands, and it presents one of the most striking pictures of luxuriant fertility which it is possible to imagine."

While the law was Ottoman, it corresponded to English practice dating from the Seventeenth Century "enclosures" of commons. The British imposed it on Ireland and enforced it on the Punjab, Kenya and other parts of their empire.

Selling the Land

The Sursuks had purchased the land, according to the records, for an initial £ 20,000. Under the Land Transfer Ordinance of 1920, they were allowed to sell it.

So in 1921, the Zionist purchasing agency bought the land and villages for £726,000. The Sursuks became rich; the Zionists were delighted; the losers were the villagers. Some 8,000 of them were evicted.

Moreover, for the most laudable of reasons – the Zionist regulation that forbade exploitation of natives – the dispossessed villagers could not even work as landless laborers on their former lands. Nor could the land ever be repurchased from the Jewish National Fund which provided that the land was inalienable.

Both anger and greed gripped the Palestinian upper class: some sold their lands for what appeared then astronomical prices, but about 80 percent of all purchases were from absentee owners, like the Sursuks.

In less than a decade, tensions between the two communities reached a flash point. The flash point was then, and continued to the present time to be, the place where the Wailing Wall abutted the principal Islamic religious site, al-Aqsa mosque. For the first time, on Aug. 15, 1929, a mob of several hundred Jewish youths paraded with the Zionist flag and sang the Zionist anthem.

Immediately, a mob of Arab youths attacked them. Riots spread across the country and for the first but far from the last time, Britain had to rush in troops. Within two weeks, 472 Jews and at least 268 Arabs had been killed. It was a harbinger of things to come

The British were deeply disturbed. Riots were expensive; a civil war would be ruinous. So the Home government decided to seek advice on what it should do. It turned to a man with great experience. Sir John Hope-Simpson had been a senior officer in the elite (British) Indian Civil Service, had helped to solve serious problems in Greece and in China and had been elected to Parliament as a Liberal. He was commissioned to find a solution.

Not surprisingly, he concluded that the issues were land and immigration because “the result of the purchase of land in Palestine by the Jewish National Fund has been that the land ... ceased to be land from which the Arab can gain any advantage either now or at any time in the future. Not only can he never hope to lease or to cultivate it, but, by the stringent provisions of the lease of the Jewish National Fund, he is deprived for ever from employment on that land. Nor can anyone help him by purchasing the land and restoring it to common use. The land is mortmain and inalienable. It is for this reason that Arabs discount the professions of friendship and goodwill on the part of Zionists.”

Hope-Simpson pointed out that Palestine was a small territory, only 10,000 square miles of which more than three quarters was “uncultivable” by normal economic criteria; with 16 percent of the good land owned by Jews or the Jewish

National Fund. He thought that the remainder was insufficient for the existing Arab community. Further sales, he was sure, would provoke further Arab resistance and violence. Thus, he recommended a temporary halt to immigration.

Zionist Protests

Infuriated by his report, the Zionists immediately organized a protest movement in and around the government in London and in the English press. Under unprecedented pressure, the Labour Party government repudiated Hope-Simpson's report and refused to consider his recommendation. From the episode, the Zionist leaders learned that they could change government policy at its source by applying money, propaganda and political organization. Dealing with the ultimate authorities first in England and then in America would become a persistent Zionist tactic down to the present time. Palestinians never developed such a capacity.

The Zionist aim was, naturally, to bring to Palestine as many immigrants as possible and to bring them as quickly as possible. Between 1919 and 1933, 150,000 Jewish men, women and children came to Palestine. In the four years from 1933 to 1936 the Jewish population quadrupled. In 1935, as many arrived as in the first five years of the Mandate, 61,854.

Seeing that the British government had spurned even its own officials and that it would not or could not control either the land or population issues, the Palestinians became increasingly furious. They concluded that their chance of protecting their position by peaceful means was almost nil.

In 1936, a general strike, something unheard of before, turned into a siege; terrorists blew up trains and bridges and armed bands, which also for the first time included volunteers from Syria and Iraq, roamed throughout Palestine and, most sobering of all, the Arab elite which had worked closely with the British as judges and officials registered their "loyal opposition":

According to senior Arab officials in the Palestinian government, "the Arab population of all classes, creeds and occupations is animated by a profound sense of injustice. ... They feel that insufficient regard has been paid in the past to their legitimate grievances, even though these grievances had been inquired into by qualified and impartial investigators, and to a large extent vindicated by those inquiries. As a result, the Arabs have been driven into a state verging on despair; and the present unrest is no more than an expression of that despair."

Annoyed but not deterred, the British Colonial Office decided, as it was then also doing in India, to crack down hard on the "troublemakers." It put Palestine

under martial law and brought in 20,000 regular soldiers to be quartered on rebel villages, blew up houses of suspected insurgents and imprisoned Palestinian notables. Over 1,000 Palestinians were killed. But it was clear to the government in London that these were measures could be only temporarily and that more durable (and affordable) policies must be found and implemented. The British appointed a Royal Commission to find a solution.

Seeking a Solution

Echoing what previous investigators had found and recommending much of what they had suggested, the Royal Commission report has a modern ring. It concluded that:

“An irrepressible conflict has arisen between two national communities within the narrow bounds of one small country. ... There is no common ground between them. The Arab community is predominantly Asiatic in character, the Jewish community predominantly European. They differ in religion and in language. Their cultural and social life, their ways of thought and conduct, are as incompatible as their national aspirations. ... In the Arab picture the Jews could only occupy the place they occupied in Arab Egypt or Arab Spain. The Arabs would be as much outside the Jewish picture as the Canaanites in the old land of Israel. ... *This conflict was inherent in the situation from the outset. ... The conflict will go on, the gulf between Arabs and Jews will widen.* (emphasis added)

Agreeing that repression “leads nowhere,” the Royal Commission suggested the first of a number of plans to partition the land.

Partition sounded sensible (at least to the English), but in 1936 there were too many Palestinians and too few Jews to carve out a viable Jewish state. Small as it was to be, the Jewish state would have 225,000 Arabs or only 28,000 less than the 258,000 Jews, but it would contain most of the better agricultural land. (The land expert of the Jewish Agency reported that the proposed Jewish state would contain 500,000 acres “upon which as many people could live as in the whole of the remainder of the country.”)

Partition was immediately rejected by Vladimir Jabotinsky who was the intellectual father of the Israeli terrorist groups, the Stern Gang (*Lohamei Herut Yisrael*) and the Irgun (*Irgun Zva'i Leumi*), and the sequence of Israeli leaders, Menachem Begin, Yitzhak Shamir, Ariel Sharon and Benjamin Netanyahu.

He warned the British that “We cannot accept cantonisation, because it will be suggested by many, even among you, that even the whole of Palestine may prove too small for that humanitarian purpose we need. A corner of Palestine, a ‘canton,’ how can we promise to be satisfied with it. We cannot. We never can. Should we swear to you we should be satisfied, it would be a lie.”

The Zionist Congress refused the Royal Commission plan, and patterning themselves on Gandhi's passive resistance movement, the Palestinians set up a "National Committee" which demanded that the British allow the formation of a democratic government (in which, the Arab majority would have prevailed) and that the sale of land to the Zionists be stopped until the "economic absorptive capacity" could be established.

And they offered an alternative to partition: essentially what today we call a "one state solution": Palestine would not be divided, but the current ratio of Jewish and Palestinian inhabitants would be maintained.

The Royal Commission proposal got nowhere: because the Zionists thought they could get more while Palestinian leaders could not negotiate since they had been rounded up and put in a concentration camp.

Blocked from peaceful and non-violent action, the Palestinian leaders and their followers began a violent campaign against the British and the Zionists. To protect themselves, the British created, trained and armed a Jewish paramilitary force of some 5,000 men. Violence grew apace. In 1938, the Mandate government reported 5,708 "incidents of violence" and announced that it had killed at least 1,000 Palestinian insurgents and imprisoned 2,500.

Neither the British, nor the Zionists, nor the Palestinians could afford to give up. In the middle of the Great Depression, the British could not afford to rule a hostile country from which they expected no return (unlike Iraq, Palestine had no oil); the Zionists, faced with the existential challenge of Nazism and having gone far toward statehood, could not agree to the terms proposed by the Palestinians; and the Palestinians saw in every shipload of immigrants a threat to their hopes for self rule.

So, eight years after the Hope-Simpson report, two years after the Royal Commission another British Government commission (the "Palestine Partition Commission") was sent to try to redraw the map in some fashion that would create a larger Jewish state.

A Single State

The best deal the partition commissioners could get for the Jewish state was an area of about 1,200 square miles with a population of roughly 600,000 of whom nearly half were Palestinians; to increase the Jewish ratio to Palestinians, the proposed Jewish state would have had to be drastically reduced in size.

A rumor that the British had decided to recognize Palestinian independence had the expected effect: throughout Palestine, Arab groups danced with joy in the streets and Zionist militants bombed Arab targets.

Actually, the British did decide to implement much of the new proposal: the Government favored a plan to stop Jewish immigration and to restrict land sales after five years and after ten years to make Palestine a single state under representative government. The policy was approved by Parliament on May 23, 1939.

The Zionist reaction was furious: Jewish hit squads burned or sacked government officers, stoned policemen and on Aug. 26 murdered two senior British officers. Five days later, the Second World War began.

While attention was otherwise directed in the midst of the war, partition was formally rejected by the Zionist organization in the so-called Biltmore program proclaimed in America in May 1942, and the solution to the dilemma of Jewish-Palestinian population ratios would be found in 1948 when most of the Palestinian population fled or was driven out of Palestine.

During the 1930s, while most of the world was plunged in a stultifying depression, the Jewish community, the *Yishuv*, profited from a material and cultural expansion. Money poured in from Europe and America. While the amounts were small by today's standards, Jewish donations enabled land to be bought, equipment purchased, factories opened, systems of transport set up and housing to be built.

Jerusalem was built in stone by Arab labor and Zionist money, and Tel Aviv began to look like Miami. The *Yishu* became a quasi state with its own schools, hospitals and other civic institutions, and enlivened by the influx of Europeans, it pulled increasingly away from both the Palestinian community and from the surrounding Arab societies. That has remained the persistent aspect of "the Palestine Problem": while physically located in the Middle East, the *Judenstaat* was and is a European rather than a Middle Eastern society.

Palestinian Evolution

The Palestinians slowly began to evolve from a colonial, peasant-farmer, village-centered society. Their agriculture spread in extent and began to focus on such specialized crops as Jaffa oranges, but villagers continued their traditional habit of isolating themselves from (now British) government and did not develop, as did the Zionists, their own governmental and administrative institutions.

The growing but still tiny urban middle class of Christians and Muslims worked with the British administration and enrolled their children in British-run, Arabic-language, secular schools. That is, they accommodated. Meanwhile, the traditional urban elite contested power not so much with the Zionists as with

one another; whereas the Arab leaders spoke of national causes, they acted in and asserted leadership over mutually hostile groups.

Overall, the Palestinians never approached Israeli determination, skill and financial capacity; they remained divided, weak and poor. That is, they remained over all a colonial society. What constituted their national cause was not so much a shared *quest* for independence as a *reactive* sense of having been wronged.

So, year-by-year as more immigrants arrived and as more land was acquired by the Jewish National Fund, opposition increased but never coalesced. Whereas anti-Semitism created Zionism, fear of Zionism fostered a Palestinian reaction. But, until another generation had passed that reaction remained only a seedbed of nationalism, not a national movement. To understand this, we must look back to the previous century.

The idea of nationalism came to the Levant (Palestine, Lebanon, and Syria) and Egypt nearly a century after it had become dominant in Europe, and it came only to a small and at first mainly Christian elite. One's identity came not from a nation-state, as in Europe, but either from membership in an ethnic/religious "nation" (known in Ottoman law as a *millet*) – for example, the Catholic "nation" – or, more narrowly, membership in a family, a clan or a village. The Arabic word *watan* catches exactly the sense of the French word *pays*: both "village" and "nation."

Arabs, like Europeans, welcomed nationalism, *wataniyah*, as a means to overcome the evident and weakening effects of division not only among the religious communities, particularly the division between Muslims and Christians, but also among the families, clans and villages.

In Palestine, nationalism by the end of the British mandate had still not coalesced into an ideology; to the extent the concept of a *watan* had been extended beyond the village and had become popular, it was a visceral reaction to the thrust of Zionism. Anger over loss of land and the intrusion of Europeans was general, but the intellectual underpinning of nationalism was slow to be formulated in a way that attracted much of the population. It still had not attracted general support until long after the end of the British mandate. In part, it became possible in large part because of the destruction of the village communities and the fusing of their former residents in refugee camps: simply put, the *watan* had to die before *wataniyah* could be born.

A More Powerful Drive

Jewish nationalism, Zionism, drew on different sources and embodied more powerful thrusts. The Jewish community as a whole benefitted from two

experiences: the first was that for centuries in what they call their *diaspora* virtually all Jewish men had meticulously studied their religious texts. While intellectually narrow, such study inculcated a mental exactitude that could be, and was, transferred to new, secular, broader fields when the opportunity presented itself in the late Eighteenth Century in Austria, Germany and France.

Thus, with remarkable speed, Polish and Russian Jews emerged in the West as mathematicians, scientists, physicians, musicians and philosophers, roles that were not part of the religious tradition. While the British had certainly been wrong to believe that Jews dominated the Bolshevik movement in Russia, Jews also certainly played a major political and intellectual role both there and in Western Europe.

The second experience that increasing numbers of Jews shared was the *sense* of exclusion but increasingly the *reality* of participation. During the Eighteenth and Nineteenth centuries, while often disliked and occasionally maltreated, Jews were generally able to take part in Western European society.

Thus, they were able to expand their horizons and to develop new skills. Many thought that they had arrived at a satisfactory accommodation with non-Jewish Europe. It was the shock of finding this not to be true that motivated Theodor Herzl and his colleagues to begin the quest for a separate Jewish nation-state, a *Judenstaat*, outside of Europe, and it was the conservatism of religious Judaism that forced the Zionist movement to reject offers of lands in various parts of Latin America, Africa and Asia and to insist on the location of that nation-state in Palestine.

Jews, of course, had to focus more on Europe than on Palestine. The Zionist movement was located in Europe and its leaders and members were all European. From the end of the First World War, secular, "modern" Jews began to migrate to Palestine and soon outnumbered and overshadowed the traditional Jewish pilgrims.

Then, from the election of Hitler in 1932 and the collapse of the Weimar Republic in 1933, pressure on the German Jewish community moved through increasingly ugly incidents like the 1938 *kristallnacht* toward a crescendo of anti-Semitism. Desperate, increasing numbers of Jews sought to flee from Germany. Most went to other countries – particularly America, England and France – but they were often not welcomed and in some cases were actually prevented from entering. (America implemented restrictions and accepted only about 21,000 Jewish refugees up to the eve of the Second World War.)

So, in increasing numbers, mainly secular, educated, Westernized Jews went to Palestine. The numbers were important but more important was that the individuals and groups coalesced to create a new community. It was this

“nation-state-in-formation,” the *Yishuv*, that set the trend toward the future.

Shaping Palestine

Nothing like these impulses were felt by the Palestinians. They had never experienced pogroms but lived with neighbors of different faiths in a carefully structured and religiously sanctioned form of mutual “tolerance” and, despite the Ottoman Empire’s moves toward modernization/westernization/fiscal control, they lived in an acceptable balance with their environment. Few had an enlivening contact with European thought, industry or commerce. To the English, they were just another colonial people, like the Indians or the Egyptians.

That is how the British officials in Palestine treated the Palestinians. As I read Indian history of the same period, I find striking parallels: colonial officials in India were equally dismissive of even the richest and most powerful Hindu and Muslim Indians. As “natives” they had to be kept in their place, punished when they got out of order and rewarded when they were submissive. Generally, the poorer natives could be treated with a sort of amused tolerance.

But the Jews didn’t fit in the colonial pattern and could not be treated as “natives.” After all, they were Europeans. So the British colonial officials never felt comfortable dealing with them. Should they “belong to white men’s clubs” or not? With the natives one knew where he stood. With the Jews, relations were at best uncertain. Worse, they were adept at going over the heads of the colonial officials direct to London. This minor but important aspect of the Palestine problem was never resolved.

Then, suddenly, as Germany invaded Poland, the world slipped into war.

The War Years

Both Palestinians and Zionists enlisted in large numbers – 21,000 Jews and 8,000 Palestinians – to help the British in their hour of need. But both kept their long-term objectives firmly in mind: both continued to regard British imperialism as the long-term enemy of freedom. And, like the Hindu Parliamentarian Subhas Chandra Bose, the Muslim Mufti Hajj Amin al-Husaini actively flirted with the Axis. Bose led a Japanese-supplied and -sponsored army into India. (Bose’s Palestinian counterpart, Hajj Amin had no such army. He fled the country.)

What Bose had tried to do fighting the British in India, Jewish terrorists, inspired by Vladimir Jabotinsky, began to do in Palestine. By 1944, Jewish attacks on British troops and police, raids on British arms and supply depots and bombings of British installations had become common, and military training camps were set up in various *kibbutzim* to train an army to fight the British.

In response, the British commander-in-chief in the Middle East issued a statement condemning the “active and passive sympathisers [of the terrorists who] are directly... assisting the enemy.”

On Aug. 8, 1944, a Jewish attempt was made to assassinate the High Commissioner and on Nov. 6, 1944, members of the Stern Gang murdered Prime Minister Churchill’s personal representative in the Middle East, the British Minister of State Lord Moyne. Churchill was furious and told Parliament that “If our dreams for Zionism are to end in the smoke of assassins’ pistols and our labours for its future are to produce a new set of gangsters worthy of Nazi Germany, many like myself will have to reconsider the position we have maintained so consistently and so long in the past. If there is to be any hope of a peaceful and successful future for Zionism these wicked activities must cease and those responsible for them must be destroyed, root and branch.”

In the last months of the war, the tempo of attacks increased. Carefully planned raids were made on supply dumps, banks and communications facilities. With Germany going down in defeat, Britain had become the Zionist Enemy Number One.

The Holocaust

But for a time, Zionist action focused on Europe. As the war ended, the enormity of the Nazi crimes against the European Jews came to public attention, and demands to “do something” for the survivors moved to the forefront of British and American politics. The British asked the U.S. government to join it in enforcing a solution no matter what that solution might be.

In America, there was a sense of collective guilt: anti-Semitism, like anti-black prejudice, while still common was beginning to be equated to Nazism and Fascism. But only beginning. America had actually turned back Jews trying to flee Nazi persecution. So when President Harry Truman announced in December 1945 that the U.S. would begin to facilitate Jewish immigration, there was little public or Congressional support. (Only 4,767 Jews were actually admitted.)

Meanwhile, various schemes were bandied about to do something for Europe’s Jews. One, never really seriously considered, was to give a part of defeated Germany to the Holocaust victims as their *heimstätt*e. It died aborning when moves toward the Cold War argued for the reconstruction of Germany as a barrier to the Soviet Union.

No one, to my knowledge, suggested that Americans cede a part of the United States as an alternative Israel. Americans quickly adopted the European program for having the “Jewish Problem” solved at the expense of someone else.

Zionists, quite reasonably, were not prepared to bet their future on Western

benevolence. They were determined to act, and they did so in four interconnected programs: first getting the survivors of the Holocaust to Palestine; second, lobbying the American government to support their cause; third, attacking any and all who stood in their way; and, fourth, making staying in Palestine too expensive for Britain.

Building a Jewish Presence

First, the Zionists understood and were informed by the British studies that if they were to succeed in taking over Palestine, they would need far more Jewish immigrants than the British were likely to allow. So already in 1934, shortly after the Hope-Simpson report, they organized the first ship, a Greek tramp steamer, to take "illegals" to Palestine. The little SS *Velos* would be the first in what became a virtual fleet, and the 300 passengers it carried would be followed by many thousands in the years to come. British attempts to limit the flow – to try to keep the peace in Palestine – were generally ineffective and were, in part nullified by the anti-Semitism of the European states and particularly by the Nazis.

The Nazi involvement in the Palestine issue and the Zionist relationship to the Nazis form its most bizarre aspect. By 1938, not only the Nazis but also the Polish, Czech and other Eastern European governments were determined to get rid of their Jewish citizens. The Zionist leaders saw this as a major opportunity. So they sent an emissary to meet with the Nazis, and even with the Gestapo and the SS, to propose to help them speed the Jews away: they proposed that if the Nazis would allow the Zionists scope, they would set up training camps for selected young people to be shipped to Palestine.

Hitler had not yet made up his mind on "the final solution" but he was keen to promote a Jewish exodus. So the German officials, including Adolf Eichmann, made a deal with the Zionists that enabled them to select would-be emigrants. The choice of who was to go was purely pragmatic: it was not on humanitarian *needs* but on physical and mental *capacity* of the candidates to join the incipient Zionist army, the Haganah and its various offshoots.

By the end of 1938, the first batch of about a thousand Jews was being organized and trained by the "Committee for Illegal Immigration" (*Mossad le Aliyah Bet*), and roughly that many started their journey each month.*

As the Nazis moved to implement "the Final Solution," they lost interest in the relatively small-scale Zionist emigration operation and began their horrible liquidation program in which millions of Jews, Gypsies and others died at Auschwitz, Treblinka and other concentration camps. With Europe closed to them, the Zionists turned to encouraging and facilitating the migration of Jewish

communities from the Arab countries. To take over Palestine, they needed Jews from anywhere and so they actively recruited them from Iraq to Morocco. Then, as the war reached its final stages, the Zionists turned back to Europe.

Their first move was to take over – literally to buy – the virtually defunct Red Cross headquarters in Romania. The newly arrived Soviet army was otherwise occupied so under the “Red Cross” emblem, the Zionist organization was able to restart the program of shipping Jews to Palestine. What the Zionist agents found was that the condition of the hundreds of thousands of remaining Romanian Jews was desperate; they were willing to go anywhere to get out Romania. Allegedly 150,000 signed up to go to Palestine, but the problem remained, how to get them there.

The answer was found in Italy. Stationed there was the small Jewish logistical support formation enlisted by the British in Palestine. Its main piece of equipment was exactly what the Zionist organizers most needed, the truck, and they were also decked out in British army uniforms and armed with British army documents.

Under Zionist orders and literally under British noses, they ranged throughout Italy, gathering displaced persons in their trucks and delivering them to ships that had been hired by the Zionists to smuggle them into Palestine.

Then disaster struck: along with other formations, the Jewish unit was redeployed. So the Zionists made what was by far their boldest move: in one of the most remarkable ventures of the Second World War, they created a fictitious British army.

A Fake Army

In the chaos of the last months at the end of the Second World War, Allied military units and supply dumps were scattered throughout Western Europe. Most troops were in the process of being redeployed or sent home. Command-and-control structures were falling apart. Dumps were often unguarded or even forgotten.

So, into this chaos, the Zionists ventured. Almost overnight, they “became” a separate British army formation with their own faked documents, phony unit designation and looted equipment. They drew petrol for their trucks and fuel for the ships with which they could rendezvous on the coast. With forged requisition papers they seized a building right in the center of Milan to use as their headquarters and others to create staging areas in various areas of Italy.

Second, they were utterly ruthless in achieving their objectives. As Jon and David Kimche have written in *The Secret Roads*, the European Jews “hated the Germans who had destroyed their corporate life; they hated the Poles and Czechs,

the Hungarians and Rumanians, the Austrians and the Balts who had helped the Germans; they hated the British and the Americans, the Russians and the Christians who had left them, so it seemed to them, to their fate. They hated Europe, they held its precious laws in contempt, they owed nothing to its peoples. They wanted to get out. ... Thus, *anti-goyism*, that malignant growth in Jewish life, received a new lease of life. Linked with Zionism, it now galvanised the Jewish camps in Europe.”

Their Zionist guides stimulated this hatred among the Displaced Persons (DPs) because, as the Kimches wrote, “they had to be uplifted; they had to be galvanised; they had to be given a stronger pride than their cynicism, and a stronger emotion than their demoralised if understandable self-seeking. The only thing that could do it, as they had seen during the Hitler era, was propaganda – hate propaganda for preference.”

Jews who attempted to go back to their former homes found their ways barred; others had taken over their houses and shops so their attempted return stimulated vicious riots, particularly in Poland, that convinced most Jews that they could not restart their old lives. If they needed further convincing, the Polish government closed the frontier and threatened to shoot returnees. And where the displaced persons were in temporary camps, their hosts were anxious to speed them on their ways.

By All Means Necessary

So, the Zionists felt justified in slandering, boycotting or even destroying those who thwarted or threatened to reveal their actions. When the head of the United Nations program charged with giving aid to the displaced persons in Germany, General Sir Frederick Morgan, reported that some “unknown Jewish organization” was running a program to transfer European Jews to Palestine – exactly what they were doing – he was pilloried as an anti-Semite.

That charge came easily. It was a charge, not unlike the McCarthyite charge of being a Communist, that all those who dealt with or wrote about the Palestine problem would learn to fear. It was used often, usually effectively and was always bitterly resented by those so attacked. It is a tactic that Zionists and their supporters often employed and is still employ frequently today.

Third, back in Palestine, the Zionist organization was doing all it could to make staying in Palestine too expensive for Britain. The Zionist army, the Haganah, its elite military force, the Palmach and the two terrorist organizations (in British eyes)/freedom fighters (to the Zionists), the Stern Gang and the Irgun, were attacking government buildings, blowing up bridges and taking hostage or shooting British soldiers.

When I first went to Palestine in 1946, the streets of every city were rivers of barbed wire, with frequent barriers and checkpoints manned by heavily armed British soldiers. The calm of evenings was frequently shattered by the sounds of machinegun fire and by night exploding bombs could be heard nearby. Everyone, including the soldiers of Britain's crack parachute division, was constantly on edge. Calm was feared as a prelude to the storm. Danger was everywhere, even when not intended.

On Christmas Eve 1946 at the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem I sat in the midst of a congregation armed with the unreliable but lethal sten gun, expecting at any minute one might be dropped and go off. A few days later, I was nearly shot, in the midst of Jerusalem by a very nervous soldier. Everyone was suspect in the eyes of everyone else.

Denying Responsibility

When the Zionist civil authorities tried to stand aloof, pretending that they knew nothing of the use of terror, the British published intercepted documents showing that they were orchestrating the attacks and were involved in collecting and passing out arms to the insurgents. For the first time against the Zionists the British cracked down as they had done against the Palestinians, and as they had been doing and were still doing against the Indians in their independence movement, putting hundreds of Jews into what amounted to a concentration camp.

In riposte, Jewish terrorists/freedom fighters blew up the headquarters of the British government in Jerusalem, the King David Hotel, killing 91 people and wounding about 46. To the English Parliament, press and public, the bombing was taken as an act of war. The Labour Prime Minister Clement Attlee denounced it as a "brutal and murderous crime ... an insane act of terrorism."

But the "brutal and murderous crime ... an insane act of terrorism" accomplished its purpose. Almost everyone – except of course the Palestinians – had concluded that the attempt by the British to establish an acceptable level of security had failed.

Fourth, the American government had long since decided to throw its support to the Zionists. Already at its presidential convention in 1944, the Democratic Party issued a statement stating that "We favor the opening of Palestine to unrestricted Jewish immigration and colonization and such a policy as to result in the establishment there of a free and democratic Jewish Commonwealth."

Shortly before his death, President Franklin Roosevelt affirmed that declaration and promised to do what was necessary to effect it. (But he, like the British in the First World War, also made a conflicting promise to the Arabs: just as the

British had promised the *Sharif* of Mecca so Roosevelt promised King Abdul Aziz ibn Saud, that he “would take no action which ... might prove hostile to the Arab people.” Then he immediately reversed himself, reaffirming his unrestricted support for Zionism.)

When he came into office, President Harry Truman called in August 1945 for the immediate admission to Palestine of 100,000 European Jews. Not to be outdone, Truman’s Republican opponent, Gov. Thomas Dewey, called for the admission of “several hundreds of thousands.” The rush to win Jewish money, influence in the press and votes was on. It has grown stronger year by year.

Caught in the Middle

Feeling increasingly isolated and desperate to turn to the host of problems it faced – both domestically and throughout the other parts of its increasingly fragile empire – the British government urged that America join in what was hoped to be a final commission, the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry, which was to focus not primarily on Palestine but, for the first time, on the plight of the European Jewish community.

It was in the emotional vortex of the hideous German concentration camps that the Commission began its work; its work would be continued in the context of American partisan politics. Its result was shaped both by the sight of the misery of the surviving Jews in Europe and driven by the political winds in America. It paid virtually no attention to the Palestinians.

The end of the mandate was in sight. The British decided to withdraw on May 15, 1948, eight months to the day after they had withdrawn from India. The results were similar: they had inadvertently “let slip the dogs of war.” Millions of Indians and Pakistanis and nearly a million Palestinians would pay a terrible price.

India was, perhaps, a more complex story, but the sole justification for the British rule of Palestine was the British obligation specified in the preamble to the Mandate instrument to “be responsible for putting into effect the declaration originally made on November 2nd, 1917, by the Government of His Britannic Majesty, and adopted by the said Powers, in favor of the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, it being clearly understood that nothing should be done which might prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country.”

Britain had failed. Indeed, three months before its forces withdrew, Britain warned the UN Security Council that it would require foreign troops to effect

the UN decision to divide the country. In reply, the U.S. Government ducked. On Feb. 24, it informed the UN that it would consider the use of its troops to restore peace but not to implement the partition resolution. On March 19, it went further, suggesting that action on partition be suspended and that a trusteeship over all Palestine be established to delay final settlement. Britain refused.

UN Division

The United Nations decision was to divide Palestine into three zones: a Jewish state, a Palestinian state and a UN administered enclave around the city of Jerusalem.

While Britain and America argued at the United Nations, Palestine slid into war. Over 5,000 people had been killed since the end of the Mandate had been announced: trains were blown up, banks robbed, government offices were attacked, and mobs, gangs and paramilitary troops looted, burned and clashed.

Then on April 10, about five weeks before the final British withdrawal, came the event that would establish the precondition of the Palestinian refugee tragedy – the Deir Yasin massacre. The regular Zionist army, Haganah, had tried to take the village, known to be peaceful and, insofar as anyone then was, neutral, and ordered the terrorist group, the Irgun, which was under its command, to help.

Together the two forces captured the village. The Irgun, possibly acting alone, then massacred the entire village population – men, women and children – and called a press conference to announce its deed and to proclaim that this was the beginning of the conquest of Palestine and Trans-Jordan. Horror and fear spread throughout Palestine. The precondition for the flight of the entire Palestinian community had been established. Much worse was to follow.

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Muslim Memories of West's Imperialism

From the Archive: A century ago, Britain and France secretly divided up much of the Mideast, drawing artificial boundaries for Iraq and Syria, but Muslim resentment of Western imperialism went much deeper, as historian William R. Polk described in 2015.

By William R. Polk (Originally published Sept. 4, 2015)

One result of the great transformation we call the Industrial Revolution in the northern hemisphere was the increasing scale of the European commercial, political and military domination of societies and states scattered from Morocco to Indonesia and from Central Asia deep into Africa. For convenience, because of their location, their relative weakness and their Islamic orientation, I called these Afro-Asian societies "the South."

Because of the scale of the issues and peoples I am considering, I cannot hope to deal with all aspects of my subject, or indeed with any part of it in satisfactory detail, but I will endeavor to provide enough to give the reader a basis to get an overview of the growth of thought in "the South." [For the first part of this series addressing the ancient roots of Muslim grievances see Consortiumnews.com's ["Why Many Muslims Hate the West."](#)]

So, here I begin where Muslim thinkers and political activists began with their perception of the disparity in power, wealth and knowledge between the North and South. At various times from the late Eighteenth Century, throughout much of Asia and Africa, some individuals set forth their analyses of the challenges they perceived and what they thought they needed to do to meet them. At first, the most important of these movements were religious.

Then, in the early years of the Twentieth Century, nationalism replaced religion as the dominant theme of political thought. At first nationalism was regionally or linguistically divided; then increasingly commentators broadened the scale of

their thought ethnically and linguistically. Europeans led the way. First Turks, then Arabs and later other peoples followed.

Nationalism reached its high point in mid-century when it incorporated social, educational and economic programs. Toward the end of the century, when socially active nationalism failed to produce the reality of power or the sense of dignity that were its goals, disillusionment set in.

There were many reasons for failure insincerity, rivalry or corruption of leaders, imbalance of military and civic components of society, the magnitude of the tasks to be performed with insufficient means and, above all, foreign military threat and intervention but a growing number of politically active people concluded that, regardless of the causes of failure, failure itself was starkly evident.

Next, I will bring this account to the present. With nationalism and socialism no longer judged to provide a "roadmap" in the early years of the Twenty-first Century, opinion makers particularly in the Arab lands returned to – but dramatically altered and implemented – the dominant theme of the Nineteenth Century politics, the quest for power and dignity through religion, leading to the United States, Russia, China and the several Middle Eastern governments engaging in counterinsurgency programs.

Overall, I aim to show how the reactions of "the South" incorporated common themes despite the enormous social, cultural and geographical diversity of the peoples. Only if we take into account the scale of the events can we hope to understand them and move toward "affordable world security."

Islamic Revival

Salafiyah is the Arabic name given to Islamic revivalist movements. The word masks a complex concept. Even native Arabic speakers usually translate it as "reactionary." But the word *salafi* in classical Arabic means a person who stands both in the rearguard and in the vanguard – Arabic delights in such contrasts. Muslim thinkers meant by it the process of going back to the beginnings in order to find a firm or "pure" base upon which to build a theologically correct system of thought and action for the present and the future.

At first sight the concept appears to outside observers as wholly exotic or even incomprehensible. But there have been historical and are contemporary movements in Christian societies that are comparable. Thus, a first step in understanding *Salafiyah* is to observe what Muslim movements and thinkers had in common with Christian movements and thinkers.

The counterpart to Islamic *Salafiyah* in Christianity is the Protestant movement

we associate with Martin Luther and John Calvin. Their thought was adopted, modified and spread by the English and Welsh Puritans during their exile in Holland and their mission in Massachusetts where they founded a fundamentalist theocratic state.

The quest for "purity" or "fundamentalism" is today represented by dozens of Protestant sects, whose members include the 40 or so million Americans who call themselves "Born Again" Christians.

Clearly, the word *Salafiyah* makes the Muslim movement sound more exotic than it really is. If we go to the essentials it should be comprehensible to us. So what is it really all about? What was it trying to deal with? What were its main ideas? Why were people attracted to it? Answers to these questions must be sought because they matter today. To move toward answers, I begin with a short look at history.

In the Quran and in the sayings of Islam's Prophet Muhammad, Islam was described as the religion common to Jews, Christians and Arabs. As the Quran put it, it is "the Religion of Abraham," but unlike Judaism and Christianity, Islam was delivered in the Arabic language so that the Arabs could understand it. (Quran 39/27-28).

Muslims believe that Islam was religion as God meant it to be. That is, they believe, that the Quran *corrected* innovations and perversions Jews and Christians made to the original message. For example, the Quran denies that Jesus could have been the "son" or God or a god himself although he was accorded a special relationship to God and was himself regarded as a prophet senior to Muhammad.

The original message was the religion Muhammad proclaimed in Madinah. The Islam spelled out in the Quran and acted out in Madinah is a worldly religion, focused on what the individual should do in this life. It provides a detailed system of law, social organization and deportment. It has few ambiguities, is authoritative but many of its followers have found it to be austere. It is not filled with solace for misery and presumes security, dominance and social homogeneity.

Then, as Islam spread afield from the area around Madinah in the Seventh Century, Muslims encountered peoples of vastly different cultures. Within a few centuries, millions of the inhabitants of large areas of Europe, Asia and Africa had come to think of themselves as Muslims. But, while having adopted the core features of Islam, most of the converts retained elements of their previous faiths and ways of life.

In this way, Islam also resembled Christianity. For example, in Mexico, Catholicism incorporated the ancient gods, renaming them saints, and converted their temples into churches. Islam similarly found ways to incorporate many of the ideas and practices of the converts.

Islamic Customs

The formal, textual and original elements of Islam often sat lightly on the shoulders of the converts: Bedouin tribesmen continued to deal with one another, as they had done in pre-Islamic times (the time of "ignorance," *jahaliyah*), in accord with their custom. Afghan Pushtuns similarly followed their own pre-Islamic code, the *Pushtunwali*, and their legal system, the *Ravaj*, so that, for example, their women did not inherit property even from their husbands as they should according to the *Shariah*, and vengeance (Pashtu: *badal*) was mandatory even against fellow Muslims although it is specifically forbidden in the Quran (4/92-93).

Mongol converts to Islam continued to be guided by the *Yassa*. In India and Sumatra, Hindu practices were brought into Islam by converts, with Muslims even making pilgrimages to Hindu shrines (*durgahs*), while in Africa animistic customs similarly continued to be practiced in the name of Islam.

Other customs were introduced as a result of changing circumstances. A prime example is the veiling of women. Veiling of women was probably not practiced in the time of Muhammad and is nowhere specifically ordered in the Quran. The closest the Quran comes to mentioning the veiling of faces is in verse 24/31 which orders "believing women" to cover their breasts and not to flaunt or reveal their [physical or bodily] "ornaments" (*zinat*) except to their husbands or other specified close relatives or impotent men and slaves.

It is not practiced in a number of Muslim societies, including the Kazaks, Tajiks and Kirghiz of Central Asia, the Malays and Javanese of Southeast Asia and the Kurds and Iranians of the Middle East and the Berbers of North Africa. It was common, however, in Christian Byzantium at the time of the Arab invasion, and was adopted presumably from them by free-born, upper-class Arab women. It is not altogether clear why and for whom veiling was mandatory. My hunch is that it was seen to be practiced in more advanced societies (Byzantium and Safavid Iran) by the aristocracy and also was a means to differentiate high-borne (Arab) women from native slaves.

Thus, both geographically and temporally, Islam was modified. An austere religion, it was everywhere "invaded" by manifestations of popular desire for emotional contact with the Divinity. The cult of saints spread and to visit them and urge their blessings Muslims made pilgrimages that rivaled the obligatory

Hajj. Particularly in times of distress, as in the wake of the devastating Thirteenth-Century Mongol invasions, mysticism offered an escape from misery and fear.

When the traditions of Islamic law grew weak in the Middle Ages, moves were commonly made to reestablish contact with the cultural and legal core of the community. Thus, for example, the great Fourteenth-Century Muslim Arab traveler Ibn Batuta was everywhere welcomed as a recognized scholar and practicing judge of the Sharia.

Aware of contradictions of text and practice, a few Muslim theologians, like the Christian Puritans, sought to return to the earliest manifestations of their faith to find theologically solid bases (*usul*) upon which they could rebuild. Both the Muslim Fundamentalists and the Puritans regarded deviations from textual ordinances as sins.

The first major Muslim thinker to preach fundamentalism was Muhammad bin Hanbal (Ibn Hanbal) who was born in Baghdad 780 AD. His life work was the gathering of *hadiths*, the tales passed down generation after generation from contemporaries of the Prophet Muhammad.

What he was seeking, and what his followers sought, was a means of evaluating and purging the contemporary manifestation of Islam by recourse to what the Prophet had actually done or said during his lifetime. That was, of course, a dangerous challenge to the ruling establishment. Rulers, warlords and judges had formed their own system of belief and had built into it their own privileges and status.

So they reacted to Ibn Hanbal's challenge by subjecting him to the Islamic version of the Inquisition (*Mihna*) which condemned him, throwing him into prison and torturing him. Unbowed, he died in Baghdad in 855 after having gathered about 28,000 *hadiths* which next only to the Quran form the "fundamentals" of the Islamic religion.

Rise of the Wahhabis

The man who took what Ibn Hanbal gathered and formed it into the interpretation of Islam adopted in our times by the austere sect of the Saudi Wahhabis, the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood and the Islamic Caliphate was Taqi al-Din ibn Taimiya. Ibn Taimiya was born in 1263, almost 500 years after Ibn Hanbal, at Harran (on what is today the Syrian-Turkish frontier). As a small child he fled from the terrible Mongol invasions to Damascus where he studied and later taught the rite or legal school (*madhhab*) of Ibn Hanbal.

Like Ibn Hanbal, Ibn Taimiya argued that returning to Islam (as the Prophet and

his immediate circle had practiced it) was crucial, but it was the clear and present danger posed by the foreign invader that captured much of his thought and action. In this he set a theme that has echoed down to our time.

In his time, it was the Mongols who were destroying Islamic societies and killing Muslims. Resisting them was a vital interest for his community. He was rewarded when they received one of their rare defeats at a battle near Damascus. With their threat removed, he turned his efforts against the off-shoots of Islam – Ismailis, Nusairis and others, whom he regarded as heretics and so, “domestic invaders.”

Throughout his life Ibn Taimiya was a dedicated “striver for the faith,” a *jihadi*, but his zeal led him, as it had Ibn Hanbal and would lead many of his followers, into conflict with the Establishment in his own community. He was several times imprisoned, rehabilitated and again imprisoned.

During one period of imprisonment, he wrote a commentary on the Quran, thereby setting a style that would be copied by later prisoners of conscience. One of his Twentieth-Century followers, the Egyptian cleric Sayyid Qutub also wrote a commentary on the Quran while in prison.

In the Thirteenth Century, Ibn Taimiya, like his long-dead mentor Ibn Hanbal, spent his life inveighing against such innovations as the cult of saints and the then highly popular Sufi mystical movement. To try to silence him, the rulers clapped him into prison and, when that did not keep him from reaching out to the public, they took away his paper and ink.

Unable to communicate, he soon died. But the rulers were too late. So popular was he in Damascus that reportedly virtually the entire city, some 200,000 men and 15,000 women, attended his interment which was held, ironically, in the Sufi cemetery.

While Ibn Hanbal had seen the danger to Islam to be its own worldly success, Ibn Taimiya saw the deadly threat to be both internal laxness and foreign invasion. Their messages were heard but made relatively little impact for the next 500 years: rulers governed, scholars wrote learned commentaries and the public went about its business.

Then what has been called the “impact of the West” began and their messages took on a new urgency. As Ibn Hanbal had told them, they found their societies to be weak and their faith corrupt, and as Ibn Taimiya demonstrated in his fight against the Mongols, foreign invasion must be stopped before the community itself was destroyed.

What to do? What was needed, a few Muslim thinkers began to assert, was both to

purge corrupt practice and to make the original, "pure," texts available beyond the closed, sophistic, ossified circles of the religious scholars. Only if their societies were internally strong, the reformers argued, could Muslims cope with the foreigner.

The first prominent figure in the long parade to follow to propose this answer was the Indian theologian Imam Quṭb ad-Dīn Aḥmad Walī Allāh who was regarded by Muslim contemporaries as their greatest scholar and who is commonly known as Shah Waliullah ("the Devotee of God") and he lived mainly in Delhi from 1703 to 1762. (The Arabic word *imam* means "one who stands in front" and is applied to the person who leads the prayer.)

Qutb al-Din's scholarship impressed millions of Muslims, but perhaps more important were his efforts to popularize the basic religious text, the Quran. He translated the Quran into the then lingua franca of South Asia, *Farsi* (Persian), so that it could be read, discussed and understood by the whole society. Today, he is often thought of as the spiritual father of Pakistan.

Foreign Intervention

Following the time of Qutb al-Din, increasing numbers of foreigners arrived and foreign activities penetrated Islamic societies more deeply.

Consider these events:

–In Eighteenth Century India, Englishmen paid a sort of homage to local customs. They dressed in Bengal style, smoked hookahs and even kept harems (*zenanas*). Then, province by province, they took over and finally in 1857, after the revolt of the Muslim Sepoy army, they destroyed the Mughal Empire and came to despise and segregate the Indians.

–In the Crimea the Russians invaded, impoverished or drove away much of the previously thriving population. In the Crimea, Russians also fought the destructive war that Tolstoy recounts in two of his novels.

–In Java, the Dutch clamped a colonial regime on the natives and, when they tried to reassert their independence, killed about 300,000 "rebels" between 1835 and 1840; they also fought Sumatra "rebels" between 1873 and 1914.

–In Algeria, after the bitter 15-year-long war that began in 1830, the French stole the lands and imposed an apartheid regime on the survivors.

–In Egypt, less violently but pervasively, the English looted the country. As David Landes wrote in *Bankers and Pashas* (p.316), the Egyptian treasury was plundered "of untold amounts for indemnities, fraudulent and semi-fraudulent

claims, exorbitant prices to purveyors and contractors, and all manner of bribes, designed to buy cheap honours or simply respite from harassment." Of all this, the ruler of Egypt had little understanding and could, in any case, do little because of the pressure of the European powers.

Everywhere, by the middle of the Nineteenth Century, all foreigners enjoyed more privileges than do modern diplomats: foreigners charged with crimes could appeal their cases to courts in Europe and even if their crimes were against natives, the local government had no jurisdiction over them.

The speed of the transformation astonished the natives. It is illustrated by two events in the Levant: Whereas in 1830, a British consul had not been allowed to enter the city of Damascus, ten years later in 1840, another British consul actually chose the governor of Lebanon.

As the evidence of their weakness, sometimes demonstrated on the battlefield but also in the market place, came to seem more shameful, the Muslim search for guidance in the Quranic phrase the *sirat al-mustaqim* (the road of those who would be virtuous) became urgent. When they didn't find this guidance, a guide came looking for them.

An Influential Thinker

By far the most influential Muslim thinker of the Nineteenth Century was a much more worldly figure than even the Indian Muslim Qutub al-Din and inevitably more controversial. Controversy, indeed, began with the attachment (*laqab*) to his name that usually designates where a person comes from. (In this style, I would be called William Polk Texan.)

Jamal al-Din's *laqab* was "al-Afghani" although he was probably born in Iran. Why did he switch his birthplace? The usual explanation, which I believe to be correct, is that he wanted to be thought of as a Sunni or Orthodox Muslim (as the ruling ethnic group of Afghanistan was) rather than a Shii or minority-group Muslim (as most Iranians were). That is, he wanted to put himself into the mainstream of Islam.

Putting himself in the mainstream of contemporary affairs, Afghani certainly did in a career that took him over much of the Muslim world from Afghanistan to Egypt and from Istanbul to India. (Professor Nikki R. Keddie has written a number of works that touch on Afghani's career. One of the best deals with the controversy Afghani was partly responsible for provoking, *Religion and Rebellion in Iran* (London: Frank Cass, 1966). Keddie uses the published catalogue of Afghani's papers to correct the version he and his Arab followers put out on his life. As she sums up his career, "Through most of his life, he was consistent in

working for the independence of Muslim states from foreign rule, but his emphasis was almost always particularly anti-British, perhaps because of early experiences in India." His tactics were based on his appearing to be an Orthodox religious figure as shown in his book *Refutation of the Materialism*.)

In contrast to what appear to have been frustrating and unsuccessful encounters with the sultans, shahs and pashas, Afghani exercised a profound influence on Muslim intellectuals and theologians in Afghanistan, Iran, India, Turkistan, Ottoman Turkey and Egypt. His message to them was in essence simple: Muslims must get back to the origins of their religion if they hoped to free their lands from imperialism. And they must do it themselves since no foreigner would help them.

During his years teaching in Egypt, Afghani made common cause with the Egyptian cleric Muhammad Abduh. (Still the best book on Abduh is Charles C. Adams, *Islam and Modernism in Egypt: A study of the Modern Reform Movement inaugurated by Muhammad 'Abduh* (London: Oxford University Press, 1933).

Although, in later years, Abduh would become eminently "respectable" as the rector of Azhar University which was the heart of Islamic scholarship, and the chief judge (*Mufti Am*) of the Egyptian Islamic court system, he and Afghani then just tolerated outsiders. They oscillated between audiences at court and exile.

Then, just before the 1879-1882 nationalist uprising led by the Egyptian officer Ahmad Arabi against British rule, Afghani was sent out of Egypt and Abduh was sent into internal exile in his village. When the British suppressed the uprising, Afghani and Abduh moved to Paris where they founded the short-lived but immensely influential journal, *Al-Urwa Al-Wuthqa*. Its message was that *both* European domination and Oriental despotism must be ended and that the way to do it was to reinvigorate Islam and establish it as the ruling doctrine.

The magazine's name is difficult to translate. It means something like a stirrup (which upholds one) that cannot be broken. It was one of three dissident and more or less clandestine journals of the time. Also in Paris, Aleksandr Herzen founded *Kolokol* (The Bell) that similarly influenced a generation of Russians.

At roughly the same time as Afghani and Abduh were holding forth, a sequence of Tatar or Turkish intellectuals in and around Bukhara began a similar mission. The most significant of these men was Ismail Bey Gaspirali who, like Jamal al-Din and Muhammad Abduh, founded a journal, *Tarjuman* (Turco-Arabic: "translator"), which was read throughout the Ottoman Empire, Russia and India. It provided a running critique of what many Turkic peoples had come to see as the source of their weakness, an ossified Muslim clergy which was unable to halt, and actually abetted, the advance of Russian imperialists.

It wasn't only the Russian Tsars who were imperialists in Central Asia. At roughly the same time as Catherine the Great was pushing into Western Muslim lands, the Qing (Manchu) emperors of China were moving into the sheikhdoms and principalities of Turkistan. There they virtually wiped out the Buddhist Dzungar people and installed Muslim Turks (Uighurs) as puppet rulers.

In 1864, the Uighurs revolted and set up an independent Turkish kingdom. When their state was recognized by Britain, the Ottoman Empire and Russia, the infuriated Chinese overthrew the kingdom and put the population into what amounted to a "reservation" (*Hui Jiang*). Under oppressive Chinese rule, the Uighurs were not able to produce either significant Islamic scholars or national leaders and still today are trying to assert their national existence both by resisting the Chinese and by participating in the armed struggles of other Muslims. We will see them again in the Islamic Caliphate.

Overall, these Turks, Arabs, Persians and Indians restricted themselves to sermons, slogans and scholasticism, but others began to try to implement similar thoughts in direct action. I now turn to them.

A Militant Revival

The first of the militant revival groups did not aim at the Europeans because, except for a few intrepid travelers, there were no Europeans in Arabia. Called into action by the theologian Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab (1703-1787), the *Wahaibyah* or as they called themselves "Unitarians" (*Muwahhidun*), were, and are today, Sunni Muslim followers of the teachings of Ibn Hanbal as interpreted by Ibn Taimiyah.

They think of themselves as essentially a continuation of the mission of the Prophet Muhammad. They like to point out, that, just as he found a haven in Madinah when he was driven out of Mecca, so Abd al-Wahhab was given refuge in the town of Dariyah. It was in Dariyah (now a suburb of Riyadh) that Abd al-Wahhab acquired the ally who assured his worldly power.

The marriage of Ibn Saud's son to a daughter of Abd al-Wahhab was the beginning of a partnership that has lasted to this day. Muhammad ibn Saud, himself a townsman, was recognized by the nearby Arab tribes as a natural leader and Abd al-Wahhab addressed their religious needs.

Like the tribesmen whom the Prophet had organized in the Seventh Century for the wars of the Conquest, they were wild and warlike. Managing them required a clear and acceptable code, astute diplomacy and the deflection of their hostilities abroad. The result, as the great Arab historian Ibn Khaldun wrote of Islam, was to "turn their faces in the same direction."

The direction where the faces of the recently united tribesmen turned in 1802 was the Shia city of Karbala, which in Bedouin style they sacked and in Hanbali style, since the inhabitants were heretics, they massacred.

Heretics were not their only targets. In the next few years, the Wahhabi-led tribesmen conquered Jiddah, Mecca and Madinah. In each place, they destroyed the tombs of saints. Everything that was not specifically authorized by the Quran was considered an illegal innovation (*Bida*). Religious fervor (*Jihad*) was combined with the Bedouin tradition of raiding (*ghaza*). It was a fearsome combination and, as it did in the days of the Prophet Muhammad, it swept all before it. By 1811, the Wahhabi-Saudi-tribal empire extended from Aleppo to the Indian Ocean.

Possibly the nonchalant Ottoman government would not have reacted to this attack on its Arab provinces, but the Wahhabi conquest of Mecca could not be tolerated because the Ottoman Sultan-Caliph was also the guardian of Islam's Holy places. So in 1812, he authorized his nominal vassal, the already powerful Albanian ruler of Egypt, Mehmet Ali Pasha, to dislodge the Wahhabis. That action began a long series of wars through which the Wahhabi-Saudi-tribal combination survived to the present.

A generation later, in 1837, another Islamic revival movement was founded by a Berber who had been born in what is now Algeria about 1790. Muhammad bin Ali al-Sanusi was a scholar who spent much of his early life studying in the libraries of Fez, Cairo and Mecca.

Strongly influenced by Islamic mysticism, Sufism, he tried to push aside worldly concerns to devote himself to prayer. But, in the North Africa of his time, he could not. The French invasion of Algeria in 1830 blocked his return from pilgrimage to his homeland and forced him to create a different sort of "homeland" in Libya. What he created was the *Sanusiyah*.

Realizing that a revivalist movement, as he planned for the *Sanusiyah* to become, could not exist without popular support, Muhammad bin Ali also realized that a people ignorant of Islam could never be relied upon to protect it.

His solution was similar to what the Prophet had done: it was to graft onto the tribesmen who merely "submitted to Islam" (the *Muslimun*) a brotherhood of true believers (*Muminun*) who would be their religious guides (*imams*). He set about creating this brotherhood in the university he founded in a Libyan oasis.

Founding Lodges

As the brotherhood grew, its missionaries founded scores of "lodges" (*zawiyahs*) throughout the deserts and steppes of North Africa through Egypt and all the way

into the Arabian Hijaz. They covered an area larger than Europe. A typical *zawiyah* was a more or less permanent encampment composed of a mosque or prayer room, a dormitory, a guest room and a school.

Virtually all of the people reached by the Sanusi "brothers" in this vast area were nomadic tribesmen on whom the requirements of Islam rested lightly. [The best account of the relationship of the *Sanusiyah* and the Bedouin is E.E Evans-Pritchard's *The Sanusi of Cyrenaica* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1949). He had been the Political Officer in Cyrenaica of the British army for two years during the Second World War and when we became friends he was Professor of Anthropology at Oxford and a Fellow of All Souls College. His student and follower, Emrys Peters, also a close friend, carried on his studies and became Professor of Anthropology at Manchester University.]

What made the unlikely combination of religious scholars and nomads work was that the Bedouin got two things they wanted an overarching but not oppressive unity (or at least occasional intertribal truce) and the codification of religion in easy to understand terms that did not violate such popular religion as they already practiced.

Muhammad bin Ali, unlike the more theoretical reformers, chose not to challenge the innovations (*bida*) that had become their way of life but sought only to refine them. Probably, that would be nearly all one would have to say of the *Sanusiya* had it been left alone in the vast Sahara. But that was not to be.

After the conquest of Algeria which the French completed about 1860, they moved deeper into Africa. Theirs was an unrewarding advance there were no rich prizes like Algeria in the vast interior but their advance was inexorable. Finally, at the village of Fashoda on the White Nile, they bumped into the British who also were moving south and west into the African interior from Egypt.

The two Powers divided Africa between them in the 1898-99 Anglo-French Partition Agreement, which legitimated, at least in European law, the French advance into "their" area. There, the French ran into the *Sanusiya*, and in 1902 they destroyed the first of the Order's lodges. As the French advanced, they destroyed each lodge that they encountered. Much worse was to come.

While the French were advancing from the south, a newly "awakened" Italy had discovered nationalism and began to think of itself as Rome Reborn. Contemporary Italians knew that their ancient ancestors had farmed the coastal plain of Cyrenaica (now eastern Libya) and thought they could meet the needs of their growing population by colonizing it.

So, like the French in Algeria, they moved in to seize the land. Driven by

nationalist fervor, the Italians also wanted to win status among the European Powers by acquiring an African empire. In 1911, they landed their first troops. The Sanusi leadership did not want to fight, but organized by the Sanusi creed, the Bedouin resisted. The Italian invasion began a war that lasted nearly 30 years.

Evans-Pritchard wrote, the Grand Sanusi was "anxious to avoid any action which might enable those powers [France and Italy] to accuse him of political designs. He wished only to be left alone to worship God according to the teachings of his Prophet, and when in the end he fought the French it was in defence of the religious life as he understood it. In its remarkable diffusion in North and Central Africa the Order never once resorted to force to back its missionary labours. He even refused the aid asked for by 'Arabi Pasha in Egypt in 1882 and by the Sudanese Mahdi in 1883 against the British. But when the French invaded its Saharan territories and destroyed its religious houses, and when later the Italians, also without provocation, did the same in Cyrenaica, the Order had no choice but to resist."p. 27-28.

An Italian-Driven Genocide

As carried out by the Italians, the 30 years' war soon became genocide. The Bedouin, calling themselves "protectors" (*muhafizat*) and called by the Italians "rebels" (*rebelli*), fought as guerrillas while the Italians used counterinsurgency tactics to try to create "furrows of blood" (*solci di sangria*) among the tribes, hoping to incite them to fight one another.

What the Italians called *politico-militari* tactics – which phrase Americans translated and tactics largely copied – did not work because as the Italian military commander wrote, "the entire population took part directly or indirectly in the rebellion." [General Rodolfo Graziani, *Cirenaica Pacificata*, (Milano, 1932), p. 60/]

As counterinsurgency failed, the Italians turned to genocide. Within a few years, they killed nearly two-thirds of the population of Cyrenaica. Among the casualties were virtually all of the Sanusis. But, as the Englishman who knew them best, Evans-Pritchard, has written, "With the [Italian] destruction of the Sanusiya the war continued to be fought in the name of the religious order. It then became simply a war of Muslims to defend their faith against a Christian Power. Deep love of home and deep love of God nourished each other. Without due appreciation of the religious feeling involved in the resistance it would be, I think, be impossible to understand how it went on for so long against such overwhelming odds." [Evans-Pritchard, Op. cit., 166]

In place of the Sanusi family, who abandoned the Bedouin to their fate, a

remarkable figure who combined the best of the Bedouin and Sanusi attributes came to the fore. Umar al-Mukhtar, known as “the Lion of the Desert,” became a hero to his people in his resistance to the Italians.

Al-Mukhtar carried on the tradition begun by Sharif Abd al-Qadir al-Jazairi (“the Algerian”) in the Algerian struggle against the French and as Amir Abd al-Karim al-Khattabi would lead the Berbers of the Rif in their war against the French and Spanish. What they held in common was their religious faith and the determination to keep their societies free and independent.

Umar al-Mukhtar emerges out of obscurity for Western viewers in the 1981 film *Lion of the Desert* where he is portrayed by Anthony Quinn. Abd al-Karim’s war in the Rif was the subject of Vincent Sheean’s reportage that subsequently became his 1926 book, *An American among the Riffis*. I got to know Abd al-Karim in Cairo, at the end of his long exile in 1954 and wrote a short account of his life in *Perspective of the Arab World: An Atlantic Monthly supplement, 1955*.

These were not the only struggles fought in the name of Islam against imperialism. For instance, when the Muslims of Java tried to win independence, the Dutch killed about 300,000 of them between 1825 and 1830 and they suppressed the people of Sumatra in a similarly brutal war from 1873 to 1914. But the one struggle that stands out, particularly in English memory, is the *Mahdiah* war in the Sudan.

Hunting for Slaves

From the beginning of the Sixteenth Century, the northern Sudanese Funj sultanate converted to Islam and began to use the Arabic language. Then in 1820, Mehmet Ali Pasha, the ruler of Egypt, decided to monopolize the hunt for African slaves and invaded the country.

Having limited resources, Mehmet Ali’s grandson and successor hired Europeans to administer the Sudan. One of them, General Charles Gordon, was a vociferous exponent of Christianity who looked upon the native Muslims as pagans and was determined to stamp out their customs. Sudanese anger built against him and the Egyptians.

Finally in 1881, another of those figures we have seen all over the Islamic world came to the fore. Muhammad Ahmed reached back into Muslim legend and proclaimed himself the *Mahdi*, a man sent by God to rectify injustice (*zhulm*) and return the people to the true path (*sunnah*). He organized his followers into armed zealots called the *Ansar*.

The choice of the name *Ansar* is an allusion to the men who made possible Muhammad the Prophet’s flight from Mecca. So Muhammad al-Mahdi was putting

himself in the position of the Prophet and his 30,000 to 40,000 followers in the center of the Muslim tradition. But, while he acted in the name of Islam he proclaimed himself to be virtually the equal of the Prophet Muhammad. Despising his claim and underestimating his power, the Egyptian government allowed itself to be defeated in small encounters by the Mahdi's followers. They, in turn, took their victories as proof of God's favor. So, by the time the British, who were effectively running Egypt, decided to suppress the *Mahdiyyah*, it had become a national movement.

Fortunately for the British, the Mahdi died of typhus, but the *Mahdiyyah* lingered on. Finally, in the spring and summer of 1898, the British attacked, destroyed the Sudanese army and absorbed Sudan into the growing British empire.

(I have dealt with the Sudan in more detail in my book *The Arab World* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1980). More detailed is Peter Holt, *the Mahdist State in the Sudan 1881-1898* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1958). The government the British imposed on Sudan was patterned on their administration in India which was made up primarily of graduates of Cambridge who had excelled in athletics (known as "the blues") so the contemporary joke was that the Sudanese government was "the rule of the Blacks by the Blues.")

Muslims in the Philippines were never able to organize a mass resistance to the Sixteenth Century Spanish invasion nor to the Nineteenth Century American invasion. Under the Spaniards, the population of most of the northern islands was converted to Catholicism while the Muslims retreated to the south.

To try to stop the American troops, the Muslims fought as guerrillas. Not having modern arms, they often fought with agricultural tools in suicide attacks that became a feature of modern guerrilla warfare. To stop the suicide attacks, the American government adopted the relatively heavy pistol, the .45 that became the standard officers' weapon for the next century.

While Britain and Russia were often on the brink of hostilities, and in the Crimean War actually fought one another, they shared a determination not to allow the peoples they conquered to move toward freedom. Their common opponent was the "Pan-Islamic" movement.

Fear of Pan-Islam played a role in shaping British and Russian policies toward much of Asia and French policy toward Africa. Like the French and the Russian empires, the British had conquered and ruled over millions of Muslims, and, like the French and Russians, they were sure that the Muslims were always on the point of revolting.

A Russian 'Domino Theory'

British security officers, like army generals, were always preparing for the last war and their text was the 1857 "Mutiny." Their fears were echoed by the Russians who imagined a sort of "domino theory" in which its Central Asians would rise and one after another topple the imperial structure. And the French had reason to fear the same thing as a result of their brutal policies in Algeria and Morocco.

All was based on rumor and much was myth but apprehension was real. The mood may now be best judged not in sober (or not so sober) diplomatic dispatches but in the then wildly popular novel, a precursor of the James Bond series, John Buchan's *Greenmantle*, which cast sinister Turkish and German agents from whom the civilized world was saved only by intrepid British agents. Buchan gave us "007" long before Ian Fleming invented him.

But the danger of Pan-Islam was largely a figment of the imperial powers' imagination. Muslims did not even conceive such a movement as Pan-Islam. A few like Afghani and Ismail Bey Gaspirali reached out beyond their immediate neighborhoods but most reformers were strictly local. And very few did more than write or talk.

Armed rebellions in the name of Islam were rare. Indeed, all over the Muslim world, reformers and militants were admitting at least to themselves that, regardless of aims, tactics and dedication, religion-based nationalism had failed to stop foreign intrusion.

So, in a ragged pattern, disillusioned Muslims from Central Asia to Sudan and from Java to Morocco began to search for new ways to defend their societies, cultures and religion. To a growing number and finally to most, the answer seemed to be found not in their own background but in the West.

To be "modern" and strong, they were coming to believe, required adoption of the mainly secular ideology of the West. To what Asians and Africans made of western style nationalism I now turn.

Western Modernism

Arabic did not have a word for "nation." Had you asked a Nineteenth Century Egyptian what was his "nation," he would have given you the name of his village. The Bedouin would not even have understood the question.

In Persian, Turkish and Berber as in other African and Asian languages, no word fit the new need. The word that the Arabs first pressed into this service was *watan*, but *watan*, like the French word *pays*, meant village. It took not only a linguistic but also a mental leap to change village to nation.

Farsi (Persian) and Turkish use a word for nation that is derived from the medieval practice of assigning minority peoples of a common faith, often called a "confession," a separate status. In Farsi, it is *mellat* and in Turkish it is *millet*. Both are derived from the Arabic word *millah* which in classical Arabic meant rite or [non-Muslim] religion. The majority community members referred to themselves not as a *millah* but as Muslims.

Thus, ironically, the word for a separate, non-Muslim minority community was adopted as the word for the whole population. In Central Asia, the Uighurs and other Turkic peoples used either a religious (Muslim) or a linguistic (Turki) designation. Malays use the Malay word, *Bangsa*, while the Indonesians used a borrowing from Dutch, *nasion*.

In the North Africa, the Middle East and Central Asia, it was the Ottoman Empire that started the transformation. The Ottoman Empire had few trained men, little industry, a weak army and almost no financial resources, but it was able to govern a vast, heterogeneous empire a feat beyond the capacities of its richer successors.

Its strategy was to tolerate other loyalties. Religious or ethnic communities (*millets*) governed themselves, apportioned and collected the taxes that were due the Empire and judged themselves according to their own customs. Each was, in effect, a miniature nation-state.

The aims of the imperial government were limited to collecting sufficient taxes in an economical way and to protecting its frontiers. It even tolerated successful rebellion. Its administration was loose: its provinces had none of the restrictions of nation-states, as European Powers recast them into Syria, Iraq or Palestine at the end of the First World War. The "Syrian," "Iraqi" or "Palestinian" moved as easily between Baghdad, Damascus, Mecca, Jerusalem, Istanbul or Cairo as the American would from Dallas to Los Angeles.

Watan-defined or separate state nationalism (*wataniyah*) was dedicated to breaking up this polyglot, multinational, religiously tolerant empire. It did this first in the Ottoman Balkans in the Nineteenth Century: Greeks broke loose from 1821; Serbians, 1868; Montenegrins, 1878; Romanians, 1878; and Bulgarians, 1879.

It was the challenge of these movements and of the Armenians, who fought a guerrilla war and engaged in urban terrorism to try to create their own nation-state, that stimulated the Ottoman Turks to develop what came to be called Turkism (*Turkçuluk*).

Turks, who had not thought of themselves as a national group (*millet*) like the

various minorities in their empire, could not distinguish themselves from Arabs or Kurds by identifying themselves as Muslims. They shared that designation. Their only unique feature was language.

Language as Bond

As Turkism's ideologue, Mehmed Ziya Gokalp wrote, language is a bond "superior to race, populism, geography, politics and desire. While still in the cradle, with the lullabies he hears, [the child] is under the influence of the mother tongue. All our religious, ethical, artistic feelings, which give existence to our soul, are taken by means of this language. Our way living is totally an echo of this."

[Ziya Gokalp (1876-1924) was a leading Turkish intellectual who is best known for his book (written in the old Ottoman Turkish) *Turkuluk Asasleri* (The bases of Turkism) which was published in 1920. Himself influenced by European sociologists, particularly by Emile Durkheim, he provided the rationale and stimulus for Kemal Ataturk's brand of secular, language-based, single state nationalism in place of pan-Islamism, pan-Turanism and Ottoman identity.]

Not only among the Turks, but also among the Arabs language is fundamental to national identity. Even illiterate Bedouin relish classical poetry as not even the most erudite Western audience could be said to relish Shakespeare's sonnets. Politically more important, shared language overcame separate religion. *Arabiyah* seemed to Christian Arabic-speakers the road toward participation in the dominant community.

Among those Arabs excited by the reform movement in the Ottoman Empire were young Christian Arabs in Lebanon and Syria, many of whom were associated with the American Protestant schools. At first, their writings were mainly anti-Turk. The first was a book in French by a Syrian Christian called *Le Reveil de la Nation Arabe*, but he had few readers. Most Arabs were still anxious to join the Turkish opposition to European invasion.

Thus, linguistic and by extension cultural preservation came to be equated with preservation of the nation. It is difficult for English speakers to evaluate the importance of this statement because secure in the imperialism or even colonialism of English which has conquered and settled whole vocabularies of German, French, Latin and even Arabic most of us scorn what appear to be just pedantic linguistics. However, not only the embattled natives but also their foreign rulers grasped well the political importance of linguistics.

Look first at the French: A key element in the *mission civilisatrice*, the politically correct French term for imperialism, was the suppression of Arabic

and its replacement with French. In Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Lebanon and Syria, street signs were posted in French; laws were promulgated in French; transactions in government offices and law courts also were in French. And bright young students were encouraged to study in France so that they would think in French. If one wanted to get ahead, the path was signed in French.

The Russian Language

The same policy was practiced by the Russians in Central Asia. Russian was the language that led to good jobs in commerce and was necessary for postings in government. That was the pattern already set under the Tsars, but, to the Soviet government, it was only the first step.

The Communists rightly saw that language was a weapon as well as a tool. In 1926, they implemented a policy to widen the gaps among the various Turkic peoples. By dropping the use of the old script (*Osmanlu*) and putting Azeri Turkish into the Latin alphabet, as they did in 1926, and then into Cyrillic as they did in 1936, they cut the upcoming generation off from its cultural and historical roots. Young people could no longer read what the Nineteenth Century reformers had written.

The second step was to divide the common written language by dialects, forming a new written language of each, so that an Uzbek could no longer read what a Tajik or an Anatolian Turk was writing.

When this policy did not work fast enough or completely enough to satisfy Josef Stalin, he followed the plan first set out by the Germans during their occupation of the Crimea to expel the natives. He arranged the shipment of 191,044 Crimeans, mainly women and children, deeper into Central Asia. Shipped by unheated and unprovisioned cattle cars, many died en route to forced labor camps.

The government then razed the departing population's cultural relics including mosques and graveyards, renamed thousands of towns and villages, burned Turkic language books and manuscripts and erased mention of the people in the *Great Soviet Encyclopedia*.

Chinese policy under Chiang Kai-shek toward the Turks in Turkistan (Xinjiang) went even further. Following revolts in 1933 by the Kazak people and in 1944 by the Turkish people of Ili who proclaimed the short-lived "East Turkish Republic," Chiang denied that there were such people as the Turks, saying that they were just part of the "greater Chinese race." As Chinese, the Turks should give up Turkish and learn Chinese. [Linda Benson, *The Moslem Challenge to Chinese Authority in Xinjiang* (Armonk, New York: Sharpe, 1990), 27.]

Malay nationalists were gripped by something like Chiang's ethnic policy. For the British, Malaya was a vast rubber plantation and to work it the British imported cheap, indeed almost slave, labor from India and China.

To keep the peace with the politically more active members of these groups, they hit on the idea of amalgamating them into the feeble Malay nationalist movement. That provoked a reaction. Fearing the loss of their nation (Malay: *melayu* from the Turkish *millet*) the tiny nationalist party, led by Ibrahim Yaacob sought to ally itself with Indonesia.

Neither the British nor the Dutch would tolerate such a program and he was forced out of public life. For the moment Malay nationalism went down without even a whimper, but the idea of some sort of southeast Asian entity would resurface and is alive today.

Malaya would not have gained much strength from an association with Indonesia. Indeed, until about 1920, there was no conception of an "Indonesia;" it was only then that the dissident native elite began to try to overcome their divisions into Java, Bali, Sumatra and the other islands. Before that time, what passed as nationalism was a polite, Dutch tolerated, move to better educate the population.

What was remarkable about it was that one of its early advocates and publicists was a Muslim woman, Raden Kartini, who lived from 1879 to 1904 and who was also a pioneer of women's liberation. The Dutch were in favor of the educational programs she encouraged because, like colonists elsewhere, they were trying to build an inexpensive native bureaucracy.

But nationalism had no part in this effort and the Dutch vigorously opposed it. They not only fought uprisings but successfully kept the various small societies apart from one another.

It was only in 1927 that Achmed Sukarno founded the secular Indonesian National Party (*Partai Nasional Indonesia*). The Dutch promptly put him in prison. He was released by the Japanese a decade later when they invaded the islands. Then, when the Japanese surrendered, the Dutch returned and, with British support, tried to reestablish their rule. For five years, they fought vicious battles against Indonesian guerrillas before giving up and recognizing Indonesian independence in 1950. [See M.C. Ricklefs. *A Modern History of Indonesia*, (Hampshire, England: Macmillan, 1981) and Adrian Vickers, *A History of Modern Indonesia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

The Indian Struggle

In India, the struggle against British imperialism lasted much longer than the

Indonesian struggle against the Dutch. In India, there was an empire to be reckoned with.

Like the Ottoman Empire the Mughal empire was decrepit, but Britain treated them differently. Whereas the British saw the Ottoman empire as useful in blocking a Russian break out into the Mediterranean, the Mughal empire had few any redeeming features in British eyes. Piece by piece they dismantled it using its own subjects as their helpers. Finally, the helpers turned against them in the 1857 Sepoy "Rebellion," Sepoy being Anglicized Persian for Sipahi (soldiers).

The rebellion was a viciously fought war in which the British took few prisoners and wiped out whole villages. When the British with their Indian allies put it down, they both destroyed the Mughal empire and set aside the Muslims as disloyal natives. It effectively ended not only the Mughal empire but also the remaining British toleration of the Muslim community. Muslims were banned from the British armed forces and the sharp turn to relative support of the Indian Hindus with great implications for the future.

Having lost the status they had previously enjoyed, Indian Muslims, then about 40 million in number, transferred their loyalty to the Ottoman Sultan-Caliph as the actual spiritual and potential political leader of the Muslim world.

So when, in the First World War, Britain attacked the Ottoman Iraqi provinces, the Sultan responded with just what Britain most feared, call for a holy war, *jihad*. To the surprise of the British, however, the Indian Muslim response was muted. Meanwhile, the relationship of Muslims to Britain and to Hindu society was undergoing both cosmetic and profound changes.

Perhaps the most profound change in Muslim-Hindu- British relationships was that lower caste and untouchable Indians who were condemned to perpetual slavery in Hinduism continued converting by the millions to Islam. While far less numerous than the Hindus, Muslims had become a major political force which both the Hindu nationalist movement and the British sought to use for their own ends.

Also politically important were the links established by the Muslim elite directly with England over the heads of the British rulers in India. Two leading figures demonstrate this trend. The first was the Aga Khan who was the immensely rich leader of the Ismaili community.

When the middle-class Englishmen who made up the membership of the British clubs in India did not welcome him, he shrewdly found a way into the top crust of English society. He saw that the royal family and the aristocracy were addicted to horseracing so he used his money, connections and skills to become an outstanding breeder and racer of horses. He was everywhere sought after in

England and could take his political arguments direct to decision makers.

The second Indian Muslim was a product of the best of English education. Muhammad Ali Jinnah (1876-1948) read law at the Inns of Court in London. The British found him a formidable adversary precisely because he was so powerfully "English." He treated the British civil servants, the members of the Indian Political Service, as though in a debate at the Oxford Union and parlayed his forensic skills, his Muslim identity and his popularity into a major role even in the Hindu-dominated Indian National Congress.

At the same time, Jinnah created an independent power base as the leader of the All-India Muslim League. Originally, he sought to work with the Hindus against the British and toward a united India, but, by 1940, he had come to believe that Muslims and Hindus would never be able to work and live together in a single state. Thus, he espoused the idea of a separate Muslim state. He would become the "father" (*Babu-i Qawm*) of Pakistan.

Jinnah's legal skills were comparable to those of the Kashmiri Hindu, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, who studied at Cambridge University and read law at the Inner Temple in London. He was at least as "at home" in English as in Hindi and was very close to the English aristocracy, even having an affair with Lady Mountbatten, the wife of the last British High Commissioner.

An Egyptian Uprising

Meanwhile, among the Arabs, a major nationalist revolt broke out in Egypt in April 1919. Egypt then had a small wealthy, educated elite that had become accustomed over a generation to working with the British authorities. During that period, the British had reluctantly and slowly allowed the children of the elite to attend Cairo's sprawling university.

There, they turned away from the ideas that were permeating Turkish and Arab societies. Many of their leading figures like Taha Husain, the blind religious scholar and novelist, had begun to argue that Egypt was not an Arab land or indeed even a part of the Middle East but rather a member of the Mediterranean cultural zone.

It was in this context a growing sense of capacity and a growing sense of being part of what I have called "the North," that Egyptians heard the Allied, and above all, President Woodrow Wilson's, proclamations of a new era of peace and independence. Riding this wave of hope, a sober and theretofore British approved member of the elite, Saad Zaghlul, led a delegation (*wafd*) to respectfully request permission to attend the Paris Peace Conference and present its case for independence.

The British were not amused. They turned him down and warned him that he was breaking martial law. Given that he was a former minister in their puppet regime, the British were astonished when Zaghlul began to organize resistance among the university students.

The British, who had a low opinion of Egyptian will and courage, cracked down, arresting and exiling Zaghlul. The students responded with terrorism. Push led to shove. After three years of sporadic violence, the British wisely offered a compromise: they would agree to limited independence. So, limited independence under a docile monarchy and a contented aristocracy was what Egypt lived under until the end of the Second World War.

Meanwhile, in Iraq, on June 30, 1920, a minor incident set off a revolt of the tribes that then made up a large part of the population of what had been the Ottoman provinces (*pashaliks*) of Baghdad and Basra. It was a spontaneous outburst of anger and does not seem to have been motivated by any sense of nationalism although religious sentiment played a significant role.

The tribesmen, with no overall leadership and no announced goals, derailed trains, killed 1,654 soldiers (at a cost to themselves of about 10,000 people). As T.E. Lawrence was quick to point out, the cost to Britain was six times as much as the British had spent stimulating the wartime "Revolt in the Desert."

The cost was too high and the benefit too low so the young Winston Churchill did something that did not seem ever to occur to an American president: he organized a meeting to plan a new policy. That new policy resulted in the creation of quasi-independent states in Iraq, Trans-Jordan, Palestine and Egypt. The new order was sufficient to give Britain a satisfactory degree of control at minimal cost for a generation. [Aaron S. Klieman, *Foundations of British Policy in the Arab World: The Cairo Conference of 1921* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1970)]

What the new order which was partially copied by the French in Syria and Lebanon allowed was a brand of national identity appropriate to separate nation-states. That was the local or state based nationalism known as *wataniyah*, which was always unsatisfactory to the younger Arabs. But they were at yet unsure even who they were: Iraqis, Syrians, Lebanese, or more vaguely, Arabs.

Defining a Nation

Meeting in Brussels in December 1938, an assembly of the most gifted Middle Eastern students tried to reach agreement on the meaning of the words "Arab" and "Arab nation." An Arab, they decided, was pretty much anyone who thought he was an Arab and who spoke Arabic.

What was different in this meeting was that for the first time, they used a word to replace the current term *wataniah*. They decided that it was national sentiment (*al-shuur al-Qawmiyah*) that was the key element. So let me dig into the meaning of *qawmiyah*.

What the students were trying to emphasize is that if the Arab people were split into artificial states, as the French and British had done in the Mandate system they constructed at the Paris Peace Conference, the Arabs could never achieve independence, power or dignity. Only if they recognized a pan-Arab loyalty could they move toward those fundamental objectives.

And, as always among the Arabs, the word chosen was crucial. So what was *qawmiyah*? It is the quality living by the terms appropriate to a *qawm*. To understand what that means, consider the basis of the Arab experience, the tribal or desert background.

In desert conditions, survival is a group activity. A lone individual cannot survive. But pasture for animals and water for humans, which are always meager, depend upon irregular rainfall. So the group cannot be large. It ranged in size from about 50 to a hundred or so people, usually descendants of a single man.

Among the Arabs, this group was not the tribe (*Qabila*), which might number hundreds or even thousands, and so could rarely assemble, but to the clan (*qawm*). To the *qawm* the individual owed total loyalty and from his membership in it derived social identity, legal standing and protection. He was absolutely honor bound to protect fellow members and to avenge any wrong to any member.

These were the sentiments the young Arab nationalists wanted the members of their movement to exemplify. To them, the granting of quasi-independence under the League of Nations was not a step forward but a reinforcement of foreign control carried out by local puppets among an artificially divided people.

If the young nationalists needed any proof of the result, it was provided by the weakness, cowardice and disunity made manifest in the 1948-1949 Arab-Israeli war. In their petty jealousies and conflicting aims, the Arab governments had allowed almost the entire Arab population of Palestine to lose what the Arab League had proclaimed to be an integral part of the Arab World.

The defeat was a humiliation of unprecedented proportions. The most memorable critique of the separate or *wataniyah* Arab leadership was by the Syrian Christian diplomat and educator, Constantine Zurayq, who wrote: "Seven Arab states declare war on Zionism in Palestine, stop impotent before it and then turn on their heels [content only to make] fiery speeches but when action becomes necessary, the fire is still and quiet" [*The Meaning of the Disaster*

(*Maana al-Nakba*), Beirut 1949.]

His words would echo down the years and still sound loudly today.

The Rise of Nasser

One of the men who watched the war under fire was the Egyptian officer Gamal Abd al-Nasir (aka Nasser), who came out of the battle gripped by two ideas: the first was that the only hope for the Arabs was an overarching sense of *qawmiyah* or pan-Arab unity. The second was that the existing “old regimes,” starting with King Faruq (aka Farouk) of Egypt must go.

Except in Egypt where exiling Faruq was easy, he failed to accomplish his first objective the old regimes were deeply enmeshed in systems of privilege, custom and corruption and remained in power in most of the Arab states. Seeing this, he slowly realized that that change must be profound to be effective. Indeed, it required a social, economic and intellectual revolution.

To achieve his goals or even to survive, Nasir (Nasser) thought that he had to create what I have called “new men.” They were not a separate class but existed in each social class. Usually, they were “graduates” of the army, acquired a sort of uniform, were encouraged by special privileges and were able to earn several times the income of traditional workers.

Unfortunately for his regime, his social revolution was deflected and stopped by his “Vietnam,” his involvement in the Yemen revolution of 1962, and the ensuing 1967 war with Israel. But, during his short life (he died in 1970 at the age of 52), he personified the Arab quest for Qawmiyah.

Very different was the experience of the men who led the Algerian struggle for independence, but they shared a slow evolution of nationalism comparable to Egypt’s. Like the Egyptians who thought of themselves as part of a Mediterranean culture, prominent Algerians sought to “evolve” into Europeans. These Algerians put aside Arabic to be admitted on equal terms into France. Their best known leader, Farhat Abbas, even denied that there was such an entity as the Algerian nation.

But many Algerians concluded that becoming sort-of French was not an option. As some of the Vietnamese Communist leaders experienced, from working and living in France, they knew that the French would not accept them on any terms. The leading Algerian in this group was Messali Hadj.

Messali Hadj was not a member of the French tolerated Algerian elite. He was a working man and his target was the Algerian worker population of France, the laborers who actually wielded the shovels and did much of the hard work on

French roads and in French factories. His first move was to form a club for them, for which crime the French put him into prison.

When he got out in 1937, he organized the first real political party, calling itself the *Parti Progressiste Algerien*. But, only the name was French. It demanded full independence and the redistribution of lands taken by the settlers. Those were nearly capital crimes. During the Second World War, he was condemned to 16 years of hard labor and the party was outlawed. Bullets soon replaced bars.

Post-War Hopes

At the end of the Second World War, a euphoria swept the colonial world inspired by Franklin Roosevelt's "ringing" words about freedom, much as the Egyptian had reacted to similar pronouncements at the end of the First World War. The words of others, such as Winston Churchill, were less ringing and those of Charles de Gaulle were much more guarded and vague, forecasting a French effort "to lead each of the colonial people to a development that will permit them to administer themselves, and, later, to govern themselves."

The Algerians organized for freedom. Indeed, some thought they had already become free. Among them were the people of the little Algerian town of Setif who gathered to celebrate. Their originally peaceful manifestation was broken up by private Frenchmen, the French police and the French army. And some 40 villages in the area were bombed by the French air force. Estimates of Algerian casualties range from 10,000 to 45,000.

That tragedy may be taken as the seedbed of modern Algerian nationalism. Messali Hadj reemerged to reform his party which won the municipal elections of 1947 but was overwhelmed by fraud and intimidation in the next round of elections. He was again arrested and deported. This action was an early case of what today is called "decapitation," but it was not successful. A new generation of Algerians, many of whom had served in the French army during the Second World War, concluded that they could gain nothing with ballots and began to think in terms of bullets. Among the new leaders was Ahmad ben Bella.

Ahmad ben Bella was a decorated soldier and favored violent action. Electrified by the French defeat in Indochina, he and a group of colleagues formed the "Front de Liberation Nationale (FLN). Nov. 1, 1954 was the effective beginning of the Algerian war.

The French accepted the challenge. In the first major engagement, French soldiers were ordered to kill every Arab they met. They did. French soldiers massacred about 12,000 Algerians.

The brutality was returned in kind. In the first three years of the war, the *militants* killed more than 7,000 “turncoat” (*Harki*) Algerians. Some of these killings were used as an indoctrination ritual that, like the Mau Mau “oathings,” was meant to convert an untested recruit to commit an act from which he could not turn back. Above all, the FLN like other Arab guerrillas and terrorists feared disunity. Today, the Islamic Caliphate is apparently using the same tactics.

The war was fought on three “fronts.” One was in Europe and America where efforts were made to get the United Nations and the other Powers to press the French to give Algeria independence; a second was in Cairo, Tunis and Rabat where Ben Bella and his colleagues gathered funds mobilized men into an “external” army that never fought but was prepared for the conditions of independence. The third was in Algeria where small bands (*wilayas*) actually fought the French army.

The principal guerrilla leader, Ramdane Abane, decided on a bold and nearly suicidal campaign: the Battle of Algiers. It began with the general strike of Jan. 28, 1957. To put it down, the French army used all the tactics of counterinsurgency. Militarily the army won, but politically their campaign was a disaster.

Special Forces (paratroop) use of torture and murder revolted the French. But it was not French opinion that caused de Gaulle to give up: it was the French army’s threat to overthrow the French government itself. De Gaulle was so frightened that he ringed the presidential palace with anti-aircraft cannon and he left Paris secretly for the safety of a French army group in Germany.

Having survived an attempted coup, De Gaulle was so infuriated that he sent 20,000 French soldiers with tanks, artillery and aircraft into the European suburb of Algiers where they killed a large number of French citizens. With them beaten down, the French government was able to bring the war to a close in the Evian Accords of March 17, 1962. (During this time, I was the head of the “Interdepartmental Taskforce on Algeria” in the U.S. government.)

The Palestinian Struggle

Very different was the struggle of the Palestinians at the other end of the Mediterranean. About 800,000 Palestinians had been driven out of their land before and during the 1948-1949 war. While, for years, Israelis denied their involvement, Israeli government documents prove that the forced exodus was deliberate, well planned and brutal. It left scars which have shaped Arab nationalism and today shape Arab guerrilla warfare and terrorism. More narrowly, this Israeli action ironically created the first “international” movement of the

Arabs.

Internationalization of the Arabs happened in two interrelated ways. On the one hand, the international community decided that the Palestinian refugees could not be left to die. So in the summer of 1950 a new United National organization (UNRWA) was created to care for them.

I first visited several refugee camps in 1950, and in 1963, while a member of the Kennedy Administration, I was offered the job of Deputy Commissioner General of UNRWA, but the State Department would not release me to take it.

While the most employable, the best educated and the lucky among the Palestinian refugees found temporary or permanent homes in Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Libya and even further afield, the vast majority were assembled in about 50 what were assumed to be temporary camps in Gaza, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon. They were to be supported given food, shelter, medical care, schooling and clothing at a per capita subsidy of \$27 yearly.

If the material diet was insipid, it was sustaining. The emotional diet was noxious. It was a blend of exaggerated memories, unrealistic hopes, enforced idleness and real angers. Within a decade over half of the Palestinians had never lived outside the camps. They blamed their hosts, the Arab governments and peoples, for the loss of their homeland.

And, in turn, their hosts felt insulted. Worse, their hosts used them as sources of cheap labor and that increased both their sense of misery and anger. To would-be leaders, they were raw material. Inevitably, the more radical turned to what I have called violent politics. Reports of the 1950s and 1960s are filled with hijackings, kidnappings, murders. [I provide a record of these events in my book *The Arab World Today* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991), Chapter 16.]

Actions replaced words and thoughts. Unlike the other national movements, this one gave rise to no definitions or programs of nationalism. All thought of the Palestinians was directed toward the sole goal of Return. How to accomplish that goal was always elusive; what was clear was that at least in their experience, "internationalization" was not conducive of pan-Arab unity.

Pan-Arab unity remained avidly sought. The last of the nationalist groups to espouse it was the "Resurrection" (*Baath*) Party formed by the French-educated, Greek Orthodox but personally secular Syrian intellectual, Michel Aflaq (1910-1989).

From 1932, he went through several major changes in style and organization. At first, he espoused Communism, but when the Communists opportunistically endorsed

French colonialism, he broke with them and, together with a fellow Syrian (Salah Bitar) who also has studied in the Sorbonne, set out to create an Arab socialist national party. He dissolved the party when in 1958 the Syrian army decided to merge Syria into the Nasserite United Arab Republic (the UAR).

When the UAR broke up in 1961, Aflaq's reputation declined in Syria. During the 1966 coup d'état (that led eventually to the seizure of power by Hafez al-Assad), Aflaq fled Syria and went to Iraq. There, two years later, one of the men whose thought he had influenced, Saddam Hussein, seized power. Hussein welcomed and publicly honored Aflaq but did not allow him much political influence or action.

Saddam did, however, publicly proclaim his regime's support of Baathism as part of his rivalry with Assad. Thus, ironically, while the basic idea of Baathism was Arab unity, it became itself an example of the pressures that led to Arab disunion.

Failed Nationalism

In summary, it became evident to the younger generation that nationalism and "Arab Socialism" had failed in the tasks they had assumed to protect the Arab "nation" and to create a sense of national unity and dignity. As I wrote above, there were many reasons for failure insincerity, rivalry or corruption of leaders, imbalance of military and civic components of society, the magnitude of the tasks to be performed with insufficient means and, above all, foreign military threat and intervention but a growing number of politically active people concluded that, regardless of the causes of failure, failure itself was starkly evident.

With that recognition that nationalism had failed to produce the reality of power or the sense of dignity that were its goals, disillusionment set in. What remained was only the heritage of religion. I will address its contemporary manifestations in my next and final essay.

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A Brief Moment of Christmas Peace

The impromptu Christmas truce of 1914 was a rare moment when human solidarity overrode the demands of hatred and war, when the guns fell silent over the Western Front of World War I and enemies became briefly friends, as Michael Winship recalls.

By Michael Winship

Last Friday night, I went to a small off-Broadway theater to see an engaging, poignant one-man show about the Christmas Truce of 1914. The title was *Our Friends, the Enemy*, written and performed by a young British actor named Alex Gwyther.

I felt bad for him; the theater was only about a third full that evening, probably because of the approaching holiday, but perhaps also because we Americans simply are too often indifferent to a century-old fight that scorched the European continent.

You would scarcely know it here in the United States, but since last year, the British, French, Germans and others of our Western allies have been commemorating the 100th anniversary of World War I, a conflict of extreme foolishness and colossal consequences, like almost every other.

Maybe our interest in this centennial has seemed lacking so far because we didn't enter The Great War until 1917. Or maybe it's because others' losses were so much more devastating than our own we lost more than 53,000 lives but half of all Frenchmen who were between the ages of 20 and 32 died, and more than 35 percent of German men ages 19 to 22.

Some 723,000 British were killed, more than would die during World War II. No wonder, as Benjamin Schwarz wrote in *The Atlantic* back in 1999, "The war is Britain's national trauma, and British and Commonwealth historians compulsively revisit it in the way that American historians revisit the Civil War."

So I felt bad for the actor and sad that more people weren't in the theater to hear an important story ingrained in British memory so profoundly that last Christmas a UK supermarket chain even used a highly romanticized version of the events as the basis of a wildly popular and sentimental TV commercial.

In December 1914, World War I had been raging in Europe for some five months; British, French and Belgian troops fighting against Germany and Austria. Along the western front, trench warfare rapidly became the norm, soldiers on both sides deeply dug in, stuck in mud, filth and pestilence with a no-man's land

sometimes just a few dozen yards wide running between the lines. This stalemate was steadily punctuated with rifle and cannon fire, death and anguished cries from the wounded.

On Dec. 7 that year, Pope Benedict XV called for a Christmas Eve truce, “that the guns may fall silent at least upon the night the angels sang.” His plea was rejected.

Few if any of the foot soldiers may have known about that papal imploration, but many of them took it upon themselves to make their own peace, however brief. On Christmas Eve, German troops along the line raised across the trench tops small Christmas trees lit by candles. The two sides sang carols to one another, their voices drifting warily across no man’s land.

With daylight on Christmas morning, on each side, men cautiously peered from their trenches and a few ventured out to shake hands with their foes and exchange holiday greetings, followed by more and more. Artillery fire stopped.

James Boyce, the soldier played by Alex Gwyther in *Our Friends, the Enemy*, tells the tale:

“Grey and khaki begin to blend into one. Order of military rank and the barriers of language vanish, as they shake hands and introduce themselves in a mix of broken English and silent gestures. They offer small gifts of friendship, drinks, cigarettes, buttons, badges, sketches they’ve drawn and in the warm absurdity of their Christmas morning, some exchange addresses to meet up after the war.”

There are stories of impromptu soccer games or simple kick rounds with an actual ball or something vaguely spherical improvised from tin cans or straw-stuffed sandbags, nothing as organized as the match that supermarket ad suggests. More organized were burial details that the momentary peace allowed to retrieve the dead.

“We worked with the enemy,” the character James Boyce recalls, “collecting the men whom we had killed together and attempted to clean up the mess of this war. It slowly dawned on us all war was still upon us. A strange orange slithered over the dead, and two armies placed their heads in their hands.”

That Christmas of 1914, the peace lasted in some places longer than others; and in still others it never happened at all. Afterwards, word came from on high that such behavior, insubordination!, would never again be permitted. One German infantryman in the trenches also thought it was a disgrace.

“Such a thing should not happen in wartime,” he declared. His name was Adolf

Hitler.

In *Our Friends, the Enemy*, James Boyce recalls, “Tucked away from the war in a quiet corner of France, sheltered by trees and covered in frost, thick twigs tied together to form small crucifixes lunge out from the fluffy snow. A worn helmet rests under each cross.

“An old tree, built with a thick body stands over the small cemetery, its long branches watching over the small bumps in the snow. In its trunk, words have been carved using the bayonet of a rifle:

“‘*Death unites us all, and we all rest on the same side.*’”

They called it “the war to end all wars.” Pause for sardonic laughter, fast forward to today. Once again, politicians and others run around ferociously beating the war drums, pandering to our fears and baser instincts. In the end, while there are really very few differences among us, there will always be those who seek to turn those small differences into monsters. Do not let that happen.

We all rest on the same side. See you next year.

Michael Winship is the Emmy Award-winning senior writer of *Moyers & Company* and BillMoyers.com, and a former senior writing fellow at the policy and advocacy group Demos. Follow him on Twitter at [@MichaelWinship](https://twitter.com/MichaelWinship). [This story first appeared at <http://billmoyers.com/story/the-christmas-day-that-peace-broke-out/>]

Fighting a Cultural Boycott of Israel

Cultural and economic boycotts helped isolate white-supremacist South Africa and encouraged a shift to multi-racial democracy – and a similar strategy has ratcheted up pressure on Israel to reach a peace deal with Palestinians – but there is a new pushback against that strategy, notes Lawrence Davidson.

By Lawrence Davidson

There is a new British organization called [Culture for Coexistence](#) with the aim of ending the cultural boycott of Israel, which has been relatively effective in raising public awareness of oppressive Zionist policies, and replace it with “open dialogue” and “cultural engagement.” A “galaxy of 150 British artists and authors” signed an [open letter](#) published in the *Guardian* newspaper on Oct. 22 announcing the group’s position:

“Cultural boycotts singling out Israel are divisive and discriminatory and will

not further peace,” while “open dialogue and interaction promote greater understanding and mutual acceptance and it is through such understanding and acceptance that movement can be made towards a resolution of the conflict.”

While concepts such as open dialogue and cultural interaction are, in principle, hard to disagree with, their efficacy as agents of conflict resolution has to be judged within a historical context. In other words, such approaches are effective when circumstances dictate that all parties seriously dialogue and interact meaningfully – in a manner that actually promotes “mutual acceptance.”

Is this the case when it comes to Israel? The burden of proof here is on Culture for Coexistence because they are the ones asking the Palestinians and their supporters to put aside a strategy (boycott) that is actually putting pressure on Israel to negotiate seriously.

The Culture for Coexistence signatories do not address this question of efficacy. Instead they make the simple assertion that cultural boycotts are bad and won't help resolve the conflict while cultural interaction is good and will work to that end. How do they know this? Without evidence of its workability, such an assertion is merely an idealization of cultural engagement that ignores that pursuit's historical futility during a nearly century long conflict.

Do Israeli Leaders Want a Just Peace?

Cultural interaction with Israel went on for decades before the boycott effort got going. It had no impact on the issue of conflict resolution. Such cultural activity certainly did not change the fact that Israel's leaders have never shown interest in negotiating a resolution with the Palestinians except solely on Israeli terms.

And, that stubbornness is a major part of the reason why peace talks (and also the Oslo agreements) never worked. There is a whole set of histories, written by Israelis and based on archival research that support the claim that Israel has not sought a just resolution to the conflict. Here I would recommend the Culture for Coexistence signatories read the books of the Israeli historian Ilan Pappé.

Given this historical Zionist attitude, what sort of “greater understanding and mutual acceptance” does Culture and Coexistence expect to accomplish by swapping the boycott for “cultural engagement”? It is a question the signatories of the open letter might address to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who just recently was reported to have proclaimed that Israel will control all Palestinian land indefinitely.

The “galaxy of British artists and authors” aligned with Culture for Coexistence seems oblivious to all these contextual issues. Of course, there is a good chance that some of them are more interested in undermining the boycott of Israel than in the alleged promotion of peace through “cultural engagement.”

As the [Guardian article](#) discussing the group notes, “Some of the network’s supporters are closely aligned with Israel,” including individuals associated with Conservative Friends of Israel and Labour Friends of Israel.

Does Cultural Contact Lead to Peace?

There is another, more generic misunderstanding exhibited in the group’s statement. It is found in the letter’s closing assertion that “cultural engagement builds bridges, nurtures freedom and positive movement for change” – a position reiterated when Loraine da Costa, chairperson of the new organization, told the *Guardian* that “culture has a unique ability to bring people together and bridge division.”

No matter how you want to define culture, high or low, there is no evidence for this position except on the level of individuals or small groups. On the level of larger or whole populations, the assertion that “cultural engagement builds bridges” is another naive idealization that is belied by historical practice. Historically, culture has always divided people (both across borders and across classes) and acted as a barrier to understanding. At a popular level, most people are uninterested in, or suspicious of, foreign cultures and are unwilling to try to pursue cultural interaction.

Israel is a very good example of this cultural xenophobia. Historically, the European Jews who established the state despised Arab culture. They tried to eradicate it among the Mizrahi Jews who came to Israel from Arab lands. This intra-Jewish Israeli prejudice is still a problem today. What aspects of Arab culture (mostly having to do with cuisine) Israeli Jews are attracted to they try to repackage as “Israeli.”

There are two final considerations here: First is the need to be serious and clear in the use of language. One can, of course, say “culture has a unique ability to bring people together” but is this a statement that has any real meaning or is it just a platitude?

And second: If you are going to give advice about a century-old conflict you should know enough about its history to be sensible in your offering. Thus, in this case, if you know that high or low cultural intercourse with Israel (and, as suggested above, there has been plenty of it since the founding of the state in 1948), has actually improved the prospects for Israeli-Palestinian peace, you

should lay out the evidence. However, if one is just offering a banal cliché, well, only the ignorant can take that seriously.

Those who first proposed the cultural boycott did not do it out of some anti-Semitic dislike for Israeli artworks, music, literature or theater. They did it because cultural interaction with Israel had not only failed to promote an equitable peace, but in fact camouflaged the policies of a nation-state that practices ethnic cleansing and other destructive policies against non-Jews.

The logical conclusion was drawn that if you want to pressure the Israelis to change their ways, you withdraw from cultural contact and make any reconnection a condition of their getting serious about conflict resolution.

How is it that the 150 artists and authors who signed the Culture for Coexistence open letter do not know the relevant facts? Setting aside the confirmed Zionists, whose ulterior motive is pretty clear, do these people take this stand because it “*feels right*” – that is, because they believe cultural interaction *ought to*, or even *must*, promote conflict resolution? Alas, this is wishful thinking and, taking history seriously, Palestine may go extinct before such an approach actually helps lead to a just peace.

Lawrence Davidson is a history professor at West Chester University in Pennsylvania. He is the author of [Foreign Policy Inc.: Privatizing America's National Interest](#); [America's Palestine: Popular and Official Perceptions from Balfour to Israeli Statehood](#); and [Islamic Fundamentalism](#).

Lost Lessons from a Toddler's Death

The world's conscience was touched by the photo of a toddler who drowned while fleeing the war in Syria – and Europe's cohesion is threatened by the growing flood of Syrian refugees. But Western leaders won't let go of their “regime change” fixation which is making matters worse, writes Rick Sterling.

By Rick Sterling

Around 3:30 a.m. on Sept. 2, toddler Aylan Kurdi, his brother, mother and nine others drowned trying to reach a Greek island from Bodrum, Turkey. Around 6 a.m., the [staff photographer](#) from Dogan News Agency came upon Aylan's body on the beach and took the famous photograph of the little boy lying face down on a

beach.

In a few hours it was published online and “went viral” on Turkish then English language social media. Washington Post Beirut chief Liz Sly posted the photo with comment that Aylan’s death is “emblematic of world’s failure in Syria.” Minutes later, Nadim Houry of Human Rights Watch (HRW) posted the photo with comment that it’s an “indictment of collective failure.”

Media worldwide began featuring video and stories showing refugees traveling by land in Europe. The crisis that burst into view on Sept. 2 has been building for years. But can the raised consciousness address the root cause of the crisis?

The media and numerous organizations have shone a bright light on the refugee crisis. North European countries with low birth rates and aging populations are accepting more refugees. Germany will reportedly accept 800,000 over the next year. Many other countries including the U.S. are promising to accept more refugees from Syria. This is welcome news. However it’s not a solution because:

–Syrian refugees accepted in Europe and other Western nations are a small part of the total need. There are 4 million Syrian refugees living in bordering countries and another 7 million to 8 million displaced Syrians living in government controlled areas within Syria.

–Permitting more Syrians to emigrate addresses a symptom but not the root cause. Most Syrians do not want to emigrate to Europe or elsewhere. A Syrian boy trying to reach Europe said: “Stop the war in Syria then we won’t want to go to Europe.”

Most Syrians just want the war in their country to end. Two days after his children and wife drowned, on his way back to his hometown of Kobane Syria, the father of Aylan Kurdi said simply, “All I want is peace in Syria.” But the forces driving the war are not changing their approach.

Hostile Governments Demand “Regime Change”

Since Aylan’s death, the countries waging war on Syria through proxy armies continue to demand change in Syria’s government and/or direct intervention through the sweet-sounding name “secure zone” (which would mean in reality a military invasion by the U.S. and/or other countries to seize and control Syrian territory from which rebel forces could strike deeper into Syria).

–On Sept. 4, Turkish Prime Minister Davutoglu said “I have been trying ... to persuade world leaders for the need of the establishment of a secure zone inside Syria. ... There are developments just like the ones occurred in Srebrenica if secure zones are not established.” His comparison to Srebrenica hints at the

beginning of potential NATO bombing and is ironic since Srebrenica had been declared a “safe zone” years before the city became a symbol of death and war.

–On Sept. 9, UK Prime Minister David Cameron confirmed the UK goals for Syria: “Assad has to go, ISIL (also known as the Islamic State, ISIS or Daesh) has to go and some of that will require not just spending money, not just aid, not just diplomacy, but it will on occasion require hard military force.”

–On Sept. 14, U.S. Special Presidential Envoy for the Global Coalition against ISIL, General John Allen said to the BBC: “We have envisaged from the beginning that this was going to be a long term struggle. ... It’s not just about dealing with Daesh. It’s about dealing with the conditions that created them. Bashar al-Assad has got to go. He is both a point and representation of what has caused so much instability in the region.”

General Allen talks easily about “long term struggle” while Syrians have their country attacked by foreign-funded mercenaries and fanatics. The total population of Syria is less than 10 percent the population of the U.S. yet more Syrian soldiers have died defending their country than all the U.S. soldiers killed in Vietnam. What would General Allen think if the U.S. was being invaded by tens of thousands of heavily armed and financed terrorists streaming across the Canadian and Mexican borders?

There are many “non-governmental organizations” (NGOs) working on Syria. The “White Helmets” is such an organization, created by the U.S. and UK with training in Turkey. They claim to be “neutral” but are not. They posted an illustration of Aylan Kurdi linking to an article calling for an “aerial bombardment free zone” in southern Syria. They effectively used Aylan’s death to promote a U.S.- or NATO-enforced No Fly Zone (which in real terms would require U.S./NATO war planes to destroy the Syrian air force and anti-aircraft sites).

On Sept. 3, Ken Roth, director of Human Rights Watch, another NGO that has promoted “regime change” in Syria, wrote an editorial suggesting “the biggest thing Europe could do to slow the refugee flow: stop Assad’s barrel bombing civilians.”

(The phrase “barrel bombs” has become a favorite talking point against the Assad regime, although it is never made clear why these makeshift weapons are worse than the far more lethal bombs that the U.S. and its allies have dropped on Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Libya, Afghanistan, etc., etc., killing many more thousands of civilians than have died from “barrel bombs.”)

“Barrel bombs” are just home-made bombs of less cost and power, especially compared with U.S.-manufactured bombs supplied to Saudi Arabia and Israel (which

have included cluster munitions notorious for indiscriminate killing). “Barrel bombs” fall to earth by gravity so people on the ground can avoid them more easily than guided bombs. People on the ground also can monitor overhead aircraft and find shelter if there is risk of a falling “barrel bomb,” whereas the self-propelled “smart bombs” can strike without any warning blowing apart not only the target but innocent bystanders.

Roth also ignored the support of proxy armies by the U.S. and its allies, such as Turkey and Saudi Arabia; he also ignored or trivialized the sectarian and fanatic ideology of the armed opposition.

According to Roth’s analysis, the core problem is Assad government attacks on civilians. In reality, however, there are few civilians in the areas controlled by the violent opposition. In the recent Syrian government attack on the violent opposition in Douma, for example, it is claimed the attack was on civilians in a vegetable market place. As shown in this [investigation](#), the fatalities were almost all young fighting age males, a curious demographic for a vegetable market.

The characterization of the Syria conflict by western NGOs and neocons is simple: the problem is the evil Assad. Although it is true the Syrian government needs reform, laying blame for the Syrian war at its feet is simplistic and inaccurate. By demonizing the Syrian government, Human Rights Watch is undermining the chance for compromise and negotiation. Shouldn’t an organization truly committed to human rights be working for a Syrian resolution of the conflict rather than promoting more foreign intervention and prolonging the war?

Tense Situation in Turkey

The death of Aylan Kurdi highlighted the desperate situation of refugees in Turkey. Many believe Turkey has recently been “looking the other way” as refugees take the risky departure trip. The Turkish government may be trying to get rid of the refugees and pressure Europe to commit more resources to the war against Syria.

Meanwhile, Turkey’s ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP), closely allied with the Muslim Brotherhood, lost its parliamentary majority in the June election. Unwilling to form a coalition government, the party has forced a second election to take place Nov. 1. The stakes and tensions inside Turkey are high and rising.

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan seems to be going for broke and provoking tensions, nationalism and conflict with the opposition. On July 20 in the Turkish town of Suruc, across the border from Kobane, Syria, 32 Turkish Kurdish

youth were killed in a bombing. The Kurdish Workers Party PKK claims that Turkish intelligence was behind the bombing, a credible accusation since there is strong evidence of Turkish intelligence support for Nusra, ISIS and other terror groups operating in Syria.

In addition, Turkish intelligence is suspected of being behind the death of American Lebanese journalist Serena Shim, also in Suruc. Shim had exposed Turkey's pivotal role in the war on Syria. The bombing that killed 32, coupled with Turkish air attacks against PKK in northern Iraq, has dramatically ended the Turkish "peace process."

In recent weeks, the AKP government has been threatening media. Gangs have attacked offices of the Progressive Peoples Party and the offices of Hurriyet media. This week a prosecutor charged Dogan news agency (Hurriyet Daily) with "terror propaganda,"

Bloodshed and Attacks in Syria Continue

Meanwhile, the war inside Syria grinds on. In the past two weeks:

–Car bombs have gone off in Latakia

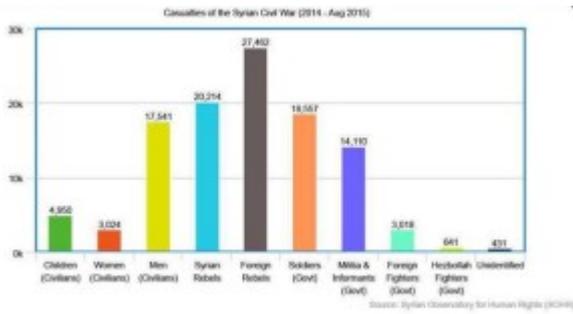
–The "Army of Conquest" (Nusra/Al Qaeda, Arar al Sham, Chinese Uighur, etc.) overran the Abu Duhour Air Base and killed about 100 Syrian soldiers.

–The Syrian Army beat back a large ISIS attack on the important air base in Deir Ezzor in eastern Syria.

Living conditions inside Syria are difficult in many areas, with rationing of electricity and running water. Some Syrians have grown tired of waiting for peace and decided to flee for a chance at security and a better life. Others bravely or stoically continue to make the best of the difficult situation.

The BBC war reporter Jeremy Bowen recently expressed high respect for the Syrian Army. "I have seen quite a lot of armies in the field over the years," Bowen said. "This army has the will to fight on; they are a cohesive unit; these positions are well managed, well run ... The soldiers are disciplined and have a good spirit. They do not look like a beaten army. I think those people who are predicting the fall of the Assad regime are again guilty of wishful thinking."

The war in Syria is intense and bloody. The death toll is huge. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, which supports the opposition, recently produced a graph showing casualties over the past year and half. As can be seen, the largest number of fatalities are foreign fighters. So, why is this called a "civil war"?



Many people are shocked at the images of Aylan Kurdi or thousands of refugees struggling to reach safety somewhere. Some say: “We have to do something!” The reality is that the U.S. and its allies have been “doing something” in Syria since 2011. The U.S. and NATO countries plus wealthy Gulf states and others have been funding, training, providing weapons and salaries for tens of thousands of mercenaries and fanatics to attack Syria. This is a clear violation of customary international law and the UN Charter.

A solution to the Syrian refugee crisis is possible. It would involve outside powers giving up their demand for “regime change” and stopping their support, training and funding of violent opposition groups. There could be an internationally enforced agreement with guarantees for the right to peacefully protest and elections. What is needed is to stop the violence and allow for the start of reconciliation and rebuilding without preconditions.

Is that possible? Are the U.S., Gulf monarchies and NATO so stubbornly committed to their regime change agenda for Syria that they will inflict hundreds of thousands more deaths and further destruction on the cradle of civilization?

Meanwhile, the tragedy continues. Twenty-two refugees drowned this week trying to reach Greece from Turkey.

What has changed since little Aylan drowned? Many more people are aware of a refugee problem. Some countries are taking in more refugees. But the root cause has not been addressed. The war of aggression against Syria continues.

Rick Sterling is a freelance researcher/writer and founding member of Syria Solidarity Movement.

The Sorry Record of a Muslim-Basher

Exclusive: Jumping on the Muslim-bashing bandwagon, Fox News’ commentator Steven Emerson claimed Muslims have seized control of parts of London and all of

Birmingham, terrorizing non-Muslims to flee, claims so absurd that even he was forced to back-track, reports Robert Parry.

By Robert Parry

Supposed “terrorism expert” Steven Emerson has admitted to making a slur against British Muslims, claiming on Fox News that Birmingham, England, is now a “Muslim-only city” and that in parts of London “Muslim religious police beat and actually wound seriously anyone who doesn’t dress according to religious Muslim attire.”

Emerson was asserting that Muslim areas have become “no-go zones” for non-Muslims and cited as an example “actual cities like Birmingham that are totally Muslim, where non-Muslims just simply don’t go in.” Yet, Birmingham, Great Britain’s second-largest city of more than one million people, is nearly half Christian, with the Muslim population less than one-quarter and with significant numbers of Sikhs, Hindus, Jews and non-religious.

As Emerson’s Muslim-bashing remarks drew criticism from the media watchdog group FAIR and ridicule across the United Kingdom, he acknowledged that his “comments about Birmingham were totally in error” and vowed not to blame someone else for his slander.

“I do not intend to justify or mitigate my mistake by stating that I had relied on other sources because I should have been much more careful,” Emerson said in an apparent attempt to do exactly that, shift the blame to some unnamed source for supposedly misleading him.

That ploy of palming off his falsehoods on others is typical of Emerson when he gets caught in a deception. In the early 1990s, when Emerson was riding high as “an award-winning journalist” and took aim at me by falsely claiming that I had lied in a PBS documentary, he responded to my protest to his editors by threatening a lawsuit against me.

Only after I was able to prove that it was Emerson who was lying did he grudgingly back down and blamed one of his researchers for the falsehood. The context of that fabrication was Emerson’s attempt to debunk allegations that Ronald Reagan’s 1980 campaign had colluded with Iranian officials to sabotage President Jimmy Carter’s negotiations to free 52 American hostages then being held in Iran, a crisis that effectively sank Carter’s reelection.

For a PBS “Frontline” documentary on the controversy, I had noted that the Secret Service had released only redacted copies of its records regarding the whereabouts of then vice presidential candidate George H.W. Bush on days when he was alleged to have traveled secretly to Paris. Writing for The New Republic,

Emerson claimed that he had received copies of the Secret Service records under a Freedom of Information Act request without any redactions, suggesting that I had lied.

After talking to the Secret Service and being told that Emerson's records had redactions like everyone else's even Congress and federal prosecutors received redacted versions I challenged Emerson's account in letters to his editors, including one to CNN where he had been hired as an investigative reporter.

Emerson was subsequently dumped by CNN and I was promptly threatened by one of his law firms with a libel suit for having criticized him in letters to his editors. Apparently, I was supposed to apologize for saying that Emerson was lying when he claimed to have Bush's unredacted Secret Service records.

Faced with this legal threat, I had to dig into my children's college fund and hire a lawyer, who frankly seemed to doubt that the well-regarded Emerson could be in the wrong. My response was that if Emerson actually had the unredacted records, he could simply present them, but his lawyer said that would only be done in the midst of a costly trial.

As the abusive and threatening letters from Emerson's lawyers mounted, I decided to submit a FOIA to the Secret Service for Emerson's FOIA, i.e., I demanded exactly the same documents that the Secret Service had released to him. When those records arrived, they showed that Emerson indeed had been lying. His copies of the Secret Service records were redacted, just like those released to me and other investigators.

Finally, the threatened lawsuit went away, and Emerson was forced to admit in an interview with the media watchdog group FAIR that he never had the records he claimed. He blamed a research assistant, but never apologized for the bullying legal strategy designed to financially bleed a journalist (myself) into confirming a lie as the truth. [For more details, see [a report](#) in FAIR's "Extra!," November-December 1993.]

Since then, Emerson has amassed a checkered record as a "terrorism expert," routinely blaming the wrong ethnic groups for various terrorism incidents. [For a brief recounting, see FAIR's ["For Fox News' Steve Emerson, Fact-checking Seems to Be a No-Go Zone."](#)]

Muslim-Bashing Career

Most significantly, Emerson has made a lucrative career out of decrying Muslims. In a 2011 report, entitled ["Fear, Inc."](#) by the Center for American Progress, he was identified as one of five "scholars" who act as "misinformation experts" to "generate the false facts and materials" that are then exploited by politicians

and pundits to frighten Americans about the supposed threat posed by Muslims.

The report offered a rare glimpse into the right-wing propaganda network that has exploited America's post-9/11 hysteria and transformed those fears into a powerful political movement to get millions of Christians and Jews to support legislation and policies that target Muslims and their communities.

But the historical significance of noting Emerson's role in this "Islamophobia network" is that he was revealed to be a propagandist willing to distort information for ideological ends, not the serious journalist that he successfully posed as during the 1980s and 1990s.

In more recent years, followers of Emerson's work have come to understand that he has very close ties to Israeli right-wingers in the Likud Party and that his "journalism" often has reflected their political needs and interests.

However, in the 1990s, Emerson was amassing journalism awards for his work targeting American Muslims as a particularly dangerous lot and he was raising large sums of money to support his work from sources, such as right-wing mogul Richard Mellon Scaife. Emerson's documentary, "Jihad in America," was broadcast by PBS.

Only gradually did a few brave reporters begin criticizing Emerson and his cozy ties to right-wing Israeli officials, including Israeli intelligence officers. Typically, Emerson would hit back by issuing legal threats from his vast stable of high-priced lawyers.

Emerson's use of lawyers to bully other journalists, which I had witnessed firsthand, became part of his modus operandi, as Nation reporter Robert I. Friedman discovered in 1995 after criticizing Emerson's "Jihad in America."

"Intellectual terrorism seems to be part of Emerson's standard repertoire," Friedman wrote. "So is his penchant for papering his critics with threatening lawyers' letters."

Friedman also reported that Emerson hosted right-wing Israeli intelligence officials when they were in Washington. "[Yigal] Carmon, who was Likud Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir's adviser on terrorism, and [Yoram] Ettinger, who was Likud leader Benjamin Netanyahu's man in the Israeli Embassy, stay in Emerson's apartment on their frequent visits to Washington," Friedman wrote.

In 1999, a study of Emerson's history by John F. Sugg for FAIR's magazine "Extra!" quoted an Associated Press reporter who had worked with Emerson on a project as saying of Emerson and Carmon: "I have no doubt these guys are working together."

The Jerusalem Post reported that Emerson has “close ties to Israeli intelligence,” and “Victor Ostrovsky, who defected from Israel’s Mossad intelligence agency and has written books disclosing its secrets, calls Emerson ‘the horn’, because he trumpets Mossad claims,” Sugg reported.

Hammering Away

Over time, Emerson grew notorious for his Islamophobia and his “investigative journalism” that hammered away at purported dangers from “radicalized” American Muslims. In 2010, Emerson went on a national radio program and claimed that Islamic cleric Feisal Abdul Rauf, an American citizen of New York, would likely not “survive” Emerson’s disclosure of supposedly radical comments that Rauf made a half decade earlier.

Although acknowledging that his “investigation” was incomplete, Emerson offered the listeners to Bill Bennett’s right-wing radio show “a little preview” of the allegedly offensive comments by Rauf, the cleric behind a planned community center in Lower Manhattan near the site of 9/11’s “ground zero”:

“We have found audiotapes of Imam Rauf defending Wahhabism, the puritanical version of Islam that governs Saudi Arabia; we have found him calling for the elimination of the state of Israel by claiming he wants a one-nation state meaning no more Jewish state; we found him defending [Osama] bin Laden violence.”

However, when Emerson’s Investigative Project on Terrorism (IPT) released its evidence several days later, it fell far short of Emerson’s lurid descriptions. Rauf actually made points that are shared by many mainstream analysts and none of the excerpted comments involved “defending Wahhabism.”

As for Rauf “defending bin Laden violence,” Emerson apparently was referring to remarks that Rauf made to an audience in Australia in 2005 about the history of U.S. and Western mistreatment of people in the Middle East. “We tend to forget, in the West, that the United States has more Muslim blood on its hands than al-Qaeda has on its hands of innocent non-Muslims,” Rauf said.

“You may remember that the U.S.-led sanctions against Iraq led to the death of over half a million Iraqi children. This has been documented by the United Nations. And when Madeleine Albright, who has become a friend of mine over the last couple of years, when she was Secretary of State and was asked whether this was worth it, [she] said it was worth it.”

Emerson purported to “fact check” Rauf’s statement on the death toll from the Iraq sanctions by claiming “a report by the British government said at most only 50,000 deaths could be attributed to the sanctions, which were brought on by the

actions by former Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein.”

What Emerson’s “fact check” ignored, however, was that Rauf was accurately recounting Leslie Stahl’s questioning of Albright on CBS “60 Minutes” in 1996. Emerson also left out the fact that United Nations studies did conclude that those U.S.-led sanctions caused the deaths of more than 500,000 Iraqi children under the age of five.

In the 1996 interview, Stahl told Albright regarding the sanctions, “We have heard that a half million children have died. I mean, that’s more children than died in Hiroshima. And, you know, is the price worth it?”

Albright responded, “I think this is a very hard choice, but the price we think the price is worth it.”

Emerson didn’t identify the specific British report that contains the lower figure, although even that number “only 50,000” represented a stunning death toll and doesn’t contradict Rauf’s chief point, that U.S.-British actions have killed many innocent Muslims over the years.

Also, by 2005, when Rauf made his remarks in Australia, the United States and Great Britain had invaded and occupied Iraq, with a death toll spiraling from tens of thousands to hundreds of thousands with some estimates of war-related deaths in Iraq exceeding one million.

Far from “defending bin Laden violence,” Rauf’s comments simply reflected the truth about the indiscriminate killing inflicted on the Muslim world by U.S.-British military might over the years. Indeed, British imperialism in the region dates back several centuries, a point that Emerson also ignored. Other of Emerson’s criticisms of Rauf were equally tendentious. [See Consortiumnews.com’s [“Islam Basher Claims to Unmask Cleric.”](#)]

In 2011, amid the furor over Rauf’s project, Emerson took credit for helping to organize controversial hearings by Rep. Peter King, R-New York, on the alleged radicalization of domestic Muslims. Emerson boasted about his role but also lashed out at King for not including him on the witness list for his hearings. In a particularly bizarre letter to King, Emerson vowed to withhold further assistance as retaliation for the snub.

“I was even going to bring in a special guest today and a VERY informed and connected source, who could have been very useful, possibly even critical to your hearing, but he too will not attend unless I do,” Emerson wrote. “You have caved in to the demands of radical Islamists in removing me as a witness.”

In another weird twist, Emerson somehow envisioned himself as the victim of

McCarthyism because he wasn't being allowed to go before the House Homeland Security Committee and accuse large segments of the American-Muslim community of being un-American. [[Politico, Jan. 19, 2011](#)]

Then, in summer of 2011, the Center for American Progress sponsored a report on Emerson and other Muslim-bashers. The context was the murderous rampage in Norway by Christian terrorist Anders Breivik, who cited their writings in a manifesto justifying his killing of 76 people on July 22, 2011, as the beginning of a war against "multiculturalists" who preach tolerance of Muslims.

CAP's report, "Fear, Inc.," noted a number of Emerson's falsehoods and exaggerations about American Muslims and examined the convoluted financing of Emerson's Investigative Project on Terrorism, which has drawn substantial support from right-wing foundations and funders whose political interests have benefited from a surging right-wing campaign against Muslims.

"Emerson's nonprofit organization IPT received a total of \$400,000 from Donors Capital Fund in 2007 and 2008, as well as \$100,000 from the Becker Foundation, and \$250,000 from Daniel Pipes' Middle East Forum, according to our research," the report said.

"Emerson's nonprofit organization, in turn, helps fund his for-profit company, SAE Productions. IPT paid SAE Productions \$3.33 million to enable the company to 'study alleged ties between American Muslims and overseas terrorism.' Emerson is SAE's sole employee. This kind of action enrages Ken Berger, president of Charity Navigator, a nonprofit watchdog group. He argued that 'basically, you have a nonprofit acting as a front organization, and all that money going to a for-profit.'"

Emerson's combination of ideological journalism and loose handling of the facts also should raise questions about his previous work as he sought to discredit serious investigations into the Republican-Israeli role in the Iran-Contra scandal, dating back to its apparent origins in the alleged sabotage of President Carter's 1980 hostage negotiations. [For more on that, see Consortiumnews.com's "[Unmasking an October Surprise 'Debunker'.](#)"]

Investigative reporter Robert Parry broke many of the Iran-Contra stories for The Associated Press and Newsweek in the 1980s. You can buy his latest book, *America's Stolen Narrative*, either in [print here](#) or as an e-book (from [Amazon](#) and [barnesandnoble.com](#)). You also can order Robert Parry's trilogy on the Bush Family and its connections to various right-wing operatives for only \$34. The trilogy includes *America's Stolen Narrative*. For details on this offer, [click here](#).

EU Wobbles Amid Conflicting Priorities

Exclusive: The 28-nation European Union was always a tenuous affair, pulling together historic enemies and nations with conflicting economic priorities, but now those stresses a triple-dip recession and differences over Ukraine and immigration are threatening to splinter the EU, writes Andrés Cala.

By Andrés Cala

The European Union views itself as the defender of much that is right in the world standing for human rights, embracing international law, generous with developing nations, protective of the environment, insisting on fiscal probity in economics while maintaining a sturdy social safety net at home. But this self-image of righteousness often conflicts with reality while also spurring divisions among the EU's 28 nations about which moral imperative should take precedence.

Indeed, one could argue that the EU's conflicting concepts of righteousness are undermining Europe's ability to resolve the most serious problems at home and abroad, especially because the Continent's de facto leader, Germany, is increasingly at odds with its neighbors.

For instance, Germany takes a moralistic stance in insisting on fiscal austerity even in the face of high unemployment and human suffering in several EU nations that instead want deficit spending and public investments to spur growth and avert (or minimize) the EU's third recession since the financial crash of 2008. France, Spain and Italy have been leading this anti-austerity drive, also citing moral arguments about saving Europeans from poverty and despair.

Meanwhile, the United Kingdom, with the EU's most powerful military, favors "humanitarian" interventions supposedly on behalf of democracy and human rights in places such as Syria and Ukraine. Yet, while boasting about its commitment to human rights, the UK bristles at the EU's liberal policies allowing the free flow of EU citizens across traditional national borders, a dispute that has led to speculation about the UK possibly going its own way.

"Britain will always step up," British Prime Minister David Cameron said recently about the need to address global injustices, "not just because it is morally right, but also because it is the best way of protecting our people and dealing with the instability that threatens our long-term [economic] prosperity."

But some in Europe question the wisdom and legality of the UK's interventions in

other nations' affairs, especially given the bloodshed and disorder surrounding the British military's role in the U.S.-led Afghan and Iraq wars. To the UK's critics inside the EU, it's also unclear if Cameron's hard-line against the Syrian regime of President Bashar al-Assad while couched in moral terms might not lead to even worse violence if Sunni extremists from Al-Qaeda or the Islamic State end up the winners in Damascus.

Similarly, the UK's stern anti-Russian stance over the crisis in Ukraine shared by some other countries in both Europe's west and east has the prospect of causing more pain for the peoples of Ukraine, Russia and even Europe than any good that might result from prying Ukraine from Russia's sphere of influence and pulling it into the EU's orbit.

Concern over the consequences of possibly overplaying the West's hand in its showdown with Russia on Ukraine is strongly felt in Germany where Chancellor Angela Merkel has tried to walk a middle line, harshly critical of Russia in rhetoric but hesitant to engage in a full-scale economic war with a major trading partner that supplies much of the EU's natural gas.

"I can't see how [sanctions against Russia] would help us move forward economically," German Vice Chancellor and Economy Minister Sigmar Gabriel said this month. "It's right that Angela Merkel [is] focusing on dialogue – and not confrontation as others are. I think it's totally wrong to react with permanent NATO saber-rattling on the Russian border."

Moreover, the moral issue of Ukraine is not clear-cut since Germany and the EU contributed to the crisis by giving Ukrainians, especially those in the western provinces, unrealistic expectations about the prospects for easy prosperity if they signed an association agreement with the EU and possibly joined NATO.

Those dangled hopes, in a country of crushing poverty and corrupt politics, spurred on mass demonstrations that destabilized the elected government of President Viktor Yanukovich and ousted him in a coup d'état in February. That split Ukraine between west and east and opened a chasm that led to secession demands from ethnic Russians, followed by a nasty civil war. Ukraine became the scene of a proxy struggle in a new Cold War between Russia and the U.S./EU.

The possible encroachment of NATO into Ukraine on Russia's border also crossed a red line drawn long ago by Russian President Vladimir Putin. Soon, the sides were posturing over Crimea's secession from Ukraine and annexation by Russia as well as arguing about an uprising in Ukraine's eastern Russian-speaking provinces where Yanukovich had his political base.

"If the West is honest with itself, it has to admit that there were mistakes on

its side," said former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger in a recent interview with Germany's Der Spiegel.

When asked whether the West shared responsibility in escalating the conflict, he said "Europe and America did not understand the impact of these events, starting with the negotiations about Ukraine's economic relations with the European Union and culminating in the demonstrations in Kiev. All these, and their impact, should have been the subject of a dialogue with Russia. This does not mean the Russian response was appropriate."

Russia can live with the fragile status quo of a pro-Western government in Kiev and autonomous ethnic Russian provinces in the east, but the crisis could quickly deteriorate if a shaky cease-fire completely breaks down and the civil war resumes in full. Merkel has warned that if Russia's military openly intervenes, that would provoke an escalation of sanctions to punish Moscow even if the sanctions would also punish Germany and the EU.

In the event of a full-scale civil war in Ukraine, the U.S. and UK would likely push Germany aside and organize a more hawkish military response, further disrupting the economic situation inside the EU.

These divisions over geopolitics among countries that historically have pursued sharply different foreign policies have left the EU unable to speak with anything like a single voice, essentially making Europe an indecisive and stagnant player in global affairs.

Germany also is facing a strong EU backlash against its orthodox economic policies which were imposed on the EU to rein in European government debt especially in Mediterranean nations. This strategy initially helped restore faith in the EU's ability to recover from the financial crisis, but now those policies are being blamed for the region's economic stagnation.

Many Europeans even blame Merkel's austerity recipe for tipping Europe back into yet another recession, which is made potentially more dangerous by the prospect of deflation, the decline in consumer prices that can result from weak demand or an insufficient money supply. A similar debt trap hobbled Japan's once vibrant economy and left it limping for the past two decades.

If deflation is not countered by raising demand or expanding the money supply it can begin a downward spiral of falling profits, declining investments, stunted consumer spending, debt delinquency, unemployment and bankruptcies. Such a crisis could spread quickly through the EU backbone, the 18-member eurozone which shares the euro as a common currency and limits what individual countries can do to address their own economic problems.

But Germany remains strongly opposed to any form of monetary easing, mindful of its catastrophic experience with hyperinflation throughout its history.

Amid this economic malaise, the EU is alarmed by the rise of radical parties, from the left and right, and by a nationalist and euroskeptic resurgence which is blamed on the austerity policies demanded by Germany. France especially has been jolted by the gains of the extreme-right National Front, even if that surge represents more a protest against the traditional parties than a popular commitment to the National Front's platform.

Further adding to the EU's uncertainty, Cameron has proposed a 2017 referendum in UK on whether to quit the EU. At this point, Cameron seems to be facing a likely reelection defeat in 2015 after years of economic pain, but his biggest threat may come from the growing anti-European movement within his own Conservative constituency which he is seeking to placate with the promise for a get-out-of-the-EU referendum.

In any case, the future EU looks likely to have a more diverse approach to leadership with Germany's role diminished by the greater assertiveness from France, Spain, Italy, the UK and other major European countries. And, the European nations will surely continue to express their differences over what the Continent's moral priorities ought to be.

Andrés Cala is an award-winning Colombian journalist, columnist and analyst specializing in geopolitics and energy. He is the lead author of *America's Blind Spot: Chávez, Energy, and US Security.*
