

The Second Arab Awakening

A Historical Background

By Dr. Mahdi Abdul Hadi



PASSIA 

Introduction

At the beginning of 2011, the Arab World witnessed a 'Second Arab Awakening' which came as a modern social and political earthquake. The wind of the "Jasmine Revolution" in Tunisia went viral, quickly propagated to Egypt, then spread to Libya and Yemen, transformed into a hurricane in Syria, and developed into a reform movement in Jordan. This 'awakening' was widely recognized among Western and Arab scholars, historians, analysts and experts.

This special bulletin aims to explore and explain the Second Arab Awakening, its background and implications. To do so, the following questions must first be answered:

The Awakening of Whom?

It is the awakening of more than 70% of the Arab population who has lived under the rule of dictators for more than four decades, during which national fortunes were wasted, corruption was widespread, and injustice prevailed. These dictators systematically degraded and censored their people, who eventually stood up in the face of tyranny chanting: "The people want to overthrow the regime." The masses discarded the culture of fear, and were soon joined by the political and social elites.

The Awakening of What?

It is the awakening of national pride, dignity, freedom, justice and equality. When Mohammed Bouazizi set himself on fire on 4 January 2011, preferring to die rather than surrender to humiliation and oppression, he became a symbol of the Arab people's pain and suffering. The culture of self-sacrifice began to spread like a contagious fever across Port Said, Ismailia, Alexandria, and Cairo.

The Awakening... Why?

It is the awakening of the demand of civil rights in the framework of a political system which cannot be composed along religious or authoritarian lines, but must rather be civil, democratic and pluralistic, and based on the principles of justice and equality.

Since the first Arab awakening in the late 19th/early 20th Century, three main ideologies have permeated the Arab national movement, the Arab regimes, and the question of Palestine: Political Islam, Pan-Arabism and Left Liberalism. These unfolded over the following phases.

Phase One:

Following 400 years of Ottoman rule, the Arab nationalist movement led the Arab renaissance, struggling against ignorance, illiteracy, injustice and oppression. The movement advocated the revival of the Arab nationalist identity along with the separation from the religious order (the Ottoman Caliphate), in addition to the revival of the Arab ethos, heritage and language, and the search for Arab independence and unity under the banner of the Arab flag.

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During this phase, Palestine was a central issue for the Arab peoples and their rulers, who contributed to and supported the Palestinian revolutions of 1922, 1933, and 1936 that were directed against the policies and practices of the British Mandate and against the Balfour Declaration that allowed for unlimited Zionist immigration. They also supported the Palestinian position at the St. James Conference of 1939 as well as the subsequent White Paper for the establishment of a Palestinian independent state, and defended the Palestinian cause throughout the years culminating in their attempt to prevent the adoption of the UN General Assembly's decision to partition Palestine (Resolution 181 of 1947) and the Palestinian Nakba in 1948.

Phase Two:

The "Military Revolutions" that occurred in Syria, Egypt, Iraq, and Algeria (in 1949, 1952, 1958, and 1962 respectively) came as a response to the Nakba and to the failure of the Arab ruling elites to prevent the partition of Palestine in 1947. These military coups d'état and national revolutions resisted the establishment of Western alliances as well as the economic and political domination of the West. The Arab regimes adopted the goals and ideologies of the leftist and Marxist movements in advocating social justice, freedom and democracy.

During this phase (1950s), the Palestinian question was treated as a refugee issue, which incentivized the West to present compensation and resettlement projects such as the Johnston Plan, the Hammarskjöld Plan, the Clapp initiative, the Jordan-Yarmouk Plan and the Sinai hydro-electric development plan. Several events in the international and domestic spheres – including the Arab regimes' helplessness and failure in facing Israel's attempts to change the course of the Jordan River, the impotence of the "Palestinian elites" to solve the Palestinian question since the formation of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) till the Naksa in 1967, the collapse of the Soviet Union and the fall of the Berlin Wall – led to the emergence of Islamic movements and ideologies. This new trend in regional politics was then bolstered by the beginning of the Arab normalization with Israel (initiated with the signing of the Egyptian-Israeli peace Treaty at Camp David in 1978), and the 1979 Islamic Revolution in Iran.

Phase Three:

Political Islam emerged as a national and ideological movement rejecting Arab dependency on the West and refusing to countenance the American military presence in the Gulf region since the first Gulf War. This movement opposed the 1991 Madrid Peace Conference and the consecutive bilateral (in Washington) and multilateral (in Moscow) Palestinian-Israeli negotiations dedicated to paving the way for reconciliation. On 11 September 2001, Osama bin Laden "hijacked" Islam with the bombing of the Twin Towers (the World Trade Center) in New York and killing more than 300 people, an event which gave rise to Islamophobia in the West.

Phase Four:

The Second Arab Awakening demanded dignity and civil rights after decades of authoritarian rule in Egypt, Tunisia, Yemen, Libya, and other Arab countries. It was provoked by the Arabs' disappointment following the US occupation of Iraq and the decline of the three predecessor ideologies, i.e. Arab Nationalism, Left Socialism, and Political Islam.

The Second Arab Awakening

A Historical background



I. The Ottoman Empire (1600-1914)

The Ottoman Empire governed the Arab World from the 16th to the 20th Century. The beginning of the 19th Century witnessed a series of regressions in the political, economic, social, military and security fields, which can be attributed to the corruption of the Sultan and his administration. These circumstances led to the fragmentation of state institutions and to the inflation of the state's debts to Europe, finally forcing the Ottomans to grant "extra privileges to Europeans and foreigners."¹

Political and demographic factors within the Ottoman Empire led to great social disparities. The absence of equality and justice was harshly felt. Among the 22.5 million citizens comprising the population of the Ottoman Empire, 10.5 million were Arabs, the rest were Turks, Albanians, Greeks, Kurds and other ethnic groups. In spite of constituting a majority, Arabs were represented politically by only 60 deputies, in comparison with the 150 parliamentarians standing for the Turks. The same situation was reflected in the Senate, with only five Arab members against 40 Turks.²

In the 19th Century, four mainstream schools of thought emerged to represent the diverse intellectual currents that existed throughout the region. These schools overlapped, mingled, and fought amongst one another for hegemony. Nevertheless they managed to maintain their control of the Arab intellectual scene in spite of the changing times, places, and faces.

Islamic Thought³

This school of thought called for "re-understanding Islam" and "rekindling its spiritual principles." It held that the foundation of Islamic thought "is religious and creedal as it targets groups and individuals simultaneously." The school's most prominent figure was Jamal Ad-Din Al-Afghani who called for the establishment of the Islamic League and the unification of the Islamic World under the reign of one Caliph, either Turkish, Egyptian, or Afghan.

Other important figures of this school of thought were Mohammed Abdel Wahhab in Hijaz (advocating religious reform and national Jihad), Mohammed As-Sanussi in Libya (Jihad and work), Mohammed Ahmad Mahdi in Sudan (return to the roots, the model of the good ancestors), Abd Ar-Rahman Al-Kawakibi in Syria, Abdelhamid Ben Badis in Algeria, and Mohammed Abduh in Egypt.



Jamal Ad-Din Al-Afghani



Mohammad Abdel Wahhab



Abdelhamid Ben Badis



Mohammed Abduh

Arab Nationalism

Abdul Rahman Al-Kawakibi (1849-1902) pioneered the Arab nationalist movement with his book, *Tabaa Al-Istibdad* [The Nature of Despotism], which included a series of articles against tyranny. Al-Kawakibi rejected the Ottoman rule and demanded the return of the Caliphate to the Arabs.



Abdul Rahman Al-Kawakibi

Al-Kawakibi authored another book, *Umm Al-Qura* [Mother of the Villages], which narrated the events of an imaginary conference held in Mecca that gathered 22 scientists and intellectuals representing Muslim states to discuss the problems and hardships faced by their co-nationals. This book embodied the "nationalist" dimension in Al-Kawakibi's discourse.



Mohammed Rashid Rida

Another prominent nationalist figure was Mohammed Rashid Rida (1865-1935). After suffering the tyranny of Sultan Abdul Hamid, Rida called for a unified and democratic state to replace the current authoritarian Ottoman government. He founded "The Ottoman Decentralization Administrative Party" and formed a secret association called "The Arab League Association." One of his most famous quotes, written in an article of *Al-Manar* newspaper, was that "Modern nationalism represents the consolidation of a country's citizens who may differ in beliefs but retain their unity when defending their homeland, guarding its independence, and rescuing it from its loss."



Al-Manar newspaper



Sultan Abdul Hamid

Leftist Secularism⁴

This school of thought was led by three prominent figures. The first one was Francis bin Fathallah Marrash (1836-1873) from Aleppo. In his books – *Ghabat Al-haqq* [The Forest of Truth] issued in Paris and *Mashhad Al-Ahwal* [The Witnessing of the Stages of Human Life] issued in Aleppo – he called for liberation, civilization, and education.

The second leader of this movement was Farah Anton (1872-1922), native of Tripoli, Lebanon. He published a text entitled *Ibn Rushd wa Falsafatah* [Ibn Rushd and his Philosophy] in which he called for the establishment of a scientific society adopting logic and dismissing tribal, religious and ethnic disputes. He also advocated the separation of religion from political power, and believed that the role of the state was to grant and protect civil liberties in accordance with a constitution. He supported the establishment of a civil state built on freedom and equality, and demanded the creation of modern schools teaching "Patriot-

The Second Arab Awakening

A Historical background

ism without religious references or affiliations.” According to Anton, a civil state could not come into being without the provision of the necessary political education, and a ruler had to be prepared to take such a position through intellectual and moral upbringing. Farah was engaged in several debates with Mohammed Abduh over the latest propositions of Islamic revivalism.

The third important leftist figure was Shibli Shumayyil (1860-1917) from Kofur Shima in Syria, a communist who engaged in numerous heated debates with Islamic and Christian figures including Al-Afghani. His monograph, *Falsafat Al-Nashu’ wa Al-Artiqaq’ [The Philosophy of Creation and Evolution]*, which was strongly influenced by Darwin’s theory of evolution, drew heavy criticism and even led to him being branded an apostate. In 1896, he published another book, *Shakwa wa Amal [Complaint and Hope]*, which was addressed to Sultan Abdul Hamid II and in which he stated: “Three things are missing in the Ottoman Empire: justice, education, and freedom.”

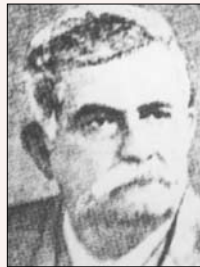
He also argued that Western civilizations were distinguished from Eastern ones by the fact that governors from the latter considered themselves above the rule of law. He claimed that Eastern rulers, through their dictatorships, had stripped the people of their dignity and sense of initiative, and that tyranny bred hypocrisy and turned the people into slaves. Shumayyil believed in socialism and attacked religious radicalism. He held as well that Europe became powerful when the reforms of the French Revolution loosened the grip of the Church over the society.



Farah Anton



Francis bin Fathallah Marrash



Shibli Shumayyil

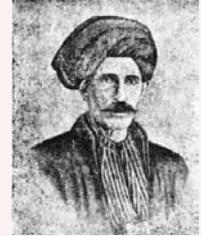
The Movement of the Arab Enlightenment ⁵

In the middle of the 19th Century a number of Arab writers and intellectuals formed cultural associations aimed at reviving Arab culture and literature as well as revitalizing “Arab glories and history.” Among them were “The Science and Arts Association” founded in Beirut in 1847, the “Eastern Associations” formed by Arab Jesuits in 1850, and the “Scientific Syrian Association” created in 1857, which counted 150 members.

The associations of the Enlightenment movement intended to “revive the Arab self-awareness by revisiting the Arab character and crystallizing its identity.” They used Arab history, literature and heritage as resources, and considered the Arabic language as a common factor uniting all Arab nationals in communication, thought, and history.

The most important members of the Enlightenment movement were:

Nassif Al-Yazigi (1800-1887): He defended the purity of the Arabic language and believed that civilizing the Arab people by referring to a common cultural heritage was the duty of each Arab, regardless of his/her creed.



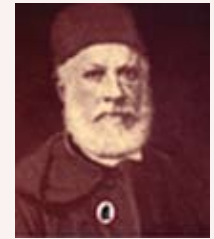
Nassif Al-Yazigi

Butrus Al-Bustani (1819-1883): He translated the Bible into Arabic and wrote the Al-Muheet dictionary in 1865. He also created the first Arab encyclopedia, published by Al-Maaref, documenting Arab history, culture, and personalities in six volumes. In addition, he established *Nafeer Suria [The Horn of Syria]*, a weekly newspaper that adopted as its slogan one of pProphet Mohammed’s traditions stating: “The faithful loves his homeland.”



Butrus Al-Bustani

Ahmad Faris Ash-Shidyaq (1809-1887): He founded in Istanbul *Al-Jawaneb [Aspects]*, one of the most popular newspapers between 1861 and 1884. He also wrote a book, entitled *As-Saq ‘ala As-Saq [One Leg Crossed Over The Other]*, which dealt with the decay of the Ottoman Empire and the return of the Islamic Caliphate to the Arab peninsula.



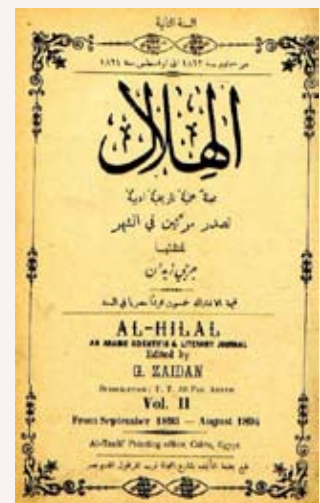
Ahmad Faris Ash-Shidyaq

Georgie Zaidan (1816-1974): He was famous for writing a series of historical novels reviving the gender of “historical romanticism” and emphasizing the themes of the “prevailing good and victorious justice.”



Georgie Zaidan

In addition, several newspapers and magazines were published during these years, such as the weekly *Al-Basheer [The Herald]* and *Thamaraat Al-Funun [The Fruits of Arts]* and the monthly *Al-Mashreq [The East]*, but also *At-Taquadum [The Progress]* edited by Adib Ishaq, and *Lesan Al-Hall [The Tongue of the Times]* edited by Khalil Sarkis (that started as a monthly newspaper and became daily in 1894). These newspapers were affiliated to different schools of thought and contributed collectively, through their exploration of a vast array of topics, to spreading and enriching the Arab culture.



Al-Hilal magazine

The Second Arab Awakening

A Historical background

II. The First Arab Awakening (1908-1922):

The years 1908-1922 saw the emergence within the Ottoman Empire of a number of opposition associations striving against the nepotism, cronyism and corruption of the government and willing to implement political reforms designed to remedy the social and economic degradation of the state, end the injustice and tyranny against the Arabs, and establish political autonomy.

Following a military *coup d'état* in 1908, Sultan Abdul Hamid was ousted and replaced at the head of the Empire by his brother Mohammed Rashad. The Committee of Union and Progress (Al-Ittihad At-Taraqi) took over the government and the constitution of Medhat Pasha was established.

In reaction, a number of opposition associations were formed. In 1908 the "Ottoman-Arab Loyalty" association was established, demanding equality between Turkish and Arab districts and advocating the use of the Arabic language in the educational system. In 1909, the "Arts Forum" club was formed in Istanbul under the leadership of Abdul Karim Khalil, gathering among its members Arab students, workers and parliamentarians such as Saleh Haider, Rafiq Saloum, and Jamil Husseini. Another one was the "Ottoman Association" led by Shukri Ghanem and George Samneh which regarded the achievement of absolute equality between Arabs and Turks as a fundamental component of the "reform" agenda.

On the other hand, the philosophy of the Committee of Union and Progress, crystallized around the "Turanian school of thought" and the "Turkification Policies" based on "Turkish superiority," aimed at building a new, culturally and politically united Turkey. Nonetheless, the leaders of the Committee of Union and Progress differed on the type of state they aspired to, with Tala't and Jawid Pasha aspiring to a state based on Ottoman unity, Anwar Pasha advocating Turkish unity, and Jamal Pasha preferring Islamic unity.¹

The Call for Separation

The Arab call for separation can be summarized by this excerpt of a memo sent on 2 June 1910 by the British Ambassador to the Minister of Foreign Affairs in London:

"The Arabs are disappointed by the reestablishment of the constitution and the taking over of the government by the Unionists, who follow their Turkish agendas instead of the decentralization process hoped for by the Arabs. The problem is now between Turks and Arabs, nothing else."²

As a response, Arab elites strived to establish patriotic movements and associations calling for separation from the Ottoman Empire, as well as the enhancement of the Arab identity.



Founders of the Committee of Union and Progress

Al Qahtaniyah Association

Founded in 1909 by a number of Arab officers, among them Aziz Al-Masri, this organization was named after the legendary ancestor of the Arabs, Qahtan. Its members advocated the establishment of a United Arab Kingdom that would include all the Arab states, be provided with an independent parliament and government, and be part of a Turkish-Arab empire with Arabic as its official language.

The First Uprising

Asser, a region in the Hijaz, was the first in Autumn 1910 to witness an uprising against Ottoman rule aimed primarily at combating Turkish tyranny. It was led by Mahdi Idrisi, who was later joined by Imam Yihya of Yemen and several Druze tribes from Huran in Syria.

Decentralization Party

This party was led by Rashid Rida and Rafiq Bek Al-Azm, who founded it in Cairo in 1912.



Rafiq Bek Al-Azm

Young Arab Association (Al-Arabyia Al-Fatat)

Formed in Paris in 1911, then moved to Beirut in 1913 and finally to Damascus in 1914, the Young Arab Association called for independence and liberation from foreign rule. Among its members were Awni Abdul Hadi, Ahmad Qadiri, Rostum Haidar, Jamil Mardam Beek, Mohammed Al-Mohamsani, Abdul Ghani Areesi, Rafiq Tamimi, and Tawfiq Swaidi.³



Young Arab Association (Al-Fatat)

The Second Arab Awakening

A Historical background

The Ahd Association

Formed in Istanbul in 1913 under the leadership of Aziz Ali Al-Masri, Al-Ahd campaigned for Arab independence and called for a revolution against the Turks. Its mission was “to employ all efforts to make the Arab nation the most prominent, free and independent nation, and to make any sacrifice to achieve this goal.” Al-Masri was arrested by the Turkish authorities and sentenced to death but was eventually pardoned thanks to the support of a group of Arab personalities who negotiated his liberation through the intervention of foreign embassies.⁴



Aziz Ali Al-Masri

The First Arab Conference

The first Arab conference, held on 18 June 1913 in Paris under the presidency of Abdul Ghani Ar-Rissi, discussed the issues of patriotic activism, resistance against the Turks, the rights of Arabs in the Ottoman Empire, and the implementation of the decentralization reforms. It demanded autonomy and self-governance for the Arab provinces to pave the way for independence. The conference also tackled the question of migration from and to Syria. For their part, the Unionists sent an envoy to the Arab elites convened in the French capital to reach a preliminary agreement. It was thus agreed that the Arabic language would be the official language of all the Arab districts and would be used in education, and that three Arab ministers would be assigned to the Turkish government. However, all the terms of the agreement were revoked by a firman of the Sultan dated 8 August 1913.⁵



Abdul Ghani Ar-Rissi

The Arab Revolt and the Containment of Independence⁶

On 5 November 1914, the Ottoman Empire joined forces with Germany against the Allies in World War I. The Arabs were caught at a crossroads and had to choose quickly between either maintaining their connection with the Ottoman Empire or casting out the “Arab-Ottoman partnership” slogan. This would entail seeking other avenues to unite their nationalist (liberal) movement and boost its leadership, as well as clearly announcing their goal of independence. It would also mean searching independently for an ally capable of understanding their demands and sharing their interests, thus marking a new phase in the theory and practice of the Arab nationalist struggle.



Arabs were aware that the changing conditions in the international arena would make it impossible for the Ottoman Empire to return to its previous position. Other factors contributed to shaping the nationalist movement at this time, such as progress in the economic sphere and the granting by the state of political privileges to an emerging “elite class” in an attempt to control and contain it. As the concept of ‘nation state’ reached maturity and became the moving force behind Arab political thought and action, the Arab struggle

shifted from demands for Arab autonomy to the call for a nation state and the struggle for its translation into a legal political reality.

In late 1912 a group of Druze and Muslims from Lebanon contacted the British consul in Beirut and asked the British government to help the Arabs in their struggle against the Turks. That same year, a delegation of Syrian Muslims visited Lord Kitchener, the British High Commissioner in Cairo, and asked Britain to annex Syria to Egypt on condition that Syria be provided with an independent administration. The British diplomat responded “favorably” to the demands as they were consistent with London’s interests to expand its influence in the Arab region. The Deputy of Basra in the Ottoman Parliament Taleb Naqib sent similar demands to British representatives in Egypt and India.



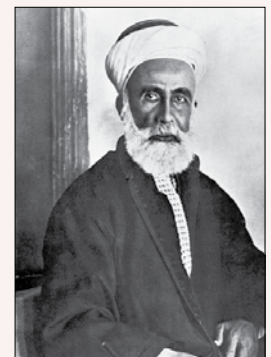
Lord Kitchener

The Arabs’ various attempts to seek allies for their movement were mentioned by the British ambassador in Istanbul in a letter sent to the British Foreign Minister on 24 February 1914, in which he wrote that: “Several Arab officers have visited our embassy in the Ottoman capital to ask about the British government’s stance in the light of specific circumstances.”

The Arab officers’ visit had also been motivated by the arrest of one of their prominent colleagues, Aziz Ali Al-Masri, who was expected to be given a prison sentence for opposing the Ottoman authorities. The Arabs presented several petitions to foreign embassies in Istanbul to resolve his case and stop his trial, and a delegation presided by the Sheikh of Al-Azhar visited Lord Kitchener to demand Britain’s mediation. Ultimately the Arabs won the case and Al-Masri was released from prison.⁷

The Arabs informed the British government about the resentment of the Emir of Mecca Sharif Hussein bin Ali against the Turks’ actions. His discontent, which he expressed in various forms, motivated him to plan for independence.

Subsequently, in 1914 Sharif Abdullah, the son of Sharif Hussein, contacted Lord Kitchener in Cairo in an attempt to transform the Western political support for the Arab nationalist movement from mere empathy into a full alliance. He presented to Lord Kitchener



Sharif Hussein

“The factual situation in Hijaz, his father’s sensitive position, and the reasons behind the growing Arab-Turkish alienation. He also displayed the goals and motives of the Arab movement in general. Yet, Lord Kitchener responded that in spite of the direct reasons that had instigated the conflict between Sharif Hussein and the Turks – such as the shrinking of his family’s privileges and the enforcement of a bureau-

The Second Arab Awakening

A Historical background



cratic system against the will of the people in Hijaz – all these problems were a fraction of the main Arab issue which was connected to them and regarded the future of the Arab countries.”⁸

Sharif Abdullah continued his search for an ally, visiting Cairo twice on his way to Istanbul, where he held a meeting on the Hijaz and the Arab-Turkish relationship with Ronald Storrs, the Secretary for Eastern Affairs of the British High Commissioner office in Cairo. He explored all the possible avenues of gaining support for the independence and protection of the Hijaz.



Sharif Abdullah bin Hussein

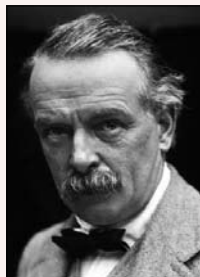
However, the British official stood his ground, refusing to offer any help to the Arabs. London's position changed with the emergence of a Turkish-German alliance in World War I and the consecutive alteration of political interests. Britain started indeed searching for an ally who could counter the Turkish position and help achieving its own goals, as was illustrated by the comments of the British Prime Minister Lloyd George:

“It is fundamental for our connections and status in the Middle East that, in the case of Turkey declaring war against us, we defeat them instantly without wasting time. It is undeniable that this rapid victory is important to protect the British Empire.”⁹

Ronald Storrs started encouraging his superiors in London to enter in an alliance with the Arabs, as one of his telegrams stated: “If we consult with Mecca at the right time, we [Britain] can extend our alliance from the Arab peninsula to other Arab provinces in the face of any possible Ottoman aggression.” When Lord Kitchener was assigned as Minister of War, he implemented Ronald Storrs' suggestions.¹⁰



Ronald Storrs



Lloyd George

The Arabs and Allies shared interests and joined forces in their fight against Turkey, in spite of the parties' differing goals.

During this historic phase, the Arab nationalist movement started working concurrently on two tracks:

- The first track: the formulation and management of the relationship with the Allies.
- The second track: the unification of the movement under one leadership.

On the first hand, Sharif Abdullah replied to a special envoy sent by Ronald Storrs to inquire if he, his father Sharif Hussein, and the Arabs of Hijaz would stand with or against Britain in the war by saying that he “expect[ed] a written promise from Britain that it would not interfere in the internal affairs of Hijaz, and would protect Sharif Hussein from the Ottomans.” Storrs responded positively to Sharif Abdullah's demands.

On the second hand, the leaders of Syrian and Iraqi secret associations (Al-Ahd and Al-Fatat), officially represented by Fawzi Bakri, approached Sharif Hussein bin Ali in January 1915 to advise him to abort several projects prepared by the Unionists (Tala't Pasha and Jamal Pasha) and to suggest that he led the national patriotic movement and the fight against the Turks.

Sharif Hussein welcomed their suggestion and sent his third son, Sharif Faisal, to Damascus in order to discuss the plans of the Arab movement leaders. He also sent his elder son, Sharif Ali, to Madina to recruit and arm tribesmen. Meanwhile, he asked Sharif Abdullah to continue his communications and negotiations with Britain.

The Arab nationalist movement leaders in Damascus presented a charter to Sharif Faisal that included all the conditions that had to be fulfilled before launching the Arab revolt, and asked for Sharif Hussein's consent to proceed. The “Damascus Charter” constituted the first step towards the international and domestic recognition of Arab demands as it regulated the alliance with Britain and provided a blueprint for the future borders of the different Arab countries. It was also a demonstration of the capacity of the Arab nationalist leaders to unite their political agendas under the leadership of Sharif Hussein and, on this basis, commence negotiations with the Allies to achieve their goals.¹¹



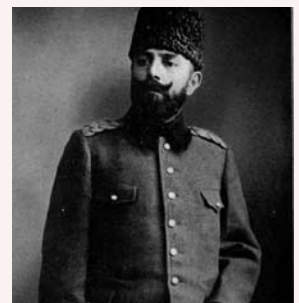
Sharif Faisal



Sir Henry McMahon

The McMahon-Hussein Correspondence

Sharif Hussein approved of the principles laid out in the Damascus Charter, referred to as the “Damascus Protocol” during his negotiations with Britain. The negotiations are documented in a series of correspondences between the Sharif and the British High Commissioner in Egypt, Sir Henry McMahon, and known as the “McMahon-Hussein Correspondence.”



Jamal Pasha

The Second Arab Awakening

A Historical background

The first letter Sharif Hussein sent to McMahon is dated 14 July 1915. In addition to recalling the principles of the "Damascus Protocol," it demanded the return of the Islamic Caliphate to the Arabs. As Sir McMahon replied that it was too early to define the borders of the independent states, Sharif Hussein insisted, stating: "It is a demand of the people, not of myself." McMahon then sent a letter including Britain's consent to this request. This letter constitutes the most significant document articulating the Arabs' conditions for fighting with Britain against Turkey in World War I.



Execution of Arab nationalists by Jamal Pasha, 1916

Martyrs' Day

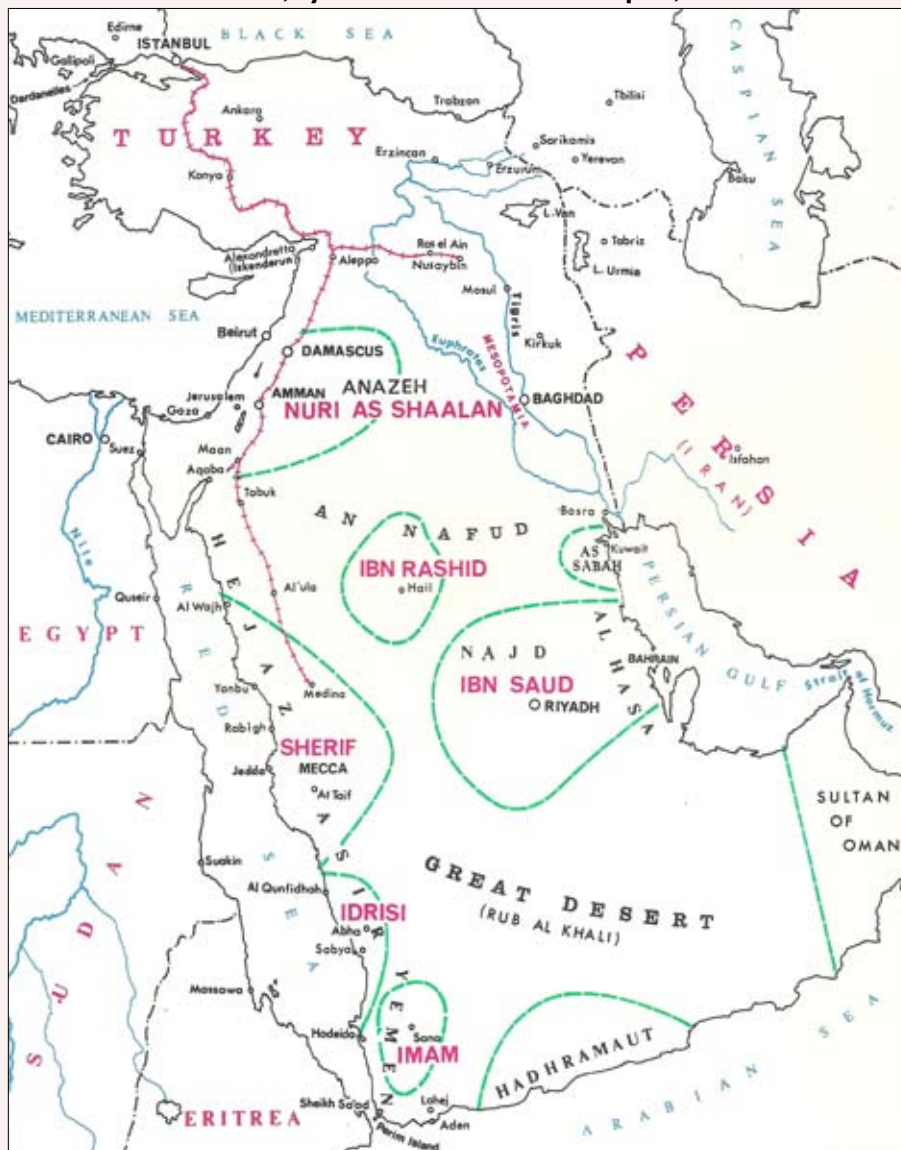
On 21 August 1916, Jamal Pasha executed the first group of Arab nationalist figures in Beirut. A second group was put to death in Damascus on 6 May 1916, leading to a death toll of 33 people. These acts provoked feelings of hatred and resentment against the Turks and precipitated the launch of the Arab revolt.

On 10 July 1916, over a month after what became known as "Martyrs' Day," Sharif Hussein declared the start of the Arab revolt. This represented a turning point in the history of the

Arab nationalist movement, shifting its dynamics from political and intellectual activism to armed struggle.

The first statement on the revolt was made by Sharif Hussein, who declared: "The Arabs and their language have suffered from marginalization, tyranny, and corruption on the political and religious levels from the Turks [...] It is clear that killing the Arabic language is an attempt to kill Islam itself, since Islam is an Arabic religion, and its holy book is written in Arabic."¹²

Arabia, Syria and the Ottoman Empire, 1914



Source: Brigadier Syed Ali El-Edroos, *The Hashemite Arab Army 1908-1979 An Appreciation and Analysis of Military Operations*, The Publishing Committee, Amman, 1980.

The Second Arab Awakening

A Historical background



Arab Nationalist Era (1921-1948)

The Arab Revolt engaged in several intellectual, political, and military conflicts since World War I. Its ultimate goals were to achieve independence and institutionalize the unity of the Arab states. This era, which started in 1914 and lasted for four decades, passed through three stages: the first one was marked by an allied conspiracy meant to contain Arab independence through the implementation of the "Mandate System" and the formation of separate Arab entities; the second stage witnessed a shift of the theories and practices of the three primary intellectual schools towards Arab unity; and the third and final stage was characterized by the challenges posed by the Zionist movement, culminating with the Partition Plan and the Palestinian Nakba.

The Allied Conspiracy

Through the Hussein-McMahon correspondences of 1915-1916, Britain promised Sharif Hussein and the leaders of the Arab movement in Damascus and Cairo (Al-Farouqi, Rashid Rida, Aziz Ali Al-Masri, etc.) "to support the establishment of an Arab state on the lands controlled by the Ottoman Empire, including Palestine, in exchange for the Arabs' military support for the British military campaign against the Ottomans." The British government then confirmed in its letter to the Arab leaders gathered in Cairo on 16 June 1918 that "It recognize[d] the Arabs' absolute independence and sovereignty over these countries and supporte[d] their struggle for freedom."¹

However, on 16 May 1916 Britain and France signed the Sykes-Picot Agreement which partitioned the Arab lands and shared interests and control between the two



Sir Mark Sykes



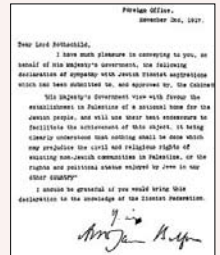
François Georges-Picot

powers. In the meantime Britain recorded in an official statement (Balfour Declaration) on 2 November 1917 that it "view[ed] with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and [would] use [its] best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object." This declaration was made with US involvement and French and Italian consents on 14 February and 9 May 1918 respectively.²

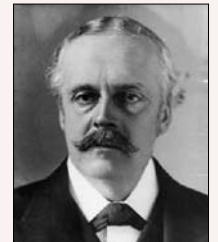
Further to the shock and furor provoked by its actions amongst the Arabs, the British government justified itself by saying that the Sykes-Picot Agreement was "not an official pact, but the

record of deliberations and negotiations that took place between France and Britain." Regarding the Balfour Declaration, London declared that:

"The British and Allied policy supports Arab freedom and independence. Concerning Palestine, there is no desire or plan for one people to control the other; the country will be governed by justice and according to the people's desires. It is understood that the arrival of Jews in Palestine will be conditional upon the political and economic freedom of the Arabs."



Balfour Declaration



Arthur James Balfour

Sharif Hussein accepted these explanations and justifications, and asked the Arabs "to remember that their holy books and traditions preach hospitality and forgiveness," he also asked them to "welcome the Jews as brothers to them" (*Al-Qebla Magazine*, Vol. 183, 23, March 1918).



Sharif Hussein bin Ali with the Palestinian delegation presided by Musa Kazem in Aqaba, 1924

The conciliatory reaction of the Arabs to these events can be explained by several factors, among which a lack of political expertise and knowledge, the absence of a risk assessment, the rapid succession of events, the multiplicity of parties and the fear of "marginalizing" the leadership or replacing it, the absolute dependence on the British ally, and the fact, according to Sharif Hussein, that "An Arab's honor prevents him from giving up on his ally in the middle of the battle." All this contributed to the "adaptation" of the Arab leadership to the Allies' propositions. Meanwhile, on 1 December 1919, the French Prime Minister Georges Clemenceau and his British counterpart Lloyd George were reaching the terms of an agreement regarding the details of the Sykes-Picot Agreement.³

In the meeting of the Allied Supreme Council hold in San Remo between 19-25 April 1920, the Sykes-Picot Agreement and the Balfour Declaration were officially integrated into the "Mandate System" which "fragmented" the Arab cause into various political entities: Palestine and Iraq passed under the mandate of Britain, Syria and Lebanon under that of France. In Hijaz King Abdul Aziz As-Saud took power after the exile of both Sharif Hussein and his son Ali to whom he had abdicated the kingdom.⁴



Abdul Aziz As-Saud

In Syria, the first Arab government (headed by Prince Faisal) was overthrown following the Battle of Maysalun in 1920. Prince Faisal left Syria for Iraq and established the Iraqi Kingdom under British Mandate in 1922, which he ruled until his death in 1933. The throne was then transmitted to his son, Prince Ghazi, whose space for governing was constrained by a long-term treaty with Britain.⁵



King Faisal I



King Ghazi



King Faisal II with Prince Abdullah

Syria and Lebanon fell under the French Mandate, with Lebanon being recognized by the Mandate “as an autonomous entity” meant to become a constitutional parliamentary republic, which happened in 1926.

Egypt was ruled by King Fuad I from 1922 until his death in 1936, and then by his son Farouq who governed under the British “hegemony” embodied in the presence and constant warnings of the British High Commissioner. The most famous of these warnings was delivered and enforced by Sir Miles Lampson on 4 February 1942.⁶



King Fuad I

In Palestine and Trans-Jordan, the British appointed as High Commissioner Sir Herbert Samuel, a Jewish Zionist who implemented the “Zionist Agenda.”

Following the Cairo Conference of 1921, Winston Churchill met with Prince Abdullah in Jerusalem and laid down the terms and conditions for establishing an “entity” in Trans-Jordan. In 1928 the British-Transjordan treaty was signed. Several British High Commissioners were then tasked to govern Trans-Jordan and monitor the implementation of the treaty. Among them was Alec Kirkbride who contained the power and the authority of King Abdullah and described him in his memoirs as “An eagle portraying himself imprisoned in a cage for canaries.”⁷



King Farouq



Winston Churchill, Prince Abdullah and Herbert Samuel

The Evolution of the Thoughts and Practices

The Arab entities witnessed the continuous and powerful presence of the three schools of thoughts – i.e. Political Islam (towards religious identity), Pan-Arabism (towards national identity), and Left Liberalism (towards liberal identity) – throughout the many decades of the Arab political system.

- **The Islamic Trend**

Palestinians tried to promote a sense of “Islamic responsibility” while defending and protecting their land against Jewish immigration and violent attacks, as was illustrated during the “Al-Buraq Uprising” of August 1929 provoked by an act of Jewish aggression on the Al-Aqsa Mosque.

The first Islamic conference was thus held in December 1931 in Jerusalem upon the invitation of the Grand Mufti of Palestine, Amin Al-Husseini. Several Arab and Islamic personalities attended the conference, including Abdul Aziz Tha’albi from Tunisia, Mohammed Ali Allouba Pasha and Abdul Rahman Azzam from Egypt, Diaa’ Addin At-Tabtaba’i from Afghanistan, the Indian poet Iqbal, Prince Said Al-Jazaeri from Algeria, Saad Allah Al-Jabri and Shukri Al-Quwatli from Syria, and Riad As-Solh from Lebanon. The participants called for the protection of the Islamic holy places.⁸



Participants of the first Islamic conference, Jerusalem, 1931

In 1928 the Muslim Brotherhood was founded by Sheikh Hassan Al-Banna (1906-1948) as “a Salafi call, a Sunni approach, a mystical fact, a political organization, an athletic group, a scientific and cultural association, an economic corporation, and a social concept.”

According to Al-Banna, “The Arabs are the guardians of Islam [...] therefore each Muslim must work to revive Arab unity.” Commenting on this, Tariq Al-Bishry, an Egyptian intellectual, said: “Islam was the gateway of Egyptian nationalism toward Arabism (Al-Aruba).” The movement was active in fundraising and recruiting volunteers to support the Palestinian revolt of 1935 (Izz Eddin Al-Qassam) and the Great Revolt of 1936.⁹



Sheikh Hassan Al-Banna

The Second Arab Awakening

A Historical background



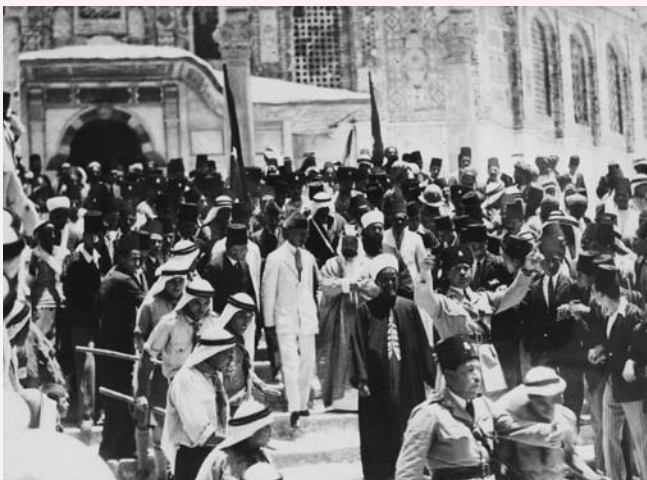
• Nationalist trend

In 1931, as the first Islamic Conference was taking place, several Palestinian and Arab public figures, including Shukri Al-Quwatli, Riad As-Solh, Rashid Rida, Kheir Ad-Din Zarkli, Awni Abdul Hadi, Khalil Talhoni, and Bashir Sa'dawi, convened in Jerusalem and drafted a "Nationalist Charter" advocating the implementation of the nationalist movement's goals of independence and unity. They also called upon King Faisal in Iraq to continue leading their movement. On 18 September 1932 King Faisal and Prince Abdullah visited Jerusalem where the former gave a speech in which he emphasized the necessity to continue working for Arab unity:



Awni Abdul Hadi

"Trust me, Brothers, wherever I am, in any country I reside in, I am committed to carry on my duty as an Arab. I am in Iraq, serving as I have served in any Arab country which I consider my own, with my Arab heart and identity."¹⁰



King Faisal I and Prince Abdullah in Al-Aqsa Mosque, Jerusalem, 1931

The years leading up to World War II witnessed the emergence on the international stage of a number of new leaders including Winston Churchill in Britain, Franklin Roosevelt in Washington, and Charles de Gaulle in France who would then lead the Free French Army Forces during World War II. These years saw as well the rise of Adolf Hitler in Germany, Benito Mussolini in Italy, Mao Zedong in China, General Franco in Spain, and Joseph Stalin in Russia who succeeded Lenin after the dismissal of Leon Trotsky.



Mufti Amin Al-Husseini in Germany



Rashid Ali Kilani and Mufti Amin Al-Husseini

This period also witnessed attempts by the leaders of the Arab nationalist movement to ally with Germany and Italy in the belief that, if defeated, Britain would be forced to give up its colonial interests in the Middle East. This anti-British sentiment manifested itself in the 1941 revolution of Rashid Ali Kilani in Iraq which aimed at abrogating the Iraqi-British treaties of 1930. The Palestinian Grand Mufti Amin Al-Husseini, who had taken refuge in Iraq in October 1939, participated in Al-Kilani's revolution, as did other Arab nationalists, including Aziz Ali Al-Masri (the leader of the Egyptian Army) and several Syrian officers (such as Akram Hourani and Adib Shishakli), as part of a wider nationalist movement meant to achieve independence from Britain and bring about greater unity. Britain resisted however, reoccupying Iraq, declaring Prince Abdul Illah custodian of the throne, and reappointing Nuri As-Said's government.

In 1940, the Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri As-Said presented his vision of Arab unity (the "Fertile Crescent") to the British. His plan entailed a two-phase implementation process, the first of which consisted of the establishment of a united kingdom including Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, and Trans-Jordan, and the second of the unification of "Greater Syria" and Iraq. As-Said stated that "the only way to reach peace among the Arabs [was] to invite the United Nations to reestablish historical Syria." Nuri As-Said's plan included also offering the Jews in Palestine a semi-autonomous independence within this united kingdom, provided that Jerusalem remained open to all three religions for pilgrimage and worship. His plan also proposed granting the Maronites in Lebanon similar privileges to those they enjoyed under Ottoman rule. However, the "Fertile Crescent" plan faced great opposition from Mustafa An-Nahas of Egypt and King Abdul Aziz As-Saud of Saudi Arabia.¹¹



Nuri As-Said

Meanwhile, King Abdullah of Jordan pursued his efforts by presenting a number of proposals to the various British Commissioners regarding Palestine, the most prominent of which was his call to establish under his leadership a "Greater Syria" that included Trans-Jordan, Palestine, Lebanon and Syria, in addition to forming an "Arab union." He called for the immediate integration of Syria and Trans-Jordan, and stated that the Jewish problem in Palestine could be resolved by giving Jews administrative autonomy. The political leadership in Syria, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt opposed King Abdullah's proposition.¹²



King Abdullah and Samir Ar-Rifai (with Gubb Pasha)

Although the Palestinian "elites" at the time were in favor of Arab unity, their orientations differed, with some leaning toward the "Amman-Baghdad" Hashemite block and others preferring the "Riyadh-Cairo" Egyptian-Saudi block. Britain encouraged

Arab unity in principle – despite its unknown consequences – and tasked its Foreign Minister Anthony Eden to communicate this position to Egypt’s Prime Minister Mustafa Pasha An-Nahas. Accordingly, An-Nahas invited Arab leaders and officials to Cairo to “seek avenues for uniting the Arabs in one front.” Thus was born the “Arab League” on 22 March 1945.



Mustafa An-Nahas Pasha

• The Leftist Trend (Secular – Liberal) ¹³

This movement emerged in Beirut when Anton Sa’adeh (1904-1949), the founder of the Syrian National Party, called for the establishment of a “United Syrian State” based on geographic and political unity, and integrating Syria, Lebanon, Palestine and Cyprus into a single Syrian entity. However, the Syrian President Hosni Az-Zaim handed over Anton Sa’adeh (although his friend and ally) to the Lebanese government, which tried him in a martial court and sentenced him to death for attempting to execute a *coup d’état* (the sentence was carried out in Beirut on 8 July 1949). Other tragic political assassinations marked the nationalist era, with the execution of Hosni Az-Zaim during a *coup d’état* in Syria, the assassination of the Egyptian Prime Minister Mahmoud Fahmi An-Nukrashi in December 1948, and that of the founder of the Muslim Brotherhood Hassan Al-Banna on 12 February 1949. The members of the Syrian National Party sought revenge for their leader’s execution by the Lebanese authorities and assassinated Prime Minister Riad As-Solh during his visit to Jordan on 16 July 1951. This dark chapter closed with the assassination of King Abdullah I at Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem on 20 July 1951. Despite these events, the basic ideas and principles of Arab unity continued, especially those presented by the Syrian National Party.



Anton Sa’adeh



Hosni Az-Zaim



Riad As-Solh

Political and Military Challenges Represented by the Zionist Movement

The leaders of the Zionist movement, in coordination with Britain and France, tried to convince Palestinian leaders and elites to cooperate with them in exchange for Arab independence and unity in the implementation of their plans in Palestine.

The first such incident took place in 1913, at the outset of the first Arab awakening and prior to the Sykes-Picot Agreement (1916) and the Balfour Declaration (1917). On the occasion of the first Arab conference held in Paris that year, the Zionist intellectual Chaim Kalvarisky discussed the idea of granting autonomy to the Jews in some Palestinian areas, while Palestine as

a whole would form part of the united Arab kingdom of “Greater Syria.” Another attempt was made ahead of the 1919 Paris Peace Conference at a meeting between Prince Faisal and Chaim Weizmann arranged on 4 June 1918 by the British Colonel P. C. Joyce in the Prince’s compound in Al-Gwreh

(between Aqaba and Ma’an). During the meeting, Prince Faisal withheld from giving a response to Weizmann’s proposals, saying that “Political issues [had to] be referred to his father Sharif Hussein.”

A second meeting was arranged by Colonel Thomas Edward Lawrence in London on 3 January 1919, during which the Faisal-Weizmann Agreement was signed. The document was written in English and Prince Faisal, ignoring this language, had to depend on Lawrence’s translation. The agreement stated that: “In the establishment of the constitution and administration of Palestine all such measures shall be adopted as will afford the fullest guarantees for carrying into effect the British government’s Declaration of 2 November 1917 [the Balfour Declaration]” (Art. III), and that “All necessary measures shall be taken to encourage and stimulate immigration of Jews into Palestine on a large scale [...]” (Art. IV).

Faced with the shock expressed by the Arab delegation that he had gone alone to the meeting and signed the agreement with Weizmann, Prince Faisal justified himself by explaining that he had clearly and personally laid out his reservations, saying:

“If the Arabs are granted their independence fully, as we requested in our memorandum of 3 January 1919, I agree to the agreement’s articles. However, if any change or modification occurs, I will not commit to this agreement, which will be null and void.” ¹⁴

During the Paris Peace Conference, the Arab delegation was keen to present the Arab demands of establishing Syria as an independent Arab state as well as creating an independent confederation between Syria, Iraq and Palestine, within which Jews would be granted rights and liberties equal to those of Arabs.

Throughout the 1930s and 1940s, the Jewish Agency’s representatives continued their attempts to foster “dialogue” with the “Arab and Palestinian elites” in Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, and Palestine, as illustrated by Chaim Weizmann and Ben-Gurion’s letters to the Egyptian Prime Minister Ismail Sidqi Pasha, to the leader of the Egyptian opposition Mustafa Pasha Nahas, and to other officials within the Egyptian foreign ministry. King Farouq was



Resolutions of the first Arab conference, 1913



Colonel Thomas Edward Lawrence and Prince Faisal

The Second Arab Awakening

A Historical background

aware of his Prime Minister's communications with the Jewish Agency and its representatives. Some British and Egyptian documents show that Sidqi Pasha "agreed on the partition plan, provided that the Jewish Agency guaranteed the support for the partition from another Arab state."



Ismail Sidqi Pasha

The famous Egyptian journalist Mohammed Hassanein Heikal commented on these meetings and relationships by saying:

"The Zionist movement was absent from the general Egyptian consciousness, whether at the governmental or popular levels. There had always been confusion between the familiar presence of Egyptian Jews and the Zionist Movement itself."



Eliyahu Sasson

Between 1947 and 1948, as part of the Jewish Agency's continued efforts to dialogue with Arab leaders, Eliyahu Sasson and Golda Meir held special meetings with King Abdullah, during which Sasson conveyed the details of his meetings in Cairo and the approval of the Partition Plan by Egyptian officials.

With the Partition Plan close to implementation, King Abdullah took new initiatives to communicate his vision and desire for "the future of Palestine." He arranged a meeting between his representatives (Jordanian Prime Minister Tawfiq Abu Al-Huda and Military Chief of Staff John Bagot Glubb, better known as Glubb Pasha) and the British Foreign Minister Ernest Bevin, in which the latter agreed "to annex the allocated Arab parts of the Partition Plan to Trans-Jordan."¹⁵



Glubb Pasha



Tawfiq Abu Al-Huda



Ernest Bevin

On the Arab "official" political scene, the positions and statements were completely different in terms of contents and concepts. Two conferences of Arab leaders were held upon the invitation of King



The first Arab summit in Anshas

Farouq. During the first one, held in Anshas on 28 May 1946, the attendees declared their rejection of the recommendations to partition Palestine made by the Anglo-American Committee presided by Lord Morrison, and demanded instead the independence of Palestine and the preservation of its Arab identity. They also called for the formation of a national Palestinian committee meant to represent all Palestinian factions.

The second conference, which gathered Arab Prime Ministers, was held in Bludan, near Damascus, from 8 to 12 June 1946. On this occasion, the Arabs decided to "reject in principle any form of partition regarding the question of Palestine," and required the disarming of the Jewish gangs and their deportation from Palestine. They also established an Arab fund to help the Palestinians in maintaining and protecting their lands in coordination with the Arab Higher Committee.¹⁶



Participants at the Bludan Conference

As a result of the British-Jewish failure to promote the idea of the partition of Palestine, Britain notified the United Nations on 13 November 1947 that it would withdraw from Palestine (which it did on 15 May 1948), and referred the resolution of the question of Palestine to the UN General Assembly. In response, the UN formed the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP) tasked with the mission of studying and assessing the situation. The majority of UNSCOP's members supported the partition of Palestine, while the minority recommended the establishment of a Jewish-Arab confederation.

On 29 November 1947, the UN General Assembly adopted Resolution 181 supporting the partition of Palestine into a Jewish and an Arab state joined in an economic confederation. The city of Jerusalem, due to its religious, historical, and cultural significance, was granted a special status via the concept of *corpus separatum*. Thus, 2% of the territory of historic Palestine would be demilitarized and administered according to a special international system.¹⁷

The Second Arab Awakening

A Historical background

In his memoirs, King Abdullah described the situation in Palestine at the door of partition in these words:

“The United Nations General Assembly has issued a decision to partition Palestine and has formed a committee that will oversee its implementation. Yet, the Arab states have not ended their membership of the United Nations. Besides, the partition is already de facto implemented. In Palestine, there are armed Jewish squads and municipal committees practicing autonomous rule. As for the Arab parts, there is a shadow of a military rule controlled by resistance committees. The British will withdraw from Palestine according to the time-frame they have set, and by then the Jews will be free to receive ships filled with guns and immigrants [...]. Who will blockade these ships and prevent the delivery of men and guns? The Arab states have not undertaken any effective action to face the facts on the ground and the rapid changes occurring in Palestine.”



King Abdullah

In spite of the secret talks between King Abdallah and the Jewish Agency, the first military confrontations took place between the Jordanian Arab army and the Jewish military forces in Jerusalem. The Arab army stayed in the parts that had been allocated to the Arab state in compliance with the Partition Plan, especially regarding Jerusalem's Old City. It thus withdrew from the cities of Lod and Ramle, which witnessed the forced evacuation of their Palestinian inhabitants by the Jewish forces.



The Arab Liberation Army led by Fawzi Al-Qawuqji

The violence of the Haganah forces and the Irgun and Stern gangs quickly escalated. More than 400 Palestinian villages were evacuated. The most infamous of their exactions happened on 9 April 1948 in the village of Deir Yassin, near Jerusalem, where Jewish forces carried out a massacre. This occurred shortly before the declaration of the establishment of Israel on 15 May 1948.¹⁸



Haganah terrorists wanted by the British Mandate authorities



King Farouq and King Abdul Aziz As-Saud



Hassan Al-Banna and members of the Muslim Brotherhood

After the Partition decision, several popular and political movements across the Arab World endeavored to support the Palestinian people. The most prominent of these efforts were led by the Muslim Brotherhood which tried to turn the Egyptian public opinion against the King and his government. Encouraged by King Abdul Aziz As-Saud, King Farouq decided to send Egyptian forces to Palestine in spite of the opposition of his government and some military officials.

The Iraqi public opinion imposed tremendous pressure on the government to intervene in Palestine and rescue the Palestinians, organizing protests and food strikes. On 15 May 1948, three Iraqi squads (around 1,000 soldiers) were ready to cross the Jordan River under the leadership of Bakr Sidqi.



Bakr Sidqi

In Syria, President Shukri Al-Quwatli supported the Arab League's decision to send troops to fight in Palestine and in late June he dispatched 1,000 soldiers near the Palestinian borders. Lebanon's factionalism and lack of political stability undermined the effectiveness of its military operations and resulted in a swift defeat of the limited Lebanese forces sent to fight in the Galilee.

The Jewish forces consisted of 27,000 individuals taking orders from the central command headquarters. Many of these fighters had received considerable training and combat experience under the British Mandate and during World War II. They also enjoyed financial support and fought according to a well-coordinated military strategy with a supporting infrastructure. In addition, they had 90,000 military reserve troops in Kibbutzim. On the other hand, most of the Arab forces were inexperienced and short of equipment and a proper strategy. They also lacked confidence and failed to carry out crucial tasks such as intelligence gathering and reconnaissance missions. Egypt's Gamal Abdel Nasser described the 1948 Israeli-Arab War by saying: “The only conclusion that could be drawn was that this was a political war, or rather a state of war and no-war. It was possible to make an advancement without victory and a retreat without defeat.”¹⁹

The Arab-Israeli truce agreements were signed in the island of Rhodes, firstly by the Egyptian representatives on 24 February 1948, followed by Jordan and Lebanon on 3 March. Syria signed the truce on 20 July 1948 following its retreat from all the areas it had controlled during the conflict, which were later turned into demilitarized zones. Iraq did not sign the agreement but withdrew from the northern parts of the West Bank in accordance with the provisions of the Israeli-Jordanian truce.

This marked the beginning of the end of the Pan-Arabism era's political regimes.

IV. The Era of Military Regimes (1948-1981)

Following the 1948 Nakba and the partition of Palestine, the nationalist elites lost their ruling power due to a combination of military incompetence and failure to fulfill their duties as statesmen. Amidst the mounting popular frustration against the established elites, the military soon proved all too willing to step in and fill the power vacuum. It became the active agency responsible for the overthrow of most Arab governments, conducting a series of *coup d'états* which paved the way for young officers to rule for over three decades.

The “Free Officers” aspired to change the system and philosophy of governance in a framework characterized by interactions, debates, and conflicts between the three main intellectual schools (Political Islam, Pan-Arabism and Left Liberalism), as well as permanent divergences among Arab countries.

Cases of Military Rule

- **Syria**¹

Syria witnessed three *coup d'états* during 1949 alone. The first one was led on 30 March by Hosni Az-Zaim against President Shukri Al-Quwatli and his Prime Minister Khalid Al-Azm, deemed responsible for the 1948 defeat.



Hosni Az-Zaim



Shukri Al-Quwatli



Khalid Al-Azm

It was followed by a coup led on 30 August by Colonel Sami Al-Hinnawi, who arrested and executed Hosni Az-Zaim and his Prime Minister Hosni Barazi. This was related to the accusation of corruption for a contract involving the construction of oil pipelines between Saudi Arabia and Syria for the account of the British Iraq Petroleum Company and Aramco.

The third *coup d'état* was conducted on 19 January 1949 by Adib Shishakli, who then took on the role of President until 1954. The end of Shishakli's rule marked the return of political parties and



Hashem Al-Atassi



Adib Shishakli



Sami Al-Hinnawi

traditional governing elites and the election of Hashem Al-Atassi as President in 1955.



Nasser and the “First Arab Citizen” Shukri Al-Quwatli



Nasser saluting crowds in Damascus

This was followed by the return of Shukri Al-Quwatli as the head of the state in 1955, until the declaration of Syrian-Egyptian unity and the establishment of the United Arab Republic under the leadership of President Gamal Abdel Nasser on 22 February 1958. Nasser's reign ended with the “Syrian separation” coup led by Abdul Karim Nahlawi and the abolishment of the Syrian-Egyptian unity in September 1961.



Abdul Karim Nahlawi



Salah Bitar, Gamal Abdel Nasser and Michel Aflaq

On 28 March 1962 another military coup took place, followed by a revolution led by Jasseem Alwan on 8 March 1963 and later pursued by the Ba'ath Party (Michel Aflaq, Salah Bitar, and Salah Jadid) until the 1967 June War.

On 16 November 1970, Hafez Al-Assad, then Defense Minister, led the “reform military coup” of the Ba'ath Party. He became President on 22 February 1971 and imposed a one-party system. After his death on 10 June 2000, ending a three-decade reign, the power passed to his second son, Bashar.



Hafez Al-Assad

In 2011, in the wake of the popular uprisings also occurring in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and Yemen, Syria's second Arab awakening began, challenging the regime of Bashar Al-Assad and the Ba'ath Party.

The Second Arab Awakening

A Historical background



Bashar Al-Assad



Salah Jadid



President Mohammed Naguib

• Egypt ²

On 23 July 1953, the Free Officers movement presided by Gamal Abdel Nasser announced a *coup d'état* against the Egyptian monarchy. Mohammed Naguib was assigned as the army's Commander-in-Chief and a "Revolutionary Council" was formed. Ali Maher, a former Prime Minister, was assigned to form a government to handle the transitional phase. Without a fight, the Free Officers managed to expel King Farouq, who left from Egypt in his ship "Al-Mahrousa" on 29 July 1952.



The Free Officers



King Farouq boarding "Al-Mahrousa" yacht



Mohammed Naguib and Ali Maher Pasha

The revolution's six main goals were the eradication of colonialism and its apologists, the abolition of feudalism, the suppression of monopolies and capitalism, the formation of a patriotic national army, the achievement of absolute social justice, and the creation of a healthy democratic environment. On 8 September 1952, a new Agrarian Reform Law limited agricultural property to 200 acres per person. On 9 December 1952, the 1922 constitution was abolished, spelling the end of the Mohammed Ali dynasty's reign over the country, and on 8 June 1953 the Republic was declared. The new constitution banned political parties and ordered the confiscation of their properties.

On 18 December 1953, General Mohammed Naguib became the first Egyptian President and Gamal Abdel Nasser was appointed Prime Minister and Minister of Interior, while the remaining min-

isterial posts were distributed among the members of the Revolutionary Council. A three-year transitional period was announced to pave the way for democratic constitutional rule. However, divergences among the Free Officers began to surface, with some disagreeing on Naguib's tenure as head of state while Naguib himself accused the Free Officers of intending to take over power. These disagreements resulted in General Naguib's resignation from the Council in February 1954. He nonetheless returned to his post upon the request of the Free Officers, willing to avoid disagreements likely to create cracks within the Egyptian society or disorder inside the army. Yet after an assassination attempt on Gamal Abdel Nasser fomented on 21 October 1954 in Alexandria by the Muslim Brotherhood, with which Naguib had connections, the General submitted his resignation for the second time (on 14 November 1954) and was discharged of all his duties.

Nasser took over the presidency of both the republic and the Revolutionary council until his death on 28 September 1970. During the first phase of his reign, his vision and political program, as elaborated in his monograph *Falsafat Ath-Thawra* [The Philosophy of the Revolution], focused on three main components based on the relations between Egypt and its three interlocutors or "circles": Islam, Africa and the Arab World.



Nasser in Cairo



The Egyptian Revolution Council dismissing Mohammed Naguib



Mohammed Naguib and Gamal Abdel Nasser

The Second Arab Awakening

A Historical background



• The Islamic Circle ³

In its infancy, the Egyptian revolution coexisted comfortably with the Muslim Brotherhood, the largest Islamic organized movement in Egypt. Yet, the 1954 assassination attempt on Nasser resulted in the banning and prosecution of Islamic organizations, as well as the arrest of the Brotherhood's leader, Hassan Al-Hudaibi. The government then established the "Islamic Conference" so as not to be dependent on the Muslim Brotherhood for the formulation of its Islamic policies. It presented the conferences in these terms:



The Second General Guide Hassan Al-Hudaibi with Nasser

"Our perception of Hajj must be changed. Going to Mecca shouldn't be seen as a ticket for paradise, or a silly attempt to buy forgiveness after a life of sins [...] Hajj should constitute a significant political statement, and the media should play a major role in conveying this message. By this we don't mean the traditional photographs meant to please the newspapers' readers, but a periodical political conference gathering leaders, scholars, merchants, columnists, intellectuals, youth, and businessmen of Islamic countries constituting an Islamic parliament outlining the principles of their country's sovereignty and prosperity."



Nasser with the Sheikh of Al-Azhar Mahmoud Shaltout

Nasser succeeded in re-activating the role of Al-Azhar and reclaiming its prominence and status as a point of reference for the Islamic World. Meanwhile, most of the Muslim Brotherhood leaders were arrested. Said Qutub, the Islamic philosopher, cleric, and founder of a new chapter of the Muslim Brotherhood, was executed on 29 August 1966.



Said Qutub

• The African Circle ⁴

The Palestinian writer Anis Sayegh declared:

"The approach towards Africa consists in asking Egypt to pay attention to African voices because of its strong historical ties with its African neighbors. These ties are based on easy geographical access and on the Nile River, which is a natural element linking Egypt to central Africa. The fact is that Pharaonic Egypt has always respected its identity as part of the African continent, whether through its political and military relations or through its commercial and population exchanges."



Salah Salem

Salah Salem was one of the Free Officers responsible for the African portfolio at the time.

• The Arab Circle ⁵

The Palestinian cause revitalized the "nationalist idea" and Arab identity of the new Egypt. In particular, a raid carried out by the Israeli military on the Gaza Strip on 28 February 1955, causing the death of 50 people, represented a turning point in the theory and practice of the Egyptian revolution with its leadership coming to realize the centrality of the Palestinian cause. Gamal Abdel Nasser expressed his feelings at the time as follows: "Having the weapons to defend ourselves was crucial, I saw the refugees and I was horrified by the thought of the Egyptians going through a similar situation."

Israel's military attacks continued between May and August 1955. The Egyptian leadership began to discern in Israel a significant strategic, military, economic and political threat. It also realized that facing this threat would require a collective rather than individual effort, and that Arab identity would be crucial in any future resistance to Israeli expansionism. Egyptian leaders became also aware of the challenges to unity represented by the Baghdad Pact established by Iraq, Turkey, Britain, Pakistan, and Iran in February 1955. The Pact showed that the Western powers continued to back those rulers in the region who would be mindful of Western interests. This was an affront to Arab dignity, causing the people to refuse any military alliance or foreign aid in return for guarding the West's interests.



Map of the Baghdad Pact, 1955

The Second Arab Awakening

A Historical background

In a speech celebrating the nationalization of the Suez Canal on 26 July 1956, Nasser declared that "Arab unity was behind the victory." The Free Officers insisted on underlining the Arab identity of Egypt, and articulated this aspect in the first article of the constitution, which in addition to stating that "Egypt is an Arab, independent, and sovereign state and a democratic republic" stipulated that "The Egyptian people are part of the Arab nation." The Egyptian press supported the banner of Arabism, which became one of the most emphasized issues in the country. The Egyptian leaders established the radio "Sawt Al-Arab" (Voice of the Arabs) which was successful in conveying the messages of the revolution and in stimulating the support of the public opinion for their policies.⁶



Nasser announcing the nationalization of the Suez Canal

Officials were brought to trial and Nasser issued a statement on 3 March in which he promised democracy and freedom for all. The students did not demand an end to the regime as a whole, but sought revenge against the state agencies they held responsible for the humiliating defeat. Yet the regime was unable to meet their calls.



Gamal Abdel Nasser's funeral



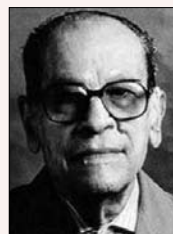
Assembly of the Socialist Union

Nasser died on 28 September 1970. According to the Egyptian constitution, upon the President's death his deputy was to become President for a period of 60 days during which a public referendum was to be held to determine his successor. The results of the referendum designated Anwar Sadat as the new President of Egypt. During his oath of office before the Parliament on 15 October 1970, Sadat expressed his commitment to respect Nasser's agenda.⁷

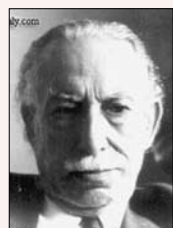


Anwar Sadat

The Free Officers also aimed at building a more democratic culture within the Egyptian society. Their first act was to establish a "Liberation commission" to fill the democratic deficit caused by the ban on political parties, which was to become a popular political entity for the realization of national unity. Other efforts consisted in the formation of "Al-Ittihad Al-Qawmi" ("Nationalist Union") in 1957, and "Al-Ittihad Al-Ishtiraki" ("Socialist Union," the one-party system) in 1962 with the objective of eliminating regressive forces and combining the democratic and socialist approaches in an attempt to articulate a distinctive Egyptian social model. The Socialist Union represented the "state-approved" opposition to the regime in that it opposed the regime when it was ordered to. Several writers and analysts, such as Tawfiq Al-Hakim and Naguib Mahfouz, questioned the implications of this arrangement for the Egyptian democracy, and presented several ideological explanations of the regime's practices.



Naguib Mahfouz



Tawfiq Al-Hakim

Conflicts and disagreements soon emerged among prominent state officials struggling for power, authority and control. Many in the old guard began confronting President Sadat publicly, questioning the wisdom of the announced unity with Syria and Libya, as well as the acceptance of the 1969 'Rogers Plan' (the brainchild of US Secretary of State William P. Rogers). They also opposed the Egyptian Commander-in-Chief Mohammed Fawzi who showed some interest in shaping the Egyptian foreign policy. In telephone conversations, members of the old guard expressed their wish to depose President Sadat.



William Rogers



Mohammed Fawzi

Successively, mass resignations (including those of the Defense Minister, the Minister of the Presidency of the Republic, the Speaker of the National Assembly, and the Head of Intelligence) were announced on the Egyptian radio before the President himself was informed. The situation could have brought about the wholesale collapse of the state. It was later revealed by official documents of this period that the Commander-in-Chief General Mohammed Fawzi had ordered the Army's Chief of Staff General Mohammed Sadeq to send army units to "secure Cairo." This could have been interpreted as an attempted *coup d'état*. However, President Sa-



Mohammed Sadeq

In February 1968, Egyptian students launched demonstrations throughout the country demanding the prosecution of the officials directly responsible for the June 1967 defeat. These of-

The Second Arab Awakening

A Historical background

Sadat promptly accepted the officials' resignations and reached an understanding with General Sadeq to prevent the army from engaging in any political manoeuvres. On 15 May 1971, Sadat ordered the arrest, trial, and imprisonment of most of the old guard, in what was considered a second "correctional" revolution.

Several assassination attempts were conducted against President Sadat during his ten-year rule and ultimately ended in success on 6 October 1981. Sadat's deputy, Hosni Mubarak, succeeded the slain President as the new leader of Egypt and kept this position for three consecutive decades until the 25 January 2011 Revolution.



Anwar Sadat and Hosni Mubarak

• Iraq⁸

In 1952, the communists led a series of demonstrations and riots that spread across Iraqi cities. The protesters voiced their anger and frustration at Prince Abdul Ellah's rule following the death of King Ghazi bin Faisal in a car accident in April 1939. They opposed the continuous restrictions imposed by London through the Iraqi-British Agreement of 1930, and rejected the ban on political parties as well as the severing of economic and political ties with communist states in Europe.



Prince Abdul Ellah and King Faisal

Prince Abdul Ellah used the army to enforce martial law, and asked Nur Ad-Din Mahmoud, the army's Chief of Staff, to form a new government. The Iraqi army had already led six *coup d'états*, the first one under the command of Bakr Sidqi which resulted in the murder of the Defense Minister Jafar Al-Askari. The last coup was led by Rashid Ali Kiliani in 1941. Between 1953 and 1958 eleven different governments were sworn in.



Jafar Al-Askari

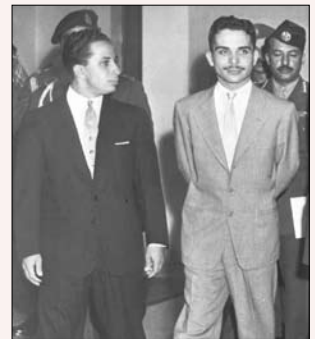
As-Said's government maintained the alliance with Britain and initiated the Baghdad Pact by signing a bilateral defense agreement with Turkey, which was then extended to Britain, Pakistan, and Iran in February 1955. Unexpectedly, Baghdad maintained the alliance after the Suez War of 1956, and even accepted the Eisenhower Doctrine authorizing the American President to "defend states against any attacks launched by a communist state and to provide aid for their defense."



Nuri As-Said leading the Baghdad Pact allies

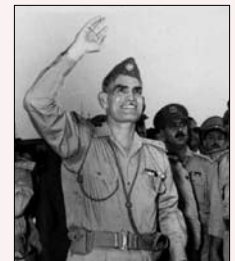
Besides, as a political and security crisis was going on in Jordan, Nuri As-Said's government showed its willingness to send Iraqi

troops to protect the royal regime in Amman, especially after the establishment of the "Arab Union" between Jordan and Iraq in 1958 under King Faisal II's presidency gave birth to a confederation between the two countries' parliaments as well as a military cooperation. This "Hashemite union" was seen as dedicated to countering the Egyptian-Syrian bloc under Nasser's leadership.



King Hussein and King Faisal, 1958

Subsequently, a group of Iraqi "Free Officers," inspired by the 1952 revolution in Egypt, began conspiring to overthrow the royal regime in Iraq. They formed a central committee, presided by Abdul Karim Al-Qassem, and led a bloody *coup d'état* on 14 July 1958, invading the royal palace and killing King Faisal II, Amir Abdul Ellah, Nuri As-Said, and other members of the royal family. General Abdul Karim Al-Qassem formed the first military government, while his associate Abdul Salam Aref was named deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense. The rest of the ministerial and governmental posts were assigned to other Free Officers.



Abdul Karim Al-Qassem

During his four and a half years in government, Abdul Karim Al-Qassem was the target of several assassination attempts motivated by struggles for power and authority among the Free Officers and their divergent political affinities. Thus, while Al-Qassem wanted to compete and oppose Nasser, Aref sought to cooperate with Syria and Egypt, and the Kurds and communists refused to enter an Egyptian-Syrian confederation.



Abdul Karim Al-Qassem and Abdul Salam Aref

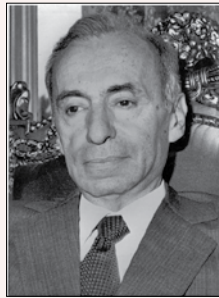
Internal disputes culminated in the arrest and imprisonment of Abdul Salam Aref, who was released in 1961. An attempted *coup d'état* took place after Rashid Ali Kilani returned from exile in Cairo, but he was arrested and sentenced to death. He remained in prison until July 1962, when he was granted amnesty by Al-Qassem. Another attempt to overthrow the regime was led by Colonel Abdul Wahhab Shawaf, Garrison Commander of Mosul and a pioneering member of the Free Officer movement. The attempt, which took place on 6 March 1959, failed due to the lack of coordination between Shawaf, the Head of Intelligence Colonel Rifaat Hajj Sirri, and the second battalion leader Nazim Tabaqchali. Shawaf later died from his injuries.

Abdul Karim Qassem's rule ended upon his death on 9 February 1963 following a *coup d'état* masterminded by Ba'ath Party members. This coup was similar to a gang war, as it involved the massacre of political opponents after their release from prison. Ba'ath officers took over the government and brought about a one par-

The Second Arab Awakening

A Historical background

ty system. The party's philosophy, according to its ideological leader Michel Aflaq, was to "include all Arab minorities, whether Muslims or Christians, and to unite them." Its banner read: "A United Arab Nation with an immortal message." Another idea promoted by the party was that "Arab socialism is different from Marxist socialism" and that its implementation is only possible after Arab unity is achieved. Abdul Salam Aref took over the presidency and Ahmad Hassan Bakr returned as Prime Minister.



Michel Aflaq



PM Ahmad Hassan Bakr and President Abdul Salam Aref

One month after the coup in Iraq, another one took place in Syria under the command of two Alawite officers of the Ba'ath Party, Hafez Al-Assad and Salah Jadid. The Syrian and Iraqi Ba'athi leaders then met and agreed on a concept of Arab unity, and approached interested leaders in Cairo who agreed to host trilateral talks on the subject in March and April 1963. On 17 April 1963, they issued the "Cairo declaration" announcing the establishment of a federation and the formation of a general council made up of members from the three countries, with the President of the Council entitled to appoint and dismiss ministers.



Michel Aflaq, Gamal Abdel Nasser, Loay Al-Atassi, Salah Bitar

The series of *coup d'état* continued in Iraq after the death of the Iraqi President Abdul Salam Aref in a plane crash on 13 April 1966. His brother Abdul Rahman Aref succeeded him as President and Prime Minister for five months, until he resigned and left the country upon the request of the second Ba'ath coup leaders. Ahmad Hassan Bakr took over the presidency and appointed Abdul Razaq Nayef as his Prime Minister and Ibrahim Daoud as his Minister of Defense. On 30 July 1969, Ahmad Bakr dismissed his Prime Minister and deported him to Jordan, then appointed a young civilian, Saddam Hussein At-Takriti, as his deputy in the revolutionary com-



Abdul Rahman Aref



Saddam Hussein

mand council. On 16 July 1979, Ahmad Hassan Bakr resigned and Saddam Hussein succeeded him as President of Iraq, until the American invasion and occupation of the country in 2003.



Ahmad Hassan Bakr and Saddam Hussein



US soldiers toppling the statue of Saddam Hussein

Alliances and Disputes During the 'Military Era'

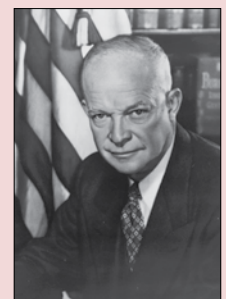
The Military Era witnessed various initiatives and projects of alliance, such as the Baghdad Pact and the founding conference of the Non-Aligned Movement in Bandung, Indonesia, both in 1955, the alliance of France, Great Britain and Israel in the Suez War of 1956, the Eisenhower Doctrine of 1957, the United Arab Republic (Egypt and Syria in 1958), the Arab Union (Iraq and Jordan in 1958), and attempts at trilateral unity between Syria, Egypt, and Iraq in 1963.



Jugoslavia's Tito, Indonesia's Sukarno, Egypt's Nasser, Ghana's Nkrumah, and Indian's Nehru at the NAM's founding summit in Bandung, 1955



Suez War, 1956



President Eisenhower

On the Palestinian front, this period saw the formation of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) in 1964.

Disagreements between Arab rulers escalated with time and regular armed conflicts weakened the Arab forces, undermining their capacity of withstanding the continuous aggressions by Israel, until the 1967 Naksa.



Emblem of the PLO

The Second Arab Awakening

A Historical background

• Military Coup d'Etat and Conflict in Yemen ⁹

The political and military situation in Yemen became complicated after the death of King Imam Yihya on September 1962, the revolution launched by Abdullah As-Sallal, and the declaration of the Republic. The newly proclaimed king, Imam Mohammed Al-Badr, had to flee from Sanaa



Imam Yihya



Imam Mohammed Al-Badr



Abdullah As-Sallal

The Arab regimes started taking sides with and against the revolution. Cairo supported the Yemini revolution immediately and sent armed forces to fight with the revolution fighters. On the other hand, Saudi Arabia (under King Saud bin Abdulaziz) sided with Imam Badr, sending him backup troops and guns and hosting his uncle Amir Hassan and his allied tribal leaders. Jordan also sided with Imam Badr, providing him with arms and men. However, on 12 and 13 November 1962 three Jordanian air force officers (Suhail Hamzah, Tahsin Saymeh, and Harbi Sadouqa) refused to fight against the Yemini revolution and flew their planes to Egypt instead of Yemen, where they asked for political asylum.

In the meantime, Prince Talal bin Abdulaziz (King Saud's brother), who was acting as Minister of Finance, left Saudi Arabia for Geneva then Beirut and Cairo in protest against the Saudi involvement against the Yemini revolution. He was soon joined by four other young princes, Abdul Mohsen, Fawaz, Badr, and Saad As-Saud, who formed the "Free Princes" movement opposing King Saud's policies and calling for change in Saudi Arabia. Two Saudi pilots (Rashad Shasheh and Ahmad Hussein) and one technician (Mohammed Izmiri) also directed their planes to Cairo refusing to open fire against the Yemini revolutionaries.

President John F. Kennedy intervened to resolve the crisis by sending letters to President Nasser, Prince Faisal As-Saud, King Hussein bin Talal and Abdullah As-Sallal in which he proposed the gradual withdrawal of Arab forces from Yemen and the deployment of peace-keeping forces.



King Faisal and President John Kennedy

Nasser and Abdullah As-Sallal accepted the American proposal immediately and on 19 December 1962 the US officially recognized the Yemini Republic. Following the Yemini crisis, arms dealing spread across the Middle East with European arms contracts reaching a stunning 600 million dollars. An unholy alliance was formed between petroleum, guns, and intelligence in

which some regional players such as Iran (ruled by the Shah) and Israel were directly involved. Further to an agreement signed in Jeddah between Riyadh and Cairo on 24 August 1965 to conduct a popular referendum in Yemen on the preferred form of government and the selection of a transitional conference, the Arab kings and presidents



King Faisal and President Nasser

headed to Casablanca in September 1965 to participate in the third Arab summit. In his reconciliation meeting with King Faisal on 9 September 1965, Nasser made the following statements in response to the Syrian propositions relative to the formation of a joint Arab defense committee:

"They are demanding us to liberate Palestine, Alexandria, and Arabistan by armed action. Although this may be necessary at this stage, we will not be the ones achieving such goals. They are in the hands of future generations, at a time when, hopefully, the Arab nation will be in a better state, stronger and perhaps united.

I do not hesitate to stand before the people and declare that I do not have any plan to liberate Palestine. I know that this will cause a huge disappointment among Arab masses, yet I accept the responsibility of telling the truth. The truth is that none of us has any plans or means to liberate Palestine now. I personally believe that the duration of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict is at least a hundred years. Thus, talking further about this issue amounts to chasing the impossible. I do not allow anyone to question my commitment to Arab independence and liberation. At this point we need to redirect our efforts and resources to our countries instead of getting into wars that are far beyond our capacity and would subject us to grave consequences. The United States would never allow an attack on Israel, and nor would the Soviet Union." ¹⁰

Nasser responded to shocked and disappointed Palestinians: "I just want them to know the truth." Ahmad Shuqairi, the PLO Chairman at the time, said in an attempt to contain the Palestinian anger: "The people hold their hopes, and their leaders hold the truth, especially the historical leaders on which such hopes are built on." Nasser repeated: "I will not be the one carrying the burden of liberating Palestine. The people are always the ones who must bear the costs and responsibilities of liberating their homeland, they are therefore entitled to the truth." ¹¹

V. Political Islam (1981-2011)

The Arab World, through its various political stages, has witnessed a number of intellectual efforts aimed at reforming and renewing existing Islamic theories related to political, economic, social, and media issues. These various efforts called for an "Islamic revival" in the sense of "boosting" religious faith and embracing it as the definitive framework for dealing with governance and societal issues. Islam was considered an inclusive system covering all aspects of human and moral values, and responsible for organizing spiritual and secular affairs.

These intellectual enterprises, which have multiplied and accumulated since the time of the Ottoman Caliphate, became known as political Islam.

Ottoman Era

Social activism declined due to cultural "backwardness", corruption, the abandon of *Ijtihad* (the independent or original interpretation of problems not precisely covered by the Qur'an or Hadith (Prophet Mohammed's traditions) for interpretations and practices which caused an internal vacuum and disability to face changes, as well as Western interventions aimed at deforming the local cultural and national identity through the establishment of foreign missionary schools and institutions. This triggered the establishment of the Wahhabi movement, led by Mohammed Abdul Wahhab in Saudi Arabia, calling for religious and moral revival through *Jihad*. It was followed by Mohammed As-Sanussi's movement in North Africa calling for *Jihad* and labor, and the Mahdiya movement in Egypt and Sudan that advocated a return to intellectual and behavioral roots in understanding and applying Islam. These movements did not seek a vision for the future and did not have nationalist objectives.

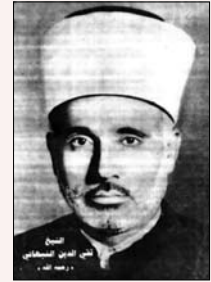
Nationalist Era

Arab governing elites fought among themselves and failed to deal with development and modernization. They also failed in facing the challenges of the Zionist movement and the partition of Palestine which led to the 1948 Nakba. This period witnessed the foundation of the Muslim Brotherhood by Hassan Al-Banna in Egypt in 1928 and its expansion to Jordan and Palestine in 1946. This movement called for adopting Islam as an ideology and a methodology adequate for all times and places, and its goal was to "raise the



Al-Sheikh Hassan Banna

Muslim individual so as to create an Islamic state." In 1953, Mohammed Taqi Ad-Din An-Nabhani defected from the Muslim Brotherhood and established At-Tahrir Party advocating for the reestablishment of an Islamic Caliphate through education. It was presented as a political movement rather than a spiritual or charity organization.



Mohammed Taqi Ad-Din An-Nabhani

Military Regime Era

During this era, religious institutions and *Ulama* (Muslim scholars) were instrumentalized by the regimes to strengthen their position through the religious explication of their policies and justification of their mistakes. This was known as official Islam, an Islam loyal and obedient to the rulers as based on a principle mentioned by a verse in the Qur'an:



Sheikh Mahmoud Shaltout

"Ô you who have believed, obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those in authority among you. And if you disagree over anything, refer it to Allah and the Messenger, if you should believe in Allah and the Last Day. That is the best [way] and best in result" - 4:59.

Official Islam was represented by Al-Azhar (Sheikh Mahmoud Shaltout) and the Ministry of Awqaf in Cairo.



The 1967 defeat

After the 1967 defeat, the Nasser regime tried to present a new political formula to unify the people.

The shock of the *Naksa* broke psychological barriers; people were pained and embittered, especially when Nasser announced in a speech that he assumed the responsibility for the defeat and decided to resign. However, Egyptians and Arabs ran to the streets on 9 and 10 June 1967 to reject the defeat and demand Nasser's return to his post.

In November 1967, five months after the *Naksa*, Nasser announced in front of the Parliament the dissolution of the police state (headed by Salah Nasr) and the end of the Generals' rule (led by Abdul Hakim Amer), adding that there should neither be a right wing (Zakariya Muhyi Ad-Din) nor a left wing (Ali Sabri). Nasser also announced that he would seek to carry out reforms in the political and social spheres (restructuring the Socialist Union and considering the lift of political bans) as well as in the military field (preparing the military armed forces for the defense of Egypt). He then declared that



Salah Nasr

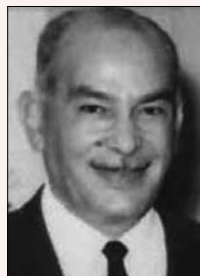
The Second Arab Awakening

A Historical background

he would review the laws and regulations relative to the Muslim Brotherhood and allow some of its members to return from their exile in European and Arab countries.



Field Marshal Abdul
Hakim Amer



Ali Sabri



Zakariya Muhyi
Ad-Din

During the three years following the 1967 defeat, several Muslim Brotherhood members defected to establish new Islamic movements with a more radical approach. As a response, the general guide of the Muslim Brotherhood Hassan Al-Hudaibi published a book in 1969 entitled *Preacher, Not Judges*, in which he refused the *tafkeer* (the practice of a Muslim declaring another Muslim as a non-believer), asked the people to learn the true doctrines of Islam, and objected to Said Qutub's call for an Islamic revolution. Hudaibi represented the moderate faction within the Brotherhood who avoided confronting the state and tried to cope with the surrounding conditions while keeping from expressing harsh opinions against the West.¹

Meanwhile, one of the Muslim Brotherhood's prominent leaders Esam Al-'Aryan wrote in the *Sawt Al-Haq* ("Voice of Truth") bulletin that the modern history of Islam could be divided into three major stages: first, defeat and decline due to Western colonization; second, fragmentation of the Islamic World into national entities adopting Western ideologies instead of Islamic ones; and third, independence caused by the failure of Westernization and marked by the rebirth and expansion of Islamic revival movements made up mainly of students and workers.

In February 1968, Egyptian cities saw major student demonstrations provoked by frustration, anxiety, and anger against the political, social and cultural conditions and the lack of job opportunities. On 30 March 1968 Nasser tried to contain these protests by announcing he would promote political and personal freedoms.



Student protests in 1968

After the death of President Nasser on 28 September 1970, his successor Anwar Sadat leaned towards the Islamic movements to strengthen his position and challenge the powerful groups which had been governing Egypt under his predecessor, which he eventually overcame in May 1972. He presented himself as a religious President and played the Islamic movements against the Nasserites and leftists. He also sought dialogue with the student movement, liberal scholars and Islamic Ulama, supporting Islamic university student associations and appointing in 1968 one of the student demonstrations' leaders, Dr. Abdul Hamid Hassan, as Minister of Youth. However, this dialogue with students was short-lived and stopped just after the first round of talks.²



Anwar As-Sadat visiting Nasser's tomb

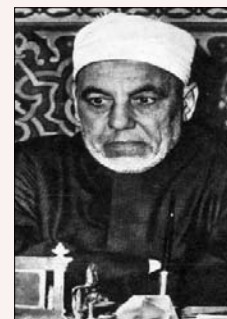
In the meantime, youth Islamic organizations and groups grew in numbers in various places. One of them, called the "Shabab Mohammed Organization," considered the regime as the Devil's ally and called for its ousting. It also advocated the withdrawal from modern Muslim societies to establish new communities in isolated areas of the Muslim world where people could live their lives following the example of the community founded by Prophet Mohammed in Medina after emigrating from Mecca. Its members traveled to Iraq, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and Yemen to work and provide financial support to the organization and its activities. In 1974 a group within the organization led by Saleh Sarriyeh attacked the Technical Military College in Egypt and then tried to assassinate Sadat at the Socialist Union central committee. The attempt failed and Saleh Sarriyeh and others members of the organization were arrested and sentenced to death.



Saleh Abdullah Sarriyeh

Another organization, "Takfeer and Hijra," advocated Islamic revival as the only way to reestablish Islamic unity, protect Muslim communities, and safeguard the word of God on earth. It also called for subduing infidels through *Jihad* and, considering that the greatest threat from the West was of a cultural nature, carried out attacks against foreign educational establishments.³

In July 1977 a group of young men affiliated with an organization led by Ahmad Mustafa and disguised as police officers abducted the former Egyptian Minister of Awqaf Mahmoud Ath-Thahbi. They broadcasted a radio announcement condemning Sadat's regime for not abiding by Islamic law and threatening to kill the minister if their demands were not met (which they eventually did). The organization's members believed they lived in a pre-Islamic society (*Jahilyaa*), and stressed their rejection of contemporary society and their desire to establish new Islamic societies.⁴



Sheikh Mohammed
Ath-Thahbi

The Second Arab Awakening

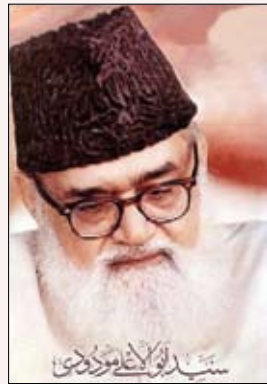
A Historical background

Another group, the "Organization of the Jihad," called upon Muslims to rebel against their rulers and their Western allies. They saw modern Zionism as the rival of political Islam, accused Judaism into a racist religion based on racial superiority, and refused to recognize Israel's sovereignty over any portion of Palestinian land. The organization's attacks against Israel escalated after Al-Aqsa's arson in August 1969 and the Israeli declaration that



Al-Aqsa Mosque's arson, Jerusalem, August 1969

united Jerusalem was the capital of the state of Israel. The doctrines of the organization of the Jihad were crystallized through the writings of Abu Al-Ela Al-Mawrodi who divided Islamic action into two phases: first, a phase characterized by weakness when Islamic societies were under the control of other forces, and second, the phase of *Jihad*, regarded as the duty of each Muslim.⁵



Abu Al-Ela Al-Mawrodi

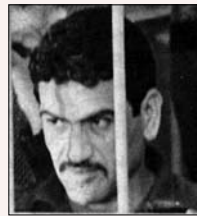
Among the prominent leaders of the Jihad Organization were Aboud Az-Zumour and Abdul Salam Faraj who were later convicted for planning Sadat's assassination. Abdul Salam Faraj published a book entitled *Jihad: The Absent Obligation*, that called for rebelling against the unjust leaders, considered the worst kind of rulers, especially when they pretended to abide by Islamic law while their faith was superficial. This book became the constitution of the Jihad Organization.⁶



Abdul Salam Faraj



Jihad: The Absent Obligation by Abdul Salam Faraj



Aboud Az-Zumour

the inevitable destiny of any Muslim ruler serving the East or the West and betraying his people.

In March and April 1980, student protests stormed the streets of Cairo, Assiut and Alexandria to express their support for the Iranian Revolution. During Ramadan of that year, Sadat met with prominent Muslim scholars, among which the General Guide of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt Sheikh Omar At-Tilmisani, in an attempt to open a dialogue with them and understand why they objected to his visit to Jerusalem and to the peace process with Israel.⁷



Omar At-Tilmisani



Abdel Moneim Aboul Fotouh and, to his left, Hamdin Sabahi during Sadat's speech

Religious Trends Opposing Sadat

Despite his efforts, Sadat did not manage to change the minds of Islamic scholars and leaders, who continued to express their opposition and anger, especially with regard to the peace process with Israel. Campaigns criticizing the President's policies were launched by several sheikhs, such as Omar At-Tilmisani who published articles in *Ad-Dawa* newspaper; Abd Al-Hamid Kishk whose sermons supporting Khomeini's revolution and attacking Sadat's regime were very popular and widespread, Ahmad Al-Mahlawi, the Imam of Al-Qaed Ibrahim Mosque in Alexandria, and Hafez Salamah, who opposed the welcoming of the Shah in Egypt.



Sheikh Abd Al-Hamid Kishk

Islamic Groups After the Islamic Revolution in Iran

The Islamic organizations strongly supported the Islamic revolution which took place in Iran between 1979 and 1980, coinciding with Sadat's initiative to visit Jerusalem and start negotiations with Israel (crowned by the signature of the Camp David Accord in 1979). From the successes of the Iranian revolution, they learned that religion could deeply affect the masses and teach them the value of dignity. They considered the Shah's ousting



Sheikh Ahmad Mahlawi



Sheikh Hafez Salamah

The Second Arab Awakening

A Historical background



The Jihad Organization

On 6 October 1981, Khaled Al-Islambuli and other members of the Jihad Organization assassinated President Sadat during a military parade celebrating the anniversary of the October 1973 victory. The Jihad Organization's philosophy of violence and rebellion was reflected not only in Islambuli's actions but also in his words; to the officers interrogating him he indeed replied: "Yes, I killed him, but I am not guilty as I committed this act for the sake of my religion and my country." He further explained his crime by saying that "the laws being implemented in the country [were] un-Islamic, and that the people suffer[ed] because of the lack of Shari'a rule," in addition to pointing at Sadat's peace agreement with Israel and his persecution, arrest, and humiliation of Muslim scholars.



Sadat's Assassination, 6 October 1981



Khaled Al-Islambuli

The ideas and practices of the Jihad Organization in Egypt revolved around the duty of fighting the infidel state, and stressed that *Jihad* was the only instrument to establish an Islamic state.

After the assassination of President Sadat, his successor Hosni Mubarak imposed emergency laws which remained enacted for three decades until his eviction on 11 February 2011 following the 25 January uprising. Mubarak adopted two distinct strategies in dealing with religious movements: oppressing and persecuting their members on the one hand, and containing them by allowing them to operate within unions and syndicates on the other. The major phase of interaction for the Islamic movements during the 1980s was the few years merging of the Al-Jihad and Al-Gamaa Al-Islamiya organizations, which led to the adoption by the religious movements of a plurality of methods adapting to the events taking place in Egypt and neighboring countries.⁸

In the second term of Mubarak's presidency, the Muslim Brotherhood adopted a new strategy and decided to run in the 1984 parliamentary elections as part of the electoral list of the Wafd Party. This approach was advocated by Omar At-Tilmisani, Mustafa Mashhour, and the Brotherhood's General Guide back then, Mohammed Hamid Abu An-Naser, who asserted that



Hosni Mubarak



Mustafa Mashhour



Mohammed Hamid Abu An-Naser

"Islamic rule [had to] believe in pluralism." This contradicted the thesis of Hassan Al-Banna, the Brotherhood's founder, who called instead for eradicating partisanship.



Fuad Siraj Ad-Din



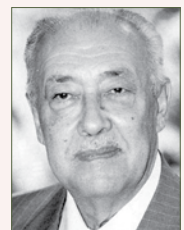
Salah Abu Ismail

Fuad Siraj Ad-Din, chairman of the Wafd Party, questioned the Brotherhood's allegations and declared that the Wafd had agreed to the "Wafd-Brotherhood" deal only to benefit from the latter's popularity. He added that the Wafd rejected the candidacy of Salah Abu Ismail, a member of the Muslim Brotherhood's Higher Committee, as part of the Wafd's electoral list.

Meanwhile, the leaders of the Muslim Brotherhood tried to establish their own political party, holding a series of meetings on the subject with the Defense Minister Field Marshal Mohammed Abd Al-Halim Abu Gazalah, and state security officials



Mohammed Abd Al-Halim Abu Gazalah



Fuad Alam

such as Fuad Alam. President Hosni Mubarak had reservations on the issue, declaring: "This would cause us so much trouble," adding, "Let them contact the Americans to test the water in Washington." However the US Administration considered the Muslim Brotherhood as a "terrorist movement" and refused its plan to set up a political party.⁹

That phase's most prominent figures included Mustafa Murad, Chairman of Al-Ahrar Party, Sheikh Yousef Al-Badrani, Hamdin Sabahi, founder of Al-Ummah Party, and Engineer Ibrahim Shukri, founder of the Labor Party "Al-Amal," who started his political career as a socialist and later became an Islamist.



Mustafa Murad



Sheikh Yousef Al-Badrani



Hamdin Sabahi



Ibrahim Shukri

Jihadist Salafis

The Soviet Union's invasion and occupation of Afghanistan in 1979 was a turning point for religious movements and political Islam in the Middle East in terms of methodology and thought. Afghanistan became the stronghold of jihadist Islamic movements inspired by Ibn Taymiyyah, Said Qutub, and Wahhabism. After a 10-year war concluding with the defeat of the Soviet Union in 1989, Jihadist troops went back to their home countries (including Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Yemen, and Jordan) and joined their Islamist fellows in their struggle against the state's institutions, attacking resorts and touristic places. Between 1992 and 1997, the Islamic movements carried out 1,200 operations, with the most devastating one taking place in Luxor and kill-

The Second Arab Awakening

A Historical background

ing 66 people, including 57 tourists. Other attacks targeted the Saudi Royal Guard's building in 1995 and the American military advisors' residential compound where five soldiers and two Indian nationals were killed and around 60 people were injured. The "Afghan Arabs" (also known as "Arab-Afghans") who had fought against the Russians in Afghanistan were accused of planning and executing the attack. Another tragic incident was the 1996 bombing of the Al-Khobar Towers in Khobar, Saudi Arabia, which killed 19 Americans and injured another 500. Iranian Muslim Shiites were accused of executing the attack as a response to a crackdown on the Shiite community by the Saudi authorities in 1992 (imprisoning some of its members and bulldozing down four Shiite mosques). The same year saw the emergence of another Islamic movement, called New Wahhabism and led by Mohammed Al-Masri. In May 1993, Al-Masri formed a committee for the defense of Shari'a law which attracted the attention of Western media and led to his arrest. He was released on November 1993 and moved his activities to London.¹⁰

On 2 August 1990 the first Gulf crisis started with the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait. The return home of around 250,000 Jordanian citizens and a million of Egyptian citizens led to great strain on the job market as well as a housing and infrastructure (schools and other facilities) crisis. This situation, together with the attempts to contain the Palestinian Intifada (8 December 1987-1991) through the Madrid Conference and the successive Palestinian-Israeli Declaration of Principles in 1993, contributed to a general sense of anger and disappointment in the Arab street. This paved the way for the "renewal of Islamic movements" aimed at forming leaders capable of ruling the nation and at creating an Islamic public opinion representing the people.



Burning Kuwaiti oil fields

The Muslim Brotherhood's International Leadership

In the early 1990s the formation of the international leadership of the Muslim Brotherhood was declared, with Omar At-Tilmisani from Egypt elected as General Guide (spiritual guidance) and Mohammed Abdul Rahman Khalifa from Jordan as his deputy.



Emblem of the Muslim Brotherhood

Opposition movements started to emerge in different parts of the Muslim World: a movement led by Hassan At-Turabi in Sudan; the Islamists led by Rashid Ghannoushi in Tunisia; in Palestine, the Tahrir Party (followers of Taqi Ad-Din An-Nabhani), the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) founded as a wing of the Muslim Brotherhood by Sheikh Ahmad Yassin and others, and the Jihad Al-Islami led by Fathi Shiqaqi; in the Iraqi city of Najaf the Da'wa movement led by Ayatollah Mohammed Baqer As-Sader and Ayatollah Mohsen-Hakim; in Lebanon the Hezbollah led by Mohammed Hassan Fadl-Allah and Amal



Hassan At-Turabi



Rashid Al-Ghannoushi



Mohammed Taqi Ad-Din An-Nabhani



Sheikh Ahmad Yassin

founded by Imam Musa As-Sader and then led by Nabih Berri; in addition to the Islamic Movement (Abu Al-Ela Al-Jaridi) in India; the Islamic Labor Front (Ishaq Farhan) in Jordan; the National party (Necmettin Erbakan) in Turkey; and the Islamic Movement (Mohammed Bouras) in Algeria.



Fathi Shiqaqi



Mohammed Baqer As-Sader



Ayatollah Mohsen-Hakim



Mohammed Hassan Fadl-Allah



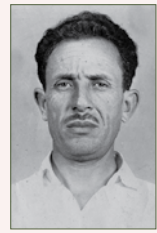
Mohammed Abdul Rahman Khalifa



Musa As-Sader



Necmettin Erbakan



Mohammed Bouras

In the 1990s, Egyptian physician Ayman Az-Zawahiri joined the Al-Qaeda movement led by Osama bin Laden and Abdullah Azzam in Pakistan. Al-Qaeda was born as the "guidance and reform committee" of the Afghan Arabs living in Saudi Arabia, with the basic demands of "ousting the American forces from Saudi Arabia (the holy land)." Az-Zawahiri shifted his Jihadist ideology from the smaller *Jihad* (fighting the close enemy, as embodied by the Egyptian regime) to the bigger *Jihad* (fighting distant enemies represented by the West and Israel). He also called for working within the framework of the idea of materialistic power mentioned in the Qur'an, and for outnumbering enemies to instill fear in their hearts:



Abdullah Azzam



Osama bin Laden



Ayman Az-Zawahiri

"And prepare against them whatever you are able of power and of steeds of war by which you may terrify the enemy of Allah and your enemy and others besides them whom you do not

The Second Arab Awakening

A Historical background

know [but] whom Allah knows. And whatever you spend in the cause of Allah will be fully repaid to you, and you will not be wronged.”
(Surat Al-Anfal, 8:60).

Al-Qaeda was then based in Sudan, whose government provided it with land and resources to operate its boot camps and train its *mujahdeen*.

The 1990s Era

In the 1990s, Palestine witnessed a series of violent incidents, particularly in the third year of the first Intifada when on 20 May 1990 seven Palestinian workers were killed and another ten were injured in Rishon LeZion. In spite of Faisal Al-Husseini's and other Palestinian political leaders' attempt to peacefully resist the Israeli violence by leading a two weeks hunger strike in the headquarters of the International Red Cross in Jerusalem, the Israeli authorities escalated their attacks, killing, among others, 21 people and injuring 150 others during confrontations in Al-Aqsa Mosque in October 1990.

On 2 August 1990, the Iraqi army invaded Kuwait in spite of the efforts of King Fahd of Saudi Arabia, King Hussein of Jordan, and President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt to resolve the Kuwaiti-Iraqi crisis, including through the holding of a mini summit in the Saudi Kingdom.

King Hussein visited Iraq eleven times, trying to persuade the Iraqi President Saddam Hussein to withdraw immediately from Kuwait. He also went to Washington to ask for an extra 48 hours delay to allow a full Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait and thus avoid an American military engagement.



King Hussein and Saddam Hussein



Faisal Al-Husseini



Hosni Mubarak, Saddam Hussein, and King Hussein



George Bush and King Hussein



Arab Foreign Ministers in Cairo, 1990

In the meantime, President Hosni Mubarak presided over a summit of the Arab League which issued a resolution condemning the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and joining the international coalition headed by the US to end the Iraqi occupation by military force.

During the Gulf War, the United States deployed half a million soldiers into the Arab World (headed by General Norman Schwarzkopf), while an additional half million of international coalition forces were dispatched. For the first time since World War II, Arab regimes' military forces (from Syria and Egypt) joined a Western coalition.



Norman Schwarzkopf

The first Gulf War, code-named “Desert Storm” by the US, began on 17 January 1991. On 26 February 1991 the Iraqi troops withdrew from Kuwait and the following day the international alliance launched a new phase in the liberation of Kuwait by engaging in direct confrontations with Saddam's regime in Baghdad.



Kuwaiti oil on fire

Against the backdrop of the US “Desert Storm” military intervention in the Gulf and the “storm” of divisions between Cairo, Amman, Baghdad, Riyadh and Damascus, the massacre of the Ibrahimi Mosque took place in Hebron on 25 February 1994 when a Jewish settler, Baruch Goldstein, shot dead 29 Palestinians during early morning prayers.



Ibrahimi Mosque massacre

The massacre added a religious dimension to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and to the Israeli policy of colonization in that they occurred in holy places and targeted worshippers. It also provoked a series of Palestinian suicide attacks motivated by religious and patriotic sentiments during the years 1994-2000. The Israeli provocations culminated with Ariel Sharon's breaking into Al-Aqsa Mosque on 28 September 2000, an act understood by the Palestinians as a new declaration by Israel that it aimed at controlling the holy places in preparation for “sharing” them by force. The event led to the outbreak of the second Palestinian Intifada, known as Al-Aqsa Intifada.



Ariel Sharon at Al-Aqsa Mosque, 2000



Israeli troops raiding Al-Aqsa Mosque

The Second Arab Awakening

A Historical background

11 September 2001

On 11 September 2001, attacks targeting the World Trade Center in New York and the Pentagon in Washington resulted in the death of around 3,000 people, most of them Americans. Al-Qaeda claimed responsibility for the planning and execution of the operation. The 9/11 attacks were compared by some with the attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941 when the Japanese air forces struck an American military base in Hawaii (leading to the drafting into the army of 21 million American soldiers and the death of 300,000 during World War II). Former Secretary of Defense Dr. James Schlesinger commented on the attack by declaring, "Pearl Harbor has changed our world forever."



World Trade Center attacks, 11 September 2001

Similarly, the 9/11 attacks changed the world forever. The first Arab and Islamic reactions were that Osama bin Laden [had] "hijacked" Islam, that he did not speak for the Palestinians and did not have the right to use their cause for his own battles. Hamas and Islamic Jihad made a clear distinction between bin Laden's "war" against the West and the Palestinian-Israeli issue, stressing that the latter was a national conflict rather than a religious one.

In October 2001, US President George W. Bush announced a "War on Terror," warning "You are either with us, or against us." and on 7 October 2001, launching an attack on Afghanistan. In 2003, American troops then invaded Iraq, toppling Saddam Hussein's regime and occupying the country.



President George W. Bush



President Saddam Hussein addressing Iraqi soldiers

The Arab regimes, especially Egypt under Hosni Mubarak, responded positively to the US initiative and supported its occupation of Iraq. However, although Saddam Hussein's regime was totalitarian and oppressive, the fall of a historic Arab capital like Baghdad led to a wave of rage and frustration among Arab masses against the West and its American leadership. The resentment of the Arab World, which had been accumulating for more than three decades of life under tyranny and dictatorship, was exacerbated by the Arab regimes' submission to the West and its policies, and especially by their cooperation with the American administration in the occupation and division of Iraq (between Shiites, Sunnis and Kurds) which led to the death of approximately one million Iraqis and the emigration of another two million.



US soldiers atop a bronze bust of Saddam Hussein

The assassination of Osama bin Laden by American commandos on 2 May 2011 and the burial of his body at sea announced the end of the Political Islam era. The Arab World entered a new phase, referred to by the West as the "Arab Spring" while it would be more accurate to term it as the "Second Arab Awakening."



President Obama, Vice-President Biden, Secretary of State Clinton, and the National Security Team in the White House watching the assassination of Osama bin Laden

The Second Arab Awakening (2011-...)

“The People want to overthrow the regime”

(Slogan of the Arab uprisings)

Three observations must be made regarding the events that took place in the Arab World at the beginning of 2011:

First Observation:

In February 2011, a number of European countries (France, Norway, Finland, and the Netherlands) sent delegations to the region to participate in the 11th Herzliya annual conference meant to discuss Israel’s strategic challenges and the future developments in the Arab World. None of the participants anticipated the strength and importance of the psychological factor involved in the Arab uprisings, including the surpassing of fears and the need for dignity and the overthrow of the regime. The Arab regimes themselves had not comprehended that the people wanted to overthrow them and the people themselves had not expected that they had the ability to overthrow the regimes. The questions that need to be asked now to understand the future is: What lies ahead after the overthrow of the regimes? Are we heading toward the unknown, the “creative anarchy” that then US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice called for in 2003 following the US invasion of Iraq, or are we witnessing the birth of a new kind of regime, where the three Arab schools of thought – Political Islam, Pan-Arabism and Left Liberalism – will converge, agree, disagree, and collide as they did during the last century? Last but not least: Does the West have a role to play in order to develop and protect its interests and relations in the region?

Second Observation:

During a conference organized by the Al-Jazeera Center for Studies in Doha at the beginning of 2012, youth from Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, and Libya explained that they did not count on their governments to finance their study abroad, relying instead on personal loans. They stressed that they were self-reliant and focused on working hard to achieve their goals, which included returning home to liberate their countries from corruption and injustice, and fight for human dignity. They said that they communicated and kept up-to-date with what was going on in their countries and in the occupied Palestinian territories through the Internet and social media, such as Facebook.

During that conference, Syrian professor Burhan Ghalion, coming all the way from Paris, talked about the Italian philosopher Antonio Gramsci and his theory of the “Pessimism of the intellect, optimism of the will.” He explained that in the case of the Arab uprisings, the youth’s determination had been stronger than their fears of the regimes and of the security forces which had denied them the right of living dignified lives for decades. Young people decided to take action by going out in mass protests, stand up for themselves and demand their lost rights. Ghalion predicted that change was coming soon, that it would be led by the youth, and that it would exclude no one. Furthermore, he stressed that Palestine would always remain a major issue of concern for the Arab youth, uniting their efforts and empowering their will. Ghalion’s central message was “Don’t succumb to despair, there is hope for the future.”

Third Observation:

In an article in the British newspaper *The Independent* dated 15 March 2011, the famous British journalist Robert Fisk wrote that he was witnessing “a Second Arab Awakening in contemporary Arab history.” He did not explain the circumstances of the first Arab awakening (1908-1914) which started by calls for separation, then autonomy and later independence, from Ottoman rule. He counted up the period of time each Arab President or ruler had lasted in office: 35 years for Saddam Hussein in Iraq, 30 years for Zine Al-Abidine Ben Ali in Tunisia, 32 years for Hosni Mubarak in Egypt, 42 years for Muammar Gaddafi in Libya, and 30 years for Ali Abdullah Saleh in Yemen., concluding that the Arab regimes had spent most of this time wasting resources, spreading corruption and injustice, oppressing the Arab people, and establishing alliances with the West.

The Second Arab Awakening

A Historical background

The Case of Tunisia



The Tunisian uprising marked the birth of the Second Arab Awakening. It showed the people's rejection of the regimes' doctrines, full of contempt and racism, and their eagerness to reclaim their humanity and national identity, live in dignity, and enjoy basic human rights and freedoms of movement and decision. The uprising adopted as a slogan the well-known verses of the famous Tunisian poet Abu Al-Qasem Ash-Shaby:

*If, one day, a people truly aspire to live,
Then destiny will favorably answer their call.*

The phenomenon of "self-sacrifice" started by Mohammed Bouazizi was a statement of anger, frustration, and rejection of the regime's corruption and injustice. The man took a last stand defending his dignity by demonstrating that he preferred burning himself to death rather than living a life of misery. Bouazizi did not duplicate the Japanese kamikaze model of World War II. He did not decide to take the life of his enemies along with his own. He did not wear an explosive belt. His *jihad* was an illustration of personal despair and misery. He stood up alone, presenting a new "culture of struggle" intended to achieve a better life.



Mohammed Bouazizi



Bouazizi burning himself

President Ben Ali and his family hastily fled Tunisia following the mass protests that swept throughout the country demanding an end to his dictatorship. However the political police and the security establishment continued to confront the people and restrain the judicial system. Besides, despite the fall of the ruling party, its tools of propaganda remained active to try and orchestrate a counter revolution.



Slogan reading "Ben Ali, clear off"



Zine Al-Abidine Ben Ali
1986-2011



Habib Bourguiba and
Zine Al-Abidine Ben Ali in
November 1987



Habib Bourguiba
1903-2000

The people formed a constituent assembly to draft the constitution, build democratic state institutions, and conduct free elections. Among the returnees from exile was Rashid Ghannouchi, a prominent Islamist leader who put forward a new vision of political Islam consisting of "a civil state, not a religious state; a democratic state not a police state; a pluralistic state not a single party state."



President Ben Ali telling the nation: "I understood you" ("Fahimtukum")

Ghannouchi also asserted his commitment to the Palestinian question declaring, "The people want to free Palestine." He also adopted pan-Arab nationalist slogans such as "The people want to reunite the Arabs," and confirmed the demands for Arab sovereignty and national independence under the slogan "The people want to cancel the agreements."



Sheikh Rashid Ghannouchi



Protests in Tunisia

The Jasmine fever from Tunis became contagious and reached other Arab capitals. The wind of change started to spread, excluding no one. "He who does not believe in change, will himself be changed!"



Tunisian "Jasmine wind"

The Second Arab Awakening

A Historical background

The Case of Egypt*



“And We have certainly honored the children of Adam”
(Qur’an, 17:70)

– the right to recognition of one’s human dignity:
“Raise your head, you are an Egyptian.”

During President Hosni Mubarak’s era, Egypt witnessed an unprecedented degradation, losing its leading role in the nationalist sphere as well as its central position in the international arena in relation to Middle Eastern affairs.



President Hosni Mubarak



Gamal Mubarak

Hosni Mubarak’s plans to bequeath the government of the country to his son started to be known in 2004. The regime had already conducted three fake referendums in 1987, 1993, and 1999, as well as sham elections in 2005.

A corrupted ruling class had monopolized the country’s resources for decades. It restricted the activities of the civil society to the point of paralysis. It also imposed an “Emergency Law” and limited the establishment of opposition parties as well as multi-party competition, facilitating the thriving of the ruling National Party under the leadership of a group of businessmen.



Posters reading “No to the emergency law”
and “I am against the emergency law”

Despite the circumstances, some opposition movements emerged such as “Kefaya” (Egyptian movement for change), which was formed on 22 September 2001, namely ten years before the uprising of 25 January 2011. This movement demanded *inter alia* the end of the National Party’s monopoly of political life, the independence of the judiciary, and the enforcement of the rule of law. It also requested the equal distribution of wealth and called for Egypt to reclaim its leading role in the region, believing this had been lost after the signing of the Camp David treaty. At their first protest in Tahrir Square, Kefaya members carried slogans stating “No Reelection... No Succession” and walked through the old neighborhoods of Cairo like Imbaba, Shubra, Sayeda Zeinab, and



Members of the Kefaya Movement protesting in the streets of Egypt



Az-Zaytoun with drums and candles. The movement soon started to expand to other Egyptian cities, including Alexandria, Port Said, Ismailia, and Suez.

In addition, personalities such as Dr. Mohammed Al-Baradei, Amr Musa, Ahmad Zewail, Hamdin Sabahi, and Ayman Nour started to come forward as national leaders daring to break the silence, stand up against the “President,” and present alternatives to his regime.



Mohammed Al-Baradei



Amr Musa



Ahmad Zewail



Hamdin Sabahi



Ayman Nour

In the meantime, opposition movements such as the National Association for Change, the 6 April movement, and Kulna Khaled Said (“All of us are Khaled Said”), which were particularly active in the cyberspace using social media tools to advocate their cause, started to gain momentum in the Egyptian street.



Members of the April 6 Youth Movement protesting



Khaled Said

The slogans that inspired the people:

- “The people want to overthrow the regime”
- “Nonviolence... Nonviolence”
- “The People and the Army are One Hand”



Logo of the April 6 Youth Movement

*The January 25th Revolution. A preliminary Reading and Future Vision, Cairo: Al-Ahram Center. March 2011.

The Bloggers' Revolution

Egyptian bloggers started to get popular by the beginning of 2005 when the Egyptian Movement for Change – “Kefaya” – became active. They used their blogs to interact and discuss social and political issues, to call for general strikes (such as the one organized on 6 April 2008), to voice opposition to oppose the regime, and to raise awareness of its repressive security apparatus, dramatically illustrated by the above mentioned case of Khaled Said, whose death in 2010 prompted Wael Ghonim to create the Facebook page “All of us are Khaled Said.”



Internet activist Wael Ghonim

In their interactions, the youth favored new tools of communication (using laptops, cell phones, cameras, and the Internet) over traditional ones. This contributed to:

- Shaking a lot of illusions
- Breaking stereotypes and the barrier of fear
- Calling for protests against Mubarak's regime
- Forming the “6 April” movement with a program originating from the Egyptian street
- Calling for a general strike in 2008
- Strengthening movements like “Kulna Khaled Said” and “Support to Al-Baradei.”

The 25 January Revolution

The New Year's morning mass bombing of the Saints Church in Alexandria on 1 January 2011 angered all Egyptians, whether Muslim or Christian. Young men and women went out to the streets in protest against the security forces for failing to protect churches. They accused them of covering up the perpetrators, and claimed that the latter were part of the security apparatus and were executing orders coming from the Minister of Interior and aiming at creating diversion for political reasons.



An Egyptian holding up a car plate reading the date of the Egyptian uprising (25 January)

The success of the Tunisian uprising boosted the angry Egyptian youth, especially after the immolation of Mohammed Bouazizi that led to mass protests demanding the overthrow of the regime. The success of the Tunisian youth in ousting Ben Ali and prompting his escape to Saudi Arabia inspired the Egyptian protesters and was expressed in their slogans:



Tahrir Square, Cairo.

“Revolution, revolution until victory... revolution in Egypt, revolution in Tunisia”

Groups of Egyptian youth started calling through social media websites, including Facebook, for the organization of a protest, named “Day of Rage,” on 25 January 2011. They asked the people to go out to the streets and public squares chanting “Bread, Freedom, and Social Justice.” Mubarak's security apparatus responded with violence, provoking numerous deaths and critical injuries. Governmental media launched a vicious campaign aimed at discrediting the protestors and turning the public opinion against them. However, protesters stayed in the streets and public squares, chanting “We will not leave... but he should!” and “Leave... Leave!”

The Egyptian regime decided to disable all means of communication to prevent the youth from contacting one another. In the meantime the security forces carried out a massive campaign of arrests ahead of the Friday 30 January 2011 demonstration. On that day the city of Suez witnessed the most violent confrontations between the people and the police, leaving behind dozens of dead and injured.

In an attempt to contain the public anger, President Hosni Mubarak declared in a televised speech on the evening of 29 January 2011 that “the protests [were] a legitimate mean to demand more democracy,” adding that “he [stood] on the side of the poor and disadvantaged.” He affirmed that he supported the youth in their demands for a dignified life and vowed to carry out further economic, political, and social reforms, including fighting unemployment. He however threatened those who took advantage of the protests to spread chaos throughout the country, claiming that Egypt was subject to a conspiracy targeting its legitimacy. The people did not trust Mubarak's words and promises, and kept on demanding his resignation and the end of his regime.

In a second attempt to contain popular rage, President Mubarak appointed the head of the Egyptian Intelligence, General Omar Suleiman, as Vice-President – a position that had remained vacant for 30 years – in a bid to end the controversy surrounding his plans of “hereditary transmission of power” to his son Gamal. On 29 January, the President appointed Ahmad Shafiq, Minister of Civil Aviation, as Prime Minister and ordered him to form a new government.



Omar Suleiman and President Mubarak



Ahmad Shafiq

On 1 February 2011 millions of Egyptians gathered in Tahrir Square for further protests against the regime. On the same day President Mubarak gave another televised speech in which he promised not to run for presidency again, and called upon the Parliament to revise Articles 76 and 77 of the Constitution and amend the prerequisites for presidential candidacy. He also promised to respond to appeals against the last parliamentary elections in which the National Party won more than 90% of the seats. Mubarak closed his speech by talking about his character in an attempt to gain the sympathy of the people.

The Second Arab Awakening

A Historical background

The Chair of the Parliament, Ahmad Fathi Sorour, decided to suspend all parliamentary sessions until the appeals were considered by the Court. Yet, once again, the people did not trust Mubarak's promises, considering them a desperate attempt to stay in power until the public rage calmed down. The people's trust in the President's vows was shaken even more after Tahrir Square was stormed by armed men riding camels and horses trying to disperse protestors. The attacks were caught on camera and caused a major controversy in Egypt and worldwide. In the meantime Mubarak expressed in a brief interview for ABC News Network that he was willing to resign from his position but was concerned that the country might fall into a state of chaos if he did so. Opposition leaders refused Mubarak's new Prime Minister's invitation to hold a national dialogue and demanded instead his immediate resignation, the forming of a national unity government, and the holding of free elections for the appointment of a constituent assembly responsible for drafting a new constitution to guide the country during the transitional phase.



Ahmad Fathi Sorour

In an interview with the Egyptian television on 3 February 2011 Vice-President Omar Suleiman tried to make a distinction between the youth who went out to protest on 25 January and other groups who had agendas connected to Western interests. He also defended President Mubarak and qualified the demands for his resignation as illegitimate since his departure would provoke chaos throughout the country. Suleiman urged the youth to return to their homes, reaffirming that what had happened in Tunisia would never occur in Egypt. The protests continued and reached a peak on Friday, 4 February, named by the youth the "Friday of Departure." On the following day, the members of the ruling National Party's political bureau resigned and on 7 February, in another attempt to contain popular rage, the Minister of Interior Habib Al-Adli was detained and an announcement that he would be brought to martial court was made.



Uprising of the Egyptian street



Protests in Tahrir Square

On 10 February 2011 the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) held a meeting without the presence of President Mubarak under the leadership of Field Marshal Mohammed Hussein Tantawi. The SCAF announced publicly for the first time that it would assume power to oversee the situation. Meanwhile the number of protestors in Tahrir Square reached over three millions.



Field Marshal Mohammed Hussein Tantawi and Lieutenant General Sami Hafez Anan

In his third and last speech given on the evening of 10 February, President Mubarak declared that he intended to remain in power until the end of his term but that he would delegate his functions as head of state to his Vice-President in accordance with the constitution. This incensed the crowds who engaged in violent clashes with the security forces, leading to hundreds of dead and thousands of injured.

Following Mubarak's speech, Vice-President Omar Suleiman vowed in a televised address that he would oversee the peaceful transition of power in accordance with the constitution, calling upon the protestors to go home.

The protestors rejected Mubarak and Suleiman's declarations, sticking to their demands to bring down the regime. Thousands of protestors gathered in front of the Presidential palace and the TV broadcasting building on Friday, 11 February 2011.

In a second public statement, the SCAF declared that it would end the state of emergency and oversee the holding of free Presidential elections once stability was ensured.



Field Marshal Tantawi reading the second SCAF statement

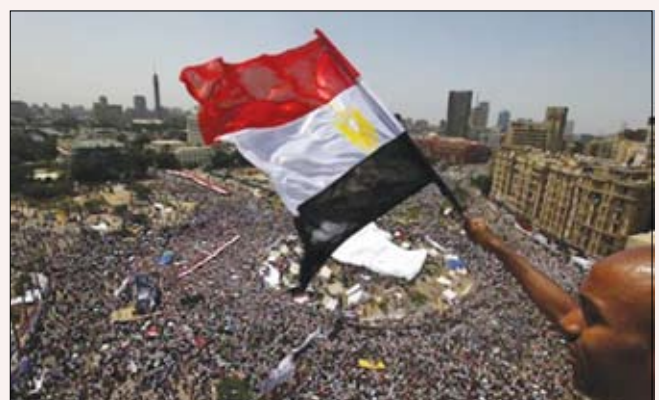
On Friday, 11 February 2011, at 6 pm Vice-President Omar Suleiman announced in a brief statement:

"Citizens of Egypt, in reaction to the instability prevailing in the country, President Hosni Mubarak decided to step down from his post and delegate all his responsibilities to the SCAF, may God help us all."



Omar Suleiman

This announcement indicated the success of the 25 January revolution, a popular uprising which demanded democracy and managed to oust the head of the state, allowing the birth of a new regime, hopefully democratic, and the entry of Egypt into the new era of its "Second Republic."



Tahrir Square, Cairo.

Final observations regarding the Second Arab Awakening:

- The Arab people overcame their fears of the ruling regimes.
- The security apparatuses failed to contain and oppress protests by using excessive force.
- Social media tools (Internet, Facebook, Twitter, mobile phones, SMS) were a key factor in activating and directing the popular uprisings in the Arab street.
- Modern news broadcasting channels contributed to creating an Arab public opinion that supported popular uprisings, attracted people's attention, and encouraged them to follow-up the uprising's developments.
- The mass protests storming the streets of the Arab World were a clear evidence of the kind of frustration that the Arab people had felt under the prevailing *status quo*.
- The popular uprisings were the result of both the activism of opposition movements and the failure of Arab regimes in containing and aborting this activism.
- The crowds went out in mass protests against corruption, injustice, police brutality, and censorship.
- The protests were led by non-politicized youth movements which were concerned with general issues such as human dignity and civic, political and social rights.
- The protests forced the Arab regimes to promote public freedoms in Jordan, Morocco, Algeria, and Bahrain.
- Political elites joined the young protestors in an attempt to prove and defend their presence and gain future political legitimacy. By doing so, they abandoned their traditional political role.
- The armed forces in the Tunisian and Egyptian cases were first neutral and then took sides with the people.
- Western countries (the USA and Europe) kept their distance and did not interfere directly in the events of the Arab uprisings. By choosing instead to wait for the final outcome, they adopted an entirely different strategy from the one followed in the past.
- The Second Arab Awakening revolved around two major demands on the part of the people:
 - to reclaim their dignity
 - to bring down the regime.
- "Jasmine winds of change" were positively contagious and spread from Tunisia to most Arab countries, including Egypt, Libya, Yemen, and Syria.
- The Second Arab Awakening brought about a renewed competition for popularity and political power between the three major schools of thought of the Arab World (Political Islam, Pan-Arabism and Left Liberalism).
- These schools of thought adopted the following concepts in their support for the Second Arab Awakening:
 - A civil state as opposed to a religious state,
 - A democratic state as opposed to a police state,
 - A pluralistic state as opposed to a single party state.

Dr. Mahdi Abdul Hadi
Jerusalem

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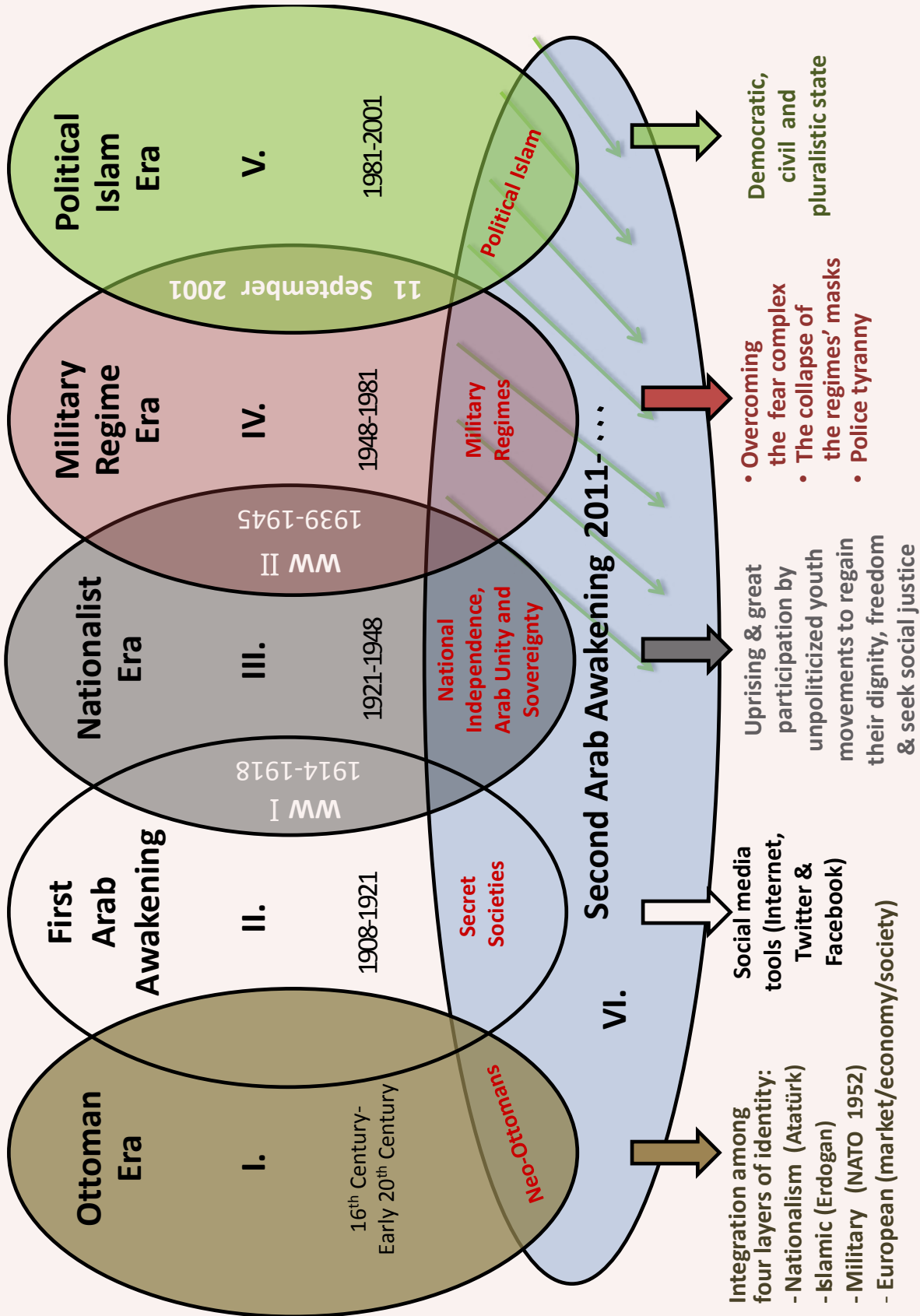


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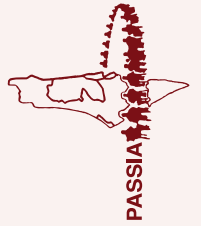
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The Second Arab Awakening

A Historical background



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