

S.P. Vageeshwari
Christ College, Bangalore

ARAB - ISRAELI WARS: A HISTORICAL ANALYSIS

Introduction

The cyclical theory in History points to the irrefutable integration, disintegration and subsequent integration trends, in human society from the time man began founding organisations and institutions. The essential truth, which has to be taken into cognition in these efforts at organising is that, the law of history predestines that "It" shall be broken up in the near future. How long the near future will be depends upon the "Zeitgeist" or spirit of the Times. From Toynbee to Spengler, this grouping-scattering-regrouping process has found support and acceptance. The nucleus of difference between them lies only in the course and method of disintegration. An intellually exhausted civilization's refusal to respond to the challenges offered by the *Zeitgeist*, declared Arnold Toynbee, results in its decay and death ultimately. Spengler in his "Decline of the West" attributed this inability to respond, to the civilization of the West. In a critical repose he declared that, the innate, inherited strength of the orient to accept, nay embrace challenges and overwhelm it, with its responses will help it to overcome in the end, the technology oriented west. Thereby the decline of the West shall begin. Edward Gibben too hints at this recurring phenomenon in his 'Rise and Fall of the Roman Empire'. For, the Roman Empire for all historical reasons, is the checkpost to European culture and civilisation.

However none of the above, though animatedly discussed the depth of several civilizations, particularly of the West, accurately studied the impact it would have on the east, while responding to the challenges. For Imperialism in the trapping of a technological era has a different set of modulation, than that of a Roman legiar. The Industrial Revolution in the west, brought in its wake, other co-related developments like Geographical discoveries and the Renaissance. While the discoveries were a victory of technological advance, the Renaissance ended a thousand year intellectual ban imposed by the christendom in Europe. It resulted in Europe gliding away from an age of darkness to an era of enlightenment and greater glory not seen since the Greco-Roman period.

Background

Geographical Discoveries introduced to the hitherto small world, a universal scale of imperialism, where the continents of North and South America, Africa, Asia and Australia were brought under the monopolistic control of Europe. The leader of this pack of imperialists was the United Kingdom, one referred to as the "Nation of Shop Keepers", by the French emperor, Napoleon Bonaparte. The significant victory over the Spanish Armada essentially gave the British, a prick in the arm for their maritime activities. The saga of commercial empire was followed by political imperialism. While Britain had a major share of the colonies, in the American both South and North, Asian, African region, the rest was equally divided between Spain, Portugal, France, The Dutch, Russia, Germany and Italy. To maintain their hold on majority of these areas the English administration pursued the policy of 'Divide and Rule'. This was most clearly evident in West Asia.

West Asia is a term which includes in its sweeping embrace all the countries situated between Turkey in the West to Afghanistan in the East, the erstwhile Soviet Union in the North to the Indian Ocean in the South. In the global strategy of a commercial age it also includes Egypt of Africa. The term West Asia is appropriate from India's point of view. The same area however is sometimes referred to as Middle East, Near East and the Arab region. Arabia includes all countries in the Arab peninsula irrespective of dogmatic faiths.

At the outset it should be clear that, the Arab crisis, in the form of periodic Arab-Israeli wars, is one of identity rather than religion. The conflict is centered around the geo-political and historical factors. These factors are the nuclei from which other conflicting issues are emerging. All the sporadic skirmishes erupting into full flooded wars between Israel and the combined power of the Muslim countries on the other hand, are but an expression of intense insecurity of all these Nations, insecurity over the questions of their survival and existence. The grass roots of the Arab-Israeli differences can be traced back to the early periods of their respective histories where desperation ruled over diplomacy. The land inhabited by the Arabs was too dry, arid and fruitless for them to either establish elaborate procedures of living or to promote a healthy respect for norms and modalities. The hostilities they found drove them to be tenacious and aggressive. It was a classic

of Darwinian existence of the survival of the fittest. This fight for survival introduced a nagging obsessive feeling of insecurity to the Arab mind over their meagre possessions. Nothing was permanent except the land that they had and nothing else was also in abundance. This psychic case of suspended existence was aggregated by frequent intervention of external entities beginning with Romans to a host of European powers in the 19th and 20th centuries. It was these European powers which left back a bloody trail in West Asia. There was constant stabbing at the back, outplaying each state against the other etc., all, for the maintenance of their balance of power, zones of influence etc. Hence to understand and sympathise it is imperative that along with the early history of the Arabs and the Jews, that European intervention in the Arab politics too must be studied in detail.

The Arabian peninsula forming the core of West Asia, has the narrow strip of Red sea to the west, the Arabian sea and the Indian Ocean in the East and South respectively. Apart from the Tigris and the Euphrates no other major river waters this vast land measuring approximately two and a half million square miles. The reflections of the great Sahara is seen in this region too, for up till Turkey in the extreme north where traces of the Mediterranean climate can be seen, the whole region is covered with shifting sand dunes which refuses to whisper too. The desert with all its paraphernalia of infertile soil, dry arid climate, scanty rainfall, least greenery, a bald landscape contributed to a disorganised, chaotic existence of its inhabitants.

This barren territory of Arabia was thinly populated by the Semitic people, the Bedouins, who undertook cumbersome journeys from Syria and other upcountry lands to the Southern ports carrying merchandise on camels. Topographical compulsions drove them to a meandering existence, which resulted in a life style and area marked by total absence of organised bureaucracy, workable economy and established judiciary, all the three hallmarks of a civilised society. Into this cauldron of confusion came Mohammed of the Hashemite family, belonging to the Quraishi tribe, bringing along with him a highly monolithic structure, admitting on concessions at least theoretically. Though stringent it was, the new order of Islam doubtlessly united the incessantly feuding Arab factions and individuals. The "La ilah illa Allah, Mohammad rasul Allah" resounded in verbatim throughout Arabia.

The Early History of the Arab Muslims

While the Quran became a book of "Hukum" communicated by God to His Prophet its subsidiary, the 'Shariat' was a compendium of the laws or the will of God, expressed through the prophet, for the proper guidance of the muslims - King and commoner alike. It was this theocratic nature of Islam, which helped it to cross over the peripheries of Mecca and Madina. In 632 A.D. Paigambar passed away to be succeeded by Abu Bakr and later Omar as the Caliphs. It was Khalid the general of Omar who defeated the Roman Emperor Heralius and received from him the provinces of Damascus, Syria, Palestine, Phoenicia, Egypt etc. So much so, by 740 A.D. Arabia had been Islamised and the Arabs in turn had succeeded in establishing their suzerainty over Mesopotamia, Persia, North Africa, Spain, Byzantine, Sicily, Malaya, Indonesia, Western China and parts of India.

Throughout these conquests the Arabs were being driven by a sense of mission to be accomplished. Dates, palms and figs alone could not become the staple diets. Hence conquests per se became a necessity to survive and to conquer by aggressive encroachment was a compulsion. But these Arabic forays were strongly reined in by the Turks under their leader Othman. In 13th C, the Ottoman Turks founded an empire with the composition of divergent population including the Arabs. 1453 was the greatest point of escalation, when the capital of the erstwhile Eastern Roman Empire - Constantinople fell into the hands of the invading Turkish hordes. But very soon the rise of powerful city states like Prussia, Naples, U.K. in Europe put a stop to Turkey's growth. Instead she was awarded the epitaph the sickman of Europe. However Turkey's hold on Arabia did not slacken until the beginning of Arab National movement. The capture of Constantinople renamed as Istanbul was an earthshaking event, because this only land mass connecting Europe and Asia was blocked for the European by the Turks, which forced them to launch an exhaustive search for an alternative route. Thus began Geographical discoveries and white man's imperialism.

Untill this stage Europe professed no interest in the happenings of the Arabic peninsula. This was because, the peninsula had no place of importance, in the European idea of great empires. Secondly Europe was busy sorting out her own home since the age of darkeness has just come to an end. The power of the Papacy had declined

considerably and feeble attempts were being made all over the continent at establishing secular governments. However the discovery of sea-route to India and Asia made the port cities of Southern Arabia important. For they were the transit points, breaking the long and hazardous journey beginning from Europe. This territory of Arabia figured as strategically important in the policy priorities of countries like U.K. and France only after, the Suez Canal was dug and when the liquid gold-oil was discovered.

The discovery of sea-route to Asia began the Asian tryst with destiny. The journey was long, tortuous and expensive. For the survival of huge commercial empires of the nations of Europe, it became a driving compulsion to find a quicker and a shorter route. This need coincided with the French expansion in the Mediterranean region. Finally it was the French who began the arduous task of connecting the Mediterranean to the Arabian Sea region, through Red Sea, by sinking a part of the Egyptian land in its Eastern sector. Named the Suez canal, it was a project of a French engineer Ferdinand de Lesseps. The canal opened in 1869 and immediately there was clamour among major European powers to secure the rights over it, obviously for the benefits they would be entitled along with.

Britain was the forerunner in this race for she stood to receive maximum advantage. In the very first place, Britain could maintain her vast mercantile fleet with less expenses as entry tax, port duties, right of passage etc. Second and most important issue involved was the relative ease with which Britain could protect and oversee her colonial possessions in Egypt, Palestine, Syria, Iran, Iraq and Afghanistan. This was facilitated when Egypt plunged into financial bankruptcy following the failure of the grandiose ambitions of its Sultan, Khedive Ismail Pasha. IN 1875 the British interests in the entire West Asian region was considerably protected when Lord Beaconsfield secured for the English Government - shares of the canal. This transaction established the British interest on the canal emphatically to be shaken only during 1956 by Naser.

Political compulsions prompted the British to evince a keen interest in the Iranian or Persian region. Afghanistan the North-West-Frontier-Province was the territorial limits of the English Empire in Asia. Iran juxtaposed between Afghanistan in the East and Russia in the North, was an easy victim to Russian aggrandisement from

time immemorial, whenever she chose. Fearing a strong Russian entry into a Persian Region, Britain sent her first diplomatic mission to Tehran in 1799 and thereafter stayed in the territory on one or the other pretext. By 1908, the Anglo-Persian Oil Co. had been set up. It pumped both oil and money into the English Exchequer. Thus by 1900 Arabia had dual imperialists-Turkey and Europe to report to. The Arabs protest against it began their movement for independence which came to be popularly called as Arab Nationalism. In the beginning the entire movement was geared up against the Turkish hold. The Turks and Arabs were as different as Chalk and Cheese. Linguistically, ecclesiastically and culturally they were divergent societies and the Turks had never attempted to assimilate those differences, inspite of conquering and subjugating the Arabs from around 12th Century.

Turkish Invasion and Beginning of Arab Nationalism

The Arabic culture was replaced by that of Turkey to such a great extent that the most revered of the three caliphates, the Abbasid Caliphate of Baghdad was annuled and instead the Sultan of Turkey was declared the holy Calipha. While political and cultural excesses were tolerated, religious transgression could not be forgiven. Accumulated resentment found expression with a widened exposure to a liberal ideological existence of the rest. The movement of Arab Nationalism was foistered by several subsidiary movements like the Wahaabi movement of Abdul Wahaab, Pan-Islamism of Jamal-ud-din Afghani, the work of Abdul Rehman Kawakivi etc. The entire movement underwent three different phases, the idealistic, the realistic, the revolutionary, thereby transferring from a small intellectual movement to that which held a wider appeal for the masses. Alarmed at these developments, the Government of Turkey followed a policy of severe repression, by sending its Governors as far as Egypt to track down the Arab leaders and their movements. The efforts of Arab Nationalists to convince the Turks of the idea of a bilingual and bicultural state in which the Arabs and the Turks could co-exist failed. As a result in retaliation the Congress of Arabs was convened in 1913 to openly denounce Turkey as an aggressor. When the confrontation reached the clashing point, the First World War began. The second stage of the Arab National Movement also began along with the war.

The First World War was not merely a clash of contending armies, but was a total war where the armies of the belligerents fought and

engaged themselves in the unproductive activity of organised destruction. It all began with the German thirst for "Greater Glory of Germania". Though the main participants were the European powers, Asia featured in the war through Turkey who had allied herself with Germany. This sent the British camp reeling, for a strong Turkey threatened not just West Asia and the Suez it could knock the door of Afghanistan too. Hence the operation to set right the Balance of power in the region began. The British began hoisting the Arabs against the Turks. The Pro-Arab policy of the British and the French, excited the Arabs to revolt against the Turkish Empire. The most conspicuous Arab leader was Hussain, the Sheriff of Mecca belonging to the Hashemite family. Hussain undertook the responsibility of providing unstinted Arab help to the British during the war, on the condition that the British would help the Arabs to become free from the Turkish yoke. An agreement to this effect was signed by Sheriff Hussain of Mecca and the British High Commissioner in Egypt, Sir Henry MacMohan. The Hussain MacMohan correspondents became the basis of Anglo-Arab relation, according to the Arabs from 1915 to 1945. The take-off point of this correspondence was a severe Anti-Turkish feeling aroused in Arabia by Hussain and his two sons Amir Faisal and Prince Abdullah.

T.E. Lawrence the British resident in Cairo was sent to Arabia, to guide the Arabs against the Sultan. He occupied the gulf of Aqaba and Madina. A little later the Sinai Peninsula and Palestine were conquered by Amir Faisal and General Allenby. The Turks were driven to the Mesopotamian region. Throughout the venture the Arabs co-operated sincerely with the English Army. When Sheriff Hussain of Mecca declared himself as the King of Arabia the British instead recognised him as the King of only Hejaz - which comprised of the holy area of Mecca and Madina. A case study of the foreign policy of Imperial Britain in her Afro-Asian colonies, will tellingly prove that never did they mention out without 'buffer treaties'. These were usually concluded in secret countermanding an earlier agreement, so that no power or agency which had signed the agreement could hold the British Government to it. The Hussain MacMohan correspondence met its death in the face of the Sykes-Picot agreement signed by France and Great Britain on 16th May 1916. This secret treaty brought about by Sir Mark Sykes the Assistant Cabinet Secretary of Britain and M. George Picot of France dealt with the distribution of Ottoman territories in Arabia, in the event of defeat of Turks in the First World War. Accordingly while Britain would get

Southern Mesopotamia, Haifa and Acre in Palestine, France was to avail from Coastal strip of Syria, Vilayat of Adana, Mousul and Cilicia. Though Russia was not a signatory, she was promised Erzerum, Trazbo, Van, Bitlin, or Turkish Armenia and Strip of Kurdistan. The Sykes-Picot agreement was not only against the Hussain MacMohan Assurance, but it was also a replacement of Turkish suzerainty by European in Arabia. This policy of divide and rule and playing one against the other harmed the Arab psyche considerably. Not only was it against the immediate Arab interest, but the European powers, particularly the British lost their credibility in the Arab eyes. As a result, when the British enunciated the Balfour declaration, the Arabs instead of symphising with the homeless Hebrews, suspected another British attempt at dividing them. On 2nd November 1917, The Balfour Declaration of the British Government announced the creation of national home for the Jews in Palestine.

Background and Early History of the Jews

The Historical law of integration and disintegration trends is most apt when applied to the religion and political movement of the Jews. From 2000 B.C. onwards the Jewish History has been intensely catastrophic with deep abaysses periodically. No other politico-ecclesiastical entity in a history of human civilization has been put to such a grinding test. The insolubility decree says that, that organic unit of man's culture which has reached the nether point has to witness a meteoric rise. This axim has proved non-existent in the history of the Hebrews. Instead it is one of incessant, uninterrupted chain of oppression and genocide by various societies and its establishment. It was the Jewish tenacity to survive and survive with dignity that helped them outmanoeuvre their oppressors. Inspite of having all the necessary pre-requisites to be identified as a political unit, the Jews were denied of nationhood till the end of the Second World War.

The Hebrew Chauvinism over their land, language and liberty predates to around 1500 B.C., when their great patriarch Abraham who led his cemetic tribe from Ur, in Mesopotamia to the Mediterranean coast region called Palestine. This was the 'promised land' given by their God Jehovah. 1300 B.C. the holy land was afflicted with a ravaging famine forcing its inhabitants to mass migrate towards Egypt. The Egyptian Social Hierarchy did not permit the Jews to rise above slavery. It was only during the period of Ramses II that the Jews

became free. The Firat 'Aliyah' of the diaspora jew was led by the Egyptian Moses. Mount Sinai was the first step where he received the Ten commandments. With Saul, the dynastic history of the Jews began, to be continued by David and Soloman. The death of Soloman divided the Hebrew Kingdom into two. While the Northern part was called Israel the Southern part was Judah. The First holocaust began in 722 B.C. when the Assyrians struck Israel. It was razed down and its inhabitants were taken as captives. History repeated when the Southern Kingdom of Judah met a similar fate in the hands of Chaldean King Nebuchadnazzar in 586 B.C. The process of annihilation has begun, to be continued systematically by the Persians, Egyptians, Cyrians, Romans, Russians, Germans and even by the English. Their disruption was completed by the birth and spread of Islam in the 7th Century A.D. Palestine was Islamised and later went under the terms. The silver lining to an otherwise gloomy sky was the promise and hope of returning to the "Promised Land" passed from one generation to the next.

"Power Corrupts, Absolute power corrupts absolutely". Every institution religious or otherwise undergoes this process of a spartan beginning to become a totalitarian set up and then begin the process of reformation, to every major, minor, socio-religious institution beginning with the Sanathana Dharma to Zorastrianism this has been the factual cycle. However the semitic tribe of Hebrews are the only exception to this Rule. From Assyrians down to the Germans villiest attack on their dignity was made. The Societies of early civilizations did not allow them to cross over the threshold of slavery. The Medieval and Modern ones went a step further and designed more articulate means. The Russian Ghettos confined the entire Jewish population to a fixed and limited periphery for centuries. Generations of non-jewish population were brought-up to denounce and despise the Jews. Even William Shakespeare could not resist making Shylock a jew. It was this generical history of anit-semetism that supported the Nazi Genocide of jews all over Europe. We have to leave out here the tragic story of the atrocities against the jews done by the Nazi regime.

The impact on the jews was deeply disturbing. They developed a fearful anxiety overloss. They had seen a world sans dignity, decency and modernisation where the butts of guns, force had elicited more than conventions, dialogues and procedures. Incessant repression had lost

for them the capacity to see injustice and fight against it in a more civilised way. Redressal could not be through judiciary. It had to be achieved through instant militant retaliation. Hence the only way they could deal with the Arab non acceptance of their nationhood status was military pressure, total lightening war, with the aid of self-interest serving Americans. They were too insecure to even see the outlines of a negotiation table.

The "outlawed" Jews efforts at returning to their homeland began through the Jewish Societies between 17 and 19 centuries. The movement thus launched was named "Zionism", for Zion was the ancient sacred city of the Jews in Palestine. The Zionist ideology began spreading in Europe, America and Middle East. The Hebrews particularly in U.K. and the new world had been relatively free. They had amassed political, economic, intellectual, scholastic power and thereby were in a position to pressurise their respective governments to support the creation of a Jewish homeland. The Zionist Congress was dominated by the Austrian Journalist Theodor Herzl and the Russian Jew Dr. Chaim Weizmann. They consolidated their position by actively supporting the British and her allies. Thereby they created a favourable impression in the English mind as a result of which their demand for a homeland in Palestine was viewed sympathetically. Yet this went against the British and French promises to the Arabs for whom they had assured an undivided Arabia, free from the Turkish yoke. However political dictums resulted in the Balfour declaration. At the outbreak of the First World War much against allied calculation, Turkey had established a close alliance with Germany, thereby endangering the Anglo-Saxan power structure in North East Africa, West and South Asia. The British desperate attempts to counter Turkish moves resulted in supporting the Arab Nationalism and Jewish demand for a homeland. The wealthy American Jews constituted a powerful lobby influencing the policies of the American and British Governments. Moreover both short and long term policies favoured English support to the Jews. An allied invasion on Turkey could be smoothly facilitated if Palestine came under the Jews.

The life line of the British Empire in the East was the Suez Canal. It would be well protected from Palestine and thereby the Anglo-French interest also cared for in the Near East, South and South East Asia. The Zionist created an atmosphere that by giving them homeland, the Christian world would be fulfilling the prophecies of the Old and New

Testament and also atoning for its long persecution of the Jews. They also advanced that their demand of Palestine was just for it was their original homeland. Right or Wrong all this found active support from America and Britain. In 1917 the British Foreign Secretary announced that "His Majesty's Government views with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious of the existing non-jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any country". The effect of this Balfour declaration was disastrous. This direct approve, gave the jews an international status. A slackened monitoring of the clauses resulted in acrimonious relation between the Arabs and the Jews. In order to establish their hold over the territory large scale migration-Aliyah of the diaspora jews began. Arab settlements were uprooted by the Jews who started occupying their areas and establishments. The process of making the nation of Israel began rather ineptly.

There was a massive uproot against the Balfour declaration by the Arabs, who demanded that the British bind themselves to the Hussain MacMohan correspondence. To appease them, a joint Anglo-French declaration was announced in 1918. It proclaimed that "the goal envisaged by France and Great Britain is the complete and final liberation of the peoples who had so long appraised by the Turk and the setting up of National Governments and Administration that should derive their authority from the free exercise of the initiative and choice of the indigenous populations".

The assurances of T.E. Laurence to the Arabs were countered by the Balfour declaration, while the Anglo-French declaration was contrary to the Balfour declaration. This was the bane of the British Foreign Policy. Controversial declaration set the Arabs and the Jews against one another as was meant to be. Neither the Arabs nor the Jews were sure where they stood. The stakes of the British Gambling were very high. In 1919 the Arab Congress met at Damascus and rejected the Jewish Homeland of Palestine. The only solution to the problem appeared to be partition of Palestine into an Arab and Jewish State. The area around holy places would be under Britain. The Arabs rejected the scheme because they were not sure of British intention. The 1939 Round Table Conference of the Arabs and the Jews also failed. In 1939

a white paper was issued by Britain. It was suggested in that for the first 10 years there would be a unitary government in Palestine. After the expiry of this period power would be transferred to the Jews. Meanwhile the Jewish immigration would be restricted to 75,000. Both the Jews and the Arabs rejected it. It was at this stage that the Second World War began. Through its history of divide and rule, setting up powers against each other, Britain had lost its credibility in the Arab and Jewish minds. Both the sections viewed all British ventures and gestures in West Asia with deep suspicion and rejected them in toto. Hence there was a deadlock in the matter.

The Mandates

T.E. Lawrence wrote in "The Time" of London that "The Arabs rebelled against the Turks during the war not because the Turk Government was notably bad, but because they wanted independence. They did not risk their lives in battle to change masters, to become British subjects or French citizens, but to win a show of their own." Hussain-MacMohan correspondence, the Anglo-French declarations were all pointers to this effect. In the face of such Arab bias, the Zionist Congress stepped up its efforts for their homeland. Observing these developments, Amir Faisal, the ruler of Syria presented the Arab case before the peace conference at Paris and demanded the establishment of federation of Arab States. This demand was rejected. Amir Faisal was back in Syria totally dejected. The extremists Syrian elements declared the establishments of a democratic constitutional monarchy under Faisal. At this breaking point the British Prime Minister Lloyd George and the French Prime Minister Clemenceau reverted to the war time partition scheme. It was followed by the San-Remo agreement of April 1920, which gave Syria and Lebanon to France; Iraq and Palestine to Britain. The mandate system thus came into existence in West Asia blinding the path of these territories momentarily.

The Middle East was thus partitioned conveniently by the British and French against all promises they had made. The French forced their entry into Syria compelling Faisal to take to flight. The French mandate over Syria became an established fact. Contrary to the principles governing the mandates the French divided Syria into small states of Greater Lebanon, the Alwi, Syria and Jabl-ud-Durz. They were constantly set up against each other. No efforts were made to set right the economic and administrative impoverishment of the Syrians.

There were no signs of introducing self government which was the primary duty of a mandatory power to prepare the people for governing themselves. The French attitude resulted in two uprisings, the first in 1925 and 10 years later the second in 1936, the French agreed to leave Syria in Phases within three years after 1936. By 1944 the Syrian and Lebanese independence had become a reality.

The British mandate over Iraq and Palestine was however not so smooth. Faisal the expelled ruler of Syria was placed on the Iraqi throne by the British. The Iraqis however resented this hoisting of a ruler on them. Hence in April 1921, conference at Cairo was called to settle the matter amicably. On the advice of Thomas. E. Lawrence, the Sheriff of Mecca, Abdullah and Faisal the two sons of the former Sheriff Hussain were made Kings of Jordan and Iraq respectively. Faisal was regarded by his subjects as a puppet ruler of the English. There was no love lost between the ruler and the ruled. The ruler also had to grapple with the vasillating English policy and several minorities like the Kurds. The 1924 treaty empowered Britain to appoint advisors to the Government, train the army etc. It was the 1926 treaty which relaxed the British control on the financial and military matters. The labour party which came to power in 1930 decided to terminate the mandate by 1932.

The Sykes Picot agreement placed the territory of Palestine under the British. When the mandates were created the area on the East of Jordan river stretching from Amman in the North to the Gulf of Aquaba in the South, formed the area of Jordan or Trans-jordon. While Amir Faisal became the ruler of Iraq Abdulla became the King of Jordan according to the Kairo Agreement. The British were closely disposed with Jordan. They helped in maintaining internal security spread education and awareness. The nationalists' demands were respected immediately on 22nd May 1946 the mandate was terminated and democracy was introduced with Prince Abdulla as the constitutional ruler.

The San Remo Agreement of 1920 had British Mandate over Palestine. In the intervening years between 1920 and 1939 various efforts were made to deal with the demands of both the Arabs and the Jews by the Allied Powers. The Second World War had helped the Jews to get worldwide attention. The Nazi ill-treatment was sympathised by all sections of the Society. Genocide by the Jews affected the entire continent. However the Arab co-operation in the war had to be complete to help the

allies to win against the Axis powers. Hence the Jewish question was driven to the background. This tacit policy was rewarded by complete Arab Neutrality. The Jews on the other hand threw their lot toward the allies and necessarily constituted a vast network of underground workers, volunteers, spies etc. They formed the civilian armed forces.

The Arab-Jewish question once again came up after the end of the war. Elections in Britain dethroned the war time cabinet of Churchill and instead voted the Labour Party to power. Mr. Bevin became the new Secretary for Foreign Affairs. But the Zionist Movement had already become very strong and powerful. Even American President Harry Truman recommended atleast one lakh Jews into Palestine. To solve the issue Arabia and Israel agreed for the appointment of 11 member commission to study the situation. It put forward the majority and minority plan. The majority plan recommended the formation of an Arab State a Jewish state and neutral zone under International Control. The minority plan suggested to deformation of a federal state which would be divided between the Jews and the Arabs with Jerusalem as the common capital. The Arabs rejected this decision immediately. Due to public pressure Britain terminated her mandate in 1948. The nation of Israel was born on the 15th of May 1948.

The European Legacy in all its colonies has been disasterous. The British reaped rich harvest when in power living her colonies to their own destination. The mandate brought West Asia back from where she had begun. The mandate territory had the guideline of the league of nations. According to which all disputed territories would be placed under a third power. It was the duty of this power to demarcate the boundaries and settle all internal and external problems completely and to train the people of the area for self government. So that when the mandates came to an end the territories would be able to transcend smoothly into full fledged sovereign entities. The mandated territory in West Asia did not derive any of the above advantages. Instead after the end of the mandatory period new regional wars began. In Syria and Lebanon no political infrastructure was built by the French to accomodate both the Christian and Muslim Administration. As a result of which they slided into civil war which has not seen a solution till this day. The British Government nominated Faisal as the ruler of Iraq. However they did not want and extended no helping hand to their nominee Faisal who was

trying to bring the Shias, Sunnis and the Kurds to a proper settlement. The Kurdish problem as a result has grown gigantically.

The termination of a British Mandate in Palestine was so abrupt and sudden that it left one gasping for breath. The British inconsistency was so proved by 1947 that when they along with the UN put forward the majority and minority plan the Jews rejected them and insisted on the establishment of an Arab State with safeguards to Jews in Palestine. The Arab argument was that the British could not be trusted not to make any mischief with a Pro-British Jewish State. Instead as it was for 1000's of years till the British dipped their hands the Arab's preferred to allow the Jews to live in their territory. When the English protested against their Governments continued stay in Palestine that the administration like Alauddin's Jeni vanished from the area. Britain was not made accountable to her colonial follies either by the World body or by regional association like the NAM, OAU etc.

None of the West Asian countries had well demarcated boundaries to give them a sovereign identity before 1947. Britain and France had abandoned this responsibility completely during their mandatory stay in the region. It took a war fought by nations skill in their infancy to decide the questions relating to boundary. It was only after the UN intervention could the Arab nations claim territorial integrity and identity temporarily.

The new map of West Asia after 1947, had Israel surrounded by Lebanon in the North, Syria in the North East, Jordan in the South East and Egypt in South West. The most controversial link between these nations after 1947 have been land and water ways. Being a desert area any topographical feature assumes strategic importance. For countries like Jordan which is land locked and Egypt whose North and Eastern boundaries face the sea, a prominent geographical feature transforms into a natural barrier against a hostile Israel, thus helping them to diversify their military resources. As a result three land marks have become the most important territorial possessions. The Golan heights is Syria, the Gaza strip and the Sinai desert/peninsula, area around River Jordan like the West bank. Likewise the water ways of the Suez Canal, Gulf of Aquaba and the States of Tiran have also become issues of conflict. The reason is both the land and the water

ways are lifeline to the entire area. The commercial structure of the Levant will fall down in heaps if the Suez, the Gulf of Aquaba and Jordan river gets affected.

The right of possession or distribution of these areas have not been possible due to excessive external interference by Britain, France, America and Russia while the pre-war period had made West Asia important to the West for reasons like oil, the post war era saw, West Asia assuming a place of priority for ideological reasons. The bipolar world had free market capitalist and a Marxists Socialist camps headed by America and Russia. Britain yet had to come to terms with its shrunken Kingdom and third rate power status. Hence West Asia became the backing ground for America and Russia to wage a proxy war and established their super power status. The Second reason for the continued West Asian Problem has been mutual suspicion of each others strategies and contentions between the various Arab Nations. From 1948 around four major wars and innumerable minor fights have taken place all for the above said reasons.

The hasty withdrawal of Britain from Palestine ruined the Arab psyche. It was a gauntlet that the Arabs could never refuse challenging. While recognition of Israel was swift from the European and American side, the Arabs categorically denied to acknowledge it. To the Arabs the British had committed a blasphemy by undermining their strength. Hence the combined armies of Syria, Lebanon, Transjordan, Iraq and Egypt rushed against the Israel in 1948. With American help Israel fought off the invaders. U.N. Mediation resulted in an armistice according to which one fifth of the territories of former Palestine was obtained by Jordan. The Gaza strip went to Egypt. The rest of Palestine which was larger than what was awarded by the U.N.O. was given to Israel.

In 1956 war was fought over the strategic Suez canal area. President Abdul Gemayel Naseer of Egypt nationalised the Suez canal thereby declaring that the British control over it from 1875 through 80% of its share, as null and void. Britain to compensate this loss of revenue and political prestige, forced Israel to attack Egypt. The attack was stopped only after universal condemnation.

By recognising officially the Jewish demand for a homeland in Palestine through the Balfour declaration, the British had given birth

to a problem which had far reaching consequences. They could not even as policy matter decide as to what should be done with the Arab inhabitants in Palestine which was also their homeland from generations. When the Jews claimed that they were maintaining the status quo by evacuating the Arabs from, what had been their area, the British played the Russian roulette with both the Arabs and the Jews in deciding the territorial division. As a result one Million Arabs had their properties confiscated, violently ill-treated and driven away at bullet point from the so-called Jewish area. These refugees were left stranded in alien areas when Britain walked away from the trouble spot. To the Israelis obviously agonies of the homeless and life of tramp were only self applicable. It was left to the neighbouring Arab state like Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and Egypt to cope up with massive impouring of the Palestenian refugees. The "Mossad" of Israel was not ready to accept the presence of Palestenians anywhere near its radius. Absence of acknowledgements, negotiations from both the sides, fermented the Palestenian trouble. The major wars of 1967, 1973 and 1981 have been over the refugee question. These wars were further precipitated due to the methods adopted. In 1967 Israel threatened to invade Syria for sheltering the Palestenian refugees and terrorists. The war broke out on 23rd May 1967 when the Gulf of Aquaba and States of Tiran were closed to the vessels of Israel and her allies, thereby striking at the core of Israeli commercial and navigational transactions. Israel retaliated by Bombing 4 Air Force basis and capturing the entire East of Suez Canal, Jerusalem and Jordan river. Though the war ended with a ceasefire, Israel refused to part with her captured territory until a permanent solution was found. Though negotiated settlement was reached due to the strong stance adopted by the super-power. Russia allied herself with the Arabs while America sided the Israelis. Both of them did not want their respective sides to lose which resulted in a stalemate. In the face of such a failure, the Arabs decided to recover the capture areas resulting in 1973 war, where Israel defeated the Arabs and added the strategic Golan Heights to her list of conquered territories. Lebanon and Syria which were sheltering the PLO activists had to face the Israeli wrath in 1982, when the Zionist planes attached Lebanens and raced out its capital Beirut. The PLO hideouts were flushed and virtually forced to flee from the area. None of the Arab nations apart from lodging feeble protest and rendering humanitarian aids to the refugees could offer any resistance.

None of the agreements ever reached had been permanent at the most all of them are temporary ceasefires including a Camp David agreement. Permanent solutions to the Arab Israeli complexes are difficult to find by to cause both the warring sections are hampered by several scarcities like land and water. The Jordan river is a major source of domestic water supply to the entire area. The desert economy is further burdened by countries like Africa, South East Europe which are in very poor economic condition thus making it impossible to render any kind of help.

Conclusion

Wars have causes behind them. However with the advance in Science and Technology they also have become too expensive in terms of human existence itself, to be fought over Religion or external intervention by subjecting their precious few resources for insane destruction neither of the countries have achieved anything substantial. Boundaries have kept changing while Israel gave back the Sinai after 1973 to Egypt, further incursions into a part of this area – the Gaza Strip were made periodically. Golan Heights has been changing hands. Though Jerusalem has become a Jewish territory with Israeli settlements springing up, the Arab nations are vigorously protesting against this settlement policy. Fortyfive years of war has tired and ruined the entire area. Attempts to begin afresh are being made. The World is not what it was. End of cold war, disintegration of the Soviet Union has made the USA as the only power to reckon with. America for once is trying to bring peace into this area overlooking its policy considerations and overriding the Jewish lobby in the Congress. The Arabs have made tentative approaches towards each other through the Madrid talks. War is far more a serious problem than problems themselves. Hence they can never be the means at achieving an Utopian end.