

Nation building in the Middle East 1918-1950

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Benedict Anderson (1983), Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism

- "In an anthropological spirit, then, I propose the following definition of the **nation**: it is an **imagined political community** - - and **imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign**."
- It is **imagined** because the members of even the smallest nation **will never know most of their fellow-members**, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion. Renan referred to this imagining in his suavely back-handed way when he wrote that '*Or l'essence d'une nation est que tous les individus aient beaucoup de choses en commun, et aussi que tous aient oublié bien des choses.*'"
- With a certain ferocity Gellner makes a comparable point when he rules that 'Nationalism is not the awakening of nations to self-consciousness: it invents nations where they do not exist.' In this way he implies that 'true' communities exist which can be advantageously juxtaposed to nations. In fact, **all communities larger than primordial villages** of face-to-face contact (and perhaps even these) are **imagined**. ... Communities are to be distinguished, not by their falsity/genuineness, but by the style in which they are imagined

- *"The nation is imagined as **limited** because even the largest of them encompassing perhaps a billion living human beings, has **finite, if elastic boundaries**, beyond which lie other nations. No nation imagines itself coterminous with mankind. The most messianic nationalists do not dream of a day when all the members of the human race will join their nation in the way that it was possible, in certain epochs, for, say, Christians to dream of a wholly Christian planet.*
- *"It is imagined as **sovereign** because the concept was born in an age in which **Enlightenment** and Revolution were **destroying** the legitimacy of the **divinely-ordained, hierarchical dynastic realm...** nations dream of being free, and, if under God, directly so. The gage and emblem of this freedom is the sovereign state.*
- *"Finally, it is imagined as a **community**, because, regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, **the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship**. Ultimately it is this fraternity that makes it possible, over the past two centuries, for so many millions of people, not so much to kill, as **willingly to die** for such limited imaginings."*

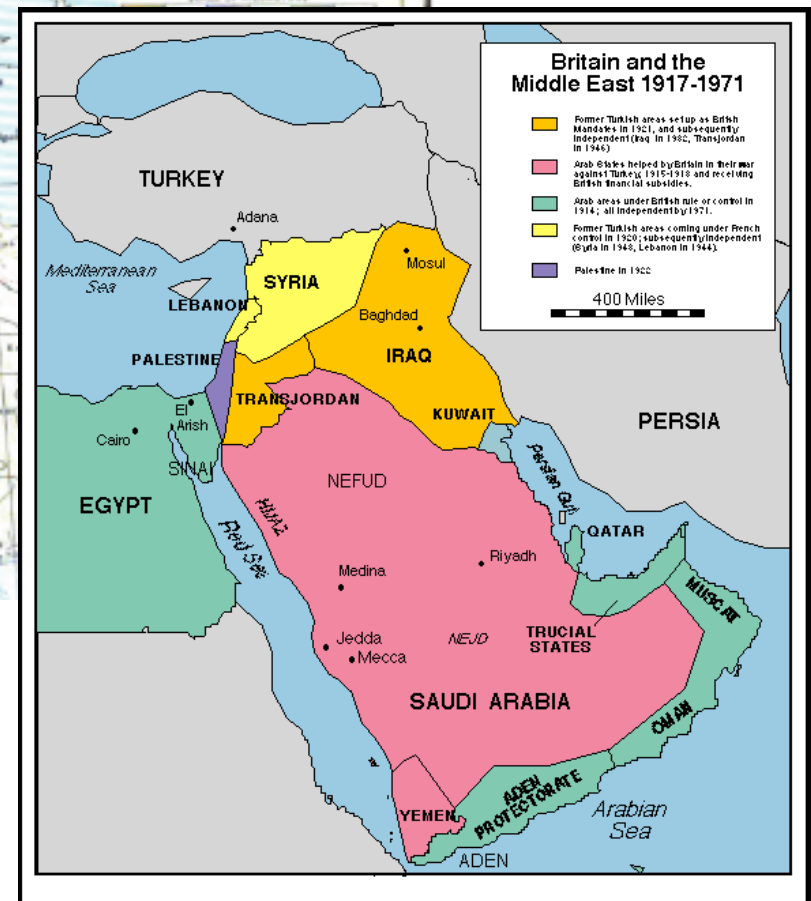
Three 'brands' of nationalisms

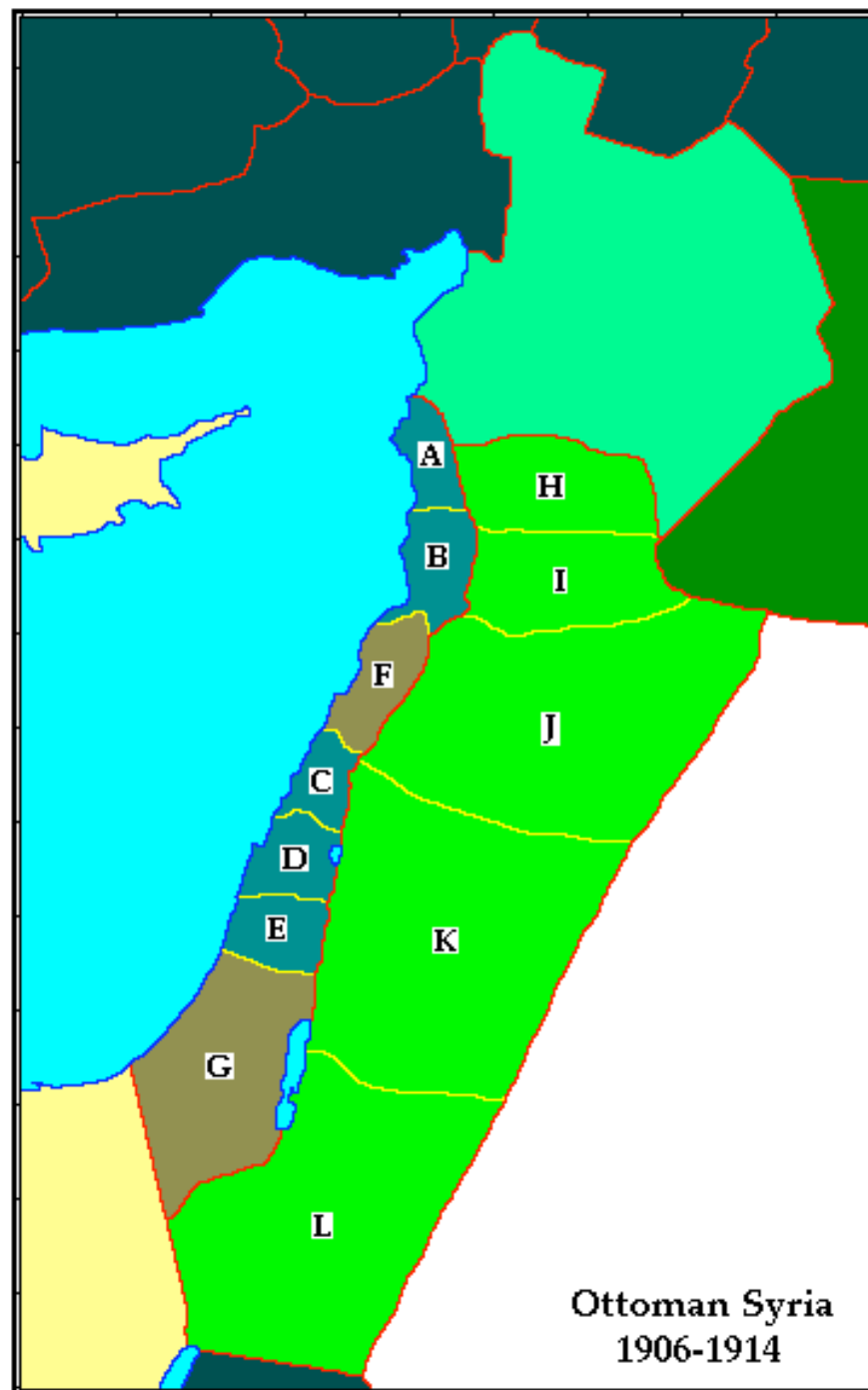
- Regionalism (Phoenicianism, Pharaonism, Turkism)
- Arabism, Sati al-Husri, 'On Arab Nationalism'
- -> Ba'atism
 - Founded by Michel Aflaq, Salah al-Din al-Bitar and Zaki al-Asruzi in the early 1940s
 - Centered on the ideas of Wahda, Hurriya, Ishtiraqiyya: Unity, Freedom, Socialism
- Islamism: the salafist movement changes: Rashid Rida (1865-1935) and Amir Shakib Arslan(1869-1946)

After the WW1

- State construction by decree: Iraq, Trans-Jordan Kingdom, Palestine, Lebanon, Syria
- State construction by revolution and revolt: Turkey, Iran, Saudi Arabia and Egypt
 - France: Syria and Lebanon
 - UK: Palestine, Trans-Jordan and Iraq

How it should have been...

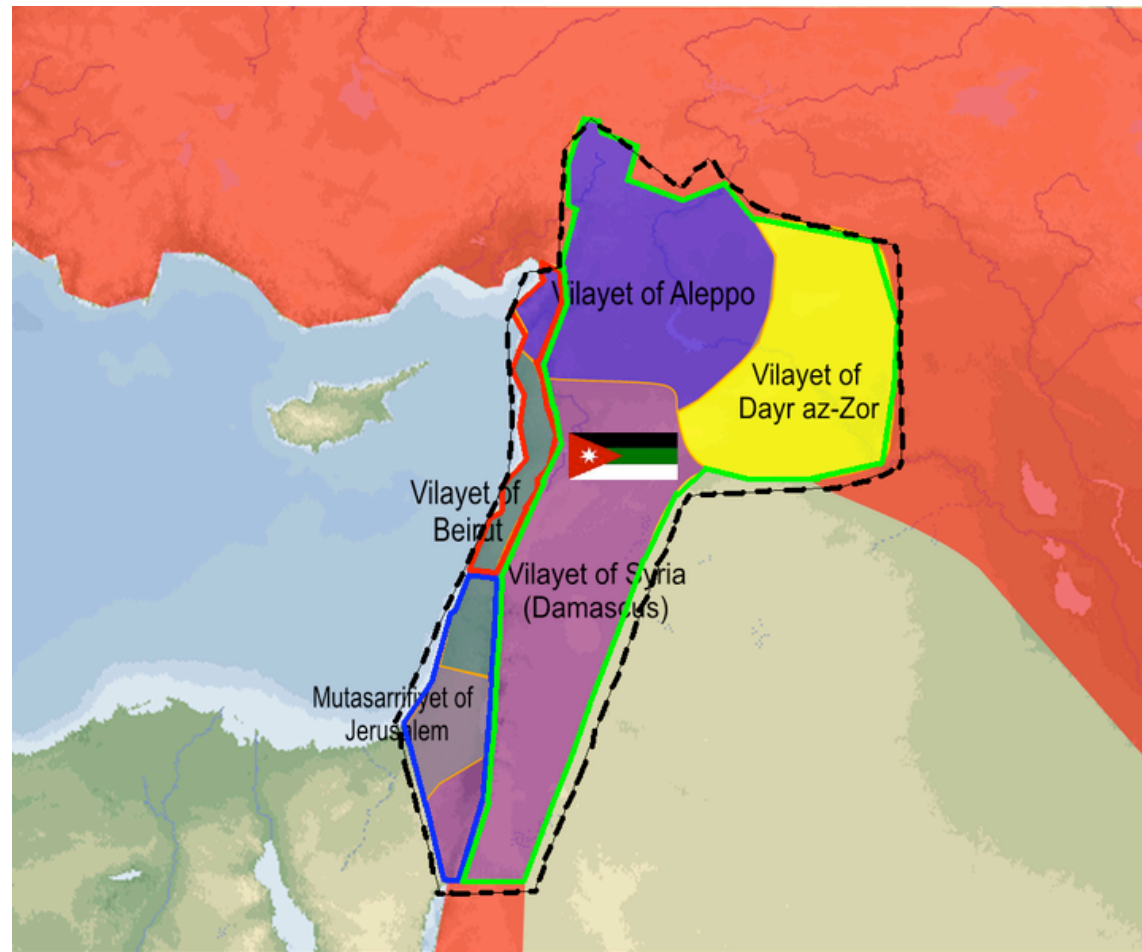




Ottoman Syria 1906-1914

- Ottoman Vilayets outside Syria
- Areas nominally part of the Ottoman Empire
- Vilayet of Aleppo
- Vilayet of Deir ez Zor
- Vilayet of Beirut
- A Sanjak of Latakia
- B Sanjak of Tripoli
- C Sanjak of Beirut
- D Sanjak of Acre
- E Sanjak of Nablus
- F Mutasarrifat of Mt. Lebanon
- G Mutasarrifat of Jerusalem
- Vilayet of Syria
- H Sanjak of Hama
- I Sanjak of Homs
- J Sanjak of Damascus
- K Sanjak of Hawran
- L Sanjak of Ma'an

Faysal's "Kingdom of Sirya"



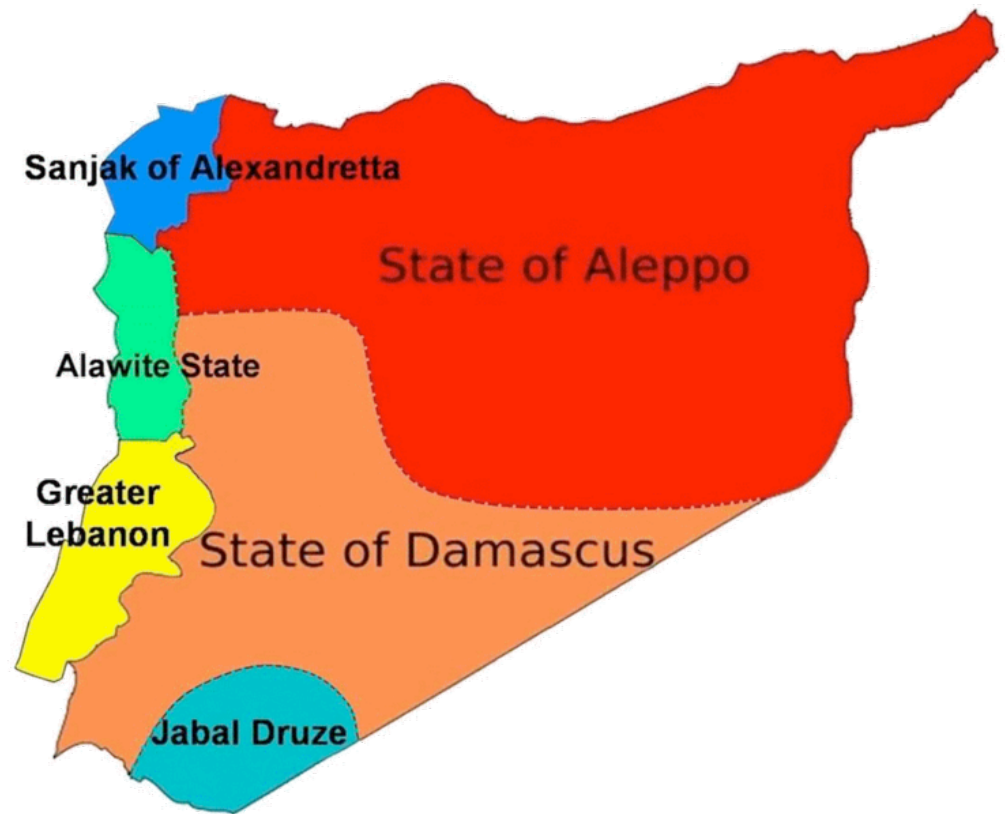
Many awkward states...

- Trans-Jordan: Abdallah avenges Faysal



French Mandate on Syria and Lebanon

Syria is divided into 6 mini-states
+
Lebanon, which becomes an
Independent state



A kingdom for Faysal: the birth of the Hashemite dynasty in Iraq, 1920



King Faisal with Lord Allenby



Syrian Mandate

- Division in mini-states
- Heavy and cumbersome bureaucracy, paternalism, large presence of French army
- -> Great Syrian Revolt of 1925-27
- Creation of the National Bloc by Sunni notables
- Constitutionalist attempts in 1929 fails; two years later, constitution is imposed upon Syrians
- 1936: Leon Blum government in France promises a new Treaty, but it falls
- 1939: Alexandretta is given away by the French to Turkey

French Mandate in Lebanon

- Lebanon: a state for the Maronites
 - But the Maronites include only the 30% of French Lebanon
- French mandate is paternalistic, but it has easier relations with the population
- 1926, a constitution is approved
- 1936: new treaty with France that prescribe the “fair representation of all the country’s sects” -> President of the Chamber would be a Maronite, and the Prime Minister a Sunni Muslim
- National Pact of 1943, based on 1932 Census: for every 6 Christian deputies, there should be 5 Muslim; Shia who are the 20% of the population are unrepresented



Post-war Turkey



Mustafa Kemal (Ataturk = the father of the Turks)



Kemalism...

- Far-reaching program of reshaping national identity:
 - Moves the capital, changes scripts from Arabic into latin letters, obliges people to change ways of dressing, reshape the pasts -> Turkism
 - New educational and legal systems, secular and THE SAME FOR ALL
 - Abolishes the caliphate, nationalize religious endowments, Islamic courts and Sufi orders (Turuq), forbade the use of the veil in public -> Turkey is a secular state
 - Economic planning and state CENTRALIZATION OF ECONOMY (Socialist style)
- => It is a thoroughly modernized state: women obtain right to vote in 1934, BEFORE France

Egypt: state-building by revolution

- Egypt is declared a protectorate in 1914
- The protectorate is not lifted after the end of the war-> 1919 Revolution
- Unilateral declaration of independence, with 4 reserved points:
 - The question of the Sudan
 - The integrity of British communications (Suez Canal)
 - Control of Egyptian defence
 - The Capitulations
- Coming to power of the Wafd (the Delegation) with Saad Zaghlul

Sa'ad Zaghlul, leader of the Wafd Party



Zaghlul comes to power in 1924 after a popular election where he is the uncontested winner

His government falls in 1924 after the assassination of Lee Stack

Keeps the leadership of the Wafd, but dies in 1927

Egypt after Zaghlul

- Stalemate of Egyptian life:
 - The constitution awards extensive power to the King, who becomes a way for the British to influence politics directly
 - The whole political life revolves around the 4 reserved points and is blind to the necessities of the people and to social reforms
 - Huge gap between the political leadership and the common people, both politically and ideologically
 - See the feminist movement of Huda Sharawi started in 1923
- => Spread corruption of the Wafd, which becomes a 'moderate' party
- => Rise of the Muslim Brother (Ikhwan) founded by Hassan al-Banna in Ismailiyya in 1923

The Ikhwan

- The regeneration of the society passes through a regeneration of Islam
- Islam should reassess its place in society
- An Islamic order of society will assure peace and stability
- Social work among people: labour unions, medical clinics, schools etc: social justice is not a matter of legislation – it is a matter of Islam

Saudi Arabia

- 1902, Abd al-Aziz Ibn Saoud seizes Riyadh and launches an attack to the whole peninsula: 1920 he has conquered most of it.
- Success as he is both a political and a religious leader: indoctrination of the tribes to Wahabism,
 - sending missionaries to spread it and obliging chiefs to attend a 'Wahabist school' in Riyadh, settles down the tribes in agricultural communities where they learn about Wahbism
- => Wahbism becomes the element of cohesion that unites very incohesive tribes
- => Since the beginning of its existence after the war, Saudi Arabia is an independent state, internationally recognized from 1932