5 million Arabs happened to be living there as well and no one could fathom where they had come from or what they were doing there. They didn't seem to have any function, and whatever they subsisted on, it was an almost completely separate economy from the one the French Algerians were involved in.

By 1850, Europeans controlled every part of the world that had once called itself Dar al-Islam. They lived in these countries as an upper class, they ruled them directly or decided who would rule, they controlled the resources, they dictated the policies, and they circumscribed the daily lives of their people. In places such as Egypt, Iran, and India, there were clubs that the native people could not enter because they were Egyptian or Iranian or Indian. Europeans had achieved this dominance without any grand war or broadscale assault. The Europeans were scarcely even aware that there had been a struggle and that they had won. But Muslims noticed, because it's always harder to ignore a rock you're under than a rock you're on.

13

The Reform Movements

1150–1336 AH
1737–1918 CE

At the same time as these political developments, a crucial story was unfolding in the intellectual arena as well. This story began before 1800 and continued long after, with consequences that shake the world to this very day: it consisted of revival and reform movements that surged up throughout the Muslim world at the same time that Europeans were overwhelming these lands.

The two stories are related, though not identical. Some sort of sweeping challenge to the Muslim status quo was going to take place around this time with or without the Europeans. Why? Because in the Muslim world, by 1700 or so, religious institutions had bureaucratized spirituality in much the same way that the Catholic Church had bureaucratized Christianity in late medieval Europe. The whole system of Muslim law had been worked out so fully that there was no creative work left for any new enthusiast to do. The application of shari'a to every dot and detail of personal and social life was a done deal. The power of the ulama had grown encrusted. The Sufi orders had been institutionalized, and authorities at every level agreed that "the gates of ijtihad were closed."

Ijtihad, remember, means "free and independent thinking based on reason." It can't depart from scripture, but it consists of thinking through the implications of scripture creatively. Muslim scholars had once allowed that ijtihad might be exercised on issues not explicitly settled by Qur'an; then by Qur'an and hadith; then by Qur'an, hadith, and the work of previous authoritative scholars. . . . And so by the eighteenth century, important scholars generally agreed that no unsettled issues existed. Everything had been covered, everything worked out; ordinary people no longer needed to exercise free and independent thought. There was nothing left for them to do but follow the rules.

Following the rules, however, does not provide the spiritual fulfillment people seek from religion. The bureaucratization of Islam created much the same stultifications and discontents that in Christendom had provoked the Protestant Reformation. And indeed, by the middle of the eighteenth century, reform movements were beginning to sprout throughout the Muslim world.

But there never was a Muslim version of Europe's Protestant Reformation, and thus none of the consequences that followed from the Reformation: no doctrine of individualism emerged here, no coupling of religion to nationalism (except in a sense in Iran), no separation of church and state, no conceptual division of the world into secular and religious realms, no sudden development of enlightenment-style liberalism, and so no democratic, scientific, or industrial revolutions.

Why not?

Well, for one thing, some of the issues that fueled the Reformation could not arise in Islam. Protestant reformers rebelled against the Church; Islam had no church. Protestant reformers attacked the authority of the pope; Islam had no pope. Protestants said priests could not mediate between man and God; Islam never had a priesthood (the ulama were more like lawyers than priests.) The Protestant reformers insisted on a direct, personal interaction between the individual worshipper and God. The Muslim prayer ritual had always been just that.

But the Europeans were certainly a factor too. Without them in the picture, the Muslim reform movements might well have taken a different course. European religious reform took shape in a purely European context. That is, when Protestant reformers challenged Catholic practices and

doctrines, they were addressing issues internal to their own society, not steeling Christianity against some external cultural challenge. In 1517, few western Christians worried that Muslims might have a more convincing message to offer than Christianity or that Christian youth might start converting to Islam. The Turks were at the gate, it's true, but they weren't in the living room, and they certainly weren't in the bedroom. The Turks posed a threat to the physical health of Christians, but not to the spiritual health of Christianity.

Muslims were in a different boat. Almost from the start, as I've discussed, Islam had offered its political and military successes as an argument for its doctrines and a proof of its revelations. The process began with those iconic early battles at Badr and Uhud, when the outcome of battle was shown to have theological meaning. The miracle of expansion and the linkage of victory with truth continued for hundreds of years.

Then came the Mongol holocaust, which forced Muslim theologians to reexamine their assumptions. That process spawned such reformers as Ibn Taymiyah. Vis-à-vis the Mongols, however, the weakness of Muslims was concrete and easy to understand. The Mongols had greater killing power, but they came without an ideology. When the bloodshed wound down and the human hunger for meaning bubbled up, as it always does, they had nothing to offer. In fact, they themselves converted. Islam won in the end, absorbing the Mongols as it had absorbed the Turks before them and the Persians before that.

Conversion to Islam made the Mongols no less bloody (as Timur-i-lang proved), but at least, under the aegis of the converted rulers, the old quest could begin again, albeit starting over from the smoking rubble of a ruined world—the quest to build and universalize the community of Allah.

The same could not be said for the new overlords. The Europeans came wrapped in certainty about their way of life and peddling their own ideas of ultimate truth. They didn't challenge Islam so much as ignore it, unless they were missionaries, in which case they simply tried to convert the Muslims. If they noticed Islam, they didn't bother to debate it (missionaries are not in the debating business) but only smiled at it as one would at the toys of a child or the quaint relics of a more primitive people. How maddening for Muslim cognoscenti! And yet, what could Muslims do about it?

Even if Muslim and Christian scholars had found some forum in which to exchange views, it would have been irrelevant to the conundrum facing Muslims because by the nineteenth century, the challenge to Islam came not so much from Christianity as from a secular, humanistic worldview that evolved out of the Reformation, the mélange now often called "modernity."

The source of Muslim weakness and European strength was not obvious. It wasn't strictly a question of military advantage. For the most part, the foreigners weren't torturing and killing. For the most part, the new overlords didn't even set themselves up as rulers, quite. Officially, most Muslims still had their own native monarchs, still had their own government buildings where Muslim officials still stamped documents, and somewhere in every Muslim state was still a capital dating back to ancient days of bygone splendor, and in that capital was a palace and in that palace a throne and on that throne usually a shah, sultan, nawab, khan, khedive, or what you will, some native ruler whose wealth and pomp made him all but indistinguishable from the potentates of old.

In Iran, the foreigners roamed the corridors of power merely as advisers. In Turkey, there they were, collecting salaries as consultants. In Egypt and the Levant, they stood by as "protectors." Even in India, which had a governor-general appointed by the British parliament, the military and police forces that "kept order" consisted mostly of Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs, Parsees, and other locals. How could Muslims claim that they were not still ruling themselves?

And yet by the end of the eighteenth century, Muslims looked around and saw with dawning horror that they had been conquered: from Bengal to Istanbul, they were subservient to foreigners in every aspect of their lives, in their own cities and towns and neighborhoods and in their very homes. And not just foreigners like the ones next door, but people who spoke a whole different set of languages, practiced different religious rituals, wore different kinds of clothes and different kinds of headgear (or, shockingly, none at all!), built different kinds of houses, formed different kinds of groupings. These foreigners ate pork, they drank liquor, their women moved about in public with their faces showing, they laughed at jokes that weren't funny and failed to see the humor in things that were hilarious, ate weird-tasting food, listened to music that sounded more like noise, and spent their leisure time in puzzling and pointless activities such as cricket and quadrilles.

So the question arose now, as it had in the wake of the Mongol holocaust: if the triumphant expansion of the Muslim project proved the truth of the revelation, what did the impotence of Muslims in the face of these new foreigners signify about the faith?

With this question looming over the Muslim world, movements to revive Islam could not be extricated from the need to resurrect Muslim power. Reformers could not merely offer proposals for achieving more authentic religious experiences. They had to expound how the authenticity they proposed would get history back on course, how their proposals would restore the dignity and splendor of the Umma, how they would get Muslims moving again toward the proper endpoint of history: perfecting the community of justice and compassion that flourished in Medina in the original golden moment and enlarging it until it included all the world.

Many reformers emerged and many movements bubbled up, but all of them can be sorted into three general sorts of responses to the troubling question.

One response was to say that what needed changing was not Islam but Muslims. Innovations, alterations, and accretions had corrupted the faith, so that no one was practicing true Islam anymore. What Muslims needed to do was to shut out Western influence and restore Islam to its pristine, original form.

Another response was to say that the West was right. Muslims had gotten mired in obsolete religious ideas; they had ceded control of Islam to ignorant clerics who were out of touch with changing times; they needed to modernize their faith along Western lines by clearing out superstition, renouncing magical thinking, and rethinking Islam as an ethical system compatible with science and secular activities.

A third response was to declare Islam the true religion but concede that Muslims had certain things to learn from the West. In this view, Muslims needed to rediscover and strengthen the essence of their own faith, history, and traditions, but absorb Western learning in the fields of science and technology. According to this river of reform, Muslims needed to modernize but could do so in a distinctively Muslim way: science was compatible with the Muslim faith and modernization did not have to mean Westernization.

These three answers to the challenge of modernity were well-embodied in three seminal reformers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries: Abdul Wahhab of the Arabian peninsula, Sayyid Ahmad of Aligarh, India, and Sayyid Jamaluddin-i-Afghan, whose birthplace is disputed and whose presence was felt everywhere. By no means were they the only reformers. Their ideas were not always mutually exclusive. They sometimes straddled two different currents of reformism. Their contemporaries and students often borrowed from each other. But still, these three men represent three distinctively different approaches to reforming and reviving Islam.

WAHHABISM

Abdul Wahhab was born around 1703 in the Nejd, that desert of yellow sand dunes that many of us picture reflexively when we think of Arabia. He grew up in a small oasis town, the son of a judge. When he showed promise as a Qur'anic student, he was sent to Medina for further schooling. There, one of his teachers introduced him to the works of Ibn Taymiyah, the austere Syrian theologian who, in the wake of the Mongol holocaust taught that God had abandoned Muslims and that Muslims must return to the exact ways of the First Community if they were ever to regain His favor. These teachings resonated for the young Wahhab.

From Medina the youngster made his way to the cosmopolitan city of Basra on the Persian Gulf, and what this ultimate country boy saw in Basra—the clamorous diversity of opinion, the many schools of thought, the numerous interpretations of the Holy Word, the crowds, the lights, the noise—appalled him. This, he decided, was the sort of excrescence that was making Islam weak.

He returned, then, to the stark simplicity of his hometown in the desert and began to preach religious revival through restoration of Islam to its original form. There was only one God, he thundered, and everyone must worship the one God exactly as instructed in the Holy Book. Everyone must obey the laws laid down by the revelations. Everyone must live exactly as the Pure Originals of Medina in Mohammed's time, and anyone who blocked the restoration of the original and holy community must be eliminated.

The Ottomans considered all of Arabia their possession, but they had no real authority among the small Bedouin tribes who inhabited this arid

landscape, living in scattered oases and eking out a thin survival as traders and herders. Wahhab attracted some followers among his fellow Bedouins, and he led his group around the countryside destroying shrines because they were objects of improper reverence, and Abdul Wahhab preached that reverence for anything or anyone except God was idolatry. Eventually, Wahhab achieved the position of judge and began to apply Hanbali law as he saw it with uncompromising zeal. One day, he had a well-known woman of the town stoned to death as an adulteress. The locals had seen enough. A mob gathered to demand that Abdul Wahhab be ousted from his post; there was even talk of lynching. Wahhab fled that town and made his way to another oasis called Dariyah.

There, the local ruler Mohammed ibn Saud welcomed him warmly. Ibn Saud was a minor tribal chieftain with very big ambitions: to "unite" the Arabian Peninsula. By "unite," of course, he meant "conquer." In the single-minded preacher Abdul Wahhab he saw just the ally he needed; Wahhab saw the same when he looked at Ibn Saud. The two men made a pact. The chieftain agreed to recognize Wahhab as the top religious authority of the Muslim community and do all he could to implement his vision; the preacher, for his part, agreed to recognize Ibn Saud as the political head of the Muslim community, its amir, and to instruct his followers to fight for him.

The pact produced fruit. Over the next few decades, these two men "united" all the bedouin tribes of the Arabian Peninsula under Saudi-Wahhabi rule. Each time they confronted another recalcitrant tribe, they began by called on them to convert. "Convert! Convert! Convert!" they yelled three times. If the warning was ignored three times (as it generally was) Wahhab told the soldiers they could go ahead and kill the people they were confronting; Allah permitted it, because these were infidels.

The call to convert confused the tribes they were attacking at this point because all of these tribes considered themselves devout Muslims already. But when Abdul Wahhab said "Convert!" he meant to the vision of Islam he was preaching. He did not call it Wahhabism because, like Ibn Taymiyah before him, he maintained that he was simply calling Muslims back to pristine, original Islam, stripped of all accretions and washed of all corruptions. He was not an innovator; in fact, he was the anti-innovator.

People unconvinced of his views, however, saw his vision as a particular interpretation of Islam, not Islam itself; and they had no trouble labeling his ideology Wahhabism, a term that came into use even among some who endorsed his views.

In 1766, Ibn Saud was assassinated but his son Abdul Aziz took over and continued his father's campaign to unite Arabia under the banner of Abdul Wahhab's theology. Then in 1792, Wahhab himself died, leaving behind twenty widows and countless children. His life had spanned virtually the entire eighteenth century. While he was imposing his vision of pristine Islam in Arabia, England and Scotland melded into Great Britain, the United States of America was born, the French Revolution issued the Declaration of the Rights of Man, Mozart wrote his entire corpus of music, and James Watt invented the steam engine.

Upon Wahhab's death, Aziz ibn Saud declared himself his successor. Already the amir, the new Ibn Saud now anointed himself the chief religious authority as well. In 1802, Aziz ibn Saud attacked the city of Karbala, where the Prophet's grandson Hussein had been martyred. This city was central to Shi'i devotions, and many of them had gathered just then to commemorate Hussein's martyrdom. But Shi'is ranked high on Wahhab's list of those who had altered and corrupted pristine original Islam, and so, upon conquering the city, Aziz ibn Saud had some two thousand of its Shi'i inhabitants put to death.

In 1804, Aziz ibn Saud conquered Medina, where he had his army promptly destroy the tombs of Mohammed's companions. From Medina, the Saudi-Wahhabi armies went on to Mecca, where they wrecked a shrine that supposedly marked Prophet Mohammed's birthplace (so that no one would fall into idolatrous worship of Mohammed). As long as he was in the city, Ibn Saud took advantage of the opportunity to humbly perform the rites of pilgrimage in the Ka'ba.

Then in 1811, the Saudi-Wahhabi alliance began to organize a new campaign, this time to Asia Minor, the heart of the Ottoman Empire. Now at last the sultan took notice of the Wahhabi movement. To grapple with these surging Bedouins, he called on Mohammed Ali, khedive of Egypt, to help him out. Mohammed Ali took his disciplined modern army into Arabia, and in 1815—the same year that Napoleon's career was ending at Waterloo—he crushed Ibn Saud, restored Ottoman control over Mecca and Medina, and opened the Holy City up again to Muslim pilgrims of every stripe. Then he sent Aziz ibn Saud's son and successor to Istanbul to be paraded before derisive crowds and then beheaded.

Little more was heard of the Saudi-Wahhabi alliance for about a century, but the alliance did not die. The executed chieftain had a son who took over the collapsed remnants of the Saudi confederacy. Now he was just a minor tribal chieftain again, but he was still a chieftain, and he was still a Wahhabi, and wherever he could still impose his authority, Wahhabi ulama presided and prospered. Wahhab was dead, but Wahhabism lived on.

What were its tenets?

You can look long and hard through the actual writings of Abdul Wahhab and not find Wahhabism as it is defined today. That's largely because Abdul Wahhab didn't write political tracts; he wrote Qur'anic commentary and wrote it strictly in the vocabulary of his doctrine. His single-minded focus on details of Muslim doctrine, law, and practice might strike outsiders as obsessive. His major work, *Kitab-al-Tawhid* (*The Book of Unity*) has sixty-six chapters, each of which presents one or more quotes from the Qur'an, unpacks each quote, lists lessons to be learned from the quote, and then explains how this quote relates to Wahhab's core creed. There is no talk here of East or West, nothing about Western influence or Muslim weakness, nothing recognizably political at all. To read Wahhab's words is to realize that he looked at the world through purely religious spectacles. In his own view, his entire theology boiled down to two tenets: first, the importance of *tawhid,* or "unity," that is, the singleness and unity of God; and second, the fallacy of *shirk*, the idea that anyone or anything shared in God's divinity to even the smallest degree.

Marx once said "I am not a Marxist," and if Abdul Wahhab were alive today, he might well say, "I am not a Wahhabi," but nonetheless, Wahhabism exists, and it now includes many further tenets that derive from Wahhab's preachings by implication or that developed historically from its application by Saudi chieftains. This expanded Wahhabism told Muslims that the Law was Islam and Islam was the Law: getting it right, knowing it fully, and following it exactly was the whole of the faith.

The Law was all right there in the Qur'an, according to Wahhab and his followers. The sunna—the life of the Prophet as revealed through hadith—amounted to a commentary on the Law. The Qur'an did not prescribe principles to guide human behavior but actual acts Muslims were to perform. It revealed not just the form but the content of human life. In the life of Prophet Mohammed, it gave a stencil for every Muslim to follow.

Medina in the time of Mohammed and the first *three* khalifas was the ideal community, the one time and place when everybody knew the law, got the law and followed it fully. That was why the First Community was able to flourish and expand so miraculously. That Medina was the stencil for every Muslim community to recreate.

The purpose of life was to follow the Law. The purpose of social and political life was to build the community in which the Law could be reified. All who hindered the great task of building that ideal community were enemies of Islam. The obligations of a Muslim included participation in jihad, the struggle to defeat the enemies of Islam. Jihad was right up there with prayer, fasting, alms, pilgrimage, and attesting to the unity of God as a religious obligation.

And who were the enemies of Islam?

According to Wahhab's doctrines, those who did not believe in Islam were, of course, potential enemies but not the most crucial offenders. If they agreed to live peacefully under Muslim rule, they could be tolerated. The enemies of real concern were slackards, apostates, hypocrites, and innovators.

Slackards were Muslims who talked the talk but didn't really walk the walk. They espoused the creed, but when it was time to pray, you found them playing cards or taking naps. They had to be punished so they would not corrupt other Muslims. Apostates were those who were born into or had converted to Islam but had then renounced it. They were to be killed. Hypocrites were those who said they were Muslims but weren't really. They mouthed the words but in their hearts their allegiance went to some other faith. They were inherently a fifth column working against the community and could commit disastrous betrayal in a crisis. Hypocrites were to be killed as soon as they were unmasked. And finally, perhaps the worst offenders of all were the innovators: Muslims who were corrupting Islam by adding to or altering any aspects of the pristine original Law. People who performed the rituals differently than the Pious Originals, or who performed rituals the Prophet and his companions never practiced, or who

advocated ideas not found in the Qur'an were innovators. Both the Shi'i and the Sufis belonged to this group. Jihad against them was not only legitimate but obligatory, according to Wahhabism as it developed in historical practice.

Wahhabi attitudes and enthusiasms spread far beyond Arabia. Wahhabism found particularly fertile ground at the other end of the Muslim world, in the subcontinent of India. In practice, various people who called themselves Wahhabis emphasized various aspects of the creed the Saudi tribe preached. In India, for example, some so-called Wahhabis rejected jihad as an obligation. Others said apostates should be engaged in debate not battle. Some thought slackards should be reeducated rather than punished or that hypocrites should be chastened rather than killed, or some other variation. But all who called themselves Wahhabis looked at the Law as the core of Islam, even the whole of Islam. All tended to look back to a golden era that provided a stencil for Muslim life and tended to believe that restoring the First Community of Mohammed's Medina would restore Muslims to favor in Allah's eyes, thereby restoring the vigor and power the Umma enjoyed under the first four khalifas.

Outside the Islamic world, the Saudi-Wahhabi alliance may have seemed like some brief anomaly that flared and vanished; but in fact it went on smoldering in the deserts of Arabia, and the world was to hear a great deal more about the alliance in the twentieth century, after the British agent remembered as Lawrence of Arabia found his way to that desert.

THE ALIGARH MOVEMENT: SECULAR MODERNISM

Sayyid Ahmad, or Sir Sayyid Ahmad of Aligarh, as he liked to be called later in life, represents an attitude of thought that sprang up independently in many parts of the Muslim world in the nineteenth century. He and others began exploring ways to rethink Islam as an ethical system that would stay true to its own traditions and spirit but make it compatible with a secular world dominated by Europeans.

Sayyid Ahmad was born in 1817 to a prominent Muslim family in Delhi. His forebears had been important officials under the Moghuls, back when the Moghuls ruled this part of the world. Now, the British grip on the subcontinent had been deepening for many generations and Sayyid

Ahmed's family had adapted to the new order. His grandfather served the East India Company in positions of responsibility, once running a school for them and another time traveling to Iran as a British envoy. Twice he had worked for the Moghul emperor as his prime minister, but the "emperor" at this point was just another British pensioner and his prime minister's chief duties were to fill out the appropriate forms to keep his pension flowing. Sayyid Ahmad's father worked for the company too, and his brother started one of India's first Urdu newspapers. In short, Sayyid Ahmad hailed from a high-status, modernist, Western-oriented family, and he knew something about British life.

His mother, however, was a devout Muslim of legendary piety, respected for her scholarship. She made the boy go to madrassa, and she equaled his grandfather as an influence on this life, so Sayyid Ahmad grew to manhood with these two dueling currents in his personality: a heartfelt allegiance to his own Muslim community and a high regard for British culture and a longing for the respect of those colonials.

Unfortunately, his family sank into financial trouble after his father's untimely death. Sayyid Ahmad had to quit school and go to work. He hired on with the East India Company as a clerk and eventually earned promotion to subjudge, handling small claims, but this was a minor post in the company's judicial system: really not much more than a glorified clerk. He couldn't rise higher because he had never completed his formal education; he was largely self-taught.

Still he read avidly, all the science and English-language literature he could get his hands on. He formed reading groups and discussion clubs with his Indian Muslim friends and organized lecture series on scientific topics. During the Indian Mutiny of 1857, he sided with the British; but afterwards he wrote a pamphlet called *The Causes of the Indian Revolt* in which he reproached the British administrators for their errors and oversights, a pamphlet he sent to government officials in Calcutta and London. He followed up with *An Account of the Loyal Mohammedans of India*, which was translated into English by a British colonel. In this little book, he tried to resurrect his coreligionists in British eyes by depicting Indian Muslims as the Queen's most loyal subjects. He also argued that Muslims could have no jihadist sentiments toward the British and ought not to have, quoting scholarly religious sources to prove that jihad against the British was not permissible since the British did not restrict or interfere with Muslim devotions.

Finally, in 1874, he decided to see England for himself. It was the first time Sayyid Ahmad had traveled beyond the confines of India. In London, where his writings had earned him some affection, he lived beyond his means, attending fashionable parties and hobnobbing with intellectuals, artists, and aristocrats. He cut a striking figure in this milieu, resolutely clad in Muslim robes, sporting a large beard, and wearing a small pillbox-shaped religious cap, looking every inch the old-school Muslim gentleman of Moghul high society. The queen herself awarded him a ribbon, making him a "Companion of the Star of India," which led him ever afterward to call himself *Sir* Sayyid Ahmad Khan.

Then one day, there in London, he ran across a derogatory biography of Prophet Mohammed written by some Englishman. He was devastated. He dropped all his other concerns and began writing his own biography of the Prophet to refute the one by the Englishman. He wrote in Urdu, because it was his mother tongue, but he was aiming his book at a European public, so he paid to have it translated, chapter by chapter, as he was writing it, into English, French, German, and Latin. The job proved too immense; he had to scale down his ambitions, in the end going for a collection of essays about Mohammed. He ran out of money before he could finish even that, and seventeen months after leaving India he dragged himself home again, penniless and exhausted.

England had impressed him deeply, however—too deeply, said his critics. In comparison to England, he found his homeland painfully backward. "Without flattering the English," he wrote, "I can truly say that the natives of India, high and low, merchants and petty shopkeepers, educated and illiterate, when contrasted with the English in education, manners, and uprightness, are like a dirty animal is to an able and handsome man."

But what made his fellow Muslims so backward? What could he do to elevate his community? Sayyid Ahmad decided that the problem lay partly in the way Muslims were interpreting Islam. They were mired in magical thinking, they were clinging to superstition and calling it Islam. Sir Sayyid Ahmed Khan began elaborating a doctrine that offended his contemporaries among the Indian ulama. Religion, he suggested, was a natural field of human inquiry and achievement. It was integral to human life. It evolved with the human community in the natural course of things—just like art, agriculture, and technology—growing ever more sophisticated as man grew more civilized.

Early humans had a limited capacity to explore moral and ethical issues intellectually, Sayyid Ahmad speculated. They needed revealed religion to help them overcome their passions and guide them to moral judgments and conduct: rulings from a higher power, delivered by prophets with the charismatic authority to persuade without explanation. But the moral and ethical injunctions of all great, true religions are not fundamentally irrational. They are reasonable, and reason can discover them, once people have developed the intellectual capacity to do so.

That's why Mohammed announced that he was the last of the prophets—he didn't mean that his rulings about issues in the Mecca and Medina of his day were to be the final word on human conduct throughout the ages. He meant that he had brought the last tools people needed to proceed on the quest for a moral community on their own, without unexplained rulings from God. Islam was the last of the revealed religions because it was the beginning of the age of reason-based religions. Rational people could achieve moral excellence by reasoning correctly from sound fundamental principles. What Islam brought were sound fundamental principles. They were the same as those found in Christianity and all the other great revealed religions with the one caveat that Islam also enjoined rationality. It would have liberated humanity from blind obedience to superstition and dogma had not Muslims misinterpreted the meaning of the Qur'anic revelations and gone off course.

Sayyid Ahmad was suggesting implicitly that Muslims disconnect from obsessing about heaven and hell and miraculous interventions by God in history and rethink their faith as an ethical system. In this approach, good Muslims would not necessarily be those who read the Qur'an in Arabic for many hours every day, or dressed a certain way, or prayed just so. Good Muslims would be defined as those who didn't lie, or cheat, or steal, or kill, those who developed their own best capacities assiduously and behaved fairly toward others, those who sought justice in society, behaved responsibly in their communities, and exercised mercy, compassion, and charity as best they could.

Before he went to England, Sayyid Ahmad had founded an organization called the Scientific Society, in the northern Indian town of Aligarh. This organization produced lectures and made advanced European learning accessible to Indian Muslims by translating and publishing the important books of Western cultures into Urdu and Persian. After his return from England, Sir Sayyid Ahmad developed the Scientific Society into a university, which he hoped to make into the "Cambridge of the Muslim World." In addition to the "religious sciences" and other traditional subjects of Islamic learning, the curriculum at Aligarh University offered courses in physics, chemistry, biology, and other "modern" subjects.

Even though many of the Indian ulama attacked Sayyid Ahmad's views, the university prospered and attracted students. Aligarh University students and faculty formed the seeds of a secular movement which, in the twentieth century, lobbied for Muslims to separate from India and build a nation-state of their own, a movement that finally resulted in the birth of Pakistan.

Sayyid Ahmad's specific ideas failed to create any widespread movement associated with his name, but modernist intellectuals in other Muslim lands were exploring similar ideas and coming up with similar conclusions. In Iran, a prime minister working for the Qajar Shahs established a school called Dar al-Funun, which offered instruction in all the sciences and in the arts, literature, and philosophies of the West. Graduates of that school began to seed Iranian society with modernists who sought to reshape their society along European lines.

Similar modernists were active at the heart of the Ottoman Empire. In the later nineteenth century, the modernist faction in the Ottoman government promoted policies called Tanzimat, or "reforms," which included setting up European-style schools, adopting European techniques of administration in the government bureaucracies, reorganizing the army along European lines, dressing the soldiers in European style uniforms, encouraging European-style clothes for government officials, and so on.

ISLAMIST MODERNISM

We come now to the dominant Muslim reformer of the nineteenth century, a volcanic force named Sayyid Jamaluddin-i-Afghan. Afghans believe he was born in Afghanistan, in 1836, about fifty miles east of Kabul, in a town called Asadabad, the capital of Kunar province. His family was connected to Afghanistan's ruling clan through marriage but did something to offend the royal and had to move to Iran in a hurry when Jamaluddin was a little boy.

Confusingly enough, they settled close to an Iranian town also called Asadabad, which has given rise to a long-standing dispute about where Jamaluddin-i-Afghan was actually born and which country, Afghanistan or Iran, can claim him as its native son. Afghans point out that he always called himself Jamaluddin-i-*Afghan*—"Jamaluddin the Afghan"—and on this basis consider the matter closed. Iranian historians say he only called himself "the Afghan" to hide the fact that he was Iranian and allude to documentary evidence that they say settles the question quite definitively. On the other hand, when I was growing up in Afghanistan, lots of people in Kabul seemed to know his family and relatives, who still had land in Kunar at that time. To me, *that* seems to settle the matter, but maybe that's just because I'm Afghan.

One thing is certain. Today, many Muslim governments see Sayyid Jamaluddin as a prize to claim. In his day, however, every Muslim government eventually came to see this fellow as a troublemaking pest and threw him out. Let me present a brief outline of his amazing, peripatetic career.

Wherever he may have grown up, no one disputes that he went to India when he was about eighteen years old. Anti-British sentiment was rising to a fever pitch in India just then, and Jamaluddin may have met some Muslims who were cooking up anti-British plots. He happened to be in Mecca on pilgrimage when the Great Indian Mutiny broke out, but he was back in time to witness the British reprisals that shocked the Muslim east so deeply. It was during that first journey to India that Jamaluddin probably developed a lifelong hatred of the British and a lasting antipathy to European colonialism in general. In any case, from India, he went to . . .

- **Afghanistan**. There he gained the confidence of the king whom the British had tried unsuccessfully to unseat. The king hired Jamaluddin to tutor his eldest son, Azam. Jamaluddin was already formulating ideas about the need to reform and modernize Islam as a way of restoring Muslim power and pride, and he saw the job of tutoring the country's heir apparent as an opportunity to shape a ruler who would implement his vision. He steeped Prince Azam Khan in his reformist ideas and trained him to lead Afghanistan into the modern age. Unfortunately, Azam succeeded his father only briefly. One of his cousins quickly overthrew him, with British backing. The British probably moved to unseat Azam in part because they didn't want any protégé of Jamaluddin's on the Afghan throne. They sensed what he was up to. In any case, Azam moved to Iran, where he died in exile. Jamaluddin was forced to flee as well, so he made his way to . . .
- **Asia Minor**. There he began to deliver speeches at Constantinople University. He declared that Muslims needed to learn all about modern science but at the same time ground their children more firmly in Islamic values, tradition, and history. Modernization, he said, didn't have to mean Westernization: Muslims could perfectly well seek the ingredients of a distinctively Islamic modernization in Islam itself. This message proved popular with both the masses and the upper classes. Sayyid Jamaluddin was well situated now to claim a high position in Ottoman Turkey and live his life out as an honored and richly compensated spokesperson for Islam. Instead, he began to teach that people should have the freedom to interpret the Qur'an for themselves, without oppressive "guidance" from the ulama, whom he blamed for the retardation of scientific learning in Islamic civilization. Naturally, this turned the powerful clerical establishment against him and they had the man expelled, so in 1871 he moved to . . .
- **Egypt**, where he started teaching classes and delivering lectures at the famous Al Azhar University. He continued to expound his vision of modernization on Islamic terms. (In this period, he also wrote a history of Afghanistan, perhaps just another sly ploy to make people think he was from Afghanistan and not Iran.) In Egypt, however, where the dynasty founded by Mehmet Ali had rotted into a despotic ruling class in bed with British and French interests, he began to criticize the corruption of the rich and powerful. He said the country's rulers ought to adopt modest lifestyles and live among the people, just as leaders of the early Muslim community had done. He also started calling for parliamentary democracy. Again, however, he insisted that democratization didn't have to mean Westernization. He found a basis for an Islamic style of democracy in two Islamic concepts: *shura* and *ijma*.

Shura means something like "advisory council." It was the mechanism through which early Muslim leaders sought the advice and consent of the community. The first shura was that small group Khalifa Omar appointed to pick his successor. That shura had to present its nominee to the Muslims of Medina and get their approval. Of course that community numbered in the low thousands and its leading members could all fit in the main mosque and its surrounding courtyard, so shura democracy was the direct democracy of the town hall meeting. How that model could be applied to a whole huge country such as Egypt was another question.

Ijma means "consensus." This concept originated in a saying attributed to the Prophet: "My community will never agree on an error." The ulama used the saying as a justification for asserting that when *they* all agreed on a doctrinal point, the point lay beyond further questioning or dispute. In short, they co-opted ijma to mean consensus among themselves. Jamaluddin, however, reinterpreted the two concepts and expanded their application. From shura and ijma, he argued that in Islam, rulers had no legitimacy without the support of their people.

His ideas about democracy made the king of Egypt nervous, and his harangues about the decadence of the upper classes offended everyone above a certain income level. In 1879, Jamaluddin was evicted from Egypt, at which point he backtracked to . . .

- **India**. There, the "liberal" Aligarh movement, founded and led by Sir Sayyid Ahmad, had evolved into a force to be reckoned with. But Jamaluddin saw Sir Sayyid Ahmad as a fawning British lapdog, and said so in his only full-scale book, *Refutation of the Materialists*. The British, however, liked Sayyid Ahmad's ideas. When a rebellion broke out in Egypt, British authorities claimed that Jamaluddin had incited the eruption through his followers and they put him in prison for a few months. When the rebellion died down, they released him but expelled him from India, and so, in 1882 he went to . . .
- **Paris**, where he wrote articles for various publications in English, Persian, Arabic, Urdu, and French (in all of which languages he was not merely fluent but articulate and even capable of eloquence). In his articles he developed the idea that Islam was at core a rational religion and that Islam had pioneered the scientific revolution. He went on insisting that Muslim ulama and despots had retarded scientific progress in the Muslim world but said clerics and despots had done the same in other religions too, including Christianity. In France, at this time, a philosopher named Ernest Renan was writing that Muslims were inherently incapable of scientific thinking (Renan also said that the Chinese were a "race with wonderful manual dexterity but no sense of honor," that Jews were "incomplete," that "Negroes" were happiest tilling soil, that Europeans were natural masters and soldiers, and that if everyone would just do what they were "made for" all would be well with the world.[1]) Jamaluddin engaged Renan in a famous debate at the Sorbonne (famous among Muslims, at least) in which he argued that Islam only seemed less "scientific" than Christianity because it was founded later and was therefore in a somewhat earlier stage of its development.

  Here in Paris, Jamaluddin and one of his Egyptian protégés, Mohammed Abduh, started a seminal journal called *The Firmest Bond*. They published only eighteen issues before they ran out of money and into other difficulties and had to shut the journal down, but in those eighteen issues, Jamaluddin established the core of the credo now called pan-Islamism. He declared that all the apparently local struggles between diverse Muslim and European powers over various specific issues—between the Iranians and Russia over Azerbaijan, between the Ottomans and Russia over Crimea, between the British and Egyptians over bank loans, between the French and Algerians over grain sales, between the British and the people of India and Afghanistan over borders etc., etc. were not actually many different struggles over many different issues but one great struggle over one great issue between just two global entities: Islam and the West. He was the first to use these two words as coterminous and of course historically conflicting categories. Sometime during this period Jamaluddin also, it would seem, visited . . .

- **the United States**, but little is known about his activities there, and he certainly dipped in and out of . . .
- **London** a few times, where he argued with Randolph Churchill, the father of Winston Churchill, and with other British leaders about British policies in Egypt. He also traveled in Germany, as well as spending some time in Saint Petersburg, the capital of

Russia. Once his journal folded, he had nothing to keep him in Europe anymore, so he moved to . . .

- **Uzbekistan**. There, he talked czarist authorities into letting him publish and disseminate the Qur'an to Muslims under czarist rule, and to translate, publish, and disseminate other Islamic literature, which had been unavailable in Central Asia for decades. His efforts led to a revival of Islam throughout the region. Here, Jamaluddin also fleshed out an idea he had long been pushing, that Muslim countries needed to use the rivalry among European powers to carve out a zone of independence for themselves, by aligning with Russia against British power, with Germany against Russian power, with Britain and France against Russian power, and so on. These ideas would emerge as core strategies of the global "non-aligned movement" of the twentieth century. In 1884 he moved to . . .
- **Iran** where he worked to reform the judiciary. This brought him head to head with the local ulama. Things got hot and he had to return to Central Asia in a hurry. In 1888, however, Iran's King Nasiruddin invited him back to the country as its prime minister. Nasiruddin was locked in a power struggle with his country's ulama, and he thought Jamaluddin's "modernism" would help his cause. Jamaluddin did move to Iran, not as its prime minister but as a special adviser to the king. This time, however, instead of attacking the ulama, he attacked the king and his practice of selling economic "concessions" to colonialist powers. The most striking example of this during Jamaluddin's stay in Iran was the no-bid tobacco concession awarded to British companies, which gave British interests control over every aspect of tobacco production and sale in Iran.[2] Jamaluddin called for a tobacco boycott, a strategy later taken up in many lands by many other political activists, including the Indian anticolonialist leader Mahatma Gandhi (who famously called on Indians to boycott English cotton and instead spin their own). Jamaluddin's oratory filled the streets of Iran with demonstrators protesting against the Shah, who was probably sorry he had ever set eyes on the Afghan (Iranian?) reformer. Jamaluddin even talked one of the grand ayatollahs into declaring the tobacco concession un-Islamic. Well, that finally snapped the shah's patience. He sent troops to roust Jamaluddin out of his house and escort him to the border. Thus, in 1891, Jamaluddin the Afghan returned to . . .

- **Istanbul**, where the Ottoman emperor Sultan Hamid gave him a house and a stipend. The Sultan thought Jamaluddin's pan-Islamist ideas would somehow pay political dividends to him. Jamaluddin went on teaching, writing, and giving speeches. Intellectuals and activists came to visit him from every corner of the Muslim world. The great reformer told them that *ijtihad*, "free thinking," was a primary principle of Islam: but freethinking, he said, had to proceed from first principles rooted in Qur'an and hadith. Every Muslim had the right to his or her own interpretation of the scriptures and revelations, but Muslims as a community had to school themselves in those first principles embedded in the revelations. The great error of Muslims, the reason for their weakness, said Jamaluddin, was that they had turned their backs on Western science while embracing Western education and social mores. They should have done exactly the opposite: they should have embraced western science but closed their gates to Western social mores and educational systems.

In 1895, unfortunately, an Iranian student assassinated King Nasiruddin. The Iranian government immediately blamed Jamaluddin for it and demanded that he be extradited to Iran for punishment. Sultan Hamid refused the demand but he put the great reformer under house arrest. Later that year, Jamaluddin contracted cancer of the mouth and requested that he be allowed to travel to Vienna for medical treatment but the sultan turned him down. Instead, he sent his personal physician over to treat him. The court physician treated Jamaluddin's cancer by removing his lower jaw. Jamaluddin-i-Afghan died that year and was buried in Asia Minor. Later his body was transported to Afghanistan for reburial. Wherever he had started out, he certainly ended up in Afghanistan: his grave is situated at the heart of the campus of Kabul University.

It's interesting to remember that Sayyid Jamaluddin Afghan had no official leadership title or position. He didn't run a country. He didn't have an army. He had no official position in any government. He never founded a political party or headed up a movement. He had no employees, no subordinates, no one to whom he gave orders. What's more he didn't leave behind some body of books or even one book encapsulating a coherent political philosophy, no Islamist *Das Capital.* This man was purely a gadfly, rabble-rouser, and rebel—that's what he was.

Yet he had a tremendous impact on the Muslim world. How? Through his "disciples." Sayyid Jamaluddin-i-Afghan operated like a prophet, in a way. His charismatic intensity lit sparks everywhere he went. His protégé Mohammed Abduh became the head of Al Azhar University and the top religious scholar in Egypt. He did write books elaborating on and systematizing Jamaluddin's modernist ideas.

Another of Jamaluddin's disciples, Zaghlul, did found a political party, the Wafd, which evolved into the nationalist movement for Egyptian independence. Yet another of his disciples was the religious leader in the Sudan who erupted against the British as "the Mahdi." In Iran, the Tobacco Boycott that he inspired spawned the generation of activists who forged the constitutionalist movement in the twentieth century.

Jamaluddin inspired an Afghan intellectual named Tarzi living in Turkey who returned to Afghanistan and, following in Jamaluddin's footsteps, tutored Prince Amanullah, Afghanistan's heir apparent. Tarzi shaped the prince into a modernist king who won full Afghan independence from the British and declared Afghanistan a sovereign nation just twenty-two years after the death of Jamaluddin.

And his students had students. The credo and the message changed as it was handed down. Some strands of it grew more radically political, some grew more nationalist, some more developmentalist—that is, obsessed with developing industry and technology in Muslim countries by whatever means. Mohammed Abduh's student, the Syrian theologian Rashid Rida, elaborated ways for Islam to serve as the basis for a state. Another of Jamaluddin's intellectual descendants was Hassan al-Banna, who founded the Muslim Brotherhood; more about him later. In short, the influence of this intense, mercurial figure echoes in every corner of the Muslim world he roamed so restlessly.

14

Industry, Constitutions, and Nationalism

1163–1336 AH
1750–1918 CE

ABDUL WAHHAB, Sayyid Jamaluddin-i-Afghan, and Sayyid Ahmed of Aligarh—each of these men typified a different idea of what went wrong with the Islamic world and how to fix it. Throughout the nineteenth century, numerous permutations of these three currents evolved and spread. Of them all, it was secular modernism, the direction championed by Sayyid Ahmad of Aligarh, that acquired political power most overtly. This is not to say that Sayyid Ahmad fathered some mighty movement himself. He was just one of many secular reformists across the Islamic world who came up with roughly similar ideas. What made these ideas so persuasive was a trio of phenomena spilling into the Islamic heartland just then, from Europe: industrialization, constitutionalism, and nationalism.

The most consequential of the three was probably industrialization, the seductions of which affected every part of the world. In Europe, the Industrial Revolution came out of a great flurry of inventions straddling the year 1800 CE, beginning with the steam engine. Often, we speak of great inventions as if they make their own case merely by existing, but in fact, people don't start building and using a device simply because it's clever. The technological breakthrough represented by an invention is only one ingredient in its success. The social context is what really determines whether it will "take."

The steam engine provides a case in point. What could be more useful? What could be more obviously world-changing? Yet the steam engine was invented in the Muslim world over three centuries before it popped up in the West, and in the Muslim world it didn't change much of anything. The steam engine invented there was used to power a spit so that a whole sheep might be roasted efficiently at a rich man's banquet. (A description of this device appears in a 1551 book by the Turkish engineer Taqi al-Din.) After the spit, however, no other application for the device occurred to anyone, so it was forgotten.

Another case in point: the ancient Chinese had all the technology they needed by the tenth century to mechanize production and mass produce goods, but they didn't use it that way. They used geared machinery to make toys. They used a water-driven turbine to power a big clock. If they had used these technologies to build labor-saving machinery of the type that spawned factories in nineteenth-century Europe, the Industrial Revolution would almost certainly have started in China.

So why didn't it? Why did these inventions fail to "take" until they were invented in the West? The answer has less to do with the inventions themselves than it does with the social context into which the inventions were born.

When the Chinese invented geared machinery, theirs was an efficient, highly centralized state in which an imperial bureaucracy managed the entire society. The main function of this bureaucracy aside from record-keeping and defense was to organize public works. The genius of Chinese political culture was its ability to soak up surplus labor with massive construction projects useful to the public good. The first emperor, for example, put about a million people to work building the Great Wall. A later emperor employed even more workers to dig the Grand Canal, which connected the country's two major river systems. Yes, China had the technology to build labor-saving machinery, but who was going to build it? Only

the imperial bureacracy had the capacity, and why would it bother to save something it already had too much of? China was overpopulated and labor was cheap. If a lot of laborers were left at loose ends, whose job would it be to deal with the resulting social disruptions? The bureacracy. The one institution capable of industrializing China had no motive to undertake it.

Likewise, Muslim inventors didn't think of using steam power to make devices that would mass-produce consumer goods, because they lived in a society already overflowing with an abundance of consumer goods, handcrafted by millions of artisans and distributed by efficient trade networks. Besides, the inventors worked for an idle class of elite folks who had all the goods they could consume and whose lot in life did not call upon them to produce—much less mass-produce—anything.

It wasn't some dysfunction in these societies that generated their indifference to potentially world-changing technologies, quite the opposite. It was something working too well that led them into "a high-level equilibrium trap" (to borrow a phrase from historian Mark Elvin.[1]) Necessity, it turns out, isn't really the mother of invention; it's the mother of the process that turns an invention into a product, and in late-eighteenth-century Europe, that mother was ready.

Steam engines evolved out of steam-powered pumps used by private mine owners to keep their mine shafts free of water. These same mine owners had another business problem they urgently desired to solve: getting their ore as quickly as possible from the mine to a river or seaport, so they could beat their competitors to market. Traditionally, they hauled the ore in horse-drawn carts that rolled along on parallel wooden tracks called tramways. One day, George Stephenson, an illiterate English mining manager, figured out that a steam pump could be bolted to a cart and made to turn the wheels, with appropriate gearing. The locomotive was born.

England at this point brimmed with private business owners competing to move products and materials to markets ahead of one another. Anyone with access to a railroad could get an edge on all the others, unless they too shipped by train; so everyone started using railroads, whereupon everyone who had the means to build a railroad, did so.

Likewise, after James Watt perfected the steam engine in the late eighteenth century, clever European inventors figured out how to mechanize textile looms. Anyone who possessed a power loom could now outproduce rival cloth makers and drive them out of business—unless the rivals acquired power looms too; so they all did.

But anyone who had the capital to acquire *two* power looms, ten looms, a hundred, could drive out many many many many competitors and grow rich, rich, rich! All the money to be made got clever tinkerers wondering what else could be manufactured by fuel-driven geared machinery. Shoes? Yes. Furniture? Yes. Spoons? Absolutely. In fact, once people got started, they came to find that almost every item in common use could be made by some fuel-driven machine faster, cheaper, and in much greater quantities than by hand. And who wouldn't want to be a shoe tycoon? Or a spoon tycoon or any kind of tycoon?

Of course, this process left countless artisans and craftspeople out of work, but this is where nineteenth-century Europe differed from tenth-century China. In Europe, those who had the means to install industrial machinery had no particular responsibility for those whose livelihood would be destroyed by a sudden abundance of cheap, machine-made goods. Nor were the folks they affected downstream their kinfolk or fellow tribesmen, just strangers whom they had never met and would never know by name. What's more, it was somebody else's job to deal with the social disruptions caused by widespread unemployment, not theirs. Going ahead with industrialization didn't signify some moral flaw in them; it merely reflected the way this particular society was compartmentalized.

The Industrial Revolution could take place only where certain social preconditions existed, and in Europe at that time they happened to exist. The Industrial Revolution also had inevitable social consequences and in Europe, at that point, turning production over to machinery did change societies, daily life, and Europeans themselves. Let us count (some of) the ways:

- Rural areas emptied into exploding new cities.
- Animals vanished from daily life for most people.
- Clock and calendar time became more important than natural time markers such as the sun and the moon.
- Large family networks dissolved, and the nuclear family—one man, one woman, and their children—became the universally accepted default unit of the industrial age.

- The connection between people and place weakened as new economic realities demanded mobility: people had to go where the work was, and suddenly the work could be anywhere.
- The connection between generations weakened, as most individuals no longer had any useful work skills to learn from their parents and little of value to pass on to their kids. The best parents could do for their children was to make sure they had the basic skills needed to flex, learn, and adapt. Thus, more broadly than ever before, reading, writing, and arithmetic became the indispensable skills of functional individuals.
- And finally, psychological adaptability—an ability to constantly relinquish old values and ideas and embrace new ones—became a competitive asset.

All these changes generated anxiety, but it was not catastrophic anxiety, because Europeans (and Americans even more) had already evolved a complex of attitudes enabling them to cope, and the core of this complex was individualism, an orientation that had taken centuries to develop in the West.

When Europeans came to the Islamic world, they brought along goods that were the end products of the Industrial Revolution, but not the evolutionary processes that made those goods possible. Muslims wanted the products, of course, as who wouldn't: the cheap cloth, the machine-made shoes, the packaged dried goods and whatnot, and saw no reason why they should not have them. They could buy and operate any machine the West could make. They could take the machines apart, study how they were built, and make similar machines themselves. Nothing in the manufacturing process lay beyond their comprehension.

But the social underpinnings were a different matter. The preconditions of industrialization could not be instantly imported. The social consequences could not be so easily absorbed in societies structured so differently from those of western Europe.

In the Ottoman world, for example, manufacturing had long been in the hands of guilds, which were interwoven with Sufi orders, which were interwoven with the machinery of the Ottoman state and society, which was interlinked with the fact that every person had numerous tribal affiliations, which was interwoven with a universal assumption that the public realm belonged exclusively to men and that women were properly kept sequestered in a private world, cut off from politics and production.

And yet, all across the world, in Europe as much as in the Islamic world, before industrialization, a great deal of manufacturing was actually in the hands of women, since almost everything of value was produced in or near the home. Women wove the cloth and made the garments. Women had a big role in animal husbandry. Women transformed the raw products of flocks and fields into useful products, and they practiced many other handicrafts as well. When these processes were mechanized, "cottage industries" went under and left countless women out of work.

In Europe, large numbers of these women then went to work in factories, shops, and eventually offices. Given the European social structure, they could do so: it caused some social and psychological disruption, to be sure, but women had already won access to the public realm, and so they could go to work outside the home, and they did, and out of this great movement, which was going to happen anyway, came the philosophical musings, political theorizing, and social activism known today as feminism, a movement premised on the existence and sanctity of individual rights. (Only after a concept of "the individual" exists can one say, "Every individual has rights" and once that assertion is accepted, one can entertain the notion that women might have the same rights as men, since both are individuals.)

In the Islamic world, the pervasively embedded division of the world into a masculine public realm and a feminine private one made the move from cottage industries to industrial production much more problematic and produced social dislocations that were much more wrenching. It required, first of all, overturning that whole divided social system, which struck at the core of family life for every family and left unsettled questions of identity for both men and women at the deepest level of conscious and even subconscious life, as became most evident by the late twentieth century.

But also, replacing guilds with factories meant severing the connection between manufacturing and Sufi orders, which at some level implied severing the connection between spirituality and work. What's more, moving production into factories required that people start living a life regulated

by clocks; yet the fundamental core of Muslim life, the prayer ritual that must be performed five times daily, is situated in a framework of natural time markers: the position of the sun was what determined the times of prayer. Here, then, was another way in which industrialization pitted production against spiritual practice. (Europe would have faced the same contradiction had industrialization emerged in feudal times when events such as matins and vespers framed people's schedules.)

Besides all this, industrialization required that a society organized universally as large networks of interconnected clans with tribal loyalties superseding most other affiliations rethink itself overnight as a universe of atomized individuals, each one making independent economic decisions based on rational self-interest and responsible only to a nuclear family. It wasn't going to happen; not easily. And it couldn't happen suddenly. It asserted a crosscurrent against the whole river of Islamic civilization since the 700s. Muslim societies needed time to let the social preconditions of industrialization evolve in their world. But that wasn't going to happen either; even less so. For one thing, no one thought in terms of developing "social preconditions." They thought in terms of acquiring products, technologies and their underlying scientific principles.

That is, no one looking at machine-made consumer goods said, "Gee, we, too, should have a Reformation and develop a cult of individualism and then undergo a long period of letting reason erode the authority of faith while developing political insitutions that encourage free inquiry so that we can happen onto the ideas of modern science while at the same time evolving an economic system built on competition among private businesses so that when our science spawns new technologies we can jump on them and thus, in a few hundred years, quite independently of Europe, make these same sorts of goods ourselves." No, people said, "Nice goods, where can we get some?" Because it's pointless to reinvent the wheel when the wheel is already sitting on the shelf, priced to move.

Marx and Engels, among others, documented that industrialization had some undesirable side effects in the West, but it caused even greater social and psychological disruption in the Islamic world. Yet the mere existence of industrially produced consumer goods made an argument that no pamphlet could refute and no religious harangue undercut. "We're nice stuff; you should get some," they whispered, triggering a widespread sense that something had to change, that people living in Iran or Afghanistan or Asia Minor or Egypt or Morocco had to become in some way . . . more Western. Thus, as awareness of the Industrial Revolution seeped through the Muslim world, secular reform ideas gained ground in Islamic countries.

In Iran, after the 1840s, an extremely energetic prime minister named Mirza Taqi, also called Amir Kabir, "the Great Leader," launched a crash program to "modernize" the country. By "modernize," he meant "industrialize," but he understood this to be a complicated process. He knew Iran couldn't just acquire industrial goods. To really match up to the Western powers devouring their country, Iranians had to acquire some aspects of Western culture. But what aspects? The key, Amir Kabir decided, was education.

He built a network of secular public schools across the country. Just outside Tehran, he established the university mentioned earlier, Dar al-Funun or "house of wisdom," where students could study foreign languages, science, technical subjects, and the history of Western cultures. Iran started sending students abroad, as well, to countries such as Germany and France. Not surprisingly, these students hailed largely from privileged urban families assocated with the court and government bureacracy—not from rural peasant stock, merchant families, or high-status religious families. And so, the new educational program expanded social divisions that already existed in this society.

Graduates pouring out of the secular education system were tapped to staff a "modernized" government bureacracy and army. (*Modern* in this context meant "more like you would see in Europe.") Thus, the Iranian response to industrialism generated a new social class in Iran consisting of educated civil servants, army officers, university students, teachers, technicians, professionals, anyone who had graduated from Dar al-Funun, anyone who had studied in Europe. . . . This burgeoning class developed an ever more secular outlook and grew ever more receptive to thinking of Islam as a system of rational, ethical values rather than a revelation-based manual for getting into heaven.

Constitutionalism, a second phenomenon born in Europe, now began to have an impact in Iran, largely because this new class was open to it. Constitutionalism is not quite the same as democratic idealism, since even totalitarian dictatorships can have constitutions, but a constitution is

certainly a necessary precondition to democracy. It asserts that a society operates within a stable framework of stated laws binding ruler as well as ruled. Absolute monarchies, the system long in place throughout the Muslim world, gave rulers de facto power to decide the rules as they pleased at any given moment. It's important to realize that in absolute monarchies this pattern doesn't apply just to the top ruler; it is reified throughout society, each man having arbitary power over those below him and subject to the arbitrary whims of those above. (Similarly, democracy doesn't just mean top leaders gaining office through election; it means that some sort of interactive participatory process goes on at every level: elections are not equivalent to democracy; they are only a sign that democracy exists.)

Constitutionalism made headway in Iran in part because, out of the rising class of educated secular modernists, a new intelligentsia emerged. They announced their modernity not just in their ideas but in the very language they used to express their ideas. New writers began to eschew the diction of classical Persian literature, which was so full of ornate rhetorical flourishes and devices, and developed instead a simple, muscular prose, which they used to write, not epic poems and mystical lyrics, but satirical novels, political plays, and the like.

Literary scholar Hamid Dabashi notes the curious case of the English language novel *The Adventures of Hajji Baba of Ispahan,* written by a traveler named James Morier, who pretended he had merely translated a Persian original. Morier used a ridiculous diction in his novel to lampoon Persian speech and depicted Iranians as dishonest scoundrels and buffoons.

Then, in the 1880s, an astounding thing happened. Iranian grammarian Mirza Habib translated *Hajji Baba* into Persian. Remarkably, what in English was offensive racist trash became, in translation, a literary masterpiece that laid the groundwork for a modernist Persian literary voice and "a seminal text in the course of the constitutional movement." The ridicule that Morier directed against Iranians in an Orientalist manner, the translator redirected against clerical and courtly corruption in Iranian society, thereby transforming *Hajji Baba* into an incendiary political critique.[2]

With the emergence of a secular modernist intelligentsia, the classics of Persian literature, poetry by the likes of Rumi and Sa'di and Hafez, began to gather dust while readers instead devoured, not just the new Iranian writing, but also books by European thinkers such as Charles Montesquieu and Auguste Comte, philosophers who theorized that societies evolved through successively higher stages. Montesquieu categorized and ranked political systems, declaring that republics were the next higher stage after monarchies and despotisms. Comte said that as people grew more civilized they evolved from religious to metaphysical to scientific consciousness.[3]

Iranian modernist intellectuals decided their country needed to evolve. Their discontent focused on the Qajar monarchs, now into their second century of rule. These kings had pretty much been treating the country like a private possession. One Qajar after another had been selling off the national economy bit by bit to foreigners, to fund their own luxuries and amusements, including expensive excursions to Europe.

Resentment among secular modernists came to a head with the Tobacco Boycott, the movement so passionately promoted by Jamaluddin-i-Afghan. As it happens, Jamaluddin also drew the Shi'i clerical establishment into the Tobacco Boycott, and it was this alliance that forced the shah to back down. But once the shah nullified the British monopoly on tobacco sales in Iran, the clerics felt they had won and retired from the field.

The remaining activists held together, however, and crafted new demands. They called for a constitution that would limit the powers of the king and give the people a voice in running the country. Cheered on from afar by Jamaluddin (deported to Asia Minor by this time), these secular modernists began to discuss building a parliamentary democracy. The clerics totally opposed them. A constitution would be un-Islamic, they said, because Iran already had a constitution: it was called the Shari'a. They derided the idea of democracy, too: only dynastic rule was permitted by Islam, they declared. By the early years of the twentieth century, the long struggle in Iran between clerics and crown had turned into a complicated three-way struggle among clerics, crown, and secular modernist intelligentsia, a struggle in which any two factions might pair up against the third. In the matter of the constitution, clerics and crown stood united against the modernists.

But the modernist tide was running high. In 1906, Qajar king Muzaffar al-din yielded, finally. He accepted a consitution that limited his powers severely and allowed a parliament to be formed, the Majlis, as it was called. The king died a week after the Majlis first convened, and his son Mohammad Ali Shah took over. It wasn't clear what powers the parliament really had—it didn't have an army and didn't command a police force—yet within two years the Majlis had passed a host of laws that laid the basis for free speech, a free press, and a full range of civil liberties in Iran.

Before the third year was up, however, the king pointed cannons at the parliament building and blew it down, his way of saying: "Let's give the old ways another chance." The ulama and all the other traditional groups cheered him on; and this is where matters stood in Iran as World War I approached.

Meanwhile, a third European phenomenon was seducing minds and hearts across the Islamic world: nationalism. Iran provided the least fertile soil for this ideology, perhaps because it was already pretty much a nation-state, or at least closer to one than any other part of the Islamic heartland. In India, nationalism began transforming Aligarh modernism into a movement that would finally give birth to Pakistan. But it was in the Ottoman Empire and in territories that had once been part of this empire that nationalism really caught on.

When I say nationalism, I don't mean the nation-state per se. A nation-state is a concrete geographical fact: a territory with definite borders, a single central government, a single set of laws enforced by that single government, a single currency, an army, a police force, and so on. Nation-states such as France and England developed spontaneously out of historical circumstances and not because nationalists conceived of them and then built them.

The nationalism I'm speaking of was (is) an idea. It didn't develop where nation-states had formed, but where they *hadn't.* It didn't describe what was but what (supposedly) ought to be. The German-speaking people came into the nineteenth century as a multitude of principalities and kingdoms. Italy was similarly divided, and so was the whole of Europe east of Germany. Nationalism sprouted in these areas.

The seeds of the idea go back to the eighteenth-century German philosopher Johann Herder, who criticized "enlightenment" philosophers such as Immanuel Kant. The enlightenment philosophers taught that man is essentially a rational being and that moral values must ultimately be based on reason. Since the rules of reason are the same for everyone, at all times, in all places, civilized people who subdue their passions and let themselves be guided solely by reason must eventually progress toward a single universal set of laws and value judgments.

Herder, however, argued that there was no such thing as universal values, either moral or aesthetic: rather, he said, the world was composed of various cultural entities, which he called *volks*: or "people." Each of these entities had a *volksgeist*, a spiritual essence possessed in common by the given people. Shared language, traditions, customs, history—ties like these bound a group of people together as a volk. Although a true volk was a purely social entity, its "groupness" wasn't just a social contract or some sort of agreement among its members to team up, any more than a multitude of cells agree to come together and be an organism. Nations had a unified singleness that made them as real as butterflies or mountains: that's the sort of thing Herder meant by volk. And when Herder spoke of volksgeist, he meant something like what religious people mean by soul or what psychologists mean when they speak of "the self." Every nation, to Herder, had some such unified spiritual essence.

Herder's argument implied that no moral or aesthetic judgment was universally valid or objectively true. If humanity was not reducible to a capacity for reason, then values were not the same at all times for all people. In aesthetics, for example, an Indian and a German might disagree about what was beautiful, but this didn't mean one side was right and the other wrong. Each judgment reflected a volksgeist and was true only insofar as it truly expressed the volksgeist. A value judgment could rise no higher than the level of the nation.

Herder wasn't saying one nation was better than another, just that they were different, and that one nation couldn't be judged by the values of another. But a slightly younger philosopher, Johann Gottlieb Fichte, took Herder's ideas a step further and shifted their import. Fichte agreed that humanity clumped together as discrete nations, each one bound together by a common spirit; but he suggested that some volks might actually be superior to others. Specifically, he suggested that Germans had a great inherant capacity for liberty, theirs being a vigorous living language as contrasted to the French language, which was dead. (The French no doubt disagreed.)

Fichte died in 1814: his career, therefore, peaked in the period when Napoleon was conquering Europe and dominating the Germans, which is

probably one key to Fichte's influence. Many Germans chafing under French rule felt that, yes, they could tell: French and German really were two different spirits; and they liked hearing that even though the French might be dominant, the Germans might be somehow "higher". . .

Fast-forward five decades from the fall of Napoleon Bonaparte to the year 1870. Prussian Chancellor Otto von Bismarck had just forged a single nation out of the many little German states. France, as it happened, was now ruled by Napoleon's buffoonish great-nephew Napoleon III, who was twice as pompous and half as talented as Napoleon the First. Bismarck goaded this Napoleon into declaring war on him, then overwhelmed France with a lightning strike, conquered Paris within months, and imposed humiliating terms upon the French, as well as wresting two resource-rich border provinces away from France.

German nationalism, born out of defeat and resentment, now had victory to batten on. A triumphalist vision of a German nation with a mythic destiny took wing. Artists sought the sources of the German volksgeist in ancient Teutonic myths. Wagner expressed the German nationalist passion in bombastic operas. Historians began spinning a mythological narrative tracing German origins back to the primal Indo-Europeans, the Aryan tribes of the Caucasus mountains.

German nationalism especially captivated professors at the Gymnasium, which was then Germany's most prestigious institution of higher education. Here, philosophers such as Heinrich von Treitschke began teaching that nations were the most authentic social entities in the world and the highest expression of human life. They rhapsodized about a pan-German nation that would rule all territories in which German speakers lived. They spoke of the heroic destiny that justified "great" nations imposing their will on barbaric lands. (In other words, colonialism was noble.) Their pupils, laden with these passions, moved into society as engineers, bankers, teachers, or whatnot, and infected the German masses with this virus of pan-German nationalism.

In Italy, meanwhile, a revolutionary named Joseph Mazzini was adding further and perhaps the final pieces to nationalism as a political ideology. Mazzini was mainly interested in rescuing Italy from foreign rulers such as the Austrians and saw unificiation as the only means for achieving this goal. His politics led him to propound that individuals could act only as collective units, and should relinquish their individual personalities to their nation. "Say not *I* but *we*," he harangued his fellow revolutionaries in his pamphlet *On the Duties of Man*. "Let each man among you strive to incarnate his country in himself."[4] Mazzini went on to assert a theory of collective rights based on nationalism. Every nation had "a right" to a territory of its own, a "right" to leaders from amongst its own, a "right" to defined borders, a "right" to extend those borders as far as necessary to encompass all the people who comprised the nation, and a "right" to complete sovereignty within those borders. It was only right, natural, and noble, he said, for the people of a nation to live within one geographically continuous state, so that none of them would have to live among strangers.

In the last half of the nineteenth century, movements fueled by nationalism spawned first Germany and then Italy, but the virus spread beyond these countries, into eastern Europe, where a multitude of disparate communities speaking many languages, claiming different ethnic origins, and telling diverse stories about their origins rattled around as indigestible parts of two ramshackle empires, the Ottoman and the Austro-Hungarian. The government of both empires tried to squelch all nationalists within their borders, but succeeded only in driving them underground, where they went on seething in secrecy. European cartoonists imagined these revolutionaries as stout little bearded men carrying bombs shaped like bowling balls under bulky overcoats: an amusing image. The real anarchist and terrorist movements spawned by European nationalism were not so amusing. And it was from here that nationalism rolled east into the Islamic heartlands.

Before leaving Europe, however, let me mention two other nationalist movements of consequence that matured in the West. One had immediate relevance for the Ottoman Empire; the other would signify later. The latter one took shape in North America where a new country formed. Technically, this country was born when thirteen small colonies of British settlers revolted against their home government and launched independent destinies, but in many ways the confederation they put together didn't actually become a nation-state until the Civil War of 1861 to 1865. Before that war, people in the United States spoke of their country as "these united states." After the war, they called it "*the* United States."[5] The issue of slavery triggered the war, but President Lincoln frankly put preserving the union at the center of his arguments for the justice and necessity of the war. In his Gettysburg Address, he said the war was being fought to test whether a nation "conceived in liberty" and a government of, by, and for the people could endure. He and others who forged the United States—politicians, historians, philosophers, writers, thinkers, and citizens in general—asserted a nationalist idea quite distinct from the ideologies spawned in Europe. Instead of seeking nationhood in a common religion, history, traditions, customs, race, or ethnic identity, they proposed that multitudes of individuals could become "a people" by virtue of shared principles and shared allegiance to a process. It was a nationalism based on ideas, a nationalism that anyone could embrace because, in theory, it was a nation any person could become a member of, not just those who worn born into it.

During that same Civil War, the emerging country gave notice of its potential power. The American Civil War was the first in which a single man at one point commanded an army of a million, the first in which nearly a quarter of a million soldiers clashed on a single battlefield, and the first in which industrial technology from railroads to submarines to proto–machine guns, played a decisive role. It's true that in this war the (dis)united states were fighting each other and posed, therefore, no military threat to anyone else, but anyone could imagine what a formidable power would emerge once the two sides melted back into a single state.

The other European nationalist movement of world-historical consequence and immediate relevance for the Muslim world was Zionism. This bundle of passion and ideas was just like all the other nineteenth-century European nationalisms in its arguments and appeals. It agreed with Herder that people who share a language, culture, and history were a nation. It agreed with Mazzini that a nation had a right to its own self-ruling state situated securely in a territory of its own. It agreed with the likes of Treitschke that a nation-state had a right (even a destiny) to include all of its own people within its borders and a right to exclude all others if necessary. If the Germans were a nation and had such rights, said the founders of political Zionism, if the Italians were a nation, if the French were a nation, then by God the Jews were a nation too.

There was, however, one key difference between Zionism and other nineteenth-century European nationalisms. The Italians, Germans, Serbians, and others claimed a nationalist right to the territory they inhabited. The Jewish people had no territory. They had been scattered around the globe for two millenia and were now living as landless minorities in other people's states. Throughout their two thousand years in Diaspora, however, Jews had held together, maintaining a sense of peoplehood built around a Judaism that was as much cultural and historical as it was religious: in nineteenth-century Europe, it was perfectly possible to be Jewish without being a practicing or even a "believing" Jew. Still, a core element of the Jewish religious-historical narrative asserted that God had promised the land of Canaan to the original Hebrews—Abraham and his tribal descendants—in exchange for their worshipping no other and obeying only His commandments. According to this narrative, the Jewish people had kept their side of the bargain and had thus earned the right to reclaim "their" land, the territory called Palestine, which was now inhabited by Arabs and ruled by the Ottoman Turks. Many nineteenth-century European Zionists were secular but this tenet about a Promised Land nonetheless made its way into the argument for a Jewish nation-state along the eastern Mediterannean coast.

In 1897, an Austrian journalist, Theodor Herzl, founded the first official organ of political Zionism, the World Zionist Congress, but Zionism already existed and its ideas went back to the early 1800s. It was amid all the other nationalist murmurings of that era that Jewish intellectuals in Europe began to speak of moving to Palestine. Some German protonationalists agreed with these proto-Zionists, and not in a friendly way. Fichte, for example, held that Jews could never assimilate into German culture, even if they were German-speaking from birth. If they stayed in Germany, they would always be a state within a state, and therefore, he suggested, they should seek their national destiny in Palestine.

Palestine had never been without an indigenous Jewish population, but in 1800 that population formed a miniscule fraction of the total—about 2.5 percent as opposed to the more than 97 percent who were Arabs. By the 1880s, when Jewish immigration from Europe to Palestine began in earnest, the ratio of Jews to Arabs had climbed to roughly 6 percent of the total. About thirty thousand moved to Palestine in the first aliyah, as waves of Jewish immigration to Palestine were called, and the ratio changed again. The first immigrants, however, were idealistic urban intellectuals who pictured themselves as Palestinian farmers, even though they didn't know a shovel from a hoe. Most of them returned to Europe, and the first aliyah petered out. That is where matters stood as World War I approached.

When these three phenomena from Europe—constitutionalism, nationalism, and industrialism—seeped into the Ottoman world they had a particularly corrosive effect, in part because the Ottoman "world" was shrinking throughout the nineteenth century, which was engendering much restless anxiety. Algeria was absorbed into France. Great Britain took over Egypt in all but name. Technically, the Mediterranean coast north of Egypt belonged to the Ottoman empire, as did the whole Arabian peninsula and most of what is now Iraq, but even here the Ottomans gradually found themselves bowing to Europeans. Meanwhile, the Ottoman hold on its European territories kept weakening. The whole of this ancient empire, so recently the world's greatest, was like some colossal creature whose extremities had fallen away and whose body was rotting, but was somehow still breathing, still alive.

It was alive, but Western business forces, backed by the power of their governments, operated freely here. Through the first half of the nineteenth century, their interaction with the Ottomans could be summed up in one word: *capitulations.*

Capitulations: it sounds like another word for "humiliating concessions." That, however, is not what the word meant at first.

The capitulations began when the empire was at its height, and the term simply referred to permissions granted by mighty Ottoman sultans to petty petitioners from Europe pleading to do business in the empire. The capitulations merely listed what these folks were permitted to do in Ottoman territory. Anything not listed was forbidden. Why call them "capitulations"? Because in Latin, the word simply means "categorize by headings." So the capitulations were lists of permitted business activities for Europeans, organized by category.

Since no single great war reversed the balance of power between the Ottomans and the Europeans, there was no single moment when *capitulations* stopped meaning "permissions doled out haughtily by mighty Ottoman lords" and started meaning "humiliating concessions wrung out triumphantly from Ottoman officials (by haughty European bosses)." But that's certainly what they meant by 1838, when the Ottomans signed the Treaty of Balta Liman with a consortium of European powers (to secure their aid against Mohammed Ali), a treaty establishing unequal terms between Ottomans and Europeans on Ottoman soil. The treaty placed low tariffs, for example, on European products coming into the empire but imposed high tariffs on Ottoman products flowing out. It forbade Ottoman subjects to establish monopolies but permitted and eased the way for Europeans to do exactly that. *These* capitulations had but one purpose: to ensure that Ottomans would be unable to compete with European businessmen on their own soil.

In the few decades after the Treaty of Balta Liman, the Ottoman government shook its aging limbs and promulgated a series of new rules to revamp Ottoman society so that it could match up to the Europeans—exactly the sort of thing that was going on in Iran around this same time. In the Ottoman Empire, these modernizing moves were called Tanzimat or "reorganization measures." They began with an 1839 proclamation grandiosely titled "The Noble Edict of the Rose Chamber." In 1856 came another document, "The Imperial Edict." Then in 1860 came a third set of reform measures.

Here are a few things the Tanzimat established:

- a new national government bureaucracy modeled along French lines;
- secular state courts superseding the traditional Shari'a courts;
- a new code of criminal justice based on France's "Napoleonic" code;
- new commercial rules favoring "free trade," which essentially gave Europeans a free hand to set business rules in the Ottoman empire;
- a conscripted army modeled on the Prussian system, to replace the devshirme;
- public schools with a secular curriculum similar to what was taught in British schools, bypassing the traditional school system run by Muslim clerics;
- one single empire-wide state-run tax collection agency (rather like the IRS in today's United States), replacing the traditional Ottoman "tax farmers" (who were, essentially, freelance tax collectors working on commission);

- guarantees that the "honor, life, and property" of all Ottoman subjects were inviolable and would be secured, regardless of race or religion.

On paper these reforms may look good, especially that one about guaranteeing the life and safety of all citizens, regardless of ethnic origin: who could be against ending discrimination? It's practically European.

But put yourself in the shoes of an average Turkish Muslim citizen of the empire in the nineteenth century: the inherent merits of such reforms would be hard to separate from the fact that they were dictated to Ottoman officials by Europeans—literally, according to historian James L. Gelvin: apparently the Imperial Edict was written out verbatim by British ambassador Stratford Canning and handed to Ottoman officials with instructions to translate it and proclaim it publicly.[6] Noble Edict of the Rose Chamber indeed! To many Ottoman Muslims, these smelled less like reforms and more like fresh evidence of alien power over their lives.

Not all Ottoman Muslims felt this way. A growing movement of reformists in Asia Minor, a Turkish version of movements in India, Afghanistan, and Iran, embraced and promoted the *Tanzimat*. They thought the only way to defeat European imperialism was to beat the Europeans at their own game, which would necessitate, first of all, adopting whatever European ideas accounted for European strength.

But the ulama were still around. The Tanzimat worked directly against their interests. Taking education out of clerical hands . . . replacing Shari'ah courts with secular courts . . . substituting French laws for Islamic law—such reforms not only stripped the ulama of power but robbed them of a reason to exist. Of course they were going to resist; and the ulama still had a lot of moral authority among the ordinary people. They still wielded clout at court too.

The sultan and his advisers, therefore, soon found themselves caught between the clamor of secular modernists and the yammer of an Islamic old guard. Tugged and yanked from both sides, the court tilted now this way, now that. As the secular modernists argued ever more stridently for European-style reforms, the traditionalists dug in ever more stubbornly to reactionary dicta. When the modernists called for mechanized state-run factories, the ulama railed against Ottoman officials using typewriters—Prophet Mohammed never used one, they argued.

For a moment, the modernists gained the upper hand. In 1876, they forced the sultan to adopt a constitution, a momentous victory widely celebrated as the "French Revolution of the East." For just a few years there, the crumbling empire was a constitutional monarchy like Great Britain (in form). In that brief period, modernizing activists of every ethnic and religious stripe interacted companionably in a heady atmosphere of progressive enthusiasm: Turkish Muslims, Arab Muslims, Jews, Orthodox Christians, Armenians, all rubbed shoulders as members of a single broad movement to build a new world.

But the old guard retrenched, outmaneuvered the modernists, and rebuilt the sultan's power, until he was strong enough to abolish the constitution and rule as an absolute monarch again. The pendulum swung back, in part, because the reforms were not working. Turkish Muslims of Asia Minor saw their standard of living sinking, their autonomy shrinking. They felt ever more powerless against the enormous forces of Europe pressing from outside.

But they did have what they regarded as one fragment of that outside world within their borders and completely in their power. That fragment was the Armenian community. In reality, of course, the Armenians were no more European than the Turks. They lived right where they had been living since time immemorial. They had their own non-European language, traditions, and history. They didn't come from anywhere else and were, in fact, more indigenous than the Turks.

They were, however, a Christian minority surrounded by a Muslim majority, and what's more, in that period of ever more humiliating capitulations, when business interests from western Europe acquired the power to march into the Ottoman Empire and establish profitable business operations at the expense of the locals, the Armenians found themselves in a paradoxical position. For Ottoman citizens, the only way to prosper at this point was to work for, do business with, or best of all form partnerships with European businesses. But when Europeans sought business partners in the empire, they gravitated quite naturally towards those with whom they felt kinship, and if they had a choice, they chose Armenian Christians over Muslim Turks, so the favorable terms extracted by foreigners seemed

to benefit the Armenian community within the empire, or such at least was the perception among resentful Muslims slipping into poverty.

The Armenians had lived peacefully in the Ottoman world up to this time; as non-Turks, however, they had been shut out of the military-aristocratic ruling caste. They had also been cut off, to some extent, from big-time land ownership and "tax farming." Many therefore, had turned to business and finance to make a living.

Finance—that's what used to be called moneylending. It was frowned upon pretty widely in early times. Charging interest on a loan was explicitly forbidden in the Qur'an, just as it was in Medieval Christian Europe where the term *usury* in canon law didn't mean "charging *exorbitant* interest" but "charging *any* interest." Why did moneylending have this odor? I suppose it's because ordinary folks saw the lending of money in the context of charity, not of business: it was something one did when a neighbor got into trouble and needed help. Seen in that framework, charging interest on a loan smacked of exploiting somebody's misery to get rich. Yet the need to borrow money came up constantly, even in the most primitive feudal economy, often in the wake of crisis: a blacksmith's workshop burned down; a famous cleric died unexpectedly leaving his family to host an expensive funeral; someone wanted to get married without having saved up a dowry; someone fell catastrophically ill. . . . People went to moneylenders at moments when they felt particularly vulnerable and raw, yet they went with a culturally implanted feeling that any decent person would give them a loan for nothing. The desperation that forced them to accept a banker's terms only added a further dollop of resentment. When the borrower and the moneylender belonged to the same community, other sentiments such as kinship or loyalty might temper the resentment, but when people went to moneylenders whom they already saw as the Other, the dynamics of the interaction tended to exacerbate any existing communal hostility. The worst possible case, then, was for moneylending to become the exclusive province of a distinct cultural minority surrounded by a vast majority. In Europe, this dynamic made victims of the Jews. In the Ottoman Empire, it was the Armenians who fell afoul of it.

As tension built up, it was easy to forget that Turks and Armenians had lived together peacefully, not even three generations back; the hostility seemed like an age-old feature of the two communities' relationship. The Ottoman policy of dividing the population into self-governing communities was originally a way of conferring upon each a measure of cultural sovereignty. It reflected tolerance. It functioned as an instrument of harmony. Now, this same policy became a deficiency, a liability, a crucial key to the coming troubles, because it worked to separate, isolate, and spotlight the unfortunate Armenians. In fact, the *millet* system became a mechanism for exacerbating existing fault lines in Ottoman society.

Between 1894 and 1896, in eastern Anatolia, a series of anti-Armenian pogroms broke out. Turkish villagers began to massacre Armenians, much as Jews were being massacred in eastern Europe and Russia, but on an even larger scale. As many as three hundred thousand Armenians died before the madness subsided, and it subsided then only because Europeans put pressure on the Ottoman government to do something. Since the power of Europeans to dictate to Ottoman officials was a factor in the resentment vented upon the Armenians, this authority ending the violence only exacerbated the original psychosocial sources of the violence. It was like parents stepping in to protect a little boy from neighborhood bullies and then going off about their business: once the little boy is alone with the bullies again, he's in worse trouble than before.

Meanwhile, even though the sultan had scuttled the constitution, power remained divided between old guard and new bucks. The political struggle kept raging on and the balance inexorably tipped back to the new guys, for here, as in Iran, the tide was with the modernists. By 1900, a whole new generation of activists were calling for the constitution to be restored. They wanted their parents' French Revolution back.

Politically it was an exhilarating but confusing time. It wasn't like one group of agitators were nationalists, another group secular modernists, some other one liberal constitutionalists. Many ideologies and movements were intertwined and interacting. Any single person might espouse a bit of this and a bit of that. There had not yet been time enough to sort out which ideas went together and which were incompatible. All who set themselves against the old guard thought themselves Ottoman citizens with a common stake in reshaping the empire. All felt like young people in the know aligned against clueless elders, comrades-in-arms merely because they all fiercely favored the "modern," whatever that was.

This new generation of activists called themselves the Young Turks. They used the name in part because they actually *were* young, in their twenties, mostly, but also in part as a way of thumbing their noses at the old guard, for among traditional Muslims, older was always regarded as better—respectful titles such as *shiekh* and *pir* literally meant "old man." What the fuddy-duddies derided as a shortcoming, the Young Turks flaunted with pride: they were *young!*

Although they had many incipient disagreements, the Young Turks held together long enough to overwhelm the last Ottoman sultan, a weak and silly man named Abdul Hamid II. In 1908, they forced him to reinstate the constitution, reducing himself to a figurehead.

No sooner had they wrestled the sultan to the mat, however, then the Young Turks realized they were not one group but several. One faction, for example, favored decentralizing the empire, securing rights for minorities, and giving the people a bigger voice in the government. They were quickly squeezed out of the government altogether. Another faction embraced Turkish nationalism. Founded around 1902 by six medical students, it coalesced into a tightly organized, militaristic party called the Committee for Union and Progress.

The CUP found ever-increasing support for its views. Many anti-imperial Turks, many younger Turks, many educated civil servants, university students, intelligentsia and children of the intelligentsia, many literati who had read the nationalist arguments of the European philosophers and knew all about the successful strivings of German and Italian nationalists, began to see nationalism as their road to salvation from imperialism. Get rid of the cumbersome, old-fashioned, multicultural, Ottoman idea of empire and replace it with a lean, clean, mean, specifically Turkish state machine: this was the idea. The Arab provinces would have to be cut loose, of course, they no longer fit, but these new Turkish nationalists dreamed of linking up Anatolia with those central Asian territories that formed the ancestral homeland of the Turkish people. They dreamed of a Turkish nation-state that would stretch from the Bosporus to places like Kazakhstan.

Turkish nationalist intellectuals began to argue that Christian minorities, especially the Armenians, were a privileged aristocracy in Turkey, inherant internal enemies of the state, in league with the Russians, in league with the western Europeans, in league with the breakaway Slavic territories of Eastern Europe.

This new generation of Turkish nationalists said the nation superseded all smaller identities and suggested that the national "soul" might be vested in some single colossal personality, an idea that came straight from the German nationalist philosophers. The writer Ziya Gökalp declared that except for heroes and geniuses, individuals had no value. He urged his fellow Turks never to speak of "rights." There were no rights, he said, only duties: the duty to hear the voice of the nation and follow its demands.[7]

Trouble for the empire tended to confer glamour upon such militaristic nationalism. And trouble did keep coming. It had been coming for a long, long time. Bulgaria wrenched free. Bosnia and Herzegovina left the Ottoman fold to be annexed by the Habsurgs into their Austro-Hungarian empire. About a million Muslims, forced into exile by these changes, streamed into Anatolia looking for new homes in the dying, dysfunctional, and already-crowded empire. Then the Ottomans lost Crete. Nearly half the population of that island were Muslims, nearly all of whom migrated east. All this social dislocation generated a pervasive atmosphere of free-floating anxiety.

Amid the uproar, nationalism began heating up among other groups. Arab nationalism began to bubble, for one. And after all the horrors they had suffered at the hands of their fellow Turks, Armenian activists too declared a need and right to carve out a sovereign nation-state of Armenia. These were exactly the same nationalist impulses stirring among so many self-identified nationalities in eastern Europe at this time.

In 1912, a war in the Balkans stripped the empire of Albania, of Macedonia, of its last European holdings outside Istanbul, a military defeat that triggered a final spasm of anxiety, resentment, and confusion in Asia Minor. Turmoil like this favors the most tightly organized group, whatever its popular support may be; the Bolsheviks proved as much in Russia five years later. In Istanbul, the most tightly organized group just then was the ultranationalist Committee for Union and Progress. On January 23, 1913, the CUP seized control in a coup d'etat, assassinated the incumbent vizier, deposed the last Ottoman sultan, ousted all other leaders from the government, declared all other parties illegal, and turned Ottoman Turkey into a one-party state. A triumverate of men emerged as spearheads of this single party: Talaat Pasha, Enver Pasha, and Djemal Pasha, and it was these "three Pashas" who happened to be ruling the truncated remains of the Ottoman empire in 1914, when the long-anticipated European civil war broke out.

In Europe, it was called the Great War; to the Middle World, however, it looked like a European civil war at first: Germany and Austria lined up against France, Britain, and Russia, and most other European countries soon jumped in or got dragged in unwillingly.

Muslims had no dog in this fight, but CUP leaders thought that they might reap big benefits by joining the winning side before the fighting ended. Like most people, they assumed the war would last no more than a few months, because the great powers of Europe had been stockpiling "advanced" technological weapons for decades, fearsome firepower against which nobody and nothing could possibly stand for long, so it looked as if the war could only be a sudden bloody shootout from which the first to fire and the last to run out of ammo would emerge as winner.

CUP strategists decided this winner would be Germany. After all, Germany was the continent's mightiest industrial power, it had already squashed the French, and it held central Europe, which meant that it could move troops and war machines through its own territory on its superb rail network to every battlefront. Besides, by siding with Germany, the Turks would be fighting two of its enduring foes, Russia and Great Britain.

Eight months into the war, with Russian troops already threatening the northern border of their empire, CUP leaders ordered the infamous Deportation Act. Officially, this order was supposed to "relocate" the Armenians living near Russia to sites deeper within the empire where they wouldn't be able to make common cause with the Russians. To this day, the Turkish government insists that the Deportation Act was purely a security measure necessitated by war. They admit that, yes, some killing did take place, but a civil war was raging, so what can you expect, and besides the violence went both ways—such is the official position from which no Turkish government has yet budged.

And the fact is, there *was* a war on, the Russian *were* coming, some Armenians *were* collaborating with the Russians, some Armenians *did* kill some Turks, and some of the violence of 1915 early on was, it seems, a continuation of that unstructured hatred that burst out in the 1890s as pogroms and ethnic cleansing. (The United Nations defines "ethnic cleansing" as the attempt to enforce ethnic homogeneity in a given territory by driving out or killing unwanted groups, often by committing atrocities that frighten them in into fleeing.)

Outside of Turkey, however, few scholars doubt that in 1915 something much worse than ethnic cleansing took place, reprehensible as that alone would have been. The Deportation Act was the beginning of an organized attempt by Talaat Pasha, and perhaps Enver Pasha, and possibly other nameless leaders in the anonymous secret core of the CUP, to exterminate the Armenians, as a people—not just from Asia Minor or Turkish-designated areas but from the very Earth. Those who were being "relocated" were actually force-marched and brutalized to death; it was, in short, attempted genocide (defined by the United Nations as any attempt to erase a targeted ethnic group not just from a given area but altogether). The exact toll remains a matter of dispute but it exceeded a million. Talaat Pasha presided over this horror as minister of the Interior and then prime minister of Ottoman Turkey, a post he held until the end of World War I.

Turkish revisionist historian Taner Akçam quotes a doctor affiliated with the CUP at the time of the massacres explaining that, "Your nationality comes before everything else. . . . The Armenians of the East were so excited against us that if they remained in their land, not a single Turk, not a single Muslim could stay alive. . . . Thus, I told myself: oh, Dr. Rechid, there are only two options. Either they will cleanse the Turks or they will be cleansed by the Turks. I could not remain undecided between these two alternatives. My Turkishness overcame my condition as a doctor. I told myself: 'instead of being exterminated by them, we should exterminate them.'"[8]

But the CUP had thoroughly miscalculated. For one thing, the war did not end quickly. Instead of one big blast of offensive destruction, the western-European theater ground down to a bizarre defensive struggle between armies of millions, lined up for hundreds of miles, in trenches separated by desolate killing fields that were littered with explosives and barbed wire. Battles kept breaking out along these lines, and sometimes they killed tens of thousands in the course of a few hours but the territory won or lost in these battles was often measurable in mere inches. This was the European theater.

To break the deadlock, the British decide to attack the Axis powers from behind, by coming at them through Asia Minor. Doing this required first crippling the Ottomans. The Allies landed troops on the peninsula of Gallipoli, from which they hoped to storm Istanbul, but this assault failed and Allied troops were massacred.

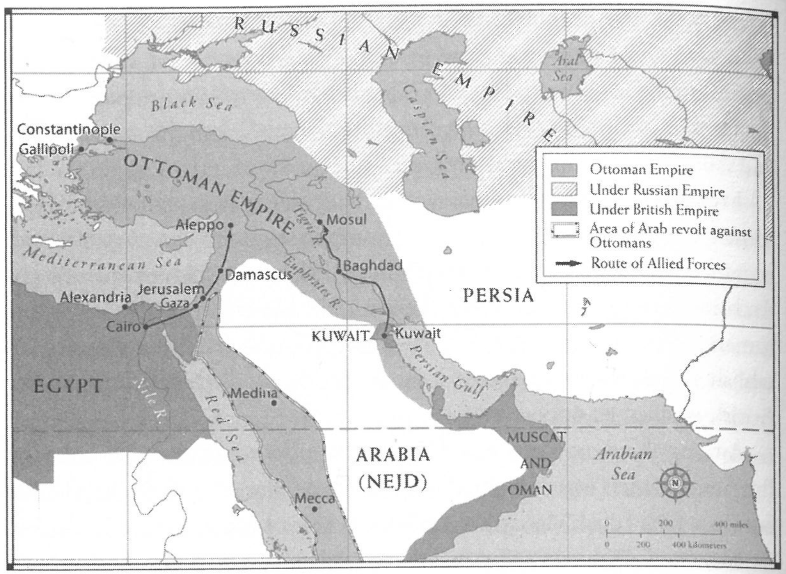
Meanwhile, the British were already busy trying to exploit another Ottoman weakness: rebellion was percolating throughout the empire's Arab provinces, stemming from many sources. Nationalist movements sought Arab independence from Turks. Ancient tribal alignments chaffed at Ottoman administrative rules. Various powerful Arab families sought to establish themselves as sovereign local dynasties. In all this discontent, the British smelled an opportunity.

Among the dynastic contenders, two families stood out: the house of Ibn Saud, which was still allied with Wahhabi clerics, and the Hashimite family, which ruled Mecca, the spiritual center of Islam.

The Saudi-Wahhabi realm had shrunk down to a Bedouin tribal state in central Arabia but was still headed by a direct descendant of that ancestral eighteenth-century Saudi chieftain Mohammed Ibn Saud, the one who had struck a deal with the radically conservative cleric Ibn Wahhab. Over the decades, the two men's families had intermarried extensively; the Saudi sheikh was now the religious head of the Wahhabi establishment, and Ibn Wahhab's descendents still constituted the leading ulama of Saudi-ruled territories. British agents dispatched by the Anglo-Indian foreign office visited the Saudi chief, looking to cut a deal. They did what they could to excite his ambitions and offered him money and arms to attack the Ottomans. Ibn Saud responded cautiously but the interaction gave him good reason to believe that he would be rewarded after the war for any damage he could do to the Turks.

The Hashimite patriarch was named Hussein Ibn Ali. He was caretaker of the Ka'ba, Islam's holiest shrine, and he was known by the title of Sharif, which meant he was descended from the Prophet's own clan, the Banu Hashim. Remember that the ninth-century revolutionaries who had brought the Abbasids to power called themselves the Hashimites: the name had an ancient and revered lineage and now a family by this name was ruling again in Mecca.

But Mecca was not enough for Sharif Hussein. He dreamed of an Arab kingdom stretching from Mesopotamia to the Arabian Sea, and he thought

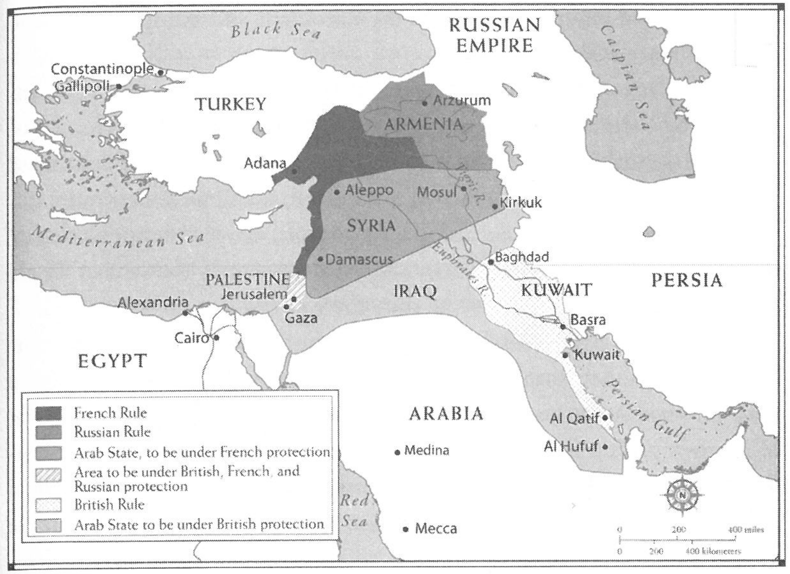


WORLD WAR I AND THE ARAB REVOLT

the British might help him forge it. The British gladly let him think they could and would. They sent a flamboyant military intelligence officer to work with him, a one-time archeologist named Colonel Thomas Edward Lawrence, who spoke Arabic and liked to dress in Bedouin tribal dress, a practice that eventually earned him the nickname "Lawrence of Arabia."

Looking back, it's easy to see what a pot of trouble the British were mixing up here. The Hashimites and the Saudis were the two strongest tribal groups in the Arabian peninsula; both hoped to break the Ottoman hold on Arabia, and each saw the other as its deadly rival. The British were sending agents into both camps, making promises to both families, and leading both to believe that the British would help them establish their own kingdom in roughly the *same* territory, if only they would fight the Ottomans. The British didn't actually care which of the two ruled this region: they just wanted immediate help undermining Ottoman power, so they could beat the Germans back home.

As it turned out, the Hashimites led the way in helping the British. They fomented the Arab Revolt. Two of Hussein's sons, working with Lawrence, drove the Turks out of the region, clearing the way for the



THE SYKES-PICOT AGREEMENT

British to take Damascus and Baghdad. From there, the British could put pressure on the Ottomans.

At the very time that British agents were making promises to the two Arab families, however, two European diplomats, Mark Sykes and Francois George-Picot, were meeting secretly with a map and a pencil, over a civilized cup of tea, to decide how the region should be carved up among the victorious *European* powers after the war. They agreed which part should go to Sykes's Britain, which part to Picot's France, and where a nod to Russian interests might be appropriate. Which part the Arabs should get went curiously unmentioned.

All these ingredients portended trouble enough, but wait, as they say on late-night-TV infomercials, there was more! Arab nationalism was starting to bubble in Palestine and adjacent Arab-inhabited territories, including Egypt, and this had nothing to do with the dynastic aspirations of the Hashimites and Saudis. It was the secular modernists who embraced this new nationalism, all those professionals, government workers, and emerging urban bourgeoisie for whom constitutionalism and industrialism also had great appeal. In Palestine and Syria, these Arab nationalists not only demanded independence from the Ottomans and Europeans but also from the Hashimites and Saudis.

Then there was one last problematic ingredient, perhaps the most intractable of them all: Jewish immigration from Europe to Palestine. European anti-Semitism, which had helped give rise to Zionism, had continued to intensify as the continent moved toward war, making life ever more untenable for Jews throughout Europe. As a result, the Jewish population of Palestine swelled from 4 percent in 1883 to 8 percent by the start of World War I to nearly 13 percent by the time the war ended.

In 1917, the British foreign minister Arthur James Balfour wrote a letter to Lord Lionel Rothschild, a British banker and a leading Zionist, a man who had supported Jewish immigration to the Levant generously out of his own private funds. Balfour told Rothschild that the British government would "view with favor the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavors to facilitate the achievement of this object."

Balfour also insisted that "nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious right of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine," but how Britain planned to accommodate both Jewish and Arab nationalism in the same territory, Balfour didn't say.

To recap—it's worth a recap: Britain essentially promised the same territory to the Hashimites, the Saudis, and the Zionists of Europe, territory *actually* inhabited by still another Arab people with rapidly developing nationalist aspirations of their own—while in fact Britain and France had already secretly agreed to carve up the whole promised territory between themselves. Despite the many quibbles, qualifiers, and disclaimers offered over the years about who agreed to what and what was promised to whom, that's the gist of the situation, and it guaranteed an explosion in the future.

But the good thing about the future was that it lay in the future. In the present a war was raging, and what the British and French cooked up for the short term worked wonderfully: the CUP lost everything the Ottomans had ever owned outside of Asia Minor. They ceded Palestine, Greater Syria, and Mesopotamia to the British. And the war was going badly for their friends in Europe, as well. In 1918, Germany surrendered

unconditionally to the Allies, and the three Pashas knew they were in big trouble. All three of them, Talaat, Enver, and Djemal, fled Istanbul inches ahead of arrest warrants. Talaat went to Berlin, where an Armenian assassinated him in 1921. Djemal went to Georgia, where an Armenian assassinated him in 1922. Enver went to Central Asia to stir up rebellion against the Bolsheviks. A Red Army detachment commanded by an Armenian Bolshevik killed him there in 1922.

So ended the Committee for Union and Progress, a bad government to be sure, but with its demise, the carcass of the "Ottoman Empire" was left with no government at all.

15

Rise of the Secular Modernists

1336–1357 AH
1918–1939 CE

BY 1919, ASIA MINOR was crawling with French and Italian troops. Greek armies led by Greek nationalists dreaming of a Greater Greece were forging deep into the Ottoman heartland. Istanbul itself was occupied by British troops. Resistance movements bubbled up throughout Anatolia, coalescing around a hawk-faced general with piercing eyes. He was Mustafa Kemal, later known as Atatürk—Father of the Turks. His forces drove out all the foreigners and in 1923 he declared the birth of a new nation-state: Turkey.

Turkey was not to be the Ottoman Empire reinvented. Atatürk repudiated the Ottoman past; he repudiated empire. He claimed nothing outside Asia Minor because he sought a coherent territory that made sense as a *country*. Henceforth, Turkey was to be a state with clear and immutable borders within which the majority of people would be ethnic Turks and the language would be Turkish. In this new country, Islam would be excluded from any role in public policy and demoted to the private sphere where it might go on thriving as a religion like any other, so long as its adherents didn't bother the neighbors.

Turkey was thus the first Muslim-majority country to declare itself secular and to make the separation of politics and religion an official policy. Having demoted Islam, however, Atatürk needed some other principle to unify his new country, so he elaborated an ideology that sanctified six isms: nationalism, secularism, reformism, statism, populism, and republicanism. Turks still call this creed Kemalism, and some of version of it, usually emphasizing the first four isms, spread to or sprang up throughout the Islamic world after World War I.

Atatürk's nationalism was not to be confused with the hardcore militarism of the Committee for Union and Progress. The roots of both went back to the Young Turks, but "Young Turkism" was a broad movement spanning a gamut from liberal constitutionalism to fascism, and Atatürk's was a flexible, cultural nationalism that grew out of the liberal end.

It was cultural nationalism that led Atatürk to discard the many languages spoken in the Ottoman Empire in favor of one national language, Turkish. The many dialects and variants of Turkish spoken in the old empire gave way to a single standard dialect, and not the literary Turkish of the old court but a purified form of the street Turkish spoken by the masses. Some enthusiasts then wanted to ban all words that had crept into Turkish from other languages, but Atatürk disarmed this agitation with a simple narrative: Turkish, he said, was the mother of all the languages, so words borrowed from other languages were simply Turkish words coming home. The Arabic script, however, the one in which Turkish had long been written, was replaced by a new *Latin* alphabet.

A modernist to the core, Atatürk did not declare himself king or sultan. He had a new constitution written, set up a parliament, and established a republican form of government with himself as president. The parliamentary democracy he built endures to this day, but let's be frank: another leader could not have replaced Atatürk through the ballot box in his lifetime—hey, he was Father of the Turks! One does not vote one's *father* out of office! And although he was no military dictator and his ruling circle was not a junta (he established and abided by the rule of law), Atatürk did come up through the military and he valued discipline; so he herded his people toward his vision for the country with a military man's direct, iron-handed resolve.

What was his vision? To break the authority of the ulama in Turkey, unseat Islam as the arbiter of social life, and authorize a secular approach to the management of society. In the Western context, this makes him a "moderate." In the Islamic context, it made him a breathtakingly radical extremist.

First up on his agenda: opening the public sphere to women. Toward this end, he promulgated new laws that gave women the right to vote, hold public office, and own property. He had polygamy outlawed, discouraged dowries, frowned on traditional marriage customs, and sponsored new rules for divorce based on the Swiss civil code, not the Qur'an and hadith.

He also banned veils and head scarves, part of a new state-sanctioned dress code that applied to men as well as women—for example, the fez was banned too. Turbans and beards were strongly discouraged. Derby hats were okay, though, and so were bowlers, baseball caps, and berets. Atatürk himself wore suits and ties and urged his fellow Turks to do the same.

The religious establishment was shocked when ballroom dancing was introduced as official entertainment at state functions, but there was nothing they could do about it. Atatürk meant business, and he had the power and prestige to get it done. His parliament backed him to the hilt when he proposed a law requiring that public readings of the Qur'an henceforth be conducted in Turkish, not Arabic—blasphemy to the devout. Parliament backed him again when he moved the workers' day off from Friday to Sunday—to *Sunday!* Atatürk's government went on to close religious schools, shut down the Sufi brotherhoods, and abolish the waqfs—those ancient religion-based charitable foundations—in favor of state-dispensed social services. In 1925, Atatürk capped his secular modernist revolution with a truly jolting declaration: he declared the khalifate dead.

This wasn't actually breaking news, of course. For all practical purposes, the khalifate had been dead for centuries, but in the world between Istanbul and the Indus, the khalifate held a special place in the public imagination roughly analogous to that of ancient Rome in the West: it embodied the lingering dream of a universal community. In the West, the ghost of Rome persisted right to the end of World War I, visible in such traces as the Austro-Hungarian Empire, which was really just the final form of "the Holy Roman Empire," and in the titles of the last German and Russian rulers before World War I—*kaiser* and *czar* were both variations on *Caesar.* Rome had been dead for centuries, but the Roman ideal of a universal state did not fully wink out until the end of World War I. The same was true of the khalifate. When Atatürk abolished the khalifate, he was abolishing an idea, and that's what jolted the Muslim world.

Or at least it jolted traditionalists, but who cared what they thought? They were no longer in power. In fact, Atatürk would turn out to be the prototypical Muslim leader of the half-century to come. Iran generated its own version of the prototype. After the war, the last Qajar king faced the "Jungle Revolution," a guerilla insurgency launched by admirers of Sayyid Jamaluddin-i-Afghan. The king's forces consisted of two armies, one commanded by Swedish officers, one by Russian mercenaries.[1] Little did the king realize that the real threat to his rule lay not in the jungle but among the foreigners propping him up. When Bolsheviks began joining the jungle revolutionaries, the British got nervous. Lenin had just seized power in Russia and they didn't want this sort of thing to spread. The British decided the king wasn't tough enough to squelch Bolsheviks, so they helped an Iranian colonel overthrow him.

This colonel, Reza Pahlavi, was a secular modernist in the Atatürk mold, except that he had no use for democracy (few secular modernist leaders did). In 1925, the colonel declared himself king, becoming Reza *Shah* Pahlavi, founder of a new Iranian dynasty. From the throne, he launched the same sorts of reforms as Atatürk, especially in the matter of a dress code. Head scarves, veils, turbans, beards—these were banned for ordinary citizens. Registered clerics could still wear turbans in the new Iran, but they had to have a license certifying that they really were clerics (and how could they meet this irksome proviso, given that Islam never had a formal institution for "certifying" clerics?). Still, anyone caught wearing a turban without a license could be beaten on the street and hauled off to prison.

Much the same thing was happening in Afghanistan, where, an impetuous young man named Amanullah inherited the throne in 1919. An ardent admirer of the Young Turks, this moon-faced fellow with a Hercule Poirot moustache gave Afghanistan a liberal constitution, declared women liberated, funded a nascent secular school system lavishly, and, yes, declared the usual dress code: no veils, no beards, no turbans, etc.

What I find interesting about this dress-code policy is that radical Islamists did exactly the same thing fifty years later when they came back into power in Iran and Afghanistan, except that their dress code was the opposite: suddenly, women were *forced* to wear head scarves and men were beaten for appearing in public *without* beards. But the principle of beating and imprisoning people for their clothes and grooming—this principle, both sides embraced.

The three rulers between Istanbul and the Hindu Kush could use state power to push the secular modernist agenda. Other parts of Dar al-Islam still lived under imperial rule but had vigorous independence movements, which were also led by secular modernists. In India, for example, the most prominent Muslim leader was the suave, British-educated attorney named Mohammed Ali Jinnah.

In short, secular modernism surged up throughout the Muslim world in the 1920s, one society after another falling under the sway of this new political creed. I will call it secular modernism, even though the term is inadequate, because secular-modernist-nationalist-statist-developmentalist is too cumbersome and even then doesn't cover the entire movement. Suffice to say, this was a broad river of attitude and opinion that drew upon ideas explored earlier by the likes of Sayyid Ahmad of Aligarh, Amir Kabir of Iran, the Young Turks of Istanbul, and countless other intellectuals, educated workers, professionals, writers, and activists from the middle classes that had been emerging in the Middle World for a century. Suddenly, Muslim societies knew where they were going: the same way as the West. They were behind, of course, they would have to play desperate catch-up, but that was all the more reason to hurry, all the more reason to steamroll over nuances and niceties like democracy and get the crash program underway—the core of which crash program was "development."

In Afghanistan and Iran, the state clamped down on citizens, but did so in pursuit of a "progressive" agenda. Monarchs in both countries set out to build roads, dams, power plants, factories, hospitals, and office buildings. Both established airline companies, set up state-run (and state-censored) newspapers, and built national radio stations. Both countries continued to grow their secular public schools. Iran already had a national university and Afghanistan founded one now. Both governments promulgated policies to liberate women and draw them into the public realm. Both were eager to make their countries more "Western" but saw no connection between this and expanding their subjects' freedom. What they promised was not freedom but prosperity and self-respect.

It would be quite plausible to say that at this point, Islam as a world-historical narrative came to an end. Wrong but plausible. The Western cross-current had disrupted Muslim societies, creating the deepest angst and the most agonizing doubts. The secular modernists proposed to settle the spiritual turmoil by realigning their societies with the Western current. Make no mistake, most of these leaders still thought of themselves as Muslims; they just adopted a new idea of what "Muslim" meant. Most still worked to break the grip of specific Western powers over their specific people; they just did so as revolutionary anticolonialists rather than as zealous Muslims committed to promoting Islam as one big community on a mission from God. These elites sought to make gains by holding the West to its own standards and ideals and in doing this they implicitly validated the Western framework of assumptions.

They were not without popular support. Throughout the Middle World, traditional, religious Islam was quiescent now: beaten and subdued. Educated people tended to see the old-fashioned scholars and clerics as quaint. The ulama, the scriptural literalists, the miracle merchants, the orthodox "believers"—all these had dominated Dar al-Islam for centuries, and what had they created? Threadbare societies that couldn't build a car or invent an airplane, much less stand up to Western might. Their failure discredited their outlook, and a sizable public was ready to give someone else a turn. The future belonged to the secular modernists.

Or so it seemed.

But secular modernism was not the only reformist current to come out of the nineteenth-century Muslim world. What of the other currents? What of the Wahhabis, for example? What of Sayyid Jamaluddin's disciples? These movements should not be confused with orthodox Islam or old-fashioned religious conservatism. They were just as new-fangled as secular modernism, just as intent on smashing the status quo.

Even the Wahhabis, by their very appeal to a mythic moment in the distant past, were rejecting the petrified present (and the twelve centuries that led up to it). And they still breathed in the Arabian Peninsula. In fact, they seized state power there, with the founding of Saudi Arabia, about which more later. Outside Arabia, the Wahhabis could not gain much purchase among the educated elite or the new middle classes but they preached away in rural mosques to ill-educated and impoverished villagers.

For that audience their message had resonance, especially in India. When they spoke of a glorious past, revivable only by a return to the ways of the First Community, the poor and dispossessed knew who they were talking about. They could see their own elites drifting away from the Muslim way of life, and boasting about it! They were to blame for Muslim weakness. In fact, if the Wahhabi narrative held water, the poverty of the rural poor was the fault of the urban rich.

In 1867, a group of puritanical Indian Wahhabis had built a religious seminary in a town called Deoband. For fifty years, missionaries pouring out of this seminary had been spreading through the subcontinent preaching Indian Wahhabism. In the late 1920s, these Deobandis gave a glimmer of their strength in Afghanistan.

King Amanullah, upon coming to the throne, had dazzled his country by declaring full independence from the British and sending troops to the border. The battles were inconclusive but he won Afghanistan's independence at the bargaining table, making him the first and only Muslim monarch to win a direct confrontation with a major European power. Indian Wahhabis exultantly proclaimed him the new khalifa; but Amanullah was not the kind of man to accept that mantle. In fact, he "betrayed" the Deobandis by launching the full array of Atatürkist initiatives mentioned earlier. The Indian Wahhabis swore to bring the apostate down.

And they did it, but not by themselves. They got help from Great Britain. This may seem odd, because Amanullah was culturally so much more in tune with British values than the Deobandis were. European ideals were his ideals. But perhaps the British recognized him as a threat for that very reason. They knew what an anti-imperialist revolutionary was; they had seen Lenin. They didn't know what a Deobandi was. Bearded preachers swathed in turbans no doubt struck them as picturesque primitives who might serve a purpose. Britain therefore fed funds and guns into the Deobandi campaign against Amanullah and soon, with further help from radical local clerics, the Deobandis set Afghanistan ablaze. In 1929, they managed to drive Amanullah into tragic exile.

Amid the uproar, a *really* primitive bandit, colorfully nicknamed the Water Carrier's Son, seized the Afghan capital. The bandit ruled for nine riotous months, during which time he not only imposed "pure" Islamic rule but undid all of Amanullah's reforms, wrecked the city, and drained the treasury. Anyone who knows what the Taliban did in Afghanistan at the end of the century will recognize an eerily precise preview of their carnage in the career of the Water Carrier's Son. By the time he was finished, Afghans were so sick of chaos, they were eager to accept a strongman. The British obliged them by helping a more compliant member of the old royal clan claim the Afghan throne, a grim despot named Nadir Shah.

This new king was a secular modernist too, but a chastened one. He guided his country back toward the Atatürkist road but very, very slowly, taking care not to offend the British, and placating his hometown Deobandis by clamping down on Afghanistan socially and culturally.

So much for Wahhabism. What of the reformist current embodied by Sayyid Jamaluddin? Was that one dead? Not at all. Intellectually, Jamaluddin's work was carried forward by his chief disciple, Mohammed Abduh, who taught at Egypt's prestigious thousand-year-old Al Azhar University. Abduh pulled the Master's patchwork of ideas together into a coherent Islamic modernist doctrine. Abduh's own disciple and friend Rashid Rida went on to explore how a modern state might actually be administered on Islamic principles.

Then came Hassan al-Banna, perhaps the most important of Sayyid Jamaluddin's intellectual progeny. This Egyptian schoolteacher was more activist than philosopher. In 1928, he founded a club called the Muslim Brotherhood, originally something like a Muslim version of the Boy Scouts. This was a seminal event for Islamism, but one that went virtually unnoticed at the time.

Banna lived and taught in the Suez Canal Zone, where he could feel the scrape of West against East every day. Virtually all trade between Europe and the eastern colonies passed through this canal, which was the most boomingly modern structure in Egypt, and every cargo ship had to pay a steep toll. A European firm owned by British and French interests operated the canal and took 93 percent of the rich revenue it generated. Foreign technicians therefore abounded in the Canal Zone, making this little strip of land the starkest embodiment of two worlds intersecting. One whole infrastructure of shops, restaurants, cafés, dance halls, bars, and other services catered to the European community. Another whole infrastructure consisted of markets, coffeehouses, and whatnot frequented by Egyptians of the humbler classes: two worlds interwoven but entirely distinct.

Hassan Banna saw his fellow Egyptians earnestly struggling to learn European languages and manners, trying slavishly to acquire enough Westernized polish to enter the Western world, even if only as workers of the lowest strata. The sight of all this Egyptian envy and subservience offended his pride. He founded the Muslim Brotherhood to help Muslim boys interact healthily with one another, learn about their own culture, and acquire some self respect. Boys dropped into the Brotherhood center after school to play sports, at which time they also received lessons in Islam and Muslim history from Banna and his instructors.

Eventually the boys' fathers and older brothers started dropping in as well, so the Brotherhood began offering evening programs for adults, which were so popular that new centers were opened up. By the mid-1930s, the brotherhood had outgrown its origins as a club for boys and become a fraternal organization for men.

From this, it slowly morphed into a political movement, a movement that declared secular Islam and Egypt's own "Westernized" elite to be the country's chief enemies. The Muslim Brothers opposed nationalism, the impulse to secure sovereignty for small separate states such as Syria, Libya, or Egypt. They called on Muslims to resurrect instead the one big transnational Umma, a new khalifate embodying the unity of all Muslims. Like Sayyid Jamaluddin, they preached pan-Islamic modernization without Westernization.

The Muslim Brotherhood was taking shape around the same time the United States was struggling with the Great Depression. In this same period, the Nazis were taking over Germany, and Stalin was consolidating his grip on the Soviet Union. Outside of Egypt, no one knew much about the brotherhood, not because it was secretive (at first) but because it had few adherents among the Egyptian elite and held little interest for foreign journalists. Even Egyptian newspapers published few stories about its activities and the Western press none at all. Why would they? This was mostly a movement of the urban working poor, and the foreigners who came and went through Egypt hardly noticed those hordes moving like shadows through the streets, doing the heavy lifting and loading, providing services, and begging for "baksheesh," as tips were called (prompting the writer S. J. Perlman to quip of Egypt, "It's not the heat, it's the cupidity").

As Westernization and industrialization proceeded, Egypt's urban working poor kept proliferating. With the expansion of this class, the brotherhood outgrew even its identity as a political movement and became more of a pandemic low-level insurgency—seething against secularism and Western influence, seething against its own modernist elite, against its own government, against all nationalist governments in Muslim countries, even against the apparatus of democracy to the extent that this reflected Western values.

By the late thirties, then, secular leaders throughout the Muslim world, whether they held state power or spearheaded independence movements, found themselves squeezed between two sets of forces: European imperialists still pressed down on them from above; meanwhile, Islamist insurgents were pushing up from below. What was a leader to do?

Under this kind of pressure, politicians typically try to associate themselves with some popular passion to shore up support; and often the passion they tap into for this purpose is religion. But religion was the one passion secular modernists could not appeal to, because it was the very thing they were trying to move their societies away from. So they waved two other banners instead. One was "development" and the material prosperity it would bring; and the other was nationalism, which they claimed to represent. In Iran, for example, the Pahlavi regime tried to invoke a connection to pre-Islamic Persia. In Afghanistan, the Nadir Shah regime insisted on declaring Pushto a national language, even though only a minority spoke it at home. Everywhere, the glories of the nation, the splendor of its culture, and the proud history of its people were trumpeted.

Nationalist sentiment was not in short supply; lots of *that* was sloshing around in the Middle World at this time. The trouble was, most of the new nation-states were rather artificial. Afghanistan, for example, had been created by Russia and Britain. Iran, until recently, had been a loose conglomeration of disparate parts, an empire, not a country. Turkey was a nation-state because Atatürk said so. As for India, where does one even begin?

But the most problematic region for nationalism was the Arab heartland. Here's why.

After World War I, the victors had met at Versailles, France, to reshape the world. As a prelude to that conference, U.S. president Woodrow Wilson had given a speech to the U.S. Congress laying out a "fourteen point" vision of a new world order that most colonized people found inspiring. To Arabs, the most thrilling of Wilson's Fourteen Points was his declaration that every people's right to self-rule must be respected and accommodated. Wilson had

also suggested creating a neutral "League of Nations" to adjudicate international issues, such as the fate of Arab-inhabited lands formerly ruled by the Ottomans. At Versailles, the "peacemakers" had set up just such a body.

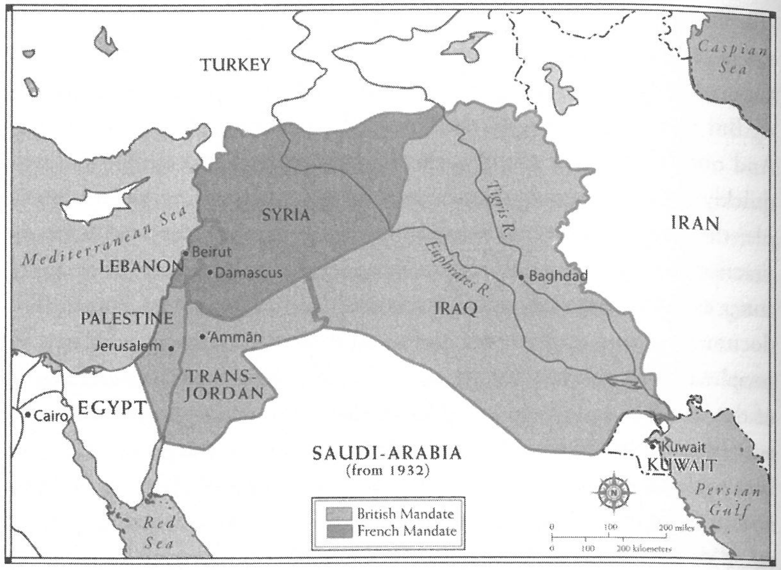
But stunningly enough, the United States refused to join this body! And once the League set to work, the European victors of World War I quickly turned it into an instrument of their will. In principle, for example, the League endorsed the idea of self-rule in the Arab world, but in practice, it implemented the Sykes-Picot agreement, dividing the area into zones called "mandates," which were awarded to Britain and France. The document setting up these mandates called them territories "inhabited by peoples not yet able to stand by themselves under the strenuous conditions of the modern world" and said "the tutelage of such peoples should be entrusted to advanced nations who by reason of their . . . experience . . . can best undertake this responsibility." In short, it spoke of Arabs as children and of Europeans as grown-ups who would take care of them until they could do grown-up things like feed themselves—such was the language directed at a people who, if the Muslim narrative were still in play, would have been honored as the progenitors of civilization itself—and who still retained some such sense of themselves.[2]

France got Syria for its mandate, and Great Britain got pretty much everything else in the "Middle East." France divided its mandated territory into two countries, Syria and Lebanon, the latter an artificial state with borders gerrymandered to ensure a demographic majority for the Maronite Christians, whom France regarded as its special clients in the region.

Great Britain had clients to satisfy as well, beginning with the Hashimites who had led that helpful Arab Revolt, so the British bundled together three former Ottoman provinces to create a new country called Iraq and made one of their Hashimite clients king of it. The lucky man was Faisal, second son of the sheikh of Mecca.

Faisal, however, had an older brother named Abdullah, and it wasn't seemly for a younger brother to have a country while his older brother had none, so another country was carved out of the British mandate and given to Abdullah, and this was Jordan.

Unfortunately, the boys' father ended up with nothing at all, because in 1924 that other British client in the region, Aziz ibn Saud, attacked Mecca with a band of religious troops, took the holy city, and ousted the



DIVISION OF THE ARAB WORLD: THE MANDATES PLAN

Hashemite patriarch. Ibn Saud went on to conquer 80 percent of the Arabian Peninsula. Only Yemen, Oman, and a few sliver-sized coastal emirates remained outside his grasp. The European powers did nothing to stop him because he too held some IOUs. In 1932, Ibn Saud declared his holdings a sovereign new country called Saudi Arabia.

In Egypt, meanwhile, Great Britain succumbed to its own pieties and declared the country independent, sovereign, and free—with a few caveats. First, Egyptians could not change their form of government; they must remain a monarchy. Second, Egyptians could not replace their actual rulers; they must retain their existing royal family. Third, the Egyptians must accept the continued presence of British military forces and bases on their soil. Fourth, the Egyptians must leave the Suez Canal in British hands without protest. Fifth, the private company controlled by Britain and France must continue to collect all fees from that busiest of sea channels and send the bulk of it back to Europe.

Egypt *would* get an elected parliament, but this parliament's decisions must be approved by British authorities in Cairo. Beyond these few points, Egypt was to consider itself sovereign, independent, and free. Egypt

quickly developed a full-fledged (secular modernist) independence movement, of course, which offended the British, because why would an independent country need an independence movement? Didn't they get the memo? Apparently not.

The French faced a bit of resistance too, in Syria. There, a Sorbonne-educated Christian Arab writer named Michel Aflaq was elaborating a pan-Arab nationalist ideology. He asserted the existence of a mystical Arab soul forged by a common language and a shared historical experience that gave a unified singleness to the vast body of Arabic-speaking people. Like all the other twentieth century nationalists inspired by nineteenth century European philosophers, Aflaq argued that the "Arab nation" was entitled to a single contiguous state ruled by Arabs.

Although he was Christian, Aflaq put Islam at the center of Arabism, but only as a historical relic. Islam, he said, had awakened the Arab soul at a certain moment in history and made it the spearhead of a global quest for justice and progress, so Arabs of every religion should honor Islam as a product of the Arab soul. What counted, however, was the Arab soul, and Arabs should therefore seek a rebirth of their spirit, not in Islam, but in "the Arab Nation." Aflaq was a hardcore secular modernist and in 1940 he and a friend founded a political party to pursue their vision. They called it the Ba'ath, or "rebirth" party.

Four new countries were carved out of the European mandates, a fifth one emerged independently, and Egypt acquired pseudoindependence. But one question remained unresolved: what should be done with Palestine? The principle of self-rule dictated that it too should become a country ruled by itself, but who was its "self?" Was the natural "nation" here the Arabs, who constituted nearly 90 percent of the population and had been living here for centuries? Or was it the Jews, most of whom had come here from Europe in the last two decades but whose ancestors had lived here two thousand years ago? Hmm: tough question.

To the Arabs, the answer seemed obvious: this should be one more Arab country. To the Jewish immigrants from Europe, the answer also seemed obvious: whatever the exact legal arrangements, this patch of territory should become a secure Jewish homeland, because Jews were endangered everywhere else in the world and only Palestine made sense as a place they could call their own. Besides Britain's Balfour had made them that memorable promise.

Britain decided to make *no* grand decision about Palestine at all, but to deal with events de facto as they came up and just see how things went.

How on earth could secular modernist leaders use nationalism to bind together their dubious nations, especially since some of their own were calling for an Arab nation transcending existing boundaries—while at the same time Islamists and Wahhabis were saying to hell with nations; to hell with ethnic identity politics; we're all Muslims; let's rebuild the khalifate?

Ultimately, in this environment, the success of secular modernism hung on two things. First, since the secular modernists kept waving the banner of "development," they had to develop something and deliver the prosperity they evoked. Second, since they sought legitimacy through nationalism, they had to gain actual independence for their nations.

In the decades after World War I, however, they failed to achieve either goal. They failed because, despite the thrilling rhetoric of Wilson's Fourteen Points, there was never any real chance of the Western powers loosening their grip on the core of the Muslim world.

No chance of it because at this point every Western power was racing to outindustrialize every other. The Western powers were moving toward an apocalyptic showdown fueled by ideologies, communism, fascism, nazism, democracy. The stakes were absolute. Victory depended on industrial strength, industrialism now depended on petroleum, and most of the world's petroleum lay under Muslim-inhabited soil.

The first big pools of petroleum oil had been discovered in the late nineteenth century in Pennsylvania and Canada but at the time these discoveries had sparked little excitement because the only product really made from petroleum back then was kerosene, and kerosene was used only to light lamps, for which purpose most consumers preferred whale oil.

In 1901, the first of the big Middle Eastern oil fields was detected in Iran by a British prospector named William Knox D'Arcy. He promptly bought exclusive rights to all of Iran's petroleum from the Qajar king of the time, in exchange for a sum of cash stuffed immediately into that shah's pockets, and a 16 percent royalty payable to the Iranian treasury later, a royalty to be calculated on "net profits" realized from Iran's petroleum, not on the gross, which means that D'Arcy's lease made no guarantees about how much money Iran *ever* stood to make from its oil.

You might wonder what sort of king would sell his country's entire stock of *any* mineral known and unknown for cash to some vagabond wandering through and why the citizens of the country would not immediately depose such a king. The answer is, first: tradition. The Qajar kings had been doing this sort of thing for a hundred years. Second, the country had just struggled mightily to scuttle the tobacco monopoly, which their king had sold to British interests, a struggle that had left the country's activists exhausted. Third, oil didn't seem very important; it wasn't *tobacco*, for God's sake (or even whale oil). Fourth, activists were girding for a struggle that did seem more important than oil and tobacco combined: the struggle for a constitution and a parliament. The oil deal therefore went unnoticed.

At the very time that Iran was giving away its oil, however, the importance of oil was about to skyrocket, due to a new invention: the internal combustion engine. *External* combustion engines such as steam engines ran on anything that burned, which in practice meant wood or coal; but *internal* combustion engines ran strictly on refined petroleum.

In the 1880s, a German inventor had used this type of engine to power a big tricycle. That tricycle evolved into a car. By 1904, cars were becoming just popular enough in Europe and the United States that some roads were being rebuilt to accommodate them. Soon after that, trains started to run on oil. Then in 1903 the airplane was invented. Next, ocean-going ships began switching over.

World War I saw the first use of tanks, the first oil-powered navies, and the first airplanes that dropped bombs. By the time the war ended, anyone could tell that petroleum-powered war machinery would grow only more sophisticated and that whoever owned the world's oil would end up owning the world.

For Iran, that realization came too late. William D'Arcy had already sold his Iranian oil concession to a company owned by the British government (it still exists: it's now British Petroleum, or BP). By 1923, according to Winston Churchill, Great Britain had earned 40 million pounds from Iranian oil, while Iran had earned about 2 million from it.[3]

Meanwhile, that British company had joined forces with Royal Dutch Shell and certain U.S. interests to form a supercompany ("the Turkish Petroleum Company") that proposed to look for oil in the Ottoman provinces bordering the Persian Gulf. By the time the supercompany was ready to drill, the area in question was part of the British "mandate." It was then that the British created Iraq and put their Hashemite client in charge of it. The oil consortium immediately approached King Faisal for a monopoly on the country's oil resources, and he gladly accommodated them. Going into the negotiation, the Iraqis were hoping for a 20 percent equity share in the company, but they compromised at 0 percent, in exchange for a flat fee per ton of oil extracted, that sum not to be linked in any way to the price of oil or the company's profits, at least for the first twenty years of the agreement. Equity in the company was divided among the several European powers and the United States, and the only real wrangling was among them over who would get what percent. In 1927, after all these issues had been settled, the company found the first of Iraq's enormous oil fields.[4]

Nine years later, Aziz ibn Saud celebrated the discovery of oil in his realm as well. Saudi Arabia would, in fact, turn out to have the world's biggest reserves of the crucial mineral. The Saudis had barely started pumping their oil when World War II broke out and the strategic significance of oil soared even higher. During that war, U. S. president Franklin Delano Roosevelt met with Ibn Saud, and the two men reached an understanding to which both sides have adhered faithfully ever since, even though it is not enshrined in any formal public treaty. The deal ensures the U.S. unfettered access to Saudi oil; in exchange, the Saudi royal family gets as much U.S. military equipment and technology as it needs to stay in power against all comers. Indirectly, this understanding partnered the United States with the Wahhabi clerical establishment and made American military prowess the guarantor of the Wahhabi reform movement. And by the time World War II broke out, the Wahhabis, and the Islamists throughout Dar al-Islam were gathering their strength for a full assault on the secular modernists.

16

The Crisis of Modernity

1357–1385 AH
1939–1966 CE

THE BLOODIEST OUTBURST in the history of violence started in 1939 and raged for six long years. Once again, Germany was battling France and Britain. Once again the United States came in late but decided the outcome. Parts of the configuration had changed this time, to be sure: Russia was now the Soviet Union, the Ottomans were missing, Japan had grown mighty—but in the end, this bloodbath only finished what World War I had begun. The old colonial empires suffered death blows, and the old alignments of power became obsolete. Britain came out of the war starving, France in ruins, Germany destroyed and divided. With the gunfire fading, two new superpowers stood astride the globe, and both were soon armed with thermonuclear bombs capable of destroying the human race. The next chapter of world history would be dominated by their competition.

Other narratives continued to play out, however, beneath the surface of the bipolar Cold War struggle, including the submerged narrative of Islam as a world-historical event. The hunger for independence, which had built