

Changes and Tensions - Middle Eastern Civilizations in the 20th Century

- ⇒ World War I ended the political unity of the Middle East, generating a complex pattern of reform and counter revolution. The political divisions made the Middle East the leading world trouble spot after WW I.
- ⇒ The collapse of the Ottoman Empire resulted in the birth of new nation states and the creation of British and French mandates.
- ⇒ Oil also made the region a major player in the world economy.

A. World War I

1. In World War I, the Ottoman Empire was allied with Germany.
2. As part of the war effort, the British and the French encouraged Arab nationalism with vague wartime pledges. At the same time, they made vague promises to Jewish leaders of a Jewish homeland in Palestine.

B. Replacing the Ottoman Empire

[To what extent was the collapse of the Ottoman Empire like the fall of the Han and Roman empires and the collapse of the Soviet Union?]

1. With the end of the war, the Ottoman Empire was abolished.
 - a. The French occupied Syria and Lebanon, and the British occupied Iraq, Jordan, and Palestine.
 - b. In Turkey, Mustafa Kemal organized resistance to the occupation and was able to create an independent state in 1923.
2. Kemal introduced a tightly controlled version of democracy controlled by a single party, as well as secular law and education. He also granted rights to women and promoted industrialization.
3. Persia, which changed its name to Iran, asserted its independence and promoted economic modernization through import substitution under the leadership of the new shah, Riza Khan.

Closing the book on the Ottoman Empire

- ⇒ Ottoman history in the nineteenth century was dominated by European wars and expansion. The Europeans madly scrambled for territory throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth century. Some of this was European territory, but far and away, the bulk of the territory that Europeans desired was non-European. The end result for the Ottomans was the loss of Empire, and, finally, the loss of the Ottoman dynasty itself.

The Crimean War

- ⇒ The first major Ottoman war, the Crimean War (1854-1856), came with Russia. Like so many of the later conflicts with Europe, this one was initiated not by the Ottomans, but by the Europeans. Russia was primarily interested in territory.
- ⇒ This war is unique in Ottoman history in that the outcome wasn't heavily influenced by the Ottomans themselves. The war soon became a European war when Britain and France allied with the Ottomans in order to protect their lucrative trade interests in the region. The war ended badly for the Russians, and the Paris peace of 1856 was unfavorable to them.
- ⇒ From this point onwards, the Ottoman Empire saw itself as being heavily controlled by Europeans. The Crimean War initiated a decline in Ottoman morale and a helplessness. Europeans, for their part, no longer saw the Ottomans as an equal force to be reckoned with, but as a tool to be used in larger European concerns.

The Balkan Rebellion

- ⇒ In 1875, the Slavic peoples living in the Ottoman provinces of Bosnia and Herzegovina led an uprising against the Ottomans in order to gain their freedom. Due to the general weakness of the Ottomans, the rebellion spread. The rebellion was part of a larger political movement called the Pan-Slavic movement, which had as its goal the unification of all Slavic peoples -- most of whom were under the control of Austria, Germany, and the Ottoman Empire -- into a single political unity under the protection of Russia. Anxious also to conquer the Ottomans themselves and seize Istanbul, the Russians allied with the rebels and declared war against the Ottomans.
- ⇒ The war went very badly for the Ottomans. Under the peace treaty, the Ottomans had to free all the Balkan provinces, including Bosnia, Herzegovina, and Bulgaria. Russia also took substantial amounts of Ottoman territory as "payment" for the war.

The Balkan Wars

- ⇒ The history of Europe in the latter half of the nineteenth century and the first decade of the twentieth is a sordid history of land grabbing and conflict among European states. The Ottoman Empire, nearing its death, was dragged into these conflicts and beaten into its grave.
- ⇒ At various times -- starting in 1911 -- Italy, Greece, Serbia, Bulgaria, and Montenegro attacked and easily defeated the Ottomans and drove them back, almost to the very edge of Europe. The Ottoman territories that fell into European hands precipitated a crisis among European powers that would eventually lead directly World War I.
- ⇒ As a result of WW I and the Treaty of Versailles in 1919, the Ottomans lost all their territory in Syria, Palestine, Arabia, and Mesopotamia.
- ⇒ The European powers fought each other in Africa and the Middle East by encouraging revolution among the peoples there. The British, for instance, promised Arabs independent states if they revolted against the Ottomans and aided the British.
- ⇒ By 1919, the Ottoman Empire was reduced to Turkey only, which extended from the southern European shores of the Black Sea, to Asia Minor in the west, to Iran in the east, and Syria and Iraq, newly created states in 1919, in the south. Ottoman power had effectively come to an end.

The Republic of Turkey

- ⇒ In 1922, Ottoman rule officially came to an end when Turkey was declared a republic. While the Ottomans were suffering from defeats in Europe, internally they were faced with revolution by liberal nationalists who wished to adopt Western style governments.
- ⇒ These nationalists called themselves the "young Turks," and in the early 1920's, they began an open revolt against the Ottoman government.
- ⇒ The goal of the revolution was to modernize and westernize Turkey, and the primary theoretician of that change was Mustafa Kemal ,who is called in Turkish history, Ataturk, of "Father of the Turks." As president of Turkey from 1922 to 1928, Ataturk:
 1. 1923, drove out occupying Allied forces, proclaimed Republic of Turkey
 2. Implemented reforms: emancipation of women, western dress, European law
 3. Secular rule replaced Muslim authorities
 4. Constitutional democracy, although Ataturk ruled as virtual dictator until 1938
- ⇒ It is not an exaggeration to say that Ataturk is one of the most significant political figures in Islam, for he was the first to theorize and put into practice the secularization of the Islamic state and society. Nothing like it had ever happened in the whole of Islamic history, and, despite the radical nature of Ataturk's reforms, the Turkish republic has remained an independent and secular Islamic state. Efforts to emulate this secularization, however, have by and large been unsuccessful in other Islamic states.