Nationalism in the Middle East. A series of addresses presented at the Sixth Annual Conference on Middle East Affairs, sponsored by The Middle East Institute, March 21-22, 1952. Published by the Middle East Institute, 1830 Nineteenth Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 68 pp. 1.

The subject selected for the Sixth Annual Conference, "Nationalism in the Middle East", is really, as the chairman George Camp Keiser points out, a timely topic of great importance and perhaps one of the most vital questions of the present day. To bring it under discussion was the aim of the Conference, where six short addresses were read on March 21st:

- Nationalism in Turkey: Lewis V. Thomas
- Nationalism in Israel: J. C. Hurewitz
- Nationalism in Iran: T. Cuyler Young
- Nationalism in the Arab World: William D. Schorger
- Education in Egypt of Today: C. Worth Howard
- Nationalism and Islam: William Thomson

In the concluding session on March 22nd Hans Kohn spoke about General Characteristics of Nationalism in the Middle East.

Thomas is right in regarding the new Turkish evolution with optimism, but without neglecting some problems which remain to be solved. The future will show if the Kurdish problem really is already well on its way to solution by a language change, and if the more mature phase of Turkish nationalism, this emotional nationalism really has been a liberative, creative force. Did Turkey's Jewish and Christian citizens in fact enjoy under the Turkish Republic only a second class status as citizens—not by law but in the ideology of Turkish nationalism? Is it certain that Turkey does not intend of any territorial expansion?

In the case of Israel there are plenty of problems. In order to show the author's point of view, we quote his words: "In less than four years more than 700,000 Jews have settled in Israel, thus more than doubling its Jewish population. Israel's resources are inadequate to take care of them. The Hebrew language is not an attribute, but one of the factors helping to unify the population... This military training serves, first of all, to teach the immigrants Hebrew. A very important point: The Israeli government as such is anxious to be as fair as possible to the entire population, including the Arab minority. There are, to be sure, civil servants who do not share the government's sentiments and interpret laws in ways in which they were not intended. On the one hand Israel has introduced a Western parliamentary system in the full sense of the term. Yet Israel has also kept alive the millet system which is based on exactly the reverse principle. The contradiction must at some time be resolved. We thus come to the unsolved Arab-Israel problems. The most serious is that of the Arab refugees. Israel does not feel responsible for the creation of the problem. And indeed, if you look back to its origins, Israel has a strong case... As the mandatory administration was dismantled and the governmental services were withdrawn, that vacuum was not filled; there was, instead, administrative chaos... If, then, a situation developed such as the Dayr Yasin massacre, which occurred on the 9th of April, 1948, when Jewish terrorists who were themselves outlawed by the rest of the Jewish community brutally murdered more than 200 Arabs in the vicinity of Jerusalem, pandemonium was bound to take place. The rapid exodus followed... I have no doubt that the present government of Israel is sincere when it says that it is willing to accept the present boundaries of Israel at any time that the Arab states are prepared to negotiate for a formal settlement. Nevertheless, there are irredentists in Israel among the former terrorist groups, that is, those who now call themselves the Freedom Movement. They continue actively to insist upon the enlargement of Israel's domain... Still, even if there is peace, it would be hazardous to predict the ultimate forms of Israeli nationalism."

In 1952, during a trip of 4000 miles through the south and eastern provinces Young

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1 See WI, N.S., II 74.
learnt much about Iran nationalism, which now is supported by a middle class, the bourgeoisie proper. The chief problems are the diversity of languages, the diverse economies of the nomadic and the semi-nomadic, the agrarian and the modern urban, the social and cultural disparity, and the problem posed by the Sunni minority of 20% to 25%. The author's view is that the Iranian people are presented with a truly creative opportunity. If they fail they may see a complete revolution and overthrow of the Islamic pattern and way of life.

Schorger points out that the Arab world which consists of some 21 political entities with a total of only four independent states, cannot have a "nationalism" in the ordinary meaning, that it is rather a critical misuse of the word "nationalism", derived from our Western experience ... one sort of nationalism is not another. In the Arab states, the disintegrative factors are principally language, religion and occupation and/or technology. This is illustrated by the cases of Morocco and Lebanon, which the author has visited himself.

Education in Egypt made great advances during Taha Hussain Pasha's office as Minister of Education. It is a pity that after only two years of office he had to relinquish his post in January 1952 with the fall of the Cabinet. It was a real progress that since 1949 the more able elementary school children have a chance of sitting for primary school examination, and if they succeed they can go on then to secondary, and that for secondary education no tuition fees are collected in the Ministry's schools (primary education became free in 1944). Even higher education has had a phenomenal development, which according to the author's words "would rival the stories of some of the universities here in America". Besides the well-known Fuad I University 1, which celebrated its first quarter century in December 1951, and Farouq I University in Alexandria 2 there is since 1950 another state university in Cairo, which is named Ibrahim Pasha, and a fourth state university, Mohammed Ali, has been designated for Upper Egypt. For the current year the figures on enrollment were about 20,000 at Fuad I, 6000 at Farouq I, and 5000 at Ibrahim Pasha. But there are serious problems to be resolved, for instance the problem of the students' and even secondary and primary schools children's demonstrations, "and indeed, all well-wishers of Egypt fervently hope that national maturity will be evidenced by a halting of all student demonstrations staged in the name of politics and national affairs".

Thomson is right in seeing the terms "nationalism" and "nationality" historically, and showing the great difference between the Western nationalism, which grew and was not the product of a political doctrine, or a philosophical theory, and the new nationalism in the Middle East, which is now adopting Western ideas, as once the Muslims did adopt Greek ideas in the 9th and 10th centuries. He is sceptical concerning the Kurds: "Professor Thomas informs us that Turkey is having fair success in denationalizing the Kurds by the process of 'assimilation'. But Iran is not registering the same success in its effort to denationalize the Kurds, and Iraq has conceded them a measure of self-determination. It is quite evident that the leaders of Turkey and Iran have forgotten, or do not consider applicable in their case, perhaps, the lesson of the Partition of Poland, which first raised the issue of nationality, and have not thought through the basis and justification of their own existence."

Even Kohn, well-known by his books, regards nationalism historically. In the East it came in four stages: 1. Napoleon; 2. The missionaries about 1860; 3. The Russo-Japanese War; 4. World War I. According to Kohn there are only two real nations in Asia and Africa: Japan and Turkey, and Japan's performance between 1870 and 1905 was greater than Russia's transformation by Stalin. On a much smaller scale the Turks did the very same thing after 1920. In 1920 the so-called imperialism reached its peak in the Middle East, but two years later it had passed, "thanks to British leadership and moderation. There is no doubt in my mind that the British are politically the most mature people on earth, perhaps because

1 WI XXII 122.
2 WI, N.S., 1 237.