

# Middle East History

# Middle East Historical Timeline

## A Preliminary Look

1. Pre-7<sup>th</sup> Century
2. 7<sup>th</sup> Century and the Advent of Islam
3. 7<sup>th</sup> Century — 13<sup>th</sup> Century: Climax of Arab-Islamic Empires
  - a. **Prophet Muhammad**
  - b. **Rightly Guided Caliphs**
  - c. **Umayyad Empire**
  - d. **Abbasid Empire**
4. 15<sup>th</sup> Century-Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century: **Ottoman Empire**
5. 19<sup>th</sup>/20<sup>th</sup> Century to Mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century: **European Colonial Rule**
6. 1940s-1950s: **National Independence**
7. **Contemporary Periods**  
(Arab Nationalism, Local Nationalism, Political Islam, Reform)

# Northern Africa and the Middle East



# The Arab World





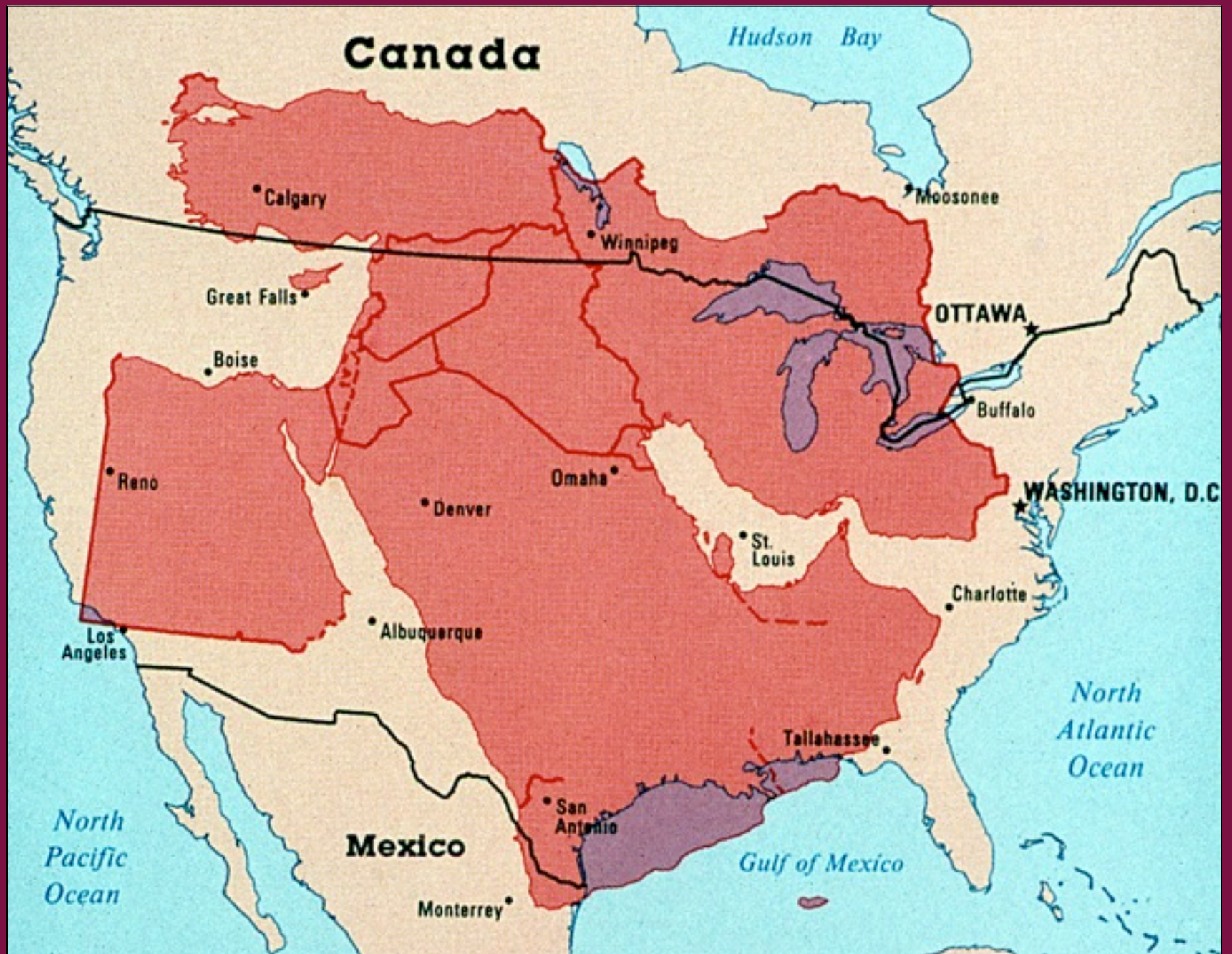
**The Arab World**

# The Islamic World



# The Near East





**Canada**

*Hudson Bay*

• Calgary

• Moosonee

• Winnipeg

**OTTAWA**

• Great Falls

• Buffalo

• Boise

**WASHINGTON, D.C.**

• Reno

• Omaha

• Denver

• St. Louis

• Charlotte

• Los Angeles

• Albuquerque

• Tallahassee

*North Atlantic Ocean*

**Mexico**

• San Antonio

*Gulf of Mexico*

• Monterrey

*North Pacific Ocean*





# Achaemenid Empire, 559-330 BC



# Sasanian Empire, 224-651 AD



# **Pre-Islam Arabia**

**The Myth of “the age of ignorance”**

## **Islam and Islamic History**

Discussing Islam and Islamic history is a monumental task. What we will be doing today is to extract from these topics what will be of use for the objectives of the course (we will focus more on the historical rather than cultural and normative aspects of Islam)

## Outline

- 1-Historical origin of Islam
- 2-Early Caliphate: Four Rightly-Guided Caliphs
- 3-Divisions within Islam: Sunni, Shi`a, Khawarij
- 4-High Caliphate: Umayyads and Abbasids
- 5-Ottoman Empire
- 6-Islamic Belief and Practice: Sources of authority, 5 pillars, 4 articles of faith.

## The Early Years

Islam is the last of monotheist religions revealed to Muhammad over a period of 22 years beginning in early 7th century Arabia (610).

- Muhammad was orphaned at a young age.
- He worked as the business manager for a wealthy widow, Khadija, in the thriving commercial routes between Arabia and the fertile crescent.
- At 610 he started receiving divine revelations in the form of messages and verses that were later collected and written in the Quran: 6000 verses ordered according to length (not chronologically).

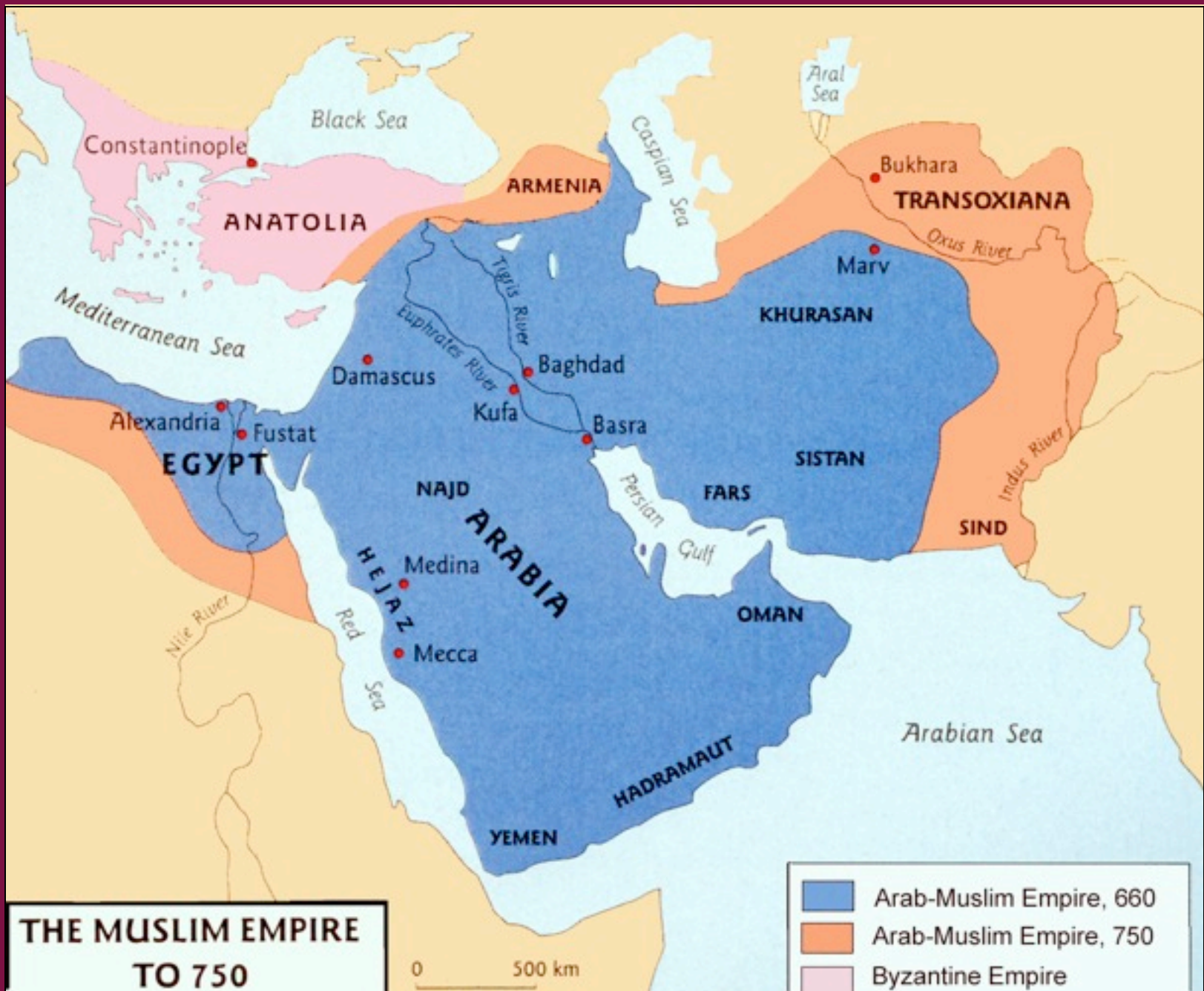
## Early Expansion

After a series of diplomatic efforts as well as battles, Muhammad was able to consolidate Islamic rule in Arabia by unifying its diverse and warring tribes. Medina was the center of the Islamic community-state that was created amidst the declining influence of the Byzantine and Zoroastrian empires.

## **Rapid Islamic Conquests: A Mixed Blessing**

Within a decade, Arab-Islamic forces asserted their rule over what is known today as **Iraq, Syria, Palestine, Iran, and Egypt**. The Islamic current overran their armies and elites but **preserved their bureaucracy, culture, and government**. This type of conquest was a **mixed blessing**: a source of tremendously rapid expansion and a source of fragmentation during times of religious, political, or economic crises or conflict. Local populations found Islamic rule to be comparatively more tolerant than previous rule (Byzantine and Persian). Conquered populations were given three options: conversion, acceptance of Islamic dominance, battle.





**THE MUSLIM EMPIRE TO 750**

# The Caliphate 632-1258

The history of the Caliphate is the history of Islam's political development. This is the source of much confusion with regard to the nature of Islam as a religion.

We will be discussing 3 periods: Rightly Guided Caliphs, Umayyads, and Abbasids.

Islam was politicized early on after the death of Muhammad, which created the crisis of succession: Muhammad had not designated a successor neither did the Qur'an address this issue unequivocally.

Initially, the Prophet's immediate companions agreed to select or acknowledge Abu-Bakr, an early convert, an advisor to Muhammad, and his father-in-law.

## The Golden Age of Islam: The Rightly Guided Caliphs

- Abu-Bakr and tribal rebellions (632-34)
- Umar and the great period of expansion and conquest (634-644)
- Uthman and tribal conflict between Mecca and Medina (644-656)
- Ali and Islamic civil wars (656-661)

Ali was supported all along by those who believed that he was the rightful successor to the Prophet because of his blood ties (cousin and son-in-law). Ali faced two challenges:

- 1-Aisha (daughter of Abu-Bakr, Prophet's widow)
- 2-Mu`awiyah: governor of Syria and Uthman's relative

He Triumphed over Aisha and eventually lost to Mu`awiyah and was killed by the Kharijites.

Ali lead an army to crush the rebellion of Mu`awiyah who refused to step down as the governor of Syria and accept Ali's replacement. Mu`awiyah, fearing an eventual defeat, called for arbitration which ended up inconclusive. Ali's acceptance of arbitration angered loyal supporters of Ali and lead to the formation of the *Kharijites* who eventually assassinated him in 661. Mu`awiyah then laid successful claim to the Caliphate, thereby ending Islam's Golden Age (normative period) and transforming the caliphate into an absolute monarchy.

# Organization and Institutions

**Caliphate:** organization and administration of the Islamic state

**Islam:** basis of identity and ideology

**Authority of Caliph:** derives from being successor to

**Muhammad:** protector and defender of the faith, institutor of Shari`a and he who spreads Islam

**Model for Governance:** Muhammad's political practice.

## Classes

-Arab Muslims

-Converts

-People of the book

-Slaves

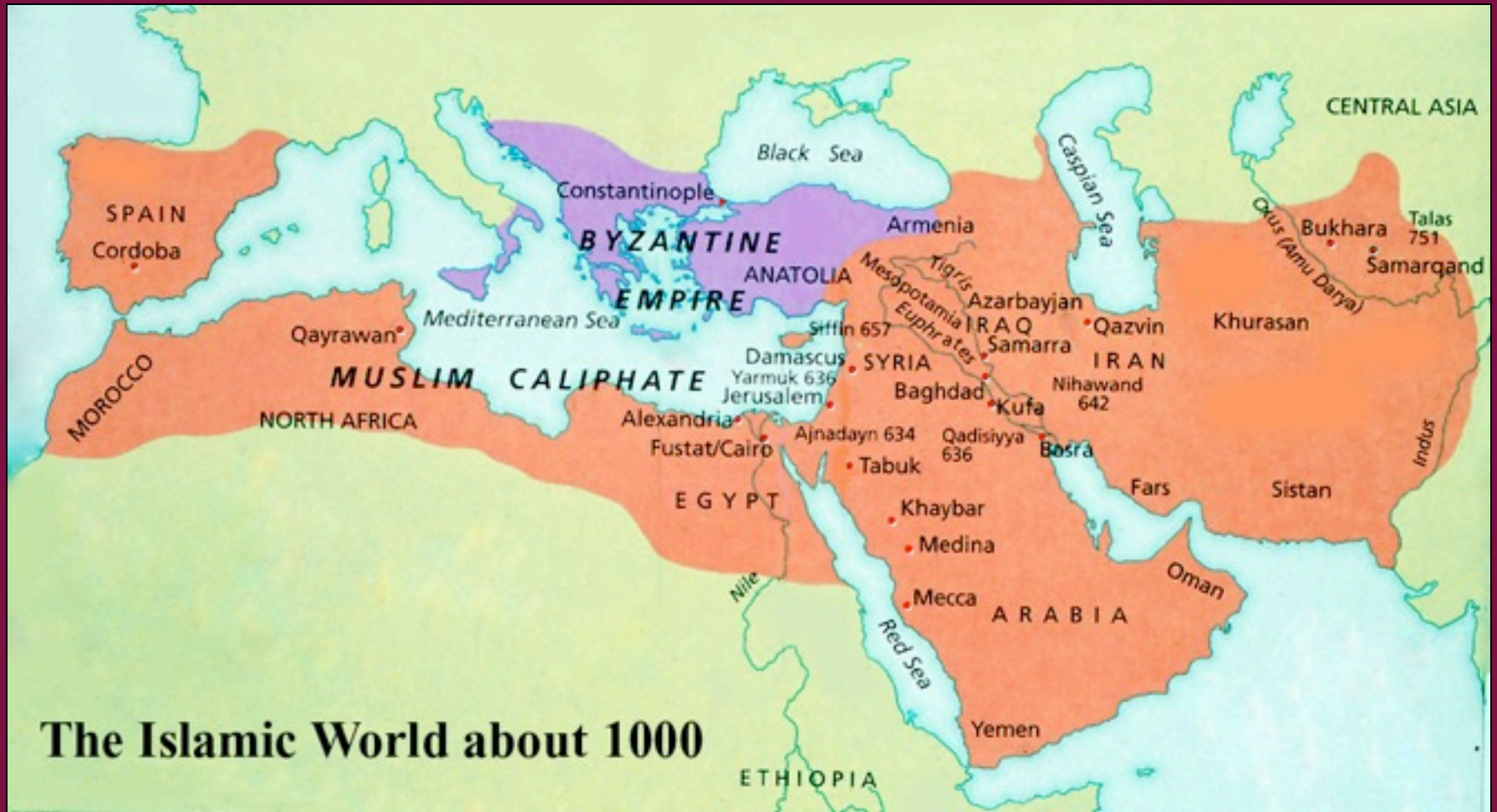
# The Umayyad Empire: 661-750

- Transformation of Caliphate to an **absolute monarchy**: hereditary vs. selection
- **Centralization and militarization** of the Islamic Empire
- **Arabization**: Reliance on Arab/Syrian warriors alienated non-Arab Muslims
  
- Moved capital to Damascus
- Expansion: North Africa, Spain, Portugal, Southern France, India.
- Created greater social stratification and enjoyed influx of new "foreign" ideas and practices
- Umayyad Caliphate denounced as dynastic rule and thus un-Islamic by many Muslims
- Excesses and infiltration led to the development of (mysticism and) the religious sciences and the formulation and explication of Islamic law to safeguard beliefs and limit the power of the Caliph
- Growth of opposition forces:
  - 1.Non-Arab Muslims as second class citizens,
  - 2.Kharijites and Shi`is viewing Umayyads as usurpers,
  - 3.Arab Muslims in Mecca, Medina, and Iraq resenting Syrian privileges,
  - 4.Pious Muslims resenting luxurious lifestyles, social privileges, and unwarranted innovations.

All above culminated in the downfall of the Umayyads at the hands of Abu al-Abbas who initiated the Abbasid era.

# The Abbasid Empire: 750-1258

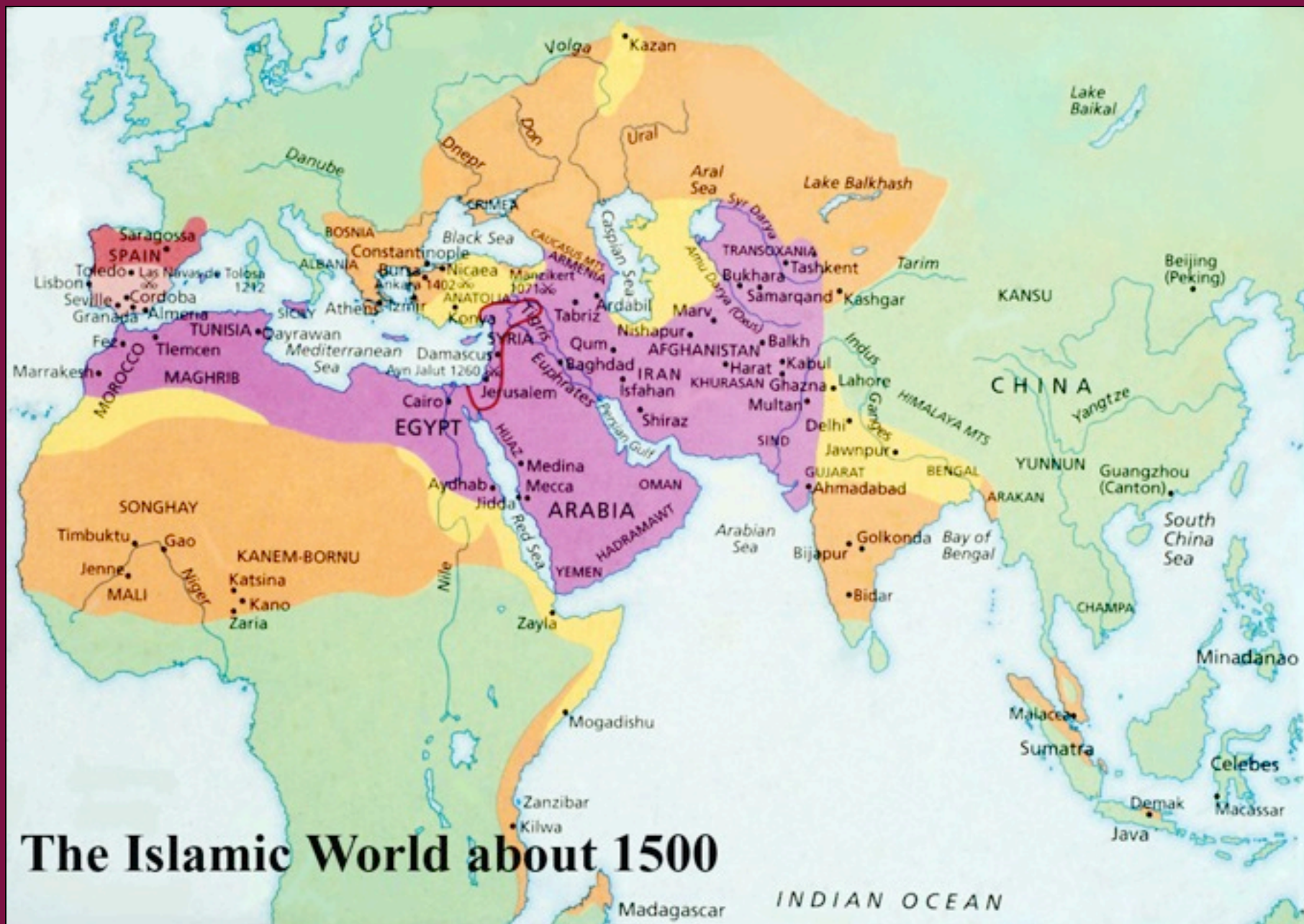
- An era of strong centralized government, economic prosperity, and remarkable civilization.
- Abbasid rule borrowed heavily from Persian culture and was more inclusive
- Abbasid success was based less conquest and more on trade, commerce, industry, and agriculture
- Major contributions were made in philosophy, Algebra, geometry, science, medicine, literature, art, and architecture (some started during the Umayyad era).
  
- Abbasids became the great patrons of an emerging religious class of Ulama (religious scholars) which further developed Islamic religious law: Shari`a
- Abbasid rule was challenged by the Fatimid dynasty in Egypt and by the crusades. Although the Abbasids more or less triumphed, their empire was exhausted and fragmented. It fell apart in 1258 under the onslaught of the marching Mongols (yeeeeee haaww!).
- The Ottoman Empire in the 15th century carried the mantle of Islam. (with the Moghuls and the Safavids Empires to the East).



**The Islamic World about 1000**







# The Islamic World about 1500

INDIAN OCEAN

# The OTTOMAN SULTANATE

in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> Centuries



# The OTTOMAN SULTANATE

## From the 18<sup>th</sup> Till the 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries



- Ottoman Sultanate
- 1874 Territories Lost, with Year.
- to Austria
- to Russia
- to Italy
- to Great Britain
- Territories Obtaining Independence, with Year
- Territories Lost after the Balkan War, 1912, 13
- Boundaries of 1914 are shown in black

# The Ottoman Empire in World War I, 1914-1918



# Husayn-McMahon Agreements, 1915





# Sykes-Picot Agreement, 1916

# The Balfour Declaration

Foreign Office, November 2nd, 1917

Dear Lord Rothschild,

I have much pleasure in conveying to you, on behalf of His Majesty's Government, the following declaration of sympathy with Jewish Zionist aspirations which has been submitted to and approved by, the Cabinet.

“His Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country.”

I should be grateful if you would bring this declaration to the knowledge of the Zionist Federation.

Yours sincerely,

Arthur James Balfour

# The Mandates, 1920





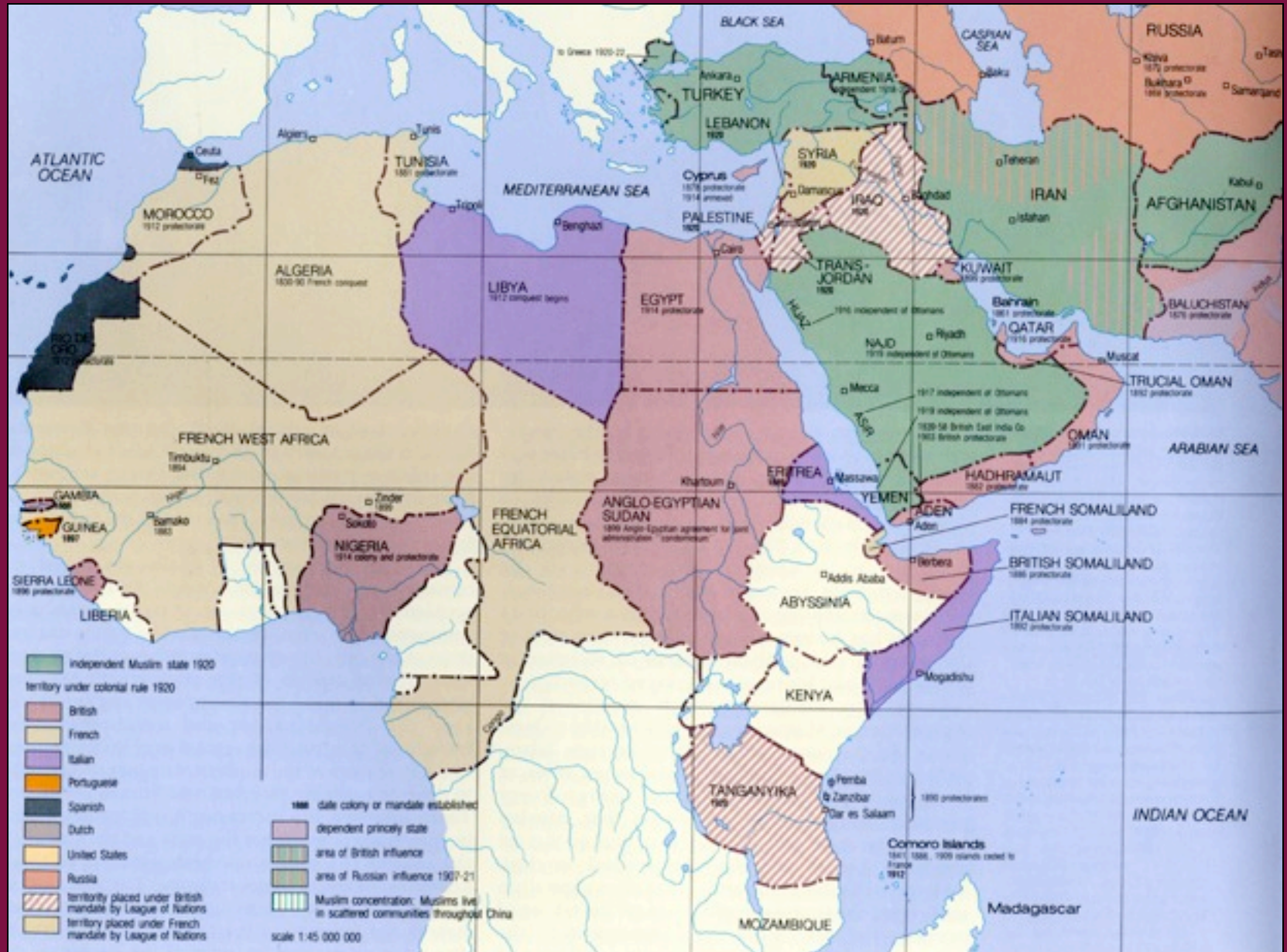
# Opposition to the Mandates, 1920-1945



# Establishment of the Republic of Turkey



# North Africa and West Asia, ca. 1920





The recession of the Persian frontiers

# The Interwar Period

## Independence Struggles

- **Interwar Period Marked by French and British Domination**

- **Arab Political Activity was devoted to achieving independence.**

Therefore:

- other domestic considerations were put on the back-burner (e.g., welfare, land reform)
- internal conflicts were glossed over (between notables, nationalists, and traditionalists)

- **Elite Nationalism: Early Arab political leaders and colonization:**

- mostly land-owners and upper class professionals
- maintaining their privileges required local bases of support & the blessing of European powers: this meant that compromises had to be made & resistance was moderated

- **Popular Nationalism: 2<sup>nd</sup> Generation Leaders**

- a rising alternative leadership emerged: nationalist-populist, included most classes
- the expansion of the state involved the mobilization/incorporation of working/middle classes that were the seed for the overthrow of the “elite nationalist regimes.”
- this is the leadership that in one way or another, continued to rule the arab world

# The End of Colonialism in the Middle East

- **The end of Colonialism**

- just as WWI weakened the grip of the Ottoman Empire, so did WWII with the Europeans

- Independence was formally granted, but imperial aspirations and dependency persisted

- Independent states and leaders struggled through a number of contradictions and challenges (politically, socially, and economically)

- **The Emerging Nation-States**

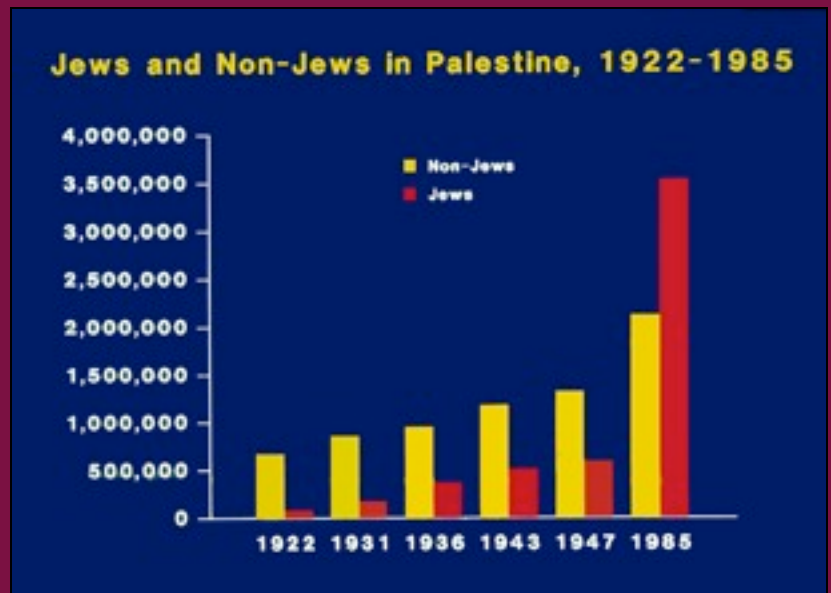
- marked by dependence

- internal class disparities

- disparities between rich and poor countries

- uneven internal development

- lack of institutionalization



# PALESTINE

U.N. Partition Plan  
(1947)



# ISRAEL

(1948 - 1967)





# ISRAEL and Occupied Territory in June 1967

