

domination and the long-time butt of European intrigues. They have been profoundly stirred by the great achievements of their ancient overlords, the Turks.

National Feeling

Arab national feeling was already astir as early as the opening of the war of 1914-18, aroused by European example and the lash of the counter-nationalism of the Young Turks. It was this growing national feeling, focused then upon the achievement of Arab independence from Ottoman rule, that Col. T. E. Lawrence so brilliantly organized for the Allied cause, thereby turning the tables upon the Germans and the Sultan. This he was able to do because he persuaded the Arab leaders that Allied victory at the end of the war would be followed by national independence for the Arab peoples. When, with Allied victory assured, it was discovered that other and more influential Allied leaders had other ideas about the political reorganization of Arab territories, that instead of gaining national independence the Arabs were to be divided into a mosaic of mandates, protectorates and dependencies of certain Allied powers, a feeling of bitter frustration swept over the Arab world.

Differences Among the Arabs

It is true, of course, that Lebanon and Syria, Iraq, Transjordan and Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Yemen and the tribal states as political divisions reflect certain real differences among Arabs. Lebanon, for instance, is largely Christian whereas Syria is overwhelmingly Moslem. Iraq has a large population of Shiah Moslems that link in religiously with their brethren in Iran whilst Saudi Arabia is the home of the Wahabis, a fiercely puritanical Moslem sect of other views. Though the people of all these areas speak Arabic, linguistic differences are noticeable, sometimes difficult. More important, perhaps, in a region where tradition of tribal solidarity and of allegiance to feudalistic overlords have held sway for so many centuries is the strength of local loyalties. These result in provincial conflicts between various Arab groups, and provide a basis for divisions. The personal and family struggles that centred on the creation of the thrones of Iraq and Transjordan are good examples of these.

Unifying Influences

Yet if the Arabs are divided by religion, linguistic variations, and local loyalties, also by disparities of economic and social development, none the less, they are all Arabs, all members of one great cultural community. Of this fact the Arabs today are strongly and increasingly conscious. Those who choose to emphasize the divisions among the Arabs, who prophesy that a national unification of this cultural community will never come about, might well remember that very similar divisions and weaknesses did not prevent the creation of modern Germany and Italy, both of which, as national states, are less than a hundred years old. Whatever the obstacles, and they are many, the Arabs today are moving toward some kind of national union. In every such national struggle common efforts against common obstacles, especially against common foes, are the most unifying of forces. That is why the fight against the Turks in 1914-18 first really awakened the Arabs to national self consciousness, and why the very frustration of their hopes after 1918 carried the process a long step forward. Once the enemy had been the Ottoman overlord: now the French and the British assumed that role. Thus, against them as the new ruling powers was levelled the full brunt of rising national feeling.

Between the two World Wars, in the years 1919-1939, the long and tangled story of bloodshed and intrigue, of assassination, insurrection, revolt and civil war that characterizes the picture of the Arab world may be summed up under the headings, a struggle for national independence, and effort to get rid of foreign rule. Some of the Arab states like Iraq and Saudi Arabia were more successful than others such