State-Building by Revolution

chapter 12: notes by Denis Basic

Cairo Demonstrations 1919
Egypt

State-Building by Revolution
The case of Egypt

- Egypt was occupied by the British in 1882
- However, legally it was a part of the Ottoman Empire until WWI
- In December 1914, Britain declared Egypt a protectorate ending the Ottoman sovereignty over Egypt once and for all.
In November 1918, a delegation of Egyptian politicians, testing the limits of Woodrow Wilson’s promise of self-determination of peoples, petitioned the British high commissioner in Cairo for permission to go to Paris to represent the Egyptian population at the peace conference.

The leader of this group was Sa’ad Zaghlul (1857 - 1927.)
Egyptian Revolt or Egyptian 1919 Revolution

- The British arrested and deported Zaghlul and his colleagues for presumptions.

- Demonstrations and strikes broke out throughout Egypt in Spring 1919.

- The revolt / revolution lasted for two months before the British were able to put it down by force.

- However, the British concluded that they cannot keep Egypt down by force.
In 1922, the British granted Egypt “conditional independence.”

The treaty they imposed on the Egyptians was a disappointment to Egyptian nationalists.

The British asserted:

- their right to control the Egyptian defense and foreign policy,
- protect minorities and the Suez Canal,
- maintain their role (alongside the Egyptians) in the governance of Sudan in the south,
- and safeguard the capitulations.
The Egyptian nationalists had to renegotiate the Egyptian independence with the British on the eve of WWII.

Independence was hampered by the strange system of governance in Egypt that pit three powerbrokers against each others:

1. Wafd (Delegation) party of Zaghlul
2. King (Muhammad ‘Ali’s descendants)
3. the British ambassador.
In the decades following WWI, the mainstream nationalist movement in Egypt did not advocate radical social changes.

The *Wafd party* mostly represented large landowners and upwardly mobile intelligentsia.

Both of these social strata accepted European ideas and models of nationalism.
The nationalist movement failed to encompass or even control the totality of the Egyptian public sphere.

In early 1920’s, a communist party opened its door capitalizing on the successes of the Bolshevik revolution and resurgent labor activism.

Toward the end of 1920’s, a modern Islamist organization, *Muslim Brotherhood* appears as the next alternative.
Muslim Brotherhood

officially Jamiat al-Ikhwan al-Muslimin [Arab. Society of Muslim Brothers], religious and political organization founded (1928) in Egypt by Hasan al-Banna. Initially opposed to secular tendencies in Islamic nations, the organization has sought to foster a return to the original precepts of the Qur’an. It grew rapidly, establishing an educational, economic, military, and political infrastructure. Threatened by its power, Egypt’s government twice banned (1948, 1954) the organization. It has since existed largely as a clandestine but militant group marked by its rejection of Western influences. The Muslim Brotherhood remains strong in Egypt, Syria, Sudan, and other Arab countries and has resorted to acts of political violence. It was permitted to operate openly in Egypt in the late 1980s and early 90s after disavowing violence in the 1970s, but the government again moved against the group in the mid and late 1990s. Members have been elected to Egypt’s parliament as independents. In Jordan the Muslim Brotherhood’s political arm, the Islamic Action Front, is an important political party. The Muslim Brotherhood has given rise to a number of more militant and violent organizations, such as Hamas, Gama’a al-Islamiya, and Islamic Jihad. The Muslim Brotherhood is the dominant force in the post-Mubarak Egypt as of 2013.
Hassan al-Banna

- **Hassan al-Banna** (1905-49)  
  Egyptian Muslim leader and founder of the Muslim Brotherhood, *ikhwan al-muslimin*.  
  Hassan al-Banna was a man of modest background from the Nile Delta region in northern Egypt, and educated as a teacher from Cairo Teachers College and from the famous Al-Azhar University.
The main inspiration for his religious involvement was from the magazine Al Manar which published the writings of Muhammad Rashid Rida (a Salafi thinker). The organization he started when he was 22 was initially a moderate one in its intent, but changes in the political climate and reorientations in its ideology, made the Brotherhood active in violent operations from the late 1940's.

The first Brotherhood was a youth club stressing moral and social reform, promoting this through education and propaganda.

Banna was an active writer. He wrote memoirs, as well as numerous articles and speeches. Among his most important books is "Letter To A Muslim Student" in which he explains the principles of his movement.

Banna's legacy is still active, and his movement has spread to many other Muslim countries.
Saudi Arabia

State-Building by Conquest
In 1902, ‘Abd al-‘Aziz ibn al-Sa’ud, a descendant of Muhammad ibn Saud, retook control of Riyadh, the capital of the former Saudi states, and drove out competing tribes from the region with the help of the *ikhwan* (brothers). The *ikhwan* were fighters from an assortment of tribes whom Wahhabi missionaries, put off by "idolatrous" nomadic culture, won over to their teachings and settled in agricultural communities.

1875-1953
The Saudi lands as the British Protectorate

By the time World War I broke out, the Saudi /ikhwan alliance proved a formidable force - so much so that they attracted the attention of the British. The British placed ibn al-Sa’ud’s domain under a "veiled protectorate," which, unlike the French protectorates in North Africa, did not have international sanction.

The British took this step for two reasons.

First, although the British had allied themselves with the rival Hashemite family in western Arabia, they decided that making trouble for the Ottomans and their Arabian allies - which ibn al-Sa'ud was more than willing to do - was more important than mere loyalty. They therefore hedged their bets.

In addition, the British wanted to check any designs ibn al-Sa'ud might have had on their Gulf protectorates. So they recognized the borders of his domain and agreed to defend its sovereign territory so long as he respected what was theirs. The veiled protectorate remained in effect until 1927.
Ibn Saud’s conquest of Hijaz

- While ibn al-Sa'ud kept his pledge to keep his hands off Britain's Gulf protectorates, he made no such pledge to the British about Hashemite domains. By 1925 he had conquered the Hijaz (kicking out Sharif Husayn) and several years later, in 1932, combined the Hijaz with the Najd to form Saudi Arabia.

- To this very day, every king of Saudi Arabia has been a son or grand son of ‘Abd al-‘Aziz ibn al-Sa'ud

- The doctrines of ‘Abd al-Wahhab has been the official state ideology of Saudi Arabia, and Wahhabi ulama - many of whom have been descendants of ‘Abd al-Wahhab and related by marriage to the royal family - have wielded tremendous power and, in return, have served to legitimate the dynasty.

- And since the government claims strict adherence to the Qur'an, it also claims that there is no need for any other constitution.
Political & Doctrinal Changes in Saudi Arabia

- Once he had consolidated his state, ‘Abd al-’Aziz ibn al-Sa'ud had no use for the *ikhwan*, whose raids into Iraq promised to bring down the wrath of the British Royal Air Force on Saudi Arabia. He therefore squelched them.

- But he took another step as well. He made sure that clerics who had once used the doctrines of ‘Abd al-Wahhab to inspire a warrior ethos now preached another message - that Islam demands obedience to authority.

- In other words, according to the new dispensation clerics preached, Islam demands submission to a ruler so long as that ruler is Muslim. Even rule by a despot is better than *fitna* (strife) that disobedience to a ruler would bring.

- Remember Muhammad al-Ghazali (1058-1111), "Better a thousand years of tyranny than a single day of anarchy."
Why the Saudi government doesn’t like the Muslim Brotherhood?

- During the 2010-2011 Arab uprisings, the Saudis did everything possible to prevent Muslim Brotherhood governments from emerging wherever autocrats were removed.

- The brotherhoods - descendants of the original Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood - were not only political rivals, they were political rivals which claimed to derive their principles from the same source as the Saudis - the "true" interpretation of Islam.

- Even worse, however, is that the brotherhoods have encouraged Muslims to participate in politics as Muslims, something the Saudis would prefer to discourage both abroad (where brotherhood-led governments might upset regional stability and thus Saudi security) and on their home turf (where brotherhood activity might threaten dynastic rule).

- Read the article: Why Saudi Arabia is helping crush the Muslim Brotherhood?
Turkey

State-Building by National Liberation / Revolution
The treaty of Sèvres

- In 1920, the government of the Sultan Mehmed VI signed the Treaty of Sèvres, which recognized the mandates of the French over Syria and of the British over Mesopotamia and Palestine, removed Ottoman control over Anatolia and İzmir, and recognized Hejaz as an independent state, severely reducing the extent of the Ottoman Empire.
- It also divided the Western Anatolia among Greece, Italy, and France.
- All three countries sent occupying forces.
- However, Greece had especially high ambitions in Anatolia. Greek nationalists were inspired by the megali idea (grand idea). They sought to unite all Greeks from the Mediterranean area to the Black sea into one state.
- The Greek ambitions proved to be the most resentful to the Turkish nationalists, for they could not think of the former vassal state, becoming now their overlord, and of being reduced to a minuscule state encompassing basically only the area around Ankara about 1/6 of the modern day Turkey. (See the following map.)
Committee for the Defense of Rights

Throughout the unoccupied Anatolia a popular movement called “Committees for the Defense of Rights” sprang with the goal to resist the occupiers.

At that time Istanbul was occupied by the Entente powers who held the Sultan Mehmed VI under their control.

The government in Istanbul sent the general Mustafa Kemal to Anatolia to suppress the Committees’ activities and accept the capitulation.

Sultan Mehmed VI Vahidettin

reigned from 1918-1922
Mustafa Kemal Ataturk

... was an army officer, revolutionary statesman, and founder of the Republic of Turkey as well as its first President. As a young soldier he joined the Young Turks and was chief of staff to Enver Pasha in the successful revolution (1908). He fought against the Italians in Tripoli (1911), in the Balkan Wars (1912-13), and defended Gallipoli (1915). During World War I he led resistance to the Allies' Gallipoli Campaign. The defeat of the Ottoman Empire and the capitulation of the sultan persuaded Mustafa Kemal to organize the Turkish Nationalist Party (1919) and set up a rival government in Ankara. The Treaty of Sèvres (1920) forced him on the offensive. His expulsion of the Greeks from Asia Minor (1921–22) led the sultan to flee Istanbul. The Treaty of Lausanne (1923) saw the creation of a independent republic. His dictatorship undertook sweeping reforms, which transformed Turkey into a secular, industrial nation. In 1934 he adopted the title Atatürk (Turkish: father of the Turks).

lived 1881-1938
The Entente army expected a quick win in the battle of Gallipoli. The battle degenerated into trench warfare that was catastrophic even by WWI standards.

Between 1/3 and 1/2 of the British, Australian, New Zealand, French and Ottoman soldiers were killed, wounded, or succumbed to disease.

The Ottomans repulsed the invaders and the Ottoman leader, Mustafe Kemal, became a national hero.
Turkish National Movement

- Instead of suppressing *the Committees for the Defense of Rights*, having arriving to Anatolia, Mustafa Kemal took charge of the rebellion.

- In a costly war that lasted two years, he forced foreign troops from Anatolia.

- In the wake of his victory, Mustafa Kemal adopted the name “Ataturk” (father of the Turks) and guided the establishment of the Turkish Republic that has ruled over an undivided Anatolia ever since.
“Population Transfer”

- Soon after the Turks expelled the Greek Army from Anatolia, the governments of the two countries agreed upon a population transfer.

- **1,300,000 Anatolian Christians** (Gelvin calls them Christian Turks) **left to Greece**. Many had lived for centuries in Anatolia, spoke Turkish as their native language, and only differed from their neighbors in terms of the religion (Orthodox Christianity, that they practiced).

- In return, **380,000 Muslim Greeks went to Turkey**.

- Like the ethnic cleansing of Armenians that took place during WWI and the dirty war to suppress Kurdish separatism, the transfer of “Greeks” to their “ancestral homeland” displays the dark side of nationalism in all its grisly detail.
Proportions des populations musulmanes, grecques et arméniennes en Asie - Mineure d'après la statistique officielle de 1914.

### Statistique officielle de 1914.

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Proportions des populations musulmanes, grecques et arméniennes en Asie-Mineure d'après la statistique du Livre-Jaune (Affaires Arméniennes 1893-1897)

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Mustafa Kemal Ataturk: his policies and deeds

Westernization/secularization of Turkey. Unlike Islamic modernists, who sought to find a compromise between Islam and Western ideas, Ataturk and his acolytes sought to impose a model for modernity borrowed directly from the Western experience.

He abolished caliphate, nationalized religious endowments, and abolished Islamic courts and Sufi orders. (Religion allowed, but only in private sphere.)

He changed calendar to a Western calendar.

He Latinized the Turkish script making it easier to read.

He granted women the right to vote in municipal elections in 1930 and in national elections in 1934, ten years before the French and eleven before the Italian women.

Let us remind ourselves of the World Chronology of the Recognition of Women’s Rights to Vote and to Stand for Election.
Mustafa Kemal Ataturk: his policies and deeds (cnt’d)

He passed a legislation forbidding men from wearing fez that was associated with the Ottoman modernity. (For details, see the Law on Headdress)

Although there was no legal regulation about the female headwear, there was “an instruction” to remove the veils, in a secret circular sent by the General Secretariat of the Republican People’s Party (CHP) to the cities. In the Congress of CHP in 1935, the issue of banning the veil and the garment, called as “kara don” (black trousers), was also discussed (B.C.A CHP Fonu, 490.01.17.88.1). Based on this decision, the municipalities banned the veil.

By prohibiting ethnic and religious clothing, Ataturk and other Middle Eastern Secularists wanted to eliminate all obvious signs that may make distinctions among citizens.

They also wanted to make their citizens living and walking billboards.

They wanted to demonstrate their ability to cow their citizens.
Ataturk is the hear to the great defensive developmentalists of the 19th-century Ottoman Empire.

He expanded the role of the state, centralized power, and spread a single official ideology to bind citizens to each other and to the state.

He standardized the Turkish legislation and educational curricula.

He centralized the economy as well - State planning modeled initially after the US, Italian Fascist and Soviet model. The latter two models finally prevailed.

State-directed centralized economy lasted in Turkey until 1950.
His policies helped establish a parliamentary democracy.

Turkish elections are relatively free in comparisons with other Middle Eastern countries.

Parliamentary representatives include members of minority groups, such as Kurds, although the formation of political parties based on ethnicity is forbidden.
Mustafa Kemal Ataturk: Turkification policies

- All fighters for the Turkish independence were not secularists. Many of them were guided by the Islamic principles in the defense of their homeland. However, Ataturk and his cronies did impose secularism on the country.

- Cultural and political pressure on Kurds persists. Some of them demand cultural freedom, while others demand total independence from Turkey.

- The Turkish military loyal to the idea of Kemalism (secularism) assumed emergency power three times, in 1960, 1971, 1980 and forced the replacement of the Prime Minister in 1997.

- Any assessment of Turkish democracy has to balance a lively and parliamentary tradition with a pattern of Military intervention.
In 1980, the first cracks in Turkish secularism appeared. In the wake of an economic and political crisis, a military junta took power and declared what was called the “Turkish-Islamic Synthesis” - the new state ideology. The synthesis was a marriage of the right-wing Turkish nationalism with “the Islamic tradition.” This was a battle against the non-believers of the political left. 

In 2002, the Islamic Political Party - The Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi - AK Party), secured its first prime ministership. For many Turks, the AKP-dominated government has led to what they call “the creeping Islamization of Turkey.” “The creeping Islamization of Turkey” has been met with widespread resistance from committed secularists, members of religious minorities, and those caught on the other side of culture war. 

See Gelvin for more on the AKP policies and opposition to them.
Iran

State-Building by coup d’état
Mohammad Ali Mirza Shah (1872-1924)

...was against the constitution that was ratified during the reign of his father, Mozzafar-al-Din Shah. In 1907 Mohammad Ali dissolved Majles (Parliament/National assembly) and declared the Constitution abolished, because it was contrary to the Islamic law. In 1908 he bombarded the Majles with the military and political support of Russia and Britain. In 1909, after constitutionalists won in their Second Revolution of 1908-09, the parliament deposed him as a monarch and named his 13 year old son Ahmad Mirza as his successor. Mohammad Ali Mirza Shah is still remembered as a symbol of dictatorship.
A cartoon that shows Muhammad Ali Mirza Shah's treatment of the Constitutionalists and his Russian backing.
The case of Iran

- At the beginning of WWI, the Russians occupied the northern part of Persia while the British occupied the south.

- When the Bolsheviks toppled the tsarist government, they withdrew Russian troops from Persia and the British occupied the entire country.

- After the war, the British tried to impose a treaty on their hosts that would have made Persia into a virtually British protectorate.

- At the same time, the Bolsheviks supported Persian separatist movements in the north.
The British needed Persia, because of its oil revenues and the connections to India. However, they did not have enough military force to control it.

The British envoys encouraged the leader of the Cossack brigade, Reza Khan, to take matters into his own hands.
At about the age of fifteen, Reza joined the Cossack Brigade in 1893-94. His proficiency in handling machine guns elevated him to the rank equivalent to Captain in 1912. Reza Khan's military reputation, his native intelligence and professionalism served him well and he soon became well known by some prominent Persians in Tehran and other provinces. By 1915 he was promoted to the rank of colonel. In 1918 Reza Khan was referred to as a Brigadier General in the campaign of Cossacks in the Kashan area against the bandits.

In 1921 he headed a British orchestrated coup and occupied Tehran with his Cossack Brigade consequently became war minister. Later in 1921 he negotiated the evacuation of the Russian troops. Reza Khan became prime minister of the new regime in 1923. In 1924, he negotiated the evacuation of the British forces stationed in Persia since World War I.
In 1926 Reza Khan deposed Ahmad Mirza, the last shah of the Qajar Dynasty, and was proclaimed shah of Persia. He changed his name to Reza Shah Pahlevi, thus founding the Pahlevi dynasty.

Reza Shah introduced many great reforms, reorganizing the army, government administration, and finances. He abolished all special rights granted to foreigners, thus gaining real independence for Persia.

Under Reza Shah's 16 years rule the roads and Trans-Iranian Railway were built, modern education was introduced and the University of Tehran was established, and for the first time systematically dispatch of Persian students to Europe was started. Industrialization of country was stepped-up, and achievements were great. By the mid 1930's Reza Shah's dictatorial style of rule caused dissatisfaction in Persia. In 1935 the name of the country changed from Persia to Iran.
In World War II the Allies protested his rapprochement with the Germans, and in 1941 British and Russian forces invaded and occupied Iran. Forced to abdicate in favor of his son, Mohammad Reza Shah, and he died in exile in Johannesburg of South Africa in 1944.
Reza Shah’s attitudes and national ideology

Initially, Reza Shah entertained the idea of establishing a republic in Persia with himself as the first president. However, in 1926 he decided to proclaim himself a “shah” and preserve the monarchist system in the country. Thus, Reza Khan became Reza Shah.

His policies were deliberately modeled on those of Mustafa Kemal of Turkey and of Benito Mussolini of Italy.

Like his exemplars, Reza Shah was a self-proclaimed modernizer, a centralizer, and a nationalist and he also disdained liberal democracy and mistrusted parliamentary rule.

All three rulers believed that the masses had to be led by a powerful leader.
Like Mussolini, he called his political and economic program “New Order.”

This program included: national consolidation, economic development, and Westernization.

In his nationalist ideology, Islam did not play any role and he traced the roots of the Iranian nation in pre-Islamic times. The Aryan nostalgia.

Actually, in his ideology, the age of Islamic Persia was presented as “the age of darkness.”
Reza Shah’s Laws and Regulations

- He outlawed ethnic and regional clothes;
- commissioned the Iranian Academy to eliminate Turkish and Arabic words from the Persian language (the project that proved unsuccessful for about 40% of Persian vocabulary comes from primarily Arabic, and much less from Turkish);
- ordered that the Arabic and Turkish toponyms be replaced with the Persian ones;
- commissioned new primary and elementary school curricula to disseminate his national ideology.
Reza Shah set up the Society of Public Guidance to reach those no longer of school age.

The society was modeled after the propaganda machinery of Italy and Nazi Germany to publish journals, magazines, pamphlets, newspapers, and textbooks and to script radio broadcast, parroting the official national narrative.
Like Mustafa Kemal and Mussolini, Reza Shah also adopted a state directed economic policy to eliminate foreign control over the economy and to ensure rapid development.

To end foreign interference, the shah

1. canceled foreign concessions,
2. established the National Bank of Iran to take a place of the British run “Imperial Bank,” and
3. took control of post, telegraph, and customs from foreigners.
He also set high tariffs to protect infant industries.

To accumulate capital for investment, the state confiscated landholdings of many of the wealthiest landlords and ‘ulama and set up government monopolies.

In addition, the state acquired income from oil sales.
Reza Shah’s economic policy started being called “import substitution industrialization.”

This practically means that rather than importing goods from Europe and elsewhere, Iran attempted to produce everything from soft drinks to steel itself.
While the most of their predecessors tried to modernize by integrating their states further into the modern world economy, Reza Shah and Mustafa Kemal sought to modernize by freeing their nations of the constrains of the world system.
Reza Shah’s modernization

- Like Mustafa Kemal, Reza Shah associated **modernization** with **Westernization**, which included secularization.

- Reza Shah legislated against religious display and participation of ‘ulama in positions of authority.

- He replaced ‘ulama in the judicial system and introduced the French Civil Law Code and the Italian Penal Code.

- He refused to give exit visas to pilgrims wishing to go to Mecca and Medina or Karbala and Najaf.
He restricted shi’a rituals deeming them “barbaric” or potentially subversive.

To further irritate ‘ulama, he erected statues of himself in town squares throughout Iran violating religious injunctions against the sculptural representation of the human form.

Reza Shah prescribed the appropriate clothing for the “modern Iranian.”

After a trip to Turkey in 1934, he prohibited women from wearing the veil and required all adult men to wear Western clothes and a brimmed hat that obstructed one of the positions for prayer.
Reza Shah & Women’s Rights

- His visit to Turkey also resulted in legislation promoting women’s legal rights.

- Legislation was passed that ensured female education and outlawed discrimination against women in public facilities.

- Unlike Turkish women, Iranian women did not have the right to vote (as they do now in the Islamic Republic).

- While the promotion of women’s rights is often associated with an expression of individual freedoms, Reza Shah, like Mussolini, sought to expend the reach of the state into the home and to replace the “private patriarchy” with a “public patriarchy” defined by the state.
Turkey vs. Iran

Many historians cite two reasons for the “success” of the Turkish modernization process and the “failure” of the Iranian.

1. Defensive developmentalism in the Ottoman Empire during the 19th century had had a greater impact on the society.

The changes in Iran were more novel than those in Turkey and fostered greater resistance.

2. Finally, Mustafa Kemal established his state and government through a popular war of national liberation whereas Reza Shah took power in a coup d’état and ruled by decree.