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# İslâm

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# Araştırmaları

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# Dergisi

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transformed more effectively by the non-resistant and non-confrontational social actors than the previous confrontational ones” (p. 150.)

Overall, Turam’s book successfully conveys the complexity of the dynamics between the state and Islamic groups: She contends that it would not be correct to explain the Turkish case with either the unique characteristics of Islamists in Turkey or with Atatürk’s heritage of authoritarian modernization. The author argues that, unlike cases of the co-option and authoritarian integration of Islam in Middle Eastern countries, the source of change in the relationship between Islam and the state in Turkey is the shifting linkages between them, “shifts that have motivated both sides to revise and readapt their attitudes and responses towards each other” (p. 154). The sporadic disagreements between Islamic actors and the state must be seen as potentially valuable assets to liberal democracy in Turkey.

Certainly, every book contains some factual mistakes and this book is no exception. Erbakan’s “ban from politics” occurred on 22 February 1998, not 1996 (p. 48). The date given for the “victory of the Refah party in national elections in 1996” should be corrected to 1995 (p. 49.) All in all, this book can be highly recommended to students of Islam who wish to escape from the neo-orientalist flaws of literature on Islam.

Burhanettin Duran

### **Western Imperialism in the Middle East: 1914-1958**

David Kenneth Fieldhouse

New York: Oxford University Press, 2006. xii+376 pages.

“There are Westerners, and there are Orientals. The former dominate; the latter must be dominated, which usually means having their land occupied, their internal affairs rigidly controlled, their blood and treasure put at disposal of one or another Western power.”<sup>21</sup> This is how Edward Said summarized, in its simplest form, the Western perception of the Middle East after the end of World War I. The defeat of the Ottoman Empire in 1917 started a new era in the history of the Middle East, totally changing the borders, authority and the ethnic

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21 Edward Said, *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient* (England: Penguin Books, 1995), p. 36.

map. The disappearance of the Ottoman authority created a power vacuum in the region which was filled by British and French mandatory powers.

The victors of WWI - merged under the League of Nations - were aware that if they were to satisfy their economic and political anticipations the colonial administrations in Africa, Asia, and the Pacific would not be effective in the former Ottoman provinces. Arab nationalism "was too far to permit usual colonial administrations,"<sup>22</sup> and the Arabs had a deep grievance against Britain and France. Both these allies had supported and influenced the Arab nationalist movement against the Ottoman rule during WWI and in return, an independent nation state had been offered.<sup>23</sup> However, at the end of the war, both victors failed to keep the promises that they made to their local Arab partners. Thus, the need to find alternative ways to the "various policy motivations - ideological, strategic, economic, and expediential" led to the creation of the mandate system. The latter approach received "powerful support from T.E. Lawrence<sup>24</sup> and Gertrude Bell",<sup>25</sup> who both became strong advocates for the independence of certain Arab provinces afterwards.<sup>26</sup> Also, "George Picot<sup>27</sup> was instructed to lay weight especially upon the point that there is no intention of imposing upon them (the Arabs) foreign governors, but solely of assisting them to create national institutions, capable of ensuring ordered government."<sup>28</sup> Hence, the administrative policy followed by the mandatory in the Middle East was different from previous applications, even though it failed to achieve its optimistic goals of transforming the Middle East into "Westernized" states. Both Britain and France had different "strategic, economic, and ideological purposes for being there"<sup>29</sup> and their political fiction produced no result but the potential for a chaos.

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22 Earnst Haas, "The Reconciliation of Conflicting Colonial Policy Aims: Acceptance of the League of Nations Mandate System", *International Organization*, Vol. 6, No. 4, p. 527.

23 For further details see T.E. Lawrence, "Seven Pillars of Wisdom"; Albert Hourani, "A History of the Arab People"; Kamal Salibi, "The Modern History of Jordan".

24 T. E. Lawrence was a British author and soldier renowned in particular for his role as liaison during the Arab Revolt of 1916-18. "Lawrence, T. E.", *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, <http://www.britannica.com/eb/article-9047425>, accessed June 30, 2007.

25 Gertrude Bell was a British writer, traveler, political analyst, administrator in Arabia, and an archaeologist who discovered Mesopotamian ruins. She was granted an Order of the British Empire in 1917, "Bell, Gertrude", *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, <http://www.britannica.com/eb/article-9015231>, accessed June 30, 2007.

26 Earnst Haas, *op. cit.* p. 527.

27 François Georges Picot was the French diplomat and one of the negotiators of the Sykes-Picot agreement signed in 1916. "Sykes-Picot Agreement", *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*. <http://www.britannica.com/eb/article-9070695>, accessed June 30, 2007.

28 Earnst Haas, *op. cit.* p. 527.

29 D. K. Fieldhouse, *Western Imperialism in the Middle East 1914-1958* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 348.

D.K. Fieldhouse's previous works focused on European Imperialism and its economic and political aspects through colonialism in Africa, Asia and the Pacific. His early research illuminated the role of economic factors in European imperialism during the 19th and early 20th century, with his perception of imperialism being generally based on economic history.

"Western Imperialism in the Middle East: 1914-1958" is Fieldhouse's second study on the region. The book evaluates the consequences of the mandate system imposed by Britain and France over the former provinces of the Ottoman Empire in the Middle East. By so doing, Fieldhouse also justifies the mandate system as the best form of Western control that could satisfy the economic needs of Britain and France within the region. As an imperial historian, Fieldhouse introduces the period from a British standpoint. Indeed, his title of the book sets a time frame from 1914 to 1958, even though the mandate powers ended their authority in the region in 1948. He claims that "the British influence" lasted in the region, particularly in Iraq and Transjordan, until 1958.

There are, however, certain problems with Fieldhouse's sources. He openly states in the preface of his book that his lack of field experience in the Middle East and his lack of command of local languages, such as Arabic, Hebrew, or Ottoman Turkish, obstructed his access to a wider range of primary sources. Nevertheless, he overlooks the original archives of Britain and France related to the period. He also avoids the important primary sources with English translations, such as *Memoires of King Abdullah of Transjordan*, H.M. King Abdullah of Jordan (London 1950). Fieldhouse's "select bibliography" at the end of his book is based mostly on secondary sources. Despite the fact that the French mandate is one of the foundations of his book, there is only one citation in French related to the period.

Although the book has been categorized in parts and subtitles, I prefer to refer to them as chapters and sections. The book consists of three main chapters. The first chapter evaluates the "before mandate period." The decline of the Ottoman Empire before 1914 and the rise of Arab nationalism as a reaction to the Ottoman Empire and the process of the partition of the Empire after World War I among the victors are presented in two sections.

The second and longest chapter of the book questions the mandate rule in the Middle East. Fieldhouse studies the region that was divided into five major territories by the League of Nations to be developed into westernized nation states under the assistance of the mandate powers. With the Sykes-Picot agree-

ment<sup>30</sup> in 1916, signed between Britain and France for the dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire, the direct control and influence zones of the mandate powers were decided. The agreement led to the division of Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, Transjordan and Palestine into various French and British administered areas. Although these regions are separately analyzed within the sections, as an imperial historian with a British background, Fieldhouse places the weight of his book on Britain's rule of the region with a special emphasis on the Palestinian issue.

The third and final chapter of the book is the conclusion; here Fieldhouse outlines the overall effects of the mandates on the mandatory and evaluates the level of success of the mandate powers in terms of reaching their primary goals of creating "truly democratic and stable societies."<sup>31</sup> Fieldhouse, as in his earlier studies, perceives the source of imperialism as an economic nominator of the industrialized West. He argues that creating "democratic and stable societies" in the Middle East facilitated the control of economically strategic locations. For Britain, the control of the Suez and Egypt would secure the trade routes and the control of the Mediterranean, while the control of Basra would secure the way to the East and to the oil in Iran. For France also, the aims were similar, and these were characteristic of European Imperialism in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>32</sup>

Fieldhouse follows an orientalist approach throughout the book. He advocates that an imperialist colonial system was the only way to bring the backwards Arabs to a level of Western development. Even when commenting on the controversies of the mandate powers' presence in the area, he refers to their failure in being able to create fully operating "western-type governments."

Fielhouse's book can be referred to by those who are seeking to attain a general idea of the historical background of the Middle East with the orientalist approach that "Britain and France failed to convert the Middle East to forms of Westernized and democratized governments." Fieldhouse has powered his argument with a well-categorized survey of all the cited sources.

İlkim Giritliođlu

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30 A secret convention made during World War I in 1916 between Great Britain and France, with the assent of Imperial Russia, for the dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire. The agreement led to the division of Turkish-held Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, and Palestine into various French and British administered areas. The agreement took its name from its negotiators, Sir Mark Sykes of Britain and Georges Picot of France, "The Sykes-Picot agreement", *Encyclopedia Britannica Online*, <http://www.britannica.com/eb/article-9070695>, accessed June 27, 2007.

31 Fieldhouse, op.cit., p. 348.

32 Fieldhouse, op.cit., p. 341.