

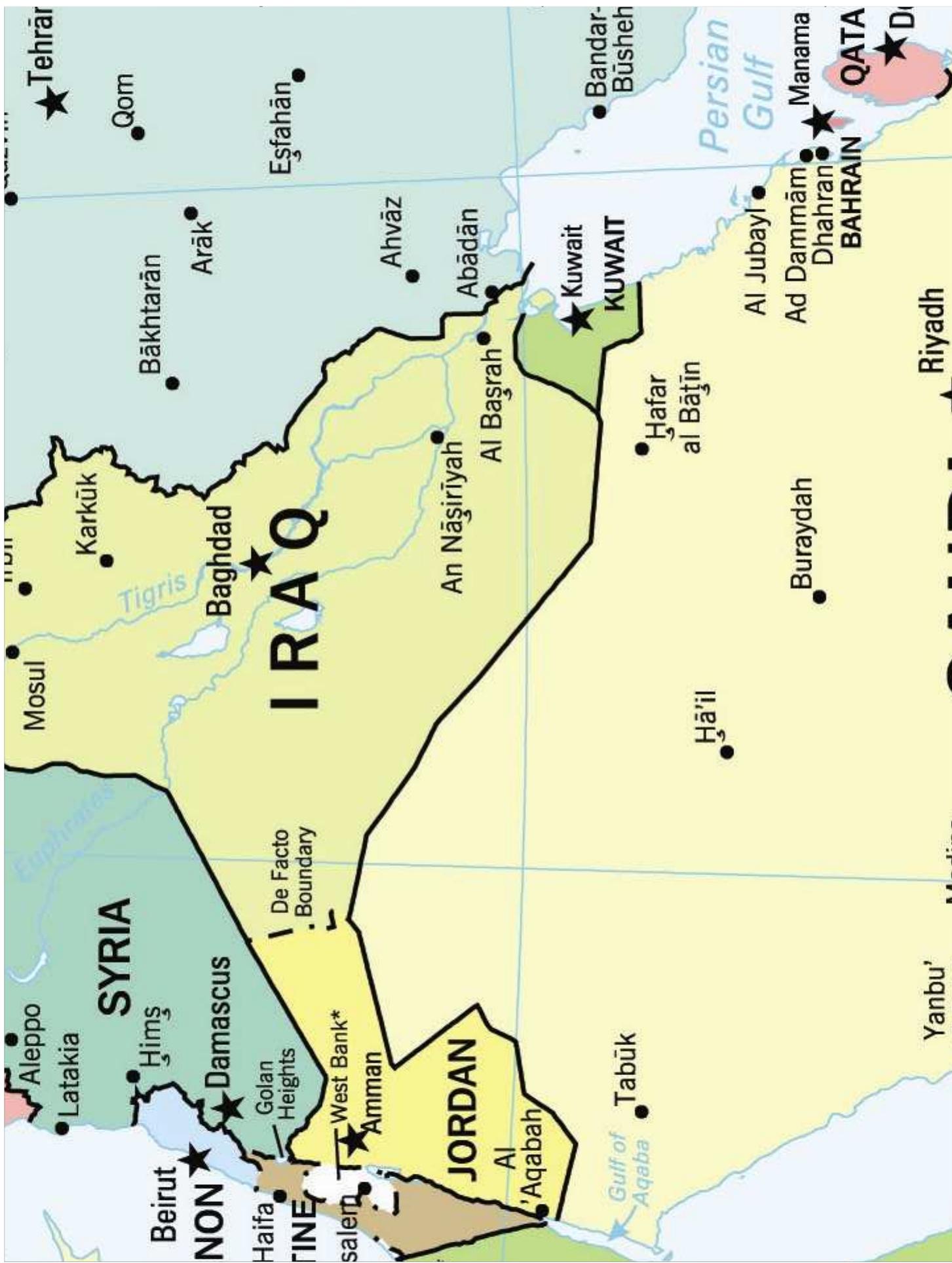
Political Zionism

Dr. Azzam Tamimi

Markfield, 22 February 2003

info@ii-pt.com

www.ii-pt.com



How & Why?

- ▶ Multitude of factors led to success of political Zionism
 - regional
 - international
- ▶ Muslims' own contribution:
 - backwardness;
 - ignorance;
 - corruption;
 - injustice;
 - infighting.

Concepts

- ▶ Theological 'Zion': spiritual link to Jerusalem
- ▶ Political Zionism:
 - an ideology that is of complex European origins, rooted primarily in the socioeconomic realities of the Eastern European Jewish ghettos & in European society of the late 19th Century.
- ▶ Its objectives:
 - To deliver the Jewish people and turn them from 'parasites' into citizens of their own 'exclusively' Jewish 'state';
 - To transform individual & communal Jewish parasitic modes of existence into international 'symbiosis'.

Zionism and Judaism

Almost all influential pioneers of political Zionism despised Judaism and were ashamed of their Jewishness, e.g.

- Theodor Herzl (1860-1904), thought of baptism
- Max Nordau (1849-1923), Herzl's closest friend, a self-avowed atheist. He believed that the Torah was 'inferior compared to European classics' and 'childish as philosophy and revolting as morality.'
- Chaim Weizman (1874-1952), Israel's first president.

Zionist Movement

- ▶ Components: Jews of diverse backgrounds:
 - non-specific (mainstream),
 - socialist,
 - religious,
 - revisionist,
 - labour, etc.

Common denominator

- ▶ conviction that since their early history, the Jews have constituted a nation, a people and that this peoplehood confers on them certain timeless national rights;
- ▶ the Jews, without waiting for the divine intervention, should achieve 'autoemancipation' by taking matters into their own hands and terminating their state of perpetual alienation & deep longing;
- ▶ this can be achieved via creating a Jewish state whose Jewishness lay neither in its religious orientation nor in its commitment to Judaism and its values but in its presumed national (ethnic) Jewish character.

European Jews

- ▶ World's Jews in 1800 totaled no more than 2.5 million, 90 per cent of them in Europe
- ▶ Up to the French Revolution
- ▶ The French revolution and emancipation
- ▶ Napoleon Bonaparte (1769-1821)
 - revoking rights granted by the revolution to the Jews
 - provoking nationalist sentiment
- ▶ Prussian King and German Princes re-impose old restrictions

Out of the Ghetto

- ▶ Enlightenment influence; Voltaire (1694-1778)
- ▶ Reform Judaism of M. Mendelssohn (1729-86)
- ▶ Economic empowerment
- ▶ Migration to urban centres
- ▶ Intellectual salons; 'shame of Jewishness' (Lassalle)
- ▶ Intermarriage
- ▶ Conversions to Protestantism or Catholicism
- ▶ Patriotism (the model of Gabriel Riesser)
- ▶ Backlash of orthodoxy: 'for Judaism to survive, it needed the exclusivity of the ghetto'

En route political Zionism

- ▶ 'Next Year in Jerusalem': the central place of Zion.
- ▶ False Messiahs from David Alroy (12th C.) to Shabtai Zvi (17th C.).
- ▶ 18th and 19th C. England: memoranda and pamphlets proposing restoring Jews to their ancient homeland.
- ▶ Napoleon called on Jews of Asia and Africa to join him in restoring old Jerusalem.
- ▶ In 1839 the London *Globe* (mouthpiece of the Foreign Office) published a series of articles advocating the establishment of an independent state in Syria and Palestine, envisaging the mass settlement of Jews.
- ▶ Disraeli's (1804-1881) & George Eliot's (1819-1880) novels and romanticising the return to Jerusalem
- ▶ Anonymous projects stressing futility of emancipation and calling for return to Jerusalem.

Leading Figures of Political Zionism

- ▶ Moses Hess (1812-1875): *The Revival of Israel* known as *Rome and Jerusalem, the last nationality question*.
- ▶ At the end of 19th C. there were more than 5 million Jews in Russia, the majority of them severely restricted. Apart from a few millionaires, the majority lived in poverty.
- ▶ 1881-1884 pogroms (destructions) in response to rumors that the Jews had killed Alexander II (the good tsar of Russia).
- ▶ Mass migration largely to the U.S. and less to Britain, S. Africa and W. Europe.
- ▶ Leo Pinsker (1821-1891): diagnosing the illness and prescribing the medicine; from assimilation to statehood (in U.S.A. or Asiatic Turkey).
- ▶ The Lovers of Zion: Associations promoting Jewish migration to Palestine founded 1881-2 independently of each other in a number of Russian cities.
- ▶ Nathan Birnbaum: said to be the real father of political Zionism, preceded Herzl in developing a plan for establishing a Jewish state in Palestine.

Theodor Herzl

(1860-1904)

- ▶ Austro-Hungarian journalist & founder of political Zionism, born in Budapest and educated in Vienna.
- ▶ His closest friend described him as “intolerant, inhumane in his judgment of people, domineering and hyper-egoistic.”
- ▶ In 1893, he envisaged the general baptism of Jewish children, because Jews must submerge themselves in the people.
- ▶ He wanted to appeal to the Pope: help us against anti-Semitism and I in return will lead a great movement among the Jews for voluntary and honorable conversion to Christianity.
- ▶ A few months afterwards he came up with a different solution to the problem: launch a Jewish national loan to finance emigration to the Promised Land.
- ▶ At the age of 36, in mid-February 1896, he published *Der Judenstaat* (*The Jewish State: An Attempt at a Modern Solution of the Jewish Question*)
- ▶ An assimilated Jew asserts the failure of assimilation no matter what (‘we shall not be left in peace’).