

Chapter Six: The West

CMIP has not in the past dealt with the attitude to the modern West in the Palestinian textbooks, as they refer to it very rarely. But in this latest issue this subject has been brought up more extensively and this requires specific attention in addition to the broad focus on the attitude to the “other” in general.

Most of the material in this chapter comes from a single geography textbook for grade 9. The emphasis is put on the damage done by Western Imperialism to the Arab nation as a result of its having divided the Arab homeland into many separate states that are in dispute with one another over their borders, its detachment of certain regions from some of these Arab states and their annexation to neighboring non-Arab countries – which has created regional disputes, the creation of the Palestinian problem, and indirect control of various Arab states by Imperialism to the detriment of their peoples.

The Arab homeland was characterized throughout its history by being one geographic and cultural unit. But when Imperialism came [to the region], during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and after that, it endeavored to divide the Arab homeland into several states separated by artificial political borders, in order to realize its ambitions, namely, preventing the establishment of Arab unity and stirring up conflicts between the Arab states over those borders.

...Imperialism endeavored to delineate the borders between the Arab and the neighboring non-Arab states, which brought about the detachment of many parts of the [Arab] homeland and their transfer to the sovereignty of neighboring countries. For instance, French Imperialism detached the region of the Bay of Alexandretta from Syria and transferred it to Turkish sovereignty. Also, English Imperialism detached the region of Arabistan from Iraq and transferred it to Iranian sovereignty. Imperialism did that, not out of love of Iran or Turkey, but rather to cause tension between the Arabs and the neighboring states. Imperialism succeeded in that by fomenting a war between Iraq and Iran that lasted for eight years as a result of the conflict between them over the regions of Shat al-Arab and Arabistan. Another example: a ferocious war took place in the 1980s between Libya, on the one hand, and Chad, on the other, over the district of Aozou which was disputed by the two states.

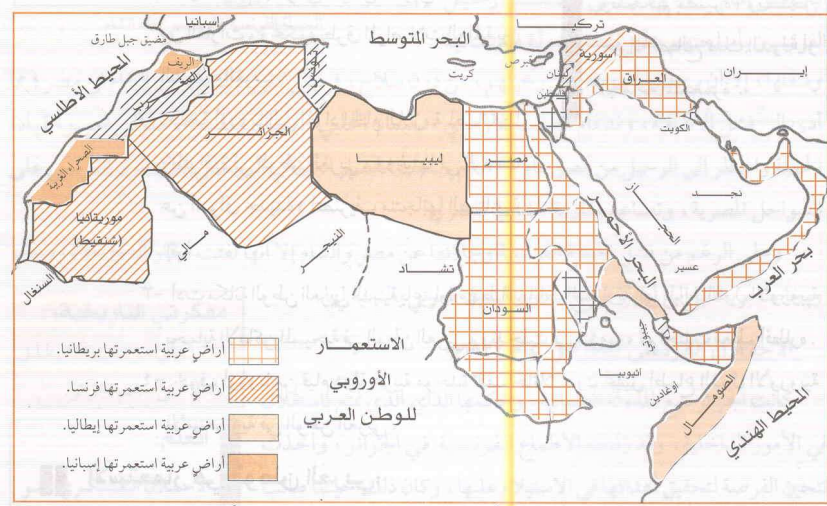
Geography of the Arab Homeland, Grade 9, (2003) pp. 6-7

Imperialism endeavored to divide the Arab homeland into several political units to realize its greedy ambitions [both] before the First World War and after it.

Geography of the Arab Homeland, Grade 9, (2003) p. 9

الدرس ١
الاستعمار الأوروبي في الوطن العربي قبل الحرب العالمية الأولى

نتأمل الخريطة الآتية:



خريطة الاستعمار الأوروبي للوطن العربي قبل الحرب العالمية الأولى

نفكر فيما يأتي، ونجيب:

- ١- أعدد الدول العربية التي خضعت لكل من: الاستعمار البريطاني، والفرنسي، والإيطالي، والإسباني.
- ٢- ما هي الدولة العربية التي لا تزال ترزح تحت الاستعمار؟

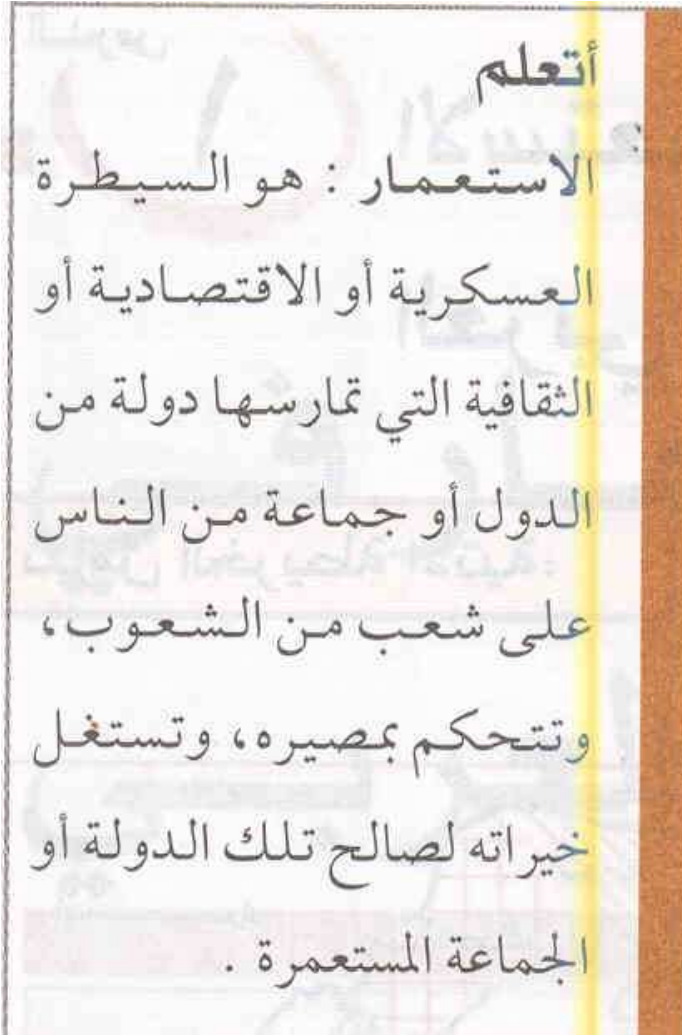
Map of European Imperialism in the Arab Homeland before the First [sic, and should be Second] World War
 [Legend:]

- +++ Arab territories under British Imperialism
- ///// Arab territories under French Imperialism
- Light Arab territories under Italian Imperialism⁴⁴
- Dark Arab territories under Spanish Imperialism

⁴⁴ Note the inclusion of Eritrea in the Arab world.

Let us think about the following and answer:

1. I will name the Arab states that were subject to British, French, Italian and Spanish Imperialism.
2. What is the Arab state that is still subject to Imperialism⁴⁵?



I learn: Imperialism is military, or economic, or cultural domination exercised over a certain people by a certain state or a group of people⁴⁶, who controls its destiny and exploits its resources for the benefit of that imperialistic state or group.

Modern and Contemporary Arab History, Grade 9, (2003) pp. 41-42

⁴⁵ No answer is given here but it seems to be clear: Palestine, which makes Israel part of world Imperialism.

⁴⁶ Zionists, for example?

The English did not honor their promises to the Arabs regarding the establishment of an Arab state after the disappearance of Ottoman rule. Rather, in November 1917, they promised the Jews the establishment of a national home for the Jews in Palestine. That promise is known as the Balfour Declaration (Balfour being the British foreign minister). Before that, Britain and France had agreed to divide up among themselves the possessions of the Ottoman State in the Arab homeland in accordance with the Sykes-Picot Agreement of 1916... Palestine and the remainder of the Arab homeland are still suffering from the results of the Sykes-Picot Agreement and the Balfour Declaration...

Geography of the Arab Homeland, Grade 9, (2003) p. 9

The Arab people showed resistance and waged wars against Imperialism in all its forms and wherever it was to be found in the Arab homeland... Most of the Arab states obtained their independence, one after the other, after the Second World War. Palestine was supposed to achieve its independence in 1948, following the withdrawal from it of the forces of English Imperialism. But Britain, during the period of its mandate over Palestine, had striven with all its might to establish a Jewish state in Palestine in the implementation of the Balfour Declaration, and it was successful in so doing.

Geography of the Arab Homeland, Grade 9, (2003) p. 10

1. How did Imperialism endeavor to divide the Arab homeland before the First World War?
2. What were the Imperialist agreements by Britain and France in 1916 and 1917 to divide up the Arab homeland?

Geography of the Arab Homeland, Grade 9, (2003) p. 11

[Some] of the border conflicts between Arab states and other, non-Arab, ones

1. The conflict between Iraq and Iran over the region of Arabistan, the surface area of which is approximately 159,000 sq. kilometers and the number of whose inhabitants is about 5,000,000, of whom the majority is Arab.
2. The border conflict between Libya and Chad over the region of Aozou in southern Libya.
3. The Syrian-Turkish border conflict over the region of Alexandretta, which was annexed by Turkey in 1939 with France's encouragement. Its surface area is 5,000 sq. kilometers.
4. The annexation by Spain of the two Moroccan cities of Ceuta and Melila.

Geography of the Arab Homeland, Grade 9, (2003) p. 13

Leaving these conflicts without a solution has a negative impact on the Arab states. It throws them into confusion and makes them feel that they are lacking security. Therefore they resort to seeking protection from the

Imperialist states. These, in turn, interfere in the internal and external affairs of the Arab states, while their rulers feel that their destiny is dependent on Imperialism's satisfaction with them. The territories and resources of their states then become the spoils of Imperialism and their money is spent on buying arms, which are not used for their defense.

Geography of the Arab Homeland, Grade 9, (2003) p. 14

Alongside Western Imperialism, neighboring non-Arab states, such as Ethiopia and Turkey, are presented here in an unfavorable light.

Water problems in the Arab Homeland

...The greedy foreign ambitions regarding the water of the rivers of the Arab homeland, which flow from outside its territory. [Examples] of these greedy ambitions [are]: The building by Ethiopia of many dams on the Nile tributaries, which has reduced the quantities of water reaching Sudan and Egypt, and the building by Turkey of many dams on the tributaries of the Euphrates and Tigris rivers, which has reduced quotas of water from these two rivers to which Syria and Iraq are entitled.

Geography of the Arab Homeland, Grade 9, (2003) p. 69