

In Pursuit of a Futile Fantasy: A Critique of T.E. Lawrence and the Arab Revolt*

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T. E. [Thomas Edward] Lawrence (1888-1935), widely known as “Arabian Lawrence” and “Lawrence of Arabia” and as an Oxford educated historian, archeologist and Middle East specialist, expresses his emotions, thoughts and expectations regarding the Arab Revolt in his memoirs entitled *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*, whose title was inspired by the Bible¹ and written after WWI. The main concern of this paper is to make, by referring to Lawrence’s memoirs and other sources, a critique of Lawrence’s perception of the Arab Revolt and comment on the roots of his Turkish antagonism within the framework of his romantic and complex personality. Thus, the racist, hegemonic and imperialistic dimensions of the Lawrence factor in the Arab Revolt will be emphasized within the context of the subtexts in his memoirs, and the limits of its current historical meaning will be expanded.

Historically, Lawrence’s personal involvement in the Arab Revolt began to develop during the first years of WWI. At the British military headquarters in Cairo, where he was appointed in December 1914 as a staff officer for maps and intelligence, he pursued every type of intelligence and propaganda against Turkey, and participated in cartography for military purposes until October 1916.² In order to hold talks regarding the Arab Revolt,³ which had been started in June 1916 by Sharif Hussein and his four sons against the Ottoman Empire, Lawrence was part of the British delegation, which was sent to Hejaz in the beginning of October, and attended meetings.⁴ Lawrence separated from the delegation after the meetings and stayed in Hejaz until mid-November. During this time, he discussed in detail and in person with Sharif Hussein’s third son Faisal (1885-1933) in particular the tactical and logistical aspects of the Revolt.⁵ During these meetings, Lawrence was greatly influenced by Faisal’s personality and political aspirations and came to regard him as the true leader of the Revolt; this is how he expressed his impressions of Faisal:

“I felt at first glance that this was the man I had come to Arabia to seek – the leader who would bring the Arab Revolt to full glory.”⁶

Lawrence returned to Cairo after the meetings with Faisal and secured necessary political, logistical and financial support for the Arab Revolt and, by re-joining Faisal, took part actively in the process of the Revolt.⁷ Thereafter, Lawrence got involved as a guiding tactical adviser in the irregular force that Faisal had created from the Arab tribes and, together with a

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¹ “Wisdom hath builded her house, she hath hewn out her seven pillars” (*The Holy Bible*, Prov. 9.1.)

² See Lawrence, *Seven Pillars*, pp. 57-59 and 62-63.

³ See Glubb, p. 64 and 79; Zeine, *The Emergence of Arab Nationalism*, p. 118; Fromkin, p. 219.

⁴ See Lawrence, *Seven Pillars*, pp. 62-75; Glubb, p. 80.

⁵ See Lawrence, *Seven Pillars*, pp. 76-109.

⁶ *Seven Pillars*, p. 91. (In the original Turkish text of this article, the English to Turkish translation was done by Professor Umunc).

⁷ See Lawrence, *Seven Pillars*, p. 111.

group of Arab elements assigned by Faisal, organized attacks, by using guerilla warfare tactics, against the Turkish military facilities, chiefly including the Hejaz Railway, and the troops in the region. They captured the port of Aqaba and, together with Faisal, provided support for the British forces advancing under Allenby's command towards Damascus from the Palestinian front.⁸

Even though Lawrence tried in essence to base the Arab Revolt upon Arab nationalism and independence, these concepts did not carry any meaning further than futile fantasy because tribal allegiance was essential among the Arabs, who lacked the concept and philosophy of nationalism. Moreover, the traditional factions and hostilities among the tribes hampered the development of an Arab unity based on nationalism and independence. Therefore the Arab unity which Lawrence had envisaged with an entirely romantic and fanciful attitude did not materialize, and the Arab Revolt itself turned out to be no more than the endeavour of Sharif Hussein and his sons to secure political hegemony for themselves, and also provided the ground for banditry, plundering and betrayal carried out against the Turks. Moreover, the discourse of "Arab nationalism" and "Arab independence," which Lawrence had himself formulated, was apparently not taken into account by the British government since, both in accordance with the articles of the Paris Peace Conference and also as indicated earlier in the Sykes-Picot agreement, which had been secretly signed between Britain and France on 16 May 1916 in London, the Arab territories outside Lebanon, the coastal part of Syria, and Palestine had come under the British mandate.⁹

Within the framework of the preliminary statements and points we have made so far, it will be useful to analyze the origins of the deep-seated interest that Lawrence felt towards the Arab world and, hence, to stress the development of his personal feelings that he displayed for the Arab Revolt. In fact, Lawrence's interest in the Arab world can be traced back to his early years when he was a student at Oxford. Along with various warfare theories, strategies and methods,¹⁰ the subject that he particularly focused on during his studies in history at this university where he was admitted in 1907, was medieval literature, culture, architecture and military fortification techniques.¹¹ He was so interested in the Middle Ages that, during his summer holidays, he would examine the gothic structures and medieval castles in England and France.¹² Similarly, he began to have a growing interest in the construction techniques of the Crusaders' castles in the Middle East.¹³ In fact, for his university graduation thesis, he chose the subject that was concerned with the sources of the Crusaders' architectural fortifications. Therefore, in order to conduct research for this purpose and study the Crusaders' castles in the region, he took an exploratory trip that encompassed the regions of Lebanon, Syria and Urfa and lasted from June 1909 until October.¹⁴ During this trip,

⁸ See Lawrence, *Seven Pillars*, pp. 183-643; Glubb, pp. 82-89.

⁹ See Glubb, pp. 67-75 and 103-12; Mack, p. 125; Fromkin, pp. 192, 338-39 ve 394-97.

¹⁰ See Lawrence, *Seven Pillars*, pp. 114 and 188. As stated in his memoirs, Lawrence tried to implement during the Arab Revolt the theories and methods of warfare that he had learned at Oxford. (See *Seven Pillars*, pp. 480, 481 and 483). Also see Mack, p. 38)

¹¹ See Mack, pp. 41-47; Allen, pp. 8 and 14-72.

¹² See Mack, pp. 48-53; Allen, pp. 21-29.

¹³ See Mack, pp. 53-55 Allen, pp. 29-33; Bidwell, p.vii.

¹⁴ See Mack, pp. 68-75

Lawrence not only made research regarding the Crusaders, but also gathered primary data on the ethnic, administrative, political, social and cultural conditions of the region, hence having his first experience in espionage. For example, in the letter dated 13 August 1909 and written to his mother from the Syrian city of Tripoli, he refers to the impact upon the Muslims of the American missionaries who were involved in activities in Syria and points out that “there are visible signs regarding the gradual decay of Islam. If so the American Mission has had the larger share”.¹⁵ After Lawrence graduated in June of 1910, he joined, as of December, the Carchemish excavations undertaken by David G[eorge] Hogarth (1862-1927),¹⁶ who was a specialist in Near Eastern archaeology and had been his tutor and sponsor when he was a student at Oxford. He worked on Hogarth’s team until June, 1914.¹⁷ Although all these excavations seemed to have been primarily undertaken for an archaeological aim, the other covert purpose was to gather intelligence and carry out espionage about the region, including in the first place the construction of the Baghdad Railway.¹⁸ Therefore, when the excavations were suspended for a few months, Lawrence again ventured, as the follow-up of the trip that he had made in 1909, on another exploratory trip between 12 July and 5 August 5, 1911, in the Lower Euphrates basin, which also included Urfa and Harran. As also seen from the diary which he kept during this trip, the apparent purpose of the trip, starting with the Urfa castle and Harran, was to visit historical sites and make archaeological explorations.¹⁹ Yet, another unexpressed purpose was to observe the ethnic and social structure of the region, and in particular to find out about the Arab public opinion towards the Turks. Therefore, the conversations that he held with the local people generally included politics.²⁰ Lawrence, who since his school days had been interested with increasing fanaticism in the Arab language and culture,²¹ perceived the Turkish people through a perspective of racist, biased, and hostile Othering, despite the fact that he was shown warm hospitality and care in Urfa, Harran and at the Turkish villages along the Euphrates.²² This attitude can clearly be seen, for example, in the following remarks in the June 25th section of his diary, concerning the people of a Turkish village on the “Mezman Su”,²³ one of the minor tributaries of the Euphrates:

¹⁵ Lawrence, *Letters*, p. 18.

¹⁶ See Mack, pp. 58-60. Hogarth who considered Lawrence, as it were, his “adopted son,” (Mack, p. 59) was very influential in Lawrence’s later life. During WWI, also Hogarth, like Lawrence, was assigned to the “Arab Office” of the British intelligence team headquarters in Cairo and undertook the presidency of the headquarters. Lawrence who praised Hogarth would say: “Mentor to all of us was Hogarth, our father, confessor and adviser”. *Seven Pillars*, p. 58. Moreover, about Lawrence’s feelings of indebtedness towards Hogarth, see *Letters*, pp. 353-54, 358-59, 360, 366, 375, 390, 399, and 525.

¹⁷ See Mack, pp. 76-97.

¹⁸ See Bidwell, pp., vii-xi. About the fact that, in addition to their archaeological excavations and explorations, Sir William Ramsay and other British archeologists were, like Hogarth, also involved in espionage and intelligence activities, see Winstone, pp. 110-11. Historically, since the sixteenth century when British intelligence began to gain institutional efficiency, it has always aimed to gather information about other countries from various sources. In addition to official embassy staff and military experts, also travelers, merchants, sailors, archaeologists, researchers, vocational and technical consultants, missionaries, teachers and many others have served this purpose. For instance, as regards the espionage activities of English merchants in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, see Dereli, p. 52. Also on British travelers’ gathering of intelligence, see Potter, “Introduction,” p. 5; for Gertrude Bell’s travels for espionage purposes in the Middle East and Turkey during the 1900s, see Winston, pp. 147 and 154. Moreover, for Freya Stark’s journeys in the Middle East and Turkey since the 1920s for a similar purpose, see Izzard, pp. 133-98.

¹⁹ See Lawrence, *The Diary*, pp 1-32.

²⁰ See Lawrence, *The Diary*, pp. 6, 9, 10.

²¹ See Mack, pp. 68-73 and 88-89.

²² See Lawrence, *The Diary*, pp. 3,5-6, 8-9, 13, 15 and 23.

²³ Lawrence, *The Diary*, p. 19.

“By the way, not a man in the village knows a word of Arabic, so I am rather put to it. All pure Turk, which means very ugly, half-Chinese looking fellows with flat eyes and broad noses, and wide-split, tight-pulled lips of thick skin.”²⁴

One can see clearly that, during this period, three historically and culturally fundamental factors which were to shape his future attitude and thought regarding the Arab Revolt were in the making; these can be defined as his *crusading spirit*, *pro-Arab fanaticism* and *anti-Turkish racism*. What fostered his crusading spirit was not only the history and fortified structures of the Crusaders but also the romantic and literary narratives about various moral values such as bravery, self-sacrifice, redeeming behaviour, justice, and charity that constituted the medieval culture of chivalry.²⁵ Indeed, the work that influenced him most in this regard was the fifteenth-century English author Sir Thomas Malory's *Morte d'Arthur*.²⁶ In his work, which Malory wrote as a parody about the political and moral corruption of his own time, he gave a romantic account of the bravery and adventures of the legendary English king Arthur and his knights of “the Round Table” and their fight against evil and injustice in order to protect the helpless, and also their self-sacrificing efforts to uphold chivalric values.²⁷ Similarly Lawrence, too, obsessed by an illusion arising from the chivalric romanticism of the Middle Ages, dreamed of himself as if he were a knight of the modern times, fighting for the ideal of freedom. Hence, for him, the Arab Revolt was a struggle that was to be fulfilled for the realization of this ideal and that, for this reason, he considered himself to be the redeemer of the Arabs. He expressed this delusion with an enthusiastic and poetic expression as follows:

“We were a self-centered army without parade or gesture, devoted to freedom, the second of man's creeds, a purpose so ravenous that it devoured all our strength, a hope so transcendent that our earlier ambitions faded in its glare. As time went by our need to fight for the ideal increased to an unquestioning possession, riding with spur and rein over our doubts.”²⁸

Thus, motivated by a romantic perception of history, a fanciful Arab fanaticism, and an internalized malignant enmity against the Turkish people, Lawrence came to regard the Arab Revolt, on the one hand, from a personal perspective, as an adventure and mission which would bring him immortality like medieval knights and also ensure the realization of the futile fantasies that he pursued, and, on the other hand, as a strategic development for the achievement of the British war aims concerning the Middle East. However, his reveries at the personal level remained as an individual subtext within the historical evolution and political process of the Arab Revolt because on the *realpolitik* level, the Arab Revolt was the outcome of extremely complex and extensively political, ideological, military, strategic and economic causes, and has become one of the significant factors that constitute the basis of the regional and international problems faced today in the Middle East. In fact when evaluated in a political and ideological framework, the Arab Revolt emerged at the outset as an armed revolt

²⁴ Lawrence, *The Diary*, p. 20.

²⁵ For details on this subject, see Allen, pp.34-72.

²⁶ Lawrence, *Seven Pillars*, pp. 111 and 485.

²⁷ Baugh, pp. 305-307; Allen, pp. 69-71.

²⁸ Lawrence, *Seven Pillars*, p. 29.

started by Sharif Hussein, with the support and encouragement of the British as well as the French to some extent, in order to establish a regional rule independent of the Ottoman Empire and unite all the Arab world under his own sharifate.²⁹ One may suggest that, in this goal of his, he was evidently influenced, besides his own personal and political aspirations, by various Arab movements, which had been in the making particularly in Syria, Lebanon, Iraq and Egypt since the 1860s and had been exposed to the provocations and manipulations of the French, British and American missionaries in the region.³⁰ Some of these movements, which gained momentum upon the outbreak of the WWI, had the aim to achieve regional autonomy or independence, while the others were committed to ensure the implementation of a series of reforms regarding problems of ethnic, religious or socio-cultural identity. Of these movements, the Al-Fetat,³¹ which had much impact in Lebanon and Syria, and the Al-Ahd,³² which was connected with Iraq, were insistent that Sharif Hussein was to take action.³³ Lawrence thought of Sharif Hussein as an “honorable, shrewd, obstinate and deeply pious” person.³⁴ Indeed, when one looks at the double-standard policies that Sharif Hussein followed before the Revolt, his connections with the Arab organizations, and his prestige with them,³⁵ Lawrence’s view of him as such was appropriate. Appointed by Sultan Abdulhamid II (1842-1918) to the Sharifate of Mecca despite the objections of the Union and Progress government, Hussein pretended on the one hand to display a loyal attitude towards the Sultan and adopted

²⁹ See Zeine, *The Emergence of Arab Nationalism*, pp.106-09 and 116; Oshenwald, particularly pp. 189-96; Fromkin, pp. 221 and 224-27.

³⁰ For detailed accounts regarding Arab movements and organizations, see Zeine, *The Emergence of Arab Nationalism*, pp. 32-100 and *Arab-Turkish Relations*, pp. 35-95; Dawn, pp. 3-30; Hanioglu, pp. 31-49; Khalidi, pp. 50-69; Wilson, pp. 205-06; Tauber, pp. 7-241; Fromkin, pp. 101-02.

³¹ The Al-Fetat, whose full name was “Al Jamiyye al-Arabiyye al-Fetat” [The Young Arab Society], was founded on November 14, 1909 in Paris by a group of Arab students of the Lebanese, Palestinian and Syrian origin “in order to protect the rights of the Arabs” against the Union and Progress government’s “Turkism” policy as well as defamatory discourse against the Arabs (Tauber, s. 90). Following the formation in 1911 of its first administrative committee, the Society virtually began to carry out its political activities. Towards the end of 1913, the Society’s headquarters was moved to Beirut and, at the end of 1914, to Damascus, and branches were opened in various cities of the region. The Society’s initial politics was to secure regional autonomy which would give prominence to Arab identity. However, with the outbreak of WWI, and in view of Djemal Pasha’s violent fight against the underground Arab organizations, the Society turned towards the goal for the independence of the Arab territories and sought out Britain’s aid and protection for the realization of his goal. For details, see Zeine, *The Emergence of Arab Nationalism*, pp. 82-84; Tauber, pp. 90-97; Muslih, especially pp. 167-171. Also, for Lawrence’s views, see his *Seven Pillars*, p. 47.

³² The Al-Ahd (the Covenant) was secretly established by the half Arab, half Circassian Aziz Ali al-Misri (1879–1965), who was one of the distinguished officers of the Ottoman army and belonged to Enver Pasha’s inner circle. Following its congress on 28 October 1913, the organization began to carry out its activities. The majority of its membership consisted of various well-known officers of the Iraqi Arab origin such as Nuri as-Sa’id (1888–1958) and Yasin al-Hashimi (1882–1937) and also of civilians like Adil Arslan and Muzahim al-Pachachi. The so-called aim of the organization, as was stated in Article 1 of its constitution, was to establish, similar to the Austro-Hungarian Empire, a united Turkish-Arab Empire with Istanbul as its capital and, for the realization of this aim, to fight in the first place for the autonomy of the Arab territories; yet, the real aim was to promote Arab nationalism in opposition to the Turkism policies of Union and Progress government and eventually set up an Arab state under British protection. However, the Union and Progress government, which kept a close watch on all the activities both of the organization and of al-Misri, tried al-Misri at Court Martial and sentenced him to death first but then to exile in Egypt. Arriving in Egypt in late April 1914, al-Misri joined, upon the outbreak of WWI, Sharif Hussein’s Revolt supported by Britain. Along with him, also Nuri as-Sa’id and other A-Ahd member officers, who had deserted or defected from the Ottoman army assumed responsibilities in the Revolt and, together with Lawrence, formed Faisal’s headquarters of staff officers. On the Al-Ahd and al-Misri, see Tauber, pp. 213-36; Fromkin, pp. 99-102. On relations with Lawrence and the Arab Revolt, see Lawrence, *Seven Pillars*, pp. 45-50, 59, 65, 70, 74-75, 76, 104, 110, 115, *et passim*.

³³ See Glubb, pp. 57-58; Zeine, *The Emergence of Arab Nationalism*, pp. 116-17; Fromkin, pp. 174-76.

³⁴ Lawrence, *Seven Pillars*, p. 50.

³⁵ The Syrian and Iraqi Arabs, especially the Al-Fetat and Al-Ahd leaders, regarded Sharif Hussein, to put it Lawrence’s words, as “the Father of the Arabs, the Moslem of Moslems, their greatest prince, their oldest notable” (Lawrence, *Seven Pillars*, s. 50).

a friendly relationship with the government,³⁶ while on the other hand he tried to secure British protection and logistic support against Istanbul so as to realize his political goals for the future. Therefore, before he departed from Istanbul as the Sharif of Mecca, he established warm relations with the British ambassador Louis Mallet³⁷ and, after having returned to Mecca, he tried to form a dialogue with the British authorities in Egypt. In this regard, increasingly from about 1912 or 1913, he began through his son Abdullah as an intermediary to openly request British protection from Lord Kitchener (1850-1916), who was at the time Britain's Consul General in Egypt.³⁸ Even so, in view of Britain's amicable relations with Istanbul, Kitchener did not give much importance to Sharif Hussein's request for support and protection.³⁹ However, at the start of WWI when Kitchener was appointed as Secretary of State for War, Sharif Hussein was engaged in a series of personal correspondences with the newly-appointed High Commissioner in Egypt Sir Henry McMahon (1862-1949). In his correspondences, he not only requested support for a revolt he was about to start, but also attempted to determine the possible boundaries of the Arab state which he dreamed to establish after the revolt and, in this regard, sought Britain's full consent.⁴⁰ On the other hand, with Kitchener himself in the lead, the British war cabinet and the British authorities in Egypt began to stress the importance of the strategic and tactical benefits that would be provided by a possible Arab revolt, and thus set about to form a new Middle East policy⁴¹ because Turkey's participation in the war on Germany's side against the allies involved a series of serious dangers for Britain in the Middle East. For example, amongst the major dangers were the possible interruption at any moment of Britain's maritime access through the Suez Canal and the Red Sea to India and the other far eastern colonies, Sultan Mehmet Reshad's call in November 1915, in his capacity as the Caliph, to all the Muslim world for a *jihad* against the allies, the possibility in view of this call of an uprising against Britain by the Muslims in the colonies including the Indian Muslims in the first place, a major threat posed against the British military and strategic presence in Egypt and Aden by the Turkish troops located in Palestine, Hejaz, and Yemen as was seen in the case of the Suez Canal offensive under Djemal Pasha's command in February 1915, and finally the possibility of the closure by the Turkish troops in the Basra region of the Shatt al-Arab water way used by the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company.⁴² Therefore, Sharif Hussein's request for support and protection was a rare opportunity for Britain to implement its new Middle East policy and ultimately to be able to

³⁶ Before being appointed as the Sharif of Mecca, Hussein had resided in Istanbul under Sultan Abdulhamid II's protection for about 18 years and seen to it that his sons Ali, Abdullah, Faisal and Zeid received good education. After the 1908 Revolution, Abdullah and Faisal had respectively served as Deputy Speaker of the Ottoman parliament *Meclis-i Mebusan* and as the representative of Jeddah. Upon the outbreak of WWI both of them had immediately returned to Mecca in order to put into action the separatist policy that they had been pursuing secretly together with their father. On the other hand, when the war had started and before the decision for a revolt had not been taken yet, Sharif Hussein had written a personal letter to the Ottoman sultan Mehmet Reshad V (1844-1918), pleading for Turkey not to enter the war on the German side. On Sharif Hussein's relations with Istanbul before the Revolt, see Fromkin, pp. 112-15; also Glubb, pp. 57-59; Zeine, *The Emergence of Arab Nationalism*, pp. 105, n12 and 108; Ochsenswald, pp. 194-95; Lawrence, *Seven Pillars*, pp. 49-50.

³⁷ See Wilson, p. 207.

³⁸ See Zeine, *The Emergence of Arab Nationalism*, pp. 106-09; Glubb, pp. 57-58; Fromkin, pp. 98-105; Ochsenswald, p. 196.

³⁹ See Zeine, *The Emergence of Arab Nationalism*, pp. 106-107; Glubb, p. 57; Fromkin pp. 98-99 and 173-87; Wilson, p. 211.

⁴⁰ See Zeine, *The Emergence of Arab Nationalism*, pp. 108-109; Glubb, pp. 57-64; Fromkin pp. 89 and 173-87; Wilson, 212-213.

⁴¹ See Glubb, pp. 57-64; Fromkin, pp. 100-05, 140-49 and 168-87; Wilson, pp. 212-13.

⁴² See Glubb, pp. 58-99; Fromkin, pp. 96-97, 100-01, 109 and 121.

establish British political, military and economic presence (in other words, British imperialism) in the entire Middle East. So, while on the one hand Britain displayed a dilatory attitude towards Sharif Hussein's political requests for the establishment of a new Arab state,⁴³ on the other hand it attempted to turn the Revolt, to which it extended all kinds of logistic support, into a process serving its own war aims.

So, the Arab independence and liberty which Lawrence had resolved to achieve with a futile illusion of being a redeemer appropriate for a medieval crusading knight, could not be realized owing to Britain's *realpolitik* aims about the Middle East. Actually Lawrence was not against Britain's policy to exploit the Arab Revolt for its own war aims. Indeed, he revealed this fact in his following statement:

“I was sent to these Arabs as a stranger, unable to think their thoughts or subscribe their beliefs, but charged by duty to lead them forward to develop to the highest any movement of theirs profitable to England in her war. If I could not assume their character, I could at least conceal my own, and pass among them without evident friction, neither a discord nor a critic but an unnoticed influence.”⁴⁴

As understood from his discourse as such, Lawrence imagined Arab independence as a phenomenon beyond Britain's war aims and, for this reason, was of the opinion that it was part of his job to be *influential* on the Arabs. He emphasized that he was himself not alone in this idea and that some British authorities in Cairo cherished a similar view:

“They had served a term of five hundred years under the Turkish harrow, and had begun to dream of liberty; so when at last England fell out with Turkey, and war was let loose in the East and the West at once, we who believed we held an indication of the future set out to bend England's efforts towards fostering the new Arabic world in hither Asia.”⁴⁵

Yet Lawrence and those who, like him, shared this same illusion, were extremely disappointed at the end of the war, and “the Arab world” that they had attempted to create as one whole and also the Arab unity could not be realized because the British imperialist ideology not only denied Lawrence any opportunity for the realization of his futile Arab fantasy, but also failed Sharif Hussein's schemes to attain the objectives that he expected from the Revolt, which he had treasonously started solely for his own personal political aims under the pretext of Arab independence.⁴⁶ Although artificial monarchies were established for Sharif Hussein's four sons in the aftermath of the war in Hejaz, Syria, Jordan and Iraq,⁴⁷ each one of them experienced periods of bloodshed with revolutions and assassinations. One can maintain that today at the roots of instability and conflicts in the Middle East lie both the Arab Revolt itself, launched under the aegis of British imperialism, and its consequences. There is no

⁴³ See Glubb, p. 62-64; Fromkin, p 173-74.

⁴⁴ Lawrence, *Seven Pillars*, p. 30.

⁴⁵ Lawrence, *Seven Pillars*, p. 57.

⁴⁶ Hogarth, who was the chief of the British intelligence headquarters in Cairo, is reported to have commented on Sharif Hussein's hypocritical policies as follows: “It is obvious that the King [i.e. Sharif Hussein] regards Arab Unity as synonymous with his own Kingship” (qtd. in Fromkin p. 221). Indeed, as Fromkin has stated (p. 221), in the eyes of the British, “Hussein, far from being the leader of a newly created Arab nationalism, was a ruler who took little interest in nationalism and whose only concern was for the acquisition of new powers and territories for himself”.

⁴⁷ See Fromkin, pp. 499-514 and 528-29.

doubt that the Arab Revolt has led to the division and colonization of the Arabs and, ultimately, to their submission to the hegemony of Western imperialism. Therefore, the future of the Arab world of the Middle East is bound to experience many more bloody developments and conflicts, and it is inevitable that instability in the region will continue to sustain itself as a bloody process.

In conclusion, the Arab Revolt was an amalgamation of Sharif Hussein's private ambitions and British imperialism; it was a bloody and bitter process of treason, which was sustained against Turkey and the Turkish people. By actively participating in this process, Lawrence, who had been inspired by the crusaders of the Middle Ages that he greatly admired in his own private life, not only posed with an illusion of justice and salvation as the redeemer of the Arabs but also served in a context of *realpolitik* the war aims of the British imperial ideology. However, the Arab world of the Middle East has not attained peace, stability, and freedom as he had fantasized; on the contrary, it has been led into a process of conflicts, revolutions, assassinations, and wars that has come down to our own time.

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