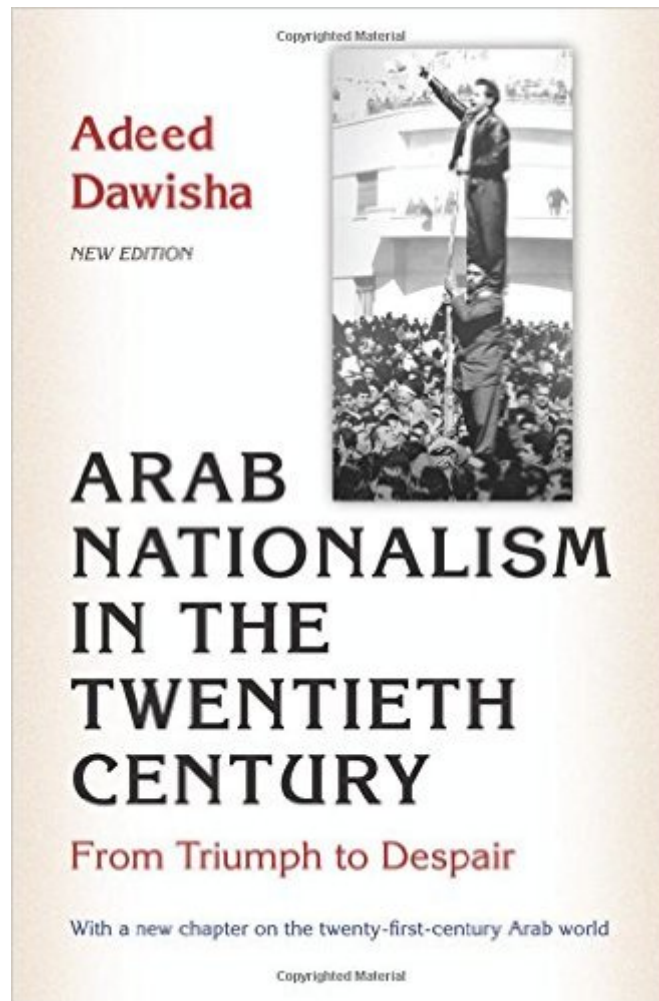


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Arab Nationalism In The Twentieth Century: From Triumph To Despair



Synopsis

Like a great dynasty that falls to ruin and is eventually remembered more for its faults than its feats, Arab nationalism is remembered mostly for its humiliating rout in the 1967 Six Day War, for inter-Arab divisions, and for words and actions distinguished by their meagerness. But people tend to forget the majesty that Arab nationalism once was. In this elegantly narrated and richly documented book, Adeed Dawisha brings this majesty to life through a sweeping historical account of its dramatic rise and fall. Dawisha argues that Arab nationalism--which, he says, was inspired by nineteenth-century German Romantic nationalism--really took root after World War I and not in the nineteenth century, as many believe, and that it blossomed only in the 1950s and 1960s under the charismatic leadership of Egypt's Gamal 'Abd al-Nasir. He traces the ideology's passage from the collapse of the Ottoman Empire through its triumphant ascendancy in the late 1950s with the unity of Egypt and Syria and with the nationalist revolution of Iraq, to the mortal blow it received in the 1967 Arab defeat by Israel, and its eventual eclipse. Dawisha criticizes the common failure to distinguish between the broader, cultural phenomenon of "Arabism" and the political, secular desire for a united Arab state that defined Arab nationalism. In recent decades competitive ideologies--not least, Islamic militancy--have inexorably supplanted the latter, he contends. Dawisha, who grew up in Iraq during the heyday of Arab nationalism, infuses his work with rare personal insight and extraordinary historical breadth. In addition to Western sources, he draws on an unprecedented wealth of Arab political memoirs and studies to tell the fascinating story of one of the most colorful and significant periods of the contemporary Arab world. In doing so, he also gives us the means to more fully understand trends in the region today. Complete with a hard-hitting new and expanded section that surveys recent nationalism and events in the Middle East, *Arab Nationalism in the Twentieth Century* tells the fascinating story of one of the most colorful and significant periods in twentieth-century Middle Eastern history.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This is a good account of Arab Nationalism from a scholarly perspective, written in accessible language. The author has no axe to grind. Readers might detect an occasional note of wistful sadness, though, as Dawisha contrasts the movement's mid-century promise and fervor with its disappointing outcomes. Dawisha sets himself the task of explaining the movement's shortcomings and weaknesses, and he does a good job of it.

I wrote my thesis on Arab Nationalism and this book was an Allah send for it. Dawisha is a great author and does a detailed job that is accessible to those who have some desire to learn the subject matter in great detail. I would recommend it to anyone who wishes to have a more solid understanding of the role of Arab Nationalism from the 1890s to the 1990s and the prospects for the future

Mr. Seraj, for some warped reason, perceived this book as an attack on arab nationalism, when in fact Dawisha's work reads as a straight history. Dr. Dawisha was simply stating a factual historical truth: "Arab nationalism", an abstract concept at best, rose fitfully, then faltered and died. Why? because it had no historical, cultural, emotive, or even linguistic bases. It was essentially contrived (and I would argue, calqued along the lines of the european language-based nationalisms that labled people based on the languages they spoke.) It sought to impute a certain identity on people who had for centuries thought of themselves as nothing but Muslims, Jews, Assyrians, Chaldaeans, Maronites, Druze, etc.. and nothing else! This is not bias, this is the plain painful truth Mr. Seraj. Be a man, accept it, and move on. Arabs and Arab nationalism are a mere mirage, an abstract concept, and an obsolete ideology (though it is still upheld by a motely senile half-witted academics who keep irresolute dreamers like Mr. Seraj and their warped ideas alive.)

I had to read this book as a requirement for a class paper, it is by far one of the worst books ive

read. It is boring, and dry and long, if you want to read this book for personal enjoyment then you must really have to love this topic or else you will get a headache after 10 pages.

I have read a couple of books on Arab Nationalism and some that are in some way related to Arab nationalism, in particular Aburish's. I find this book so confusing and uninteresting. In addition to the weird and confusing diction the author uses, it is a little biased - in my opinion. whether wittingly or unwittingly the author is attacking Arab Nationalism even even in conditions which require that he be otherwise. In a word, I would not recommend this book.

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