Oxford Cambridge and RSA

Wednesday 24 May 2023 – Morning

A Level History A

Y321/01 The Middle East 1908–2011: Ottomans to Arab Spring

Time allowed: 2 hours 30 minutes

You must have:
- the OCR 12-page Answer Booklet

INSTRUCTIONS
- Use black ink.
- Write your answer to each question in the Answer Booklet. The question numbers must be clearly shown.
- Fill in the boxes on the front of the Answer Booklet.
- Answer the question in Section A and **any two** questions in Section B.

INFORMATION
- The total mark for this paper is **80**.
- The marks for each question are shown in brackets **[ ]**.
- Quality of extended response will be assessed in questions marked with an asterisk (*).
- This document has **4** pages.

ADVICE
- Read each question carefully before you start your answer.

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SECTION A

Read the **two** passages and answer Question 1.

1 Evaluate the interpretations in **both** of the two passages and explain which you think is more convincing as an explanation of the Suez Crisis and the Second Arab-Israeli War. **[30]**

Passage A

The origins of the Suez-Sinai War of 1956 can be found in the realignment of power in the Middle East that followed the First Arab-Israeli War of 1948–1949. Changes of governments in the Arab states, humiliated by the recent defeat, meant that a new Arab nationalism was able to take root across North Africa and Arabia. This was largely motivated by what many Arabs saw as the existence of an aggressive and alien state in their midst.

Britain had lost its influence over the Zionists in 1948. Between 1949 and 1956 British influence in the Arab world was shattered with the creation of the Zionist state. London did try to reassert its position with the formation of the Baghdad Pact, but in effect this constituted working with the old ruling houses and not the new nationalists. In a major retreat from Empire, Britain lost what had been considered in the prenuclear age the essential base for Middle Eastern security, Egypt. This transfer of power invited Russian penetration.

The United States, despite domestic opposition, tried a policy of even-handedness. Its priority was to close a gap in the West's security system; London's was consideration of imperial policy. France, too, was drawn in with the Algerian rebellion.

By 1956 the Middle East was an area of Great-Power politics. And it was this power politics that made Israel's pre-emptive war against Egypt possible. Nasser replaced Zionism as the threat to the British power base and it resulted in Britain and France arming Israel against Egypt. All three Western powers were in agreement: Nasser had to go. Israel was the beneficiary and Ben Gurion was determined to force a peace on the Arabs on Israel's terms. But it was Great-Power politics that made this possible.

Adapted from: R. Ovendale, The Origins of the Arab-Israeli Wars, published in 1984.

Passage B

The period following the 1947–1949 fighting was dominated by the interstate conflict between Israel and her Arab neighbours. The tense situation was further complicated by bitter inter-Arab rivalries centred on the assertive role played by Gamal Abd al-Nasser. He came to represent a dynamic route towards a more promising regional order shorn of imperial ties. Palestinians especially looked to him to unite the Arab world against Israel.

The 1949 armistice agreements had left unresolved two major sources of friction. One was the question of demarcating Israel's borders. The ceasefire lines were fragile and contested. Some villages were cut in half, others were separated from their agricultural lands. The second question was the future of Palestinian refugees, languishing in temporary camps. Many attempted to make their way through the permeable ceasefire lines either to rejoin families, harvest crops, and reclaim property, or to sabotage attempts by new Israeli immigrants to develop the land for themselves.

In the face of growing violence, Israel's strategy of disproportionate retaliation targeted both the returning Palestinian refugees and the states from which they entered Israel. The mutual sense of insecurity that emerged from this unstable border situation led all sides to expect another round of fighting. And, indeed, Israeli cross-border retaliatory raids were followed in quick order by a series of sharp steps that would culminate in 1956 in another war.

Adapted from: M. Bunton, The Palestinian-Israeli Conflict, published in 2013.

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SECTION B

Answer any **two** questions.

2* 'The Oslo Accords of 1993 and 1995 were the most important turning point in relations between Israel and the Palestinians.' How far do you agree with this view of the period from 1908 to 2011? **[25]**

3* To what extent did the nature of Arabism change in the period from 1908 to 2011? **[25]**

4* 'Religion has had a greater impact than ethnicity on developments in the Middle East in the period from 1908 to 2011.' How far do you agree? **[25]**

END OF QUESTION PAPER

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