

Transcript

00:00:01 Speaker 1

Welcome all to what I take as the first.

00:00:06 Speaker 1

Middle East centre seminar. For this term I might be mistaken, but I think it might be the first.

00:00:12 Speaker 1

And it really is a pleasure to be hosting this evening, Erin O'halloran, who as many of you know, is a former student here at this college and a student who did add fill in history here.

00:00:31 Speaker 1

She went on subsequently to teeter the University of Toronto was at Stanford, where I last met her and is now a Marie Curie fellow at Cambridge.

00:00:44 Speaker 1

Working on a fantastic new project on Guernica and its global resonance, particularly in the Middle East, so Picasso's famous painting, aerial warfare and the way in which that painting comes to inform visual representations of aerial warfare elsewhere in the world.

00:01:04 Speaker 1

Particularly in the Middle East.

00:01:06 Speaker 1

But today we are here to listen to her speak about her new book.

00:01:11 Speaker 1

Which I have here, and I recommend that you buy east of Empire, Egypt, India and the world between the wars. It really is a wonderful book and I'm here in part because of it. The India bit which does something that has been until quite recently.

00:01:32 Speaker 1

All too rare that brings together the historiographies of the Middle East. On the one hand, and South Asia on the other.

00:01:41 Speaker 1

In part through the British Empire, of which both regions or large parts of both regions were apart, but also, as Erin does in this book, by looking at the relationship between nationalists and nationalist movements in Egypt and Palestine and in India, and soon to be Pakistan.

00:02:02 Speaker 1

And she notes the various resonances between these struggles, which are seen as being separate and distinct. So it's only the latest of a new burgeoning field.

00:02:14 Speaker 1

In history in global history that brings together regions that are in fact connected, but have been kept apart for all too long. So with that, Erin, the floor is yours.

00:02:26 Speaker 2

OK. Thank you so much for that kind introduction, Faisal. It's really wonderful to be back in this particular room where I was a teaching assistant for a long time, so used to teach alongside Eugene Rogan in this room the.

00:02:44 Speaker 2

The sort of history of the Middle East in the 19th and 20th centuries, and it's very exciting to be back here to to give a talk of my own.

00:02:51 Speaker 2

Because I am at Saint Anthony's, I must open by acknowledging the great debts that I owe to this place, and in particular to my academic mentors, who many of whom are here with me today. So the journey of this book began here at Saint Anthony's with the Deerfield project, where I was mentored with, mentored by Margaret Macmillan.

00:03:11 Speaker 2

And Eugene Rogan. Margaret is here tonight. Thank you so much for.

00:03:15 Speaker 2

And in the very earliest incarnations of my project, it benefited from the careful reading and deft guidance of Abu Shlaim, who is also here this evening, and Faisal Devji, who introduced me, graciously agreed to a one off meeting to discuss Indian Muslim politics. When I was, I think in my first or second year of the devil.

00:03:34 Speaker 2

And I have been impinging on his time and benefiting from his immense professional generosity literally ever since. So thank you so much, Faisal.

00:03:43 Speaker 2

I will. I will launch right in now. So on New Year's Day 1938, the celebrated Urdu poet Mohammed Iqbal took to the airwaves on the All India radio station in Lahore. He had already been suffering with an illness for some time, which affected his throat and thus his intonation.

00:04:03 Speaker 2

But if his voice was strained, it suited his subject. The poets address surveyed the states of global affairs with bitter acuity.

00:04:12 Speaker 2

And now I'm going to quote somewhat at length from Iqbal.

00:04:16 Speaker 2

The modern age prides itself on its progress in knowledge and its matchless scientific developments. No doubt the pride is justified. To date, space and time are being annihilated and man is achieving amazing successes in unveiling the secrets of nature and harnessing its forces to his own service.

00:04:36 Speaker 2

But in spite of all these developments, the tyranny of imperialism struts abroad, covering its face under the masks of democracy, nationalism, communism, fascism and heaven knows what else besides.

00:04:49 Speaker 2

Sites under these masks in every corner of the Earth, the spirit of freedom and the dignity of man are being trampled under foot in a way to which not even the darkest period of human history presents a parallel. As I look back on the year that has passed, and as I look at the world in the midst of the New Year's rejoicing, it may be Abyssinia or Palestine.

00:05:11 Speaker 2

Spain or China, the same misery prevails in every corner of man's earthly home, and hundreds of thousands of men are being butchered mercilessly. Engines of destruction created by science are wiping out the great landmarks of man's cultural achievement.

00:05:28 Speaker 2

The world's thinkers are struck dumb.

00:05:31 Speaker 2

Is this going to be the end of all the progress and evolution of civilization? They ask that men should destroy one another in mutual hatred and make human habitation impossible on this earth.

00:05:43 Speaker 2

Only one unity is dependable and that unity is the brotherhood of man, which is above race, nationality, colour or language.

00:05:52 Speaker 2

Which so long as this so-called democracy, this accursed nationalism, and this degraded imperialism are not shattered, so long as men do not demonstrate by their actions that they believe that the whole world is the family of God, so long as distinctions of race, colour and geographical nationalities.

00:06:12 Speaker 2

Are not wiped out completely. They will never be able to lead a happy and contented life. And the beautiful ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity will never materialise.

00:06:24 Speaker 2

Iqbal concluded with an appeal to the divine.

00:06:27 Speaker 2

Let us therefore begin the new year with the prayer that God Almighty may grant humanity to those who are in places of power and government, and teach them to cherish mankind.

00:06:38 Speaker 2

It was to be one of his final public utterances, Shayari Mishraq, the poet of the east, passed away that April in Lahore. He was 60 years old.

00:06:50 Speaker 2

My book is a history of the geographic, societal and cultural space connecting Egypt to India in a time of twilight. As the sun began to set on European empire and anti colonial nationalism moved into the ascendant, the men and women who populate the pages of my book moved in the shadows of a gathering.

00:07:10 Speaker 2

Dorm, which would ultimately break in 1939, transforming their lives and the world around them.

00:07:17 Speaker 2

They also moved and wrote and thought between what we now tend to think of as discrete regions of the world. Egypt and the Middle East.

00:07:26 Speaker 2

India and South Asia, Britain and Europe among historians, a debate has emerged about how to explain this apparent cross pollination and what to call it. In my book, I described the affinity among a broad cross section of the Indians, Egyptians and other Arabs throughout the interwar period as eastern ISM.

00:07:48 Speaker 2

These trans regional relationships took place as Mahesh has phrased it through the grids of Late Empire. They have long remained underreported and underappreciated in part because they can only be glimpsed in the historical record in fragmentary ways, as if by the light of a flickering lag.

00:08:08 Speaker 2

Taken together, however, they illuminate the rapid changes then underway across the British Empire and expand our understanding of the developments in the era immediately preceding decolonization of complementary and competing visions for the future of the Middle East, South Asia, and the broader extra European world throughout the 1920s.

00:08:28 Speaker 2

And deep into the 1930s, a multiplicity of heterodox eastern visions flowed in and out of alignment with one another as headlines changed, alliances evolved and priorities shifted.

00:08:42 Speaker 2

With the onset of war in Europe in 1939, the stakes of these ideological differences began to spike. Subjected to the unrelenting pressure of war, the many strands of Eastern ISM splintered, putting paid to the more fluid and open-ended possibilities which had animated preceding decades. In their stead emerged.

00:09:02 Speaker 2

Post war ideologies with sharper edges.

00:09:05 Speaker 2

Hardened national frontiers and following years of globally cataclysmic violence, little faith in the pacifist and humanist ideals of a bygone era.

00:09:16 Speaker 2

This almost chemical transformation is, I argue, the background against which votes affirmed the Partitions of India and Palestine in 1947, unleashing torrents of interpersonal violence and ethnic cleansing which we have yet to staunch almost 80 years.

00:09:33 Speaker 2

On.

00:09:34 Speaker 2

This, then, is the story I tell in my book, how a multiplicity of visions of a transnational fluid and heterodox E informed the interwar politics and diplomacy of India and Egypt, and under what conditions these visions gave way to militant nationalism, territorial partition.

00:09:55 Speaker 2

And large scale ethnic cleansing across both the Middle East and South Asia.

00:10:00 Speaker 2

Within this overarching narrative, there are many smaller, but I think at least no less fascinating stories about the personal connections and ideational affinities forged between poets, feminists, artists and politicians. The Calafat crisis in India and its intra Arab fallout, the anticolonial outrage and propaganda.

00:10:20 Speaker 2

War, which defined the Abyssinian crisis and presaged the dynamics of the Second World.

00:10:26 Speaker 2

War and how Indian Muslims and Eastern women fought to internationalise the Palestinian cause. I also revisit some of the more famous and infamous incidents from the national historiographies of Egypt, India, Pakistan and Palestine. Israel, revealing transnational aspects and entanglements between them.

00:10:46 Speaker 2

Which have long remained obscure. The result is a political history, but one which takes a very broad view of the political touching on art, poetry, religion and the power of ideas, as well as grassroots activism, interparty rivalries, military strategy, and conference diplomacy.

00:11:06 Speaker 2

As is probably already clear, I am not a structuralist. My book trace is not the deterministic influence of one factor over others, but the constellation of mutually informing forces at work in complex colonial societies undergoing truly momentous world changing transition.

00:11:26 Speaker 2

Although ostensibly about Egypt and India, the book also devoted significant attention to events elsewhere from Paris and London to Ankara and Addis Ababa, and in almost every chapter. The deepening crisis in Egypt's neighbour, Palestine and this Palestine is the aspect of the book that I would like.

00:11:45 Speaker 2

To share a little bit more about with you today.

00:11:49 Speaker 2

So while Egypt and India had been the twin epicentres of anti colonial uprisings in the early 1920s, by the mid 1930s politicians and activists in both countries had begun to respond to external crises in Ethiopia, Spain, China and Palestine. The victims of what?

00:12:08 Speaker 2

Many, including as we saw Iqbal perceived as connected forms of fascist, totalitarian and colonial violence.

00:12:17 Speaker 2

Between 1937 and 1939, Palestine was to emerge as the key point of convergence between Egyptian and Indian activism, and one of the most contentious policy issues facing the British Empire, resulting in heated debates, schizophrenic decision making and barely contained hostility among the officials and branches of government.

00:12:38 Speaker 2

Involved.

00:12:39 Speaker 2

The Arab revolt in Palestine had broken out in April 1936 with a countrywide general strike. It swiftly made front page headlines across the Middle East and beyond, attracting instinctive sympathy from Arabs and Muslims, but also winning supporters further afield on anticolonial grounds. The public outcry only intensified.

00:13:00 Speaker 2

Following the publication in mid 1937 of the report of the Appeal Commission recommending the partition of Palestine into Arab and Jewish.

00:13:10 Speaker 2

This marked a new and yet more explosive chapter of the revolt, as armed insurrection resumed, accompanied by a mounting transnational diplomatic and protest movement whose slogan was the defence of Palestine from partition.

00:13:26 Speaker 2

The revolt was firstly a crisis of the colonial state, placing British policy in a part of the Middle East which it controlled outright at odds with its interests in other parts of the Middle East, which it did.

00:13:39 Speaker 2

Thought.

00:13:40 Speaker 2

It raised uncomfortable ethical questions and seemingly unanswerable practical ones about the legitimacy, correct policy and material cost of Britain's mandate.

00:13:52 Speaker 2

The initial failure to contain the revolt made Britain look weak in the eyes of its enemies, while the escalation of violence and the oppressive measures used to contain that violence provided easy headlines for Italian and German propaganda targeting Muslim audiences in the Middle East and Asia.

00:14:12 Speaker 2

The stakes of the crisis were thus intensified by the gathering clouds in Europe as the prospect of a new war between Britain, France and the Fascist powers loomed ever more ominously on the horizon.

00:14:25 Speaker 2

The revolt was, secondly, a regional Arab crisis. In many ways, the defining event of Arab politics in the Inter War years. It drew much of the Arabic speaking world from North Africa to the Gulf, together around a shared political concern and provided enormous momentum to a wave of grassroots political movements ranging from conservative Islamist.

00:14:47 Speaker 2

To militant nationalist to progressive feminist.

00:14:51 Speaker 2

Among the most important of these was the emergence of a Pan Arab block centred on Cairo, incorporating the leading politicians and heads of state of much of the Arabic

speaking world and defined by its commitment to the defence of Palestine. It was these prominent figures who would participate in a series of conferences in 1939 which sought.

00:15:11 Speaker 2

Unsuccessfully to negotiate a settlement of the Palestine crisis on Arab terms in collaboration, as we will see with several politicians from British India.

00:15:21 Speaker 2

For the crisis in Palestine was also thirdly perceived as a crisis of the entire Muslim ummah or community.

00:15:29 Speaker 2

In Egypt, this was reflected in the leadership of the Muslim Brotherhood and the Young Men's Muslim Association in Pro Palestinian protests and fundraising campaigns in India, the reaction to the Arab revolt constituted the most significant Muslim political campaign focused on an external policy issue since the khalifat.

00:15:49 Speaker 2

Movement of the early 1920s and given that not all of you may be familiar with this, laugh at, I'm just going to give a very brief sort of historical overview to that movement. So in November 1914, the Ottoman Empire entered World War One on the side of Germany, and this confronted Britain with a dilemma.

00:16:08 Speaker 2

The Army of India was about to be used to fight in autumn territories in the Middle East and a disproportionately high number of the soldiers involved were themselves Muslim.

00:16:20 Speaker 2

Alarmed by what they perceived as the potentially disastrous consequences of this race, officials pressed London to make certain pledges to their Muslim subjects, guaranteeing the inviolability of Muslim holy places in the Middle East and London was forced to acquiesce. Therefore, speaking at the Guild.

00:16:40 Speaker 2

Hall in London on 9th November 1914, Prime Minister Herbert Asquith made the following statement.

00:16:47 Speaker 2

Quote our sovereign claims among his most loyal subjects, millions of men of Muslim faith, and nothing is further from our thoughts than to encourage a crusade against their

creed or their holy places. We are prepared to defend them should need arise against all invaders and to maintain them inviolate.

00:17:08 Speaker 2

However, at the end of the First World War, as European diplomats convened in Paris in 1919, they carved up the territories of the former Ottoman Empire among themselves, the heartlands of Islam in the Middle East were enacted by the British and French under the guise of League of Nations mandates, and this, of course, included Palestine.

00:17:27 Speaker 2

In India, Muslim veterans of the war were appalled by this apparent betrayal of Britain's wartime pledge.

00:17:35 Speaker 2

They launched A protest campaign which would grow into one of the largest the subcontinent had ever seen, the 1919 to 1924 Calafat Movement, which briefly united the Muslim League and Congress parties in a joint popular uprising against the British Empire, illustrated the potential of external affairs in the broader.

00:17:54 Speaker 2

Muslim world to serve as a lightning rod for mass political mobilisation domestically within India.

00:18:01 Speaker 2

As an aside, the Khilafat campaign divided the leadership of the Muslim League at the time. Mohammed Ali Jinnah, who was at the time a young but very prominent and important leader of the movement, stepped down and for a while disappeared from Indian politics because he viewed Gandhi's alliance with the Kalafatis as pandering.

00:18:21 Speaker 2

To Muslim religious sentiment, which was cheap in his view, compared to the hard power concessions on things like weighted electorates, which Gina had been working to extract from.

00:18:32 Speaker 2

Congress, so crucially throughout the 20s and 30s, Britain's wartime pledge to maintain quote, Islam's holy places in violin appears, at least to me, to have held no less weight for Indian Muslims, or at least those involved in the class. That sort of protest and its its progeny, then, for example.

00:18:52 Speaker 2

The Hussein McMahon correspondents did for Arabs during the same period, or the Balfour Declaration of 1917 for the Zionist.

00:19:00 Speaker 2

Indeed, just as proponents of Arab nationalism and a Jewish national home in Palestine found frequent cause to relitigate Britain's wartime commitments over the course of subsequent decades, Indian Muslims, too, would brandish London's pledge to them as evidence of their privileged right to participate.

00:19:20 Speaker 2

In the formation of British policy in the Middle East.

00:19:24 Speaker 2

Especially in its early years, Pro Palestinian activism in India featured many of the same prominent Muslim individuals who had led the Khalifat movement a decade prior. Men like Hasrat Mohani, Ahmed Ansari, Mohammed Ali Jihad and following his death, his brother Shaukat Ali, now joined by.

00:19:43 Speaker 2

Mohammed Ali Jinnah, who returned to India and assumed the leadership of the All India Muslim League in 1935. Importantly, Jinnah did not have the same objection to the Muslim League involving itself in pro Palestinian activism, which he had with respect to the Kalafat campaign in the early 1920.

00:20:02 Speaker 2

So he was a prime mover. In fact, in in sort of projecting Muslim league policy or diplomacy abroad on the issue of Palestine.

00:20:13 Speaker 2

Following the announcement of the British government's new policy of partitioning Palestine, which was the Appeal Commission report in 1937, the Muslim League began passing resolution after resolution concerning the situation in the mandate.

00:20:27 Speaker 2

It convened regional and international conferences on the issue and petitioned the viceroy, the Indian Secretary, the colonial Secretary and the British Prime Minister on behalf of their Arab brethren. Dissatisfied with the limited impact of these efforts, they resolved to send a delegation on a tour of the Middle East and Europe to make their case in person.

00:20:48 Speaker 2

But influencing policy in British mandate Palestine was an excessively complicated task, as they would discover, given that the British government was itself almost paralysed by internal divisions on the issue.

00:21:00 Speaker 2

Particularly following the release of the Appeal Commission report in September 1937, many British officials stationed abroad attempted to effect a change in policy in London on the grounds that the revolts and proposed partition ran against British interests in the parts of the world where they were stationed. These efforts were met.

00:21:20 Speaker 2

With varying degrees of hostility by the Colonial Office, which regarded Palestine as falling exclusively within its jurisdiction.

00:21:29 Speaker 2

The extent of this hostility is illustrated by a comment I found in the marginalia of a colonial office record pertaining to travel visas issued for the Muslim League's Pro Palestine delegates in 1938, in which a senior CEO official referred to the Government of India, which had issued the travel visas.

00:21:49 Speaker 2

Has quote no less of an enemy government than Hitler or Mussolini. When it came to policy on the Middle East, The upshot of all of this was that by the late 1930's, the British Line on Palestine tended to vary drastically depending on which official or branch of government was consulted.

00:22:08 Speaker 2

This naturally bedevilled the task of the Arab and Indian negotiators then attempting to insert themselves between the British government and the Palestinians to engineer a diplomatic settlement to the ongoing revolt. Prominence among these negotiators were shadrick aliquis, a men, a member of the Legislative Assembly, or MLA.

00:22:29 Speaker 2

From the United Provinces and his dear friend Abdul Rahman Siddiqi, an MLA from Bengal.

00:22:36 Speaker 2

Recipients of two of the travel visas I just alluded to, tasked by Jinnah to defend Palestine abroad, these Muslim League Malays proved willing to go to great lengths in support of their mission. Crucially, however, there was a novel domestic angle to their diplomacy as well. For Jinnah was anxious to prevent.

00:22:56 Speaker 2

The hybridised Muslim anti colonial politics of Palestine, from creating an alignment between Indian Muslim voters and the Indian National Congress. What he and his deputies termed the prospect of a second Khalifa.

00:23:12 Speaker 2

But crucially, as the late historian Mushir Al Hassan observed, the aspect of the Kalafat crisis which seemed to resonate most deeply with ordinary Indian Muslims and brought in certainly the most donation rupees, was the need to defend Islam's holy places abroad. The physical geography or sacred geography.

00:23:32 Speaker 2

Islam, for this reason, the Middle East itself took on new significance in Indian nationalist discourse, forming, as it were, a land bridge connecting Muslim and anticolonial agendas.

00:23:46 Speaker 2

In the late 1930s, Palestine arguably was, or at least had the potential to become another laugh at like land bridge in Indian politics, at least from the perspective of many of the Muslim leaders and politicians who had themselves been most deeply involved in the kalafat movement in the early 1920s.

00:24:06 Speaker 2

And this is very interesting. It very it very much worried them.

00:24:10 Speaker 2

Their concern was that if the Muslim League was seen to be an ineffective advocate for the preservation of Palestine's territorial and spiritual integrity, Indian Muslims might look instead to Congress, easily the strongest political bloc in India, and also concerned about what was going on in Palestine, Israel.

00:24:30 Speaker 2

Or excuse me on in Mandate Palestine from the perspective of anti colonial politics.

00:24:35 Speaker 2

They might instead cast their lot in with Congress for leadership on this issue, the consolidation of Indian Muslims and Hindus into a single political bloc opposed to British rule was not only a threat to the British Raj, it was also a deeply worrisome prospect for the Muslim League itself, which stood to lose its electoral foothold.

00:24:57 Speaker 2

If it's base aligned with Congress.

00:25:00 Speaker 2

Thus, in petition sent to the provincial governors, the viceroy and the British government, and in the interviews held by Khalid Kuzman and Siddiqui with ministers in London, the Muslim League stressed that its efforts to defend Palestine were intended to avert the disaster of mass Muslim solidarity with Congress.

00:25:20

This.

00:25:21 Speaker 2

This need to be seen to be leading on the question of Palestine helps to explain why between 1938 and 1939 the Muslim League sponsored A delegation that traversed the Middle East, Britain and continental Europe for the better part of nine months, attempting to help resolve the ongoing.

00:25:41 Speaker 2

In the British mandate, they left India in the fall of 1938 as representatives of India's 80 million Muslims, the largest, wealthiest and most consequential religious minority anywhere in the British Empire, determined as they put it to quote, defend Palestine from partition.

00:25:59 Speaker 2

By the time they returned to India the following spring, they had undergone the 20th century's geopolitical inverse of a religious conversion. They no longer wish to claim themselves as members of a religious minority or community of believers. And far from having succeeded in preventing Palestine's partition.

00:26:18 Speaker 2

They were now, in fact, convinced that their own country would have to be submitted to the cartographer's knife.

00:26:25 Speaker 2

In the time that remains to me, I'm going to attempt to explain why and how this happened.

00:26:32 Speaker 2

The world's Interparliamentary Congress of Arab and Islamic countries for the defence of Palestine, to mouthful in Arabic too, was held in Cairo in October 1938, and it served

as the initial destination of the Muslim League delegation when they departed Bombay. It was the delegates first experience.

00:26:52 Speaker 2

On air travel.

00:26:54 Speaker 2

And in addition to Indian Muslims and representatives of the Arab countries, there were delegations in attendance from Iran, China, Spanish Morocco, Yugoslavia, Turkey and the United States. Over 200 men and women participating in parallel proceedings in their speeches in Cairo, SADIKI and.

00:27:13 Speaker 2

Aliquippa men claimed to speak for India's 80 million Muslims and warned Britain that should the Palestine issue remain unresolved, it would not be able to rely on the support of what they called world Muslims in the coming European war. So I'm using this speech as sort of the opening.

00:27:32 Speaker 2

Statement to mark this transition that I just described to you, they start out referring to the communal character to referring to themselves as part of a pan Islamic or world Muslim community, but also is representing the 80 million Muslims of India and they're very much speaking in terms of their religious affiliation.

00:27:53 Speaker 2

Upon the interparliamentary Congress's completion, Siddiqi and Aliquis Amen, I'll refer to them to the MLA. Sometimes moving forward were nominated by the other delegates at the Conference to travel to London to make representations to the British Government on its behalf. So why were these two Indians nominated out of hundreds of delegates from across the Arab and Muslim world?

00:28:16 Speaker 2

Would.

00:28:16 Speaker 2

I have two hypotheses on this. The first is their status as barristers and elected officials may have played a role, but there were many trained lawyers in attendance, and many parliamentarians as well. I think it was in fact precisely their identity as Indians and thus they were perceived as having a certain.

00:28:37 Speaker 2

Intimacy with both the language and institutions of the British Empire and enjoyed the status of full subjects of the.

00:28:45 Speaker 2

Because the British presence in the Arab region was more informal and in any cases relatively new, Arab politicians did not have, generally speaking, the same intimacy or the same level of access to British channels of power as Indian elites, the MLA's were to prove that by contrast, they did understand how to work these channels.

00:29:07 Speaker 2

Reasonably effectively when they arrived in London, they were able within a short time, for example, to arrange multiple private audiences with several British cabinet ministers.

00:29:18 Speaker 2

And to press their case relatively effectively in those meetings, at least with the Indian Secretary and to a certain extent with the Colonial secretary as well as Amen and Siddiqi, proved willing to go to great lengths, as I mentioned from Cairo, they embarked on a sort of free Palestine world tour, conferring with everyone from the colonial secretary in London.

00:29:38 Speaker 2

To eventually Mussolini's brother in Milan to the chairman of the League of Nations in Geneva and the Mufti of Jerusalem in.

00:29:44 Speaker 2

The root and I just want to underscore the level of political, financial and emotional investment that this demonstrates on the part of these men and of the Muslim League, which was at this time still very much an underdog within India politically, but projecting itself as a global player abroad, as it had last done in the 1920s during and in the immediate aftermath of the Khalifa.

00:30:07 Speaker 2

So what happened to the MLA's once they reached London is, from my perspective, the most crucial part of the story. Essentially, they were sidelined from the proceedings of the 1939 Saint James Conference, which they had travelled to London in the hopes of attending. They were sidelined essentially by the Colonial office, which was at pains to maintain its prerogative.

00:30:28 Speaker 2

As I mentioned on all matters concerning Palestine and did not wish to admit the Indian representatives even as observers to the fraught proceedings.

00:30:38 Speaker 2

The grounds they offered for their rejection was that in the official estimation of the colonial office, the conflict in Palestine was national and political rather than global and religious in nature. Thus, Muslims as such were not admitted as stakeholders in the proceedings.

00:30:55 Speaker 2

Kalikasan and Siddiqi were perplexed in a letter to the colonial Secretary MacDonald. They pointed out that the same standard was not being applied to the Zionist delegation to the conference, which sought to bolster its claim to represent.

00:31:08 Speaker 2

Quote all due.

00:31:10 Speaker 2

By including delegates from the United States, Britain, South Africa and various European countries, alongside those actually residing in Palestine, 2, Siddiqi and Khalid was a man. This stood in bold faced contradiction to the stated rationale behind their own exclusion and the letter they write. We are constrained to remark that the intensity of the feeling.

00:31:31 Speaker 2

In India, is perhaps not yet fully realised in London.

00:31:35 Speaker 2

We may also be permitted to question the wisdom or even the efficacy of circumscribing the international character of the problem, so vitally touching the deep rooted sentiments of the Muslim world and restricting it to almost parochial dimensions, especially when no such restrictions are likely to be applied to the representatives of the Zionists.

00:31:56 Speaker 2

So as the opening day of the Saint James Conference approached, the Muslim League rallied in a final bid to win Indian representation. Yet MacDonald was adamant, quote the admission of Indian Muslim representatives to this to the discussion might have the effect of introducing the religious factor and was open to serious.

00:32:16 Speaker 2

Rejection on that ground.

00:32:18 Speaker 2

Several days later, a telegram arrived for MacDonald from Jinnah in India. Its tone was urgent and beseeching and its a telegram. So forgive the the grammar, the All India Muslim League urges upon His Majesty's Government give representation Muslim League Palestine conference and concede Palestine national Arab demands.

00:32:39 Speaker 2

Muslim India awaiting most anxiously.

00:32:42 Speaker 2

Results I cannot by means Telegram Express adequately and impress intensity feeling throughout India failure conference will be most disastrous throughout Muslim world, resulting grave consequences. Trusting this earnest appeal will receive your serious consideration.

00:33:03 Speaker 2

Jenna received a cordial reply, not from MacDonald, but from Linlithgow, the viceroy, explaining, as MacDonald had done to him, the delicacy of the situation, expressing regret and offering assurances that Indian Muslim opinion would be taken into account by the government in London, Zetlin also made a final, unsuccessful bid.

00:33:24 Speaker 2

To impress upon his colleagues, this is excuse me. Zetland is the Indian secretary in London to impress upon his colleagues in cabinet, the stakes of the conference. From his perspective, quote.

00:33:36 Speaker 2

These are the minutes of the cabinet meeting. We have been warned by the Secretary of State for India that the Palestine problem is not merely an Arabian problem, but is fast becoming a pan Islamic problem and that if the London conference fails to reach any agreement or ends in what is regarded as a substantial victory for the Jews.

00:33:56 Speaker 2

Serious trouble in India must be apprehended in early February, Jinnah wrote.

00:34:02 Speaker 2

Deeply disappointed His Majesty's Government, not inclined. Extend representation Muslim India in Palestine conference. No analogy comparison. Muslim India. Other parties in view of solemn promises, assurances given to the Muslims India.

00:34:22 Speaker 2

During war Palestine, their first kibla Muslims deeply and vitally concerned their holy places earnestly urged His Majesty's government to meet request.

00:34:34 Speaker 2

In this exchange, we find Jinnah, the famously and rather unobservant Muslim pressing the emotional dimension of Muslim attachment to their holy places, and evoking Britain's wartime pledges. This is the grammar and vocabulary of the kalafat movement over which Jinnah had once abandoned his party in disgust.

00:34:54 Speaker 2

Still, Muslim religious sentiment was a tried and tested bargaining chip in communication with the Raj. Zetlin's somewhat dramatic warning to his colleagues and cabinet makes clear the extent to which he and his office still took such considerations.

00:35:10 Speaker 2

Seriously, as Sadiqi and Kalika Zaman were discovering to their dismay, however, the Muslim card did not carry much clout in London. It was downright unattractive to the Colonial office, which was determined to avoid acknowledging that the conflict in Palestine even had a religious dimension excluded from the formal proceedings of the Saint James.

00:35:32 Speaker 2

Conference the MLA's thought of returning to India, but their Egyptian colleague Ali Alubia, who had travelled with them from Cairo, convinced them to stay on to encourage the Palestinian delegates on the sidelines of the conference, which they did.

00:35:47 Speaker 2

But they had a lot of free time on their hands as a result of this, and they became very frequent visitors at, for example, izat anuses, Arab Centre in Trafalgar Square, in his memoir of Eliquis, Amen. Recalled quote. It was a great trial on our nerves to stay for months together, doing nothing but walking on the streets of London.

00:36:07 Speaker 2

The antidote emerged in the form of a what he called a tall, graceful and well cut figure, who invited the MLA's to tea in early December 1938 and met with them frequently over the course of subsequent months. The gentleman in question was Shukri Rahmat Ali, already well known in India.

00:36:26 Speaker 2

As a Cambridge student who had promulgated a concept called Pakistan.

00:36:31 Speaker 2

This was a an acrostic poem of a political programme comprising the Muslim regions of South Asia, P for Punjab, A for Afghani, AK for Kashmir and Istan from Baluchistan.

00:36:44 Speaker 2

It translated to land of the spiritually pure in Urdu. Shalika Zaman was profoundly impressed by shuddered Rahmat Ali quote. When we started talking about the scheme of Pakistan, I found that not only had he thought deeply over the question, but was earnest about its realisation. After some discussion, I informed him that I was.

00:37:05 Speaker 2

Already converted to the idea.

00:37:08 Speaker 2

Thus, although they were disappointed by the outcome of the Saint James Conference, Siddiqi and Kalika's amend decided to make the most of their time in London, and so they went back to the India office and met first with Colonel Muirhead, the Under Secretary of State for India, and subsequently at Muirhead's insistence.

00:37:28 Speaker 2

Assistance with Zetland, the Secretary of State and the point of these interviews was to propose to the British Government the partition of India and to Muslim and Hindu majority majority areas.

00:37:40 Speaker 2

They did so apparently without consulting Jinnah or anyone else. Years later, however, Felico's men was able to confirm, and I was able to verify in the India office records at the British Library, that Zetland had written to the Viceroy, Linlithgow, and alerted him to this new departure in the Muslim League. Thinking this is in March.

00:38:01 Speaker 2

1930.

00:38:03 Speaker 2

So as of March 1939, the Indian Secretary and the Viceroy are already aware that the Muslim League is starting to think about the partition of the country into into, into Muslim and Hindu parts, and they are open to this idea and encourage.

00:38:21 Speaker 2

The delegates to explore it further and continue discussing it amongst themselves, so it was best precisely in the midst of working to prevent Palestine's partition.

00:38:33 Speaker 2

That the Muslim League demand for the partition of India took concrete form, not in a public statement by Jinnah, but in private meetings between his emissaries and the British government in London on the sidelines of the Saint James Conference on Palestine. So all of Siddiqui and Khalid Wisemen's efforts, both in London, London and subsequently.

00:38:54 Speaker 2

On the on the continent and back in the Middle East to lobby on behalf of the Palestinians, were unfortunately abortive.

00:39:03 Speaker 2

I write a lot about this in the book and it's a it's a. It's a wild and exciting story, and I encourage you to to read it, but what is important for the story? I want to tell today is that they're painful. Failure to impact policy or to even be considered deserving of a seat at the table in London.

00:39:22 Speaker 2

Seems to me to have driven home to them that in the emerging configuration of global politics, even the impassioned pleas of a very large and wealthy religious minority were no match for the emerging claims of Nat.

00:39:38 Speaker 2

After all, Jews were a religious community, yet more dispersed than India's Muslims.

00:39:44 Speaker 2

But in London, Zionism was taken to be far more serious and entirely different from the claims that Indian Muslims were advancing.

00:39:54 Speaker 2

The British government seemed to think that this was a serious programme. It was compelling and Jews, as a result from the United States and South Africa and Australia and across Europe, all deserved its seat at the table. But Indian Muslims were British subjects did not.

00:40:11 Speaker 2

Sadiq and Khaliq was a man made landfall in Bombay on 12th May 1939. That evening the two league emissaries met with Jinnah to debrief.

00:40:21 Speaker 2

He listened carefully to their accounts, asking for occasional clarifications and Kalika and Siddiqui emphasised their interview with Zetland and his conviction at their conviction that the British would ultimately concede the the point of India's partition.

00:40:38 Speaker 2

In his memoirs, Kaliko Zaman recalled that in some instances during this interview, Gina made him go back and repeat certain words. Finally, the President of the Muslim League asked him, have you weighed the consequences?

00:40:51 Speaker 2

Halika Zaman replied. We cannot go on talking on the old basis without any result.

00:40:59 Speaker 2

Jinnah assured them that he was not opposed to the notion of partition and would reflect on the matter carefully.

00:41:05 Speaker 2

The following spring at Lahore, the Muslim League president unveiled the Muslim League's new constructive policy.

00:41:12 Speaker 2

It called for Muslim majority provinces in North India to be grouped into autonomous and into an autonomous and sovereign state.

00:41:19 Speaker 1

Yeah.

00:41:20 Speaker 2

Quote it has always been taken for granted, mistakenly, that the Muslims are a minority and of course we have gotten used to it. These settled notions sometimes are very difficult to remove. The Muslims are not a minority. The Muslims are a nation by any definition. The problem in India is not of an intercommunal character, but manifestly.

00:41:41 Speaker 2

Of an international 1 and it must be treated as such.

00:41:46 Speaker 2

The Lahore resolution of 1940 thus formalised a shift in vocabulary away from the language of a spiritually bound community or religious minority, which the Muslims which the Muslim League advocates and Jinnah himself were still avidly pressing into service on behalf of the Palestinians in early 1939. By the same time the following year.

00:42:07 Speaker 2

They were insisting that the rights they claimed were on behalf of Muslims as.

00:42:11 Speaker 2

Nation, for as Jinnah acknowledged in a meaningful aside to his remarks at Lahore, quote the word nationalist has now become the play of conjurers in politics. In the same speech, Jinnah singled out Palestine as an ongoing subject of negotiation between the Muslim League and the British government.

00:42:31 Speaker 2

Quote we are told that endeavours earnest endeavours are being made to meet the reasonable national demands of.

00:42:36 Speaker 2

The Arabs, well, we cannot be satisfied by earnest endeavours, sincere endeavours, best endeavours to which the audience laughed. Quote, we want that the British Government should in fact actually meet the demands of the Arabs in Palestine.

00:42:52 Speaker 2

The Lahore resolution was seconded by Shukri Kalika. Men in the high key public discussions and debates which followed its pronouncement. Palestine was still on quite a few minds.

00:43:03 Speaker 2

Arguments about what a prospective Pakistan would or would not be able to do for the Palestinian people appeared in multiple treaties as and newspaper articles are doing both for and against the creation of the Muslim state. A set of semi official volumes to which Jinnah provided the forward suggested that where Muslim efforts to defend Palestine.

00:43:23 Speaker 2

Have so far failed. A future Pakistan could and would do better.

00:43:29 Speaker 2

What is striking is the extent to which Jinnah and his votaries did not meaningfully distinguish between the categories of nation, state and empire, the unit of political organisation with which they were, of course.

00:43:42 Speaker 2

Infinitely more familiar, indeed, the vision of Pakistan which gradually emerged in the wake of the Lahore resolution, took cues from the realities and historical practises of

the British Empire itself. Thus, Jinnah cited the way British Commonwealth citizens moved through foreign waters and territories to reach different parts of their far-flung.

00:44:02 Speaker 2

Empire as an analogy for movement between East and West Pakistan. Even more tellingly, perhaps, he evoked the British intervention on behalf of Ottoman Christians in Armenia in the 19th century.

00:44:16 Speaker 2

This was the logic of an imperial world system in which religious communities sought patronage from foreign powers. It was the logic according to which the Calafat campaign had brandished Britain's wartime pledges. As for the inviolability of Muslim holy places, it was in fact the.

00:44:36 Speaker 2

Precise logic, which the Muslim League had so recently seen dismissed at Saint James.

00:44:42 Speaker 2

Yet by conjuring the language of the nation state, Jinnah and other Muslim leaders seemed to believe the legitimacy of such claims might be revived for if Pakistan were to come into existence, they could only envision it as a great power, one to whose flag the Muslims of other countries might also eventually.

00:45:02 Speaker 2

Valley, as Ambedkar observed in his widely read commentary on the prospect of a Muslim state, one of the earliest and most influential on the subject and one which Jinnah himself encouraged people to read quote, there is nothing to prevent Pakistan from joining Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, Arabia, Turkey and Egypt and forming a federation.

00:45:23 Speaker 2

Of Muslim countries constituting 1 Islamic State extending from Constantinople down to Lahore, a Muslim must really be very stupid if he is not attracted by the glamour of this new destiny and be completely transformed in his view of the place of Muslims in the Indian cosmos.

00:45:41 Speaker 2

Jinnah may not have much cared for the term pan-Islamism. Yet in nation statehood he seemed to perceive possibilities for great power, status and prestige, which were in their implications not dissimilar to those the Ottomans had enjoyed mere decades prior. In this sense, Pakistan had become the vehicle for a set of Muslim cosmopolitan imaginaries.

00:46:04 Speaker 2

He had himself as a younger man, dismissed out of hand.

00:46:10 Speaker 2

The partition of India and the creation of the new Muslim state of Pakistan in August 1947 resulted in the largest forced migration in modern history, encompassing approximately 10 million people and the murder of a million more in incidents of mass communal violence beginning in 1948. Both India and Pakistan.

00:46:30 Speaker 2

Would launch a series of military annexations against the independent princely states not included in the original Partition plan. Among them was Jammu and Kashmir, a small and beautiful region in the north with a Hindu ruling family and majority Muslim population.

00:46:47 Speaker 2

By the time the First Kashmir War ended in December 1948, India and Pakistan were locked into a pattern of conflict which has persisted right up until the present day.

00:47:00 Speaker 2

Meanwhile, in November 1947, as India and Pakistan continued to reel from the violence of partition, the United Nations opted to repeat the experiment in Palestine.

00:47:10 Speaker 2

9 which they proposed to cleave into 6 non contiguous Arab and Jewish pieces. India served on the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine in a rare instance of accord, both it and Pakistan and every other Arab and Asian country. But one voted against partition in the General Assembly.

00:47:31 Speaker 2

In these earliest days of decolonization, they were outnumbered by the Western and Soviet blocs.

00:47:36 Speaker 2

The partition of Palestine triggered a grim closing of ranks among the Arabs as opposition to the new state of Israel overshadowed all other foreign policy considerations in the spring of 1948, the Arab countries would go to war, ostensibly to prevent the establishment of the new Jewish state, though in reality their motives had much more to do.

00:47:56 Speaker 2

With rivalries amongst themselves.

00:47:59 Speaker 2

The Arab defeat in the 1948 war would be the first in a cascade of regional crises, the most consequential of which was the Nakba.

00:48:07 Speaker 2

The forced displacements of 750,000 Palestinians from the lands conquered by Israel, as with India, Pakistan, the Palestinians who fled or were forced out of their homes in 1948, have never been permitted to return. But in contrast to India, Pakistan no Palestinian state has ever been permitted to emerge.

00:48:28 Speaker 2

And so those displaced by the war were rendered and have continued to be stateless ever since.

00:48:34 Speaker 2

These are the ancestors of the generations who have grown up as Palestinian refugees, both in surrounding Arab states but also in Gaza, where most of the population traces its origins to other parts of Palestine from which they were forced to flee. What we are currently somehow still witnessing 19 months.

00:48:54 Speaker 2

After the attacks of October 7th, 2023 is not so much a vicious cycle as it is the vicious compounding of the Nakba of destruction and ethnic cleansing. One generation after another.

00:49:08 Speaker 2

Both in the Middle East and in India in 1947 signalled the triumph of statism over more expansive, universalist imaginations of a heterodox post colonial order. In this climate, lands no less than ideas had to be emptied of their human contradictions, ironed into politically.

00:49:28 Speaker 2

Flexible units of analysis. While both geopolitics and academic study pivoted, post World War 2 toward to focus on discrete areas of the globe, drawn with increasingly thick rigid front.

00:49:40 Speaker 2

Years.

00:49:41 Speaker 2

This did as much as anything in the second-half of the 20th century to erase our collective memory of the kinds of interconnections which had bound much of the world together mere decades prior, and which my book is one attempt at recovering.

00:49:58 Speaker 2

Because I am at Saint Anthonys, whose current warden is a scholar of Japanese Buddhism, I'd like to close by acknowledging that east of Empire is dedicated to my mentors and faith. A lineage of Buddhist humanists, educational reformers, and peace activists who all lived during the period documented in this.

00:50:17 Speaker 2

Book from Japan, Sunisa Burro Makiguchi and Jose Toda went through similar processes and experiences to those of my Indian and Egyptian protagonists, fusing their global consciousness and progressive ideals with eastern culture and spiritual philosophy. Incarcerated by the Japanese regime as thought criminals.

00:50:38 Speaker 2

During World War 2, Makiguchi died in prison. In 1944, Toda emerged, awakened to a higher calling and determined to rebuild Japan as a just and peaceful society.

00:50:49 Speaker 2

Piety. By 1957, his movement, the Soka Gakkai, comprised over 750,000 households.

00:50:57 Speaker 2

Shortly before his death, Toda told his disciple the young man by Sacada, that he had dreamt he was in Mexico, where people were waiting eagerly to learn about Buddhism. His testament to the younger man was clear, travel the world, and forge connections with people in distant lands, teach people everywhere to practise Buddhism and become happy.

00:51:19 Speaker 2

And to my eternal benefit, that is exactly what my sense they did. Thank you very much.

00:51:31 Speaker 1

You can stay there to answer.

00:51:33 Speaker 1

Questions.

00:51:34 Speaker 1

Well, thank you very much. If I may ask the first question and then while people collect their.

00:51:38

Of course.

00:51:40 Speaker 1

So you know, you've told us a story about shift on the one hand between a more amorphous.

00:51:48 Speaker 1

Understanding of the postcolonial future to a Nationalist 1, and yet at the same time you're telling us sorry, he's Mike.

00:51:58 Speaker 1

Sorry.

00:52:01 Speaker 1

So on the one hand, Aaron has told us a story about a shift between non national way of thinking about the future and the nationalist one that she argues came to prevail certainly after 1939. But on the other hand, you also tell us, Erin, that.

00:52:19 Speaker 1

That shift has been an incomplete one. You've told us this about India, or at least Pakistan with its, you know, in imperial inheritances and desires.

00:52:31 Speaker 1

But I suppose you could also make the case for Israel and Palestine. And might that mean that?

00:52:40 Speaker 1

In both places, nationalism is either an unfinished task that needs to be completed, no matter how violently or and at the same time.

00:52:53 Speaker 1

In both places, the possibility of a non national future remains open and both these options depend one on the other, that the incompleteness of 1 narrative leads to the possibility of the other.

00:53:09 Speaker 2

An easy like question to start out.

00:53:11 Speaker 2

With of course.

00:53:13 Speaker 2

So I guess what?

00:53:14 Speaker 2

I was thinking about while you were asking that question, is that potentially one way of thinking about it is that much like gender, it's a spectrum and that they're not necessarily mutually exclusive or?

00:53:27 Speaker 2

I I certainly don't treat in the book nationalism and the project of Eastern ISM as mutually exclusive. I I'm actually very interested in the way that Eastern ISM serves as an umbrella.

00:53:37 Speaker 2

Term and within that umbrella are nationalist projects, but they're nationalist projects that are still very interested in the transnational or international dimension. So they're about finding affinity with other cultures and other peoples. And I think we can see something like that in, for example, the project of the European Union is something where your.

00:53:57 Speaker 2

You know, your national affiliation is not necessarily precluding your sense of affinity with this broader umbrella within which you also reside, right? So if we can think about it almost as Concentra.

00:54:08 Speaker 2

Circles and I I think that one of the one of the things I was trying to do in the book was to stitch back all of these ideologies including Pan Islamism, including territorial nationalism, including sort of an anti colonial feminism that are often treated as.

00:54:28 Speaker 2

Mutually exclusive projects and I was trying to show how the ways in which they were all actually stitched together within this broader framework of transnational connection and affinity, and that the the expectation was that in the post imperial world that that would continue.

00:54:49 Speaker 2

That even as states achieved independence for their national community, that there would still be this much broader tapestry that they were plugged into. And in fact, what happened after the war was this turning inwards, isolationism, tribalism, let's say, seemed to be a much more kind of powerful.

00:55:09 Speaker 2

And compelling narrative. And so even by the point in time that we get to the 1950s and there are.

00:55:18 Speaker 2

You know efforts towards the non aligned movement, for example this is coming from a place of very high walls, very thick frontiers, very statist imperatives, and it looks quite different from the much more fluid geography, let's say, of the 1920s and 30s.

00:55:37 Speaker 1

Well, thank you all for attending and more. So thank you Erin, for presenting us with such a wonderful paper. Please join.

00:55:43 Speaker 2

Thank you so much for having me.

00:55:46 Speaker 1

Me in thanking.

00:55:47

Hey.