

The Impossible Peace - 70 Years after The World War 2 in the Middle East (13)

[\(Japanese Version\)](#)

[\(Arabic Version\)](#)

Chapter 1 Wave of nationalism and socialism (1945-1956)

1-7(13) Young officers awakned by Nakba

Arabs living in the Palestine could not keep silent against the declaration of independence of the Jewish state Israel. Adjacent Arab countries such as Egypt and Jordan were the same. In terms of number of populations, the Jews at the time of declaration of independence was around six to seven hundred thousand. On the other hand, the population of Arabs surpassed 100 times. Speaking of the myths of the Old Testament, it looked like a fight between David and the Giant Goliath. The commanders on the Arab side, therefore, predicted that they would annihilate the Jewish army within 11 days.

Nonetheless, the First Arab Israeli War from 1948 to 1949 ended in Israel's overwhelming victory. Arabs suffered terrible defeat. The reason of Jewish victory was the difference of the number of military force and the fighting spirit. Jewish regarded the war as an independent war.

The populations of Arabs were a hundred times more than the Jewish ones. But actual number of soldiers sent to the battlefield from Egypt, Jordan, Iraq, Syria and Lebanon were about 10,000, 4,500, 3,000, 2,000 and 1,000 respectively. Total number of combatants including 2,000 soldiers from other Arab countries and Palestinians were less than 23,000. On the other hand, the Jewish side had about 35,000 regular troops of Haganah. In addition, they deployed thousands of combatants from Irgun units, a Zionist paramilitary organization and volunteers from colonies. And they were armed with the modern weapons. Israel had a wealth of funds sent from European and American Jewish communities. The difference of each powers was obvious.

Furthermore, there was a big difference between the fighting spirit of each soldiers. Jews soldiers were eager for the independence. If they were defeated by war, they would face again for the fate of "diaspora (discrete)". For the Jews it was a war that could not be defeated at all. Both men and women took their weapons with them and stood up. At present Israeli women have obligatory military service. Military service in various countries around the world is currently a volunteer system, and not so many countries have compulsory military service. Even in countries where military duty is required as in South Korea, only men are subjects. There are very few countries where military service is obliged to women like Israel.

On the other hand, the unity of the Arab Allied Army was nominal. The Arab armies flooded into Israel from all directions at the first stage of the war without any unified commander. They were only a crowd

of chaos. Each soldier was forced to fight against the Jews with old-fashioned weapons. They obeyed of his superior's order without any information on about for what and for whom they were fighting. Arab soldiers were defeated everywhere in the front. They named this war "Nakba (great disaster)".



Major Gamal Abdel Nasser, who became Egyptian president later, served in war and injured. He was born in 1918. After graduating from the military academy in 1939, he was transferred to Sudan. During World War II, he devoted to the liberation movement of Egypt. He was 30 when the First Arab Israeli War was broken out in 1948.

In those days, boys who could not enter to college due to poverty despite having excellent brain aimed to join the military academies. In military academy, they did not worry about food, clothing and housing. They got even salary. Furthermore, they could master the latest technology, and when they had achieved excellent performance they had a chance to study abroad. For ambitious but poor young boys, there was no other job exceeding military service.

After graduating from the military school, they faced to a tough war in their motherland betting their own life. When defeated by the first Arab Israeli War, Nasser who had been fighting for the sake of Egypt was disillusioned about his motherland.

Shuji Terayama, Japanese poet, revealed nihilistic feeling in his poem after the World War II;

“Striking a match / momentarily / I see the foggy ocean -/ is there a motherland / I can dedicate myself to?”

Major Nasser was not nihilistic like Shuji Terayama. He formed a secret society of anti-British patriotism so-called “Association of Free Officers” with General Mohamed Naguib. Nasser devoted himself to Egyptian revolution.

(To be continued ----)

By Areha Kazuya

E-mail: areha_kazuya@jcom.home.ne.jp

Home Page: [OCIN INITIATIVE](#)

([Table of contents](#))