

The Impossible Peace - 70 Years after The World War 2 in the Middle East(14)

[\(Japanese Version\)](#)

[\(Arabic Version\)](#)

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

1-8(14) Both East and West blocks were at the mercy of Nasser

Everyone know the name of Saladin (Salah Ad - Din) who was the hero in the Arab world. He was born in Tikrit of Iraq in the 12th century. He conquered Egypt and founded the Ayyubid Dynasty. He was a warrior who fought against the Third Crusade led by British King Richard I. Saladin did not kill the war prisoners, while the crusaders killed all of the war prisoners. Therefore, he was loved by both his ally and enemy. He left his name in the history as a hero.

In the 20th century, 800 years after Saladin, Gamal Abdul Nasser born in Egypt was also praised as hero of the Arab world. Saladin was a hero who fought against the Christian Crusaders of medieval Europe. But Nasser was a hero who overthrew the Egyptian monarchy which was a British puppet by the coup d'etat in 1952. He then fought against UK and French and has nationalized the Suez Canal in 1956.

Born in 1918 in Alexandria, a city on the Mediterranean coast, Nasser was transferred to Sudan after graduating from the military academy and served as a major during the Arab Israeli War triggered by the Declaration of Israeli Independence in 1948. When Arab suffered a fatal defeat in the war, of which Arabs called as Nakba(catastrophe), he formed the organization of the anti-British patriotism "Association of Free Officers" and exiled King Faruq I in 1952. Egypt shifted from the tyrannical system to the republican state.

Nasser, then 34 years old, gave the post of President and Prime Minister to his boss Major General Mohammed Naguib. In 1954, however, he took office as president himself through power struggle., Nasser came into the power and made Egypt the leader of the Arab world. He advocated Pan-Arabism. Pan-Arabism is an ideology to combine socialism with Arab nationalism. It was originated by the Ba'ath Party in Syria. By nature, Pan-Arabism was hostile to British and French colonial imperialism and US capitalism, but familiar to the Soviet socialism.

Idealist Nasser aimed the nationalization of the Suez Canal. The Suez Canal opened in the middle of the 19th century by Ferdinand de Lesseps of France. Later the UK has acquired 44% of the Canal's equity from Egypt who suffered debt due to lack of fiscal discipline. Financing for equity was burdened by Jewish Lord Rothschild. Until the end of World War II, UK and France had controlled the Suez Canal jointly.



Nasser allied with Nikita Khrushchev of Soviet Union. He constructed Aswan High Dam. Then he declared the nationalization of the Suez Canal. Britain and France fiercely reacted against Nasser. In 1956 they opened the fire against Egypt joining with Israel. It was the Suez War. The battle itself was favorable for British-France-Israeli Joint Forces due to their state-of-the-art armaments. Israel occupied the Sinai, and the Suez Canal was closed. Eilat, a town at the bottom of the Aqaba bay, was involved in the battle again after the Israel Independence War in 1948. When the Suez War was over, the Arabs evacuated from Eilat and only the Jews remained. A Palestinian peasant family, Zahara living in the suburbs of Eilat became a refugee. They escaped to adjacent port town Aqaba in Jordan accompanying eight-year-old son

International public opinion including the United States was critical all over Britain, France and Israel. Nasser lost the battle but won the diplomacy, which made Nasser famous in the Arab world. He was raised to one of the prominent leaders in the Third World belonging neither the Eastern nor the Western blocks. In addition to Nasser, there were several leaders in the Third World. They were Indian Prime Minister, Jawaharial Nehru, Chinese Prime Minister, Zhou Enlai, President of Yugoslavia, Josip Broz Tito and Indonesian President, Sukarno. Nasser, Nehru, Zhou Enlai and Sukarno jointly held the first Asia-Africa Conference (so-called Bandung Conference) in 1955. It was the heyday of Nasser.

(To be continued ----)

By Areha Kazuya

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

Home Page: [OCIN INITIATIVE](#)

([Table of contents](#))