Soc188I/Poli124: The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict
Jewish and Arab Histories

A. Mark Tessler’s plea

B. Congruence and symmetry:

1. Political communities with codified religion
2. Golden era, followed by long decline
3. Conflicting intellectual responses to European modernity: radical v. orthodox
4. Under threat of colonialism, nationalist reconstruction of political communities.
Timeline I

Jewish history
- 11th c. BCE-70CE
  - Golden Era
- Diasporic life
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Arab history
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- 622 start of Islam - Golden Era until 16th c.
Timeline II

Jewish History

- 18th c. Enlightenment
- 19th c. Rise of anti-Semitism
- Pinsker & Haskala 1882
- Herzl & Zionism 1897

Arab History

- Napoleon’s invasion
- European colonialism & capitulations
- Al-Afghani’s asabiya
- Arab nationalism (Egyptian National Party 1907)
A few lessons

Both Jews & Arab’s nationalisms are responses not to each other but defensive reactions to European aggressiveness.

Israeli-Palestinian conflict is not only modern but is between the respective modern wings of the revivalist, nationalist, movements.

Tessler: “commonalities...might lead each people to recognize the legitimacy of each other’s aspirations.” (5)
A few problems

- A-symmetry of periodization
- What happens to dormant tradition? (may turn revolutionary)