

## Deep History: the deeply-rooted impulse that drives a nation...

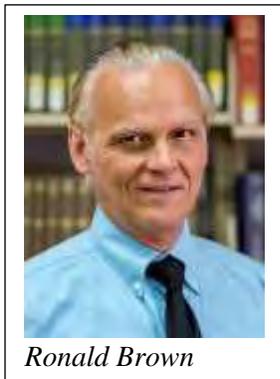
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"Deep history" is the deeply-rooted impulse that drives a nation, shapes the identities of peoples, and determines its present activities and future goals.

For many nations, some mythical past shaped this impulse while for new nations it is still being created. Here, I apply "deep history" to mean those primal characteristics of a people that defy the tumult of the centuries, remain immutable to individual leadership, and determine the destiny of a people.

This theory slowly evolved during my five years of university study in Jerusalem (1971-76), many visits thereafter, and most recently, my trip to the Holy Land last August.



Ronald Brown

### Examples of deep history

The challenges of nationalism, socialism, communism, and Western-style separation of church and state have done little to undermine the fundamental and deeply-rooted Muslim belief that the goal of the religion is to create an Islamic state. The current global crusade to defeat so-called "Islamist ideology" is fated to failure. Muslim dedication to an Islamic state is as deeply-rooted in the faith and resistant to the vicissitudes of history as the resurrection of Jesus is in Christianity.

Western colonial expansion into North Africa, the Middle East, and Southeast Asia, the 1924 abolition of the caliphate, and 1948 Jewish occupation of Palestine resulted in a rebirth of Islamic deep history. The Muslim Brotherhood, ISIS and al-Qaida rejected Western nationalism, socialism, communism, secularism, and separation of church and state to reunite the shattered body of the Islamic *umma* and restore the caliphate.

China likewise is permeated with the idea that the Confucian social, economic and political order is universally applicable, and that its destiny is to spread this model worldwide. Even during the "Century of Humiliation," when it was at the mercy of Western imperial powers, China remained firm in the belief of its divine destiny.

Political scientist Francis Fukuyama greeted the fall of Soviet Marxism in his 1992 book, *The End of History and the Last Man*. The Soviet Empire would finally join the rest of the planet in embracing parliamentary democracy, capitalism, and the rule of law. But by 2000, Russian deep history reared its head from the rubble of the collapsed Soviet Empire and Vladimir Putin resumed Russia's imperial march as the Third Rome.

American history is also inspired by the deeply-rooted belief in American exceptionalism. This identity is so embedded in the national identity that even during the darkest days of its history, most Americans remained convinced theirs was a nation unlike any other, that the American political, economic, moral, and legal system is exceptional and universally applicable, and that America is truly a city on a hill, a

light unto the nations.

*TIME* magazine founder Henry Luce hailed the 20th century as "The American Century." American exceptionalism had sustained the nation in its expansion across the continent to the Pacific Ocean, the annexed half of Mexico, victory in two World Wars, and Neil Armstrong's walk on the moon. But, defeat in the Vietnam War, the challenge of the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa), the unification of Europe, and today, the economic rivalry with China challenge the continued validity of American exceptionalism. When candidate Donald Trump vowed to "Make America Great Again," he was simply restating a deep faith in the universal American mission.

### **The State of Israel in 1971**

I first arrived in Israel in July 1971 at the high point of what I term the Third Jewish Kingdom. The 1967 Six Day War had expanded Israel from the conquered Golan Heights to Egypt's Suez Canal and Israelis talked about taking Jordan, southern Lebanon, and even Damascus. Jordanian-occupied East Jerusalem was absorbed into Israeli-occupied West Jerusalem and declared the indivisible capital of the state. Giant wall maps of the Israeli Kingdom decorated the airport and arriving American and European Jews kissed the tarmac and wept.

Since the destruction of the Second Jewish Kingdom by the Romans in 70 AD, Jews had recited the Passover prayer, "Next year in Jerusalem." Isaiah prophesied the return of the Jews to their homeland and the figure of the Messiah entered Judaism as the person who would achieve this miraculous return. Throughout Jewish history, the faithful undertook numerous attempts to reestablish this kingdom but only through the intervention of Great Britain, the United States, and the United Nations in 1948 was a Jewish state finally established in part of historic Palestine. Even in the darkest days of Jewish survival in the Diaspora, Jewish deep history continued to inspire the people. One day they would return to their Promised Land and rebuild their City of Zion.

In addition to returning to their homeland and rebuilding their sacred city, Israelis revived the long-dead Hebrew language as a national language, built Tel Aviv, founded Hebrew University, and joined the United Nations. Finally, in 1967, Israel expanded the boundaries of the nation. The hope of the Passover prayer and the project of Theodore Herzl had become a reality.

### **The 1973 Yom Kippur War**

With the seizure of the Gaza Strip, West Bank and East Jerusalem, Jewish deep history had been fulfilled. Prime Minister Golda Meir's prophetic statement that there is no such people as the Palestinians had become a reality.

Three years of peacefully living and studying in Israel came to an abrupt halt on the morning of October 6, 1973. I woke to a mad banging on doors, and screaming and yelling in the halls of my student residence on Prophet's Street in downtown West Jerusalem, as Christian and Muslim students fled the city. The Egyptian army had crossed the Suez Canal and the Syrians had retaken the Golan Heights. Only massive American intervention and military aid enabled the Israelis to regroup and push back the invaders. In the aftermath of near defeat, public and political pressure forced Golda Meir to resign in March 1974. Depression and crisis replaced the euphoria that had greeted the miraculous Israeli defeat of the Arab World and its Soviet backers in 1967.

I remained in Jerusalem until I had finished my M.A. in history in October 1976 and then continued my education in Geneva, Switzerland, where I spent the next seven years. I returned to Israel shortly after the Israeli right turned to Menachem Begin in 1977 to restore the nation's belief in its deep history. I came again in July 1979 after Prime Minister Begin and Egyptian President Anwar Sadat signed the Camp David Accords that provided for Israel to withdraw from and evacuate the Sinai Peninsula. I visited Yamit, the largest Israeli settlement in Sinai in April 1982, and witnessed the dismantling of this colony and transfer of its Jewish population back to Israel proper.

As compensation for Israel's "loss of the Sinai," President Carter gave Israel great leeway in the West Bank, Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem. Under Begin and later prime ministers, a massive transfer of Israelis to these areas, driving out Palestinians who had lived for generations in East Jerusalem, ensued to make place for settlers. Ruthless suppression of the occupied Palestinians followed to convince them Israel was here to stay.

### **Jewish reality**

Five years of living in Israel and many visits thereafter, most recently last summer, convinced me that Jewish deep history is the most powerful and determining factor in understanding the current reality of the State of Israel. The frenzied Israeli flag-waving, Hatikvah singing, West Bank settlement building, virtual annexation of East Jerusalem, Hebrew language name changing, apartheid legal system, and declarations of Jerusalem as the eternal capital of the state, confront visitors at every moment.

However, lurking beneath and viciously challenging this deep history is reality. Jewish historical reality is

dominated by the acute realization that nothing lasts forever. The brief time of prosperity in Egypt under Joseph ended with enslavement. Under Joshua, the Hebrews conquered the Land of Canaan, exterminated the original inhabitants, unified the 12 tribes under King Saul, David seized Jerusalem, and Solomon built the First Temple.

Again, this era of glory fell into ruins with the Babylonian conquest and exile. In turn, the Romans brought down the Second Kingdom and Second Temple in 70 AD. Often lengthy golden ages emerged in Egypt, Babylon, Muslim Spain, Poland, and Germany, all of which emerged, thrived and fell. Today constitutes still another transitory Jewish Golden Age, but according to the dictates of historical reality, this too will pass.

No one dares ask when the current Third Kingdom will fall, but silently my Israeli friends, former classmates at Hebrew University, and acquaintances are laying firm plans for its fall. Every Israeli lusts after a "real" passport that will guarantee them refuge in the USA, Canada, Germany, or Argentina. My wealthy friends maintain Swiss bank accounts while the less affluent settle for ones in Cyprus.

Lurking in their minds but never stated is the realization that, like the First Kingdom founded by kings Saul, David, and Solomon, so too the Third Jewish Kingdom will no doubt fall. Five millennia of experience have firmly proven the reality, "Nothing lasts forever."

### **Reality confronting deep history**

The conflict between the reality and deep history of a people today is being dramatically played out on the battlefield of the British Brexit campaign. Notions of empire, the "White Man's Burden," and Britain's prominent place in global history saturate British deep history. Unfortunately, the end of the empire, the decline of the nation as a major power, and its membership in the European Union have seriously undermined this global mission. What happens when reality clashes with deep history? In the case of Britain, it is national paralysis and worse, national rage.

National rage is consuming Israel today. After half a century, the state still has no internationally recognized borders or capital city. The Arab and Muslim worlds still refuse to recognize it (except Egypt and Jordan). Six million Palestinian refugees still clamor for their right of return. In spite of immigration, apartheid laws, settlement building, and ethnic cleansing, Palestinians now outnumber Jews in Israel and the Occupied Territories. Israelis flee the country in droves making New York City the second largest Israeli city after Tel Aviv.



*A depiction of Chinese nationalists demonstrating against Japan.*

Every time I took a Palestinian bus from East Jerusalem to visit friends in Bethlehem, Ramallah, or Jericho, the hideous separation wall confirmed my impression that Israelis are consumed by fear that the Third Jewish Kingdom will follow the First and Second into ruin. In Jerusalem, Israelis blot out reality in prayer at the Second Temple Wall, in Tel Aviv they bury their fears in discos and bars, in Haifa they smother their fears in work, and in West Bank settlements they banish Palestinian reality behind high concrete walls.

In the 21st century, the long-established peoples of the world are rediscovering their deep histories and fashioning a new century in these images. Are nations and peoples slaves to their deep history? Is the USA fated to cling to its ideal of American exceptionalism to its dying breath? Can Russia abandon its

quest of global domination as the Third Rome? Can Britain finally accept the reality it is no longer a global empire and preserve membership in a united Europe? Are nations able to transcend their deep histories and move to a new stage of human evolution?

No political or religious leader dares ignore the power exerted by the deep histories of the major actors on the world stage today. On a recent visit to Shanghai, a group of students asked me not if, but when the United States would attack China. Is American exceptionalism fated to conflict with Confucian moral superiority?

### **Deep history and Unificationism**

One group that attempts to liberate the peoples of the world from their seemingly deterministic enslavement to their respective deep histories is the Unification Movement founded by Rev. Sun Myung Moon. Beginning his ministry in the midst of the Cold War, itself driven by deep histories, Rev. Moon expounded a global spiritual and political vision. Shaped on the battlefield of a divided Korean Peninsula, the new movement elaborated concrete and spiritual instruments that sought to transcend all racial, spiritual, economic, ideological, and spiritual barriers between humanity.

The Unification Movement is a "movement" (not a religion) that seeks to unite the diverse faiths and peoples of the planet. Rather than converting individuals from one to another faith, the Unification Movement treats each of the historic faith communities as "training grounds" where distinctive aspects of religion are explored, refined and developed. When united these individual contributions will result in one common path.

Unificationism undermines the grip of deep histories on humanity by emphasizing that humans at one time lived in a world where such deep histories did not exist. Rev. Moon described this world as the "original homeland" of humanity. The goal of the Unification Movement did once exist here on earth and remains a realizable human aspiration today. He said, "The heavenly world is the original homeland to which we are to go. Today, we are exiles from our original homeland and live a fallen life. But our fate is to return there."

For Unificationists, the various deep histories that have animated humanity since time immemorial are not only signs of the fallen state of humankind but barriers against the restoration of the original homeland. Rev. Moon maintained that the struggle to overcome racism, sexism, ideologies, classism, nationalism, and religious divisions will not be easy. "We cannot, however, enter there by ourselves, so God has to set up a path in the course of history so people can go in," he insisted.

Central to this "path" is bringing together hierarchies, clergy, and members of the many different religions of the planet. Rev. Moon clarified that God created so many different religions "to be training grounds" to make a path for every people, culture, custom, and tradition. Religions polish people to be qualified to enter the original homeland. Because of humankind's many different cultural backgrounds, God sought and set the standard of comparison and has been leading the way toward one unified religious world. The many organizations Rev. Moon founded are instrumental in transcending the deep histories that have divided religions.

The highly publicized international mass marriage blessings are another central step in the "path" elaborated by Rev. Moon. Marriages between historically antagonistic groups, such as Israelis and Muslims, Jews and Germans, blacks and whites, and Japanese and Koreans, force the participants to transcend their respective deep histories in the quest of a new world and new humanity.

Will the Unification Movement have more success than any of the scores of such quests in history to return humanity to its ancient Garden of Eden? In order to succeed, Unificationism will need to rise above the deep histories that I have described.

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Graphic at top: *A depiction of Israeli soldiers praying at the Western Wall in Jerusalem.*