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HUMILIATION: EGYPT'S COLONIAL LEGACY
The Importance of a Recurrent Theme
in Arab/West Relations

A Thesis
submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree of
Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Studies

By

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ABSTRACT

There is a massive sense of injustice in the Arab perception of its colonial past that has found expression in the coups, revolutions and terrorist activities that have filled our newspapers since the end of World War II. In trying to make sense of the present situation, it is of value to examine the colonial record and the intellectual, religious and political movements through which the Arab world responded to the challenge of foreign penetration. Those responses constituted an effort to re-establish national dignity in the face of a humiliation inherent in the foreign domination.

This study, utilizing an interdisciplinary approach, (an anthropological observation of an historical event, the colonial experience of Egypt) examines the role of humiliation in the continuing discord between the Arab/Islamic world and the West.

I do not suggest that a preoccupation with national pride has overwhelmed national interest in setting priorities for the policies implemented by the Arab leadership, but that humiliation is a social aggression that can cause alienation, thereby making diplomatic efforts more difficult.

The Islamic nation is susceptible to the value of
humiliation for it has been unable to defend the land
the language, and the people believed chosen by God to
receive His Word from the incursion of non-believing
colonizers. This susceptibility is apparent in the
frequency the term "humiliation" appears in historical and
current writings that consider the interaction between
Arab/Muslim and Western/Christian cultures. The
proportions of that humiliation are relative to the
positioning of Arab nations with their western neighbors.

It is important to understand what happened to the
Egyptian consciousness during the English occupation.
From 1884 to 1907 Egypt was ruled by the British Agent and
Consul-General, Lord Cromer. Lord Cromer wrote two
volumes documenting his administration. Egypt's
humiliation can be perceived in Cromer's writings, and the
resentment stemming from that period must still be dealt
with. Lord Cromer's certainty of English superiority was
the hallmark of his administration, and hindered any
meaningful interaction between the English and the
Egyptians. There is an element of racism in any colonial
experience, and the English care to maintain separateness
did have racial undertones.

The desire to free Egypt from its sense of shame with
the British occupation gave rise to different movements
seeking an adjustment to the country's political situation. Nationalism and Islamic reform were the most important responses to the challenge of colonialism.

Nationalism, with its concern for national dignity and prestige was late in coming to Egypt. It was a European importation that first appeared when the country's tolerance for the colonialists' intrusion had ebbed. A patriotic leadership developed that promoted the new idea of loyalty to country, to a history that preceded Islam, to an understanding that citizens are linked one to another by characteristics they share that developed from a unique national experience that created an affection and pride for each other and their land.

The English occupation gave rise to intellectual movements centered around Al Azhar University that sought an Islamic solution for the modernizing secularism that posed a threat to Islamic values, but it was the Society of the Muslim Brothers that offered a sweeping reform movement. Humiliation, lack of status, lack of dignity, a need to serve the glory of Islam, these emotions gave rise to an organization whose offshoots we are still dealing with and whose goals have changed little over the years.
The United States is considered by many in the Arab world as a colonial power because of Arab economic and technological dependency on America and because of the U.S. role in establishing Israel.

The attitude of separation and exclusion between Arab and Jew that exists today in Israel compares to the colonial experiences of other Arab nations and increases Arab willingness to sacrifice national resources to gain Palestinian freedom. In a world directed by government edicts, the importance of individual exchanges that occur daily can be lost. Although governments establish the position of domination, in its final expression, humiliation is not so much a collective action as it is a one-on-one activity, one man subordinating another, that need not occur.

United States/Arab relations before the difficult days of partition form a good basis for future interaction with the nations of Islam, but an historical perspective is needed to avoid the pitfalls inherent when dealing with a culture alien to one's own. It is in the U.S. national interest to redefine its relations with the Arab world. Because of the U.S. special association with Israel this process will not be an easy one. Within the limitations of its own moral values, consideration of the values of
the Islamic-Arab culture must be included in developing a U.S. area policy. For that policy to have any chance of success, humiliating episodes must be avoided.
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I. INTRODUCTION

"They publish news, articles, and figures on the danger of the new Islamic movement as if there had never been, a century or so before, movements in the Islamic world much bigger than the present movement in Iran. The awakening of the Islamic world has not just begun. It began a long time ago".

Abd al-Hamid Abd al-Ghani\(^1\)

There is a massive sense of injustice in the Arab perception of its colonial past that has found expression in the coups, revolutions and terrorist activities that have filled our newspapers since the end of World War II. New leaderships have developed from the popular will to establish a national identity infused with the dignity and self-confidence that had been eroded by the policies, and even more important, the attitudes of the occupiers.

This study, utilizing an interdisciplinary approach, (an anthropological observation of an historical event, the colonial experience of Egypt) examines the role of humiliation in the continuing discord between the Arab/Islamic world and the west.

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Since man has not devised a physical method to end wars, perhaps we must seek new social patterns, corrections, so to speak, in our global search for peace. Clyde Kluckhohn wrote that when establishing international relationships, more than the external facts about a nation must be taken into account, sentiments must also be considered. "The problem of how to minimize and to control aggressive impulses is in many ways the central problem of world peace. One, though only one, [my underlining] way of preventing wars is to lessen the irritants making for tension within each society."  

National pride develops from a variety of sources, including acknowledgment of a country's historical achievements, cultural development, and national purpose by the international community. By ignoring the Arab contribution to the world's accumulation of knowledge, and then compounding this neglect by not using today's available Arab talent to participate in common global cultural, scientific, economic and political goals, a sense of national humiliation continues.

I do not suggest that a preoccupation with national pride has overwhelmed national interest in setting

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priorities for the policies implemented by the Arab leadership, but that humiliation is a social aggression that can cause alienation, thereby making diplomatic efforts more difficult.

Today in Egypt the British occupation is a fresh and remembered event. It would appear a sense of community outrage over humiliating incidents is more enduring in the Arab culture than in the American, more likely to be handed from father to son. Perhaps this is linked to the oral tradition of the Arabs as opposed to the less personal written tradition of America.

Anwar Sadat often referred to an incident that occurred in a village (Denshway) near his home. British officers on a pigeon shoot wounded the wife of the local imam*. In reprisal, resentful villagers wounded two of the officers, one fatally. The British, in turn, killed a bystander, imprisoned and publicly flogged residents, and hanged four of the villagers. One of the martyrs, the first to be executed, was Zahran, who became a hero to the people for the way he walked to the gallows with his head held high and his body erect. Sadat was born twelve years after this incident but this story retained its importance to him because it was immortalized in a ballad, one his grandmother sang to him each night and that he heard

*A Muslim leader with some religious authority.
throughout his village. Zahran's defiance became a model for Sadat and for other nationalist leaders.

In Sadat's book, *In Search of Identity*, he wrote of his mother and grandmother telling him bedtime stories "that were close to our real life and drew on contemporary history. One story dealt with the poisoning of Mustafa Kamil...by the British (he actually died of natural causes)...I did not know at the time who Mustafa Kamil was...I knew only, at that tender age, that there were forces, called "the British", who were alien to us, and that they were evil because they poisoned people."³ His grandmother also recited other ballads dealing with the patriotic struggle against the British, songs and poems that sunk into the boy's subconscious so that even before he "saw the British (he) had learned to hate the aggressors who whipped and killed our people."⁴

We have no counterpart to this oral tradition in our culture. The exploits of World War I hero Sergeant Alvin York were movingly recalled in a Hollywood film some thirty years after the event, but they never became a part of the emotional fiber of a generation of school children. The Bataan Death March, one of America's most humiliating

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⁴ Ibid., p.6.
experiences and an inspiration for a wartime population, now is consigned to the history books of the children and grandchildren of that population, never becoming a central event that provides inspiration for a new generation of leaders. The ability of film and book to generate and sustain patriotic responses appears less than when national heroics are handed down in song and story in the home from parent to child.

The ethnic groups in the United States most supportive to their national causes are often those with strong oral traditions. The Jews and the Irish come first to mind. America's Blacks may also use that same tradition (which is central to their culture) to develop the ethnic consciousness of the next generation of Black children through stories and songs of the civil rights movement and heroes like Dr. Martin Luther King.

In a world directed by government edicts, the importance of individual exchanges that occur daily can be lost.*

*In January, 1985, I crossed into the West Bank by public car, travelling from Amman to Jerusalem. My fellow passengers were Palestinians and subject to interminable interrogation, paper work and body search at the Israeli customs station. The procedure was objectionable to them, but understandable considering the times. What they could not come to terms with was the humiliation they felt at having to scramble barefooted through a communal pile to retrieve their shoes. Perhaps this procedure was not a policy of the Israeli government, but a matter of expedience initiated by the local officials, but I am confident that the sense of outrage it engendered must some day find outlet.
Although governments establish the position of domination, in its final expression, humiliation is not so much a collective action as it is a one-on-one activity, one man subordinating another, that need not occur.

The Islamic nation is susceptible to the value of humiliation for it has been unable to defend the land, the language, and the people chosen by God to receive His Word from the incursion of non-believing colonizers. This susceptibility is apparent in the frequency the term "humiliation" appears in historical and current writings that consider the interaction between Arab/Muslim and western/Christian cultures. The proportions of that humiliation are relative to the positioning of Arab nations with their western neighbors.

A psychological gulf between the Arab world and the west was well in place by the nineteenth century. Although scholars from an early time acknowledged the Arab contribution to human knowledge, their journals could not compete in popularity with such travellers' accounts as Marco Polo's. A romanticized history of the Crusades and Biblical familiarity with the area did aid the development of a popular interest in the region.

America first developed an impression of the Arab world from Mark Twain's well circulated travelogue, *Innocents Abroad*. His nineteenth century impressions of
Syria, Lebanon and Palestine betray a bias that was no doubt developed from earlier English travelogues. Books on travel in the Islamic world were immensely popular in England in the seventeenth century. One of these early accounts described the Arabs as people who "cannot be possibly brought to a quick and well formed manner of living but are continually spoilers of these parts of Turkes Dominions", 5 a sentiment repeated in Twain's observation that Arabs "put on airs unbecoming to such savages". 6

In trying to make sense of the present situation it is of value to examine the colonial record and the intellectual, religious and political movements through which the Arab world responded to the challenge of foreign penetration. Those responses constitute an effort to re-establish national dignity in the face of a humiliation inherent in the foreign domination.

The Oxford Universal Dictionary defines the word 'humiliate' as the ability "to make low or humble in position, condition, or feeling", and defines the word 'humble' as "to cause to think more lowly of oneself, to


lower in dignity, to abase.

"Dignity, Karamah, is implicit in being truly independent and sovereign. For Arabs it represents one of the highest values on the personal as well as the collective levels. For the individual it sums up the totality of his worth as a man. It manifests itself not merely in bearing or in external form of conduct; it consists primarily in a subjective sense of self-esteem; to lose dignity is to lost self-respect. Projected toward the collectivity, national dignity becomes the view that society has of itself. And violation of it is violation of something fundamental, judged in terms that transcend merely empirical consequences. The greatest violation of national dignity is subjugation to a foreign master, hence the profound mortification of Arabs under European domination and their mystical pride and attachment to their inner identity as Arabs".7 Arabism, urubah, is an almost mystical term describing the essence of being Arab. It "implies pride in being the inheritor of Arab culture and recipient of the Muslim heritage; it also involves an awareness of a special destiny".8

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8 Ibid., p.96.
Quranic references to the importance of dignity, justice, and humiliation have been catalysts for an Islamic response to Western challenges, for "Muslims have always sought the justification of their varying attitudes in the Quran". 9

An historical perspective is needed to develop an understanding of motives that formulate attitudes within today's Islamic community in the Arab world. The colonial experience must be understood in order to comprehend the trend of the Islamic community to turn to fundamentalist and nationalist philosophies. Although Britain and France were two countries most involved in shaping the modern Arab world, Spain and Italy left a legacy that has powerfully impacted on today's relations between Arab and western nations, and the United States, because of its special commitment to Israel, is today viewed as a colonial power by Arab countries.

According to Sharabi, the structure of European domination took four forms:

---Direct colonial domination. The countries colonized in this fashion were opened to settlement by Europeans and indigenous citizens were excluded from government

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participation. Under this system there was greater restriction of basic rights.

--Exclusive treaty relationship. This established a pattern of economic and diplomatic dependence on the intruding nation.

--Rule by protectorate. Under the protectorate system it was assumed that foreign rule would be temporary and so traditional forms of local government were at least partly preserved. Control, of course, remained with the representatives of the protecting powers.

--The mandate system. Introduced by The League of Nations after World War I, was established to prepare certain nations (Palestine, Transjordan, Iraq, Syria and Lebanon) judged unable to govern themselves for eventual self-government. Although political control remained with the mandatory powers, a certain amount of political freedom was retained by the indigenous leadership.

The colonial experiences of French dominated Algeria approximated those of Italian dominated Libya, while Spain followed a pattern that in many ways was similar to that of Britain's. Perhaps because of her long association with Islam, Spain was able to follow a sympathetic course. Spain used a mixed system of administration, Spanish and Moroccan; did not annul the sovereignty of the Sultan; used a policy that was nonassimilative and only indirect
political control. France's range of domination varied from country to country but the overall effect was more disruptive. The level of French penetration was greatest in Algeria where France attempted a program of complete "gallicization" by developing a French educated elite with few local administrators or technicians. "From Napoleon to de Gaulle, the attitude of France toward the Arabs remained paternalistic; the complex character of French rule, ranging from severity to compassion, from ruthlessness and repression to cooperation and reconstruction, is best exemplified in Algeria."\(^{10}\)

A painful aspect of the French occupation was "the settlers' mentality (was) imbued with racial hatred. The settlers invoked the myth of racial superiority to justify their exploitation of another people, and they clung to it to maintain a structure which placed the destiny of ten million Algerians at the mercy of one million Europeans...it was the humiliation, individual and collective, felt by everyone and in every relationship between Algerians and Frenchmen which created the real gulf that separated the two peoples...The (occupation) policy...aimed at the extinction of the Algerian personality. The attack was concentrated upon the

\(^{10}\) Sharabi, p.26.
 mainspring of that personality: the peoples' language and their religion...The official abhorrence of Arabic and the determined efforts to obliterate it were still being expressed as late as 1954".11

It is of interest that some of the French authorities found a reason for the Algerian revolution in the rise of Nasser's Egyptian form of nationalism rather than the climate they had created.

Before examining particular colonial experiences in detail, it should be noted that some scholar have found an Arab predisposition to humiliation. Raphael Patai attributes the personal and intense character of most social contacts in Arab society for the Arab inclination toward a "personalization of problems". In The Arab Mind, he quotes Hans Tutsch, the Swiss Arabist:

"the personalization of problems goes so far in the Arab countries that even material, technical difficulties accompanying the adoption of elements of Western civilization are considered as resulting from human malevolence and felt to be a humiliation. The Arabs, who have accepted Western...life as a whole, are more and more determined by Western technology and science, of course experience always new "humiliations" which in other places would be considered normal difficulties of growth and eliminated...Proud peoples with a weak "ego structure" tend to interpret difficulties on their life path as personal humiliations and get entangled in

endless lawsuits or throw themselves into the arms of extremist political movements...".

Patai feels this may be somewhat exaggerated, but "there is unquestionably an element of truth in the observation that the Arab "feels enemies, humiliations, triumphs where the Occidental makes allowances for material, objective, and, in any event, impersonal difficulties." 12

1. The Libyan Colonial Experience

Italy justified her defeat and occupation of Libya in her declared need "to preserve her national dignity...for the development of her national spirit...to maintain her national prestige and assure her position in the Mediterranean,"\(^{13}\) but gave little thought in the conduct of her occupation to Libyan sensitivity towards the same values. An Italian composite of the 1911-1912 events, using diaries and eyewitness accounts, reveals the attitude of the Italian conquerors, the dimension of the Arab humiliation, and provides an explanation for present Libyan hostility towards the west: "Not yet are they ripe for the brotherhood of man...Underneath the Arab bravery lies a substratum of cowardice. When fanaticism dies down, their habitual deceit and lying come again to the top. Treachery seems as essential part of their nature."\(^{14}\)


\(^{14}\) Chevalier Tullio Trace, *With The Italians In Tripoli*, London: John Murray Publisher, 1912, pp.126-155.
Religious ties prompted some Libyans in 1911 to fight with the Ottoman forces against the Italians, "preferring to remain the Loyal subjects of a Muslim ruler than to become Europeanized citizens under Christian rule."15 Perhaps a stronger reason is that an accommodation had taken place over the years of Ottoman rule and autonomy had been conceded to the tribes of the interior.16

The thirty-two years (1911-1943) of attempted domination by the Italians left Libya in chaos. "The colonial period had neglected industry and training and brought so few Libyans higher education that King Leopold's regime could claim a better record for the Congo at independence."17 The severity of the Italian colonization was centered in her policy of settlement of the country by Italian immigrants, the creation of a "fourth shore" for Italy.

The attitude of the occupiers, their lack of respect for the Arab culture and their sense of superiority developed responses that have continued these many years.


since the occupation ended. When the first American chief of Mission to Libya met with a tribal leader in 1952, he was told, "Love and hatred (are) hereditary...the Italians (will) always be the enemies of my family."\textsuperscript{18}

Following World War II many Libyans in exile participated in neighboring Arab countries' political activities. They were motivated by the desire to attack western colonial rule. They took their newly learned tactics home "to a new generation of Libyans who had matured during the thirty years of Italian domination and wished nothing more than to have Italy pay the price of its uncompromising policy."\textsuperscript{19}

The term 'Libya' was used in ancient times, but it was not until the Italian colonists unified the separate entities of Tripolitania, Cyrenaica and the Fezzan for administrative purposes, that Libya, as we know it, appeared on the maps of modern Africa. The U.N. maintained the unification when Libya was granted its sovereignty in 1949, and the Senussi religious leader, Sayed Mohamed Idris, a loyalist who had fought the Italians, became its new monarch.


\textsuperscript{19} Khadduri, p.52.
If Libya had political sovereignty in 1951, it had little else for it was probably the poorest country in the world. Since the Italians had ignored the need for education, Libya also had one of the highest illiteracy rates (90%). The population was displaced and decimated. With 68% of the agricultural land mined and grazing cattle belonging to nomadic herders seized by military foraging parties, the country lived on charity and what little it could muster from the export of esparto grass that is used in paper-making and the scrap metal retrieved from the battlefields. In 1953 and 1954 this income was augmented by rental fees for the use of military bases.  

All of this was reversed in 1959 when oil started to be marketed. Technological expertise was then imported, schools were established, and the talented young were sent abroad for education, especially to Egypt who also supplied many of the teachers who staffed Libyan schools. Libya's foreign policy remained tilted towards the west, not the Arab world where her only bond seemed to be "a sense of unity with (those) nations in the feeling against Israel."  

King Idris always lacked a strong base of support for

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20 Bearman, pp.15-25.
21 Villard, p.55.
his monarchy, partially because of his courting the British (he had advocated protectorate status for Libya) in order to further his own political goals. His rule was also threatened by young emigres who had spent the occupation years in Egypt and were influenced by Egyptian nationalism and wanted to end Idris' economic and technical attachment to the west. This dependence "compelled Idris to sign a number of 'unequal treaties' guaranteeing the country's subordination to Western foreign policy...The 1956 Accord with Italy was perhaps the most humiliating of the unequal treaties the regime was obliged to conclude."22 This treaty had the effect of legitimizing the Italian land seizures.

The monarchy was overthrown in 1969 by a group of young military officers led by Mu'ammar al-Qadhhdafi. "The humiliation of the occupation of Sinai by Israel after the Six Day War was the catalyst of the Libyan young officers' coup. The struggle...was...to break into the Middle East and to become part of Arab aspirations. This is one reason why Libya, remote from the battlefields of the Middle East, insists on trying to settle the terms of the battle. Her late realization of her own identity is, for her, inseparable from the displacement of the

22 Bearman, p.25.
Palestinians." Qadhafi's revolutionary goal was to use the Libyan Islamic heritage to dispel the influences of European colonialism and to attain Arab unity by not recognizing the "existing boundaries among Arab states...all belong to the Arab nation."24

The revolution, for the most part, was conducted by men of the oases from minor tribes and poor families, the country's second-class citizens born in the last days of the Italian occupation. Qadhafi was born in Sirte, a desert oasis, in a tent similar to the one his parents still occupy.25 His father had been a follower of Omar al-Mokhtar, a Cyrenaican school teacher and the hero of modern Libya, who had been hanged by the Italians in 1931 for his guerilla war activities.

Execution by hanging for this revered man shows the proportions of the Italian disregard for Islamic beliefs. When the <u>sulama</u>* explained to the Italian staff in Tripoli that only death by hanging terrifies an Arab "because he

* <u>sulama</u> is a collective term for the learned men in the Islamic tradition.

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23 First, p.18.


25 First, pp.115-116.
believes that if he dies in this way his soul cannot escape from his body through his strangled throat, and remains still tied to earth". the authorities banned the use of firing squads as punishment. Omar al-Mokhtar's hanging took place before a crowd of twenty thousand Libyans.

Memories of the Italian Christian domination were so painful that nothing could save the Italian community from expulsion in 1970 when it was charged with continuing "to maintain an imperialist attitude."

Perhaps Radio Cairo's "Voice of the Arabs" was the real father of the revolution for it did provide the intellectual basis for the fledgling movement, and it was radio that coordinated the revolutionary cells that later formed and finally delivered the news of the successful coup. Radio provided the rumors that the defeat at Suez in 1956 was partly due to British use of Libyan bases and nourished Libyan dreams of revenge after the Arab defeat of 1967. One particular broadcast seemed directed towards their dreams:

26 Trace, p.179.
"Dear Arab brothers, raise your heads from the Imperialist boots, for the era of Tyranny is past! Raise the heads that are bowed in Iraq, in Jordan, and on the frontiers of Palestine. Raise your head, my brother in North Africa."29

Three weeks before the revolution took place, an Australian set fire to al-Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem. Only by understanding the central role of Jerusalem in the spiritual life of Muslims that the scope of the humiliation that burdens Islam for being unable to defend it is realized. This event became a catalyst for the coup.

The proclamation of the coup referred to Israel as "... the enemy of humanity, who burned our holy places and shattered our honor..." and ended with this call to arms: "Thus will we build glory, revive our heritage, and revenge an honor wounded and a right usurped. O you who witnessed the holy war of Omar al-Mokhtar for Libya, Arabism and Islam..."30

Britain has been especially effected by Qadhafi's policy of "support for those peoples and movements fighting states which collaborated with Israel, or which

29 Cooley, pp.15-16.

30 Ibid, pp.4-5.
were deemed oppressors of the Arab nation... (Since) the British had surrendered Palestine to the Zionists... the IRA received support on the basis that it was opposed to British colonialism. Justification for such intervention was provided by Qadhdafi...

'If we assist the Irish people it is simply because we see a small people still under the yoke of Great Britain and fighting to free themselves from it. And it must also be remembered the revolutionaries are striking, and striking hard, at a power that has humiliated the Arabs for centuries'.

The closing of British bases in Malta was a continuation of this policy of giving financial aid to any country willing to sever ties with England.

31 Bearman, p.116.
II. THE EGYPTIAN COLONIAL EXPERIENCE

Egypt served my turn.
You'll never plumb the oriental mind,
And if you did, it isn't worth the toil.

Rudyard Kipling.

Napoleon conquered Egypt in 1798. The French stay was short, less than three years, but its consequences are immeasurable for it abruptly imposed the west on a self-contained people and provided the event that propelled Muhammad 'Ali, an Albanian officer with the Ottoman forces that drove the French out of Egypt, into the role of father of modern Egypt. The dynasty he founded ruled until 1952.

Industrial Europe is credited with dragging nineteenth century Egypt into the modern era, but it was achieved also with the genius of Muhammad 'Ali. His record was remarkable. He established a system in Egypt that was new to both the Arab world and Europe. He transformed the economy by building canals for irrigation and transportation, and by introducing cotton and scientific agriculture to the Delta farmers. He became Egypt's most important landlord (through confiscation), manufacturer, and contractor.

Muhammad 'Ali was an illiterate man but his record in
education was impressive. "...(he) started a ministry of education, created a council of education and founded the first school of engineering in his realm (1816) and the first school of medicine. Professors and physicians he brought mostly from France. He invited missions—military and educational—to train his people, and sent native missions—military and educational—to study in Europe...The preferred subjects of study were military and naval, engineering, medicine, pharmacy, arts and crafts. Since then the French language has enjoyed a favoured place in the Egyptian curriculum."\textsuperscript{32}

Muhammad 'Ali's accomplishments provide one explanation for Egypt's heightened sense of humiliation with her English colonial experience. Unlike the population the Italians dealt with in Libya, a rural, illiterate people whose monumental heritage was Roman in origin, the English had local scholars available, products of Egypt's traditional centers of classical Arab studies as well as capable professionals trained by Europe's technicians to staff the public and private sectors.

The opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 changed Egypt's importance to the Great Powers. Most of the funds for the

canal were raised by public subscription in Europe, chiefly in France. After Muhammad 'Ali's death in 1849, his successors' extravagances [and what many consider the extortionist practices of European bankers], forced the Khedive to sell his canal shares to the British government. Great Britain put a bankrupt Egypt under its thumb. The following years Muslims seethed with resentment at being under the control of a Christian power.

It is important to understand what happened to the Egyptian consciousness during the English occupation. From 1884 until 1907 Egypt was ruled by the British Agent and Consul-General, Sir Evelyn Baring, who became the Earl of Cromer. Lord Cromer wrote two volumes that documented his administration. Egypt's humiliation can be perceived in Cromer's writings, and the resentment stemming from that period must still be dealt with. In 1981 England's Prince Philip visited Egypt and President Sadat attended a dinner at the British Embassy (that "bastion of British occupation and conspiracy") to honor the Prince. In his book Sadat remembered: "I moved from room to room in the ambassador's residence and saw there the pictures of all the British ambassadors who had served in Egypt - with one

33 Hitti, p.750.
exception. The portrait of Cromer had been removed. I considered that its removal was a very courteous move by the British. It respected my feelings and it showed that the British know better than anyone how Lord Cromer disgraced Egypt when he ruled our country as high commissioner in the early years of this century."

Lord Cromer's certainty of English superiority was the hallmark of his administration. "...one of the first qualifications necessary in order to play the part of a saviour of society is that the saviour should believe in himself and in his mission. This the Englishman did. He was convinced that his mission was to save Egyptian society, and, moreover, that he was able to save it." Cromer knew the task would not be easy considering "the chaotic material out of which the Englishman had to evolve something like order," but was confident that what had been accomplished in India could be repeated in Egypt.

Cromer found ethnic differences insurmountable: "It would seem, indeed, as if even in the most trivial acts of life some unfelt impulse, for which no special reason can

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34 Sadat, p.123.


36 Ibid., p.126.
be assigned, drives the Eastern to do the exact opposite to that which the Western [sic] would do under similar circumstances."37 (It must be noted that after a twenty four year residence in Egypt, Lord Cromer spoke no Arabic, and so his ability to accommodate cultural differences was limited.) Cromer's sense of superiority must have permeated the embassy staff and hindered any interaction between English and Egyptian: "from whatever point of view we look at the Egyptian, we should never forget that he is what the accidents of his history, climate, religion, and geographical position have made him. It is useless and, indeed, hurtful to hide his defects, or to disguise from ourselves the fact that the reception of true European civilization by a population such as that which is described above must be the work of generations...let us, in Christian charity, make every possible allowance for the moral and intellectual shortcomings of the Egyptians, and do whatever can be done to rectify them."38

The Anglophobia of the Europeanised Egyptian was of concern to Cromer, who blamed it on "envy, dislike of British administrative systems, ignorance of the English

37 Cromer, p.144.
38 Ibid., p.227.
language, resentment at the stand-off manners and at the airs of conscious superiority which the Englishman, somewhat unwisely, is prone to give himself, 39 but the English care in maintaining their separateness was probably the underlying reason. "The British in Egypt were very far from feeling that enthusiasm which inspired imperialism in India and in Burma. Basically they did not like this country, and knew that the dislike was mutual." 40 There was the Turf Club in downtown Cairo for English discussions about the direction Egyptian politics should follow. The Gezira club, with its lovely location on the Nile, was another favorite spot for the most select of Cairo's residents. No Egyptian would dare to enter either of these clubs. The story is told about an Englishman who committed an impropriety, "almost an indecency" by playing tennis with a future prime minister at the Gezira Club. It became fashionable amongst English ladies to proclaim how much they detested the country they were forced to reside in, despite their opulent life style. With no feeling for the country and no apparent affection for its people, the English penetrated "all aspects of Egyptian life, finance, administration, the

39 Cromer, p.243.

economy and the police."41 This state of subjection had to
demoralize Egypt's elite, for a man's dignity is dependent
upon his acceptance in institutions relevant to his life
style, especially in his own land.

The English writer Douglas Sladen used a parable to
illustrate the English sense of superiority prevalent in the
first quarter of the twentieth century: "The value of the
English to Egypt is of a different kind," he wrote. "It is
the custom in noble English families, where the heir is of
weak character, to engage a tutor, who is not only good at
education of the ordinary kind, but is looked up to by all
his fellows for the strength of his character and his
excellence in manly sports. He is given complete authority
over the boy in the hope that his influence will make a man
of him. Egypt has the same results to expect from the
tutelage of England."42 This was the attitude that demanded
revolution from an overburdened people.

When Lord Cromer resigned, his twenty four years of
service in Egypt were marked by the Egyptian national poet,
Showki:

41 Berque, p.198.
42 Sari Nasir, p.133.
How shall we name this era, after you or Ismail?
Were you born Pharaoh to govern the Nile?
Or despot by conquest of the land of Egypt,
Deferring to no one, never answerable?
Master by might of our necks in servitude,
Did you try the path to our hearts meanwhile?
At your departure the land gasped in thankfulness,
Freed from a pestilence too nearly fatal...

Lord Cromer "set out to make Egyptians devoted to
England rather than to nationalism...by careful attention
to the material interests of the people...to prevent their
becoming easily the prey either of the Nationalist
demagogue...or that of some barbarious religious
fanatic...or finally, that of some wily politician..."43
The type of native leaders Lord Cromer wanted to avoid
were precisely the type that assumed leadership throughout
the region but particularly in Egypt.

43 Morroe Berger, The Arab World Today, New York:
1. The Rise of Nationalism

Bypassed for centuries, her culture unchallenged, Egyptian concern for national dignity and prestige first appeared when the country's tolerance for the colonialists' intrusion had ebbed. An awareness of a national bond that had been formed by a common development, a particular accommodation to the land they occupied, was late in coming to Egyptians. Interesting to note, nationalism in Egypt developed in the lower strata of society. "It is important to remember that all national armies in the Arab world are of recent origin. There exists no military tradition...Each has its beginnings in the forces created under foreign domination. Until the end of the Second World War the status of the military was an inferior one; those who volunteered for military service generally belonged to the lower strata of society and only a very few educated young men chose the army for a career."44 This is at odds with the theory that "nationalism as it appears in a society is likely first to be embraced by elements of the society that are deeply interested in and well-informed about politics, that are

change-oriented and that tend to value tolerance and freedom more than order." Nationalistic trends found their initial outlet through a revolt by army officers under Lt. Col. Ahmad "Urabi in 1879. "Urabi was the first Egyptian leader from a fellah background and the first hero of Egyptian Nationalism. "Urabi set the pattern of a military man from a rural background emerging at a time of crises in Egypt to use nationalistic aspirations as a force for change.

Reckless spending and other factors including usurious practices of European bankers and European control of the terms of trade, had placed a bankrupt Egypt under the financial control of France and England and "The presence of Christian European high officials aroused popular resentment even animosity on political and religious grounds." The Army, understaffed and underpaid, was explosively discontented with Turkish-Circassian officers who spoke little Arabic and so had minimal contact with their troops. The peasants were overtaxed and subjected to forced labor by a government unable to pay for their work.


46 Hitti, p.439.
"Urabi championed the army and the peasants. He was the son of a poor farmer and had been a theological student at the Azhar, and so was well prepared to lead a resistance movement that consisted of "young educated men, theologians, civil servants."\textsuperscript{47} "Urabi's movement was vaguely aimed at a constitutional monarchy and an assembly,\textsuperscript{48} ideas that challenged British and French interests. By 1882 "Urabi had become Minister of War, virtually the head of government, an unpopular choice with the British and French.

A minor incident in Alexandria developed into a massacre of Europeans and Egyptians and provided the British reason to bombard Alexandria in 1882. The subsequent occupation of the country ended "Urabi's political career, and the country settled down under the reality of British domination. "A rich and charitable English lady, wife of a clergyman, returned to Cairo at this juncture, having left it at the time of the disturbances. She writes: 'Our power over the natives stopped short of life and death. We could put people in prison, keep them there for years, take them out again, at our will and pleasure, without enquiry or formality of any

\textsuperscript{47} Hitti, p.439.

\textsuperscript{48} Ibid.
Nationalism attracted new adherents amongst Egyptians who resented the puppet status of their Khedive and the increasing number of British officials involved in national affairs. The movement gained momentum from the leadership of men like Mustafa Kamil (d.1908), Sa'd Zaghlul (d.1927) and Ahmad Lutfi al-Sayyid (d.1963) who promoted the new idea of loyalty to country, to a history that preceded Islam and formed a very special bond between the people and their land. This was a new idea, a loyalty based on another value than religion, on an understanding that citizens are linked one to another by characteristics they share that developed from a unique national experience. That experience created a national identity, a people different in behavior and appearance from all others, aware of that difference and using it to build an affection and pride for each other and their land. When England occupied Egypt in 1882, she challenged the behavior patterns of the Egyptians by introducing her own unique way of 'doing'. As English 'ways' became the social standard, a sense of inadequacy developed among the Egyptian elite. With the advent of nationalism discord was sure to follow, for "a nationalist will place a first

49 Berque, p.124.
intensity value (willing to risk life or career)...on the
dignity and prestige of the nation...(and will be) more
inclined to see slights and indignities, more likely to
conjure up glories"\textsuperscript{50} than is the non-nationalist citizen,
is predispositioned for concern with national "grandeur".
Nationalism was a new concept imported from the west.

Mustafa Kamil rallied a class of educated youths in
the 1890s who lacked the hesitation of their fathers to
challenge a government (Cromer's) that was making them
prosperous. Born in 1874, Kamil had no memory of an Egypt
without the British, but without hesitancy, he knew the
land would be better without them. In order to achieve
his goal he attempted an alignment with France and an
alliance with the Khedive, (both wanted to check Cromer's
power). Kamil was ready to use the Ottoman sultan, the
French and the Khedive "to prevent Egypt being wholly and
permanently drawn into the British sphere of influence."\textsuperscript{51}
He thought a strong Turkey was necessary to check British
power in the region. Equally important was the need to
develop national unity based on a spirit of patriotism,
for "there lay the secret of European strength and basis
of civilization: everything that exists in those regions,

\textsuperscript{50} Arjomand, pp.30-31.

\textsuperscript{51} Hourani, pp. 200-201.
by way of justice, order, freedom and independence, great prosperity and great possessions, is undoubtedly the product of this noble feeling which spurs the members of the nation in their entirety to strive for a common purpose and a single goal."

Although only 34 years old when he died, Kamil left a strong political legacy in the National Party that he formed and in his writings and speeches. His demand for a constitutional and representative government became a rallying call for future movements.

The nationalist movement flourished during the first World War and in 1918 sa'd Zaghlul demanded autonomy from the British High Commissioner. Although his request was denied, Zaghlul's efforts gave rise to the Nationalist Party, The Wafd (delegation) which became the country's means of expression for national aspirations.

Although Zaghlul is referred to as a peasant, he was the son of a village notable, educated at al Azhar in law and theology. His nationalistic fervor first found expression during the revolt of 1882, when he was twenty-one years old.

He was a capable man, admired by Lord Cromer and respected for his positions as Minister of Education,

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52 Hourani, p.206.
Justice, and finally Prime Minister, but accommodation with the British government was not his goal. He wanted to secure the independence of his country. Zaghlul wanted Egyptian laws to be applied equally to all residing in Egypt, indigenous and nationals. He also wanted Egypt to share in the administration of the Sudan in order to protect its interest in the Nile.

He inspired revolution (1919) even as he attempted negotiations in his challenge of British rule. He found it unthinkable "that the Hashemite Bedouin, who had fought a small campaign...should be awarded a government of their own...whereas Egypt, a far greater and older nation, which had been thrown from the outset and in its entirety into the Allied war effort, should be consigned to the humiliating status of a protectorate."53 This was a period when British imperial requirements stood toe-to-toe with the Egyptian demand for self determination.

During the transitional period from protectorate to independent status, Zaghlul "had indignantly condemned the high-handed manner in which the British government defined its new relationship with Egypt,"54 even though the new elections placed his Wafid party in power and he became


54 Ibid.,p.25.
Prime Minister in 1924. When the British Governor General of the Sudan was assassinated in 1924 by an Egyptian fanatic, British anger made the fate of the Nile water uncertain and Zaghlul retired. He died in 1927 and the first period of Egyptian revolutionary activity ended.

Lutfi al Sayyid (1872-1963) was a nationalist whose arena was not the political stage, although he was a founding member of the People's Party, but through his writing and his work at the University, he was able to influence the moral consciousness of his beloved Egypt. He, too, was a village man whose education was well grounded in the Quran and in the law. He entered school in Cairo at a time when nationalist sentiments were shared by many of his fellow students, including Mustafa Kamil. He became a disciple of Muhammad 'Abduh, the period's great Islamic teacher, although he was not always in agreement with him, for he had also been influenced by European thought.

Freedom was the theme al-Sayyid dwelt on in his writings, the political freedom necessary for man to "fulfil his function in society, and in so doing fulfills his human capabilities."55 He fought for a free press so that the newly awakened national consciousness would have

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55 Hourani, p.174.
a means of expression.

When Lutfi wrote of nation, it was not of the Islamic or Arab nation, but the land of Egypt, so beautiful and precious in his sight, and so worthy of ruling itself. When he criticized British rule it was not because Egypt had not benefitted from her colonial experience, but because of "the absence of a moral relationship between rulers and ruled."\(^{56}\)

\(^{56}\) Hourani, p.179.
2. The Emergence of Islamic Reform

Egypt's desire to be free from its sense of shame with the British occupation gave rise to new movements. Islamic reform gained popularity as a means to combat the sense of malaise the nation felt with its subordination to a non-Islamic nation. The visible strength of the West was difficult for "a community, whose historical experience tended to reinforce the idea that 'God is on the side of those who fear Him and do good'" to come to terms with. Islamic revivalism emerged as the means to meet the challenge from the West with its secular doctrines and political dominance that precluded an Egyptian voice in initiating government policy.

Al Azhar, a bastion of Muslim orthodoxy, was the focal point for dissatisfaction with western intrusion. It was also the depositor of Islamic truths espoused by the 'ulama' as well as home for scholars of the ilk of Jamal al Din al Afghani and Mohammad 'Abduh.

Jamal al Din al Afghani wanted Muslims to fully understand their religion and then live according to its precepts. He thought this was what was needed to make Muslim countries politically strong. Muslims had few successes because they "were disunited, ignorant and

57 Voll, p.88.
lacking in public virtues. The Muslim countries were weak because Muslim society was in decay."58 The flourishing civilization of Islam could only be restored through unity. He wanted the reconciliation of Sunni and Shi'ites* and solidarity of the 'umma**. He sought a just leader but never found one so he promoted revolution to rid the people of unworthy Muslim rulers who "cared about nothing except their own pleasures and caprices, and so had fallen easy victims to the guiles and craft of the British."59

"The European Powers were not, al-Afghani maintained, innately stronger than the Muslim States. There was a prevalent idea that the English were superior, but this was an illusion...such illusions make men cowardly, and so tend to bring about what they fear. The successes won by the Mahdi in the Sudan showed what Muslims could do against the British if only they were awakened..."60

Afghani accepted the fundamental aspects of Islam completely and insisted, "The laws of Islam are also the

* The two major sects of Islam.
** The community of believers.

58 Hourani, p.114.
59 Ibid., p.116.
60 Ibid., pp.113-114.
laws of human nature; if man obeys the teaching of Islam, he is also fulfilling the laws of his own nature, and so attains to happiness and success in this world...when societies obey the law of Islam they become strong, when they disobey they grow weak, for Islam commands solidarity and mutual responsibility, and these are the secrets of the strength of nations."61

Afghani knew Islam to be a belief in transcendence, a belief in reason and a belief that required activity from its members. He "preached the necessity of Islamic revival and unity and vigorously affirmed that Islam was fully compatible with reason and modern science."62 He said reason should be used in interpreting the Quran and the door of *ijtihad* should not be closed, thus leaving men free to exercise their duty of applying the principles of the Quran to their own times. As far as activity is concerned, Muslims must not be passive to what comes along and accept everything as coming from God. They must choose activity in doing the will of God. Afghani quoted the Quranic verse many times, "God changes not what is in a people, until they change what is in

*The action of using informed, independent judgment in a legal or theological issue.

61 Hourani, pp.113-114.

62 Voll, P.93.
themselves." If man acted correctly God would be with him. This concept should stimulate him to greater activity. When man obeys God's laws he is successful and the same is true for societies.

Muhammad *Abduh was a devoted student of philosophy under Afghani and at the same time developed his own reputation as a social-political writer for the newly formed magazine al-Ahram. He was a teacher at al-Azhar as well as Dar al _Ulum_, a newly formed college that was to provide a modern education for students at al Azhar. His interest tended towards an Islamic version of Greek ethics and the problems of the rise and fall of civilizations. Because of his opposition to the occupation, in 1882 he was imprisoned, mistreated, and then exiled for three years. During his exile in Paris he became involved in Afghani's political activities.

Like Afghani, *Abduh was aware that Islamic societies were prey to decay. He accepted change in society but was conscious of the dangers inherent to change. He advocated Islam as a restraint in the modern world. The law must be conformed to, not avoided, but it had to be an Islamic code, not a European one. His writings were directed toward modern man who questioned religion as a model for

63 Hourani, p.128.
the life he had to lead. "Abduh emphasized that Islam could be reconciled to modern thought. In his autobiography Abduh said, "religion must be accounted a friend to science, pushing man to investigate the secrets of existence, summoning him to respect established truths, and to depend on them in his moral life and conduct."64

What Abduh advocated was a new ulama' open to modern concepts evaluated in the light of Islamic truths. He wanted to free the umma from the restrictions of taqlid.* He felt strongly that the people should be aware of those rights that the ruler could not usurp and that although the umma owed obedience to its legitimate ruler, they also had the duty to keep from error. He felt Islam was corrupted by its rules.

Abduh felt that certain precepts of the faith had to be accepted in total as written, for they are clearly stated in the Quran and in acceptable Hadiths,** but with obscure references or in matters that are not mentioned in Hadiths or the Quran, then the individual is obliged to practice ijtihad. Abduh stressed the importance of the

*The action of following precedents set by earlier thinkers.

**Statements or accounts of actions or sayings of the Prophet.

64 Hourani, p.141.
use of reason. One must remember that his major goal was to show that Islam and modern thought were compatible. For "Abduh law was not the only sign of a Muslim society, reason was equally important. Reason must be exercised to reinterpret the law to make it relevant to modern life. The law must promote the community's general welfare in the light of its needs today.

"Abduh looked to the restoration of the true caliphate as the means to restore Islam and rescue it from its decay. This was an interesting concept for "Abduh was a nationalist with very strong roots in Egypt. What he suggested was national unity achieved under the political leader (king) where people of all religions would be united within the country's borders but the leader would be under the religious authority of the caliph. His ideal was "a just ruler, ruling in accordance with a law and in consultation with the leaders of the people." 65 In his autobiography "Abduh points out "the distinction between the obedience which the people owe the government, and the just dealing which the government owes the people." This is a question the Egyptians have never come to terms with, "and weakness and humiliation would not have come upon

65 Hourani, p.157.
them had they not neglected it."66

'Abduh accepted the realities of the British occupation. His mode of change was through integration, combining modern and Islamic thought into workable techniques. "Clearly, with Muhammad 'Abduh, modernist thought had become firmly established in the Islamic experience."67 In the end 'Abduh broke with his former mentor on the means of achieving political change. He wanted reform through education rather than political intrigue.

Most of the leading Muslim intellectuals of the early twentieth century were in some way attached to Afghani or 'Abduh, usually as their students. Muhammad Rashid Rida, a student of 'Abduh's, became his influential successor.

Rida first became acquainted with Afghani and 'Abduh through their writings in a journal they had contributed to during their Paris exile. 'Abduh visited Tripoli, Syria, Rida's home, and after meeting him, Rida became his devoted follower. In 1898 he began the publication of the magazine al Manar in Cairo. This journal provided a means to espouse 'Abduh's reform ideas. Al Manar was a great magazine and the focus of Rida's life. Religious and

66 Hourani, p.141.
67 Ibid., p.144.
political commentary filled the pages with passionate ideas of renewal for a discontented population. Rida, reflecting the views of Afghani and "Abduh, stressed the proposition that Islam would attain greatness only when her people followed Islamic precepts. He also blamed local political leaders' perfidy for the nation's failures. Activity was the key to European success and Muslims must follow their example, and with the principle of unity adhered to along with their natural bond of language, a revitalized Islam could be achieved.

The idea of unity is a central theme of Afghani, "Abduh and Rida. Agreement between the Believers would accomplish God's plan for his people. The comforting promise of the Hadith, "My community will not agree upon an error" emphasized the urgency of all of these reformers to establish an Islamic nation. "Unity, wahda, is implicit in the feeling and awareness of Arabism; it involves political unity, but also the aspiration for a more profound unity transcending the merely political or economic. This has deep psychological roots that must be sought in the idea of the Muslim community advanced by Muhammad's early teachings and embodied in the community of his followers. Arabism posits the indivisibility of the Arab nation; the longing for wahda reflects the will
to restore to wholeness what has been violated by history, adversity, and accident."\(^{68}\)

Both Rida and 'Abduh were less rigid than Afghani. Both stressed the importance of reason and finding the common good in fulfilling the Shari'a. What Rida wanted was a just and devout ruler who would work in partnership with the \textit{\textsuperscript{culama}'} in the spirit of "the original conception of legislation in Islam."\(^{69}\) He stressed that the greatest need was for the \textit{\textsuperscript{culama}'} to develop a code of laws based on the Quran and Hadiths that would meet the needs of the day. Like 'Abduh, Rida stressed accommodation without abandoning basic tenets of the faith in order to meet the \textit{\textsuperscript{umm}a}'s needs in a modern world.

Rida did not keep up with the demands of a changing era. With the British occupation, nationalism became the dominant sentiment, and Rida's plans for the return of the caliphate, at a time this goal was not realizable, cost him his premier position as intellectual leader within the Cairo political circles. This was the period when militant fundamentalism was gaining popular acceptance in Egypt. The dialogues of Afghani, 'Abduh and Rida were important as an intellectual base to develop the activist

\(^{68}\) Sharabi, p.97.

\(^{69}\) Hourani, p.235.
role needed to satisfy the popular demand for change.

The population's weariness of the domination by the "adaptionists" gave easy acceptance to a militant fundamentalist style to confront the modernizing secularism that posed a threat to Islamic values. The Society of the Muslim Brothers offered this style in a sweeping reform movement totally Egyptian in concept, pan-Islamic in content, conceived and administered by one man, the charismatic Hassan al Banna.

Al-Banna (1906-1949) was a son of the Tanta, the rural delta region where a mystical Islam (Sufism) gave comfort to an overburdened people. Al-Banna's father was a pious man and the author of various works on the Hadiths. He was a student of Muhammad 'Abduh while attending al-Azhar. Hassan was profoundly affected by his father's attitudes and values and these of course were the result of his personal history. We have briefly evaluated the Egypt both father and son knew in the last quarter of the nineteenth century and the early years of the twentieth century, but it is important to stress the profound impression the British forces' occupation of his hometown made on young Hassan during the uprising of 1919.

Upon completion of his University work, al-Banna was assigned a teaching post in Isma'iliyya, a city in the Suez Canal Zone. "...his observations of the community
heightened his awareness of the role assigned to the city as a focal point, both of the British military occupation and of foreign 'economic occupation'. Here were not only the British military camps, but, equally hateful to Banna, the Suez Canal Company; complete foreign domination of the public utilities; and the conspicuously luxurious homes of the foreigners overlooking the miserable homes of their workers. Even the street signs in the popular Egyptian quarters, he observed were written in 'the language of the economic occupation'.”

Banna took an active part in the community of Isma'iliyya, teaching day and night and speaking in the coffee houses. His message was usually a warning against the materialist philosophy and foreign traditions that had adversely impacted on the community and diverted them from the goals of their faith. Six members of the British camp labor force were attracted to Banna's message and sought his leadership:

"We have heard and we have become aware and we have been affected. We know not the practical way to reach the glory ('izza) of Islam and to serve the welfare of Muslims. We are weary of this life of humiliation and restriction. Lo, we see that the Arabs and the Muslims have no status

(manzila) and no dignity (karama). They are not more than mere hirelings belonging to the foreigners. We possess nothing but this blood...and these souls...and these few coins...We are unable to perceive the road to action as you perceive it, or to know the path to the service of the fatherland (watan), the religion, and the nation ('umma) as you know it. All that we possess, to be acquitted by God of the responsibility, and for you to be responsible before Him for us and for what we must do. If a group contracts with God sincerely that it live for His religion and die in His service, seeking only His satisfaction, then its worthiness will assure success however small its numbers or weak its means."71

Humiliation, lack of status, lack of dignity, a need to serve the glory of Islam, these emotions gave birth to an organization whose offshoots we are still dealing with and whose goals have changed little over the years.

The Brotherhood's growth in a relatively short period of time reflected the sentiments of a large segment of the Egyptian population and the magnetism of its founder. The size of the membership during its peak period, 1946-1948, was 300,000 to 600,000 people, and by adding sympathizers, the Society represented nearly a million Egyptians, every facet of Egyptian society. Essentially, they were men trying to find an Islamic direction for Muslims in a modern world. Their ultimate goal was unity of Islam

71 Mitchell, p.8.
"under the single banner of God," and to end the indignities of foreign domination.

In spite of the murder of its founder and the official dissolution of the organization, the Brotherhood remained a powerful propaganda force in the Moslem world. New challenges; the Camp David Agreements, President Sadat's ties with the West, and oil wealth, created new splinter groups including Al Tagfir wal Hijra that was responsible for President Sadat's assassination. Students of the Arab world who were studying in Cairo during the days when the fiery orator, Hassan al-Banna, held their attention and inspired their dreams for a new order have long since returned to their respective countries. New groups have formed, all with different names, (in Syria, Young Men of Muhammad) but the original goal remains, the establishment of an Islamic-based state. The times and some of the challenges have changed but the ideal remains.

The war years (1939-1945) further diminished Egyptian self-esteem. To the English soldiers the Egyptians were 'Wogs', wily, Oriental Gentlemen. "...of no country did the British demand more than they did of Egypt during the war, and of no country's interest were they less considerate...Their troops marched through the streets of Cairo singing obscene songs about our King, a man whom few of us admired but who, nevertheless, was as much of a
national symbol as our flag." Farouk was never so popular as when he was being insulted by British troops."72

There was a unique feature in the pattern of colonial domination used by the English, the Egyptian elite were included in the political process. "To be sure, power to make the crucial decisions that determined the course of Egypt's history was reserved to the British. Still, the indigenous elite was given just enough of a taste of political power to be tantalized and kept off balance in a position of calculated inferiority not without racist overtones."73 This attitude is illustrated in a remark credited to Farouk when he heard Lord Killearn was to leave Egypt: "I only really ever had one thing against that man; he would never acknowledge that I am the power behind the throne."74

During the years after World War II there was a strong movement amongst the intellectuals of Egypt to encourage the education of the masses as a means of attaining status amongst the community of nations. Egypt had a tradition in literature, jurisprudence, theology and

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74 McBride, p.147.
theater. Increased emphasis on education seemed a logical step in attaining intellectual parity with the West. Taha Husain, educator and writer, wrote in 1944:

"The people must learn all that there is to know. This is the only way they have to recognize injustices, to call to account those who humiliate them, who treat them unfairly, who rob them of the fruits of their effort and labour; their only means of entering on the paths of equity and justice...If the nation acquires education, it will know what is due to it by right in private life. It will no longer allow any minority to treat the majority unjustly, to deprive it of its rights in public life. It will no longer allow any other nation to treat Egypt unjustly and to humiliate her...Why this attitude of inferiority towards the foreigner, this surly but sometimes servile imitation, from which we can only escape by a cultural self-improvement which will make us equal to the foreigner, so that he can no longer regard us with contempt?"\(^{75}\)

\(^{75}\) Berque, p.638.
3. A New Era

On January 15th, 1918 Gamal Abdel Nasser was born. It was an appropriate year for a nationalists's birth for it was the year Sa'd Zaghlul asked for Egyptian independence and England, by refusing to have his appeal heard in London, set off the terrible riot of 1919.

Both Hassan al Banna and Gamal Abdel Nasser sparked the imagination of their despairing nation. Max Weber notes "the 'natural' leaders in times of psychic, physical, economic, ethical, religious, political distress, have been neither officeholders nor incumbents of an 'occupation' in the present sense of the word, that is, men who have an acquired expert knowledge and who serve for remuneration. The natural leaders in distress have been holders of specific gifts of the body and spirit; and these gifts have been believed to be supernatural, not accessible to everybody."\(^76\)

In 1939 (Nasser dated the founding, 1942) a group of young army officers banded together by Anwar Sadat formed the Free Officers Organization. This group, led by Nasser overthrew the monarchy on July 23, 1952. The leadership

of the coup d'état was consolidated into a Revolutionary Command Council under the charismatic Nasser.

This was a revolution nurtured by passionate discussions between young men who sought a personal world defined by Egyptian standards, not English demands filtered through an abject monarch. All were deeply scarred by a shared and distressing history that needed to be recalled: "We restore lost dignity to our moral values by not forgetting the past."77 Nasser later wrote, "Sometimes when I re-read the pages of our history, I feel a tearing grief...it robbed us of all sense of strength and honor. It left in the depths of our souls a complex which we will have to fight for a long time to overcome."78

Nasser was a member of the Egyptian forces fighting in Palestine in 1948. The betrayal he felt over inferior weapons and lack of training of the Egyptian soldiers cemented his determination to rid the country of its leadership and to establish Arab unity. "The Arab states emerged from Palestine with a common bitterness and disappointment; then, each in its own internal affairs encountered the same factors, the same ruling forces that

78 Ibid., p.63.
had brought about their defeat, and forced them to bow their heads in humiliation and shame."79

The U.S. withdrawal of its offer to help Egypt building the High Dam at Aswan led to Nasser's greatest victory. Nasser declared the Suez Canal Company nationalized in order to use its revenue to pay for the Dam's construction. This prompted an Israeli-British-French invasion. "It was at Suez that Egypt's nationalist revolution found its voice. Stung by withdrawal of the Western offer to finance the dam, Nasser expressed in his anger the full depth of historical humiliation built into Egypt's colonial dependence; he also expressed its new defiance."80

Anthony Eden, the British prime minister, referred to the nationalization as an act of "plunder", claiming Nasser took away what "really belongs to the world to use for selfish national purposes." This is a remarkable viewpoint when the foreign exploitation of nearly a century of this poor country's major asset is considered. U.S. diplomacy aided in the departure of the tripartite forces and finally ended colonial dependency, but it was

79 Nasser, p.105.
an Egyptian population standing firmly against the aggression that restored national confidence and received Arab acclaim.

The English insistence that only the French and British were capable of piloting the Canal was a real bone in the throat for Egyptians. It was a matter of national pride that the Canal be kept open and so while the West waited gleefully for the ships to stack up, the Egyptians worked around the clock and the Canal remained open. "They were such snobs, the French and the British," an Egyptian pilot recalled many years later. "They insisted you couldn't pilot this Canal without two years' training." He had been hired during the summer of 1956 and was shepherding ships through the Canal without incident after thirteen days of tutelage.\(^{81}\) The mystique of foreign superiority that had been carefully nurtured over seventy-five years was finally cracked. Ahmad Urabi had been vindicated:

"Oh, ye just men! Is it fair that the sons of the country should be deprived of every office, and that foreigners should take their places, together with those who have come to Egypt, like Circassians, Albanians, and Bulgarians, so that even down to lowest ranks such as the ouzbashis of the army, the places are given to others than the sons of Egypt? Are not the Egyptians as good as the Bulgarians and other foreigners? But we shall find

amongst the champions of humanity sons to defend the right against the tyranny of the time which blackens the face of man.

(Signed) Ahmed Arabi, the Egyptian.\textsuperscript{82}

\textsuperscript{82} A. M. Broadley, \textit{How We Defended Arabi and His Friends}, Cairo: Research and Publishing Arab Center, 1980, p.151.
III. CONCLUSION

The Arab nation's long struggle against domination has affected her psychological sense of self-worth. This point was apparent in a summary of Egyptian motives in the 1973 war. "By 1973 Egypt had almost become the laughing stock of the Arab world. We claimed to be the leader and protector of the Arabs, but gave no lead to our own people and showed ourselves unable to protect our own territory...Each day that passed was a day of humiliation for Egypt."\(^{83}\) The Arabs not only felt that they have been denied justice in the unfolding of their personal history, but their potential has been thwarted by colonialism, imperialism and also by their own rulers' treachery, incompetence or greed. Today the world must deal with the sense of outrage felt by Islam. Islam, chosen by God Himself to be keeper of The Book, has failed in fulfilling her Islamic prerogatives. She remained impotent as her holy language was replaced by a foreign tongue, her faithful humiliated by forces of occupation. The occupation of Palestine has become a unifying force within the Arab nation, the catalyst for seeking Islamic

solutions to Arab problems.

It is in the U.S. national interest to redefine its relations with the Arab world. Because of the U.S. special association with Israel this process will not be an easy one. If America does not take into consideration Arab sensitivities it will be impossible.

During the Achille Lauro crisis in 1985 the familiar sense of humiliation was again the focal point in our dealing with Egypt. Ibrahim Naafa, editor of Al-Ahram wrote that President Mubarak "ended up humiliated in front of his own people." President Reagan's terse "never" when an apology was asked for showed a lack of appreciation for Egyptian sensitivity. A Washington Post editorial writer showed keener insight than our political advisers in his analysis of the situation: "As Egyptians see it, Cairo could have taken political cover and turned the ship away, as others did; but to save lives and do a service it took the ship in. Having gone that far, it became politically unthinkable to hand over Arab perpetrators to non-Arab prosecutors...Still, it is possible to think, as we do, that Mr. Reagan was right to intercept the Egyptian airliner, and to understand the measure of humiliation and increased vulnerability that it

brought upon an already frustrated Arab friend."  

When an Arab King is refused arms he deems necessary for his defense, while our government supplies an unending inventory to Israel, or is refused the same level of technology that is given Israel, humiliation is perceived in that action. Through an exchange of technology there is a real basis for cooperation between the U.S. and individual Arab countries. The advantages for the U.S. are obvious but the advantages for a developing country are overwhelming. Introducing new manufacturing techniques, i.e. transfer of technology, could lead to industrial independence, but perhaps more important, the recognition of Arab ability to handle all technologies is an important step in developing a relationship based on mutual respect.

An Egyptian perception of humiliation in its dealings with other nations has not been limited to its encounters with the west. In July of 1972 President Sadat gave the Russians a one week notice to vacate their personnel and equipment from Egypt. The final breach was caused by the Russian leadership's communique to President Sadat: "As to war, we are concerned about it. Waging wars, preparing for them and training for them is a very dangerous

proposition. But it is useful to mention that you are unable at this point to launch a war."86 A furious Sadat fired back his reply to the Russian Ambassador: "I reject your message in both content and form. I reject your attitude and behaviour towards me. I reject your methods."87 Commenting on this incident in his autobiography, Sadat notes "That the Soviet ambassador had assumed a position comparable to that of the British High Commissioner in the days of British occupation of Egypt."88*

As a nation the U.S. should be sensitive to another nation's sense of humiliation for it is an emotion it has encountered. The humiliation the U.S. felt when its people were hostages of Iran or when the Japanese captured the American army in the Philippines during the dark days of World War II recall the same emotions the Arab world

*The United States had fallout from this Russian incident. An American businessman six years later had to relay the displeasure of the Egyptian airforce's Chief of Staff to the U.S. Ambassador when Egypt was not offered its choice of weapons systems. He protested that the U.S. military was treating Egypt as the Russians had, and he would not accept that behavior.

87 Ibid., p.71.
88 Sadat, p.231.
has felt when it was not in control of the lives of its citizens.

A historical perspective is needed to appreciate cultural values of a society alien to one's own. Historical perspective frees a people from current trends and prejudices and allows them to develop an objective viewpoint. Within the limitations of its own moral values, consideration of the values of the Islamic/Arab culture could ease strained U.S.-Arab diplomacy.

United States-Arab relations before the difficult days of partition form a good basis for future interaction with the nations of Islam. Today the U.S. is challenged to develop an even-handed policy to meet the rapidly changing environment of the Middle East. "Since in the Arab view a man's self-respect depends primarily on the respect others have for him,"\(^8^9\) for that policy to have any chance of success, humiliating episodes must be avoided at all costs.

"Say, Our God, You are the possessor of all kingship; You grant kingship to whomever You will, and remove kingship from whomever You will. You bestow dignity upon whomever You will, and humiliate whomever You will. All bounty is in Your hand. You are omnipotent."

The Quran. 3:26.

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\(^8^9\) Patai, p.310.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


