

Majid Salman Hussain
British Policy and the Nationalist Movement in Egypt,
1914–1924

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Movement in Egypt, 1914–1924**

A Political Study



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Foreword

The British occupation of Egypt in 1882 is by itself a sobering and intriguing episode that has fascinated historians for a long time. Its origins go back to 1798, the year of Napoleon's invasion of Egypt and British fears of a French strategy designed to put an end to their Indian imperial presence, leading eventually to a more concerted effort to storm the British Isles under the banner of the French Revolution. However, within three years, Britain succeeded in its alliance with the Ottoman Sultan to chase the French out of Egypt, leading in the process to the unexpected rise of a Middle Eastern admirer of Napoleon, Muhammad 'Ali.

It was this unexpected event that drew back Britain into Egyptian affairs, prompted by its rivalry with the French, on the one hand, and an ever expanding power fuelled by the engines of its industrial revolution, on the other. Muhammad 'Ali (1805–1848) had great ambitions that went well beyond the cautious policies of his Ottoman suzerain. His programme which unfolded over four decades consisted of building an industrial base that had the capacity to sustain a national army, and consequently consolidate Egyptian independence within an Arab world that was increasingly perceived as his sphere of influence. His industrial policy made him keener to exercise a direct monopoly of Egypt and the sole merchant and distributor of these products. These policies were an anathema to the British imperial economic and political elites who saw free trade as the only feasible policy in a world market dominated by their manufactured goods. His other strategy consisted of extending his Egyptian presence across a number of Arab countries, which were considered part of the Ottoman Empire, including the Sudan and Greater Syria. These twin policies were largely supported by various French governments, adding to Anglo-French tensions. Another Anglo-Ottoman was consequently forged to curb this Egyptian drive for independence and expansion. By 1841 Muhammad 'Ali was forced to confine his political sway to Egypt, drastically reduce his military forces and, more importantly, dismantle his reform programme and its reliance on economic monopolies. Although Egypt remained in theory an Ottoman province, the victors bestowed its governance on Muhammad 'Ali and his dynasty.

Between 1848 and 1880 Egypt was governed by family members of Muhammad 'Ali who were keen to throw their country wide open to Western goods, personnel and ideas, while trying at the same time to press ahead with a programme of modernisation that sought by the time of Khedive Isma'il (1863–1879) to make the country part of Europe. However, Isma'il's ambitious plans and rapacious European creditors, with their ever astronom-

ical interest rates, led to Egypt's bankruptcy and the sale of its Suez Canal shares to the British, thanks to the endeavours of the Prime Minister Disraeli and his eager lending bankers, the House of Rothschild. It was during these turbulent events that the Egyptian army decided to defend the country's independence and force the Khedive to be accountable to a parliamentary system of government. Britain, for the third time, decided to intervene under various pretexts, whereby the country was occupied and parliamentary democracy deemed unsuitable for a state that was intent on restoring its own independence. Pronounced a temporary measure that was supposed to end within a short period of time, the British occupation of Egypt, in one form or another, did not formally end until 1954.

This excellent book, analysing and narrating the events and socio-economic changes that followed the third wave of British military intervention, offers a comprehensive coverage that captures the spirit and concrete drive of the Egyptian national movement in its relentless campaign. Using primary archival sources, both British and Egyptian, in addition to countless memoirs and first-hand accounts, it represents a nuanced depiction that is original and compelling at the same time. Its analysis of the 1919 revolution and its demands for full independence in the wake of WW I is one of the best interpretative essays on the subject. By analysing its long-term and immediate causes, describing its course and countrywide representation, and plunging into the details of its outcome, largely determined by unseemly British diplomatic and military manoeuvres, it allows the reader to grasp the general characteristics of a typical revolution, while acting as a timely reminder that the "Arab Spring" has been a long-standing feature of this part of the world, leading to great expectations tinged with disappointments and broken promises and shattered dreams. But it also indicates and highlights the resilience of such dreams, often renewed or refined, until they are amenable to be realised under different or more propitious circumstances. This book, fittingly takes the story down to 1952 and its subsequent success in wresting its independence and spearheading the struggle for interdependence across the Arab world.

It is for these reasons that this study is a timely piece of scholarly and nuanced analysis that is a good guide to understanding British policy in the Middle East in the inter-war period, as well as a pointer to future developments that still animate the Middle East and haunt the world in their poignancy and recurring endeavours for a brighter future.

Youssef Choueiri
University of Manchester
July 30, 2014

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I acknowledge with gratitude the assistance of the staff at the Public Record Office in London, Exeter University Library, and the Middle East Centre's Library at St Antony's College in Oxford, the Cairo Archives, and the National Library in Cairo, Cairo University Library, and 'Ain Shams University Library.

Finally I wish to thank my wife and my children Kalid, Youssef, Hannah and Emily for all their loving support throughout the years that I have worked on this project – their encouragement has been my strength.

*Dr Majid Salman Hussain
(PhD Law and PhD Arabic and Islamic Studies)*

Introduction

At the end of the eighteenth century, Egypt's geographical position, and its economic and political conditions were all factors that facilitated colonial penetration, and the study begins by exploring the effects of European penetration and foreign interference in Egypt's internal affairs and how these led to the rise of the Nationalist Movement during the British occupation of 1882.

It then looks at Britain's political approach and at how the British strengthened their dominant position in Egypt despite their many promises to leave the country. It also looks at the way in which the British managed to break up the unity of the Nile Valley (Egypt and the Sudan), and at how they abolished Egypt's pre-Occupation constitution, and examines the British policy of liquidating the Nationalist Movement led by the National party, which latter action obliged the Movement to go underground in order to fight the occupation.

During the First World War the British went to extremes against Egypt and the study discusses British objectives in taking such action. The war had a serious effect on economic and social conditions in Egypt and this produced feelings of desperation amongst the Egyptian people. An important outcome of all this was the collaboration between the Egyptian Government and the leaders of the Nationalist Movement which resulted in a significant change in the political approach that had been formulated by Lord Cromer, Sir Eldon Gorst and Lord Kitchener. This policy change on the part of the British led to a renewed Egyptian stand against British occupation and with the impact of political, economic and social factors, the 1919 Revolution became inevitable.

The thesis seeks to assess the 1919 Revolution. It looks at how the Egyptians, in order to confront the occupation, managed to organise and group themselves into national and revolutionary committees, into underground societies and professional organisations. All this work culminated in the Sirdar's assassination in 1924. We also analyse and discuss why Britain changed its policy towards Egypt and the Nationalist Movement and the purpose of the mission headed by Lord Milner which was sent to study the situation in Egypt, and the study highlights the nature of the negotiations between Milner and the Wafd, and Curzon and 'Adli. With the failure of negotiations, the British Government had to issue the Declaration of 28 February 1922 as a way out for its policy in Egypt, but was able to secure its privileges through four reservations which could be used at any time Britain's interests were perceived as being in any danger.

An important part of the study is the discussion of how the King man-

aged to receive wide authority through the constitution, and how the regime in Egypt became dependent on the Wafd, the Palace and the British. After the constitution and the defining of the executive and legislative powers, the Wafd and the Palace alternately ruled the country under the British occupation. Thus an important aspect of this study lies in its attempt to assess the historic role of all these different powers in Egypt's political history during the period researched and until 1924.

The thesis also sets out to explain why Sa'd Zaghlul placed the Nationalist Movement in an awkward position during his premiership in 1924, and tries to account for the contradiction in the policy adopted by the cabinet of trying to work for the Egyptian people on the one hand, and for the interests of the Palace and the British on the other. We also try to explain the weakening in Sa'd's position following the Sirdar's assassination which led to the British warning and examine how, as a result, the British and the Palace had the opportunity to hit at the Nationalist Movement and then to strengthen the British hold on Egypt and the Sudan. At the same time, the thesis attempts to shed light on aspects of the period under study such as the conditions surrounding the formation of al-Wafd, the organisations of the Egyptian revolution, changes in British policies, the differences between Zaghlul and 'Adli, the Anglo-Egyptian negotiations, the evaluation of the National Government, the relapse of the Nationalist Movement which occurred as a result of the Sirdar's murder, and other relevant matters.

The struggle of the Nationalist Movement had, at this stage, developed into a prolonged confrontation with the Palace, leading different national parties to form a National Assembly in 1935. The King had to respond to the demands of this strong group by bringing back the constitutional rule of 1923 and calling for an election which was won by the Wafd. Although a treaty was signed in 1936 between the Wafd and Britain, it did not bring about the longed-for British evacuation which was the hope of every Egyptian.

Britain continued to interfere in Egyptian affairs until the revolution of 23 July 1952 which liberated the land from the King and from British Colonialism.

As indicated, the importance of this study lies in the fact that the period being researched is highly significant in the political history of Egypt for the development of the Nationalist Movement, and requires therefore a carefully documented and objective scrutiny. There are a number of studies that deal with this period, some of which have concentrated on certain aspects at the expense of other equally important ones. Other studies are far from being objective, critical or analytical, and merely reflect the particular point of view of the individual authors.

In order to achieve a definitive and accurate outcome in approaching this study, we have endeavoured to adopt a comprehensive and historical method which takes into consideration as many sources as possible to enable analysis of events and their development at various stages. This method used is the Analytical Historical Approach which we consider to be the most suitable for the topic.

Several sources have been used in this thesis. These can be divided as follows:

(1) Primary sources: published and unpublished Arabic and English documents, and published and unpublished private memoirs.

I have used British documents in the Public Record Office in London and private papers in the Library of the Middle East Centre, St Antony's College, in Oxford. These documents and private papers represent the point of view of the British establishment towards Egypt and the nature of their relationship, particularly its connection with the Palace and the Nationalist movement.

I spent a number of months in Egypt collecting Egyptian material on this subject and I have tried to use the Egyptian documents to produce a more balanced view and in order to study the subject as objectively as possible by avoiding reliance on one side only. Despite the lack of organisation in the Egyptian Public Record Office, I succeeded in finding and studying most of the relevant material.

The use of documents and memoirs has given the thesis a new dimension, correcting previous misinformation and providing previously unknown details.

(2) Secondary sources: these consisted of books, research papers and articles dealing with some various aspects of the subject, in both English and Arabic.

British secondary sources express a particular view of political events in Egypt. These include: (1) Lord Lloyd's book *Egypt since Cromer* (2 vols.). Despite his criticisms of the application of British policy in Egypt, he was unsympathetic to the Nationalist movement, and he defends and justifies errors of British policy in Egypt. (2) Chirol's *The Egyptian Problem*. This book grew out of a series of articles he contributed to the Times from Egypt between October 1919 and April 1920. In it, he gives a detailed description of the 1919 events from a viewpoint representing British policy. He explains many events in accordance with the pronouncements of the British authorities, and provides excuses for certain British activities in Egypt. (3) Wavell's *Allenby in Egypt* furnishes views of British policy that are just as biased as the other English books, but at the same time it gives valuable information about the period of Allenby's rule as a High Commissioner in Egypt. Wavell reported

certain communications between Allenby and his government, and this correspondence is very important for studying the 1922 declaration and the murder of Sir Lee Stack. (4) R. Wingate's book, *Wingate of the Sudan*, is a short biography, based on the private letters and diaries of his father. He points out that when the Nationalist movement started in 1918, his father tried to adopt a conciliatory attitude. (5) Sir Thomas Russell Pasha in his book *Egyptian Service 1902–1946* describes events in his capacity as a former head of the Egyptian police in Egypt, and his book offers a purely British point of view. (6) Elgood, *The Transit of Egypt* and *Egypt and the Army*. In the first book, one chapter is devoted to the Egyptian Revolution under the title "Confusion". In the second book, the British authority is criticised for allowing Zaghlul to come back to Egypt from Paris on 31 March 1921, but the author did not mention that Zaghlul came back to Egypt when 'Adli Pasha invited him to take part in the official negotiations. In both books he, like the other British authors, justifies British policy in Egypt quite uncritically.

The Arabic sources express different views about the events in this period such as: (1) A. Lashin, *Sa'd Zaghlul, Dawruhu Fi al-Siyasah al-Misriyyah*. He makes a number of exaggerations, particularly in denying the role of Zaghlul as a leader of the nationalist movement. (2) M. Ghorbal, *Tarikh al-Mufawadat al-Misriyyah al-Britaniyyah*. He reproduced the texts of the negotiations proposals and presented them in a literal style, although his book would have been more useful if he had explained the texts and the conditions under which they were put forward in terms of political developments in Egypt at the time. (3) A. A. Al Rafi'i, *Thawrat 1919*, 2 vols, and vol.1 of *Fi A'qab al-Thawra al-Misriyyah*. These books are a compilation of events in Egypt, arranged in a chronological sequence, and all his quotations are from the official proclamations and from the newspapers. Although the author's views are similar to those of the al-Watani party's view, he emphasises Zaghlul's leadership in the Egyptian revolution, and expresses his own nationalist feeling in his books when evaluating the revolution and the nationalist movement. (4) A. A. Ramadan, in *Tatawwur al-Harakah al-Wataniyyah Fi Misr 1918 ila 1936*, exaggerates the role of Zaghlul, and considers the 1919 revolution to have been an indispensable part of his character. This exaggeration of Zaghlul's role denies the important role of the people throughout these events. The study is written in a journalistic style, and the author used only secondary sources.

Nevertheless, all these books remain important because they provide us with valuable and relevant information about the historical events which took place during that period.

Chapter One
Egypt's Political History: 1854–1914

Because of its geographical situation, Egypt has always occupied a unique position as a link between the East and the West and as a major route for world commerce, and Napoleon's invasion of Egypt in 1798 served to focus the attention of other European countries on its strategic situation. Moreover, its economic, political and social circumstances attracted colonial penetration. At the beginning of the 19th century, Egypt's economy was in a state of stagnation, as a result of the isolation from the rest of the world that resulted from Ottoman domination, and this adversely affected the country's agriculture, industry and commerce. Politically, Egypt did not have complete independence and remained part of the Ottoman state. Meanwhile, Mamluke efforts for autonomy in Egypt intensified, but were ultimately destroyed by Muhammad 'Ali and his dynasty.¹

Economic stagnation notwithstanding, Egypt was an important outlet for European capital investment, offering a large market for goods produced by the Industrial Revolution and producing the agricultural goods and raw materials Europe needed.² Furthermore, when Muhammad 'Ali ruled Egypt (1805–1848), he introduced a number of innovations for which he needed European help; he did not, however, allow Europeans to interfere in the internal political affairs of Egypt. Europeans working in Egypt numbered 5,000 in 1833, and this figure increased to 6,150 in 1843. They were employed in the construction of bridges and canals and in the development of agriculture and industry.³

French officers were also asked to organise the Egyptian army and fleet and to establish military factories in order to provide the army with the weapons necessary to safeguard the country's independence and security.⁴

Foreign economic penetration of Egypt began in the mid-19th century during the reigns of Khedive 'Abbas Pasha (1849–1854) and Khedive Sa'id Pasha (1854–1863). The justification, it was argued, was to facilitate the transport of products such as cotton and grain from Egypt, and to open up Egyptian markets to British goods. During the reign of Khedive 'Abbas Pasha, Britain started to construct the railway lines between Cairo and Alexandria, and Cairo and Suez, and Britain also sold Egypt the materials that were needed for building the railway network, such as sleepers, rails, railway carriages and locomotives. European countries were also granted some privileges for the construction of the Suez Canal and of other public utilities

1 Al-Rafi'i, 'Abd al-Rahman, *'Asr Muhammad 'Ali*, Cairo: Maktabat al-Nahdah al-Misriyyah, 1951, pp.105-108.

2 Ahmad, Nabil, "Al-Zahf al-Imbiriyyali 'ala Misr", in *Misr lil-Misriyyin*, Cairo: al-Ahram, 1981, p.9.

3 Shukri, Muhammad Fuad, *Misr wa al-Sudan*, Cairo: Dar al-Ma'arif, p.53.

4 Ahmad, Nabil, *op.cit.*, p.11.

such as, gas, electricity, trams and railways, and as a result of this growing number of projects the Egyptian Government found itself in need of long-term foreign loans as a way of financing them. The British economic penetration of Egypt was more extensive than that of any other European country, so that Egypt became a good market for British wares and investments.¹

Ismail Pasha (1863–1879) encouraged foreign investments and this helped to increase the number of foreigners working in Egypt from 33,000 in 1862 to 56,500 in 1864,² and to 85,000 in 1878.³

1. The Methods of European Penetration in Egypt 1854–1882

The Suez Canal

In 1854 Ferdinand de Lesseps won the contract from Khedive Sa'id to construct the Suez Canal, despite Britain's objections through its Ambassador in Constantinople, Lord Stratford, and in 1856 the Egyptian Government signed the agreement of privileges with De Lesseps representing the Suez Canal Company.⁴

The 800,000 shares of the Suez Canal Company were put on the market in 1858; of these 353,204 were purchased by Khedive Sa'id while French shareholders bought 400,000 and other European shareholders bought 46,796 shares. However, in 1875, Khedive Ismail sold the Egyptian shares and interests in the Canal to the British Government for £E 4,000,000. This meant that Britain owned 44 per cent of the Suez Canal Company shares.⁵

Through their ownership of shares in the Suez Canal Company, Britain and France both gained an excuse to interfere in Egyptian affairs.

The headquarters of the Canal Company was in Paris where members of the Canal administrative staff were chosen. The Board of Directors of the Canal Company consisted of 30 members, 19 of whom had to be French, in addition to 10 English and one Dutch.⁶ Ninety-five per cent of all other officials in the Canal Company were foreigners; Egyptians were only employed in minor positions.⁷

Under article No.18 of the Canal Contract, Egypt was to receive 15 per

1 *Ibid*, pp.12-16.

2 Landes, D. S , *Bankers and Pashas*, London: William Heinemann Ltd, 1958, p.88.

3 Egypt, Al-Waqa'i' al-Misriyyah, No.781, 13 October 1878.

4 Dar al-Watha'iq al-Qawmiyyah fi al-Qal'ah, Mahafiz Qanat al-Suways, Mahfazah No.2 file 184-81-J5, p.6.

5 *Ibid*, No.7 file 184-81-27, pp.41-42.

6 *Ibid*, and Mahfazah No.12 file 184-81-76, p.103.

7 *Ibid*, Mahfazah No.2 file 184-4-J1, p.87.

cent of the annual net income of the Canal in return for having relinquished its land and other privileges to the Company. However, it lost this right, too, in 1880, when Cr dit Foncier bought it from Egypt for 22 million Francs (£E 850,000). The Cr dit Foncier and Hardely Banks subsequently established a company, known as the Civilian Company, which handled the 15 per cent interest received annually from the Suez Canal Company.¹

The Suez Canal was of strategic importance to Britain because it provided the quickest route to British possessions in the Far East.

The Foreign Debt

Egypt started to accumulate foreign debts during the reign of Sa' d Pasha. The first sum, borrowed in 1862 from the Fruhling and Goschen Bank in London, was £ 3,242,800 at 7 per cent interest, and the total debt increased to £ 11,160,000² during Sa' d's reign and increased further under Ismail Pasha's period in power. In 1864, Ismail contracted a loan from Fruhling and Goschen, for a nominal sum of £ 5,704,200 at 7 per cent interest, secured on the revenues of al-Dukhaila, al-Sharqiyya and al-Buhairah.³

Between 1865 and 1867, three more foreign loans were negotiated, theoretically for sound and unobjectionable purposes. The first of these, in 1865, was for the sum of £ 3,387,300 at 7 per cent interest from the Anglo-Egyptian Bank, and was secured on the revenues of Ismail's estates (of some 365,000 *feddans*). This was known as the first Daira Sanieh Loan.⁴ The second loan, which was negotiated in 1866 from Oppenheim's Bank, was for a sum of £ 3,000,000 at 7 per cent interest, secured on the Railway revenue,⁵ while the third loan, in 1867, was for a nominal amount of £ 2,080,000 repayable at 9 per cent interest, and was secured on the revenues of the Daira Saniyah loan. It was contracted by Oppenheim's Bank and floated by the Imperial Ottoman Bank.⁶

In 1868 Ismail obtained yet another loan from Oppenheim's Bank for the

1 Ahmad, Nabil, *op.cit.*, pp.25-26.

2 Al-Rafi'i, A. R., *Asr Ismail* vol.2., Cairo: Dar al-Ma'arif, 1982, p.70.

3 Marlowe, J, *Spoiling the Egyptian*, London: Andre Deutsch, 1974, pp.164-165; and Al-Rafi'i, *op.cit.*, pp. 35-36.

4 Al-Rafi'i, A. R. *Ibid*, pp. 37-38; and Marlowe, J, *Ibid*, p.166. 'Daira' was the term used for the administration of the various royal estates. In Ismail's time there were seven such dairas, of which easily the two largest and most important were the Daira Khassa and the Daira Sanieh.

5 *Ibid*, pp. 38-39; and Marlowe, *Ibid*, p. 165.

6 *Ibid*, pp. 39-40; and Marlowe, *Ibid*, p. 167.

nominal sum of £ 11,890,000 repayable at 7 per cent interest, and this was secured on the Customs revenue and certain specific taxes.¹

In 1870 Ismail contracted a further loan from the French-Egyptian Bank, for a nominal £ 7,142,860 at 7 per cent interest, and this too was secured on his private estates.²

In 1873 he contracted another loan from Oppenheim's Bank, for a nominal sum of £ 32,000,000 at 7 per cent interest, secured on the Railway revenue and specific taxes.³

By 1874 Egypt's foreign debts amounted to £ 119,917,160,⁴ with the result that servicing the interest on the debts during Ismail's reign required most of the state's revenue. In 1877 the Treasury revenues amounted to £ 9,589,000 of which the bondholders took £ 6,000,000, and taking into account the rate of interest, this left a deficit in the budget amounting to £ 1,382,200.⁵

Most of the Treasury revenues therefore flowed out as security for the repayment of the foreign loans and of the interest on them, so that European countries thus had a controlling hand in Egypt's financial affairs.

European Interference in the Financial Affairs of Egypt

In view of the budget deficit resulting from the payments of the interest on the foreign debts, Ismail Pasha sought the advice of British and French experts. Britain and France agreed with each other to send experts to Egypt in order to secure positions of influence and to maintain the interests of the creditor countries.

a. The Cave Mission: Ismail asked for a British mission to be sent to Cairo to study Egypt's financial difficulties and to suggest the best way of dealing with them. He hoped to excite French jealousy of Great Britain in order to obtain, either from French or British sources or from both, the financial assistance which he urgently needed.

Cave and his party arrived in Egypt on 17 December 1875. He was advised by the British Government to include in his report a recommendation for foreign control over Egypt's finances. However, Ismail Pasha objected to this proposal.

The French reaction was to appoint a French financial adviser, Villet, who arrived in Egypt in the middle of March 1876. Cave had returned to

1 Landes, D. S., *op.cit.*, pp.339-40; Marlowe, *Ibid*, p.169; and Al-Raff'i, *Ibid*, pp.41-42.

2 Al-Rafi'i, *Ibid*, p.44.; and Marlowe, *Ibid*, p.171.

3 Landes, D. S., *op.cit.*, p.339; and Al-Rafi'i, *Ibid*, p.49.

4 Ahmad, Nabil, *op.cit.*, p.30.

5 Al-Rafi'i, *op.cit.*, p.54.

England and had written his report, which was dated 22 March but not published until 3 April in view of Ismail's objections to it. Publication of the report tended to confirm the fears being expressed about the state of Egypt's finances and the price of Egyptian 1873 loan stock fell from 63 to 51.

Following publication of the report, the Egyptian Government issued a decree announcing that, pending financial arrangements for a settlement of the debt, the payment of obligations falling due in April, would be postponed for three months, subject to the payment of 7 per cent interest for the period of delay.¹

b. Creation of the Commission of the Public Debt: Given Egypt's bad financial situation, the Khedive asked the creditors to organise the payment of their debts according to whatever system they found satisfactory, and the French financial commissioner proposed the creation of a Commission of the Public Debt in order to unify the debts. Khedive Ismail agreed to this proposal, and on 2 May 1876 issued a decree instituting a Commission of the Public Debt. The Commission was to be a branch of the public treasury and was empowered to collect money for the debt from the revenues of al-Minufiyyah, al-Gharbiyyah, and al-Buhairah, Alexandria, al-Suez, Port Sa'id, Damiyat, and al-'Arish, the Railway, the proceeds of the taxation on cigarettes, salt, Al-Matariyyah fisheries, bridges, and Daira Sanieh. This meant that most of the treasury's revenue was absorbed through servicing the debt.

Article No. 8 of the decree declared that the officials who collected the revenues should put the amounts that were gathered towards payment of the public debt. The Government undertook not to reduce the money required for servicing the debt without the agreement of the foreign Commissioners of the Public Debt.²

It would appear that the Commission of the Public Debt was the first official European mission to interfere with and control Egyptian finances.

c. The Goschen Mission: On 7 May 1876, Khedive Ismail issued a decree to unify the Daira debt, the Daira Sanieh debt and the Government debt which together amounted to a total of £ 91,000,000 at 7 per cent interest.³

On 11 May 1876, the Khedive issued a further decree, establishing a High Financial Commission of 10 members, half of whom were European and half

1 *Ibid*, pp.65-66 ; and Marlowe, *op.cit*, pp.207,215.

2 Al-Rafi'i, *Ibid*, pp.68-69.

3 Marlowe, J., *Anglo-Egyptian Relation 1880-1952*, London: Cresset Press, 1954, p.94; and Cromer, Lord E, *Modern Egypt* vol.1, London: Macmillan, 1908, p.12.

Egyptian, whose function was to advise the Egyptian Government on its annual budget.¹

Britain did not nominate a representative to this Commission of the Public Debt until it had established the amount of the debt and the proposals for repaying it. Britain proposed another solution to these difficulties, when it agreed with France to send another mission to Egypt. Lord Goschen, in association with M Joubert who was charged with representing French interests, duly arrived in Egypt in October 1876.

The arrangement negotiated by Goschen and Joubert was embodied in a decree issued on 18 November 1876. The chief financial features of this arrangement were that the loans of 1864, 1865, and 1867, and the capital debt were taken out of the unified debt.

A 5 per cent preference stock was then created with a capital of £ 17,000,000. The Daira debts, amounting to about £ 8,815,000, which had been included in the unified debt, were again deducted and ultimately formed the subject of a separate arrangement. The capital of the unified debt was thus reduced to £ 59,000,000 at 7 per cent interest and it was decided to appoint two Controllers-General, one of whom was to supervise the revenue and the other, the expenditure. The Khedive also requested Lord Goschen to nominate an English Commissioner of the Public Debt.²

d. The Commission of Inquiry: At the end of March 1878, as a result of British and French pressure, a Commission of Enquiry was appointed by a Khedivial decree. The nominal president of the Commission was Rivers Wilson of the British Treasury. The other members were the four Commissioners of the Debt and an Egyptian ex-minister, Riyadh Pasha.

After sitting for four months, the commission of Enquiry came to the conclusion that one of the main reasons for Egypt's financial plight was the confusion between the State accounts and Ismail's expenditure. The Commission proposed to separate that part of the Royal Estate, amounting to about 500,000 feddans, that was not already pledged to the service of Ismail's foreign loans, and to place it under an international administration.³ Ismail had thus got himself into a bad position as regards his creditors and this resulted in the economy of Egypt coming under the control of British and French officials.

1 Al-Rafi'i, *op.cit.*, p.70.

2 Cromer, *op.cit.*, pp.13-14.

3 Marlowe, J., *Anglo-Egyptian Relations*, pp.97-98.

2. The Rise of the Egyptian Opposition Groups

The financial situation of Egypt was the background to the political opposition which erupted in the form of the National Revolution of 1881–1882 under the leadership of ‘Urabi.

The national newspapers played an important role in mobilising political opposition.¹ Newspapers had become the most effective means of political opposition. The school of Islamic modernism, founded by Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, and developed in Egypt by his pupil and successor, Muhammad ‘Abduh, was also an effective element of Egyptian nationalism.

Political opposition grew up through the Chamber of Notables, a quasi-parliament that had been set up to represent Egyptian national interests. It had been created in 1866 by Khedive Ismail and until 1871 had rubber-stamped its approval of the financial policy. It then issued the *Muqâbala* (compensation) law in 1872. However, the Government ignored the Chamber and did not allow it to sit in the years 1874 and 1875, during which time the Khedive negotiated more loans and the Egyptian budget was in a great shambles. In 1876 the Government recognised the necessity of summoning a meeting of the Chamber to reconsider the *Muqâbala*'s Law,² but the Chamber opposed his demand.³

The political and economic pressures exerted by the European powers on Egypt in 1878 had the effect of aggravating political opposition in the Chamber of Notables to such an extent that on 28 August 1878 Khedive Ismail gave up some of his authority to the Council of Ministers, which was led by Nubar Pasha and included two European Ministers, Sir Rivers Wilson (British), who was the Minister of Finance and M. De. Balignières, (French), who was Minister of Public Works.

The Chamber of Notables was summoned again when the Cabinet decided to increase the ‘*Ouchouri* land tax. However, when the members convened in Cairo in January 1879 they demanded a reduction of taxation.⁴ The Khedive supported the Notables in order to obtain their assistance against foreign interference in Egyptian affairs, and he encouraged them to continue

1 For more details see: Tarrazi, Filib, *Tarikh al-Sahafah al-‘Arabiyyah*, Beirut, 1913, ‘Attarah, Ilyas Qustaki, *Tarikh al-Suhuf al-Misriyyah*, Alexandria, 1928; and ‘Abduh, Ibrahim, *Tatawwir al-Sahafah al-Misriyyah*, Cairo, 1945.

2 Al-Rafi‘i, *op.cit.* pp.115-122.

3 *Ibid.* pp. 152.

4 Mustafa, Ahmad ‘Abd al-Rahim, *Misr wa al-Mas‘alah al-Misriyyah 1876–1882*, Cairo: Dar al-Ma‘arif, 1965, pp.72-73. ‘Ouchouri’ is derived from the Arabic word *ushr*, meaning the tenth part. Ouchouri lands were supposed to pay a tithe to the state. There were some 1,323,000 acres of Ouchouri land.

their opposition against the Government. This gave them more confidence and they felt a sense of responsibility toward their country.¹

There was increasing opposition to Nubar Pasha's Ministry in the Chamber, and the merchants also supported the Notables against the Ministry. 'Abd al-Salaam al-Muwaylhi and Mahmud al-'Attar, a pupil of al-Afghani, led the opposition until the Ministry of Nubar Pasha fell and was taken over by Tawfiq Pasha. However, because he left the European Ministers in office and furthermore gave them a power of veto, the opposition also protested against Tawfiq Pasha's Ministry. They held many meetings and duly issued a proclamation for the formation of a national ministry, to dismiss the European Ministers, to recreate the office of Controller-General of Egyptian Finances, and to lay out a constitution for the country in order to make the Chamber of Notables responsible for the Ministry. They called themselves a National Assembly.

As a result of these moves, Khedive Ismail summoned the Consul of the countries as well as the leaders of the National Assembly to meet him, and having given them copies of the proclamation, informed them that he was compelled to take note of the demands for parliamentary institutions and that he had accordingly issued a decree naming Sharif Pasha president of the Council and charging him with the formation of a ministry. He also sent a despatch to Constantinople to acquaint the Turkish authorities with the situation.² However, the European countries put pressure on Constantinople to dismiss Khedive Ismail and their efforts to have him removed met with success when Constantinople duly dismissed Ismail on 26 June 1879 and appointed Khedive Tawfiq in his place.

Khedive Tawfiq yielded to foreign pressure in order to eliminate the political opposition. He deported al-Afghani from Egypt on 24 August 1879 and re-established the office of Controller-General. He also established a Commission of Liquidation on 17 July 1880, which maintained the rights of the European creditors and reinstated the state taxes, increasing the rate to be paid on the 'Ouchouri Estates to £ 150,000 annually.³

All these events provided favourable conditions for various political groupings or factions to establish a national front, which included the following:

1. The group which in 1879 called itself the Free National Party had demanded the dismissal of Khedive Ismail and the appointment of Khedive

1 Landau, J., *Parliaments and Parties in Egypt*, New York: Praeger, 1979, p.77; and Marlowe, J., *Spoiling the Egyptian*, p.243.

2 *Al-Tijarah*, No.9., April 1879.

3 Egypt, *Al-Waqa'i' al-Misriyyah* No.12, 19 January 1880.

Tawfiq in order to reform the country, and subsequently joined forces with al-Afghani's school of Islamic modernism. Its organisation was similar to that of political parties.

2. The National Assembly was established in Helwan in October 1879 by the Turkish aristocracy, whose interests had been damaged after Ismail Pasha's dismissal, and was led by Sharif Pasha. They issued a proclamation on 4 November 1879 entitled "The National Party Proclamation", and their demands included the dismissal of Riyadh Pasha's Ministry, the reform of the taxation system, the reduction of taxes, the improvement of the conditions of the Egyptian people, and the modernisation of the educational system.¹
3. The Misr al-Fatat Assembly was the radical nationalist grouping formed in 1879,² with which the Egyptian journalists and authors, 'Abdullah al-Nadim, Adib Ishaq and Salim al-Naqqash, were associated. The political principles of this Assembly were the same as those of al-Afghani. A delegation was formed to make proposals for reform to the Khedive Tawfiq and these were published in Misr al-Fatat newspaper which was issued in Arabic and in French as *La Jeune Egypt*. They demanded both political and internal reforms and criticised Riyadh Pasha's Ministry. The authorities stopped publication of the newspaper, arresting some of the group's members and deporting the others.
4. The Military Party had its origins in a secret grouping established in the army in 1876 by Ahmad 'Urabi, 'Ali al-Rubi, Muhammad 'Ubaid, 'Ali Fahmi, 'Abd al-'Al Hilmi and Alfi Yusuf.³ This officers' organisation took final form at a meeting which was held at 'Urabi's house on 14 January 1876. Attended by the national officers, the aim of this meeting was to discuss the promulgation which the Ministry of War had issued in order to demote some Egyptian officers and dismiss a number of others. 'Urabi asked them to choose a leader and to limit their demands, whereupon they chose him as the leader of their organisation and agreed with him on the legal means of improving the conditions of Egyptian officers.

1 Hamid , Ra'uf 'Abbas, "Al-Mu'aradah al-Wataniyyah", *Misr lil-Misriyyin*, Cairo: Al-Ahram,1981, p.62.

2 During the years 1876-77-78 'Urabi organised a sort of secret society among the *Fallahin* officers which, however, was not noticed, thanks to the events which were engaging the attention of the Khedive and the state. FO 407/21 Enclosure in No.931 Extract from the *Observer* of 23 July 1882.

3 Khedive Ismail was not comfortable with the organisation within the army but he did not try to curb its activities because he himself suffered from European hostility. FO 407/22 Enclosure in No.589 "Memorandum by Dervish Pasha".

They sent their petition, signed by ‘Urabi, Hilmi and Fahmi, to the Prime Minister.¹

3. ‘Urabi’s Revolution

When the Nile Palace event took place on 1 February 1881, the political opposition groups in the Chamber of Notables, the Free National Party, the Helwan Assembly and the Misr al-Fatat Assembly, had joined with the military organisation to form a national front which they called “the National Party”. It was led by ‘Urabi, who had obtained the signature of the Notables to put together a deputation in order to defend the rights and interests of the nation. This national front announced a nation-wide political project which was to be called the project of “the Egyptian National Party”.²

The petition submitted by the officers declared that the Minister of War, ‘Uthman Pasha Rifqi, had treated the Egyptian officers unjustly in the matter of promotions. Furthermore, officers had been dismissed from the service without any legal inquiry. The petitioners made two demands. The first was that the Minister of the War should be removed. The second was that an inquiry should be held into the qualifications and credentials of those who had been promoted. The petition was presented by the colonels to Riyadh Pasha and the matter was discussed at a meeting of the Council of Ministers held under the presidency of the Khedive on 30 January 1881, when it was resolved to arrest the colonels, and to try them by court martial.³ However, the colonels had had word of the plot and before proceeding to the ministry, had left orders with their officers to come with their men to release them if they did not return within two hours.

The Colonels were duly arrested and were released by force. They then proceeded to ‘Abdin Palace where they demanded the dismissal of the Minister of War and redress for their grievances. The Khedive, having informed them that he had no means of resistance, and no regiment on which he could count, and that no course was left to him but to dismiss the Minister

1 ‘Urabi, Ahmad, *Kashf al-Sitar fi Sirr al-Asrar fi al-Nahdah al-Misriyyah al-Mashhura bi al-Thawrah al-‘Urabiyyah*, vol.1, Cairo: Kitab al-Hilal, 1953. p.35.

2 Blunt, W. S, *Secret History of the English Occupation of Egypt*, London, 1907, pp.556-559.

3 FO 407/18 No.38, Memorandum of Events in Egypt since the Deposition of the late Khedive, leading to the recent military insurrection, by P. Currie, 17 September 1881; and Dar al-Watha’iq al-Qawmiyyah, “Awraq al-Hadrah al-Khidai-wiyyah bi Sadad al-Thawrah al-‘Urabiyyah”, Khatab min Ra’is Majlis al-Nazar ila al-Qa’id al-‘Am, 30 January 1881.

of War, then announced that ‘Uthman Pasha Rifqi was dismissed and named Mahmud Pasha al-Barudi as Minister of War in his place.¹

The Khedive tried to encourage Mahmud Pasha al-Barudi to reduce the influence of ‘Urabi and his colleagues but Mahmud Pasha did exactly the opposite by uniting with them and demanding that the Khedive should promote the officers.²

In view of this situation, the Khedive appointed Dawud Pasha Yakan as Minister of War in place of Mahmud al-Barudi on 13 August 1881,³ and insisted that Dawud Pasha stop the activity of the patriots in the army. Accordingly, the Minister of War put ‘Urabi and his supporters under observation and tried to disperse them. On 9 September the Third Infantry Regiment, which was stationed at Cairo, was ordered to move to Alexandria.⁴ ‘Urabi promptly sent a despatch to the Minister of War in which he pointed out that the order meant dispersing the military forces simply in order to take revenge on ‘Urabi and his friends, and which informed the minister that the troops in Cairo were going at 3.30 to ‘Abdin Square to obtain their demands from the Khedive.

The Khedive asked the opinion of Sir Auckland Colvin (a member of the Indian Civil Service) opinion on what should be done, and was advised by the latter to take the initiative. Two regiments in Cairo, which were said by Riyadh Pasha to be faithful, were summoned to ‘Abdin Square, along with all the military police that were available. Riyadh Pasha put himself at their head, and it was agreed that when ‘Urabi arrived in person, they would instead arrest ‘Urabi. However, they discovered that the regiment in the Citadel which was faithful to the Khedive, had been signalling to ‘Urabi’s regiment in al-‘Abbasiyah Barracks.⁵

At the same time ‘Urabi, with 2,500 men and 18 guns, marched to the square in front of ‘Abdin Palace and surrounded it with artillery, cavalry and infantry troops. The artillery and cavalry were in the middle and the three

1 FO 407/18 No.38 Memorandum of Events in Egypt 17 September 1881; FO 407/18 No.80, Sir E. Malet to Earl Granville, Cairo, 23 September 1881; and Cromer, E., *op.cit.* pp.177-179.

2 Dar al-Watha’iq al-Qawmiyyah, Taqarir ‘an al-Thawrah al-‘Urabiyyah, vol.1 Taqir No.14 Aqwal Riyad Pasha; and Mahafiz Majlis al-Nazar, Mahfazah No.5/4 Jalsat Majlis al-Nazar fi 3 April 1881; and “Nazarat al-Harbiyyah”, Mahfazah No.11 “Taqir ila al-Khidiwi bi Khusus Murattabat al-Dubat wa al-‘Asakir”, 19 April 1881.

3 FO 407/18 No.38, Memorandum of Events in Egypt, Cairo, 17 September 1881.

4 FO 407/18, enclosure in No.49, Colonel Araby Bey to the Minister of War, Cairo, 9 September 1881.

5 FO 407/18, enclosure 1 in No.47 memorandum by A. Colvin, Cairo, 10 September 1881.

regiments of infantry were drawn up on the four sides of the square. In the middle was a group of officers around 'Urabi.¹ When the Khedive asked 'Urabi what his demands were, the latter formulated them as follows: the dismissal of the whole ministry, the convocation of a national parliament, and putting the recommendations of the Military Commission into force, including the proposal to increase the size of the army to 18,000 men.

Colvin and Sir Charles Cookson (who was acting Consul-General during Sir Edward Malet's absence) had been speaking to 'Urabi, pointing out that he and the officers with him were running a great risk in view of the menacing attitude which they had assumed. Accordingly Colvin asked for the troops to be withdrawn but 'Urabi refused.² Colvin then suggested to the Khedive that he should inform the officers that he was in communication with the Sublime Porte about their demands, and that they should be asked to disperse until the answer from Constantinople had been received. Cookson communicated this to 'Urabi Bey who replied that in that case they would remain in arms until the answer was received. After a short conference with Riyadh Pasha, the Khedive then authorised Cookson to tell 'Urabi that he consented to change his ministry on the understanding that the other points demanded by the officers should be in suspense until the answer from the Porte arrived. 'Urabi formally accepted these terms.³ The Khedive dismissed Riyadh Pasha and invited Sharif Pasha to form a ministry and to summon the Chamber of Notables.

During the meeting of the Chamber of Notables that took place on 26 December 1881,⁴ work started on formulating the bill of law. In the course of the discussions among the Notables and the ministers on the drafting of the new bill, a dispute arose when the Chamber demanded the right to vote that part of the budget which was not specifically assigned to the service of the debt. This brought the financial controllers into active conflict with them. On 6 January 1882, Britain and France sent the text of a joint note to the Egyptian Government. The text, which was in the form of an instruction to the British and French Representatives in Cairo, was sent by Cookson and read as follows:

You have been instructed on several occasions to inform the Khedive and his government of the determination of England and France to afford them support against the difficulties of

1 FO 407/18, No.47 Sir C. Cookson to Earl Granville, Cairo, 10 September 1881.

2 FO 407/18, enclosure 1 in No.47 memorandum by A. Colvin, Cairo, 10 September 1881.

3 FO 407/18, No.47 Sir C. Cookson to Earl Granville, Cairo, 10 September 1881.

4 Egypt, *Al-Waqa'i' al-Misriyyah*, No.1291, 26 December 1881.

various kinds which might interfere with the course of affairs in Egypt ... I have accordingly to instruct you to declare to the Khedive that the British and French Governments consider the maintenance of His Highness on the throne.¹

The result was that the Chamber of Notables was supported by the army and became exigent in their demands both for control of the budget and for an increase in the size of the army. Sharif, who had already committed himself to the Controllers' view, was under pressure from them to stand firm and he therefore tried to include a stipulation in the regulations of the Chamber forbidding the Notables to control the budget; this, of course, provoked the Notables to oppose him.²

Mahmud Sami asked the Notables to control the budget and to dismiss Sharif Pasha if he did not agree to this course of action, and expressed his willingness to act if they were to ask him. On 3 February, Sharif Pasha resigned and Mahmud Sami became Prime Minister, with 'Urabi as Minister of War.³ Mahmud Sami's Ministry consented to the Chamber of Notables controlling the budget and Egypt's financial affairs on the understanding that the financial contracts and obligations of the other countries would be respected. 'Urabi took over the responsibility for the maintenance of public order and security in Egypt.⁴

When the British and French fleets arrived in Alexandria,⁵ the two governments telegraphed to Cairo on 25 May 1882 authorising their Consul-Generals to make sure that 'Urabi and his principal supporters departed from Egypt and that the resignation of the ministry took place. The Ministers rejected the conditions, which the Khedive had of course accepted. The ministry then resigned on 26 May, as a protest at the foreign interference. Nor did the officers accept the resignation of 'Urabi Pasha and this encouraged the Egyptians to give their support to 'Urabi.⁶

The religious leaders, including the Patriarchs, all the deputies, the 'Ula-

1 Marlowe, J., *Anglo-Egyptian Relations*, p.118; and Malet, E., *Egypt, 1879-1882*, London: 1909, pp.227-228.

2 Marlowe, *Ibid*, p.119.

3 Egypt, *Al-Waqa' i' al-Misriyyah* No.1325, February 4, 1882, Dar al-Watha'iq al-Qawmiyyah, Majmu'at al-Qararat wa al-Manshurat, February 1882 p.121; and Rafuse, J., *Egypt and the British Parliament 1882-1918*, unpublished Doctoral Dissertation. Notre Dame University, Indiana, 1972, p.5.

4 FO 407/20, enclosure in No.477 memorandum by E. Malet, Cairo, 16 May 1882.

5 Parliamentary Debates, vol. 269, p. 1615.

6 FO 407/20 No. 495, Earl Granville to Earl Dufferin, May 23,1882; and Dar al-Watha'iq al-Qawmiyyah, Muhafiz al-Thawrah al-'Urabiyyah, Mahfazah No.20, File 179.

ma, and others went to the Khedive and asked him to reinstate ‘Urabi as minister of war. In these circumstances, the Khedive consented that ‘Urabi should remain as Minister of War.¹ With ‘Urabi taking over responsibility for the maintenance of public order and security, the Khedive tried to encourage disturbances against European citizens in order to allow for European interference on the grounds that the Egyptian Government could not protect foreigners.² He tried to create disturbances in Cairo with the help of his followers but failed. Then he made contact with ‘Umar Lutfi, the governor of Alexandria, so that the latter might create a situation of anarchy in Alexandria for which ‘Urabi would get the blame by having prevented the Governor from exercising his responsibility for the maintenance of public order and security.³ So, on Sunday 11 June 1882, a chain of events started. First an Egyptian stabbed a Maltese,⁴ which led to a conflict between Egyptians and foreigners, until troops sent by ‘Urabi, restored order.⁵

The House of Commons in London considered that the events in Alexandria were a disaster for Britain, because several British citizens had been killed, despite being under the protection of the British Fleet.⁶ Cookson was badly wounded in the head during the events, and three consular constables were also hurt,⁷ and questions were asked in the House of Commons, with Backer, for example, asking the deputy Foreign Secretary “who was responsible for the events in Alexandria?”⁸ These events gave Britain an excuse to interfere in Egypt, on the grounds that ‘Urabi was not able to protect European citizens and foreign consuls in Egypt.⁹ After these events, the Khedive went to Alexandria, taking Darwish Pasha with him. It seems that he wanted to be near the British and French fleets.

On 21 June, the Khedive issued a proclamation accusing ‘Urabi of being unable to protect the foreigners.¹⁰ However, it would appear that the Khedive himself was not strong enough to control affairs in Egypt, since questions continued to be asked, with Sir Henry Taylor MP, inquiring from Glad-

1 Dar al-Watha’iq al-Qawmiyyah, Muhafiz al-Thawrah al-‘Urabiyyah, Mahfazah No.8. File. 53- 4- 8.

2 Blunt, W. S., *Secret History*, pp. 497-498.

3 *Ibid*, pp.497-534.

4 Egypt, *Al-Waqa’i‘ al-Misriyyah*, No.1431, 12 June 1882; and Rafuse, J, *op.cit*, p.14.

5 Blunt, W. S, *op.cit*, p.548; and Marlowe, J, *op.cit*, p.122.

6 Parliamentary Debates: vol.270, p.1724.

7 Parliamentary Papers, Egypt, (1882) No.11.

8 Parliamentary Debates: vol.270, p.818.

9 Dicey, E, *The Egypt of the Future*, London: 1907, p.171.

10 Egypt, *Al-Waqa’i‘ al-Misriyyah*, 21 June 1882.