EGYPT UNDER PRESSURE

A contribution to the understanding of economic, social, and cultural aspects of Egypt today

By
Marianne Laanatza
Gunvor Mejdel
Marina Stagh
Kari Vogt
Birgitta Wistrand

Scandinavian Institute of African Studies
Uppsala 1986
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PREFACE

The publication *Egypt under pressure* is the result of a co-operation between some Nordic researchers representing different disciplines. In April 1985 a two-day seminar on Egypt took place in *Stockholm* at the Swedish Institute of International Affairs. A grant covering travelling expenses was made by the Nordic Co-operation Committee for International Politics. All contributors of this publication participated as well as Eva Nyberg, researcher at the University of Stockholm, and Beatrice Zeidler-Blomberg, editor at the Institute of International Affairs. During the seminar each one presented their respective subject concerning the Egyptian society. From the lectures given and the discussion which followed, we decided how to continue the work on each subject. This book is the result of our efforts, published by the Scandinavian Institute of African Studies in *Uppsala*, to which we want to express our appreciation as well as to the Nordic Co-operation Committee for its grant.

*Stockholm  June 1986*
EFFECTS TO CHANGE THE DIRECTION OF THE EGYPTIAN ECONOMY

ARE THEY BASED ON REALITY OR ILLUSION?

The pressure on the Egyptian economy is growing, both from inside and outside. On one hand, the International Monetary Fund has tightened its conditions for lending to Egypt, thereby trying to force President Hosni Mubarak to bring about new economic reforms. On the other hand, any economic reform leading to increasing costs of living, constitutes a political threat in a society with high unemployment and underemployment, and where ordinary civil servants and other middle-class people already need to have two jobs to afford a modest way of life. (1) The opinion of many Egyptians was that President Mubarak tried to pursue a good policy, although taking small steps. Due to more or less uncontrollable factors, the economic situation has deteriorated, and earlier feelings of confidence are becoming undermined.

The base of the Egyptian economy is a very weak one, and easily disturbed by external factors. Oil exports, remittances from Egyptians working abroad, Suez Canal tolls, and tourism constitute the main revenues in the current account balance. At present, all of them are affected, and the dependence on foreign economic assistance, especially from the Americans, is growing. The heavy burden of subsidies in the Egyptian budget forms the main problem that faces the government. How to alter its obligations has become the most important and urgent question.
The purpose of this chapter is to examine the steps taken by President Mubarak, by which he is trying to influence different individual economic factors in ways acceptable to both the Egyptian people and outstanding foreign financial authorities.

THE HERITAGE OF PRESIDENT SADAT

The economic policy of President Mubarak's predecessor, President Anwar Sadat, was announced as "al Infitah" or the "Open Door" policy. It was introduced in the first half of the 1970's. The intention was a reorientation in political-economic strategy, which included a liberalization of foreign trade, more positive attitude towards foreign investment, and less restrictions on the financial and banking sectors. The annual growth rate of the Egyptian economy was 8.5 per cent during the second half of the 1970's, which was pointed out as a proof of success of "al infitah"-policy. Egypt became aligned with the West, and this relationship deepened, especially after the Camp David conference in November 1978 and the following peace treaty with Israel in March 1979.

The liberalizing tendencies in Egypt were established even though the economic management remained highly centralized, and acted quite contrary to market forces. The Egyptian government continued its underpricing of basic commodities and energy, as it had done since the days of President Nasser - then however, in a socialist frame.
The costs of the subsidies have increased tremendously. When Mubarak came into power the bill of the direct subsidies exceeded $2 billion. The official figure on budget outlay including all calculable direct subsidies for 1982/83 was just under $2.5 billion. If the indirect energy cost would be included the figure for subsidies would be at least doubled. - Anyhow, in a study of the 1979 subsidies, done by the US Agency for International Development (AID) in 1981, it was estimated that indirect subsidies going towards fuel and electricity were higher than direct subsidies for both food and energy.(2)

"Al infitah"-policy dined with these subsidies led to an increasing need for borrowing. The economic dependency upon the US became remarkable. The US economic assistance program for Egypt during the period 1975-82 amounted to roughly $7.6 billion, together with an additional $4.2 billion in military aid.(3)

Although Egypt gained substantial foreign exchange earnings during this period from oil exports, remittances, Suez Canal tolls and tourism, the pressure on the public finances led to a balance of payment deficit and growing external debts. In 1982/83 the balance of payment deficit was about $1.8 billion and the foreign debts was nearly $22 billion at the end of 1982.(4)

The backside of President Sadat’s "al infitah" policy has been colourfully described by Fouad Ajami, namely that "its harvest was wild rents, land speculations, inflation, and corruption....The official classes plunged into the private market".(5) An Egyptian businessman made another summing up of
this shift stressing that the market became "full of former prominent officials; two former prime ministers in addition to twenty-two former ministers, and tens of former heads of public sector companies, deputy ministers and governors". (6)

Ajami also stated that the basic pillar of "al infitah" was the dismantling of state regulations. Typically the Ministry of Industry officials were not invited to participate in all workshops, which took place in the frame of the new policy i.e. "the Legal and Economic Aspect of Foreign Investment", "the Exchange Control and Open Door Policy", "the Banking Control and Open Door Policy", and "the Workshop on Proposed Changes to Law 43". (7)

In early 1976 the editor-in-chief Lutfi Abdul Azim of Al Ahram al Iqtisadi commented cynically on "al infitah" policy as "a remarkable success because there was plenty of German, Dutch and Danish beer on the market and plenty of foreign cigarettes on the side-walls. The Open Door policy should have been welcomed for there was an abundance of Kentucky Fried Chicken and foreign fast food, changing the habits of the average Egyptian from eating FULL (fava beans) to hamburger; plenty of elegant foreign-made cars relieving the crises of transportation". (8)

The tariff structure introduced was in many ways disadvantageous for the local industry. In several cases the tariffs on raw material, important for Egyptian key industries, became much higher than those on corresponding finished products, and the tariffs on spare parts became as well much higher than those on corresponding machines, e.g. the import tax on finished
generators was 2 per cent but 35 per cent on raw materials, and 12 per cent on tractors, but 17 per cent on fitting spare parts.(9)

The Open Door policy was of course scrutinized by the Egyptian Federation of Industries, The President of the Federation, Hamed Habib, stressed that the local industry was being undermined by a number of factors, namely 1) the import laws, 2) smuggling from the free zones, 3) the "import complex", which drives those with purchasing power to buy foreign goods as a badge of their own cosmopolitanism and sophistication, and 4) the loss of Eastern European and Soviet markets.(10)

Egypt's relationship did not only change with the Communist Countries, but as well with the Arab World, as a consequence of the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty in 1979. An investigation done by Victor Lavy on the economic embargo of Egypt by Arab States makes it clear that the actual effects of the embargo were significant, with respect to aid flows and trade. In the areas of tourism and migration, however, only temporary effects could be discerned.(11)

The decisions to halt all Arab economic aid and capital flow was fully implemented in regard to the Gulf Organization for Development in Egypt (GODE). The GODE consisted of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Qatar, and since 1976 was the main source of aid to Egypt. GODE cancelled all existing agreements and was dissolved.(12) The total contribution given by GODE amounted then to $2 billion.(13) Furthermore the Arab countries stopped all bilateral aid to Egypt, and the transfer of resources from various Arab aid funds declined, some funds continued to finance projects already
Arab private investments in Egypt declined temporarily influenced by the Arab sanctions. Most projects cancelled in 1979, were however, resumed in 1980.

The development concerning Arab tourism in Egypt showed a different reaction. Already in 1977 Arab tourism declined by 12 per cent, or 60,000 people. This trend continued through 1978, and became even stronger in 1979, while a remarkable recover was noticed in 1980, with an increase of 32 per cent.

The Egyptian foreign trade pattern regarding the Arab world changed after the Baghdad summit in 1979. The exports to Saudi Arabia and Jordan increased, while the exports to Libya, Iraq and Syria were reduced. The trade value in view as such declined in 1979 and decreased even more during the following year. In 1981-82 the trend turned upwards again as a result of increased exports to Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Qatar.

A summing up of the situation at the time of the murder of Sadat showed that Egyptians in general were discontented with the Open Door policy. They felt it had led into an impasse, and some kind of correction was considered necessary. Many Egyptian and foreign economists, including American officials related to the US AID-program, shared this opinion. Of course, the new millionaires, favoured by Sadat's policy, the so-called infitah-class, didn't want any change.
MUBARAK’S SEVEN POINT PROGRAM

After the death of President Sadat, several questions were raised on the Egyptian political and economic direction. The successor, Husni was rather unknown, and despite having been so close to President Sadat, as his vice-President during six years, very few Egyptians and Arabs hold Mubarak responsible or accountable for Sadat’s major policies. In the description of Mubarak, given by Saad Eddin Ibrahim, it is stressed that the new President represented a new generation. He did not belong to the Free Officers, and has neither the claim nor the burden of that legacy. Ibrahim emphasizes, that Mubarak’s long career as an air-force officer had given him a solid technocratic mentality; cool, calculating, with a disposition for details, pragmatism, and managerial skills. (18)

In the beginning of 1982, President Mubarak adduced his ideas in a seven point program. This declaration, which in some way clarified his intention, was regarded as a compromise between President Sadat’s and President Nasser’s political lines, but could to a certain degree be interpreted as cross-signals. The seven points, as they were presented in the Middle East Magazine, (19) were the following:

- “Finding the best means to rationalize consumption and direct local savings to productive activities and development goals.
- A radical solution to the housing problem so that every citizen can plan his future assured of getting a suitable house on a fixed date,
- Ensuring that subsidies are reaching the needy,
- Eradicating extravagance and waste in public and private expenditure without resorting to arbitrary measures restricting economic activity.
- Compensation for the present serious shortage of skilled labour in many fields relating to production and basic service.
- Examining imports and their effect on national resources and local industries.
- Strengthening and consolidating the public sector, which is the basis of industrial production and the main financier of development."

The President's program giving priorities to projects related to popular housing, food, clothing, medicine, and inexpensive furniture, as well as export related projects, was positively received by both moderate and socialist oriented political parties and groups in Egypt. It was even possible for Mubarak to get some support from moderate Muslim Brotherhood representatives. The positive expectations constituted a platform, from which the new Egyptian leadership could act – but the solidity of this platform should be questioned.

**ACTIONS TAKEN TO CONSOLIDATE THE POLITICAL FRAMEWORK**

A president needs either a heavy political support, or control - if necessary even with military forces, to change an economic system, or only to correct the existing one. This view was stressed by Weinbaum and Naim, and considering Egypt they stated that President Mubarak would be incapable of carrying out vigorous, meaningful policy reforms, because he was lacking the power to ignore popular interests and feelings, as well as the instruments that could enable his to mobilize popular consent for change. (20)
Aware of the difficulties President Mubarak has, on one hand tried to enlarge his political framework through carrying out elections to the People's Assembly in 1984, and by easing restrictions on the press the same year. On the other hand he has prolonged the state of emergency, proclaimed after the murder of Sadat.

In foreign politics President Mubarak has been anxious to enlarge and normalize Egypt's external relations, especially with Soviet Union and Arab countries. The broken diplomatic relation with Moscow was re-established in 1984, and relations with East European countries were improved as well as with China, without jeopardizing the Egyptian-American ties.

Three Arab countries never broke their diplomatic relations with Egypt, namely Oman, Somalia and Sudan. Up to the end of 1985 diplomatic relations had only been restored with Jordan. Some other Arab States had, however, welcomed visits by Egyptian Ministers, in some cases even by the President, and economic co-operation between Egypt and other Arab states had improved, especially concerning Iraq and Jordan. The contact between Mubarak and the PLO leader Arafat was also re-established. Worth mentioning is Egypt's re-entry into the Islamic Conference organization in January 1984. During the same year, the Egyptian-Turkish relations were strengthened, and a military cooperation agreement was signed.

All these actions could be looked upon as expressions of Mubarak's efforts to consolidate his political platform to be able to introduce vigorous economic reforms. Other economic circumstances did not, however, develop favourable to Egypt as the balance of payment results showed.
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* Figures for fiscal year, which starts on 1 July
** Provisional
*** Including imports by Law 43 companies of replacement goods and raw materials

Exchange rates: $1 = £E 0.70 (official rate); $1 = £E 0.83 (parallel rate)

Source: Central Bank of Egypt, Cairo
Published in MEED 12 October 1985 p. 8
The figures presented on the preceding page are the official results published by the Central Bank of Egypt. They give however, a less alarming impression than the case. It's necessary to examine each item to better seize the reality and the trend.

The International Monetary Fund claimed, in a gloomy report on Egypt's economic prospects in July 1985, that the country's problems had to be dealt with systematically, and called for urgent reforms regarding pricing, exchange rate and administrative procedures. The weak export sector was underlined as a very serious long-term problem. A restoration of Egypt's competitiveness is a condition for growth of non-oil exports, such as textiles, agriculture products, and light manufactured goods. This difficult task includes facing entrenched competition from other developing countries and protectionism in developed economies.(21)

Egypt's foreign trade

The composition of Egypt's exports shows how dependent it is on oil revenues. Two thirds of the export revenues come from crude oil and petroleum products. In 1981/82 the peak was reached with revenues exceeding $ 3.3 billion. Since then the export income has decreased, and in 1984/85 it was just above $ 2 billion. The uncertain situation on the world market concerning oil prices is well known and comprehends a serious threat to Egypt's exports incomes. The output at the end of 1985 was 870,000 barrels a day. About 50 per cent of the total output is used locally, and a further
200,000 - 250,000 barrels a day is the share of the foreign companies. Consequently the Egyptian oil export revenues come from the remaining 225,000 barrels a day.(22)

Proven recoverable oil reserves are put at about 3 billion barrels. Unless significant new discoveries are made, these will be exhausted within the next 10 years.(23) In connection with this, the gas reserves should be mentioned. They are estimated at about 8 million million cubic feet, and will be exhausted within 12 years at the present consumption rate.(24) Egypt's dependence on these energy resources, and the substantial export revenues they yield, has indeed turned out to be a weak point in the long run - instead of a solid economic base.

The cotton harvest is the second most important factor in the Egyptian trade balance. The export earnings are about $350 million a year, and account for more than two thirds of all agricultural exports.(25) In 1984 the merchandise export of cotton rose in value to $450 million, and the production is expected to continue to rise also during 1985/86.(26) Egypt is the world's largest producer of high-quality long and extra-long staple cotton. The government has put, as a target, to enlarge the area of cotton plantation, which had declined from 1.6 million feddan in the early 1970s to less than 1 million feddan in 1983/84. To a certain extent, the policy has been successful, but as far as the better prices are obtainable for other corps this positive trend is threatened.(27) The most discouraging factor is, however, the substantial divergencies of the Egyptian producer prices from international prices. Consequently a implicit taxation exist. In the case of cotton the producer prices, set and controlled by the government, amount to
less than one third of international prices. Reducing all farmer benefits from a number of direct and indirect subsidies, the average net tax on agricultural products is estimated to about 15 per cent. (28)

More than 50 percent of the value of the industrial exports comes from textile exports, which amounted to about $315 million in 1984/85. (29) The protectionism characterizing the EM: and the US policies, concerning textiles and agro products, is hampering Egyptian export efforts towards these markets. Egypt's trade deficit with the EEC is estimated to $2 billion a year. A request for easier access to the EM: markets was recently discussed in Brussel, where the Egyptian Minister of Economy and Foreign Trade, Sultan Abu Ali, stressed the importance of expanding the export markets for manufactured goods. (30) The bulk of the Egyptian exports to EEC compromise textiles and farm products, and, as mentioned above, can not be expanded.

The Egyptian trade deficit with the US exceeded $2.8 billion in 1984. (31) The prospect of changing the situation seems to be very limited, Egypt is too dependent on the US economic assistance to request any reform in bilateral negotiations.

Consequently the export efforts regarding traditional industrial goods have to be concentrated to other markets, namely the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe as well as the developing countries, in particular in the Midlle East.
The growing importance of the Soviet Union as an Egyptian export market could be illustrated with the value of the textile exports for 1985, which amounted to $75 million, compared with $80 million to the whole EEC market, using the total quota fixed for Egypt. (32) The bilateral trade protocol for 1985/86, concerning the Soviet Union and Egypt, covers a value of $806 million, which is a remarkable increase, (33) The same trend has been observed in the bilateral trade between Egypt and other East European countries.

The Egyptian trade relations, regarding the Arab Gulf states, has as well improved. Worth mentioning is also the Jordanian-Egyptian co-operation, following the resumption of diplomatic links in September 1984, The two states have set up a joint committee. The bilateral trade, estimated to $150 million in 1984/85, is expected to rise to $250 million in 1985/86. (34) A joint bank has been established in order to facilitate trade credit arrangement and joint project financing.

The Egyptian-Iraqi trade relations had a remarkable importance during 1982 and 1983, when the Egyptian export value amounted to $1000 million and $500 million respectively. (35) The years coincided with a critical stage for Iraq concerning imports from Soviet Union of spare parts and ammunition. During this period Iraq also bought battle tanks from Egypt's strategic reserves. Since then the Egyptian military exports have been kept on a level below $500 million a year.

The Egyptian exports to Israel were extensive during the years 1980 - 1982, in particular concerning oil exports. The total value reached its peak of
about $450 million in 1981. (36) After the Israeli invasion in Lebanon, the trade relations were interrupted. Since then the Egyptian side has made it a condition, that the Taba dispute has to be solved. (37)

Egypt's export development has not, however, kept pace with that of imports. The external bank dept and trade-related credits reached $13.7 billion at the end of 1984, which was about 20 per cent higher than the figure of 1983. (38) These figures include the military purchases contrary to the official Egyptian figures. Worth mentioning is that the military budget, including imports and exports of military equipment, was kept outside the control of the government until September 1985, when the responsibility for military depts was taken away from the Defence and Military Production Ministry. This took place after the cabinet reshuffle in the early September, when the army lost several ministrial portfolios. (39)

Worried about the increasing trade-related depts, President Mubarak instructed governmnt authorities to stop foreign borrowing except for what could be described as "productive projects which are able to compensate for themselves". (40)

Remittances

According to the Central Bank of Egypt the remittances brought in about $3.800 million in 1984/85, which was nearly $150 million below the previous year's level. The figure includes about $2000 million in the category of "own-exchange imports". (41) This means imports financed direct by foreign currency obtained outside the official banking system. It
illustrates as well the substantial role of the black market, thus through which the main part of remittances comes. The principal reason for this is, of course, the favourable exchange rate on the black market compared with the official exchange rate. (In December 1985 the former was $1 = LE 1.85 and the latter $1 = LE 1.35.) Exchange rate reform has been discussed for quite a long time, but after an unsuccessful attempt in January 1985, the government has proceeded cautiously. All forecasts indicate decreasing inflow of remittances in the future, and it has become an urgent task for the Egyptian government to take steps offering returning guest workers a more favourable exchange rate and savings account. A plan to sell bonds to Egyptians working abroad, aimed at raising funds towards external debt servicing costs, was presented by the government last August at a conference in Cairo for expatriate workers. (42)

The Suez Canal

The Suez Canal Authority (SCA) has used the method of increasing tolls, trying to compensate for diminishing revenues caused by the decreased transport volume through the canal. The company's income in 1984/85 reached $900 million, $60 million lower than during the previous year. (43) The prospect is not encouraging and increasing tolls have just a marginal influence on the level of future revenues.

Tourism

The income from the tourist sector, which declined in 1983/1984, increased by 35 per cent in 1984/1985. Then, the revenues were estimated to about $
410 million by the Central Bank. The estimation is, however, uncertain: Only about one third of the tourists' expenditure in Egypt is channeled through the official banking system. This constitutes another illustrative example of the need for an exchange rate reform. The cycle of violence in the Middle East, beginning with the hijacking in June 1985 of a TWA airliner to Beirut, continuing up to the bloody finale of the hijacking of the Egyptair Boeing in Malta, has had a very negative impact in regards to Egypt's tourist trade. Tourism Ministry officials reported mass cancellations and estimations of losses could range between $100 million and $200 million, assuming there was no change before the new year. (44)

NEED OF $1.5 BILLION FROM THE IMF

The gloomy prospect of the Egyptian economy included a need to request for a two-tranche $1.5 billion IMF standby facility to help dealing with balance of payments problem. (45) Up to January 1986 the request had not been accepted.

During the second part of 1985, Egypt's dependence on the USAID contribution of about $2000 million a year became even more obvious, and President Mubarak seemed to have had no choice but to stand the humiliation following the forced landing by US fighter planes of the Egyptair Boeing carrying hijackers, which took place in October. The bilateral relations were, however, strained and anti-American feelings, anger and bitterness were widespread reactions throughout Egypt. (46)
The Egyptian Prime Minister, Dr. Ali Lotfi, appointed in September 1985, received the difficult task of presenting the new economic reforms. Two months later he was prepared to state certain immediate priorities, namely: 1) To restrain prices and encourage production, 2) To eliminate waste, particularly in the distribution of foodstuffs, 3) To give a "substantial" push to the private sector, including an extension of tax-free holidays for new investment and relief on payment of customs duties or equipment needed to establish ventures. 4) To gradually reduce subsidies, while at the same time increasing wages. (47)

Prime Minister Lotfi's suggested reforms did not constitute any real departure from conventional methods of dealing with Egypt's chronic problems. Worth mentioning is that one of the last measures adopted by the former Minister of Economy, Dr Sultan Abu Ali, to encourage the private sector to increase commodity exports was to allow private sector companies to take part in trade agreements between the Egyptian government and the Soviet Union, Romania, Sudan, Jordan, Ethiopia, Somalia, Iraq and Czechoslovakia. The total value of these agreements was estimated to about $1 billion. (48)

In December, Lotfi announced coming proposals regarding reforms of the tariff system, aimed at maximizing revenues, cutting imports and protecting local industries, while safeguarding freedom of access to all commodities. (49) The Import Rationalisation Committees, which have been criticized for
their inefficiency in processing import applications and for being occasionally biased, are expected to be replaced. (50)

Up to the end of 1985 only modest exchange rate reforms had been presented. According to the Prime minister, Egypt was not yet prepared to go further. The move to a unified exchange rate is needed to be introduced gradually. (51)

The new Egyptian government has outlined a long-term objective of moving towards a system of cash grants, and higher state-sector wages. This is to compensate the poor, as subsidies are gradually phased out. Measures aimed at reducing energy subsidies have also been put into effect: petrol, electricity and fuel oil prices have all gone up. This has to be seen in the light of the increasing costs of subsidies. The costs of keeping basic commodity and energy prices down in 1985 were estimated at $ 5,000 million. (52)

According to some observers, another area in which subsidies are expected to be reduced is that of medical services. The Minister of Public Health, Dr. Hilmi el-Hadidi, announced shortly after taking office last September, that the Ministry could not continue to bear the brunt of the cost of providing medical services to the public (53).

PRESIDENT MUBARAK´S POSITION
On one hand it seems to be fair, to stress that President Mubarak has tried to follow his outlines from 1982. Considerable investments have been made in housing, water system, sewerage etc, and up to now decisions regarding the serious problem of deteriorating living conditions for the poor have been avoided. On the other hand the economic platform has been weakened as well as the political one, mainly caused by external factors. The situation as such, might however, be described as a very exposed one, even if the level of revenues would have remained unchanged, caused by the insatiable need created by the population explosion with another million hungry mouths to feed for every ninth month that passes.

by Marianne Laanatza
NOTES


2. See M. Weinbaum and R. Maim; Domestic and international politics in Egypt's economic policy reforms, Journal of Arab Affairs (JAA), Fresno, California, vol.3, Fall 1984, No 2, p.160


4. See Weinbaum and Naim, JAA, pp 160-1.

5. F. Ajami; Retreat from Economic Nationalism: The political economy of Sadat's Egypt. JAA, Vol 1, October 1981, No 1, pp 27 ff.

6. Ibid p.28.

7. Ibid p.29.

8. Ibid p.43.


10. Ibid p.43.


15. Ibid pp 424-5.


24. MEED, 19 October, 1985 p. 17.


26. MEED, 7 September, 1984, p. 11.


29. MEED, 15 February, 1986, p. 11.


32. MEED, 15 February, 1985, p. 11.


34. MEED, 7 September, 1985, p. 11

35. MEED, 18 May, 1984, p. 18.


37. MEED, 1 June, 1985, p. 11. Worth mentioning is that negotiations opening in May 1985 were suspended after the Israeli air raid on the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) headquarters in Tunis in October 1985 until the beginning of December, when a new round of talks took place.

38. MEED, 17 August, 1985, p. 5.

39. MEED, 5 October, 1985, pp 6, 8, and D. Butter; Egypt: New government seeks to stimulate housing and tourism, MEED, 14 September, 1985. When President Mubarak appointed Lotfi to Prime Minister he also promoted three other ministers to deputy premier, namely Foreign Affair Minister Esmat Abdel-Meguid, Agriculture Minister Yousif Wali and Planning & International Cooperation Minister Kamal Ahmed el-Ganzouri. "These three promotions are also important because they put the three ministers on the same level as Defence & Military Production Minister Field Marshal Abdel-Halim Abu Ghazala, also a deputy premier. Abu Ghazala has long been regarded as the second most powerful figure, reflecting the key role played by the military in the country's political and economic life."


41. B. Butter; Egypt: Lotfi sets modest pace for economic reform. MEED 7 December, 1985, pp 12-3.

42. MEED, 17 August, 1985, p. 5.
43. MEED, 5 October, 1985, p.5.


45. MEED, 19 October, 1986, p.21.


47. T. Walker; Egyptian premier launches investment drive. FT, 12 November, 1985.


50. J. Baroudi, p.4.


52. MEED, 21 December, 1985, p.49.

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Militant Islam in Egypt

A SURVEY

The Islamic resurgence in Egypt has proved to be a varied and many-faceted phenomenon. Under Sadat, political leadership increasingly relied on religion as a means of legitimation; at the same time, however, religion played a growing role as a catalyst of sociopolitical revolt.

After 1981, there can be little doubt that militant Islamic groups or organizations, often referred to as Islamic fundamentalist movements, have been growing in scope as well as in political significance.¹

Despite their diversity, nearly all these groups have a common ancestry, socially as well as ideologically, in the Ikhwan-movement. A survey of the development and political role of fundamentalist movements in Egypt naturally finds its point of departure in the history of al-Ikhwan al-Muslimun, the Society of the Muslim Brothers, still a significant political force in Egyptian society.

Social and political role of the Muslim Brotherhood.

The founding of Ikhwan by the Egyptian school-teacher Hassan al-Banna in 1928 marked the beginning of a new era in the history of political Islam.² By 1932 the movement had fifteen branches, by 1940 five hundred and
by 1949 two thousand, corresponding to an estimated five thousand active members and as many sympathizers. The parallel women's movement, The Muslim Sisters, was founded in 1936 by Zeinab al-Gahzali, today one of the most influential leaders of Ikhwan. Richard Michell rightly characterized Ikhwan as 'the first mass supported and organized, essentially urban-orientated, effort to cope with the plight of Islam in the modern world,'

Ikhwan kept a low profile politically until the early 40's. During this period, the Brothers undertook various enterprises to raise the standard of living of the common Egyptian: They built mosques, schools, and hospitals, and even successfully launched industrial and commercial enterprises.

Al-Banna believed in influencing the masses through social work in order to mobilise the rural and urban masses of different educational levels. This is a characteristic of the Ikhwan compared to the elitist orientation of the fundamentalist Jama'at-i-Islami in Pakistan, which emerged at about the same time.

By the mid-30's Ikhwan became increasingly active in the struggle for independence, not only in Egypt but in most Arab states as well. Hassan al-Banna supported the Palestinian Arabs and members of the Ikhwan fought in the Palestinian war of 1948. After the Arab defeat, the Ikhwan appeared as an organized armed force, capable of challenging the Egyptian government, and in 1949, al-Banna was assassinated.

As an active political force from the late 40's onwards, the Brothers were instrumental in bringing Nasser to power in 1952. Nasser quickly repudiated their support, however, and banned the Ikhwan in 1954. Ikhwan members suffered fierce repression and among those jailed in the famous Tura prison was the Ikhwan author, Sayyid Qutb, who as a prisoner wrote Ma'alim fi-l tariq (Milestones), a book which was to become
the manifesto of contemporary Islamic movements.

A new confrontation, in 1965, after an alleged attempt by the movement to overthrow the regime, led to several hundreds of arrestations. Qutb was executed in 1966, and after his death the movement split into several currents. The main branch, the 'reformist' brothers, gathered around Omar Telmesani, now the official leader of the Ikhwan in Egypt.

As early as in the 30's the Ikhwan spread throughout the Middle East, and to-day local branches of the movement are active, not only as clandestine pressure groups as in Syria, but also as part of the political establishment as in Jordan, Sudan, Kuwait, Quatar and North Yemen. 4

Outlines of an ideology.

The originality of the Ikhwan lies in the fact that Hassan al-Banna, by systematizing and simplifying already existing ideological elements, created the basis of a powerful popular movement.

The essential message of the Ikhwan, and the ideological basis of present militant movements as well, is to consider Islam as an 'order' or a 'system', nizam. This order is revealed by God, and is the basis on which all aspects of human life has to be organized. The nizam islami is considered to be universally valid, and to represent a return to the faith and practice of the first umma, the Community of the Prophet, as expressed in the Quran and the Sunna.

This return to the original source of Islam, implies a rejection, not only of Western civilization, but of the traditional Islamic legal schools and of Islam's mystical tradition as well. The majority of the
ulama, the religious scholars, who ought to have been the effective
defence of the Islamic way, are seen as responsible, by their own
confusion and rigidity, for the present decay. Thus human history,
including Islamic history, is regarded as part of the jahiliyya, the
unislamic paganism.

The doctrine of nizam islami can be seen as centered on the problem
of religious authority: The proposition from which all else follows is
the sovereignty of God, and God is conceived principally as a demand or an
imperative, embodied in the divine law, sharia. Muslim civilization with-
out the sharia is seen as meaningless, and it is both religiously and
socially necessary for the individual to live by the sharia. Given the
necessity of sharia, the crucial consideration is, indeed, its defini-
tion. Sayyid Qutb writes: 'In Islam the meaning of Shari'ah is not
limited to mere legal injunctions but include the principles of admini-
stration, its system and modes [...] By the Shari'ah of God is meant
everything legislated by God for ordering man's life; it includes the
principles of morality and human relationships, and principles of know-
ledge.' Based on a particularly comprehensive conception of sharia
(in fact interchangeable with nizam islami) and underlining the 'general',
'flexible', and 'developing' aspect of the divine law, the Ikhwan offered
freedom from the traditional law-schools and their interpretations.

A characteristic of the fundamentalist ideology is, in fact, to combine
the idea of 'development' and of 'authenticity'.

Sharia thus became a key-concept in the politization of Egyptian
Islam. The legitimacy of the ruler and the establishment of the
'Islamic state' is intimately linked to the question of how the divine law is implemented. The strategy of the Islamic movements hangs on this question, and the multiplicity of answers also explains the diversity of movements.\(^7\)

The present militant doctrine of establishing Islamic rule by force is, in fact, inspired by the writings of Sayyid Qutb who in *Ma'alim fi'l tariq* underlines the necessity of 'jihad through sword':

\[\ldots\text{hence it is the duty of Islam to annihilate all such systems, as they are obstacles in the way to universal freedom}.\] \(^8\)

The moderate branch of the Ikhwan, however, regarded Qutb's book as anathema, and the moderate views expressed by the Ikhwan leaders in the 70's, coincided with the emergence of extremist groups, headed by a new generation of militants.

**The emergence of the Islamic Societies.**

The presence of Islamic societies, al-jama'at al-Islamiyya, became particularly noticeable on the university campuses at the beginning of the 1970's. After 1977, the members of different Islamic groups managed to win the majority of student union posts in the universities, thus relegating the Nasserists - who were the most powerful in the mid-seventies - to a very minor position. Before 1979, the regime did indeed encourage this religious trend, as Sadat tried to create an alternative powerbase after his confrontation with the official left in 1971.\(^9\) The main reason for the jama'at's success was, however, based on their ability to offer practical help as 'Islamic solutions'
in the cul-de-sac of the Egyptian student's daily life: Not only moral support and common prayers, but transportation and housing as well as more adequate tuition and textbooks, became the concern of the jama'at.  

These groups seemed to vary in the degree to which they sanctioned the use of violence to achieve their goals, and their activities tended to come to public attention when a certain degree of violence was involved. This happened, for example, during the sectarian troubles in 1972, with attacks on Coptic churches, in the food riots of 1977, and in the anti-settlement demonstrations of 1979. A still more serious level of violence involved planned murder, and three such events resulted in the exposing of different Islamic organizations of a highly militant character. An armed attack in 1974 on the Technical Military Academy in Cairo led to the uncovering of the society known as the Islamic Liberation Organization, the murder of the former minister of Awqaf, shaikh al-Dhahabi, in 1977, led to the discovery of the organization of al-Takfir wa al-Hijra, and the inplantation of explosives in some Coptic churches in Alexandria in 1980 led to the revealing of Al-Jihad. In particular, the Jihad group proved highly effective in its confrontations. Despite the preventive arrests of hundreds of its members in September 1981, it still had enough members and organisational ability to plan and carry out the assassination of President Sadat on October 6th 1981, and the same year, Jihad members were able to storm the main police headquarters in Assiut, killing and wounding several state security men. Both Assiut and al-Minya, with a relative important percentage of Copts, had a higher share of communal disturbance than any other provincial capitals. In fact, during the second part of the 70's, tension was
continuously increasing, the Coptic community became the target of the militant jama'at's attack, and particularly violent Muslim-Coptic confrontations took place in Assiut in 1980.

Recent studies have thrown light on the social background as well as the ideology of the members of the militant jama'at. Typically, these members are young, usually in their 20's, highly educated and highly motivated. They mostly come from lower middle class - 70 per cent had a modest, but not poor, rural or small-town background. Apparently, recruiting and growth of Islamic militancy is closely associated with economic crisis, rapid urbanization, unemployment and demographic increase.

Ideologically, the militant jama'at show a certain diversity, the main difference, however, consisting in the organizational, strategic and tactical options of each movement. What differentiates the militants from the rest of the conservative ulama and the moderate jama'at is, above all, their extreme view of the discrepancy between Islamic ideals and contemporary life. Consequently, jihad, 'holy war', or in modern terms, a military coup, is considered a religious duty as fundamental as the five religious obligations.

Political options of the Ikhwan in the 80's.

In the 70's, Ikhwan had opted for peaceful, non-violent tactics. In fact, the Ikhwan leadership denounced the militants, also within its own ranks, in an effort to come to a modus vivendi with the regime. In 1981, however, Ikhwan members were imprisoned as part of the opposition, and their monthly, Al-Da'wa, was once more banned.
The change came with the Mubarak regime, and since 1981 the Ikhwan has been fighting its way into the Egyptian political establishment. In the first place, the Ikhwan normalized its relations with secular political groups, including the Nasserists and the Communists, and, in October 1983, joined with these groups in the newly formed Egyptian Committee for the Defence of Democracy. Shortly after, and not without violent internal discussions, the Ikhwan joined forces with the New Wafd. After the elections, in May 1984, the New Wafd party's tactical alliance with the Ikhwan gave ten seats to Ikhwan members in the National People's Assembly. In an interview with Ikhwan MPs on the issues which they would raise in parliament, it was strongly underlined that 'the People's Assembly [...] is the legitimate channel through which we can put into practice the Islamic programme advocated by the Ikhwan.' And, not surprisingly, the main issue was pointed out as follows: '... in entering the Assembly is to endeavour to put into practice the laws of Islamic Sharia.' Support for the sharia was, in fact, part of the pre-election understanding between Ikhwan and Wafd. This issue, in particular, has been creating tension within the opposition party. In 1984-85, the majority of the New Wafd has proved to be reluctant in their support of the pro-sharia movement, and the statement of the Wafd leader, Fuad Serageddin, that 'the question of sharia is not controversial but it should be applied carefully and in a studied manner' has been sharply criticized and even ridiculed in the Islamic press.

In this political experiment, however, several major objectives seem to have been achieved. For the first time, Ikhwan members are officially part of the political establishment, and the movement has manifested both willingness and capability of a certain realpolitik.
An important success is also the coordination and reconciliation between Ikhwan and other moderate trends of the fundamentalist movements - the very basis for the victory of the Ikhwan candidates in the 1984 elections.

**The shaikhs and the pro-sharia movement.**

Recent Islamic militancy has been accompanied by an increase of both private mosques and independent preachers and Imams: Of the total 46,000 mosques in Egypt in 1981, only 6000 were under the control of the Ministry of Awqaf. A number of private mosques became famous in the 70's because their Imams established a reputation of being independent of the authorities. In these mosques the militants met in order to establish or renew contacts, and such popular Imams as Mahalawi in Alexandria and Hafiz Salama in Suez served as spiritual guides for a large number of them.

Friday prayer meetings led by preachers like the blind shaikh Omar Abd al-Rahman - once accused of being the guide of the Jihad-group - now attract large and militant audiences. The same has for a long time been the case with the extremely popular shaikh Kishk, 'le grand ténor des mouvements islamistes'. Today, the impact of these shaikhs on popular opinion in Egypt is considerable, and their message, taped on cassettes, is listened to all over the Arab world - reaching Muslims in Western Europe as well.

This group of shaikhs is now patiently fighting its way into political life. In particular, shaikh Hafiz Salama emerged, in 1984, as the leader of several thousands of committed pro-sharia supporters,
claiming a full-scale programme for implementation of sharia in public life. Shaikh Salama's message is simple: Islamic sharia, he says, can solve all the economic and social problems of Egypt by turning men's souls away from sin. 'Under an Islamic regime, every problem in Egypt will be solved within hours, and not within days, because Islam has a solution for every problem.',

Shaikh Hafiz Salama headed a relatively small non-governmental Islamic society in Suez before he came to lead prayers in the private al-Nur mosque in Cairo. He was known as one of the most outspoken critics of the Peace Treaty with Israel, and among the accusations levied against him by Sadat's government, was his alleged role in the sectarian conflict in al-Zawiyya al-Hamra in June 1981. Now an incisive critic of the government reluctance to implement sharia, shaikh Salama called, in his capacity as an Imam, for a general Islamic conference to discuss ways of inciting the otherwise reluctant People's Assembly to discuss islamisation measures. This conference took place in the early summer of 1985, and even if the attitude of the Ikhwan towards shaikh Salama has been divided, several MPs and leading figures of the Ikhwan-Wafd coalition were present. The decisions of the conference to organize a 'Green March' to the presidential palace to press for sharia, proved to have far-reaching consequences. Permission for this march was not granted, the al-Nur mosque was closed and shaikh Salama, together with a great number of his followers, were arrested and sent to the notorious Tura prison. Also in the summer of 1985, tension between Muslims and Copts increased, and the authorities took swift actions to ban provocative car-stickers bearing Muslim and Coptic slogans.
These events marked the end of Mubarak's four years of patience with an increasingly outspoken opposition. 'There is no room for any attempt at destabilizing the country or shaking the world's confidence in it', were the President's words.23

Even if the extremist stance of university students has now largely been taken over by well-established shaikhs, it is interesting to note that in the elections in November-December 1985 the Islamic student unions seem to have made a triumphant return to the Egyptian campuses.24

Conclusion.

Even if the explicitly violent and militant Islamic view seems confined to a small segment of the population, the rapid growth of a general and more or less diffuse Islamic revival is spectacular in Egypt to-day. The number of mosques and private prayer-halls is constantly growing, and among common Egyptians, fundamentalist groups have recently gained increasing sympathy by founding schools, kindergartens and dispensaries in connection with the new mosques, Islamic dress is once more allowed and very much in fashion, and radio and TV are filled with religious programmes. In 1985, the Egyptian writer Yusuf Idris, since 1973 literary editor of Al-Ahram, characterized the influence of Islamic fundamentalism as 'tremendous', predicting that intellectuals will have to leave Egypt, because, he said, the fundamentalists oppose fiction, cinema, theatre, music and dance.25 This point of view is amply illustrated by the confiscation, in February 1985, of the Arabic version of 'Thousand and One Night', judged by the tribunal of aib (shame or vice) as a potential source of moral decay.26
This general islamization, in itself politically significant, is largely influenced by religious shaikhs whose message is reaching an extremely wide audience of Egyptians. Since 1984, the political role of some of these shaiks as leaders of the pro-sharia campaign has proved to be of great consequence.

At the same time, the Wafd-Ikhwan alliance has become an important factor in integrating the 'moderate' wing of Islamic fundamentalism into the mainstream of political life.

In this context, the sharia-campaign in particular seems to have the possibility of effectively uniting all sectors of Islamic groups: The uncompromising extremists, the shaiks and their followers, and the 'moderate' MP's and politicians. Popular discontent seems thus to crystallize around an Islamic programme: The claim for immediate implementation of sharia. In fact, observers have suggested that today as many as 70% of Egyptians would support the sharia-case.

Intimately linked with economic crises, the Islamic wave must, in fact, be viewed as an expression of wide-spread discontent. Political Islam is firmly rooted in modern Egyptian history, and is certainly not to be judged as an incidental phenomenon. As Gilles Kepel wrote in 1984: 'Ils (i.e. the fundamentalists) forment le réseau de la vie politique quotidienne, réelle, de l'Egypte contemporaine, réseau sur lequel les institutions - civiles, religieuses ou militaires - de la vie politique légale n'ont qu'une faible prise.28
Notes

As all these Islamic groups are working for radical political, social and cultural change, they are here characterized as 'militant', regardless of their view on violence as a means to achieve their goal.

For a precise account of the history of the Ikhwan, see Delanoue's article in IE, pp. 1068-1071.

3 Mortimer, p. 252.

4 For a detailed account of the present position of the Ikhwan outside Egypt, see Carré and Michaud, pp. 205-219, in particular p. 214.

5 Qutb, p. 200.

6 For the Ikhwan's concept of *sharia*, see Michel, pp. 236-241.

7 On strategy, see Ibrahim p.441-443.

8 Qutb, p. 137; see also al-Banna on *jihad*, p. 133 sq.

9 As the militants achieved important victories, Sadat dissolved all student unions by decree in 1979.

10 On the development and strategies of the *jama'at* at the universities, see Kepel, pp. 131-142.

11 In particular, Ibrahim; Kepel: Ansari.

12 Ideology, see Ibrahim, pp. 429-435; Ansari, pp. 136-140.

13 Arabia, April 1984.
Arabia, July 1984.

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Ansari, p. 129.


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"Une enquête publiée dans le journal al-Akhbar, du 27 novembre et portant sur un échantillon de 3500 personnes, montrait que 96% étaient favorables à l'application de la loi islamique pour des crimes tels
que l'adultère, la consommation d'alcool, le vol et l'apostasie; 79% d'entre eux étaient en faveur d'une application progressive'.


For the islamization of Egyptian law, see the article on the Copts.

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RELIGIOUS REVIVAL AND POLITICAL MOBILISATION: DEVELOPMENT OF THE COPTIC COMMUNITY IN EGYPT

In the Middle East and North Africa conflicts between majority and minority groups have been growing in number and scope. An important part of the total picture is the situation of the Coptic community in Egypt, the largest Christian minority group in the Arab Middle East.

Throughout Egyptian history, the Copts have largely avoided the communal isolation that has characterized some of the smaller, less socially integrated Oriental Christian communities. Since the 19th century, the Coptic Community has been an important - and peaceful - agent of cultural, economic and political change.

Christian-Muslim conflicts are, however, not new on the Egyptian social scene," and recently, various forms of political re-Islamization have increased confessional tension and resulted in an outburst of violent clashes between militant Muslims and Copts.

In fact, the Islamic revival seems to be matched by a Coptic religious revival, and also, of particular importance in this context, of a growing politicization of Coptic ethnic identity.2

What is the historical background for this development within the Coptic community as a whole, and, in particular, within the Coptic Orthodox Church? And what are the conditions underlying the politicization of Coptic ethnic identity during the 70's and the first half of the 80's? Obviously, these questions are of great complexity, and this article will only try to draw an outline of possible answers,

1. The Copts of Egypt.

The Copts were native to Egypt, and converted to Christianity by the end of the second Century. Today, the members of the Coptic
Orthodox Church comprise the overwhelming majority of the Christian population of Egypt (95 percent). Their actual number is, however, an object of dispute between the Copts themselves and the Egyptian government. This fact might in itself be seen as an indication that the Coptic community is a significant minority and that the government does not want them to appear too numerous.\(^3\)

In 1985, the Copts themselves claim to number about 10 million out of a total population of about 47 million.\(^4\)

More than the half of the Coptic population is living in the area of Upper Egypt, mainly concentrated in the Coptic heartland Al-Minya, Assiut, Al-Suhag and Quina. In some districts, as in Assiut city itself, the Christian population probably reaches as high as 35 percent.\(^5\) The second major area is the urban environment of Cairo and Alexandria.

There are also important Coptic communities outside Egypt: Emigration of Copts in sizable numbers started some 20 years ago. The majority of the emigrants were professionals and intellectuals, thus forming part of the Egyptian 'brain-drain'.\(^6\) Today, the Coptic Church has several centres in Western Europe, in the U.S.A., Canada and Australia.\(^7\)

After the Arab invasion in 641, the Coptic language gave way to Arabic.\(^8\) Coptic is still used, however, as the language of the liturgy, in Sunday School services and for some daily communications in the monasteries.\(^9\)

The largest occupational group among the Copts are the peasants, in the cities the Copts are to be found on all income levels, and are particularly numerous in the private sector. Throughout history, Copts, as well as Jews, have dominated the fields of finance, banking and money lending, especially in the Egyptian countryside.\(^10\)
During this century, the representation of Copts in higher education has been far greater than their percentage in the population. Their literacy shows higher rates than among the Muslim population, and their crime rate is lower.\textsuperscript{11}

The ancestors of most Egyptians were at one time Copts, and there seems to be no racial difference between Copts and Muslims.\textsuperscript{12} Social separation between Copts and Muslims is upheld by a number of endogamous marriage rules, and both Copts and Muslims use social pressure to discourage exogamous marriages. Nevertheless, there are well developed, reciprocal social relations between the two groups. Through isolation from other Christian groups and long co-existence with Islam, the Copts have acquired a number of Islamic customs, just as Egyptian Muslims have adopted Coptic customs, for example in connection with festivals and the reverence of saints. Significantly enough, the confrontations between Copts and Islamic fundamentalists reached a climax during Easter 1980, when the militant Muslims warned against the traditional Muslim observance of the Coptic celebration of the Spring festival of Sham al-Nasim.\textsuperscript{14}

Nevertheless, having regard to their particular social, economic, cultural and political manifestations, rooted in one of the two main religions of the country, Egyptian Coptic Christians must be seen as a distinct ethnic group.

1.1 \textbf{Historical Roots of Coptic Identity,}

The Copts consider themselves as Arabs and Egyptians, and share a common history with their Muslim compatriots. In fact, Coptic identity is particularly linked with Egyptian nationalism.\textsuperscript{15}

At the same time, as a religious and cultural minority, the Copts constitute a distinct group within Egyptian society. In this respect,
membership of the Coptic Orthodox Church plays a crucial role. The history of the group, with its strong family cohesion and solidarity, and with its customs, beliefs and values, is profoundly rooted in the life and history of the Church. Consequently, Coptic identity is closely linked both with an awareness of a distinct history of origin and with a particular interpretation of history.

The Christian movement had its earliest flowering in Egypt, and Christian thought reached its first summit in the Catechetical School of Alexandria. Christian monasticism originated in Egypt in the 3rd Century, and also left a highly original literature which is a part of the common Christian cultural legacy.

The church-historian Eusebius (3rd century) says that St. Mark the Evangelist 'first brought the gospel to Egypt', and the present Coptic Patriarch, Shenuda III, is considered the 117th successor of St. Mark. The See of Alexandria and the patriarchal succession are thus the symbol of continuity right from the very origin of the Christian Church.

Before the Arab conquest in 641, the Egyptian Christians had suffered savage persecutions, in particular under Diocletian. These events are still commemorated in a special way: The Coptic era, 'the Era of the Martyrs', starts in the year 284 AD, the year of Diocletian's accession to the throne. The martyr cult of the Coptic Church is highly developed and easily reinterpreted.

Of particular importance is the link between the Egyptian Church and Christian 'mythical history'. Coptic sources from the fourth to the fourteenth century mention numerous localities and incidents in the Nile delta and valley in connection with the flight of the Holy Family to Egypt. The coning of the Holy Family is an annual event of jubilation, commemorated in the Coptic Synaxar and celeb-
The Cairene suburb, Zeitun, is one of the sites connected with the Holy Family, which became in 1968-69 the scene of several apparitions of the Virgin. These visions were witnessed by thousands of people, both Christians and Muslims, and were officially confirmed by the Church.\textsuperscript{19} The apparitions of the Virgin thus served, at a moment of common disappointment and humiliation after the defeat in 1967, as a reminder of this particular Egyptian heritage and as a convincing witness of the continuity and the fidelity of the Church.

Coptic history-awareness integrates pre-Christian Egyptian history as well. From the earliest times the Coptic Church, in its customs and rituals, has represented a particular continuity with pharaonic times.\textsuperscript{20} The discovery of pharaonic Egypt during the late 19th Century had a tremendous effect on the Copts. The first generation of European Egyptologists readily identified the Copts with the ancient Egyptians, and in an interview with a Coptic journal in 1907, the celebrated Gaston Maspero stated positively that the Copts, more than any other people, had retained their racial purity, and that the present Copts were the descendants of the Pharaohs.\textsuperscript{21} Varieties of this idea still play a role in Coptic apologetic writing,\textsuperscript{22} and are used as a theme in novels written by authors of Coptic origin.\textsuperscript{23} In recent socio-political writings,\textsuperscript{24} moreover, the pharaonic origin of the Copts is quite often referred to as an ethnic reality.

In this way, the Coptic self-image has continually integrated elements which confirm the awareness of an identity separate from their Muslim compatriots.
2. **Reorganization and renewal of the Coptic community.**

The present Coptic revival is the result of a long internal development, tending to reinforce both the religious link which binds the religious community together, and the position of the community in relation to the Muslim majority.

The Coptic renewal, initiated in the second part of the 19th Century, was carried out in two phases, the first lay, the second monastic.

2.1 **First phase: The lay reform.**

In 1874, a group of lay Copts formed a society to press for communal reform, and for a better supervision of communal affairs, financial as well as juridical. Initially, this liberal lay movement had a certain anti-clerical orientation towards a still culturally backward clergy.\(^{25}\) The formation of the majlis al-milli, the lay council of the community, was to have a profound and long-lasting influence.\(^{26}\) In 1875, the Council's scheme to form a Theological College, the first attempt at a systematic religious training of the (mostly hereditary) clergy, was approved of by the Patriarch.

In 1881, several leading lay Copts formed a Coptic Charitable Society. This society equally played an important role in promoting reform. The end of the 19th Century is characterized by the emergence of a variety of Coptic reform societies with branches in all major cities. With the abolition of the jeziya-tax(1851) and permission for the enlistment of Copts in the army, at least legal equality was assured. The period after 1882 has been called the golden age of Coptic history: A dwindling minority in the mid-eighteenth century had swelled into an entrenched one of about a million in 1914.\(^{27}\) This expanding number was given opportunities of education. The Patriarch, Kyrillos IV
(1854–6), had been the initiator of Coptic schools for boys and girls, and the number of Coptic students was growing. This striking advance of education manifested itself in an intense cultural activity. About a dozen Coptic journals and magazines were founded, some of which still exist. Several literary clubs were established, also contributing to strengthen communal solidarity.

These varied activities could be possible only if founded on a solid economic basis. This was indeed the case. During the last decades of the 19th Century, and until the land reform and nationalization following the revolution in 1952, the Copts held about 25 percent of the total wealth of Egypt. Copts owned some of the best arable land, and controlled about six-tenths of all Egyptian commerce.

2.2 Political commitments.

The ideology of pan-Arabism had its Coptic adherents, among others Makram Ebeid and Boutros Ghali, appointed Prime Minister in 1908. In fact, Coptic support of modern Arab nationalism as a liberal and secular movement goes back to this period. The communal solidarity of the Copts was remarkably demonstrated during the uprisings in 1919 when religious leaders as well as lay leaders from both Muslim and Christian communities participated in demonstrations against the British: Christians spoke in the mosques and Muslims addressed congregations in Christian churches. Several Copts played a particularly important role in the history of Egyptian independence, mainly connected with the Wafd party. The belief in the possibility of a full political and social integration is clearly shown by the maintenance of the Coptic Wafdist that past differences between the religious communities had been overcome by the solidarity demonstrated
in the 1919 uprising. Consequently, the Constitution of 1922 was adopted without any special guarantees for the Copts, such as a fixed proportions of seats in Parliament.

This situation was not to last for long. The first cases of open confrontation between the two communities in contemporary history, consisting of localised incidents of arson against churches, was initiated by the al-Ikhwan al-Muslimun. The Ikhwan, founded in 1929, had a pronounced anti-Christian profile, as demonstrated in its battlesong: 'One religion and not two religions, henceforth no cross.' A clear indication of the polarization between Christians and Muslims in this period, is the militant Coptic organization, the Umma Coptiya (Coptic Nation), founded in the late forties as a counter to the Ikhwan. Both organizations were abolished by Nasser in 1954, and both have continued their underground existence until this day.

2.3 Second phase: Monastic revival.

In the 1930's and 40's, a reform movement of the utmost importance, the Sunday School movement, gained strength among the urban lower-middle class youth. Though initially it had the same critical attitude towards its clergy as the lay movement of the preceding century, this movement was to recruit the most prominent ecclesiastical leaders of the Coptic Church today, and it was also upon this milieu they first exercised their influence.

2.4 The importance of Coptic monasticism.

The rising educational level of the clergy and the renovation of monastic institutions initiated a new era for the Church. The Church leadership, i.e. the Patriarch of Alexandria (residing in Cairo since
the 11th Century), the metropolitans and the bishops, are elected from the monks. This means that the spiritual state of Coptic monasticism determines to a great extent the state and the spirituality of the Church. 38

One of the results of the Sunday School movement was the recruitment of monks from the student milieu and among university graduates. In 1959, the new St. Mena's Monastery was founded in the desert near Alexandria by Abuna Mina, later patriarch Kyrillo VI. Abba Matta al-Meskin, also a spiritual master of the monastic reform and of the youth movement, organized in 1956 the lay community of the Bayt al-Takris (House of Sanctification) which gradually became a bastion of spirituality - and of conservatism. His publication Marcos is of importance for the understanding of the ideology of the Coptic revival. In 1969, Matta al-Meskin, a prolific author whose books are translated into French and English, was appointed head of the important monastic centre, the Monastery of Macarios. 39 In 1978, this monastery announced the discovery of the relics of St. John the Baptist and of the prophet Elisha. 40 In times of trouble and distress, the invention of relics will often serve to increase a sense of identification with the religious heritage, and the event must be seen in this perspective. The worldwide coverage also significantly enhanced both the status and prestige of the monastery - and increased the number of pilgrims and visitors. 41

A noticeable change in the recruitment of nuns seems to be taking place and their educational level has been considerably improved. There are now eight female monasteries, and nine monasteries with several hundred monks. 42
2.5 **Organizational renewal of the Church.**

Patriarch Kyrillos VI (1959-1971) took the significant step of appointing new bishops for the first time without territorial dioceses. A number of these new bishops, among them the present Patriarch, were destined to play a crucial role in the affairs of the Coptic Church in the 70's and the 80's.

Bishop Samuel (killed together with president Sadat in 1981) was appointed bishop of Ecumenical, Social and Public Affairs.  

The Coptic Orthodox Church had acquired full membership of the World Council of Churches from 1954, and was, from 1962, involved in the ecumenical affairs of the Middle East (member of the Middle East Council of Churches).  

Bishop Gregorios, in charge of scientific research, has been active in an attempt to record all the hymns and liturgies of the Church; as early as 1954, a private 'Higher Institute for Coptic Studies' was created. Bishop Gregorios was appointed leader of this Institute and set up a committee charged with producing a Coptic edition of the whole Bible and preparing a Coptic Encyclopedia with the participation both of Oriental and Western scholars.

The teaching of the Coptic language was encouraged, a sign of the importance attached to the Coptic cultural heritage. In 1961, the Educational Committee of the Majlis al-Milli and the Central Committee of Sunday Schools instructed their branches to sponsor studies of the Coptic language.

Shenuda III, elected Patriarch in 1971, established a high-profile style of church leadership and quickly became a public figure in Egypt. Author of numerous books and, of great importance, a highly gifted preacher, the Patriarch often draws thousands of people to hear him lecture, teach or preach.
Shenuda III has established six theological seminaries and several institutes (Music, Biblical Studies, Pastoral Training) and also the Institute for Missionary Work in Africa.\textsuperscript{47} Shenuda was the first Patriarch to visit Rome, and has continued ecumenical talks with the Roman Church.\textsuperscript{48} Under his Patriarchate numerous organizations have been founded or renewed, such as hospitals, kindergartens, hostels for young people, old peoples' homes and several centres for social services.\textsuperscript{49}

3. **Legal status of the Copts and the Islamization of Egyptian law.**

An important part of the present political debate in Egypt, as in several other Muslim countries, revolves around the question of the implementation of *sharia*, the traditional Islamic law.\textsuperscript{50} In fact, the Egyptian debate requires us to consider the pivotal role of religion on the country's legal system.

According to the classical *Sharia*, the Copts shall be treated as *dhimmis*, 'protected citizen', and not as equal partners in the nation.\textsuperscript{51} On the 4th of May 1985, the People's Assembly voted to review the country's legal code in order to bring it gradually and scientifically into conformity with the *sharia*.\textsuperscript{52} The first victory of the fundamentalist forces was the Egyptian Supreme Court's abolition, also on the 4th of May 1985, of the women's rights law of 1979.\textsuperscript{53}

However, the reluctance of the Mubarak government to review the legal code, particularly in questions concerning economic and commercial law, is evident. This attitude is severely criticized by an Islamic opposition, which accuses the government of delaying tactics, and asserts that the application of *sharia* would 'remove the present state of conflict between the law and the conscience of the people.'\textsuperscript{54}
The growing tension is amply demonstrated by Mubarak's decision, in July 1985, to close the Mosque al-Nur, the stronghold of sheikh Hafiz Salama's small but potent pro-sharia group.\textsuperscript{55}

The current struggle between state secularists and the pro-sharia adherents - inside as well as outside the political establishment - will largely decide the degree of legal freedom and equality for the Copts. And, as Eric Rouleau wrote early in 1985 in Le Monde: 'The challenge of preserving a secular Egyptian state will be an awesome one'.\textsuperscript{56}

3.1 **Islamization of the Law.**

The present situation must be evaluated against the background of an increased legislative Islamization during the 70's. In 1971, Sadat altered the second article of the constitution and made Sharia a major source of civil law. In 1980, The Egyptian People's Assembly approved changes in the second article to make the sharia the principal source of law. Though Article 46 of the Egyptian Constitution explicitly recognizes the equality of all Egyptians before the law, it is obvious that these changes have opened up possibilities for interpretations which might have far-reaching consequences for the non-Muslim minorities.\textsuperscript{57}

Equally open to interpretation is the law of aib (shame or vice) passed in 1980, making it a crime to advocate any doctrine which implies a negation of divine teaching or urging disloyalty to the nation.\textsuperscript{58}

In 1977, faced with certain expressions of Muslim extremism, the Sadat government announced the introduction of certain sharia principles. These legislative proposals (the death penalty for apostasy and for adultery, and the whipping of drunkards) caused
considerable public concern, not least among the Copts, and were postponed. At present, these laws are under renewed consideration.

3.2 Personal status law.

The question of the Copts' personal status touches a vital area of the social life of the whole Coptic Community.

In 1955, all Muslim sharia- and Coptic millet-courts were abolished. When the new courts started functioning in 1956, the Muslim religious courts were directly incorporated - with their judges and clerics - into the civil court system, while the Christian courts were abolished and their judges rendered non-functional.

At present, the treatment of personal status cases involving Christians poses a number of problems. For instance, cases of divorce or child custody are heard before Muslim judges trained in Islamic law and tending to state this law in harsh terms. Personal law as it stands also provides that disputes between Christians of different communities should be settled according to Islamic law. Equally there are problems with regard to testimony in law (Christian testimony is not heard against Muslims), protection under criminal law, and in inheritance law.

4. Present conflict areas.

Two of the main areas of dispute are the question of Church Trust Land and the question of church building.

During the 19th and 20th Centuries wealthy Christians donated land to a large number of churches and Christian charities. In 1961, the Egyptian government restricted ownership of land, and the Ministry of Land Reform confiscated excess land from all institutions, Muslim and
Christian. However, although a substantial percentage of the confiscated land had been owned by Copts, all the land holdings were redistributed exclusively among Muslim peasants.66

In 1973, the Sadat government returned all land previously seized from Muslim organizations to the Ministry of Islamic Affairs charged with the responsibility of building mosques, Muslim schools and hospitals, etc. Meanwhile, Sadat refused to return the church land to the Coptic Trust Land Committee. During Sadat's tenure, much of the remaining church trust land was seized and given to the Ministry of Islamic Affairs. As late as 1977, the Ministry of Islamic Affairs seized the trust land of the monastery of St. Bishoi, as well as 150 acres from the Great Coptic Benevolent Society in Cairo.67

The other important conflict object is the question of church building. The existing law requires an official permit to build churches or to repair old ones. Due to the influx of peasants to the cities and the general population growth, the need to construct new churches is strongly felt. The regulations concerning church building are strict: before qualifying for a presidential permit the church site is required not to be situated beside a mosque, a major square or any government agencies; and the congregation should have the permission of the Muslim sheikhs and leaders. Obviously, several of these claims are difficult to fulfil, especially as the Muslim population often constructs a mosque beside the area pointed out as a church site.68 Some of the major clashes between the Coptic and the Muslim groups during the last decade were centred on the question of legal and illegal churches.
4.1 Cultural and educational restrictions.

Not unexpectedly, representatives of the Coptic Community have for a long time been underlining the importance of secularizing the mass media and other cultural and educational institutions. In 1982, the Minister of Information appointed a high council of the mass media without any Christian/Coptic representation. Islamic programs now constitute a high percentage of the radio and TV programs, whereas Coptic history and culture are more or less ignored.

A law promulgated in 1958 brought Coptic schools (as well as all Christian missionary schools) under the supervision of the Minister of Education. Under this law, Islamic culture was introduced into the curriculum. The way this is practised is characterized by the Copts as 'an educational discrimination'. Generally, Copts do not have permission to teach Arabic in government schools (Arabic is the language of the Koran and thus Islamic par excellence). The graduate schools restrict their admissions of Christians to a percentage far below their actual representation in society. Admission to military and police colleges is severely restricted, and the various medical schools do not accept Christians in the department of gynaecology and obstetrics. The Al-Azhar university, which is state supported, does not accept any Christian in its non-religious colleges. The award of fellowships has also been restricted during recent decades.

It does not seem exaggerated to point out that legally, socially and culturally, the Copts meet with numerous restrictions and also with a certain degree of discrimination.
5. **Interconfessional tension and crisis.**

In Egypt to-day, ethnic conflict largely coincides with economic, social and political conflicts, making the situation ripe for inter-confessional tensions.

Economic suffocation combined with demographic increase and unemployment have resulted in a mass of people, some of them well educated, drifting outside the community. In this situation religious fraternities often emerge as the only actual factor of social integration. The uncompromising attitude of the militant Islamic fraternities has been, to some extent, matched by Coptic student militancy. After 1967, Coptic students on university campuses began to establish their own fraternities in reaction to the Islamic groups. On the other hand, one of the few research-reports on this subject, quoted by Ansari, shows that the emergence of associations among the Muslims in the areas of Upper Egypt is strongly associated with the size of the Coptic population. These findings suggest 'a chain reaction of organization and counter-organization among Christian and Muslim communities (...).'

The first major confrontation in the 70's came in connection with government restriction on church building. In 1972, Muslims set fire to an illegal church-building in Khanka, a suburb of Cairo. A new series of serious clashes followed, and eventually the tension was increased, not only by the attacks of fundamentalist groups, but just as much by the official introduction of the sharia referendum of 1980. The crisis culminated in violent confrontations in Assiut in 1980 and with the massacre of Copts in Al Zawiyá al Hamra, in Cairo in 1981. Frictions at grass-root level seem to continue, but only minor incidents are reported, the most recent during the summer of 1985.
In the propaganda of the fundamentalists of Upper Egypt, in towns like Assiut and al-Mina, attacks on Copts play an important part. Here, the notion of takfir (the appellation of unbelief) serves as the basis of the militant doctrine of rebellion both against the established authority, the state, and against the Copts. On the other hand, among the northerm fundamentalist groups, confessional propaganda plays a moderate role and verbal attacks seem almost exclusively to be directed against the government.81

The charges against the Copts, as referred to in recent studies, consist of a variety of themes which can be traced back at least to the 14th Century: The Copts are conspiring with foreign powers, they are secretly planning to take over the country and set up a government based on a dictatorship of the minority, etc.82

The reactions of the Coptic community to confessional crises have been divided, and have resulted in a certain tension within the Church.83 Shenuda III, even before his election as a patriarch, was strongly inclined to take a radical position towards the political authorities. In this respect, Shenuda III represents a movement within the Coptic leadership which has as its clearly pronounced aim to work actively for the interests of the Church, thus alarming traditionalists within both the Coptic and the Muslim communities. In modern times, as traditionally, the attitude of the Church was to be very cautious, to conform to the state's policy and, as a reward for this loyalty, to be tolerated and receive a limited financial aid.84

Shenuda's policy, however, has aroused Coptic mass opinion. His popularity has been constantly growing during recent years, and he is now supported by what seems to be the majority of his people.
The repercussions of the sectarian conflict were also felt in Europe and in the U.S.A., where thousands of Copts demonstrated during Sadat's visits to Washington.85

6. Conclusion: the politicization of Coptic identity.

The question of Coptic identity has become an important political issue in the 80's. During recent decades, outside influence has indeed hastened this process: The first phase was initiated by nationalization and centralistic control during the Nasser period, resulting in an erosion of the political and economic role played by the Coptic Community. A second phase started under Sadat. Facing an increasingly militant Islamic opposition, Sadat's politically expedient appeal to religion had the unintended consequence both of arousing Islamic militancy and of alienating the Coptic minority and forcing the traditionally acquiescent Coptic Church to take a militant stand.86

At present, legal reforms plus the prospect of further islamization of Egyptian law, of the educational system and of important sectors of cultural life, combined with the fact that social advancement and admission to financially rewarding positions seem increasingly difficult of achievement, contribute to the active and explicit will to reinforce ethnic cohesion and conformity.

In fact, the process of politicization has been in action for a long time, and is rooted in the cultural, institutional and economic renaissance of the Coptic community during the last decades of the 19th Century.

During the first half of this century, the new possibilities of development and integration were reinforced, and the general level of both secular and religious education was considerably raised.

An important aspect of this development seems to be a great capacity...
of the Coptic community to attract and to mobilize its own sub-groups with divergent political and economic interests. At present, the members of the community join organizations of their own, read magazines and newspapers of their group, and, of primary importance, have churchleaders of international reputation and with a wide network of contacts. Further, the revival of monastic life has been of inestimable importance, and has given the community a considerable number of charismatic 'model' personalities.

At the same time, it has to be emphasized that the issue of Coptic identity is strongly interconnected with Egyptian identification. A politicization of the Coptic question primarily entails the demand for recognizion of the Coptic identity on a par with the Arab-Islamic identity of the state, and consequently, for the recognition of certain social, cultural and religious rights of the community. Claims for particular privileges or special guarantees have never been under consideration by the Coptic majority; nor have claims for autonomy.

The prospect of damping down confessional tension and of avoiding open crisis seem to be closely connected with the capacity of the state to maintain a certain degree of cultural pluralism. In this respect, the interests of the Coptic community and the government apparently converge: In a research report published by Deutsche Orientinstitut in 1982, the probability of an Islamic coup d'etat in the different states of North-Africa is evaluated. In Egypt, an Islamic take-over was ruled out, mainly because of the presence of the important Coptic minority.

In itself, the Coptic community constitutes a considerable human potential for the development of Egyptian society - provided a pluralist evolution of this society will allow this potential to be developed.

by Kari Vogt
NOTES

1 An historical survey of Christian-Muslim conflicts is given in Samaan & Sukkary, pp. 131-138.


3 The last Egyptian census conducted in November 1976 reported a total of 2,315,560 Copts, or 6.31 percent of the total population. A balanced discussion of the religious demography of Egypt is given by Bett, pp. 61-65. AHiya estimates the Coptic population in Egypt (1974) from four to six million. See also Spuler, p. 479; Pennington, pp. 159.

4 Aldeeb Abu-Sahlieh, p.252; The Copts, vol.12, June 1985, p.1: 'Egypt is already a religious state of 47 million people, of whom 10 million are Christians (Copts).'

5 Bett, p.61.

6 Hopwood, p.123; Verghese, p.82.

7 Anba Athanasius, in Verghese, p.82.


9 Saaman & Sukkary, p.141.

10 Bett, p.136; Jomier, p.16, cf. Pennington, 'perhaps 80 percent of pharmacists are Copts: 30-40 percent of doctors (the proportion was probably higher in the past); and a high proportion of lawyers and engineers', p.159.


12 Pennington, p.177. A Coptic view-point is given by Saaman & Sukkar, p.133 and Verghese, p.56.


15 Jomier, pp.77-78.

16 cf. 'In dieser Gemeinschaft hat die Kirche immer das Fortbestehen der koptischen Identität symbolisiert', Assad p.87.

17 CEMAM-shaft, p.49.

For the cult-continuity between pre-Christian Egypt and Egyptian Christianity, cf. Baumeister.

Seikaly, p.269. In particular, Masperos lecture, 'The Copts', delivered in Nadi Ramsis in 1908, proved to be of seminal importance.

The chief priest of El-Maallaka Church in Cairo, Shenuda Hanna, writes: 'The genuine Egyptians of to-day are the Christian Copts who alone trace direct descent from the ancient Egyptian races', in Who are the Copts?, Cairo 1967.

cf. Fawazia Assad, L'Egyptienne, Paris 1975

'...sur le plan ethnique, ce sont les descendants de l'antique peuple égyptien (...)', Chabry, p.297.
This point of view is confirmed by Anba Athanasios, in Verghese, p.60, and Saaman & Sukkary, p.133.

The multi-faceted symbolism of 'pharao' and 'pharaonic descent' in Arab politics has to be underlined. Cf. The Coptic author Salama Musa, in A.J. Ibrahim, p.348; p.354.
On the other hand, in Islamic political symbolism, 'pharao' always has a pronounced negative meaning, denoting a tyrant and illegitimate political power. Cf. Kepel, 'Assassiner Pharaon', pp.201-205.

Seikaly, p.251 ff.
Seikaly, p.267.
Assad, p.128.
Seikaly, p.268.
Chabry, p.302; Hanf, p.37.
Hanf, p.37.
Bowie, p.108.
Attiya, p.94.
Quoted by Edsman, p.24.
Saaman & Sukhary, p.148.
Jomier, p.78.
A presentation of the present renewal of the Monastery of St. Macarios: reconstruction projects, resources, rule of the monastery, etc., is given in Le monastère de Saint-Macaire au Desert de Scété (Wadi el Natroun, by 'Un moine de Saint-Macaire', in Irénikon, t. LI, 1978, pp. 203-215.


Spuler, p. 483; Le Monde Copte, No. 11, 1985, p. 9.

Samaan and Sukhary, p. 142.

Spuler, p. 484.


Spuler, p. 482.

Schlicht, p. 231.


cf. Khoury, in particular: Chap. 7; Status der Dhimnins im Gebiet des Islams, Chap. 8, Die Religionsfreiheit der Dhimnins, Chap. 9, Die rechtliche Stellung der Dhimnins im islamischen Staat.


Le Monde, le 8 Mai 1985.


According to The Copts, June 1985, p. 1; the Administrative Court of Egypt on April 8, 1980 declared that the second article overrules all succeeding articles on religious freedom and equality.


Proche Orient Chrétien, t 33, 1983, pp.242-244.

'(..) les tribunaux religieux islamiques ne furent supprimés que pour la forme et seulement en apparence', Aldeeb Abu-Sahlieh, p.119. For further details on the abolition of the religious courts, cf. Aldeeb Abu-Sahlieh; pp.108-139.


Aldeeb Abu-Sahlieh, pp.283-86; pp.300-301; Pennington, p.170.

Aldeeb Abu-Sahlieh, pp.165-166.

Aldeeb Abu-Sahlieh, pp.297-298; p.144; p.293 ff.

Aldeeb Abu-Sahlieh, Translation of 'Memorandum du Saint synode au gouvernement concernant les restrictions des droit des Copts dans le domaine du droit civil, des postes et de la représentation politique', p.325.

Fact File, 1980, published by The American Coptic Association, p.3.

Aldeeb Abu-Sahlieh, pp.345-346; Ansari, p.399; Heikal pp.163-164.

Aldeeb Abu-Sahlieh, p.348; The Copts,


Aldeeb Abu-Sahlieh, p.325; p.341; Peroncel-Hugoz, p.


Ansari, p.397; p.403.

Ansari, p.400.
Ansari, p.400.

Spuler, p.481.


'Egypt acts to defuse Muslim-Copt tension', in Aktueller Informationsdienst Moderner Orient, 14, 1985, p.8.


Kepel, pp. 188-201, p.228; Ansari, p.412.

Ansari, p.398; Heikal, p.160; Pennington, p.168.

Activities of Coptic groups outside Egypt are adding to this tension. In an interview in One World, Maurice Assad, associate general secretary of the Middle East Council of Churches and director of the Cairo office, points to 'certain vocal elements among Egyptian Christians living overseas, who for several years have been making sharp public criticism of the plight of the Coptic Church.' 'These groups', he says, 'increase the problems faced by Egyptian Christians.' One World, No.84, March 1983.

Demonstrations against the Egyptian government taking place in the U.S.A., as well as publications like The Copts by the American Coptic Association, might also have an influence on public opinion in the U.S.A. and in Europe.

Spuler, p.480.

Spuler, p.481.

Ansari, p.416, cf. Ansari p.398:
'The Coptic Orthodox Church has experienced in the past decade a revolutionary transformation in its attitude toward the state authorities. The election of Shenuda III (...) marked the beginning of an activist Church (...).

In this respect, the Coptic question might offer a parallel to the Berber question in North-Africa, cf. Laanatza: Ethnic conflicts in Islamic Societies - Politicization of Berbers in North-Africa and Kurds in Iraq, in Tagil, p.238.

'In Ägypten ist ein eindrucksvolles Beispiel für die Relevanz des Vorhandenseins religiöser Minderheiten als Hindernis im Wege der Machtübernahme einer recht starken islamistischen Front durch die wenigsten 12% der Bevölkerung ausmachenden Kopten gegeben', Khalid, p.99.
References


THE PRESS IN EGYPT

How free is the freedom of speech?

A quick glance at the press in Egypt in 1985, four years after the death of Sadat, evokes a lot of optimism. Diversity of opinion in the press is the widest in thirty years, due to a new openness on the political scene. Since May 1984 there are five recognized opposition parties in the former one-party state, although only one of them — the New Wafd — passed the eight percent barrier to the parliament. The so-called national press, loyal to the government, is thus no longer the only voice to be heard. It is today challenged by a wide range of partisan weekly newspapers; al-Ahali by the National Progressive Unionist Party, al-Sha'b by the Working Socialist Party, al-Ahrar by the Socialist Liberal Party, al-Wafd by the New Wafd Party, al-Umma by the Islamic Umma Party and Watan by the Coptic community. The frankness with which these newspapers are allowed to express themselves has vitalized the political debate. There is no pre-publishing censorship, and the cases of legal intervention after publishing are few.

For some years now, democracy has been treated as a first priority news-item in the national press. It is a favourite word in headlines and the topic of countless editorials and columns. This emphasis on the advantages of democracy is a conscious effort of the official propaganda. Egypt is considered to have embarked on the road of democracy by the introduction of a certain pluralism in the parliament. President Mubarak has repeatedly stressed the need of "an open dialogue"; a slogan addressed to the editors but also an invitation to intellectuals to contribute. Thus a relaxed and liberal atmosphere has evolved, as indicated by the number
of prominent writers and journalists who have returned from exile.

But - as Egypt today bears witness of - an open dialogue is not the same as freedom of speech. All the major publishing houses, the daily newspapers and most of the weeklies, are owned by the state and thereby more or less directly controlled by the government, Egypt still has a very long way to go until it can be called a democracy. The electoral system is clearly too heavily biased in favour of the ruling party to give the opposition a fair chance. Many political opinions can not be expressed through parties. There is no freedom of association; an arsenal of anti-democratic legislation is supressing the creation of independent public opinions. And most important of all - Egypt is still in a state of civil emergency since the assassination of Sadat.

However, these curtailments of freedom of speech do not necessarily mean that all the talk about democracy is mere propaganda. Dr. Sayed Yassin, director of the al-Ahram Centre of Strategical and Political Studies, explained the ideology behind the official policy as follows; "Political stability can be guaranteed through opening up the system. Egypt needs openness, that we accept pluralism. But this is a historical process. The government still feels a need to control those extremist groups, who have chosen the road of violence. But political democratization would be difficult without a rational economic policy and social justice." 1) An editor with close relations to president Mubarak confirms this analysis of "openness and pluralism" as stabilizing factors, necessary prerequisites for any further democratization; "The government can not encircle the Islamic extremists without an open dialogue. There are 70 groups differing with each other. Some of them are against science and medicine. If people hear what they are saying, it kills them. They will vanish". 2) But what
will happen if this strategy fails - if the opponents do not vanish but
gain strenght? Are there any structural, legal or political factors
safeguarding the amount of freedom achieved so far, or will the open
dialogue be closed and the democratization process be reversed?

The government's confrontation with the fundamentalists during 1985
indicates a readiness to exchange the open dialogue with an iron fist.
The confrontation began with the demand - primarily articulated by sheikh
Hafiz Salama - for an immediate full-scale programme of implementing the
Shari'a (Islamic law) in public life. A march on the presidential palace
in late June, to urge the president to counterbalance the unwilling
parliament by using his own legislative power, infuriated Mubarak and the
ruling National Democratic Party. Soon 500 fundamentalists were arrested
and sent to the notorious Turah prison. The oppressive legal instruments,
said to be aimed at curbing the small, armed, extremist, religious groups,
were thus used against well-established, non-violent sheikhs in the core
of the Islamic community,

In order to analyse the possible impact of this conflict on freedom of
speech one has to consider the main contradictions in the modern history
of Egypt; traditionalism/fundamentalism versus modernism/liberalism and
authoritarian rule versus popular movements. The quest for political de-
mocracy and democratic liberties like freedom of speech has played a
major role in this struggle and furthered the early development of a
diversified press. A brief historical review of the press before 1952
is therefore necessary.
The History of the Press before 1952

As P.J. Vatikiotis writes: "In practically no other Arab country has the Press been as significant and crucial a part of modern development as it has in Egypt from the nineteenth century until 1952 at least." The history of the press in Egypt dates back to Bonaparte's invasion in 1798. The French expeditionary forces did not only include soldiers and arms but also scores of savants, printers and printing machinery. The impact of this brief three-year occupation was the encounter with new European sciences and philosophy it brought about. Muhammed Ali (autocratic ruler of Egypt 1805–48) was the first to take advantage of this new knowledge. He sent educational missions to Europe to learn the art of printing and then to study sciences and languages. By 1822 a state printing press, the Bulaq press, was in operation. The first indigenous Egyptian paper with a daily edition of less than one hundred copies appeared in 1827. The following year saw the publication of al-Waqa'a al-Misriyya. Apart from official news it also covered literary and educational subjects. This was very much due to its first learned editors, sheikh Hassan al-Attar and his disciple Rifa'i al-Tahtawi, but also in accordance with the curiosity of the time and Muhammed Ali's program to modernize Egypt.

Although the press was a complete state venture at first, the early start offered Egypt a certain advantage in publishing. The cultural and intellectual renaissance under the reign of Khedive Isma'il (1863–79) provided the favourable climate for the growth of the press. During his liberal regime Egypt became an asylum for Lebanese and Syrian men of letters immigrating from the repressive rule of Sultan Abd al-Hamid in Constantinople. There were the Taqla brothers who founded al-Ahram in 1875, the Syrian Salim al-Naqqash, founder of the weekly Jaridat Misr in 1877, and many others. Jacob (James) Sanu, an Alexandrian jew, active in both journalism and theatre.
started numerous satirical newspapers. The most famous of them, Abu Naddara, appeared in Cairo 1877. On stage and in the newspapers Sanua heaped abuses on the Khedive and was expelled from the country in 1878. Khedive Isma'il thus encouraged publication of privately owned papers, although he at the same time kept a watchful eye on them and suppressed critical voices. An other push to a non-government press was the appearance of the religious-political agitator Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (1838-97), who inspired the earliest protest movement against the ruling dynasty (he was expelled in 1879) as well as the Urabi revolt 1881-82 and the British occupation which followed. For the first time in Egypt the press reflected a variety of partisan views; for or against Urabi, the Khedive and the British.

After 1882 the press increasingly became a public opinion maker. It was through the press that the ideas of the time were propagated. The religious reform ideas of Afghani were elaborated by his principal disciple sheikh Muhammad Abduh, editor of the Official Gazette. Literature, scientific discoveries and new theories were presented and debated in weeklies like al-Muqtataf, al-Jami'a and al-Hilal. The first anti-British nationalist movements centered around al-Mu'ayyad, edited by sheikh Ali Yousuf, and Mustafa Kamils newspaper al-Liwa', while a pro-British stand was propagated by the daily al-Muqattam. When the first political parties were established in 1907 al-Jarida, edited by Ahmad Lutfi al-Sayyed, became the platform for the liberal modernists (Hizb al-'Umma).

A diversified, vigorous press was thus born, which was going to have a great impact on intellectual and political life in Egypt during the following decades. Vatikiotis states as a fact that "between 1900 and 1950 literate Egyptians did not as a matter of course read books; they read news-
papers, magazines and periodicals". The choice of the reader was tremendous. Apart from the partisan newspapers, there were lots of popular weeklies like Rose al-Yousef, al-Ithnen and the pictoral al-Musawwar, many serious women's magazines and several important cultural periodicals like al-Risala and al-Thaqafa, just to name a few of the 200 Arabic newspapers, magazines and periodicals in Egypt around 1938. By september 1951 the citizens of Cairo could choose between 21 daily newspapers, 121 weeklies and 172 bi-weeklies, monthlies, quaterlies and more irregulars.

Mere quantity is not a sufficient measure of the freedom of the press, but has to be coupled with an analysis of the legal restrictions of freedom of speech, at times quite severe. The first Press Law - enacted in 1881 and reactivated in 1909 - gave the Minister of Interior the power to suspend newspapers without trial and to apply administrative exile sentences against editorial staffs for undesirable political activities. The constitution of 1923 declared that "the press is free within the law", abolished censorship and circumscribed the possibilities of the government to suppress newspapers by mere administrative acts. But the formula "free within the law" still admitted for quite detailed legal regulations of what was not allowed to be written. During the oppressive government of Isma'il Sidqi (1930-33) the constitution was abolished and Egypt ruled by decree for six years. Sidqi also re-introduced censorship and stiffened the penal code vis-à-vis the press, all measures that were met with fierce opposition. One must not forget that already by the turn of the century Egypt's judicial system had been modernized along French lines and that the political leadership had a European secularist orientation. The slogan of Democracy was almost as important as the call for Independence.

However, freedom of the press is closely linked to political democracy. The
constitution of 1923 followed more closely the Ottoman than any European model in its authoritarian provisions. It gave such extensive power to the King that parliamentary life in Egypt was in fact undermined before it had begun to practice. The King had the right to select and appoint the Prime Minister, to dismiss the Cabinet, dissolve Parliament and postpone parliamentary sessions, and he made ample use of this right. In spite of the scoring success for the Wafd party - which had initiated and led the popular uprising against the British in 1919-22 - in the first free elections in January 1924, the wafdist government was dismissed by the King after only nine months, a procedure repeated again and again. Since no government could govern without the support of the King, the political parties tended either to compromise their principles to stay in power or to indulge in intrigues with the court to outmanoeuvre their opponents. These practices undermined the prestige of the old political parties and paved the way for new popular movements, such as the Muslim Brotherhood and the Young Egypt in the thirties and the radical left in the forties. After the Second World War the traditional centers of power did what they could to suppress the freedom of speech for these non-parliamentary movements, but the situation was already out of control. In spite of intermittent censorship and harassment of the press, the debate has never been as intense and the freedom of expression never as wide as in these years of political turmoil.

The Press from 1952 to 1970

The military coup on July 23, 1952, put an end to this liberal era. The first victims of the new military regime were the political parties and organizations, which through their struggle for independence and democracy had prepared the way for the Free Officers’ movement.

On September 8, 1952, appeared the law on the reorganization of the par-
ties, which was a preparatory step towards their dissolution. Fifteen parties chose to publish their programmes, by-laws and the names of their executive committees, according to the requirements in the law.\textsuperscript{15}) Three months later the government announced the abrogation of the constitution, and on January 16, 1953, the parties were dissolved, their properties confiscated and their leaders put under house-arrest. To prevent a press-campaign against this de facto installation of military dictatorship, censorship on the press had been established on October 21.\textsuperscript{16}) To fill the vacuum after the banned political parties a single new political organization, the National Liberation Rally, was announced on January 23, 1953.

The military officers had already in 1952 established a publishing house, Dar al-Tahrir, of their own, which very soon began issuing a bi-monthly, Majallat al-Tahrir, and after a year al-Gumhuriyya, a daily to which the most respected personalities were recruited: men like Taha Hussein, Muhammad Mandour and Louis Awad.\textsuperscript{17}) At this time there was still hope for a return to democratic life. In the spring of 1954 a rift within the Revolutionary Command Council became visible. The whole opposition turned in this situation to general Naguib, who sympathized with their demand for a return to a constitutional system and the restoration of democratic liberties.\textsuperscript{18}) Naguib seemed victorious at first. He abrogated martial law, eased censorship of the press and released most of the political prisoners.\textsuperscript{19}) Within a month, however, Nasser had succeeded to mobilize the workers. Under the auspices of the Liberation Rally he incited mass-demonstrations and strikes, which paralysed the country. On the 28th of March general Naguib was ousted by the RCC, and Nasser - who was already President of the RCC - became Premier a few weeks later. Thereafter the press was brought to heel. On May 4 the government banned al-Misri, the biggest daily in the Arab world with a circulation of 120 000 copies and the most powerful
spokesman for the democratic movement in Egypt. 20) Louis Awad has given an interesting account of this critical period, that illustrates the scepticism, hope and frustration many intellectuals experienced. 21) He had spent two years on a fellowship at Princeton University in the United States when he returned to Egypt in the summer of 1953. When he was asked by Sadat to supervise the literary section of al-Gumhuriyya, he hesitated and tried to persuade him to forget about it. "I had my own ideas about the revolution, even in America. I never believed in the rule of the military. I hoped they should leave over to politicians. But when Sadat insisted I accepted and hoped to make the best of the situation." Louis Awad took part in the planning and remained at the paper for three months, "But this was the most difficult time in my life—'une crise de confiance'. I noticed the regime was going full speed against my leftist friends, putting them in jail. One day Sadat came and said it was enough with literature and that I should write about politics. I said I wasn't a political writer, but if they promised me that not one word should be taken by the censor I would try. He agreed, I wrote about the people's constitution—Naguib stood for the return to democracy—and recommended that the army should withdraw from politics and that Egypt returned to constitutional forms. But Nasser used the workers of Helwan against the students and the famous judges, like Peron. Some were brutally beaten up. With the day of violence came the day I had to resign. Sadat sent me a messenger to persuade me to continue, to stay until things calmed down. But I said no." In December Nasser and the RCC expelled about 45 professors from Cairo University. Louis Awad was one of them, after 17 years in the service of the university. "All professors expelled belonged to the democratic or the left element".
With the dismantling of the political opposition not only the more or less partisan press disappeared, but also some of the best cultural magazines like al-Thaqafa and al-Katib al-Misri. Only four large privately owned publishing houses were left; Dar Rose al-Yousef, Dar al-Ahram, Dar al-Hilal and Dar al-Akhbar. They were supposed to keep out of politics, which they did, not so much because of the censorship as of fear. Many writers and journalists were arrested for something they wrote, especially before the nationalization of the Suez Canal and the war 1956. While al-Ahram was taken over from inside by Nasser's personal spokesman, Muhammed Hassanein Heikal, the owners of al-Akhbar and Akhbar al-Yawm, the leading journalists Ali and Mustapha Amin, tried to balance between the demands of the revolution and the principles of their professional task.\(^{22}\) The government compensated for the disappearance of all critical voices and publications by founding new publishing houses, newspapers and magazines under the auspices of the Ministry of Culture. Some of them turned out to be ideological work-shops of the regime, and in this capacity allowed to express a certain amount of criticism at times, to be silenced when they went too far, as in the case of the daily newspaper al-Masa', whose editor Khaled Muhieddine, a left-winger among the original Free Officers, was dismissed together with the editorial staff on March 12, 1959.\(^{23}\)

Then on May 24, 1960, came the fatal blow to the privately owned press; law 156 on the "organization of the press". Ownership of the four private publishing houses was transferred to the single political party, the National Union (later renamed Arab Socialist Union, ASU).\(^{24}\) By law 140, October 1963, Dar al-Ma'arif was also included in the "organization". Al-Gumhuriyya and two small papers originally exempted from the law, voluntarily submitted to it.\(^{25}\) The law on the "organization of the press" stipulated that no newspaper could be published without the permission of the
National Union, which was also entrusted with the power of appointing editors and boards for the newspapers it owned.26)

Initially, the nationalization of the press did not bring much change in the management of the press. Former owners were compensated for their properties and editors were assured of their jobs under the new system. The committee formed to run the newspapers in the National Union's name largely consisted of former editors and owners of the nationalized press.27) And since the new press law stipulated that half of the profits of the publishing houses should be distributed among press employees, many journalists found the new system personally rewarding.

But the mechanisms of propaganda were inherent in the new structure of ownership. From now on the press was not only supposed to avoid issues and subjects considered anti-revolutionary or hostile to the regime, but were also expected to actively promote the objectives of the new owner, the National Union, which was "to be a positive force behind the revolution".28) This demand came into full force when the National Union was reorganized and activated as the Arab Socialist Union, ASU. The newspapers then became increasingly loaded with propagandistic material on Arab socialism, nationalism and unity. Journalists and writers sympathizing with the left welcomed this political development and went to great lengths explaining its advantages. At last they felt that they could influence the military regime from within, supporting its good traits and criticizing its shortcomings. But criticism was mainly directed at low-level employees, sluggishness of the bureaucracy and similar more or less harmless targets. Nasser and the military regime became more sacrosanct than ever. Still many journalists and writers, suffering through the lack of democratic oxygen, tried to attack the autocratic rule and its practice in indirect and
subtle ways, which could hardly be done if not in the form of fiction; short stories, novels and poetry published on the cultural pages.

After the Egyptian defeat in the war 1967 criticism became more outspoken. The devastating war-propaganda had created such an immense credibility gap between the press and the public that even Nasser's close confidant Muhammed Hassanein Heikal urged "his colleagues to abandon their ingrained habits of self-censorship and speak out". The military power elite was thoroughly discredited, except Nasser who had admitted full responsibility and resigned from the Presidency and all political offices - only to be called back to office by millions and millions of people flooding the streets of the major cities. It seemed as if time had come for the people of Egypt to come on stage to direct their own destiny. The necessity of a less authoritarian rule, which permitted anyone to speak up freely and frankly, was once again widely felt and discussed.

The Press from 1970 to 1980
The same atmosphere was still prevailing when Nasser died in the autumn of 1970. It was thus with a sense of relief that the public welcomed his successor Anwar al-Sadat, who introduced himself as a true spokesman of democracy. His first reforms were considerable steps in the democratic direction. The new constitution of 1971 contained a whole chapter relating to the "Rule of Law", which put an end to the arrests without warrant and the long-term detentions without trial of political opponent or opposing journalists and writers. Another chapter contained most of the essential liberties and rights of man, but also the well-known general provision that these rights must be exercised within the limits of the law. Censorship on newspapers, magazines and books was abolished in 1974. With
the law on political parties in 1977, a kind of pluralism was re-introduced and the opposition parties given the right to issue their own papers.

Anacronistically, freedom of speech - in spite of all the reforms - did not get a chance to develop. Sadat supported democracy in theory. But when he or his policy was criticized, he used existing ways or promulgated new laws to prevent this criticism. Sadat soon felt that the elite in mass-media - editors as well as influential journalists and writers - were against him. He considered them to be his most dangerous opponents, raised as they were to their positions by Nasser and presumably still loyal to him and his radical, political legacy. Sadats attitude turned even more negative when he decided to approach the United States to get America involved in a peace process. The mere existence of leftist or even liberals at key positions in media constituted a threat to his personal image and to the picture of Egypt as a pro-western democracy with market-economy, which he had created for the American public opinion. The suspension of 104 leading publicists six months before the October war in 1973 shows how bitter feelings he harboured against the media establishment and gives a hint of the superficiality of his adherence to democratic values. But it was only the most spectacular blow. There was a general weeding out of decent journalistic profiles. Some were transferred to minor positions or harmless jobs in bureaucratic institutions, others chose exile.\textsuperscript{33} They were all replaced by men, who were first and foremost qualified by their absolute loyalty to Sadat and his new policy. These new editors became the new censors, and they were at the same time much more conservative and unpredictable than the official ones. According to Tawfiq al-Hakim, the Nestor of the writers, 88 years old and still working at al-Ahram, the informal censorship turned out to be suffocating;\textsuperscript{34}
"The editors and the publishers are concerned with the opinions and reactions of the power elite. They respond to the common atmosphere rather than to direct orders. It would be easier to handle power if we knew exactly what it would accept. Now, they say that this or that is unacceptable to society, as if they wanted to make the whole society an institution of censorship. Whatever you write upsets them. They claim that they are Society, that they act on behalf of it and defend its values." The bureau of censorship, that still exists for theatre and film, is an administrative body of judicial character. The censors are well-educated employees—many of them law-schooled—with administrative responsibility, individuals with whom you can argue and negotiate. But in the system Tawfiq al-Hakim describes, which is still valid, the editors interpretation of what is in the air is not always fit for intellectual arguments. Therefore, he said, "If I write something they dislike, they forbid publishing without saying anything, without giving an explanation. They are not even cultured enough to inform me. They just throw it away or put it aside". This suffocating atmosphere in the major newspapers as well as in radio and television was matched by a complete dismantling of the cultural and literary magazines. Within a couple of weeks most of the cultural periodicals and serials sponsored by the Ministry of Culture lost their licences to publish. Hundreds of cultural journalists and writers, who used to support themselves working in this cultural sector, suddenly found themselves handed over to a non-existing private market.

While Nasser patronized culture, Sadat took his hand from it, considering it all through leftist. Apart from a few individuals protected by a combination of fame and old age, the cultural élite was deliberately ignored or blacklisted, not only in the widely circulated dailies and weeklies but also on the listless bookstore. Young writers with a name of their own
could be published abroad, in Lebanon or Iraq, but the younger generation found no other way than privately distributed Rank Xerox copies. Louis Awad, who stayed as a cultural editor of al-Ahram until December 1981, points to the fact that under Sadat he did not publish a single book, while he before his time published 44. "It is very strange, because Nasser would not interfere with our writing, he would imprison us. Sadat suppressed writing but did not imprison. On the whole I can say I enjoyed freedom of expression under Nassar. Once he felt that you were not in the camp of the enemies he would not interfere with what you wrote. I do not remember that under Nasser any of my articles were suppressed. I had full freedom to examine the system of education and to defend secularism and the concept of the modern state in Egypt. Under Sadat things became different. In one year as many as seven of my articles were suppressed, and I was expelled from the Higher Council for Arts and Letters in 1973."36) This personal experience was shared by so many journalists and writers interviewed during my visits to Egypt in autumn 1983 and spring 1984, but I choose to give the final word to the editor of the famous weekly al-Musawwar, Makram Muhammed Ahmed; "The era of Sadat was a non-profit period for Egyptian culture. There was a chance for some to write a revision of Nasserism, bit. it was a non profit period for literature, theatre and press."37)

So, the great paradox is, that Sadat abolished censorship, put an end to the state of fear created by Nasser, and made it legally possible for anyone to say whatever he wanted as long as it was not a violation of a specific law - and most of those supressive laws were not promulgated until 1977 - but that the outcome was still a definite decrease of public debate. The channels of debate were simply closed. This paradox is, however, solidly founded on the state monopolization of publishing that took place
under Nasser.

In March 1975 control over the press was transferred from the ASU over to a new body, the Higher Press Council. But since the key members of the council were the Minister of Information, ASU officials and editors, who were all appointed by the regime, the government did not lose its de facto control.38)

The next legal reform related to the press was law no 40 on political parties enacted in 1977. The three so-called platforms of the ASU which had competed in the election campaign 1976 were henceforth to be separate political parties and were allowed to issue their own newspapers.39) The ASU, which owned 51 percent of the existing publishing houses, was thus made obsolete, and a revision of the press law was inevitable. The discussions were extended into 1979, as the government searched for an institutional formula to ensure that the right people remained in charge of the politically important publications.40)

In the meantime Egypt faced severe political turmoil. Following the riots over consumer price increases in January 1977 and a growing movement against the state of emergency, law 33 of 1978 "on the protection of the internal front and social peace" was promulgated. On the basis of this law and the law "on the protection of values" political opponents could be stripped of all civil rights.41) This was to be done through the so-called Socialist Public Prosecutor in an extra-judicial body called the Court of Values. Offences according to these laws are for instance;42)

- to advocate opposition to, hatred of, or contempt for the state's political, social or economic order,

- to call for the domination of a social class over others or for
the liquidation of a social class,
- to disseminate or publish false, misleading or provocative information which is capable of inflaming public opinion, generates enmity and hatred or endangers national unity or social peace,
- to undermine the dignity of the state or its constitutional institutions.

So, when the new parties took advantage of their right to issue papers and started criticizing the government's economic policy and connection with the United States as well as corruption by prominent personalities, the Socialist Public Prosecutor intervened. He began confiscating newspapers for the opposition parties accusing them of offences against the law, charges that the court upheld.\textsuperscript{43} Al-Ahali, a weekly newspaper issued by the National Progressive Unionist Party, was confiscated for twelve consecutive weeks. After that the party found it meaningless to keep on publishing. By September 1978 all the opposition papers were gone.\textsuperscript{44}

The Press Law of 1980

Discussions on a revision of the press law continued. In spring 1979 a preparatory committee was formed, which included editors, managing directors in the publishing houses as well as union representatives and judicial experts. The new press law was enacted on July 14, 1980, and came into force three months later.\textsuperscript{45} What it most important to notice is that it completed the "nationalization of the press" from 1960 by transferring the ownership of the press from the ASU to the state, According to paragraph 22, "The national press establishments and the national newspapers are considered to be special assets belonging to the state, and the rights over these assets are to be exercised by Majlis al-Shura (i.e., the Senate, in Egypt a semi-parliamentary body, where 99 percent of the members belong to the
ruling party)." As a consequence of that the law gives Majlis al-Shura 51 percent of the votes in the general assembly of each publishing house. The remaining 49 percent are distributed equally between journalists, workers and employees. Majlis al-Shura also elects seven out of the thirteen members in each administrative board. The real administrative and economic power over the press is however concentrated in the Higher Press Council within Majlis al-Shura itself.

The new law regulates newspaper ownership also for the non-national press. Individuals are not allowed to issue newspapers, whereas political parties, corporations and cooperatives are on certain conditions. A party must have at least two representatives in the peoples assembly to get the authorization to publish a paper. This condition is not fulfilled by all the opposition parties today, but they nevertheless keep on publishing. For corporations and cooperatives the restrictions are much harder. The law prescribes that before publication of a newspaper an amount of 250 000 Egyptian pounds must be deposited in a bank, The corresponding amount for a magazine is 100 000 Egyptian pounds. The shareholders have to be Egyptian citizens, the individual shares may not exceed 5 000 pound, and there is only to be one individual shareholder in each family (i.e. husband, wife and under-age children).

The preparatory committee, which worked out the proposed bill, had suggested that editors were to be elected by the general assembly at each paper. But in the final version of the law this vital point was altered, probably at the request of President Sadat. Editors in chief are now appointed by the President for terms of three years. In order to fire an editor whose term has not expired the President has to turn to Majlis al-Shura.
As mentioned earlier the real power over the press is in the hands of the Higher Press Council. By economical re-allocation, changes in the staff or withdrawn governmental advertisements the Council can exert overwhelming pressure against disobedient editors. The case of al-Ahram al-Iqtisadi, noted for its free discussion on economic affairs, offers a good illustration to that. The magazine was brought back into the official line of the national press through cuts in the documentary budget, transfers of investigative journalists, and the final ouster of its editor, Dr. Loutfi Abd al-Azim, in June 1984. Al-Azim had then been on indefinite leave since August 1983, at the request of the chairman of the board. Among the reasons were a series of articles on the strings attached to US aid that upset the Americans, and reports on Israeli business penetration of Egypt after Camp David, that annoyed the Israelis.

The Press in Egypt today

How free is freedom of speech today? This question -- the topic of this paper -- has partly been answered by the previous review of the history of the press and the legislation related to freedom of speech.

To summarize and update this information, the most important fact is that President Mubarak has not initiated any major revisions of the many laws promulgated under Sadat, but he has changed the general atmosphere by applying them differently.

As we have seen, the law "on political parties" and the right for opposition parties to issue their own papers introduced some pluralism in the political life of Egypt. But when the opposition made use of their democratic right to criticize the government, Sadat immediately lost his temper. By the law "on the protection of the internal front and social peace"
and the law "on the protection of values from shameful conduct" the opposition press was silenced and the leading cadre of the opposition parties harassed. One month before the assassination of President Sadat more than one thousand intellectuals were arrested, many of them independent and distinguished members of society. Within a month after the assassination they were all released by President Mubarak.

President Mubarak has made himself known as a cautious step by step man. Although not a legal reformer, he has given proof of a sound judicial conscience by leaving to the courts to judge in several delicate matters. The case of the New Wafd offers a good illustration. According to the very restrictive law on political parties, a new party has to have at least 20 members in the parliament to be recognized (!), a condition included to prohibit the formation of new parties. The New Wafd, however, succeeded to form a party in 1978 by seeking support from 20 members in the parliament. This achievement, which must be attributed to the historical role of the Wafd party, was not foreseen by Sadat, and he immediately proceeded to turn it down. The law "on the protection of the internal front and social peace" enacted shortly afterwards contained one paragraph, tailor-made for the New Wafd. Leaders of dissolved parties, which had existed before 1952, were deprived forever from the right to participate in political parties and from practicing other political rights or activities. The New Wafd was thus deprived of its leadership and decided to dissolve itself - a fatal decision, which was however modified by the High Council of the party shortly afterwards. Nevertheless the New Wafd had to carry on a lawsuit before it could re-enter politics. The case was presented to the Council of State, which declared that the party had not dissolved itself but been forced to stop its activities and was therefore free to take them up again. The government (Mubarak) appealed to a higher
administrative court but lost. A second lawsuit concerned the restitution of political rights for former ministers. The Constitutional Court settled it by judging that the deprivation of political rights was an anti-constitutional administrative decision by the Socialist Public Prosecutor. This judgement was later confirmed by the Higher Constitutional Court. The remarkable thing with Mubarak is that he as the first President after 1952 has accepted the "Rule of Law" and abided by the judgements of the courts. The legal struggle itself is also a good illustration of the judicial conscience imprinted on generations of Egyptians, a legacy of the liberal past that has been kept alive by - among others - the well-reputed Bar Association and the Judges' Club.

Concerning the new press law of 1980 we saw that it preserved tight state control over national publishing houses and national papers. Since the President has the power to appoint editors in chief, it is ultimately up to him to decide how much freedom of expression there will be "within the system". We also know that the editors appointed by Sadat were extremely loyal to him and his policy. In spite of that Mubarak has not used his power to get them replaced. People close to the president claim that it is because he wants to avoid the kind of ousters and upheavals which followed the death of Nasser. But when the editors in chief of four important newspapers reached the age of pension in 1984, they were succeeded by men with a clean, professional reputation. While Sadat used to call editors daily to ask for the headlines, Mubarak is said to have limited his surveyance to a few large gatherings a year and very occasional in-between contacts. This lack of interference in combination with Mubarak's emphasis on the necessity of an open dialogue has given broad-minded editors an opportunity to deal with the most touchy subjects and to invite friends and foes to express themselves in public; although not many edi-
tors in the national press have dared to make use of it. That may be because the political future of Egypt still has not been settled. There are no guarantees that today's open window will not be shut tomorrow.

To estimate the future prospects for the freedom of the press in Egypt is therefore to estimate the strength of the political forces in Egypt today, which are the same as the main trends in the modern history of Egypt; liberalism, fundamentalism and authoritarian rule. The new openness on the political scene and the increased amount of freedom of expression are only slight modifications of an authoritarian rule. Real political democratization and real freedom of the press are still very distant goals. So far even an abolition of the state of emergency has been considered out of the question. May be because - to quote Dr. Sayid Yassin again - "Political democratization would be difficult without a rational economic policy and social justice". As long as the government seems unable to deal with the deeprooted economical problems of Egypt, social unrest will prevail or increase and the Islamic revivalists will continue to gain in strength and popular support, as they have done so far. If the situation leads up to a major confrontation between an Islamic popular movement and an authoritarian government founded on military rule, one does not have to be a born pessimist to anticipate that liberal values like freedom of speech and political pluralism will be the first to be sacrificed.

by Marina Stagh
NOTES

1. Interview on October 17, 1983, Cairo.
2. Interview, October, 1983.
5. P.J. Vatikiotis, op.cit., p. 95.
10. Ibid.
13. Almaney, op.cit., p.34.
15. Ibid.
16. Ibid.
23, Abdel-Malek, op.cit., p. 120.
25. CAbduh, op.cit., p.250.

26. Rugh, op.cit., p. 120.

27, Almaney, ibid.

28, Ibid.


32. el-Hilaly, op.cit., p. 8.


34, Interview on September 30, 1983.

35. Hafez, ibid.

36. Interview on October 10, 1983.

37, Interview on October 23, 1983.

38. Rugh, op.cit., p. 38.

39. el-Hilaly, op.cit., p. 16.


42, el-Hilaly, op.cit. p. 11,

42, Ibid.

43. Rugh, op.cit., p, 46.

44, el-Hilaly, op.cit., p. 15.

45, The account of the Press Law is mainly based on CAbduh, op.cit., p. 252-260,


47, Ibid.

48, The facts in this paragraph are based on an interview with Dr. Muhammed Asfour - the lawyer representing the New Wafd in the lawsuits - on March 30, 1984.
THE IMAGE OF EUROPE IN EGYPTIAN LITERATURE: TWO RECENT SHORT STORIES BY BANW TAHIR ON A RECURRENT THEME.

Under the heading "This is the issue" (tilka hiya al-qadiya) the Egyptian liberal philosopher Zaki Nagib Mahmud summarizes the principal question in Egyptian intellectual debate during the last 150 years in the epitome "what should be our attitude towards the West" (madha yakunu mawqifun min al-gharb). The article is provoked by a contribution by Anis Mansur in the daily Akhbâr al-yaum, in which he relates an encounter between some Egyptian writers, including himself and Ahmad Baha al-Din, and a visiting Russian poet to Egypt in the 1960's. The poet asks them about the issue which has most preoccupied Egyptian men of letters. They were embarrassed by the realization that Egyptian writers (udabâ) had no such common matter, writes Mansur. After some hesitation they find no better reply than "socialist realism" (al-ishtirâkiyya al-waqqiyya).

Exasperated by such lack of insight from some of the leading intellectuals of today, Zaki Nagib Mahmud strongly asserts that the issue of how to relate to the West, with all its implications, underlies the great controversies in modern Egyptian political and cultural life. He claims that distinctive dividing lines may be drawn all the way between two main tendencies: on the one hand those who reject the West (and all it stands for), on the other hand those who accept Western impulses, provided they are integrated into the national cultural tradition. A third, westernized (mustaghrib), group is numerically insignificant and without any impact, Mahmud alleges,
so it needs not be brought into the general picture.

Undoubtedly, the "challenge of the West", with all its implications, has been a most central issue in Egyptian intellectual debate. Representing well-ordered, affluent and educated societies, Europe would stand forth as a much-coveted model, a symbol of human progress. On the other hand, the experience with European powers as occupants, suppressors, and exploiters, rendered the relationship with Europe at best a love-hate relationship. Egypt's economic and political survival, as well as the nation's dignity, was at stake for many years. Besides the struggle for economic and political control, there was the struggle for national cultural identity. The "challenge" was responded to in different ways, largely reflecting the interests and orientations of various social classes and groups. Roughly, we may distinguish four sets of responses:

1) The conservative apologetic response, unconditionally defending traditional (Islamic) social and cultural structures and values.

2) The modernizing apologetic response, claiming that the idea of human progress is inherent in the national (Islamic) culture, and that necessary reforms may be based on this national heritage.

3) The liberal modernizing response, aspiring to borrow the best of European civilisation and integrate it into the national culture (as expressed by al-Caqqad: "I may eat an American apple... but in my body that apple is transformed to Egyptian blood" (anā ākul tuffāḥan amrīkiyyan... lākin hādha t-tuffāḥ yatahawwalu fī jisimī ilā damrīn misrī)

4) The marxist response, aspiring to liberate and produce a new
Egyptian identity imbued with socialist culture.

The image of Europe in fictional literature

The young Egyptian going to Europe, usually for educational purposes, and the cultural conflicts he thereby experiences, is a recurrent theme in Egyptian fiction. It is a drama in which the civilizational conflict between East and West rages on a personal level. The qualities which are usually contrasted in this conflict are the alleged materialism of the West vs. the spirituality of the East, the unbelief and arrogant pride of the European vs. the faith, trust and humility of the Oriental, Europe's human and physical coldness vs. the warm atmosphere of Egypt, the egoism, cynicism and decadence of European society vs. the naive innocence and generosity of Oriental society. But also positive "Western" qualities as education and scientific achievement vs. ignorance and superstition haunting Oriental societies, individual freedom and democracy vs. the burden of tradition and despotism, affluence vs. poverty, are frequently commented upon by some writers. The evaluation of certain qualities may vary: to some the contrastive set of activity vs. passivity as typical of Western vs. Eastern societies, is associated with concepts of energy and vitality vs. inertia and lethargy, to others it is associated with aggressivity, exploitation and sexual promiscuity (especially in females) vs. patience, endurance and (female) modesty, respectively.

The appreciation of these contrastive qualities and the value judgments passed on them by Egyptian writers have oscillated in accordance with shifting political and cultural trends in modern
Egyptian history, as is amply demonstrated by Rotraud Wielandt in her highly perceptive study "Das Bild der Europaer in der moderne arabische Erzahl - und Theaterliteratur". Roughly summarized, the image of European society as expressed in literary contributions, reflects an awareness of considerable cultural differences. However, up through the first couple of decades in this century, European society and cultural values were not necessarily considered inferior to, nor totally incompatible with, the culture and values of Egyptian/Oriental society. It was rather considered a matter of good and bad aspects of both societies, and contributions often reflect a sense of a potentially useful complementarity of the two cultures. With the ascendancy of an educated Egyptian middle class (as opposed to the predominantly westernized, at least Western educated, upper class intellectual elite of the previous decades), the intellectual climate shifted in the 1930's towards an accentuation of traditional (Islamic) culture and values as superior to Western culture and values. This also reflected a general anti-colonialist (anti-British) political mobilisation in Egypt, combined with the political and economic unrest and desintegration characterizing Europe in this period.

"The return of the spirit" (Awdat al-rūh, 1933) and "Bird of the East" (Uṣfur min al-sharq, 1938) by the prominent Egyptian writer Tawfiq al-Hakim are novels in which the cultural conflict is rendered in an uncompromisingly anti-Western bias. In "Bird of the East" which is said to be based on the author's personal experiences as a young student in Paris in the late 1920's, the Egyptian hero falls victim to the intrigues of a young Parisienne with whom he falls desperately and genuinely in love. She
ruthlessly exploits his feelings and enters into a sexual relationship with him only to provoke jealousy in another man, whom she really wants. She is the prototype of European woman, and a symbol of Europe itself: intelligent and beautiful she may appear, but she lacks spirit and soul, and at heart she is cold and cruel. While European society is imbued with "the poison of utilitarianism", Egyptian society is presented as one in which man and nature live in symbiotic harmony, its people imbued with natural social solidarity (sha'b 'ijtimā' bi-l-fitra). Fantasy and emotion reign - not cold intellect.

In Yahya Haqqi's novellette "The lamp of Umm Hashim" (Qindīl Umm Hāshim 1944), the cultural conflict is presented in much the same manner, employing the stereotypic contrasts of materialism vs. spirituality, cynicism vs. innocence, egoism vs. communal feeling. However, with its impressionistic and lyrical style, its tone is less aggressive, less crude, and besides, it is more sensitive towards positive aspects of Western civilization.

The central theme is similar to "Bird of the East": The young Egyptian student, Ismail, goes to Europe (England). He becomes involved with a girl, who embodies the standard cliché of the European woman: independent, active, sexually liberated, self-conscious and esthetically educated - qualities which Ismail (and the author) considers admirable and attractive. On the other hand, she exposes herself as an egocentric, cynical and ruthless person when it serves her interests, being emotionally so uncomplicated that it amounts to callousness and moral irresponsibility.
Ismail becomes influenced by Western thinking and values: it is a sophisticated man of science who returns to Egypt after 7 years abroad. The encounter with the poverty, ignorance and superstition of his native environment becomes extremely painful. He is torn between loyalty and disgust, between his old and new identity. Following a deep personal crisis, he arrives at a personal solution, a reconciliation consisting of synthesizing the best aspects of the two cultures: the scientific achievement of the West with the warm spirituality and confidence of the East.

The contemporary context

The young Egyptian intellectual in Europe is the theme of two novels by Bahāʾī Tāhir published in 1984: "Yesterday I dreamed of you" (Bi-l-ams halumtu bik) and "In an unusual park" (Fi hadīqa ghayr ġadiya). For many years Baha Tahir worked at the Cultural Programme of Cairo Radio. Following a dispute with the authorities he was removed from his position in 1975. Since 1977 he has worked for various UN organizations, which has brought him to live abroad for several periods. The two short stories are thus based on personal experience of living in Europe, and may be said to represent a kind of exile literature (adab mahjar). However, we should also bear in mind the general political and cultural climate in Egypt during this period, which Baha Tahir as an intellectual is highly sensitive to. Egyptian society in the post-Nasser period is characterized by a process of political and cultural reorientation - moving from a prevailing offensive,
socially progressive nationalist-secularist orientation towards a basically defensive, though increasingly aggressive, islamizing orientation, notably conservative with regard to inherited social values. The conflict of values, this time perhaps more than ever pronounced in terms of Eastern vs. Western civilization, flares up, vehemently anti-Western. The search for authenticity (asāla) and the cultural heritage (al-turāth) are once again key concepts in the political and cultural debate. While the 1960's and early 1970's focused on the economic and political aspects of the East vs. West confrontation, the focus may be said to have shifted to inherent cultural values with clearly apologetic undertones,

The climate thus may be said to favour a relapse into what the Syrian intellectual Sadiq Jalal al-Azm has designated "Orientalism in reverse". He warns against the tendency among Arab writers to apply the same kind of "metaphysical abstractions and ideological mystifications" which exponents of Orientalism have been heavily criticized for in their studies of Oriental societies: "(They) simply reproduce the whole discredited apparatus of classical Orientalist doctrine concerning the difference between East and West, Islam and Europe, only to favour Islam and the East in its implicit and explicit judgments". This self-assertive tendency to uncritically accentuate "Arab" and "Islamic" qualities as superior, has as its counterpart a tendency to depreciate European society in equally crude terms.

This politico-cultural trend bears a striking resemblance to the dominating trend in the period which produced the abovementioned works of Tawfiq al-Hakim and Yahya Haqqi. We shall now proceed
to Baha Tahir's two contributions and consider how they relate to the tradition and to the contemporary setting.

"Yesterday I dreamed of you"

The protagonist (who also is the narrator in both stories) gives the impression of being an intellectual, sensitive, young/middle-aged (I would guess in his late thirties or early forties) person, reserved of nature, polite and softspoken in his conduct. This is not the tale of the open-minded, naive, unsophisticated young Egyptian to be destroyed by the cynicism and decadence of Western society. He seems to have lost his "innocence", his belief in mankind, well before he left Egypt for Europe. We are brought to suspect that he has a past there that he wants to eliminate from his mind.

In "Yesterday I dreamed of you" the setting is "the big city in the north" (one suspects London, but any North-European city may evoke the atmosphere). The protagonist's everyday life is characterized by isolation and monotony, in fact absence of any form of vitality, energy or enthusiasm. One senses a silent desperation underlying the attitude of resignation, the low-pitched description of the monotony and futility of existence.

We meet two other Arab expatriates: Kamal is a distant friend of the protagonist, he lives in another city, but calls him every evening on the phone. Kamal has settled and married a woman of the country, he has worked in a bank for ten years. However, Kamal is uneasy and unhappy, constantly complaining of the
emptiness of existence, the barrenness of society. He feels as if he lives in a desert, his apartment being a bedouin tent. Long since he has given up getting involved with people. His nervous and psychosomatic sufferances increase. His work at the bank agonizes him - after all, it represents a form of riba (usury or interest on money forbidden by the Quran). In a dream he is thrown in jail by Mu'awiya (the first Ummayyad khalif), where he meets Taha Husayn (a prominent Egyptian writer who in the 1930's provoked traditional circles by critically examining the origin and authenticity of the pre-islamic odes, and who otherwise claimed Egypt's adherence to European, or rather, Mediterranean, culture). His whole existence, in real life as well as in his dreams, appears as nothing but a series of defeat and deceit. When we last hear of Kamal, he has resigned from his work in the bank and is preparing to leave for Egypt, to retire to a life of contemplation in the desert, in harmony with the celestial Grace.

The other Arab is Fathi, the protagonist's colleague: "We were a group of Arabs employed in an Arab firm, the director and most of the employees were Europeans. Under such circumstances Fathi became involved with sufism (Islamic mysticism)" the author remarks laconically. Fathi tries to move the protagonist through his message of opening up one's soul, of the wandering of souls and spiritual contacts, of the beautiful Truth behind the real world. In glimpses the protagonist actually feels both attracted to and frightened by this mystical vision of ulterior forms of contact, he obstinately refuses, however, to become involved, in spite of his colleague's incessant appeals.
The impression of a cold society is conveyed through concrete images and observations: the snow, the frost, the cold weather outside. Cold interiors with glaring white tablecloths and curtains. People turning away, faces kept in rigid, unexpressive forms, unapproachable, reserved, composed. In contrast to this northern European rigidity, glimpses involving people of another cultural background: the easygoing, friendly laughing and joking style of two young Africans, the spontaneous remark from a stranger sitting next to the protagonist in the bus, - "I knew he was a foreigner like myself, because people in this country do not speak to anybody". A general, pervading, usually unspoken, animosity vis a vis foreigners, occasional outbursts of unmasked racism. But also glimpses of friendly concern, of straightforward sympathy.

Significantly, the episodes in which the protagonist is confronted with racial prejudices, involves the older generation, and their ungracious stupidity has a certain pathetic touch. The author appears to be sensitive to the importance of social background for the formation of prejudices and nuances in their manifestations:

There is a scene at a laundry where an elderly, typically working-class woman feels passed over by two young Africans in the line waiting for a vacant washing machine. She then bursts out in an indignant remark about negroes and respect for law and order. The Africans react sharply, and the woman must reluctantly give in to them, after having in vain appealed to the laundry assistant, a young girl, for support. The scene reflects a "poor white" reaction - a conflict-of-interest situation, in
which the old woman's frustration takes an outlet in simple-minded racial prejudice.

This is different in kind from the reaction of the elderly woman of educated middle class background (the mother of the young woman the protagonist gradually becomes involved with, a relationship to which I shall shortly return). She addresses the young Egyptian with a formal, polite curiosity, as a representative of a strange, exotic and backward culture: "From Africa, really? I nodded. She pointed at two Sudanese masks which were suspended on the wall with a wooden cross in the middle, and said: I actually love African handicraft. She pressed her white, wrinkled fingers together and waved her hand, saying: It has such strength. Then she opened up her hand, moving it in undulating movements, and said: And such elegance and grace, Then she asked: And which part of Africa are you from, then? In a loud voice I said: I am from Egypt. She raised her eyebrows somewhat surprised and said: Egypt? I always wanted to visit Egypt. My husband travelled to Egypt in ... in ... , oh, I don't remember. We were not married yet, but I still have the pictures. She leant her hand on the table and intended to get up, then she hesitated for a moment: but I do remember my husband told me that in Egypt they are good at sorcery? She nodded, while I tried to laugh, remarking: That was maybe at the time of Moses? Keeping her hand on the table, she said: Oh, my husband did see quite a lot. I said: Perhaps he did,"

Later on she brings out pictures from Egypt - the classical posture with the smiling (British?) gentleman/colonial master/tourist on camelback in front of the pyramids. "In front
of him a man was standing, holding the reins of the camel, wearing a galabiyya (traditional Egyptian man's dress), the lean arm protruding from the wide opening of the galabiyya. I stared at him and at the mustache over his broad mouth, at the sad, gloomy face. He resembled my father."

The superior European fascinated by the "mystique" of the Orient. The protagonist sees "his father" and he sees himself perceived in a folkloristic frame, as the oriental object. Far from the vulgar racism of "poor white", but equally imprudent and demeaning. The old lady's predisposed notions of Egyptians as exotic primitives produces, at the end of the story, a most repulsive accusation of him having used evil magic on her daughter,

The relationship with Ann Mary (or Anne Marie if the setting were not England, but Scandinavia or a German- or French-speaking society) is the central theme of this short story. Ann Mary is a young woman whom the protagonist meets at the bus stop nearly every morning on his way to work. She never looks straight at him, nor does she demonstrate in any way that she recognizes him when by chance he finds her sitting behind the booth at the post office (where he has gone to send a golden-decorated book about Sufism (Islamic mysticism) which Fathi has given him, to his friend Kamal, who has expressed interest in the matter).

However, one night they run into each other outside the cinema, she approaches him and wants to talk with him, and they agree to have a cup of tea together in a cafe. In the course of their conversation she exposes herself as a hypersensitive, unbalanced young woman, in mental agony, desperately in search of "the
meaning of life”. Apart from her extremely agitated condition, she is also representative of the young generation's alienation from the values of her (Western) society, with its international awareness, though in a vague, unpolitical sense. She wants to go to Africa to make herself useful to poor people, which reflects a sense of commitment (though we suspect it is motivated by a need to "save her own soul" as much as by altruism and righteousness+), Her attitude towards him is devoid of any references to their ethnical differences, and she openly defies the glances from the neighbouring tables at the "mixed couple".

Rather, her interest in him stems from a feeling that he has entered her life to convey something she cannot grasp. He has possessed her mind, she fears him, even hates him, she tells him, Still she feels attracted to him because he may be capable of helping her in her agony. He stays calm and reserved, confronted with this torrent of emotion, but we understand that he is touched by her confidence and closeness, His feelings are, however, devoid of any erotic attraction, as he perceives her as a child rather than a woman,

After a week she invites him home to the appartment where she lives with her mother. In the meanwhile, they have met several times at the bus stop. She has apologized for her very emotional behaviour at the cafe, blaming it on the personal crisis she is going through, and that he somehow reminds her of a young man she loved and who deceived her. But as soon as they are alone in her room, she accuses him of interfering with her life, by constantly entering her dreams in a significant way. She pleads for help, he can only reply that he himself has no illusions, no belief,
that he has no sense or meaning of life to offer her, however much he wants to help her. Desperately she starts taking off her clothes and throws herself into his arms: "Come on, if this is what you want..." But that is not what he wants, he picks up her clothes while she sobs. "How can I help you when I cannot even help myself?" he says. She calms down, and staring out in front of her she says, as if to herself: "I understand".

This is the last time he sees her. She does not show up at the bus stop any more, but she is constantly in his mind. She has triggered a crisis within him, touched the emotions he has suppressed, the lack of sense and meaning in his own life. In a dream he sees her running by the seaside, desperate, in agony. Alarmed at this, he goes to her house only to hear that she has committed suicide. He flees in panic, having been accused by the mother of causing her death through black magic.

At night he is back in bed: "Did I sleep or was I awake when that wing flapped in my room? Was it a falcon or a dream that which I saw? I stretched out my hand. I heard a rustling and I stretched out my hand. Suddenly lights and colors welled out, I had never experienced such beauty. The rustle of the wings all around me. I stretched out my hand. I was weeping silently and without tears, but I did stretch out my hand."

This mystical vision/dream links together several elements in the story. It integrates a dream that Ann Mary had previously, of a falcon beckoning at her window, but which she dares not let into her room. The falcon - al-saqr - is the ancient Egyptian figure of the Sun good (Horus), and thus, by extension, symbol of
vitality, of strength and freedom. Ann Mary perceives it as a threat, she does not let it touch her, he in the end lets himself be embraced by it. Al-sagr is also associated with after-life, as the protector of souls, and directly to the ancient Egyptian myth of Isis/Osiris, in which Isis in the shape of a she-falcon guards Osiris' body\textsuperscript{10}. Is it Ann Mary reaching him from after-life? An encounter of the souls, to which Fathi urged him to open his mind through Sufism? He did open up his soul, his feelings, through the relationship with Ann Mary, he did let himself be touched: He now experiences the overwhelming beauty that Fathi mentioned associated with the recognition and experience of the hidden, or ultimate Truth.

"In an unusual park"

In the second story we recognize the same themes, only in a more strictly realistic frame. It is essentially the same main character that reveals himself through the "I" of the story: polite, reserved, sensitive, expatriate Egyptian. Lonely and bitter, he has behind him a broken marriage to a European woman: "I don't believe that a person can really have friends outside his own country. It just isn't so that a man in a foreign country establishes real friendships or really loves someone. Your feelings change. Sorrow feels more heavy, joy rapidly evaporates." Egypt, however, seems no alternative: the protagonist feels like a stranger and a visitor to his home and native environment.

The theme is again the encounter between two lonely people: a pitiable old European woman and the young Egyptian, They
accidentally meet in a park especially designed to accommodate the needs of dogs. He becomes entangled in a rather comical situation: Far from harbouring any affection at all towards dogs, in fact he is afraid of them, he makes up a story that he has lost his dog in a car accident. His intention is not to hurt the feelings of the old woman, to whom it is simply inconceivable that someone does not love dogs, and who, given the dog-like environment, simply assumes he has one. However, instead of representing an easy way out of a conversation which, at the outset, he is not interested in, this lie leads to an unexpected flow of sympathy and pity from the old woman - and ironically an atmosphere of intimacy and closeness grows up between them, a kind of unity from shared grief.

In this short story criticism of European society stands out more sharply: the protagonist's disgust at the grossly exaggerated concern for the well-being of dogs, while children in his own country hardly have enough to eat, Alienated relationships, solitude due to lack of communication. The old woman complains about the emotional distance separating her from her daughter. The loving care for the dog is a substitute for human communication.

Again, our Egyptian is confronted with the simple-minded, blunt racism of the older generation: the miserable scape-goat syndrome which I referred to above as "poor-white" reactions: the old woman's immediate response to being told of the pretended accident which killed "his" dog, is: "How terrible. But what can you expect when the city has become filled up with all these foreigners and their cars." Faced with the fact that this nice
young man is Egyptian, however, she hesitates: "Oh, Egypt. Egypt, of course.. let me see.. you are from Egypt.. when I speak of foreigners, I mean..." He kindly, but sarcastically, helps her out of her embarrassment. And again an instance of the sentimental mystification of "the Orient", combined with ignorance of contemporary Third World realities: Talking enthusiastically of the enchantment of Egypt and its monuments, she exclaims: "Imagine they could carve all that in stone, without utensils. - They must have had utensils. - I mean machines... hoists and such things, She shook her head in wonder, saying: Strange how this people was wiped out. - Who was wiped out? - The Egyptians. - But they were not wiped out. - Pardon? I smiled as I said: We consider ourselves to be their descendants. The expression on her face changed: Oh, really well, of course... If one looks at it that way, I suppose, well, why not?"

Still, our Egyptian tolerates her pathetic bluntness, for the confidence developing out of their conversation is real, a rare instance of true communication between two victims of an inhumane society.

Shortly after they have parted, he finds her lying unconscious on the pavement. She is taken away in an ambulance. And however strong his dislike for dogs, he cannot but accept the silent appeal, the pathetic attachment of the abandoned dog, as it helplessly lingers behind and follows him as he walks away.
Lost illusions - and a humanist response

In these texts by Baha Tahir we discern an underlying criticism of Europe: the traditional concept of a cold, dehumanizing society. The tone, however, is quite different from the earlier contributions by Tawfiq al-Hakim and Yahya Haqqi. Above all, the nearly programmatic cultural dichotomy applied by al-Hakim and Haqqi, is absent in Baha Tahir's text. Baha Tahir, to my mind, reveals intellectual maturity and honesty by not falling into the pitfalls of "orientalism in reverse". The text reflects the Arab "identity crisis", which extends to the Arab community in exile (and which, of course, may be even more acutely experienced there), but the author does not idealize this in terms of East vs. West.

Baha Tahir's main character rejects his Arab friends' escape into Islamic mysticism or literally back to Egypt. And, on the other hand, the European characters are not purely rational, cynical and self-assured persons, but human beings, suffering, like himself, from loneliness, alienation and longing for something else. Some may be inhibited in their outlook by ignorant prejudices and misconceptions, but so are his Arab characters. Glimpses of communication and of sympathy, occur regardless of racial or cultural dividing lines: the European in the drifting snow complaining to the Egyptian about his compatriots's unreadiness to assist others; the young girl in the laundry taking the Africans' side against the old woman's racist accusations; the director of the company who awkwardly employs some poor Arab phrases in order to be friendly (though admittedly with the added motivation of showing off), and who otherwise shows serious
concern about his health condition,

To Baha Tahir, neither a romanticizing of and wholesale commitment to "Egyptian/Oriental" culture and values, a la Tawfiq al-Hakim, nor a harmonizing and reconciliation of different cultures and values, a la Yahya Haqqi, make any sense. I believe this is so because to the author's generation of Egyptian intellectuals Egypt simply has "lost its virtue".

Baha Tahir is associated with a group of writers often referred to as "the generation of the seventies" (gil al-sab'Inat). Many of them surfaced in connection with the appearance of "Gallerie -68" - an Egyptian underground literary journal which brought together poets, writers and critics on the political left, in a period in which it had become increasingly difficult to cooperate with the institutions of official culture, the literary establishment. They have in common an experience of trauma from what Edward al-Kharrat, prominent Egyptian writer and critic, designates as "the great defeat of hopes" (hazImat al-Imal al-kabira). He refers, of course, to the disillusionment resulting from the defeat of nasserite Egypt in the June war of 1967 against Israel, which represented a political turning point for most young intellectuals. They grew up with the new regime of the 1952 revolution, were imbued with its slogans of a better future, a just society, of freedom from local and international oppression. The aftermath of the war represented a "moment of truth": the dam of idealism which had held back creeping uneasiness, second thoughts and frustrations over political and social reality in Egypt, was broken. There ensued a crisis - political in nature, but with threatening existentialist
dimensions. Former conceptions of active social and political commitment (iltizām) seemed meaningless, connected as they were with adherence to the policies of the Nasser regime.

The literary trend which had claimed to correspond to the political commitment of cultural life was socialist realism (al-ṣawq al-ishtirākiyya): representing the living conditions of the popular classes, with an unequivocal underlying class struggle perspective. The new literature (al-adab al-jadīd), which was called for, turned away from the direct style, the concrete realistic description of class society. It emerged introspective, in search of perspective in an existentialist sense, and using corresponding poetic and symbolic means of expression, techniques as "stream of consciousness" (mAJrā al-wāy), or short sentences heavily loaded with meaning and association a la Hemingway. It represented a departure from the broad narrative style of realism, with its tendencies of rhetoric, and a breakthrough for "the new sensitivity" (al-ḥassāsiyya al-jadīda). This new style, comments Edward al-Kharrat, is "fluent, light, subtle, masked in the essence of the wording. The logical narrative style is no longer necessary, it is rather the details of this absurd reality which are loaded with significance....

The very careful selection of words and dialogue is decisive in the style of writing. This description applies very well to Baha Tahir's prose, He is a most sophisticated and careful writer, with a simple, soft-spoken style, one does observe the poetical precision in the selection of words and symbolism.

Alienation (al-īghtirāb) and the sense or atmosphere of
absurdity (al-manākh al-Cabathi) are central concepts in the presentation of the new literature. The absurd worlds of Kafka and Camus met with deep resonance among the generation of lost illusions. The Egyptian literary critic Sabri Hafiz describes the typical (anti)-hero of this literature as a person who "finds himself submerged in constant surprise and incomprehensibility, This urges him to take refuge to the banks, of fear of disappearing into the whirls of the stream, feeling that he has lost the ability to fight the waves, to the point where he withdraws into isolation, and resigns himself to a very marginal role, in spite of a constant inner refusal to play such a role and an ardent longing to transcend it"12.

Baha Tahir's short stories reflect the alienation of man in contemporary society. They describe the loneliness of existence in exile, but also the loneliness of individuals belonging to the other society. Alienation and loneliness seem to be the "condition humaine" of contemporary society. This may imply social criticism of modern Western society, but there is no "Oriental" remedy to deliver it, no safe "Oriental" haven to take refuge to.

However, I believe Baha Tahir in these texts suggests one way of relief from apathy and despair: to open up for empathy, for moments of true human communication. This human touch transcends cultural differences; it does not necessarily eradicate them, but it definitely transcends them.

by Gunvor Mejdell

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Noter:

1. Al-Ahrām, 25.2.85


4. Āudat al-rūḥ.

5. It should be mentioned, however, that Tawfiq al-Hakim on the other hand produced penetrating and witty criticism of social conditions and bureaucratic practices in the Egyptian countryside: "The diary of a deputy public prosecutor in the countryside" (Yawmiyyāt nāʿib fī al-aryāf, 1937)


7. In the literary journal İbdā', vol 2, 12, dec. 1984.


9. One key to understanding this attitude of disillusionment, to what he wants to forget, might be found in reading Baha Tahir's earlier short stories from Egyptian context, These also express alienation in human relations, sometimes rather Kafka-esque nightmares of distorted reality. On earlier short stories by Baha Tahir see Sabry Hafez M, Abdel-Dayem: The Rise and development of the Egyptian Short Story (1881-1970), unpubl. Ph.D. thesis at the University of London (School of Oriental and African Studies) 1979, pp 561-3.
10. These associations of *al-saqr* were suggested to me by Safinaz-Amal Naguib.


TOURISM IN EGYPT - INTERCHANGE OR CONFRONTATION

The aim of this paper is to describe tourism (1) in Egypt, in order to shed some light on the positive and negative effects of this activity on an economic level. Perhaps in a less tangible way, it will also attempt to analyze some of the effects on a psychosociological level. Much of the following is based on my own experiences gained in working with Scandinavian tourism in Egypt during a period of six years. In the following I have dealt with situations that to me seemed to recur time after time in accordance with a specific pattern. This is very subjective, but nevertheless certain conclusions will be drawn. The ultimate evaluation must however be left to the reader.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM AS A MAJOR ECONOMIC ACTIVITY

The economic boom of the Sixties in the West made possible the breakthrough of mass tourism. A large segment of the population then benefited from increased salaries, extended and paid vacations, etc. This coincided with the introduction of the jumbojet.

Tourism’s share of the world trade has since been around 7 %. (2) Its average growth rate per annum has been 6 % (during the same period industry expanded by 5 % annum).
Tourism was initially hit by the recession in the Seventies, but to a lesser extent than other economic activities. "In the rationalized society, with all its consequences, people need to get away from stress and monotony. They will get used to having less money to spend on material comfort. But they will not sacrifice a journey abroad" an official in a Mediterranean tourist department pointed out to me with confidence.

In 1980 almost 300 million people went abroad, spending a total of roughly USD 92 billion. Four-fifths of these people came from the Developed Countries. (3) One-tenth travelled to the Lesser Developed Countries; mainly for resort tourism, and this is expected to increase. (4)

At the moment between twenty and twenty-five per cent of Europeans cross an international border as tourists each year. This implies an as-yet untapped potential of tourists.

Like primary exports, tourism is utterly dependent on the demand of the Developed Countries. Shareholders and tourist marketers in the tourism-generating countries decide on the planning of investment and development of vacation resorts in the receiver countries. In most cases these decisions are not under the control or influence of the Lesser Developed Countries,

In all circumstances tourists expect a high degree of comfort and to find a functioning infrastructure at their disposal. If the expected amenities do not exist, tourists may not return. Furthermore, they may discourage other people from coming.
On a more superstructural level, phenomena such as the economic situation in the West, major natural disasters and the political stability of the Third World all play significant roles in the growth of tourism in the Lesser Developed Countries.

The main reason for a country belonging to the Lesser Developed Countries to invest in tourism is obviously the hope that this will help generate the country's economic growth and development. Many of the states that are not endowed with oil in sufficient quantities to meet their hard currency demands feel that they really have no other opportunity.

The reasoning runs accordingly that gains from tourism can be invested in industry and agriculture and so on. The feasibility of this is, however, not self-evident. Precisely because tourism in the Third World does not threaten employment opportunities in the First World, as would the development of Third World industry, the West, also in need of relaxation, encourages Lesser Developed Countries' tourism.

Since 1963 the UN has given priority to technical aid in the tourism sector "due to its importance as a means to reinforce economic growth in poor countries". (5)

From the development of tourism follows increased dependency on the Developed Countries. It also implies the opportunity costs for developing another sector of the economy and the opportunity cost of natural resources, as well as of personnel. The cost of tourism as an inflationary factor must also be considered,
The cost of creating an employment opportunity in the tourism sector is usually higher than in a small-scale industrial and repair activity and lower than in heavy industry. (6)

One psychological cost is when a population is confronted with the demonstration of the effects of standards of living they cannot hope to attain. Deculturalization initiated by a Third World country’s absorption into the world economy will be accelerated. The massive influx of materialistic and foreign values may threaten the spiritual and moral concepts of the receiver country. The Tunisian sociologist, Abd Ak Wakhab Bouhdiba, for example, mentions the commercialization of hospitality in a culture which used to view hospitality as sacred.

One is reminded of the old lady who asked, after she was told how much the tourists contributed to the local economy: "Why can't they just send the money?"

Among the main benefits are the gross foreign currency earnings (minus import content) of the tourism sector. GNP will rise slightly and the balance of payment will be improved, as will governmental revenue from taxation (directly on salaries within the sector, indirectly on commodity consumption pertaining to tourism). Investors, bankers and landowners will also profit.

Unemployment and underemployment will be mitigated through job creation also in adjacent sectors, such as industry, agriculture, craftsmanship and construction.
Among the benefits on a psychosociological level to both host and guest has been mentioned the broadening of mind resulting from two cultures getting to know each other. With reduced distances and increased accessibility to any part of the world, this is very significant.

TOURISM IN EGYPT

If pyramids could be called into evidence they would testify to a venerable and ancient tradition of tourism (or pilgrimage) to their countries. As it is, enthusiastic visitors of all ages have left innumerable inscriptions on the walls of what formed part of the "Seven Wonders of the World".

In the Middle Ages, the eminent stateman Ibn Khaldoun is supposed to have said: "What one can imagine always surpasses what one sees because of the scope of imagination. Except Cairo, because it surpasses anything one can imagine. He who has to visited Cairo cannot grasp the glory of Islam". (7)

19th century imperialism demanded improved lines of communication. With the resulting increase in security and comfort, large segments of the upper classes of Europe started to travel. For no imperative reason and without giving up their own culture they nevertheless physically transcended its borders. With the inauguration of the Suez Canal in 1869 Egypt grew in importance due to its strategic situation as a thoroughfare to India. In addition to this the winter climate of Egypt was renowned for its salubrity and temperateness, Paddle steamers travelling up and down the Nile carried Victorian passengers. Furthermore, as a result of the Oriental studies, a
science emerged that was to have a profound impact on the West (not least visually), namely Egyptology. Let us listen to an amateur in this field, one of our forerunners at the turn of the century:

"The area of the Pyramids is invaded by a host of bedouins, these devils of the desert, who, I believe, do not fear God or Man, and whose lives imply only two things that they often succeed in achieving; Prey and women! Dressed in garments reaching to their feet and armed with huge sticks, they surround the poor tourist and present him with the most enticing offers to show him the Sphinx and the Pyramids, and mount the latter. The strictest caution, as seems sometimes to be the case, in search of unsavoury adventures. Two bedouins are usually enough to haul a man up a pyramid. To a woman at least three are needed. While one of these villains pulls her by her arms, the other two push from behind and it is at this moment that they play their dirty tricks." (8)

Many of us still recognize this sort of incident quite well today, though it obviously varies in relation to the social, economic and cultural standing of the people involved. There is not sufficient foundation for mutual respect, though both parties would like to have the respect of the other (the European more so perhaps, because in spite of having the material advantages he is an outsider and thus more insecure). There is an element of repressed fear which is corruptive. The confrontation is not a personal one but formed by previous experiences that have not been worked out but turned into prejudice on both sides.
Traditionally, Egypt has concentrated on "Cultural Tourism", confident that no other countries could actually compete in this area. However, this type of tourism is not without its problems. Cairo (where some of the main attractions such as the Pyramids and the Antiquity Museum are located) is now believed to have a population of 12 million. The city is enormous, and transportation difficult. The level of population is high and infrastructure generally run down. The effects of all this are aggravated by the fact that many tourists are elderly people.

Furthermore, the cost of living has increased considerably during the last ten years or so, and products and services marketed within the tourism sector are certainly not among the cheapest.

Five-star hotels, built mainly in the Seventies, have now created excess capacity in Cairo, while there is still a shortage of cheaper alternatives, especially outside the capital. At the same time, Western (and recently also Arab) tourists have less money to spend than they had a decade ago. Families can often simply not afford to come. In 1977 the average spent per tourist each day was USD 102. Today it is between USD 150 - USD 170. (9) During the same period, inflation has been running at an annual rate of twenty-five per cent.

At present, Egypt receives 1.5 million (10) tourists per annum and it is hoped that this will increase to 2.5 million in 1990, though some doubts may
exist as to how feasible this is. Around half of these tourists originate in the West, with the other half coming mainly from the Arab OPEC countries.

Tourist planners are very concerned about the average length of stay of each vacationer. Though there were far less tourists in the Fifties, those who came stayed for about 24 days, while today this is down to 6 days (partly because statistics are influenced by overnight stays by businessmen, also registered as tourists).

It is now being realized that tourism in Egypt must become much more diversified. Only between ten and fifteen per cent of the world's tourists take an interest in historical sites and monuments. And they do not make repeaters.

Most of the other eighty-five to ninety per cent are looking for recreation, entertainment and leisure at a seaside resort. This points to a potential that Egypt cannot afford to miss, especially as the country is endowed with beaches of immense beauty. The coastline of the Mediterranean and the Red Sea extends along four thousand km of practically untouched land. The waters are acceptably clean, and in addition the Red Sea possesses a submarine fauna which is unique. The season for vacationing is also longer here than on the Mediterranean coast, and there is less competition. As yet, however the fresh water problem has not been satisfactorily solved. (11)

The date, a few tourist villages have been inaugurated. The ideal would be that tourists stayed in these villages most of the time. Excursions on an optional basis would be organized to visit sites like Alexandria, Cairo and
the Nile Valley. These sight-seeing tours would have an almost hundred per cent sell-out, since very few people would travel all the way to Egypt without wishing to see the Pyramids. At the same time, the dependence upon Cairo could be reduced to a minimum.

Many tourist villages are planned, some are presently being constructed, and the exploitation of the two coastlines is under way.

Investors benefit from a five-year tax exemption (in some cases up to eight and ten years have been granted). In addition they are enticed with the exemption of capital goods from customs duties, the repatriation of capital (fifty per cent of hotel institutions) and exemption from labour law (all according to Investment Law Number 43).

Westerners, perhaps doubting the future stability of the country, and still remembering the nationalizations undertaken by President Nasser in the Sixties, have proved reluctant to invest outside oil (and to a lesser extent in banking and free zones). Petrodollars do filter through via unofficial channels in spite of Egypt’s isolated position outside the Arab fold, due to the separate peace treaty with Israel in 1979, initiated by the Camp David talks in 1978, but Arab money is mostly invested in luxury establishments in Cairo such as five-star Hotels, Many Egyptians prefer to invest in enterprises demanding less capital and quicker returns,

There is a great need for more capital from the private sector, which it is hoped will invest USD 1.5 billion during the five-year plan extending from 1983-1987 (in many instances in cooperation with the Government).
SOME PSYCHOSOCIOLOGICAL CONSEQUENCES OF TOURISM

Egypt is the Arab world’s most accomplished state as well as one of the poorest. With its population approaching the fifty million mark it is the most populous. Four per cent of its area, corresponding to the size of Denmark, is cultivable. Illiteracy runs at about fifty per cent.

The past decade has been characterized by a period of social upheaval. Many have benefited from the liberalisation policies and become conspicuously richer. More have remained poor, some have become impoverished. Thirty per cent are said to live below the poverty line.

Egyptians are exposed to two alternatives, one representing the West, the other the East.

The West stands for status and glamour and personal freedom, but this may also easily lead to guilt. A certain degree of economic inequality has always had to be accepted. There are far more problems involved in an alien culture, seen as wielding inherent values like egoism, materialism, atheism and moral laxity, in open contradiction of the code of ethics of the traditional culture. While no one denies the benefits of Western technology, the ambition is often to import it as free as possible of any of the values associated with the culture of origin.

The other alternative, the Eastern one, is based on the need for authenticity, linking the present to the past, to the origin. The Eastern option takes a stand against the present social order, and the failure of
its secular elites. The symbolic language of religion is used, as it always has been, invoking tradition in a society that virtually lacks alternative channels for the expression of social and economic grievances. It is seen that while the state may have a monopoly on violence, religion will have a monopoly on truth and righteousness (as well as the promise of the avenging of injustice). The most outspoken and radical representatives of this tendency are, as most people are now aware, some of the so-called "fundamentalist" groupings.

The choice between Material West - Spiritual East may, if one emphasizes the economic aspect, be seen as hypothetical and illusory, as if the Eastern alternative were reduced to one of denial, a reaction against power not held. However, this would certainly be to under-rate the importance of indigenous culture, self-understanding and the influence of tradition upon the choice made. Furthermore, no system is obviously clear-cut or exclusive.

The fact which remains, though, is that life, materially speaking, is experienced as increasingly difficult to cope with, due to high inflation and shortages. This is true of large segments of the middle and lower classes. In the urban community, as a result of education, these people are very conscious of their situation, and they are becoming pretty articulate (though they may neither enrol in active religious groups nor necessarily always agree with these groups' methods or ends).

There is an old saying which runs "Sabr Tayyeb" (Patience is Good), indicating a "savoir-vivre" in situations where no alternative was visible. The dilemma of today is that alternatives are highly visible and perceived,
but without the material means or the right connections they cannot be put into practice. People are exposed through the media to a way of life realizable by only a few. Shops are filled with imported goods, accessible to a minority. Cairo is presently ranked as one of the more expensive cities in the world. At the same time, the average per capita income is below USD 700 per annum. People’s patience is wearing thin.

Western tourists, in a way, walk around as a live exposition of the alien and provocative culture of consumption which is the West. Some tourists certainly do not wish to expose these values, some may not know that they do, since ignorance and lack of awareness may exempt them from obligations and responsible involvement.

People with whom the tourists come into direct contact are, for obvious reasons, mostly those engaged in tourism either directly or indirectly. In the first category may be reckoned professional guides, hotel staff, people working in travel agencies and airlines, and to some extent the bazaar merchants. On the whole all these people constitute a fairly new group that prospered from the boom in the late Seventies/early Eighties. They may represent "the new generation", being highly efficient and time-conscious. Through their work they will have assimilated Western values more or less harmoniously.

The second group that tourists come across includes all those earning their living in the informal sector, be it as self-appointed guides, street vendors of souvenirs or camel drivers.
What the two above-mentioned categories have in common is that, though they may have acquired their formal knowledge of Western culture elsewhere, (e.g. school or television) their understanding of how Western culture works in practice will be coloured by their exposure to tourism. And conversely, the tourist's appreciation of "what the Egyptians are like" will be derived from the contacts with people in the tourist sector. It is of course arguable how representative tourism (in the form of tourists on the one hand, tourist personnel on the other) is of the essence of either Eastern or Western culture, and especially whether it agrees with what we would ideally wish to communicate. The Egyptians' understanding of their own culture will conflict with Westerners' perception of Egyptian culture and vice versa: Westerners' understanding of their own culture will not coincide with how the Egyptians see it.

**PHENOMENA CONDITIONING TRANSCULTURAL INTERACTION**

Concepts such as Involvement-Withdrawal, Candour-Duplicity, Sharing-Witholding and the like may be crucial to one culture, while not so to another, (12) Potentially positive, any trans-cultural interaction will however be exposed to a set of restrictions implicit in factors like time, knowledge, frames of reference, motivation, language, inequality and sexuality.

Most interaction between the host population and the tourists will probably occur in the bazaars or with people from the informal sector.
Time is limiting factor not only for the tourist, whose holiday seldom exceeds two or three weeks, but also for Egyptians. Lack of time is part of the reason why a relationship with a tourist can rarely be particularly profound. Moreover, language is liable to create a barrier in most instances.

Time is crucial to the interiorization of theoretical knowledge that may exist about the other culture. The substitutes for knowledge, clichés and stereotypes, allow for naivety, superficiality, commercialization of values, regression, etc.

Tourists often see Egyptians as inoffensive children, and likewise Egyptians tend to regard tourists as good and naïve, perhaps partly because of a hidden and instinctive need to fend off or play down a mutual sense of threat and insecurity. Because of different frames of reference the Egyptian may behave according to a set of rules unknown to the tourist and vice versa. From the comments of the tourists the Egyptian may infer that the tourist has not grasped what was implicit. This works the other way around as well, and often even simultaneously. Thus both parties will in the eyes of the other be proved to be inexplicably naïve. Different ideas are implicit in the two cultures and undercurrents run differently.

Interaction in the bazaar may often take the form of the "childish" approach, as though it were the common denominator. Both parties will be overtly bright and joyous, constantly slapping each other on the back and so on. In brief, they will behave in a way which neither the tourist nor the Egyptian (though expressing himself in a more physical way than the
Westerners would use with members of their own society. One can have reservations about this form of acting, and whether it will ever lead to a more equal contact one day. At least it does not block all avenues. Most important perhaps is that it gives people a fair chance to laugh at themselves and this should prove a relief.

In an intellectual situation where nuances may not readily be grasped, there is often a marked avoidance of the "middle way". People from the other culture tend to be regarded as either extremely warm and generous or almost obnoxious. Tourists often experience a need to comprehend the extremes, to fathom the unknown and to render it as tangible, but usually this wish to belong is not that consciously expressed. Moreover the quest for adventure may sometimes be attributed to sheer non-reflexive curiosity.

In this spirit, some tourists who are neither Moslems nor even religious (and who may be contemptuous of other "tourists") want to enter mosques reserved to the believers, to see them praying. Others may wish to visit slum areas to see people in rags and living in hovels. Or perhaps they would like to enter the home of an "ordinary Egyptian" (though they might be surprised if an unknown Egyptian one day stepped into their flat back home, unannounced, because of his interest in and appreciation of their ordinariness).

There seems to be a prevailing urge for intensive experience which has the character of a "kick", coinciding with the objecifying of an environment of which one constitutes no integral part. There is perhaps an unintentional element of disrespect and exploitation about this short-cut to the essence
of a foreign culture which has taken the collective experience of countless generations of that culture to arrive at.

The difficulty lies in finding a way for interaction in limited time which may be acceptable to both parties,

Another phenomenon pertaining to tourism is one we all know, that is "the conducted-tour syndrome", with its loudness and noise. The relaxation of identifiable outer social control does away with much restraint and self-criticism. The focus of strength, the group, transmits a sense of belonging to those taking part. The group is superior and exclusive and may demonstrate little consideration or sense of responsibility towards outsiders.

A stigmatizing element in most relations between host population and tourists is the existence of inequality, no less corruptive because only half-admitted by Westerners, stressing egalitarian values. Lack of equality rather than lack of time decisive impediment to any real contact between hosts and tourists.

A tourist will automatically be placed in the upper middle classes, though the Egyptians know that this may not be true in the tourist's native country. The Westerner is the representative of a richer and technically more sophisticated culture than the Egyptian one of today and therefore acquires a certain status. Being extracultural means exemption from many obligations that Egyptian society imposes on its own members (code of ethics, behaviour, dress and so on).
Some tourists exploit this situation, a few deliberately. Most are probably not aware, however, but believe the fact that they are Westerners ensures them superiority in a total sense, and the innate right to enjoy all sorts of privileges, without ever having to pay back.

An issue which is loaded in any intercultural situation is obviously the one of sexuality, where accepted ideas and rules sanctified by the tradition of one culture do not hold true in the other culture. Western women of today have gained their personal freedom. They own their own bodies and they make their own choices. Egyptian society on the other hand is more protective of its womenfolk, and does not easily accept that they engage in contacts with outsiders of the opposite sex. Egyptians may see Western women of today as largely deprived of any protection, exposed and let down by their own society. It could further be argued that what it not forbidden ought logically to be allowed, in which case the impressions of the western way of life as it filters through in films and TV series would be confirmed.

Gratification from meeting another culture varies, depending on one's ambitions, previous experiences, benefits and the quality of experience sought. To most tourists the main attraction is not contemporary Egypt, but the Pharaonic civilization. The ancient period represents to the Westerner the cradle of civilization and the origins of his own culture. This is what appeals to his imagination, what he dreams of, and why he decides to come. The spiritual heritage transcending five millennia will deepen his own personal experience. He feels more secure with that distant and enigmatic era and he enjoys a closer and more secure relationship with it than with the Egyptians of his own day.
His meeting with Pharaonic culture may consequently turn out to be a shocking experience, because the solemnity he is prepared for seems nonexistent. In his eyes the Pyramids that he conceives of as almost sacred are being profaned by unruly crowds of loud-mouthed people, selling souvenirs, camel-rides and Coca Cola in an incredible atmosphere of confusion. Behind all this noise of neighing camels, braying donkeys and bawling people the Pyramids, by no means insignificant in size, may well quietly shrink below the horizon of modern Egypt.

Some tourists, it is true, are amused by all this haggling over prices and the like, at least initially. This vitality, this insistence, this friendliness and flattery, this expressiveness and use of eye contact have all the pleasure of novelty, and tourists are not used to this same familiarity. Seemingly in a capricious way (to the tourist at least) the souvenir vendor or camel driver may, however, in some instances abruptly change his attitude of warm spontaneity to one of insolence and effrontery. The tourist realize all of a sudden that the interaction is totally one-sided and it is not he who has the upper hand. He feels deprived of any choice and not respected, objectified, overridden, embarrassed, fooled, angry. The only thing which is absolutely clear to him is that he did not know "when to draw the line". He just wanted to be open-minded and communicate with the "locals" on an equal basis, but his good intentions backfired. (He could add that the equal basis was meant to be on his terms.)

Tourists probably complain more about this phenomenon than about poor infrastructure and lack of comfort. They ask why the Government does not
initiate campaigns to teach its people to treat tourists well, since tourists after all do bring money to Egypt.

Tourist planners and other responsible personnel will willingly discuss the faults of the infrastructure and how it can be improved upon. The social problems on a human basis are infinitely more complex, however. To put it very simply: Private individuals may be rich in Egypt, but the Government is not. With what inducement could the regime appeal to the loyalties of people in the informal sector earning their living from tourism, and motivate them into behaving "nicely" and not "persecuting" tourists as long as no alternative sources of income exist? These camel drivers and self-appointed guides are usually of peasant origin, from a background where unemployment and underemployment run very high due to the scarcity of land. (13)

CONCLUSION

Both tourists and hosts are affected by tourism, the latter more so. To them tourism is not transitory, but has a real impact on their daily life. The Egyptians are more exposed to the whims of the outside world, and they depend more upon tourists than tourists do upon them, since the tourist's stay is limited.

Negative phenomena arising out of tourism have perhaps been mapped to a greater extent in the above sketchy survey. Positive phenomena do not attract the same attention, but this is not to say that they do not exist. Their impact would be felt more with an increasing awareness of the
psychosociological problems, though the latter are ultimately dependent on the economic level and cannot be solved without an improved economic situation. The following will attempt an evaluation of the negative and positive impact of tourism.

One negative effect on an economic level is that a considerable proportion of the profits from tourism is being repatriated by international hotel chains and other foreign investors. Moreover, the import content is very high, and though efforts are being made to correct this, the satisfaction of the needs of tourism may be at the expense of large segments of the population. The opportunity cost to agriculture and especially to industry is arguable. The consumption pattern of tourism (especially Arab tourism) generates increasing consumption. As for the tourist, he may feel exploited because anything purchased in the tourism sector is more expensive than elsewhere. People in the informal sector openly overcharge tourists, sometimes justifying this by saying that the present wealth of the tourist has been gained at the expense of the poor, thus it is in a sense his right to take some money back. Since many tourists now have less money than they used to, this makes for resentment and irritation. Tourism is not very labour-intensive (though it is capital-intensive to establish). There is a great disparity in salaries. Tourism does not seem to bridge existing gaps between classes, either within the microcosm of tourism or within society as a whole.

On a psychosociological level, since only ten per cent of tourists apparently wish to meet Egyptians, the most widespread influence from tourism must come from the effects of example, more or less indirectly
transmitted. Attitudes and consumption patterns are imitated by the Egyptians who can afford to do so. The upper classes often make a splendid show of their weddings in the status-bearing foreign hotel chains at enormous cost, with the tourists as curious spectators.

The expectations of the ordinary people in general are raised when seeing the wealth of tourists - wealth in which most have but little part, like a false promise of a better life.

For obvious reasons Egyptians are extremely sensitive to the "colonialist" attitudes which many tourists may unintentionally still display, at times forcing the Egyptian into a position of false servility.

Tourism does not initiate modernist attitudes, either positive or negative, but it may accelerate them, since the character of tourism is so conspicuous and since many of the more refined and sophisticated phenomena of Western civilization are here displayed in a seemingly crude form, bringing about much deculturization.

In the sphere of sexuality, Western behaviour directly conflicts with the traditional Muslim concepts of decency, thus engendering much misunderstanding and distorted ideas from both sides.

The positive aspects of tourism for Europeans are more readily discernable than those for the Egyptians. The Europeans will most likely feel emotionally and mentally enriched by the Pharaonic culture (the main reason why they come until resort tourism is developed). However they are also
likely to be very impressed by the Egyptians they meet. Though occasionally clinging or persistent, the Egyptians show a warmth in their relations to others that is no longer common in the West. The average Egyptian is more concerned, more considerate and polite than the average Westerner. All these attitudes may perhaps have a positive impact on European culture. The European may also stop for a brief moment to wonder about the direction in which his life is going. By seeing his own culture from a distance he may discern more easily what is really valuable and crucial to him in that culture. He may perhaps become less indifferent.

The Egyptians’ main benefit from tourism is obviously on the economic level. It provides work, not least for women, who in many cases have no other opportunities (in Luxor, for example). However, the status of a waitress is still not quite accepted socially, though attitudes are changing fast. Handicrafts have actually recently improved in quality, in response to Western tastes, though not always very "authentic" some of the work is very attractive indeed. New traditions have been created, probably the most interesting within mat-weaving.(14)

The revival of Pharaonic culture through introduced from outside has provided the Egyptians with pride in their past and a national identity that can be understood and appreciated by outsiders since it is very visual (unlike the traditional form of self-expression, poetry, which sadly does not permit itself to be easily transmitted to outsiders).

Seeing foreigners on a more equal footing than before independence has after all also helped to remove the myth and mystery of the inaccessible
superiority of the Westerner, bringing him down to human stature, with all his weaknesses, and thus establishing a potential basis for real interaction.

by Birgitta Wistrand
I would like to give a more precise definition of the word "tourist" as I have used it throughout this paper. One official definition runs as follows: "An international tourist as defined by the United Nations and the International Union of Travel Organizations, is a person who visits a country other than his own for at least 24 hours, whatever his motive for travel. A vacationer whether international or domestic is defined by major European tourist services as staying away from home for at least four nights and many in some instances include tourists travelling with a combination of business and pleasure." (World Bank, Group Operation in Tourism Sector Working Paper).


3. De Wacht, Emanuel: "Tourism, Passport to Development". UNESCO and IBRD, 1979


10. This is comparatively little for a population of almost fifty million. Tunisia receives a number of tourists each year equivalent to a quarter of the total population, and Spain receives one tourist per inhabitant.

11. Tourists in five-star hotels consume 300 l/person and night in Egypt. (Private consumption in Scandinavia is 180 l if car-washing and gardening are not included.)

12. Concepts:
   a) Engagement-Withdrawal. Often in an ambiguous situation the Egyptian will try to establish a relationship, which the Westerner will prefer to withdraw from. The Egyptian will perceive the Westerner as very cold, and the Westerner will perceive the Egyptian as very clinging.
   b) Candour-Duplicity. Westerners usually express themselves in a more restrained literal manner. The Egyptian on the other hand will often be emphatic, trying to be convincing without saying outright what he believes the tourist might not wish to hear (which is when he perceives it is irritating the tourist).
   c) Sharing-Withholding. Hospitality is a very central institution in Egyptian society, While a Westerner will probably only offer from him his abundance, an Egyptian will always invite, always offer, always insist, and this then may be conceived of as a conventionalized
gesture of politeness and consideration, not meant to be taken seriously in all instances, though an opening for a potential relationship in a culture whose members rely on each other. Other concepts may be more honoured in the West, such as self-reliance, punctuality, discipline, etc.

13. The Khawaga complex. Originally a Turkish title of respect, this title meant to be used mainly when addressing extracultural persons, that is representatives of imperconnotations. The concept of khawaga hereby became very ambiguous. The colonialist embodied absolute superiority, strength and status inspiring respect and absolute obedience, but also the hope for protection for those who manage to establish the right relationships. The foreigners often showed openly their contempt and disdain of the indigenous culture and its values. Colonialism was experienced as humiliating and repressive by many, and this created an inferiority complex engendering much resentment, hostility and lack of real respect. Though the values of colonialism should by now, sixty-three years after independence, have become obsolete and no longer an issue, certain situations may spark off the memory of the past. Aggressiveness may be shown to a person whose only resemblance to the former colonializer must be his extra-culturality, since the concept of khawaga is absolutely depersonalized, the only restriction being that the person addressed will not be a Muslim, especially not a Muslim Arab. The khawaga concept as anything extracultural exempts from obligations, but also from rights, mainly of acceptance.

14. Egypt, the artistic centre of the Arabic world during the latter part of the Medieval age, fell to the Turks in 1517. Its court artisans were all carried off to Constantinople. (Egyptian art traditionally was very refined craftsmanship.) A period of decline of the handicrafts was initiated and the coup-de-grace was administered by the British, who in the 19th century were in need of markets for their industrially manufactured goods. A few items remained to satisfy European tastes for exotism, such as "Aladdin’s lamp". After independence, handicrafts were encouraged to give a form to national identity. The tradition had been broken, however, and much of Egyptian handicraft work acquired the extracultural form of "airport art". (Tourists, having now travelled for more than twenty years, are more visually trained than they used to be, and their tastes have played a part in the upgrading of some of the souvenir items, especially the practical ones like dresses, bags, etc. The Egyptian (upper classes) who ten years ago would never dream of wearing a farmer’s clothes do so today at parties, etc., because the Westerners buy these things, and through them they have lost their original implications, and have been neutralized and have acquired a new form and purpose.
The pressure on the Egyptian leadership has indeed become harder during the first part of 1986. On February 25th a police riot began in the capital and three other Egyptian cities. Hundreds of conscripted security police rampaged through several tourist hotels near the Pyramids district of the city, firing guns and attacking parked cars. Rumours of a one-year extension to the three year period of service was pointed out as reason for the conscripts to react. The involved police forces were made up mainly of young men of rural origin, Connections with Islamic fundamentalist organizations was mentioned, although all circumstances are not clarified or even known. (1) Not until after the intervention of the military forces a return to the normal state of things was obtained, Defence Minister Abu Ghazala was focused again - this time as a rescuer. A certain unrest had taken place already before. The riots had namely been preceded by strikes in early February, when thousands of textile workers in al Mahallah al Kubra went on strike to demand wage increases. The strike was broken up by police, and about 110 workers were jailed. (2) These events had, however, gone largely unreported in the Egyptian press, On contrary, it has been noted, that the Egyptian press was informed about the police-riots, and was rather free to write about them. This might be seen as a test of the actual state of the Egyptian democracy, and another prove of Mubarak’s sincere attempt to introduce a little more democracy. (3) The events as such are, however, a serious blow to the cautious line of action which has become typical of President Mubarak.

**THE FOLLOW-UP IN EGYPT**

The pressure on the Egyptian leadership has indeed become harder during the first part of 1986. On February 25th a police riot began in the capital and three other Egyptian cities. Hundreds of conscripted security police rampaged through several tourist hotels near the Pyramids district of the city, firing guns and attacking parked cars. Rumours of a one-year extension to the three year period of service was pointed out as reason for the conscripts to react. The involved police forces were made up mainly of young men of rural origin, Connections with Islamic fundamentalist organizations was mentioned, although all circumstances are not clarified or even known. (1) Not until after the intervention of the military forces a return to the normal state of things was obtained, Defence Minister Abu Ghazala was focused again - this time as a rescuer. A certain unrest had taken place already before. The riots had namely been preceded by strikes in early February, when thousands of textile workers in al Mahallah al Kubra went on strike to demand wage increases. The strike was broken up by police, and about 110 workers were jailed. (2) These events had, however, gone largely unreported in the Egyptian press, On contrary, it has been noted, that the Egyptian press was informed about the police-riots, and was rather free to write about them. This might be seen as a test of the actual state of the Egyptian democracy, and another prove of Mubarak's sincere attempt to introduce a little more democracy. (3) The events as such are, however, a serious blow to the cautious line of action which has become typical of President Mubarak.
The effort to develop the tourist sector in a large scale has, at least temporarily, been undermined by the police riot and instead of attracting more tourists, the opposite has in fact happened. Both Americans and Saudis are concerned. Cancelled trips to Egypt have been countless. Tourism income is expected to fall by 30 per cent, to about $700 million in the fiscal year ending June 30th.

Meanwhile the situation on the oil market has led to a reversed oil-crisis. The Egyptian economy, so dependent on its oil revenues, has been strongly hit. Two thirds of its export income came from the oil sector. Recent estimations show that the oil income will fall below $1.5 billion in 1986.

The effect of the oil crisis on Egypt includes decreasing incomes from the Suez Canal, as a result of the diminishing trade volume in the region.

The worsened situation of the Iraqi economy has already had a strong impact on the Egyptian economy. New restrictions concerning remittances were introduced. 1.5 million Egyptians live in Iraq and their contribution to the Egyptian economy is considerable. At least 5,000 Egyptians working in Iraq have already returned home. After negotiations between the Minister of State for Immigration & Egyptian Expatriates William Naguib Seifein and his Iraqi counterpart the restrictions have been withdrawn for state and mixed-sector companies in Iraq. As before, up to 60 per cent is allowed to be remitted. But in reality the current payment delays typical to Iraq give no guarantees to a full pay down of any salary. The labour market in Saudi Arabia as well as in the other Arab Gulf countries are changing and in the
long run the demand for guest workers is decreasing in the area. Government officials estimate that about 15 per cent of the 3 million Egyptians working abroad will return home in 1986.\(^{(9)}\) If returning Egyptian guest workers bring with them their savings, the Egyptian economy can, however, receive a certain stimulation in the short run.

All together the problems have led to an increasing budget deficit. Prime Minister Lotfi is worried that the deficit might be tripled and amount to more than $3 billion if the present oil price slump continues.\(^{(10)}\)

The situation becomes even more serious, if the dept service is regarded. The cost of servicing Egypt’s external dept has reached a peak of $3.1 billion for the fiscal year ending in June 1986. This figure, presented by the Deputy Premier and Planning Minister Kamal Ahmed el-Ganzouri, is however, based on a total external dept at $25 billion from September 1985. As above mentioned, the IMF projection puts total debt at $32.5 billion for 1984/85 including $9 billion listed as "other", which stands for military debt. Based on these figures the debt service reaches $3.6 billion.\(^{(11)}\)

The Egyptian government has made it a goal to reduce the dept servicing to $1.3 billion by the year 1992. But this doesn’t seem to be realistic. The medium and long term debt servicing alone will average more than $2.8 billion a year until 1990 according to IMF.\(^{(12)}\)

The riots in February and the dramatical fall in revenues made the Egyptian government come out as an incompetent one or at least too cautious. Even President Mubarak expressed his dissatisfaction with his government and its
snail like pace of economic reform. He stressed in his speech to the people’s assembly on March 8th, that the government has to take prompt and decisive action to address Egypt’s economic problems.(13)

Prime Minister Lotfi had, however, a problem getting his submitted reform proposals accepted by two of his colleagues, namely Abu Ghazala, the Defence Minister, and Yousif Wali, Minister of Agriculture. (14) At last he managed and could present five draft laws, which were approved by the people’s assembly in April. They imposed steep price increases on luxury goods, and taxes on foreign travel and lavish receptions. Furthermore the National Investment Bank was commissioned to issue dollar bonds totalling up to $500 million on favourable terms for the buyers. Through another law Non-Egyptian received permission to buy property in Egypt on certain conditions, and finally, inheritances in foreign currency was exempted from inheritance tax provided they are deposited in state owned banks.(15)

In the reform program, subsidies were excluded, and the slogan was repeated by the President, that no measures should be taken, and no decisions should be made that would affect those with low incomes or raise the price of basic commodities.(16)

The budget presented at the end of April put the spendings at $24.3 billion including a rise of the public-sector wages by 10 per cent. Apart from wages, government expenditures is to be reduced by about 40 per cent. If the subsidies are to be unchanged, the direct spending alone, should amount to $2.4 billion - 10 per cent of the total spending, which doesn’t include large expenditure for trading loss of the General Organization for Supply
Commodities (GOSC). (17) As an attempt to reduce the costs of the subsidies the privat sector has, however, recently been authorized to import a wide range of commerce goods, previously handled only by the state organizations as GOSC. (18)

The external reactions to the riots and the drastic reduced revenues were denoted by the US's quick decision to pay up the $150 million, the final amount of a $500 million supplementary aid programme approved in 1985, which earlier had been held up. This was seen as an important indication of support from Washington. (19) The already broadened contacts with the Soviet Union have been further expanded. Among other things, Egypt and USSR recently agreed on cooperation in electricity supply (20) and in metallurgy (21). The Soviet Union has also agreed to reschedule military debt payments, estimated at upwards of $4 billion (22), and the EEC as well as Canada have recently made positive decisions on further loans to Egypt, (23) and in June talks with IMF will start again, (24) so the external reactions continues to be positive towards President Mubarak's leadership.

The conclusion is, however, that the economic reforms in no way counter balance the income drop. The alarming situation is a fact. The dependence of foreign aid, especially US aid, is even stronger, and the White House plans to reduce funding for the US-backed Middle east regional co-operation programme to $2.9 billion during the fiscal year 1986, from $5.8 billion granted the previous year. This is seen as another serious threat against the Egyptian economy. (25)
The new **economic** reforms in Egypt were recently presented in the revue *The Middle East* under the title "An aspirin for the **sickly economy**". The reforms show how limited the scope of action is for the Egyptian **government**, and maybe it is a correct description to present President Mubarak’s site as one of a hostage of the *Open Door* policy.

On one hand the greater the problems faced by the civilian government under the leadership of President Mubarak, the more Defence Minister Abu Ghazala’s power could enhance. Although discounting the possibility of a bloody coup by the military many observers do not reject the potential of a military takeover in the event of a future crisis. In that case they *foresee* that Abu Ghazala could replace the Prime Minister or even the President. On the other hand, the riots could have strengthened the government’s position, as pointed out by many observers. Certain sympathy for the conscripts, mixed with fear, on the part of "better-off" Egyptians, that the situation could degenerate into a civil war between the "haves" and the "have-nots". The sense of threat has provided the right **atmosphere** for the government to demand economic sacrifices from the middle class, who are not likely to express their discontent in street riots.

But what prospect could the message of President Mubarak offer the Egyptian people, when he described the future, as a **spectre of a fearsome** growth in population, which threatens the society every year, and Egypt’s **need** to continue to import 5 per cent of the world’s wheat surplus - a volume which can’t be extended, even though the population is **growing**. He puts the question: "How can we handle the wheat deficit if our agricultural land has increased by only one million **feddans** from 1909 to 1986 .. giving six
million feddans in all. Meanwhile, the Egyptian population during the same period grew from nine million to 50 million. .." He ended his speech with the request: "Let us struggle to provide food through our will, our hands, our sweat, our resolute determination, and our wavering, overflowing national enthusiasm." (30)

What effect will the clear description of the existing difficulties and the necessary sacrifices have on the Egyptian people? Will it instead lead to hopelessness, which in its turn will further increase the number of Egyptian fundamentalists as many observers foresee? (31) There is, however, little agreement about the strength of Islamic organisations. (32) Will the impossible reality be compensated not with national enthusiasm but with religious enthusiasm? Meanwhile President Mubarak’s policy of restricted Egyptian democracy continues, which includes a plan to extend the emergency security laws for another two years.

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NOTES

1. Middle East Economic Digest (MEED), 1 March, 1986, p. 15.
4. Ibid., p. 15.
5. MEED, 15 March, 1986, p. 16.
6. Ibid., p. 16.
8. MEED, 26 April, 1986, p. 16.
12. MEED, 8 March, 1986, p. 16.


28. Yamine, Jeannie; Time for Mubarak diffing over, an Nahar, 14 March, 1986, p. 3.

29. See Butter, David; Egypt: Mubarak’s dept to the army. MEED, 8 March, 1986, p. 5 and MEED, 5 April, 1986, p. 11.


32. See The Middle East; Egypt: Facing a long hot summer, June 1986, p. 13.
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CONTRIBUTORS

Marianne Laanatza is research associate at the Section of Empirical Conflict Research, Department of History at the University of Lund, Sweden. She has published several articles, essays and reports in her main fields of interest: the history and economics of the Arab World.

Gunvor Mejdell is research associate at the Institute of Semitic Studies at the University of Oslo, Norway. She is presently engaged in teaching and research on topics related to linguistic, sociolinguistic and cultural aspects of modern Arabic.

Marina Stach is a post-graduate scholar at the Department of Arabic, Institute of Oriental Languages at the University of Stockholm, Sweden. She has published several books and articles on literature and politics in the Middle East, including translations of modern Arabic literature. She is presently working on her thesis on modern Egyptian literature.

Kari Voigt, senior lecturer at the Department of Religious Studies, University of Oslo, Norway. She has published several books and articles, her main fields of interest are Egypt in the first centuries AD, and modern Islam.

Birgitta Wistrand is a student at the Centre for Arab Area Studies, University of Odense, Denmark. She has own experiences gained in working with Scandinavian tourism in Egypt during a period of six years.