

'Misr' The Arab Republic of Egypt - Part Two

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THE BRITISH IN EGYPT (continued)

The 'Anglo-Egyptian Condominium Agreement of 1899' was promulgated but during this time of British influence (1882-1956) there was very little attempt made to promote local industries. In spite of that some small industries did develop. Behind any progress that was made there were always two problems to be faced: the debt payment and the continual growth of nationalism. Nationalist and anti-British feelings began to grow. Gradually Egyptians, rather than Turco-Circassian, became involved in politics. Typical of these were the leaders of two political parties, the National Party (Al Hizb al Watani) and the People's Party (Al Hizb al Umma or Umma Party).⁽¹⁾ Kitchener brought in a new constitution in 1913 which established some local and national representation in a legislative assembly. When the Ottoman Empire entered the First World War, 29th. October, 1914, a series of events took place. In Egypt martial law was declared and the country made a Protectorate (2nd. November); the Khedive Abbas, who was believed to be pro-German, was deposed and Kitchener was recalled to serve as minister of war.

THE 1919 REVOLUTION

Up to and when the First World War broke out a working class had already built up around the modern factories (in 1916 there was a work force of about 35,000). Anti-British feelings were fuelled within this group by Britain's actions, such as: requisitioning supplies, forced

recruitment and basing foreign troops in the country. Working conditions were poor and this gave rise to workers' associations that were supported by Mustafa Kamil's National Party. The unions and the nationalist movement were both put down by the Government.

When the war ended, as in many other countries, there was much unemployment and the rate of inflation grew. Both of these factors were a spur to nationalism. In September, 1918, the Nationalists also began to press for independence and formed a delegation (Wafd)⁽²⁾ to set their demands before the Paris Peace Conference. After much discussion with, and refusals from, the British Government three members of the Wafd were arrested and deported to Malta on 8th. March, 1919. This led to demonstrations during March and April, which are known as the '1919 Revolution'. Students and Egyptians of all social classes joined in these demonstrations - even a women's group demonstrated in veils, on 16th. March. The clashes and strikes that ensued took place in Cairo and other cities throughout the country. The Government realised that this movement could not be stopped, so on the 7th. April a group of nationalists and Ulama representatives were allowed to travel to Paris.

Discussions began in May on Egypt's future and eventually the 'Milner-Zaghlul Agreement' was announced in February, 1921. This was the result of private talks which Lord Alfred Milner and Said Zaghlul (1857-1927) had in

(1) The National Party (Al Hizb al Watani Party)(NP) was founded by Mustafa Kamil (d. 1908) in 1894. Islam played a major role in the NP's ideology and they wanted the British to leave Egypt. Because of these two factors it drew an anti-European and religious following and was labelled 'extremist' at the time. The NP refused to be part of the 'Anglo-Egyptian Treaty' of 1936 and they played a major role in Egypt's politics until 1952. Its newspaper was 'Al Liwa' ('The Standard'). The People's Party (the Umma Party or Al Hizb al Umma) was founded by Mahmud Sulayman Pasha and Hasan Abd ar Raziq in 1907. They came from a background of Islamic reformers and their aim was to change Islam so as to make it fit into the modern world. They worked for independence through the reform of Egypt's laws and institutions. They did this by participating in public life and so were known as being 'moderate'. The Umma Party continued until the First World War and the party's publication, 'Al Jaridah' ('The Newspaper'), ceased in 1915.



the summer of 1920. It was agreed that the Protectorate would be abolished and a treaty negotiated between Britain and Egypt. Zaghlul returned, on the 4th. April, 1921, to a hero's welcome. On seeing this Edmund Allenby, the Governor General, gradually became determined to break Zaghlul's power. Eventually he was deported to the Seychelles on the 23rd. December. Demonstrations and violent clashes followed in Cairo, Alexandria, Port Said, Suez, and many provincial towns. Events moved very fast and Britain unilaterally declared Egypt independent on the 28th. February, 1922. Sultan Ahmad Fuad became King Fuad I (1920-65), with Farouk his son, named as his heir. A new Constitution was approved on the 19th. April.

INDEPENDENCE OF SORTS

Politics during this time became even more complicated and a 'triangular' power play ensued. There were three main groups of players: the British (the Army, Police and British officials in the administration); the King (who could select and appoint the Prime Minister, dismiss the Cabinet and dissolve Parliament); and the Wafd (who had popular support and a majority

(2) The Wafd (delegation), including Lutfi as Sayyid, Said Zaghlul, Muhammad Mahmud, Ali Sharawi, and Abd al Aziz Fahmi, which went to the Paris conference was made up of people from the Umma Party. Later this gave rise to the Wafd Party (1919) which became a very important movement in Egyptian politics and the government. It was banned in 1952 but regrouped as the New Wafd party in 1978 with Fouad Serageddin as its leader.



the Wafd. King Fuad died on the 28th. April, 1936, Farouk succeeded him. Negotiations continued and the 'Anglo-Egyptian Treaty' was signed on the 26th. August, 1936. Amongst other things the Treaty agreed an Anglo-Egyptian military and defence alliance and that Britain could keep 10,000 soldiers in the Suez Canal Zone. It did not give Egypt full independence and led to anti-Wafdist and anti-British demonstrations. As the Wafd lost the support more militant parties, such as the 'Muslim Brotherhood' ('Al Ikhwan al Muslimun') and the 'Young Egypt' (3), began to gain a following.

Once again Egypt, because of its geographical position, became very important to Britain and the Allies during the Second World War. As the German army advanced in 1942 the Wafd formed a government led by Mustafa Nahha (1876-1965). They lost the popular support of this alliance when details of Nahha's alleged corruption were published the next year. The Wafdist Government fell in 1944, they boycotted the elections of 1945, which

brought the Saadists to power, and a swing to the right.

The end of the Second World War saw a new series of events come into play throughout the world. The Cold War began, as the Soviet Union expanded, American influence grew and the British Empire was collapsing. Again the Middle East became a centre of concern for the major powers. Further negotiations took place over the British presence in Egypt and the future of the Sudan. It was agreed that British troops would move to the Suez Canal Zone but nothing was decided about the future of the Sudan (Britain and Sudan wanted self-government, Egyptian nationalists wanted a united Sudan-Egypt). The whole question was put in the hands of the newly created United Nations (UN). Reaction in Egypt was harsh with the 'Brotherhood' calling for strikes and jihad (holy war) against the British.

The circumstances of the late 1940s (the establishment of the State of Israel [1948], and

(3) The 'Muslim Brotherhood' ('Al Ikhwan al Muslimun', the 'Brotherhood') is a major Sunni Muslim political and religious group which was founded by Hasan al Banna in 1928. During the early years the organisation was peacefully involved in Egyptian politics and it became the leading organisation of its kind in Egypt. The aim of the 'Brotherhood' was to establish a pure Islamic State in Egypt, based on the Islamic principles practised during the reign of the first four Caliphs. The new State was to be brought about by riding the country of foreign domination. As a result the 'Brotherhood' was associated with anti-British and anti-Monarchist groups in the 1940s. After the Second World War it was believed to have been linked with a number of assassinations. On the 13th. February, 1949, Hassan al Banna, its founder, was assassinated. The 'Brotherhood' developed contacts with the 'Free Officers' and helped inspire the 1952 coup. They supported the Nasser Government but then were suspected of being involved in an attempt on Nasser's life in 1954. Many of its leaders were imprisoned and the organization outlawed the same year. Sadat allowed the 'Brotherhood' to form again and freed many of the members who had been jailed. He wanted them to counter balance the growing political left in the country. The 'Brotherhood' was in three factions: a non-violent majority that wished to work with the Government, through education and social reform; a group which wished to create a separate peaceful society based on Islamic principles and living parallel with civil society; and the last, which was militant and set itself in opposition to the Government. The 'Brotherhood' had candidates in the 1984 and 1987 elections and gained thirty-eight seats in the People's Assembly. The 'Muslim Brotherhood' has spread from Egypt throughout the Arab Middle East and North Africa where it has developed in different ways. Its influence has been great amongst many 'extreme groups' which take an anti-Communist stance, are against the influence of the West and that of secular states and organisations. The 'Islamic Group' broke from the 'Muslim Brotherhood' in the mid-1970s and has claimed responsibility for the assassination attempt on Hosni Mubarak in June, 1995, when he was in Addis Ababa attending the OAU summit. In this line it has opposed both Iranian-backed Shiite radicals and the PLO. 'Hamas', the militant Palestinian group, was founded out of the 'Brotherhood' (1987) in Jordan but was banned in 1994 when it tried to undermine the peace accords between the PLO and Israel. The 'Muslim Brotherhood' has links with the Sudanese Government, and with militant groups in Algeria, Syria and Tunisia. (See also: 'Islam Through the Years - Part Two', foot note no. 4, Issue no. 344 and the final part of this article).



'Young Egypt' ('Misr al Fatat') was founded by Ahmad Husayn in 1933. It was a nationalist movement which wanted to make an 'Empire' out of a united Sudan and Egypt. It had a paramilitary wing, the 'Green Shirts', and leanings towards Fascism and being anti-British.

The Suez Canal

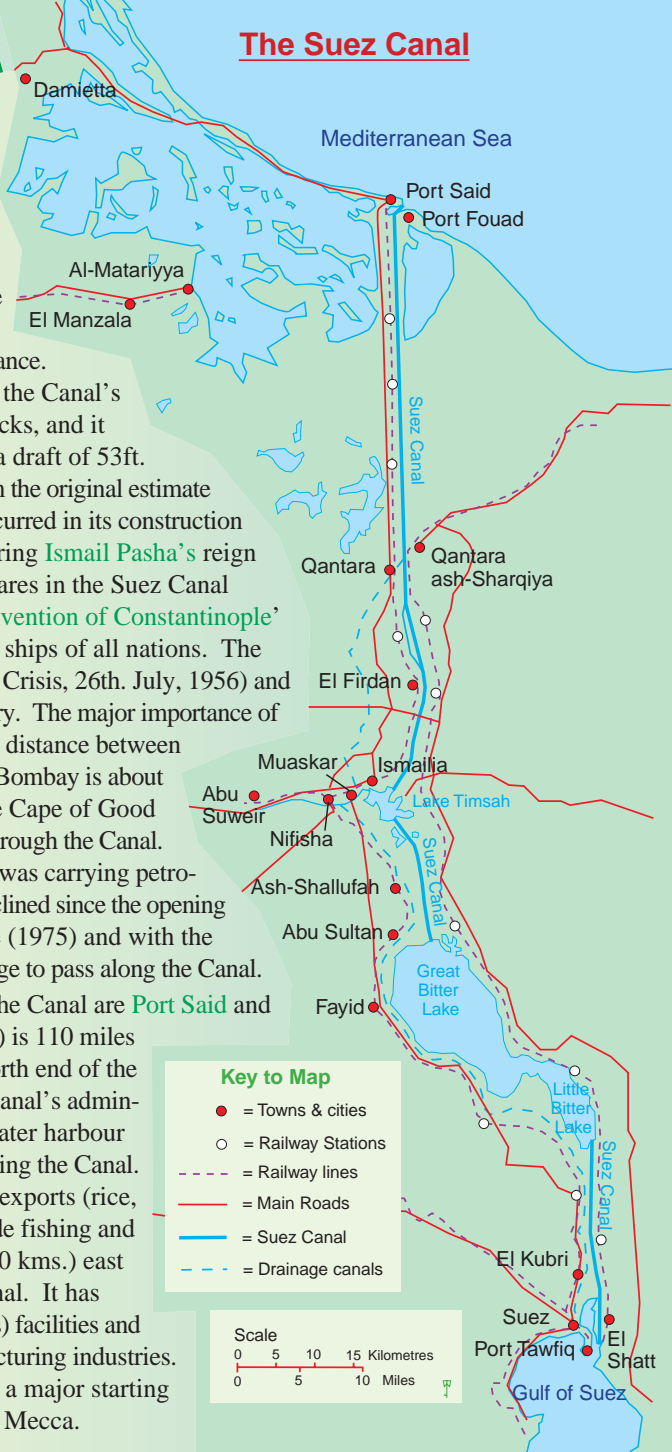
INFORMATION ON THE SUEZ CANAL

Construction of the Suez Canal began during the rule of Muhammad Said (1854-63) with the concession being given to Ferdinand de Lesseps in 1854. It was built mainly with forced labour that was supplied by the Viceroy of the time. The Canal was completed in 1869 and the concession was then given to France.

It takes about 15 hours to pass through the Canal's 105 miles (169kms) length, without locks, and it can take ocean-going vessels of up to a draft of 53ft. (16.2m.). The Canal's cost doubled from the original estimate of US\$41,860,000. Due to the debts incurred in its construction and through other massive projects during Ismail Pasha's reign (1863-79), he was forced to sell his shares in the Suez Canal Company to Britain (1875). The 'Convention of Constantinople' (1888) gave the freedom of passage to ships of all nations. The Canal was nationalised by Egypt (Suez Crisis, 26th. July, 1956) and is now owned and operated by the country. The major importance of the Canal is that it shortened the sailing distance between Europe and the Far East e.g. London to Bombay is about 12,400 miles (20,000 kms.) around the Cape of Good Hope but is 7,270 miles (11,700 kms.) through the Canal.

In the past a major part of the shipping was carrying petroleum from the Persian Gulf. This has declined since the opening of the Suez-Mediterranean oil pipeline (1975) and with the advent of supertankers which are too large to pass along the Canal.

The two major cities which dominate the Canal are Port Said and Suez. Port Said (named for Said Pasha) is 110 miles (175 kms.) north-east of Cairo at the north end of the Canal on the Mediterranean. It is the Canal's administrative headquarters and has a deepwater harbour with a major fuelling centre for ships using the Canal. The port handles much of the Egypt's exports (rice, salt and cotton) and its industries include fishing and chemicals. Suez is about 80 miles (130 kms.) east of Cairo at the southern end of the Canal. It has petroleum (refining, storage, by-products) facilities and a pipeline to Cairo, and various manufacturing industries. The port is Egypt's third largest and is a major starting point for pilgrims going on the Hajj to Mecca.



the reaction of the League of Arab States [Arab League] to this and the defeat of Arab armies [1947-49], including Egypt's, in Palestine) further bolstered Egypt's wish for independence. The defeat of the Egyptian army led to bitterness and recriminations between them and the King and Government. Gamal Abdul Nasser (1918-70) had commanded an army unit in Palestine and these events made him determined to gain a truly independent Egypt. Nasser was part of the 'Free Officers', (4) a secret organisation within the army, and they began to plan the overthrow of the Government. He became their chairman in 1949.

The 'Brotherhood' continued to gain following. They had been involved in various militant activities such as: attacking British personnel and property; they sent volunteers to fight in Palestine; and they were alleged to have played a part in the murder of Prime Minister Nuqrashi. As a result members of the 'Brotherhood', the 'Young Egypt' and Communists were put into concentration camps after this. The Wafd regained power in January, 1950, and Nahhas was made Prime Minister. In October, 1951, Parliament approved decrees which revoked the 'Anglo-Egyptian Treaty' of 1936 and proclaimed Farouk King of Egypt and Sudan.

THE 1952 REVOLUTION AND NASSER

Various groups put pressure on the Government to oppose the British with military means. The 'Liberation Battalions' were formed and a guerilla war began against the British in the Suez Canal Zone. British forces attacked an Egyptian police barracks at Al Ismailiyah (Ismailia), on the 25th. January, 1952, (wounding 50 and killing 100 Egyptians). This action provoked the events of 'Black Saturday', (26th. January, 1952) when Police in Cairo mutinied, in protest, and

were joined by groups of people who went on the rampage, resulting in many deaths, injuries and property being destroyed. The King and Government were lost control and a power vacuum was created. This was filled when Nasser and the 'Free Officers' seized power on the 23rd. July. Farouk abdicated, went into exile and the Republic declared on the 26th. July. (5)

When Nasser and the 'Free Officers' came to power the British made it clear that they would not interfere with Egypt's internal matters - from their garrison in the Suez Canal Zone - unless British lives were threatened. With the Cold War it was important for Britain to keep the base in the Canal area as part of the 'Baghdad Pact' (6). The 'Free Officers' created the 'Revolutionary Command Council' (RCC) and Ali Mahir, a previous Prime Minister, formed a Government which was controlled, as were many other civilian functions, by the RCC. There was no one single ideology within the 'Free Officers', each member had different sympathies to different factions. Nasser was the power behind them and between 1952 and 1954 he worked to control the Government.

The Government were quite ruthless in upholding law and order, such as when the army put down the strike at the Misr Company textile factories, Kafr ad Dawwar, in August, 1952. The RCC worked fast and brought in agrarian, labour and education reforms in both legislation and by increasing the money available for improvement in these areas.

All political parties were banned on the 17th. January, 1953, and the RCC imposed a three year period for them to rule solely. Sudan was given self-determination in February. On the 18th. June, Egypt was declared a Republic with Mohammed Naguib as President and Nasser

as Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of the Interior and also President of the RCC. In October 1954, Nasser signed an agreement for the withdrawal of all British troops. The agreement was not accepted by all and a member of the 'Brotherhood' tried to assassinate Nasser while he was in Alexandria (26th. October, 1954).

Within the next decade there were to be events that would prove to be important turning points for how Nasser viewed his country's position. Nasser was aware of Israel's power and the threat it posed to Egypt. This was made apparent when Israel attacked Egyptian military outposts in Gaza. He asked the West for support and was given none - mainly because they had other interests at the time and Nasser would not align Egypt fully with them. As a result he turned to the East for support and began a new liaison by doing an arms deal with Czechoslovakia (September, 1955). The funding of the Aswan High Dam was another major turning point. There were complicated financial agreements proposed with the USA, Britain and the World Bank which were interdependent. Stringent conditions for supervising the budget were asked for, but the whole scheme collapsed when America withdrew its offer. As the Cold War developed Nasser was gradually becoming more inclined towards the Non-aligned Movement which took neither side. Egypt was part

of the conference, at Bandung, in April, 1955, where they gained a great deal of support.

The 'Suez Crisis' developed in July, 1956, when Egypt nationalised the Canal. Nasser promised compensation for the stockholders of the Suez Canal Company and the right of access to all shipping. Eastern and developing countries generally supported Egypt. Britain, France, and Israel invaded Egypt on the 28th. October - known as the '1956 War'. Ships were sunk in the Canal and there were many casualties in the battle to take Port Said. A cease-fire was accepted on the 6th. November, and troops were finally evacuated on the 22nd. December. A United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF) started to land in Egypt on the 21st. November, to ensure the safe passage of Israeli ships. They remained there until June, 1967, when they were withdrawn and the Arab-Israeli war ('The Six Day War') broke out. Egypt did not restore diplomatic relations with Britain until 1969. The Israelis eventually withdrew from Sinai carrying out a scorched earth policy as they went. Britain, France, and Israel may

Part of the Aswan High Dam

(4) Members of the 'Free Officers' Movement in the '1952 Revolution' were: Lieutenant Colonel Gamal Abdul Nasser, Major Abd al Hakim Amir, Lieutenant Colonel Anwar as Sadat, Major Salah Salim, Major Kamal ad Din Husayn, Wing Commander Gamal Salim, Squadron Leader Hasan Ibrahim, Major Khalid Muhi ad Din, and Wing Commander Abd al Latif al Baghdadi.

(5) The 26th July Street and the 26th July Bridge in north-western Cairo are named after this date

(6) The 'Baghdad Pact' was an alliance of Britain, Turkey, Iran, Pakistan, and Iraq, which was supposed to contain the Soviet Union on its southern borders - somewhat similar to NATO and SATO.



have recaptured the Canal but the international reaction was disastrous. Nasser eventually won and it was the end of British and French direct involvement in Egypt. Their remaining assets were nationalised and Egypt had control of Canal revenues.

These incidents marked Nasser's final turning away from the West and gradual swing towards dependence on the Soviet Union. The Soviet influence increased even more when it financed the construction of the Aswan High Dam. Nasser also aligned himself more with the Arab world and developed his 'Arab Nationalism'. In his pan-Arab endeavours Nasser attempted to unite Egypt with Syria (the United Arab Republic) and Yemen (the United Arab States). Neither option worked mainly because of the differences between the countries and the reaction from other Arab States, especially Saudi Arabia. Nasser continued to implement 'Arab Socialism'. In 1962 his 'National Charter' was promulgated and the Arab Socialist Union (ASU) was formed as the only political party. Candidates were drawn from it in the elections of March, 1964. The Charter swung away from the early nationalism to the idea of an Egypt being an Arab state built on Islamic principles and in 1971 it became the basis of a new constitution.

EGYPT AND ISRAEL

Nasser still saw Israel as a continual threat and with this in mind he initiated three Arab summit meetings in 1964. Out of them came one major agreement, to make the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) as the only Palestinian organisation. Up until then there had been several Palestinian guerrilla groups but this was an attempt to unify them. Egypt controlled the PLO until Yasir Arafat, the former Al Fatah leader, took over in 1969.

The tension between Israel and the Arab States increased during the mid-1960s. In

November, 1966, Israeli troops went into the West Bank (Jordan) in retaliation for PLO raids. Israel threatened to overthrow the Syrian Government if the PLO raids did not stop from Syrian soil. During April, 1967, there were Israeli-Syrian air clashes. The Soviet Union warned Egypt that the Israelis had mobilised two brigades on the frontier. Nasser sent troops to the Israeli border, as did Syria, hoping to deter Israel from attacking Syria. Israel responded by deploying its forces. Egypt found it difficult to help Syria because of the UNEF troops, stationed on the Egyptian side of the border.

On the 16th. May Nasser asked the UN to remove the UNEF from the Egyptian-Israeli frontier in Sinai, which they did. Egypt signed defence agreements with Jordan and Iraq. On the morning of the 5th. June, Israel launched a full-scale attack on Egypt, Jordan, and Syria ('The Six Day War') and by the 8th. ground forces had reached the Suez Canal and the same day both sides accepted a UN cease-fire. Israel had taken control of the Sinai, the Gaza Strip, Arab Jerusalem, the West Bank, and the Golan Heights. The war was a disaster for Egypt and on the 9th. June, Nasser said he took full responsibility for the debacle and resigned as President. It was not accepted so he withdrew his resignation. A shake-up in the military and the government followed, including arrests for a plot to overthrow Nasser, and Nasser assumed the role of Prime Minister.

Many people were unhappy with Nasser's strong Government and the lack of democracy. After demonstrations in March, 1968, Nasser presented a plan of action which was approved by a referendum in May. The changes began with the election of new members to the ASU, and its Supreme Executive Committee (SEC). The SEC was divided into five permanent committees: political affairs, administration,

internal affairs, economic development, and culture and information. Anwar as Sadat (1918-81) chaired the committee for political affairs. For some people the changes were not enough.

Saudi Arabia, after they had settled their differences with Egypt, agreed to finance the rebuilding of Egypt's army. Between March, 1969, and August, 1970, there was the 'War of Attrition' between Egypt and Israel. Egypt used artillery to attack the Israeli positions along the Suez Canal. In turn Israel carried out air raids into Eastern Egypt. Nasser and the Soviet Union came to an agreement to establish an air defence system - which included the use of surface-to-air missiles (SAMs), Soviet advisors, troops and pilots.

Many peace plans were put forward and eventually the 'Rogers Plan', based on the United Nations Resolution no. 242 (settlement after the war), was accepted by Egypt, Jordan

and Israel. The fighting stopped along the Suez Canal on the 7th. August, 1970, but the PLO continued attacks against Israel and criticised the Peace Plan. As a result Egypt closed down the PLO radio station, the 'Voice of Palestine' in Cairo, stopped most of Egypt's material support to them, and expelled some PLO activists from Egypt. The PLO tried to undermine the Peace Plan by hijacking aircraft in September, which contributed to the civil war breaking out in Jordan the same month. This resulted in King Hussein driving the PLO guerrilla groups out of their bases in Jordan (by July, 1971). The situation in the Middle East was very fragile at this point. Nasser called for a Summit meeting (26th. September, in Cairo) to stop the civil war and Hussein and Arafat agreed to a cease-fire. Nasser had been ill for some time and the work which brought about peace hastened his death of a heart attack on the 28th. September.

The Madrassa of Sultan Hassan and the Mosque of Mahmoud Pasha, Cairo, taken from the Citadel



ANWAR AS SADAT

Anwar as Sadat, a 'Free Officer' who had various roles in Government, took over in 1970 - after an election on the 15th. October, in which he received 90% of the votes. Sadat wanted to encourage Western investment into Egypt, but realised that would mean moving from some of Nasser's policies, making peace with Israel and limiting relations with the Soviet Union. He had over a hundred officials arrested (the 'Corrective Revolution' of May, 1971) for plotting a coup against the Government, and he appointed his own followers in their place. The armed forces gave their support as did the people in demonstrations. In September, 1971, a new constitution was presented by Sadat and approved by the electorate.

Sadat tried to make peace with Israel (4th. February, 1971) but Israel refused and the US would not put pressure on Israel to accept the peace move. Egypt then rejected the 'Rogers Plan' and the cease-fire. An added problem was that the Arab states remembered the humiliation of the defeat in the June 1967 war. The Egyptian economy was being drained to rebuild the military during the stand off. 1972 saw student riots and Sadat felt Sinai had to be regained. Gradually, 1972-73, he prepared for war: Soviet advisers were expelled; he formed a new Government and became Prime Minister. On the 6th. October, 1973, Egyptian forces attacked across the Suez Canal and Syria attacked at the same time (known as The 'October', 'Ramadan' or 'Yom Kippur' War). Israel counter attacked, crossed the Canal and encircled the Egyptian Third Army.

The outbreak of war caused a great deal of work behind the scenes between the two Super Powers and also the Arab countries. These included the Arab oil producers cutting supplies to Israel's backers and America giving Israel US\$2.2 billion worth of arms. Sadat, working

through Alexei Kosygin (USSR) and Henry Kissinger (USA), thought that a cease-fire had been worked out (22nd. October, the UN Resolution no. 338) but Israel did not and continued to completely cut off the 3rd. Army. Tension increased when the Soviets thought that they had been double crossed by the USA and Syria felt betrayed by Egypt with the cease-fire, but accepted it later. Kissinger's 'shuttle diplomacy' between Egypt and Israel led to disengagement agreements being signed (18th. January, 1974 and on the 1st. September, 1975).

There was no true victor in this war: the cost in lives and on the economies for all countries was great. Despite this the fact that Egypt attacked improved the morale of the people and Sadat was praised as a hero. The Suez Canal was opened again on the 5th. June, 1975, and began to bring in revenue for Egypt. Israel also gained concessions from the USA.

Sadat tried to give more political expression and to move away from the one-party system. He began to allow political parties again, but the main parties, the Wafd, the Muslim 'Brotherhood', the Nasserites, and the Communists, were not allowed representation in the new Assembly. Still the 'Brotherhood' was given a limited freedom as long as they did not criticise the Government too much. Sadat did this to counter-balance the left wing parties. In 1977 Sadat establish his own party, the National Democratic Party (NDP), and the Arab Socialist Union merged with them.

Egypt gradually moved away from the Soviet Union (the 'Soviet-Egyptian Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation' [signed 27th. May, 1971] was renounced on the 15th. March, 1976) and towards America. Sadat did this for two main reasons: to attract American investment and in the hope that the US would put pressure on Israel to make peace. Sadat came up with a new economic plan (the 'October Working

Paper') for the country in April, 1974. Part of this was the 'infitah' (7). Doubts were expressed about it from the start and in January, 1977, there were demonstrations against it, the corruption it had caused, and the price rises which had ensued after a World Bank loan in 1976. There were riots in towns all over the country and in clashes between the rioters and police eight hundred people were killed. They eventually ended when the Government cancelled the price increases and raised wages.

Peace prospects had not improved by 1977. Israel had begun to establish settlements in the West Bank and was carrying out raids into southern Lebanon. On the 19th. November, 1977, Sadat went to Jerusalem at the invitation of Menachem Begin, the Israeli Prime Minister. His journey caused a mixed reaction around the world and the Arabs and Palestinians accused him of betrayal. The Egypt-Israel peace negotiations got under way and when they were

(7) 'Infitah' means 'open door' and was Sadat's policy for the relaxation of government controls on the economy. It was hoped that by this method the private sector would grow and foreign investment come into the Egypt.

Picture above: The courtyard of the Muhammed Ali Mosque, Cairo

deadlocked President Jimmy Carter invited the two leaders to Camp David. The 'Camp David Accords' were agreed (17th. September, 1978) and an Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty was signed (26th. March, 1979).

The Peace Agreement was complicated but within it it was settled that Israel would withdraw from Sinai and that Egypt would regain full sovereignty over it. The reaction Sadat received for his part in the agreement was varied. In the West he was a hero; in Egypt most people approved, but the 'Brotherhood' and parties on the left opposed it; in the Arab world he was condemned and Egypt was expelled from the Arab League.

The 'Camp David Accords' brought peace to Egypt but not prosperity. Egypt was isolated from the rest of the Arab world and there was no economic improvement. Sadat became more and more unpopular amongst ordinary Egyptians and was openly criticised. He reacted

by imposing censorship and imprisoning his opponents. September, 1981, saw Sadat order a roundup of at least 1,500 of his opponents. These included: members of the 'Muslim Brotherhood', the Coptic Pope, Bishops and Priests, journalist and various leaders of other political parties. The inevitable happened on the 6th. October, 1981, when Sadat was assassinated by members of 'Al Jihad', a 'religious extremists' movement, at a military parade.

HOSNI MUBARAK

Hosni Mohammed Mubarak ⁽⁸⁾ became Head of State and was confirmed as President in a referendum on the 14th. October, 1981. Mubarak continued much of Sadat's work including the crack down on 'Islamic Fundamentalists'. Four thousand members of the 'Takfir Wal Hijra' ('Repentance and Atonement') Islamic group were imprisoned as they were allegedly involved in Sadat's death. A 'state of emergency' was brought in and since then the special powers were regularly renewed.

Mubarak has gradually improved Egypt's standing with its neighbours and on the world's political stage. He honoured the Peace Treaty with Israel and they completed their withdrawal from Sinai in April, 1982. This was not an easy time and the situation deteriorated when Israel invaded Lebanon on the 6th. June, 1982, in an attempt to destroy PLO bases. The peace initiatives were revived later with talks between Mubarak and Israel's Shimon Peres. This eventually led to the Arab-Israeli peace talks in Madrid (1991) and the signing of a peace agreement between the PLO and Israel on the 13th. September, 1993. The following July saw the basics of self-rule for Palestinians in the Occupied Territories being agreed at a meeting in Cairo. Mubarak visited Israel for the funeral of Yitzak Rabin, the Israeli Prime Minister, in 1995.

Egypt gradually became less isolated due to the diplomatic work of President Mubarak. They were re-admitted to the Islamic Conference Organization (1984); the Arab ban on diplomatic ties with Egypt was lifted (November, 1987) and many of the Arab States re-established diplomatic relations with the country; the PLO offices reopened in Cairo (November, 1987); Egypt recognised the PLO State (20th. November, 1988); they were re-admitted to the Arab League (May, 1989) and rejoined the Arab Parliamentary Union (June, 1989). In July, 1989, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) held its summit in Cairo and Mubarak was elected as Chairman of the OAU on two occasions (1989-90 and 1993-94).

Despite the decline in the economy and the growth of 'Fundamentalism' Mubarak still remained in control. The 25th. February, 1986, saw the start of riots by about 20,000 conscripts in the Central Security Forces (CSF) in Cairo and Giza. This was due partly to a rumour that their national service was to be increased, but it was also a reflection of the economic hardship which poorer parts of society had to undergo under the Government's *infithah* policy. Despite such pressure Mubarak was elected for a second term in October, 1987, with 97% of the vote.

THE 1990s

The 1990s were a turbulent decade for Egypt. When Iraq invaded Kuwait in 1990 Egypt sent 32,000 troops as part of the multinational forces in the 'Gulf War'. In return the USA and some Arab countries wrote off several billion US\$ of Egypt's debts. Since 1991 Egypt has been pursuing structural adjustment reforms with the IMF which have led to debt relief under the Paris Club arrangements. The country is now considered to be a model of IMF policy. Liberalisation and deregulation have encouraged business growth and brought new companies

into the country. External economic links have improved such as when Al Gore, the US Vice President, visited Egypt and a trade and investment agreement was signed (3rd. May, 1998).

Egypt suffered a set back with the escalation of 'Fundamentalist' activity in 1992-93. The two main groups involved were 'Jihad' and 'Gama'a al-Islamiyya' which targeted tourists, politicians, and the security forces. Both are alleged to have been involved in assassination attempts on politicians. About a hundred tourists have been killed including nine Germans who were shot in Cairo (October, 1997) and sixty-seven killed at Luxor (17th. November, 1997, 'Gama'a al-Islamiyya' claimed responsibility). Several Egyptians have also been victims, such as when ten policemen and a civilian were killed by 'Islamists' on the 13th. October, 1997. There was some hope when 'Gama'a al-Islamiyya'

issued a statement that they would no longer target tourists (8th. December, 1997). Tourism is recovering, but the loss of foreign exchange due to attacks and concerns about the 'Gulf War' effected the Egyptian economy. In 1991 the number of tourists dropped by 40%. It revived in 1992 with three million visitors who brought in US\$3bn. and a similar figure in 1997.

On the 4th. October, 1993, Mubarak was endorsed for a third term, but he was not free from 'Extremist' attention. On the 26th. June, 1995, there was an attempt on his life while in Ethiopia for an OAU Summit (the third in twenty-two months). He was unhurt but some of the 'Islamists' involved went to the Sudan, which increased tension between Egypt and Sudan. Later three men were arrested in Ethiopia (March, 1996) and were sentenced to death.

to be continued

Sources - 'The Penguin Historical Atlas of Ancient Egypt' by Bill Manley; 'Egypt: A Country Study', Library of Congress; 'A Brief Review of Modern Egyptian History' by Dr. M. Trabia (University of Nevada Las Vegas, USA); 'The Grolier Multimedia Encyclopaedia, 1999'; 'Encyclopaedia Britannica'; 'Egypt', Lonely Planet, 1999; Lonely Planet Web Site; 'Egypt', The Rough Guide by Dan Richardson, 1997; 'The Times Atlas of World History'; <http://www.anthro.mankato.msus.edu/prehistory/egypt/>; The Coptic Network - WWW; 'The Coptic Encyclopedia', edited by Aziz Sourial Atiya; 'A History of Christianity' by Owen Chadwick; 'The Oxford Illustrated History of Christianity'; 'Country Reports on Human Rights Practices', U.S. Department of State (various years); CIA Factbook; 'The New African YearBook' (various years); 'Africa Review' (various years); 'Makers of Modern Africa' (3rd. edition, 1996); 'Africa Today' (3rd. edition, 1996), 'Amnesty International' reports; 'Historical Dictionary of Islamic Fundamentalist Movements in the Arab World, Iran, and Turkey' by Ahmad S. Moussalli; 'The Catholic Encyclopedia'; 'Zenit'; 'Fides International'; 'World Churches Handbook'.

Picture above: The Cairo Tower (middle of picture) and the River Nile in the centre of Cairo

(8) Mubarak was born in Kafr El-Moseilha on the 4th. May, 1928, in Lower Egypt. Even though he had a career in the armed forces he did not become a member of the 'Free Officers' movement. He had trained as a pilot in the Soviet Union and became air force chief of staff in 1969 and deputy minister of war in 1972. He was also Vice-President from 1975 to 1981.

