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Thesis Title:

ITALO-EGYPTIAN RELATIONS  
1922-1937

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R E L A T I O N S  
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by

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ITALO-EGYPTIAN RELATIONS

Ammann

## PREFACE

The following paper aims at giving an account of Italo-Egyptian relations between the years 1922 and 1936. The major sources used are L'Oriente Moderno, Great Britain and The East, The Times of London, and Gli Italiani in Egitto by Angelo Sammarco. A number of other periodicals and books also provided information, particularly the periodical Current History. Unfortunately, this writer was unable to gain access to a series of Italian documents published in Rome, I documenti diplomatici italiani, nor was he able to make use of a great number of Italian periodicals and books that appeared during the Fascist period.

The present writer was able to learn a number of titles of such works, and has listed them in the bibliography, marked with an asterisk. There should also be a certain amount of information available in Egypt, both in Arabic and in Italian, which this writer was unable to obtain during his two visits there. Furthermore, Prof. Angelo Sammarco after his death bequeathed a sizeable collection of notes, which are now in possession of a nephew. The present writer expects to make use of this material in the near future, in order to expand part of this paper into a doctoral thesis.

## ABSTRACT

After World War I, an unsatisfied Italy made efforts to dislodge Great Britain from her Mediterranean strong-holds, including Suez. Italy's aim coincided with the national aspirations of the Egyptians, who wished to be free from any sort of British control. Italy gave the Egyptian demands full backing through her propaganda apparatus. But Italy's proximity in Libya and her apparently quick resort to armed force against opposition, led the Egyptians to suspect Italian intentions to such a degree that they feared an invasion of Egypt. This sort of fear and suspicion reached its peak in 1935, and enabled Great Britain to obtain military privileges in Egypt by treaty. Hand in hand with Italy's Egyptian policy went the gradual Fascist takeover of the Italian community in Egypt. Through disciplined organization, modern facilities and considerable construction, the community was built up as a model of the Fascist system. Its schools were made increasingly available to Egyptians, many of whom made use of the opportunity.

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## I. ITALY AND EGYPT UNTIL 1922

Starting from the last years of the Roman Republic, the inhabitants of the Peninsula have had, almost without interruption until today, that is over two thousand years, a major at times nearly exclusive, role in the frequent and manifold commercial, religious and cultural relations, which the Occident has entertained with the Oriental regions.

Angelo Sammarco.

Relations between geographical Italy and Egypt can be traced back to times immemorial. An outline of these relations is given here, because the Fascist regime justified its Mediterranean policy by Roman history. Fascism exploited the past glories of the Roman Empire, and saw itself as its spiritual, if not its physical successor. The historic links and the growth Italian power in the Mediterranean were used by Fascist Italy to develop friendly relations with the Levantine states and to justify Italy's civilizing mission as viewed by Fascism. Egypt lay on the trade route to India, and provided the link between the Mediterranean and the Red Sea. In 31 B.C., Octavian conquered this rich and strategically important country and made it a Roman province. Because of its economic importance, Egypt received special status, and together with Libya it served as the granary of Rome.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Angelo Sammarco, Gli Italiani in Egitto, (Alexandria: Edizioni del Fascio, 1937), pp. 4-5. The material on early Italo-Egyptian relations is based almost exclusively on Sammarco's book and on L.A. Balboni's Gli Italiani nella civiltà egiziana del secolo XIX, 3 vols, (Alexandria: Società Dante Alighieri, 1906), on which Sammarco relies extensively. On Italy and Egypt see also Giovanni Wian, Il nuovo Egitto e l'Italia, (Pescara: Arte della Stampa, n.d.) and Luigi Villari, The Expansion of Italy (London; Faber and Faber Ltd., 1930), pp. 13-32.



Relations were particularly close between Rome and Alexandria. After the spread of Christianity, men like Sts. Clement and Athanasius introduced Greek philosophy in Alexandria. From there it spread to Rome, where it was incorporated into the Catholic doctrine.<sup>2</sup> Close relations between Egypt and Rome continued until the end of the fourth century A.D., when the Byzantine Empire became separated from Rome and exercised control over Egypt. The power of Rome declined and the Empire was succeeded by the Italian City States. The coastal states, like Naples, Amalfi, Bari, Ravenna and Venice, who had developed a flourishing trade with the Levant, were Byzantine possessions. Byzantium controlled their trade until they made themselves independent in the sixth century.<sup>3</sup> With the Arab conquest of Egypt in 640 A.D. there began a new period in Italo-Egyptian relations. Sicily became Arab in 652 A.D. and served as a base for Arab raids along the Italian coast. In 909 A.D. it came under the control of the Fatimid Dynasty of Egypt. The Fatimids launched an attack from Sicily on Genoa, and sacked the city in 934 or 935.<sup>4</sup> By the eighth century Genoa and Pisa, together with the former Byzantine states in Italy, became prosperous as trade centers. Italian traders in the Levant, including Egypt, now became sufficiently numerous to be organized in colonies.<sup>5</sup> The Venetians were the most active and

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<sup>2</sup>Sammarco, op.cit., p. 7.    <sup>3</sup>Ibid, p. 8.

<sup>4</sup>Philip K. Hitti, History of the Arabs, (London; Macmilland & Co. Ltd., 1960), p. 605.

<sup>5</sup>Sammarco, op.cit., pp. 8-9.

noted among the Italian states for their sea-faring activities.<sup>6</sup>

In 1096, the first Crusade was launched. During it and the subsequent Crusades, the Italian traders were able to remain independent of both the Christian and Muslim belligerent parties. These resorted to the Italian merchants for ships, arms, men and information.<sup>7</sup> Salah al-Din, who wished to expel the Christians from Syria, contacted the Italians for arms supplies and also for naval construction. The Italians found the Egyptian market more profitable than the Syrian and shifted their attention to it. By this they indirectly assisted Salah el-Din to defeat the Kingdom of Jerusalem in 1187.<sup>8</sup> The Church in Rome protested against such assistance to the Infidel and compelled the Italians to participate in campaigns. They were incorrigible and immediately used their occupation of Damietta in 1219 for commerce.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>Balboni, op.cit., vol. I, p. 20. Balboni says they have been called the "English of the Middle Ages" for their mastery of the sea.

<sup>7</sup>Sammarco, op.cit., p. 9.

<sup>8</sup>Sammarco, op.cit., pp. 10-11. Refugees from Jerusalem found 38 Pisan, Genoese and Venetian ships wintering in Alexandria.

<sup>9</sup>Majid Khadduri and Herbert J. Liebesny, eds., Law in the Middle East, Vol I: Origin and Development of Islamic Law, (Washington, D.C.: The Middle East Institute, 1955), p. 314. Sammarco, op.cit., p. 11. Hitti, op.cit., pp. 653-654, says the Italian republics prompted this invasion. The Venetians, got their patron saint, the Evangelist Mark, from Alexandria; Sammarco, op.cit., p. 8. In July 1968 this saint's relics were returned to Egypt.

Life in the Orient brought the Crusaders in contact with new articles of consumption. They created a demand for these in Europe, which led to greater profits for the Italian merchants, who supplied these goods. But there was also a new cultural interrelation. Sicily had been conquered by the Normans in 1091, but Arab cultural influence remained strong. The Pisan Leonardo Fibonacci visited Egypt and in 1202 wrote a mathematical treatise based on Arab learning. Frederick II, who spoke Arabic, maintained very friendly relations with the Ayyubid Sultan of Egypt, al-Kamil Muhammad. This enabled him to get control over Jerusalem in 1227 by treaty instead of war.<sup>10</sup> Italian campanili of the early renaissance seem to have been based on the style of the Egyptian minarets.<sup>11</sup>

Till the end of the 13th century, the Italian states were unable to establish stable colonies in Egypt, nor did they enjoy the advantages they had secured in Palestine and Syria.<sup>12</sup> They did, however, obtain some privileges and immunities, which developed into the Capitulations. Al-'Adil (1199-1218) granted the Venetians special markets with inns (fanadiq) in Alexandria, and the Pisans had consuls there during his reign.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>10</sup>Hitti, op.cit., pp. 574, 610, 654, 662-663, 667.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 613.

<sup>12</sup>There, the Christian princes had granted them concessions in the ports, where they could exercise commercial activities without interference from anyone. They were also beyond the jurisdiction of the princes and had courts according to the laws of their native states under their own magistrates. See Sammarco, op.cit., p. 9.

<sup>13</sup>Hitti, op.cit., p. 653.

The first known documents resembling capitulations was granted by the Fatimid ruler<sup>14</sup> to the Republic of Pisa in 1154 and was renewed in 1155. Salah al-Din granted capitulations to the same state in 1173. Venice obtained capitulations in 1238, 1254 and 1302, and Genoa in 1290. Lorenzo the Magnificent was able to obtain these privileges in 1422 also for Tuscan merchants.<sup>15</sup> In the 14th and 15th centuries, under Florentine leadership, Italian commerce was at its height. Italians became the biggest foreign group in the Levant, and their tongue was used as the commercial and almost the diplomatic language, and Italian, especially Florentine, currency became a medium of exchange in the Near East.<sup>16</sup>

Ironically, this flourishing Italian trade with the East suffered a severe blow indirectly inflicted by two Italians - Columbus and Vespucci - and other explorers. The discovery of the maritime route to India around the Cape of Good Hope caused commerce in the Mediterranean decline. The Atlantic states like Spain, Portugal, Holland and England

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<sup>14</sup>This was either al-Zafir (1149-54) or his son al-Fa'iz (1154-60). The latter was only 4 years old in 1154, and effective control was in the hands of the wazir 'Abbas. See Ibid, p. 623.

<sup>15</sup>Later Ottoman capitulations followed these. It was, however, the capitulations given to France, which became the standard model. See Khadduri and Liebesny, op.cit., p. 1313. Sammarco, op.cit., pp. 14-16, and Balboni, op.cit., vol. I, pp. 34-35. See also Ahmed Chafik Pacha, L'Egypte moderne et les influences étrangères (Cairo: Imprimerie Misr, 1931), p. 8. and N. Bentwich, "The End of the Capitulatory System" in The British Yearbook of International Law, vol. 14, (London: Oxford University Press, 1933) p. 89.

<sup>16</sup>Sammarco, op.cit., p. 16.

benefitted from shipping on the Cape Route. Egypt's economy also suffered from the new route, because goods no longer passed through the country on transit.<sup>17</sup> Nevertheless, Italian relations with Egypt were not completely broken off, and around 1500 Venice thought up a plan to cut a canal across the Isthmus of Suez to save her threatened position. The scheme was never carried out.<sup>18</sup>

By the beginning of the 18th century, Italian commerce was almost entirely carried by the Cape route, and England was slowly becoming the maritime power par excellence. But some Italo-Egyptian contacts and all the old concessions were preserved, and Italian remained the language of commerce and diplomacy in the Levant. With the decline in the importance of Egypt as the gate to the Far East, the political and financial influence of these states had however disappeared.<sup>19</sup> This was the situation, when Europe made a dramatic re-entry in the Near East with Napoleonn's invasion of Egypt in 1798.

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<sup>17</sup> Nadav Safran, Egypt in Search of Political Community, (Cambridge; 1961), p. 27.

<sup>18</sup> This could have preserved Italian predominance in the Mediterranean and it is tempting to speculate how events would have developed, had such a scheme been carried through. As it turned out, the plan was abandoned, either out of fear that the levels of the two seas differed too much - as happened again in 1798 - or because of the great expense involved. Later in 1500, 'Uluj 'Ali Pasha, Bey of Beys in North Africa, who was a Calabrese Italian serving under the Porte, suggested the same idea and the French ambassador in Istanbul then transmitted the idea to France. Napoleon, an ethnic Italian from Corsica, may have acquired the concept of the Canal in this manner. The plan adopted in 1856 by Lesseps was that of another Italian, Luigi Negrelli. See Sammarco, op.cit., pp. 18-19, 109-11, and Enciclopedia Italiana, Vol XXXII, p. 959, article "Suez".

<sup>19</sup> Chafik Pacha, op.cit., p. 209.

Some Italians were members of the Bonaparte's expedition,<sup>20</sup> and many were to work for Muhammed 'Ali later. The Italian state of Leghorn was of particular value in building up Muhammed 'Ali's navy for his later wars. When that navy grew, Muhammed Ali dispensed with all European assistance, except that of the Leghorn-Italians, This cooperation drew protests from the Porte.<sup>21</sup>

Economic and political upheavals in Italy in the 1820's caused a strong migratory movement to Egypt, which will be considered below in the chapter of the Italian community. Worth mentioning is that among the Italian emigrants were officers who were valuable in training the Egyptian army, In 1848 Egypt again harbored and protected Italian political refugees - a favor which Italy was later to return. Between 1859 and 1886 the emigrants sent funds and some returned as volunteers to Italy to fight.<sup>22</sup>

After its unification in 1861, Italy still had to find its way into the ranks of the imperialist powers, The importance of Egypt in Italy's attempts to expand began to be discussed by Italian politicians. Already before unification, Mazzini claimed North Africa for Italy,<sup>23</sup> and Cavour called

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<sup>20</sup>Italy as a state was non-existent then, hence there was no Italian citizenship, while many countries had an Italian population, e.g. France - which had just acquired Corsica - Switzerland, and Austria, etc. See Balboni, op.cit., vol I, pp. 112-130.

<sup>21</sup>See Sammarco, op.cit., pp. 66-68. See also Ch. V, below p. 146.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid, p. xxvii.

<sup>23</sup>Martin Moore, Fourth Shore: Italy's Mass Colonization of Libya, (London: Routledge & Sons, Ltd., 1940) p. 211.

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for Italian predominance in the Mediterranean at the time of the Crimean War.<sup>24</sup> On 30 August 1863, one Christoforo Negri expressed similar concerns:

There is no . . . country, which could be more interested in the Eastern Question, than Italy . . . if, for example Egypt were to fall into English hands, and the Suez Canal with it, if Tunisia falls [sic] into French hands, if Austria proceeds from Dalmatia into Albania, etc. we shall soon be there in the middle of the Mediterranean without so much air to breathe.<sup>25</sup>

Negri's conclusion continued to be the essence of Italy's attitude towards the Mediterranean until World War II. The young Italian nation, however, maintained friendly relations with Egypt, which, through the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, became once again of importance. In the same year, Khedive Isma'il made his first visit outside Egypt to Victor Emmanuel II in Florence, because Italy seemed to be the only country which was not seeking any advantages or favours.<sup>26</sup> Relations were to remain friendly between the royal houses of both countries until the end of both monarchies. De Martino, the Italian consul in Egypt, supported Isma'il when he was under strong pressures from the Porte and from the European powers, and favored Egypt's

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<sup>24</sup>Luigi Peteani, La questione libica nella diplomazia europea, (Florence: Casa Editrice Carlo Cya, 1939) p. 13.

<sup>25</sup>L'Opinione of Turin, 30 Aug, 1863, quoted by Corrado Masi, "La preparazione dell'impresa libica" in Romaso Sillani (ed.), La Libia: In venti anni di occupazione italiana, (Rome: La Rassegna Italiana, 1933) p. 11. This writer's emphasis.

<sup>26</sup>From a dispatch by de Martino, the Italian Consul in Egypt, of 14 May 1869, in Sammarco, op.cit., p. 73.

independence and autonomy. A visit in September 1869 in Alexandria of an Italian naval squadron, commanded by Crown Prince Amedeo, was considered to be an expression of Italy's support in Egypt.<sup>27</sup> During Egypt's financial crisis, the Khedive still found the Italian Government friendly, because it sent him Antonio Scialoia as advisor.<sup>28</sup> When in 1879 Great Britain and France finally forced Isma'il to resign, he found refuge and hospitality in Italy. Scialoia's plans were incorporated in the Caisse de la Dette Publique.<sup>29</sup> Italy became one of the members of the Caisse de la Dette Publique, and remained so until after World War I.<sup>30</sup>

In 1830, France occupied Algeria and had designs on Morocco and Tunisia. Early in 1878, Britain assumed control over Cyprus. At the Congress of Berlin, in summer 1878, the British Foreign Secretary Lord Salisbury suggested that Italy occupy Libya to balance British possession of Cyprus.<sup>31</sup> The

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<sup>27</sup>From a dispatch by de Martino of 30 Sept 1869 and one by the Austrian Consul in Florence of 16 Sept cited in ibid., pp. 78, 80.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., p. 80.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., pp. 80-81. It is of interest for later developments to note that King Fu'ad was educated in Italy, and that King Faruq chose it as his exile.

<sup>30</sup>The original administrators of the Caisse were Britain, France, Italy, and Austria-Hungary. After World War I, the latter dropped out. Official languages were Arabic, English, French and Italian.

<sup>31</sup>Peteani, op.cit., pp. 27-28. Salisbury denied this in 1890, ibid., n. 4. Peteani also thinks that Britain wished an Italian Libya to offset an eventual French Tunisia.



French favored the British proposal, because they wished to control Tunisia, Italy also wanted that country because it was near Sicily and had more Italians than Egypt.<sup>32</sup> In 1881, France occupied Tunisia, and in 1882, Britain and France jointly occupied Egypt. Britain invited Italy to intervene militarily in Egypt and restore order there. But the Italian Government declined the invitation, although the Italians in Alexandria were asking for Italian intervention,<sup>33</sup> and although such an intervention "would have been the first step to secure Italy's moral position in the Mediterranean basin, and to direct her to her future destiny."<sup>34</sup> After the occupation, however, Italy wished to be consulted by Britain regarding future developments in Egypt in order to protect her interests.<sup>35</sup>

Italy's failure to obtain a foot-hold in Egypt was much regretted by strategic-minded Italians then and later.<sup>36</sup> After 1882, Libya, instead of balancing Cyprus, was to be a balance for Tunisia and Egypt, as it was the only remaining

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<sup>32</sup>Ibid, pp. 32, 33. Italy's hopes in Tunisia were supported by Bismarck. This set Italy against France and eventually made her join the Triple Alliance, see p. 19.

<sup>33</sup>See Balboni, op.cit., vol II, pp. 187, 197-8.

<sup>34</sup>From an Italian parliamentary discussion of 9 March 1883, in Peteani, op.cit., p. 46. See also Italian Foreign Minister Mancini's explanation for Italy's non-intervention to the Senate on 30 June 1882. Ibid, p. 47

<sup>35</sup>Zayid Mahmud, Egypt's Struggle for Independence, (Beirut: Khayats, 1965), p. 32.

<sup>36</sup>See L'Italia militare, Aug. 1895, in H. Pensa (ed.), L'Egypte et l'Europe, (Paris: Joseph André & Cie., 1896), p. 51. Sammarco thinks the refusal was a mistake. See Angelo Sammarco, et. al., Egitto moderno, (Rome: Edizioni Rome, 1939), p. 88. See also Iwan Kirchner, Der nahe Osten (Munich: Rudolf M. Rohrer Verlag, 1943), p. 601.

territory in North Africa near Italy,<sup>37</sup> With this idea in mind, Italy and Britain reached an accord on the status quo in the Mediterranean in 1887, in which Italy received the go-ahead to occupy Libya.<sup>38</sup> Italy also joined the colonial race in other parts of Africa, where even Germany had acquired colonies. Hence in 1889 and 1890 respectively, she established colonial rule over Somaliland and Eritrea respectively. From then on, Italian official influence in Egypt was minor, and the Italian colony there, which had steadily grown, was practically abandoned by the mother country.<sup>39</sup> It took a chauvinist regime to reinstall a lost pride in these citizens.

Profiting from Turkey's preoccupation in the Balkans Italy declared war on her in September 1911 and invaded Libya in October. The 4,000 Turkish forces were no match for the 40,000 Italian troops and therefore the burden of resistance was shouldered by the Libyans, led by the Sanusis. When the Porte admitted defeat in October 1912 and renounced her rights over Libya by the Treaty of Lausanne, fighting did not cease. The Sanusi leaders continued the battle against the Italian Invaders.<sup>40</sup> Italy, by virtue of her possession of Libya, became an immediate neighbor of Egypt. Italian efforts to

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<sup>37</sup> Peteani, op.cit., p. 46 and Italy, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, L'Italia in Africa, Vol. II, (Rome: Istituto Poligrafico dello stato, 1955) p. 257.

<sup>38</sup> Peteani, op.cit., pp. 65-70; see also Current History, XVI, p. 902. In 1902, an Anglo-Italian agreement reconfirmed this, in exchange for Italian support of British policy in Egypt. See Peteani, op.cit., pp. 210, 219. The French also condoned Italy's intentions in Libya.

<sup>39</sup> Sammarco, op.cit., p. 153, and Sammarco, et.al., op.cit., p. 88.

<sup>40</sup> Nicola Ziadeh, Sānūsīyah, (Leiden; E.J. Brill, 1958) p. 69.

subdue the Sanusi resistance were the core of a lengthy diplomatic issue between Italy and Egypt, which is discussed in Chapter III. At Lausanne Italy moreover acquired the Greek inhabited Dodecanese Islands along the Turkish coast, which, as naval bases, served as a strategic balance against British Cyprus.<sup>41</sup>

At the outbreak of World War I in August 1914, Italy, although an ally of Germany and Austria-Hungary in the Triple Alliance, remained neutral. But early in 1915, Italy withdrew from the Triple Alliance to fight alongside Britain and France. Her share in the spoils of war was first set down in the Pact of London of 26 April 1915. According to Article 9, she was to receive parts of Turkey in case of partition. Article 13 stipulated that if France or Great Britain increased their African colonies at Germany's expense, Italy could also claim shares, and especially to rectify frontiers. Italy was not a party to the Sykes-Picot Agreement, but on April 17, 1916, she signed the Agreement of St. Jean de Maurienne, subject to Russian approval. By this agreement Italy became a party to the Sykes-Picot arrangement, while the sections on Balance of Power in the Mediterranean provided for by the London Pact were reconfirmed. As it happened, the Bolshevik Revolution did away with Russia's agreements. Britain and France then no

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<sup>41</sup>See Łukasz Hirszowicz, The Third Reich, and the Arab East, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966), p. 13, and Gennaro E. Pistolese, "La Libia nella politica mediterranea italiana" in Sillani, (ed.,) op.cit., p. 143.

longer considered themselves bound by the Agreement of St. Jean de Maurienne, while Atatürk foiled any Italian hopes of taking areas promised to her in Turkey. Italy had made a proportionately great contribution to the war effort. But following the war, she found herself relatively worse off than before in the Mediterranean, while in Europe she only added some more Italians, previously under Austria, to her crowded population. In the Mediterranean, she only received a confirmation of her Libyan and Dodecanese possessions, while Britain and France took colonies in Africa from Germany and occupied Syria and Palestine, thus increasing their strength in the Mediterranean.<sup>42</sup> Even the youngest power, Japan, took over German imperial outposts in Asia, like Kiauchow in China and the Palau Islands near the Philippines. Italy felt more than ever a prisoner of her beloved Mediterranean, cheated and poorer than before.<sup>43</sup>

This state of affairs was made more problematic by the geo-political views of the times.<sup>44</sup> Fascism was to magnify the problem even more. Already in 1919, an unsatisfied Mussolini wrote in *Popolo d'Italia* that England should be forced

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<sup>42</sup>See: Oriente Moderno, VI, p. 1; Current History, XVI, p. 902; A. Gingold Duprey, De l'invasion à la libération de l'Ethiopie, (Paris: Paul Dupont, 1955), p. 87, n. 2; G.T. Garratt Gibraltar and the Mediterranean, (London: Jonathan Cape, 1939), pp. 183, 204; S. Nava, Il problema dell'espansione italiana ed il Levante islamico, (Padua: Casa Editrice A. Milani, 1931) pp. 38-41; Maj. E. W. Polson Newman, The Mediterranean and Its Problems, (London: Cassell & Co. Ltd., 1927), pp. 13-14; Hirszowicz, op.cit., pp. 13-14.

<sup>43</sup>Garratt, op.cit., p. 183.

<sup>44</sup>Nicholas J. Spykman described it very aptly in "Geography and Foreign Policy", Part I, in the American Political Science Review XXXII, no. 1, Feb 1938, p. 43. See also Elizabeth Monroe, The Mediterranean in Politics, (London: Oxford University Press, 1938), p. 2.

out of the Mediterranean and that Italy should develop a merchant marine to compete with her in the East.<sup>45</sup> He failed in expelling the British from their strongholds, but the attempts to build a strong commercial fleet were quite successful.

Italy brought her strategic concerns to the attention of Britain, and in mid-June of 1922, the two countries conferred on Italy's position and needs in the Mediterranean. Lloyd George made written promises that Italy should have her due share in oil and raw materials, as well as an outlet for her surplus population. The Italian Foreign Minister Schanzer went to London for more talks in July.<sup>46</sup> But both Italians and non-Italians continued to express concern about Italy's precarious position in the Mediterranean. For example, Lord Balfour at the Washington Conference of 23 December 1921, recalled how difficult it had been to supply Italy during the war because of the German blockade, and doubted if such a blockade could be withstood again.<sup>47</sup> Then Italy had had powerful allies in Britain and France, but now Italy was unlikely to trust other powers after her own Machiavellian switch of sides during the war and the small spoils received in return. She had to rely

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<sup>45</sup>H. W. Schneider, & G. B. Clough, Making Fascists (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1929), p. 53.

<sup>46</sup>Current History, XVI, p. 902.

<sup>47</sup>Pistolese, op.cit., p. 143. For Italy's position in the Mediterranean, see also J. Nicholas Spykman, "Geography & Foreign Policy" Part II, in the American Political Science Review, XXXII, no. 2, Apr 1938, pp. 221, 227.

on herself. On January 16, 1923, it was decided to reorganize the weak Italian navy, which consisted of much outdated equipment;<sup>48</sup> but of the big powers, she was always to have a relatively small arms budget.<sup>49</sup>

Italian overall policy was expressed by an article in Politica in December 1924:

In Northern Africa, Morocco, and elsewhere, Italy possesses interests and a historical position, and she has no intention of renouncing them . . . We are dealing with facts and they demand that in any re-arrangement tending to re-establish the balance of power in the Mediterranean a proper rôle should be given to a country that counts a population of forty million, that breathes in the Mediterranean alone and which country is strongly implanted on the soil of Northern Africa, with Britain and France on either side. It is useless to ignore the existence of this people . . . Italy does not ask for any extensive grants of territory. Emerging from the war with very slight territorial gains in Northern Africa, Italy wants to maintain its historical position in Tunis and in Morocco and so to modify the frontiers of Tripolitania and Cyrenaica as to be able to have a better outlet for her surplus population. If other States whose population is stationary go on claiming more colonies, there is no reason why

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<sup>48</sup>Current History, XVII, Mar 1923, p. 1062. Italy had then 8 cruisers, 64 destroyers, 43 submarines.

<sup>49</sup>T. Sillani, L'Etat mussolinien, (Paris: Librairie Plon, 1931) p. 12.

Italy, whose population increases by half a million every year, should not have an equally good claim.<sup>50</sup>

The colonization of arid Libya, unique as an experiment, seems to have been done to spite Italy's former allies.<sup>51</sup> For to develop agriculture in this desert land, implied that strategically Libya could become an extension of the mainland, and garrisons there would not need to be supplied from Italian peninsula.<sup>52</sup> This was an ambitious and costly plan, which weighed heavily on the Italian economy. Italy, by strategic necessity, was "almost forced to cripple her own economic productiveness in order to insure any adequate protection at all. The cost of national defence is the price of freedom and must be paid."<sup>53</sup>

The main Italian concern was expressed by Mussolini: "For others the Mediterranean is a route; for us it is life itself."<sup>54</sup> This idea became the center of Fascist policy which saw Italy as the Mediterranean nation par excellence. In the Fascist view she was "virtually excluded from the control of the Mediterranean; she is imprisoned and besieged in her own

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<sup>50</sup>Article by Ferdinando Nobili Massuero, Politica, Rome, Dec 1924, in Current History, XXII, p. 165.

<sup>51</sup>See Gaspare Ambrosini, I problemi del Mediterraneo (Rome: 1937), p. 23, quoted in Monroe, op.cit., p. 163.

<sup>52</sup>Moore, op.cit., p. 14. See also Pistolese, op.cit., p. 151.

<sup>53</sup>Capt. Elbridge Colby, "America's Army Compared to Forces of Other Powers", in Current History, XXVII, Oct 1927 - Mar 1928, p. 351.

<sup>54</sup>Moore, op.cit., p. 211. See also Luigi Villari, Italian Foreign Policy Under Mussolini, (New York: The Devin-Adair Co., 1956) p. 182.

ocean."<sup>55</sup> Britain, who controlled Suez and Gibraltar could starve her by means of a blockade. British shipping through Suez amounted only to 10% of total British shipping, and Italy hence assumed that the loss of Suez could not be disastrous for Britain.<sup>56</sup> Italian policy was aimed at weakening Britain's strong position.

At the other end of the Mediterranean, Italy after 1936 began to support Franco in establishing himself in Spain. Thereby Italy gained the use of two strategic Spanish islands and the hope to create trouble for the British on Gibraltar. But first the omnipresent British were to be dealt with at the eastern end of mare nostrum. In Palestine, Mussolini played the part of the anti-Zionist,<sup>57</sup> while for the rest of the Arab world, the nationalist theme came into the foreground. Unfortunately, Italy was an imperialist among imperialists, and her Libyan venture spoiled the image. But as an ever-growing anti-British power, she did appeal to Arabs everywhere. Cordial relations were established with the independent regimes of Yemen and Hijaz.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Francesco Coppola, "Italy in the Mediterranean" in Foreign Affairs, vol, I, June 1923, p. 108. See also Italy, Ministry of Italian Africa, Gli Annali Dell'Africa Italiana, year I, vol, III - IV, (Verona: Casa Editrice Mondadori, 1938) p. 435.

<sup>56</sup> Commander Russel Grenfell, "Mediterranean Strategy after the Franco Victory" in Foreign Affairs, July 1939, p. 735 See also Hector C. Bywater, "The Changing Balance of Forces in the Mediterranean" in International Affairs, XVI, May-June 1937 p. 377. Total British Suez shipping exceeded that of Italy, but Italian dependence on it was greater.

<sup>57</sup> Villari, Italian Foreign Policy, pp. 198-203.

<sup>58</sup> Hirszowicz, op.cit., p. 14.



Egypt, however, remained a special target. Although as part of the ancient Roman Empire, it could have been considered as worthy to be incorporated in the Fascist Empire, it was not suited for Italy's population scheme.<sup>59</sup> But as a country that had barely received its formal independence, with which it was dissatisfied, and as a neighbor of Italy via Libya, close political contacts were inevitable. Italy, from the outset sided with Egypt's aspirations.

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<sup>59</sup>Sammarco, op.cit., p. 33.

## II. ITALO-EGYPTIAN RELATIONS 1922-1937

It has been well said that foreigners' relationships to Egypt have always been like those of a band of suitors towards a beautiful woman; they will shower favours on her, they will caress her, but only so long as they can still hope to possess her.

Amine Youssef Bey.

Early in 1922, Egypt became a nominally independent monarchy and later in the same year, Benito Mussolini's Fascist regime began in Italy. Egypt's major political objective was to secure a greater degree of independence, and to abolish the capitulatory system. Italy supported these aspirations, although in regard to the Capitulations she acted contrary to the wishes of the Italian community in Egypt. Fascist Italy, however, was lavish in her care for her nationals abroad and the Italians of Egypt were used to demonstrate to the Egyptians the "superiority" of the Fascist system. The numerous Italian schools in Egypt, which were frequented by many Egyptians, were improved, new ones were constructed, and the Egyptians were urged to send their children to them in even greater numbers. Italian propagandist activity included scholarships and cultural programs, but it culminated in the Arabic-language broadcast from Bari, which enabled Italy to effectively reach greater numbers of Arabs, particularly Egyptians and Palestinians.

Already before Mussolini assumed power, the Italian Government observed political developments in Egypt. The Egyptians demanded independence, abolition of the Capitulations and a treaty with Great Britain. Egyptians went to Europe,

including Italy, to obtain support from the various Governments for their aspirations.<sup>1</sup> Italy supported the Egyptian stand for independence and against the Capitulations, as will be seen in this chapter. By the invasion of Ethiopia, Italy created an atmosphere which led Britain and Egypt to conclude a treaty, as is shown in chapter IV. Italy was dissatisfied with her spoils from the War and therefore ill-disposed towards Great Britain. The Italian Government then began to assist nationalist agitators in Egypt for the purpose of annoying the British.<sup>2</sup> Some Egyptians disseminated anti-British propaganda in Italy,<sup>3</sup> and their writings and favorable Italian comments were published in the Italian press.<sup>4</sup> Other Egyptians bought arms in Turin, shipped them to Libya and smuggled them across the desert into Egypt.<sup>5</sup> The policy of supporting anti-British forces in Egypt became more pronounced under Fascism.

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<sup>1</sup> Ahmed Chafik Pacha, L'Egypte moderne et les influences étrangères, (Cairo: Imprimerie Misr, 1931), p. 205. In 1919, the Wafd under Zaghlul presented its case in Paris. Inconclusive negotiations to the same effect took place between Lord Milner and Zaghlul in early 1921. These were followed by negotiations between 'Adli Pasha and Lord Curzon in July 1921. See Mahmud Zayid, Egypt's Struggle for Independence, (Beirut: Khayats, 1965), pp. 95 ff. and 102 ff.

<sup>2</sup> The Near East (after 1935: Great Britain and the East) XX, Aug 11, 1921, p. 162. The periodical will hereafter be referred to as GB & E.

<sup>3</sup> Lord Lloyd, Egypt Since Cromer, vol II, (London: Macmillan & Co. Ltd., 1934), Appendix A, p. 380.

<sup>4</sup> GB & E, XX, Nov 17, 1921, p. 615.

<sup>5</sup> GB & E, XX, Dec 1, 1921, p. 690. They were caught by the police. Ironically, it was to prevent arms from going from Egypt to Libya that Italy pressed for a border settlement. See below, Chapter III.

In November 1921, Lord Curzon submitted a draft for a treaty between Britain and Egypt. It gave Egypt little real independence and left actual control of foreign affairs, military and financial matters, and the Sudan with Britain. Therefore, it met with violent objection in Egypt.<sup>6</sup> According to the draft, British forces were to protect Egypt's "vital interests." Italy's interpretation was that such British protective measures could only be directed against an imaginary "eventual attempt on the part of Italy against Egypt's independence."<sup>7</sup>

British efforts to restore order in Egypt encouraged Egyptians abroad to continue their attempts to enlist Italian sentiment in their favour. The Egyptian Association in Italy (al-Jam'iyya al-Misriyya bi Italiya) published an appeal in Italian on 30 December 1921. It strongly accused the British of atrocities and barbarism, and called on the Italians to support Egypt's desires for independence.<sup>8</sup> The upheavals in Egypt led the British Government on February 22, 1922, to unilaterally declare the Protectorate abolished. Egypt had become independent.

But the British reserved for themselves four major points in the Declaration: 1. Communications to India, 2. Defense of Egypt against foreign attack, 3. Protection of minorities and foreign interests and 4, the Sudan. There was

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<sup>6</sup>Zayid, op.cit., pp. 102, 103, 107.

<sup>7</sup>La Liberté, Cairo, 12 Dec 1921, in Oriente Moderno (hereafter referred to as OM), I, p. 496. Article by E. Manusardi, an Italian lawyer.

<sup>8</sup>OM, I, 1921, pp. 496-497.

immediate protest in Egypt against the reservations. The Italian public was informed of this by the President of the Egyptian Association, Dr. 'Abd al-Hamid Sa'id, in an article published in Rome, which rejected the reservations.<sup>9</sup> He could hope for Italian support, because Italy did not favour the idea of British protection of her subjects and interests in Egypt. Furthermore, the Italian Government still felt that Italy was the only potential aggressor against whom Britain would wish to defend Egypt.<sup>10</sup>

'Abd al-Hamid Sa'id was also the leader of the League of Oppressed Peoples, which had its head-quarters in Rome. During a meeting of the League in Geneva in May 1922, Italy demonstrated her support of Arab aspirations, when Gabriele d'Annunzio expressed his sympathies for oppressed Arabs. The Syrian delegate, Amir Shakib Arslan, recalled Italy's old ties with the Orient and prophesied that she would reassume her historic position. All voted enthusiastically for his suggestion that an Italo-Oriental Chamber of Commerce be formed to promote economic relations for the benefit of the Orient.<sup>11</sup> A few months later in Italy, 'Abd al-Hamid Sa'id, in his capacity as leader of the League, spoke out against the English in

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<sup>9</sup>Tribuna Coloniale, 11 Mar 1922, in OM, II, p. 627. 'Abd al-Hamid Sa'id later became a Nationalist deputy and became strongly anti-Italian during the Ethiopian Crisis. See Chapter IV, p. 128.

<sup>10</sup>OM, II, p. 11.

<sup>11</sup>OM, II, p. 15. Arslan was soon to become strongly anti-Italian because of Italian activities in Libya (see chapter III, p. 90), but later again he became an ardent pro-Italian (see chapter IV, p. 127-129).

Egypt. He also claimed that the European colonies there, especially the Italian, were on the side of the Egyptians. He appealed to Italian pride when he maintained that:

The English are trying to impede the realization of an airline project between Naples and Alexandria, not only because they want to avoid competition from Italian goods, but also to prevent that the close relations between the two Mediterranean countries become more intimate. This, like other facts of the same type should open the eyes of the Italians, whose sympathy and interests are all in favor of Egyptian liberty.<sup>12</sup>

On October 28, 1922, Italy became Fascist, Arslan's prophecy seemed to become true, because soon it was evident that Italy intended to become the predominant power in the Mediterranean. She had to become strong, if she wished to achieve her four major objectives, which can be expressed by these catchwords: liberty, security, nationalism, and colonialism. Liberty meant that Britain must lose her ability to bottle up Italy in the Mediterranean from Suez and Gibraltar. Security called for a balance to the British, French, Greek and Yugoslav naval bases. Nationalism demanded control over the large Italian communities under foreign rule. Finally, colonialism, implied the intention to acquire territory equal to that of Britain and France.<sup>13</sup> Egypt was definitely touched by the objectives of liberty and nationalism. The British reservation

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<sup>12</sup>Il Popolo d'Italia, Fascist Organ of Milan, 2 Sept 1922, in OM, II, p. 250.

<sup>13</sup>See Francesco Coppola, "Italy in the Mediterranean" in American Quarterly Review, I, 1923, p. 106 ff. Cited by Margret Boveri, Mediterranean Cross-Currents, (London: Oxford University Press, 1938), p. 171-172.

concerning the defense of Egypt, could implicate that country in the objective of security. As a neighbor of the Italian colony of Libya, Egypt also became involved in the colonialist objective. The cornerstone for Italian policy was the transformation of Libya into an economic and military stronghold. To do this, absolute control by Italy over Libya was essential. First, however, the Sanusis, whose headquarters lay in Egypt, had to be subdued. The result was a heated issue over the Egypto-Libyan border, which began in 1922 and dragged on until 1934. It is dealt with in the next chapter.

Italy did not restrict herself to Egypt, but tried to reach all Arabs. Many Arabs considered her to be friendlier to Muslim peoples than Great Britain.<sup>14</sup> Since Italy objected to Britain's positions of strength in these countries, the Arabs considered her a potential supporter of their demands for independence, in spite of Italy's colonization of Libya. Considering mutual Italian and Arab interests and grievances,

It followed inevitably that Signor Mussolini began to take an interest in, and then to patronize and encourage the various Islamic and Pan-Arab movements in the French and British colonies.<sup>15</sup>

In March 1922, an Egyptian cabinet was formed and in April a Foreign Ministry was established. To regularize foreign

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<sup>14</sup>Arthur Moore, "Britain and Islam" in Atlantic Monthly, CXXX, July-Dec 1922, p. 709.

<sup>15</sup>G.T. Garratt, Mussolini's Roman Empire, (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd., 1938), p. 14.

relations in general, the Egyptian Government named its representatives to the major Powers on 18 September 1923. Ahmed Zivar, a future premier, was appointed minister to Rome.<sup>16</sup>

On 19 November 1924, the Sirdar Sir Lee Stack was murdered. Great Britain held the Egyptian Government responsible and presented it with an ultimatum, which demanded an apology and a fine. It, and a second ultimatum, also requested Egypt to relinquish military administration in the Sudan and the protection of foreigners to Britain. British troops were deployed to give weight to these ultimata.<sup>17</sup> The British attitude over the incident was resented by the Egyptians and Italy at once sided with them,<sup>18</sup> because it wanted to exploit the turmoil caused by the murder.<sup>19</sup> The British then urged action, lest more Englishmen get killed. The only alternative seemed to be withdrawal from Egypt, which, they assumed, would only bring in the Italians or the French.<sup>20</sup> Of interest also is the unusual behaviour of Italian-educated King Fu'ad. According to an eyewitness, when the High Commissioner and the Commander-in-Chief of the British Forces and some officers entered 'Abdin Palace, they found King Fu'ad wearing the uniform of a general of the Royal Italian Artillery, saying:

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<sup>16</sup> OM, III, pp. 314. At first Judge Isma'il Muhammad Bey handled affairs in Rome as Consul Second Class. Ibid, p. 459.

<sup>17</sup> Zayid, op. cit. pp. 121-122.

<sup>18</sup> The Times, London, 27 Nov 1924. Hereafter referred to as Times.

<sup>19</sup> Maj. E. W. Polson Newman, Great Britain in Egypt, (London: Cassell & Co., Ltd, 1928) p. 256.

<sup>20</sup> Daily Mail, 13 Dec 1924, in OM, V, p. 34.



You see me in the tunic of my past. Today I am but an Italian general of artillery, and every thing I say to you is not binding for this country and its Government. For you, the King is not in.<sup>21</sup>

Zaghlul resigned after the murder, and Ziwar, who had been first Egyptian Minister to Rome, became the new head of Government. He was popular among the Europeans in Egypt.<sup>22</sup> Italy, who had found Zaghlul hard to deal with, particularly over the Libyan border question, now could look forward to a settlement to that outstanding issue. Relations between Italy and Egypt improved under Ziwar's term, and an accord on the border was even reached in December 1925, in face of considerable Egyptian political and popular opposition.<sup>23</sup>

On 8 April 1926, Mussolini declared that "We are Mediterraneans and our destiny, without imitating anyone, has been and will always be on the Sea."<sup>24</sup> and that "Destiny sends us to Africa . . . no one can bend our inexorable will."<sup>25</sup> Accordingly, Italian activity in the Middle East gained momentum and was observed especially in the free Arab areas, such as 'Asir, Yemen and Hijaz. With the latter two, Italy signed treaties of friendship. Some Egyptians noticed that their demands frequently received Italian support, and urged Arab leaders everywhere to appeal to Italy.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>21</sup>I. Kirchner, Der nahe Osten, (Munich: Rudolf M. Rohrer Verlag, 1943), p. 696.

<sup>22</sup>Marino Mario Moreno, "La Situazione interna dell'Egitto dall'Uccisione del Sirdar ad Oggi," in OM, V, p. 234.

<sup>23</sup>See Chapter III, p. 74 ff.

<sup>24</sup>Boveri, op.cit., p. 107.

<sup>25</sup>A. Gingold Duprey, De l'invasion à la libération de l'Ethiopie, Vol I, (Paris: Paul Dupont, 1955), p. 92.

<sup>26</sup>Al-Muqattam, 16 Dec 1924, in OM, V, pp. 147-149.

At first, Italian ambitions were considered by Britain to be economic, without implying territorial threat to her possessions.<sup>27</sup> But there were indications in the Italian press that Egypt could become a target for Italy's future empire.<sup>28</sup> Such ideas aroused Egyptian and British suspicions and eventually led to the conclusion of the 1936 Anglo-Egyptian Treaty. The English thought that Mussolini would not affect his image by trying to control Egypt at this time, especially since Italian influence had made great progress over the past four years. But they did suspect that

Were Great Britain to leave Egypt to herself there is little doubt that Italy would not be long in finding a justifiable reason for intervention in a country where there is a large Italian population and extensive Italian business interest.<sup>29</sup>

A considerable number of Egyptians shared this British view.<sup>30</sup> But Josiah P. Wedgwood, a British MP and member of the Labour Party reached a different conclusion by assuming that Italy had intentions of taking Egypt. He thought that an Italian Egypt

<sup>27</sup>GB & E, XXXII, July 7, 1927, p. 3. See also Albert Howe Lybyer, "Italy's Ambitions in the Near East" in Current History, XXVI, Apr - Sept 1927, p. 297.

<sup>28</sup>See a quotation in La Rassegna Italiana, Dec 1925, p. 712; given in Maj. E. W. Polson Newman, The Mediterranean and Its problems, (London: Oxford University Press, 1927), p. 75.

<sup>29</sup>Sir Frederick Maurice, "British Policy in the Mediterranean" in Foreign Affairs, Oct 1926, p. 113.

<sup>30</sup>Polson Newman, Great Britain in Egypt, p. 256. Egyptians generally preferred British control, which they knew, to an unknown fate under Italy. See Fikri Abaza, al-Mussawar, Aug 1940, in Albert Viton, "Britain and the Axis in the Near East" in Foreign Affairs, Jan 1941, p. 378. See also George Young, Egypt, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1927) pp. 312-313.

was not such a bad solution, since it would benefit British commerce, while eliminating the cost of troops there. The Sudan would remain under British control, while Fascism could well protect foreign interests in Egypt. He even considered trading Eritrea for Egypt.<sup>31</sup>

Such ideas were considered as nonsense by the Egyptian press.<sup>32</sup> The thought that Italy would want to replace Britain had been gathered from a variety of Italian publications. Some stated that Italy must build an Empire; others said that she should cooperate with the natives to create new states in the Mediterranean. An aggressive attitude was noticed among Italians who maintained that they had been cheated of their war spoils under a pacifist democracy, and that this would not happen under Fascism.<sup>33</sup> But next to this belligerent attitude of some writers there existed a peaceful one. It expressed friendship for Egypt:

Egypt has the sympathy of the Italian nation as well as of Fascism. These may be of use to her tomorrow, as to us also may well be useful the friendship of a country so rich and near to us like Egypt, where there are so many

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<sup>31</sup>Josiah C. Wedgwood, "The Future of Egypt" in Observer, 23 Jan, and to al-Ahram, 11 Feb 1927, in OM, VII, pp. 34, 99. Also GB & E, XXXI, Jan 27, 1927, p. 74. and Feb 24, p. 201. His alternative suggestion was a commonwealth arrangement. Ideas like these were not isolated. About the same time, a Lord Rothermore suggested that parts of Iraq and Palestine be given as mandates to Italy, Others agreed with the principle, if not the territory. See Polson Newman, the Mediterranean etc. p. 309. In View of Italy's support for the Arabs against Zionism, Palestine was seen as a liability rather than an asset for British defense of Egypt. See G. T. Garratt, Gibraltar and the Mediterranean, (London: Jonathan Cape, 1939), p. 331.

<sup>32</sup>Al-Siyasa, 14 Feb 1927, in OM, VII, p. 99.

<sup>33</sup>Francesco Coppola writing in Politica, LXXI, cited in Current History, XXIV, Apr - Sept 1926, p. 597.

working Italians, and so many traditions of Italian collaboration.<sup>34</sup>

Italian policy towards Egypt in the 1920s and 1930s was peaceful. Italy did want Britain to withdraw from Egypt and was convinced that this would not harm the British Empire.<sup>35</sup> But Italy's colonial policy was one of mass emigration, as in Libya. For such a purpose, densely populated Egypt was unsuited.<sup>36</sup>

While Italy expressed support for the opposition parties in Egypt, the Italian Government also bestowed honors on the holders of power in Egypt. For example, in March 1927, Paternò di Manchi, the Italian Minister, conferred on Premier 'Adli Yakan Pasha the Grand Ribbon of Saints Maurice and Lazarus, by order of the Italian King.<sup>37</sup> This flattery was matched by the Egyptians. In July, King Fu'ad, hoping to ease Anglo-Egyptian relations, went to London. On his way back, he visited Italy for the first time as King, together with 'Abd al-Khaliq Tharwat, his new Premier. They were received by the Duce, and later stayed as guests of the Italian King in the Quirinal. They also visited the Pope. Victor Emanuel spoke of historic ties,

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<sup>34</sup>Paolo Orsini di Camerota, L'Italia nella politica africana, (Bologna: Licinio Copelli, 1927), from a review in GB & E, XXXI, June 9, 1927, p. 689.

<sup>35</sup>Luigi Federzoni, "Hegemony in the Mediterranean" in Foreign Affairs, April 1936, pp. 393-394. The Italian problem was well interpreted by Maj. Polson Newman. He saw that "Italy's vital need is a freedom of passage from her coasts to the outside world . . . and it is . . . Britain's duty to open this question with the Powers with a view of finding a solution, to the benefit of Italy and the maintenance of future peace." The Mediterranean, etc. p. 10. "Unless some solution can be found . . . nothing can prevent events taking their natural course and that course has only one ending - war." Ibid p. 8. Similar ideas were expressed by Howard R. Martaro, "Italy's program of Empire" in Current History, XXIV, p. 545.

<sup>36</sup>Santi Nava, Il problema dell'espansione italiana ed il Levante islamico, (Padua: Casa Editrice A. Milani, 1931) p. 146.

<sup>37</sup>Il Messaggero Egiziano, 18 Mar 1927, OM, VII, p. 182.

and Fu'ad, speaking in Italian, expressed his love for Italy and his gratitude for "the precious efforts" of the Italians in Egypt.<sup>38</sup>

On the occasion of King Fu'ad's visit, the Italians, generally ignorant of Egypt, were informed by their press that their country had never caused resentment in Egypt, and that Italy would support Egypt's struggle for independence.<sup>39</sup> The Egyptian press picked up the topic of the visit in a variety of tones. Al-Ahram hoped for continued good relations between Italy and Egypt, and for more places for Egyptians in Italian universities. Al-Muqattam recalled the past historic ties, praised the Italians, and expected support from Italy in the Capitulations issue. Al-Siyasa more realistically pointed out existing problems, like the unratified treaty on the Egypto-Libyan border, the Capitulations and the Consular Courts; but it hoped for a future settlement of all these issues in a friendly atmosphere.<sup>40</sup> Al-Balagh was most suspicious of Italy's attitude towards the Capitulations. The paper even suspected that Mussolini proposed that King Fu'ad should appoint Italians to high government positions in compensation for Italy's support

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<sup>38</sup>OM, VII, pp. 362, 377, 380, 392, and Nava, op.cit., pp. 172-173.

<sup>39</sup>Il Corriere della Sera, Milan, 29 July 1927, in OM, VII, p. 377.

<sup>40</sup>Al-Ahram, 2 Aug, al-Muqattam, 4 Aug, and al-Siyasa, 3 Aug 1927, in OM, VII, pp. 381-382. The article in al-Ahram was most flattering.

for a modification of the Capitulations.<sup>41</sup> This indicates that the King was at times viewed suspiciously for his Italian upbringing, although at other times this was exploited when pointing to Italo-Egyptian friendship.<sup>42</sup> Whatever views were expressed, it had become clear that Italy intended to be considered an important power in the Mediterranean.<sup>43</sup>

On January 31, 1928, the heir to the Italian throne, Prince Umberto, arrived on an unofficial visit to Egypt. He received an enthusiastic welcome from Italians, Egyptians and foreigners, and stayed in Cairo as King Fu'ad's guest from February 1 to 5. Egyptian students also sent him greetings.<sup>44</sup> This visit presented the press with another good opportunity to give publicity to Italo-Egyptian relations. It repeated the same points that it had made during Fu'ad's visit to Italy.<sup>45</sup> Lest the British should become concerned over Italy's intentions in Egypt, the Duce spoke of the profound Anglo-Italian friendship, when he addressed the Senate on June 5, 1928.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>41</sup>Quoted in L'Imparziale, 4 Aug 1927, in OM, VII, p.382.

<sup>42</sup>See Angelo Sammarco, Gli Italiani in Egitto, (Alexandria: Edizioni del Fascio, 1937), p. 82; Young, op.cit., p. 262; and Murray Harris, Egypt Under the Egyptians, (London: Chapman & Hall Ltd., 1925) p. 133.

<sup>43</sup>Polson Newman, The Mediterranean etc. p. 12.

<sup>44</sup>OM, VIII, p. 79; L'Imparziale, 1 Feb 1928, in OM, VIII, p. 80; GB & E, XXXIII, Feb 2, 16, 23, 1928, pp. 137, 197, 230.

<sup>45</sup>Al-Siyasa, 1 Feb, al-Ahram, 2 Feb al-Kashshaf, al-Muqattam and Il Messaggero Egiziano, 6 Feb 1928, in OM, VIII, p. 79.

<sup>46</sup>Maxwell H. H. Macartney and Paul Cremona, Italy's Foreign and Colonial Policy, 1914-1937, (London: Oxford University Press, 1938) p. 169 .

The good atmosphere in Italo-Egyptian relations facilitated the negotiation and conclusion of new agreements. In January 1928, an accord was signed between the Egyptian Foreign Ministry and the Italian Legation on the turning over of deserters.<sup>47</sup> Another accord concerned a question of nationality. Already in 1923 an accord had been reached on the status of Libyans in Egypt, which permitted them to opt for Italian citizenship. Italy desired a similar agreement regarding the Dodecanesian Greeks living in Egypt. On 26 July 1928, Egypt recognized Italian rights and jurisdiction in the Dodecanese, and most of the several thousand Dodecanesians in Egypt opted for Italian citizenship. Those who - like some Libyans - were engaged in "irredentist" activities against Italy, preferred to fall under Egyptian jurisdiction.<sup>48</sup>

Italy's policy made her and the Fascist system rather popular in Egypt. Most of the praise came from the organ of the Liberal Constitutionalists, al-Siyasa, which previously had not been pro-Italian. When 'Abd al-Khaliq Tharwat Pasha died in Paris on 22 September 1928, the paper called him "the hero of Egyptian independence, as [was]

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<sup>47</sup> Al-Siyasa, 13 Jan 1928, in OM, VIII, p. 81.

<sup>48</sup> A. Assabghy and E. Colombani Bey, Les questions de nationalité en Egypte, (Cairo: Imprimerie Misr, 1926), p. 132; Il Corriere della Sera, Milan 10 Aug 1928, in OM, VIII, pp. 368-369; GB & E, XXXIV, Aug 30, 1928, p. 237. They had been treated as Ottomans or locals, but could travel abroad with Italian papers. The new status was obviously more profitable.

Cavour of the Italian [independence]". On the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the end of World War I, al-Siyasa lauded the great achievements of Fascism, while on the seventh Fascist anniversary, it indulged in flowery praise of the regime in Italy.<sup>49</sup> Egyptian admiration for Fascism was attributed to the "oriental" concept of power: The authority of one strong man assisted by a select few chosen by him.<sup>50</sup> In order to see if Italian methods could work in Egypt, the Italian Ministers of Finance and Agriculture, Count G. Volpi and Giacomo Acerbo, came on a visit to acquaint themselves with the financial and agricultural needs of Egypt.<sup>51</sup>

Italy's image was well represented in Egypt by her Minister, Marquis Paternò di Manchi, who had been in office since 1926. Early in 1930 he was replaced and his departure was viewed with regret and sympathy. According to Great Britain and the East, he had defended his country's interest with "such ability, such tact, and such personal qualities that he has managed to make a consistent success of his mission

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<sup>49</sup>Al-Siyasa, 23 Sept and 31 Oct 1928, in OM, VIII, pp. 481, 541, and 1 Nov 1929, in OM, IX, p. 540. On the 7th anniversary it wrote that Italy could look back in pride and that the enemies of Fascism could not deny that "the ends of the State and of modern regimes, whatever their color, cannot be realized better than Fascism has realized them, and that the national aspirations, the well-being of life, the reflourishing of national life in all its aspects, have reached the highest vertex through the work of the regime that based itself on violence."

<sup>50</sup>B. G. Gaulis, Le nationalisme Egyptien, (Paris: Berger-Levrault, 1928), p. 183.

<sup>51</sup>OM, X, p. 129.



while retaining the respect and in fact gaining the affection . . . of both foreigners and Egyptians."<sup>52</sup> On April 16, his successor, Roberto Cantalupo presented his credentials to King Fu'ad and outlined Fascist policy. He first spoke of the functions of Roman civilization in the Mediterranean. Then he pointed out possibilities for cooperation and argued that the Fascist Government was singularly suited to solve modern problems.<sup>53</sup> On 16 June a provisional commercial accord was signed in Cairo by Wasif Butros Ghali, Egyptian Foreign Minister, and Cantalupo.<sup>54</sup> On October 2, a bilateral accord on measures against dengue fever was signed.<sup>55</sup>

The border problem with Libya again became aggravated in 1930 and 1931 because Egypt had not yet ratified the 1925 Treaty. Premier Isma'il Sidqi Pasha urged ratification, which was done in June 1932. With this matter settled, he visited Rome on July 27, to obtain concessions from Italy on another issue. First he expressed his admiration for progress under Fascism, and the mutually beneficial cotton deals and Italian

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<sup>52</sup>GB & E, XXXVII, Feb 27, 1930, p. 228. He had replaced Count Caccia Dominioni in 1926. Caccia Dominioni was also an Egyptian Italian of long standing. Probably it was his son, Paolo Caccia Dominioni, Count of Sillavengo, who wrote El Alamein, 1933-1962, (Milan: Longanesi, 1962), which gives an interesting insight into the mind of an Italian from Egypt during the period under consideration.

<sup>53</sup>OM, X, pp. 93, 94, 181; GB & E, XXXVII, May 1, 1930, p. 490. Compare this with al-Siyasa, 1 Nov 1929, as cited in note 49 above.

<sup>54</sup>Il Giornale d'Oriente, Alexandria, 17 June 1930, in OM, X, p. 329. French text in Journal Officiel of Egypt, July 10, 1930; English translation in Great Britain, Foreign Office, British Foreign and State Papers, vol. CXXXIII, 1930, part II, (London: H.M. Stationery Office, 1935), pp. 379-380.

<sup>55</sup>Ratifications were exchanged in Cairo on June 29, 1931. From Journal Officiel, July 23, 1931. English text in British and Foreign State Papers, vol CXXXIII, part II, 1930, pp. 380-381.

financial aid. Then he shifted to one of Egypt's major problems - her foreign debt. By the original agreement, it was to be paid in gold. Britain had gone off the gold standard and was prepared to waive her right to gold payment but France and Italy had repeatedly urged Egypt to settle the debt soon in gold. Sidqi declared that insistence on payment in gold was unfair, in view of the fact that European countries at that time were trying to avoid paying their debts. Italy had the legal right to insist on gold, but she acceded in principle to Sidqi's request for diplomatic negotiations on the matter. Her only condition to relinquishing that right was that France should do the same.<sup>56</sup> Thus Italy had pushed the matter in France's lap, and could now pose even more as the friend of the Egyptians. On January 21, 1933, the Mixed Courts made a minor concession by deciding that Egypt should pay the Public Debt in "sterling at gold parity". The Egyptians, however, decided again to negotiate for a better settlement.<sup>57</sup> Since many Italian nationals in Egypt had a large amount of Egyptian government and bank bonds, Italy's acceptance of Egypt's wish was contrary to their interests.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> OM, XII, pp. 366, 387; GB & E, XLI, Sept 22, 29, Dec 1, 1932, pp. 700, 760, 967, XLII, May 25, 1933, p. 411.

<sup>57</sup> GB & E, XLII, Jan 26, 1933, p. 70.

<sup>58</sup> Current History, XXXVIII, p. 635.

By 1933, Italy had subdued the Sanusis in Libya. Her mass colonization there with the intention of making Libya an extension of the Italian mainland, was viewed with apprehension in Britain:

If that uninterrupted band of Italians can stretch westwards from Porto Bardia to Ben Ghazi, why should it not also stretch eastwards from Porto Bardia to Alexandria? For a long score of years Italy has been treading on England's feet in Egypt.<sup>59</sup>

Once in Egypt, the Italians would logically try to take Palestine. The fear arose in Britain that "Italy is assuming the position of eminence in the Near East which Germany held up to 1914."<sup>60</sup>

What strengthened this fear was the most spectacular event thus far in Italo-Egyptian relations, namely the visit of King Victor Emanuel to Egypt. Every care was taken to make the visit successful and to give him a reception as festive as the one King Fu'ad had received in Rome six years earlier.<sup>61</sup> The pro-Italian sympathy, which had been cultivated over the past years was expressed when the Italian sovereign landed on 20 February 1933. It was the biggest event since the opening of the Suez Canal.<sup>62</sup> Victor Emmanuel was received

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<sup>59</sup>Geoffrey Popham, "Under the Lictor's Emblem" in GB & E, XLI, Dec 29, 1932, p. 1052.

<sup>60</sup>Ibid., p. 1053. Italian Foreign policy puzzled some observers, who saw it as not following a fixed course; hence one had to expect surprises. See W. Y. Elliott, "Mussolini Turns to Thoughts of Peace" in Current History, Apr - July 1932, XXXVI, p. 19.

<sup>61</sup>Al-Ahram, 8 Feb 1933, quoting Deputy 'Abd Allah Lamum, in OM, XIII, p. 95.

<sup>62</sup>Times, 21 Feb 1933; GB & E, XLII, Mar 9, 1933, p. 184. In 1928, King Amanullah of Afghanistan, and in 1930, the King and Queen of Belgium had come to Egypt, but they received nothing that approximated Victor Emanuel's reception. See GB & E, XLII, Mar 23, 1933, p. 225.

by King Fu'ad, members of the Cabinet and high palace officials.<sup>63</sup> King Fu'ad greeted the Italian King with praise for Italy, and after his own long, flowery and laudatory reply, Victor Emanuel received an honorary title as Doctor of Law from the Egyptian university. When this occurred, the speaker presenting it, even managed to credit the Italians with great accomplishments in Egypt, which they had never performed.<sup>64</sup> In Cairo, the streets to 'Abdin Palace were lined with the flags of both nations. Once the two sovereigns arrived at the palace, "large crowds of Italians shouted for their King, who appeared several times on the balcony to acknowledge their cheers."<sup>65</sup> The visit was doubtlessly a resounding success. To Britain, this was not merely a polite return visit, but an encouragement to all Italians in Egypt and the Arab World. It also served to make an impression on the Arabs.<sup>66</sup>

The visit encouraged Italy even more, and on 19 May, Pietro Perretti spoke critically of the Mandatory Powers to the Italian Chamber, and expressed the desire that the British and French Mandates in the Near East should gain their freedom. He assured the Arabs in the Mandates of support and understanding in Italy.<sup>67</sup> With this policy, Italy actually aimed more at

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<sup>63</sup>Times, 21 Feb 1933.      <sup>64</sup>OM, XIII, pp. 147-148.

<sup>65</sup>Times, 21 Feb 1933.      <sup>66</sup>Times, 22 Feb 1933.

<sup>67</sup>Il Messaggero, 20 May 1933, in OM, XIII, pp. 291-292.

the Arab masses than at their leaders, because in the opinion of her diplomats,

The ruling classes basically favour the English, since they hope with their aid to retain their privileges which it would be difficult to retain otherwise. Many words and little concrete activity can be expected of them.<sup>68</sup>

In December 1933, Mussolini addressed a meeting of Oriental students in Rome. He predicted a renewed meeting of East and West once again through Rome.<sup>69</sup> But in Egypt, Italy was still viewed somewhat suspiciously as the colonial power she was, and the Duce's desire for East-West cooperation was termed a sweet dream.<sup>70</sup> Mussolini reiterated his Arab policy on March 19, 1934, at the Royal Opera Theater on the occasion of the Second Quinquennial Assembly of the Regime;

The historic objectives of Italy have two names: Asia and Africa. South and East are cardinal points which must stir the interest and will of the Italians . . . It is not a question of territorial conquests, let this be understood by all far and near, but one of natural expansion, which must lead to cooperation between Italy and the Nations of the Near and Middle East. It is the question of an action which must exploit the yet numerous resources of the two continents, above all in regard to Africa, and to immerse them more deeply in the circle of

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<sup>68</sup>The Afghan Foreign Minister to the Italian Envoy at Khabul, in I documenti diplomatici Italiani, series 8, vol XII (Rome: 1952), no. 446; cited in Lukasz Hirszowicz, The Third Reich and the Arab East, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1966) p. 24.

<sup>69</sup>OM, XIV, p. 18.

<sup>70</sup>Al-Ahram, 19 Jan 1934, in OM, XIV, p. 199.

global civilization. Italy can do that; her position in the Mediterranean, a sea which is recovering its historic function as link between Orient and Occident, gives her this right and imposes this duty; we do not intend to claim monopolies or privileges, but ask and want to obtain that the arrivés, the satisfied, the conservative, do not strive to block from all sides the spiritual, political and economic expansion of Fascist Italy.<sup>71</sup>

This speech received great attention among the Arabs but reactions to it showed varying degrees of favor or suspicion.<sup>72</sup> To allay suspicions and to show that Italians were qualified bearers of civilization, much publicity was made of Libya. For after that country was pacified, the Libyans were permitted to have their own schools, and courts and the Italian Government restored and built mosques for them.<sup>73</sup> Italy finally expressed her public support for Egypt on the question of the debt and stated that she would accept payment in bills instead of gold.<sup>74</sup> Now only France had to accede to Egypt's request.

By the end of 1934, the Ethiopian Crisis began to develop. Egyptian and British fears combined to produce the

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<sup>71</sup>OM, XIV, p. 150. In an interview with the Daily Telegraph, on May 14, he said much the same. See Gingold Duprey, op.cit., pp. 93-94. See also Garratt, Mussolini's Roman Empire, p. 51.

<sup>72</sup>The Jaffa paper al-Jam'iyya al-Islamiyya was quite in favour; al-Jam'iyya al-'Arabiyya of Jerusalem (22 May) was watchful, while L'Orient of Beirut (6 June) was strictly against. See OM, XIV, pp. 198, 272-273.

<sup>73</sup>Macartney and Cremona, op.cit., p. 333.

<sup>74</sup>See al-Jihad, 15 Sept, and al-Siyasa, 18 Sept 1934, in OM, XIV, p. 500; GB & E, XLIII, Dec 20, 1934, p. 1023; OM, XV, p. 30.

Anglo-Egyptian Treaty of 1936. The details of the Crisis are discussed separately in Chapter IV. The invasion of Ethiopia evoked a strong, but temporary anti-Italian sentiment in Egypt. But once Italy conquered Ethiopia, antipathy slowly changed into admiration.<sup>75</sup>

One of Egypt's major desires was to abolish the Capitulations, under which foreigners exercised extraterritorial privileges. It was also a matter of national pride, because Egypt was the only country in which the capitulatory system was still in operation.<sup>76</sup> Italy, wishing to appear pro-Egyptian, backed up Egypt's request for abolition, but the existence of a strong Italian community in Egypt proved to be an obstacle to Italy's support. By its very nature, the Italian colony thrived on the Capitulatory privileges.

The problem was made more complicated by the anti-European riots of May 1921 in Egypt. In Alexandria, three Italians were killed, and the Italian colony requested the deployment of British troops to maintain order, which, it claimed, the Egyptians apparently could not. The Italian, French and Greek consuls then stated that they "could never consent to their nationals being protected by any force

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<sup>75</sup>Boveri, op.cit., p. 285.

<sup>76</sup>N. Bentwich, "The End of the Capitulatory System" in the British Yearbook of International Law, vol 14, (London: Oxford University Press, 1933), p. 99.

which consisted exclusively of Egyptians."<sup>77</sup> Although the Egyptians tried to make clear that they were neither xenophobic nor anti-Italian,<sup>78</sup> the Italian community in Alexandria later urged Rome to stress the need for keeping the Capitulations. This caused, some remonstrances in Egypt, and the Italians there were forced to declare themselves in favour of Egyptian desires. By implication this meant that they were for abolition of the Capitulations.<sup>79</sup>

To emphasize the Egyptian demands, a committee of prominent Egyptians made a futile appeal to the foreign communities. They asked the latter to publish statements to the effect that English troops were not needed to protect foreigners. This appeal was indirectly addressed to Italy. She was the only power which had a sizeable community to protect, while the King of Egypt was known to be pro-Italian and anti-British. Publication in the Italian press of the views of anti-British Egyptian nationalists and other writings on Egypt had encouraged the Egyptians.<sup>80</sup> A few months later, in November 1921, Lord Curzon's draft treaty was published in Egypt. One of its provisions was to stop the employment of foreign functionaries in Egypt. The Italian community

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<sup>77</sup>H.W. Jarvis, Pharaoh to Farouk, (London: John Murray, 1955), pp. 271-272. See also GB & E, XX, Dec 22, 1921, p. 794.

<sup>78</sup>OM, I, pp. 78, 104.

<sup>79</sup>GB & E, XX, Sept 1, 1921, p. 250.

<sup>80</sup>Ibid.



resented the intended treatment of foreign functionaries as offensive and ungrateful to the Italians who lent excellent services to Egypt.<sup>81</sup>

After Egypt was unilaterally declared independent on 22 February 1922, the matter of the Capitulations became a direct problem between Egypt and the foreign powers. In March 1922, Egypt informed the foreign consuls that they no longer had diplomatic privileges and should be replaced by regular diplomats. The consuls received this information from multigraphed circulars written in Arabic. They were offended by this irregular procedure, because normally they received formal communications written in French. The consuls moreover insisted on their old privileges and accused Egypt of deliberately attempting to undermine the Capitulations.<sup>82</sup>

A year later, the Italians once more were the object of attack by enemies of the Capitulations. In early October 1923, al-Ahram pointed out to the Egyptian Government the anomaly of the alleged sole use of the Italian language in relations between the Government and Italian Consular authorities. The latter pointed out that they used bilingual texts in Italian and Arabic. The Italian community then protested that in Egypt Italian was as widespread as French

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<sup>81</sup>La Liberté, Cairo, 12 December 1921, OM, I, p. 690.  
Article by E. Manusardi.

<sup>82</sup>Times, 29 May 1922.

and more so than English.<sup>83</sup> By this they implied that they resented being the sole object of Egyptian critics.

In early 1925, the Italians in Egypt were again subjected to criticism. Italian legal experts had a good reputation and were preferred in Egyptian courts. To some Egyptians this was detrimental to Egypt's interests.<sup>84</sup> In July 1925, the Egyptian Government imposed restrictions on the press. The Capitulations prevented these restrictions from being applied to the foreign-language press in Egypt. The Italian papers of Egypt therefore defended the Capitulations, which at least preserved freedom for some of the press in Egypt. As zealous journalists, however, the Italian newspapermen supported their Egyptian colleagues in objecting to the press law.<sup>85</sup>

A murder case in Giza in February 1927 involving Egyptians and Italians aggravated the issue of the Capitulations between Italy and Egypt. The court proceedings allegedly resulted in light verdicts for the Italians, who were tried by their consular courts, while the Egyptians received harsh sentences from their courts. Strong objections to the verdicts and the continuation of the Capitulations

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<sup>83</sup>L'Imparziale, 4, 7, 10 Oct 1923, in OM, III, p, 316, n. 1.

<sup>84</sup>GB & E, XXVII, May 28, 1925, p. 556. The most outstanding Italian legal expert was Ettore Pezzi. See Chapter V. p. 182.

<sup>85</sup>L'Imparziale, 11 July 1925, in OM, V, p. 422, and OM V, p. 423, L'Imparziale, Il Messaggero Egiziano and Il Mediterraneo all voiced such objections.

appeared in several issues of al-Siyasa. The Italian paper L'Imparziale then printed a strong defense of the Capitulatory system.<sup>86</sup> The Italian Legation disassociated itself from this article, stating that it expressed neither the views of the Italian Government nor of the Legation, and that it never asked that such an opinion be printed.<sup>87</sup> This communiqué was gladly received by the Egyptian press.<sup>88</sup> But the issue was not closed, for an Italian lawyer, Nelson Morpurgo, defended the verdict and the efficiency of the Italian Consular Courts under Consular Judge Impallomeni.<sup>89</sup>

During King Fu'ad's visit to Italy in 1927 and Prince Umberto's stay in Egypt in 1928, the Egyptian press amply expressed itself on the Capitulations and Italy. In general, the Egyptian papers had faith in the Italian Government's support for the abolition of the Capitulations.<sup>90</sup> But the Italian community's exercise of these privileges in Egypt continued to create friction. In October 1929, an Italian court came into conflict with the superior Mixed Courts, and the Egyptian Government nearly found itself forced to enforce a Mixed Court decision against the Italian court.<sup>91</sup> In January

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<sup>86</sup> See al-Siyasa, 25, 28 Feb, 1, 2 Mar, L'Imparziale, 3 Mar 1927, in OM, VII, pp. 143-145, and p. 145 n. 1.

<sup>87</sup> Al-Ahram, 3 Mar 1927, in OM, VII, p. 145.

<sup>88</sup> Al-Siyasa, 6 Mar 1927, in OM, VII, p. 145.

<sup>89</sup> L'Imparziale, 17 Mar 1927, in OM, VII, p. 146.

<sup>90</sup> See above, pp. 30-1.

<sup>91</sup> GB & E, XXXVI, Oct 24, 1929, p. 449.

1931, Italy became unpleasantly involved in a matter of the Cairo Mixed Tribunals. George Molotov, a judge appointed in the days of the Tsar, died, and was replaced by Vittorio Emanuele Impallomeni, the Italian Consular Judge in Cairo. Egypt had no relations with the USSR, and argued that the place should have been given to an Egyptian in order to change proportion of foreigners in the Courts.<sup>92</sup>

The Italians in Egypt opposed their own government and Egypt by insisting that the Capitulations should be retained. Egypt, instead, supported by the British and Italian Governments insisted that the capitulatory system was incompatible with Egypt's position as a modern state. The Italians and the other privileged foreigners in Egypt thought differently. In their mind, the Egyptians, largely Muslims, were too fanatic to be able to protect non-Muslim foreigners. The Italians of Egypt, moreover, insisted that they had improved the capitulatory system with qualified legal experts and a court of appeal in Rhodes.<sup>93</sup>

On October 23, 1932, Egyptian police fought with and arrested some Libyan drug smugglers. As Italian subjects, they had capitulatory privileges and Italian Courts handled the case.

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<sup>92</sup>See Times, 5 Jan and Temps, 6 Feb 1931, in OM, XI, pp. 36, 110. The strongest protest came from the leader of the Liberal Constitutionalists, Muhammad Mahmud Pasha, in his party organ al-Ahrar al-Dusturiyyun. In their paper al-Siyasa, they had laterly been pro-Italian. See above, pp. 32-33.

<sup>93</sup>From a letter to GB & E, XL, Nov 12, 1931, p. 527. by Romolo Tritonj from Rome, who had long lived in Egypt.

The event was considered disgraceful in Egypt.<sup>94</sup> This incident only served to shed doubt on the image which the Italian community tried to create for itself in Egypt: "loyal to the State which shelters it, respectful of the Egyptian nation."<sup>95</sup>

In 1934, Italy agreed not to insist on payment in gold of Egypt's foreign debt. Encouraged by the concession, Egypt requested an official declaration on the part of Italy that the Mixed Courts were incompetent. Italy was in favour of the Egyptian demand, but did not feel ready to commit herself and dismissed the matter without comment.<sup>96</sup>

Egypt had to wait until the Ethiopian Crisis. During it, she was able to suspend the Capitulations in order to apply sanctions against Italy. She also agreed with Britain that all Capitulations should be abolished.<sup>97</sup> Egypt's desire was fulfilled on October 1, 1937, by the Treaty of Montreux. Italy was a signatory to the treaty contrary to the wishes of her citizens in Egypt. In return, Egypt extended her formal recognition of Italy as an Empire.<sup>98</sup>

<sup>94</sup> Al-Ahram, 25 Oct 1932, in OM, XII, pp. 551-552.

<sup>95</sup> Nava, op.cit., p. 172.

<sup>96</sup> OM, XV, p. 30; Il Giornale d'Oriente, 23 Feb 1935, in OM, XV, p. 144.

<sup>97</sup> See Chapter IV below.

<sup>98</sup> Paul Hartmann, L'Egypte indépendante, vol I, (Paris: Le Groupe d'Etudes de l'Islam, 1938), pp. 181, 202, 228, and Elizabeth Monroe, The Mediterranean in Politics, (London: Oxford University Press, 1938), p. 37.

Under the Fascist regime of Italy, the absence of mass propaganda at home and abroad was unthinkable. In Egypt, Italy was able to act through her schools, which were rapidly improved under Fascism, and through her cultural organizations which doubled their efforts under Fascist direction. The Fascists, by their propaganda methods, succeeded in making a name for Italy.

The oldest institution at Fascism's disposal was the Italian schools in Egypt. In 1921, there were 55 but over the years more schools were added; in 1939, they numbered 68. French schools always greatly out-numbered the Italian ones, while there were almost as many Greek schools as Italian. French and Italian schools served as a means to spread their respective cultures among Egyptians, but Greek schools primarily served the large Greek community.

Fascist Italy wished to make the Italian language and culture known among the Egyptian masses. Italian had been part of the official curriculum in only very few schools in Egypt, unlike English and French. Now Fascist prestige stimulated interest in Italian culture and language. At the same time, the development of Italian secondary schools and their high quality encouraged Egyptians to attend them. To attract even more natives, Arabic became compulsory in all Italian

schools.<sup>99</sup> The British considered Italian institutes as centers of subtle Fascist propaganda, but they were probably not much more propagandistic than their British and French counterparts.<sup>100</sup>

The British were aware of their relatively small share in education in Egypt. They feared that the propagation of Italian culture and language would cause British influence to diminish.<sup>101</sup> The problem was frequently discussed and

Many an English Government has had questions put to it about the excellent Italian schools and their system of free places, without having been able to give any satisfactory answer.<sup>102</sup>

The Italian schools accepted all nationalities, had low fees and gave noon meals, whereas the English schools did not. If English was propagated, it was through American mission schools. The British realized that the success of Italian schools was due to Governmental support, and they called on their own government to reorganize the British schools in Egypt. The British also were worried about the quality of

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<sup>99</sup> Sammarco, op.cit., pp. 47, 155, 158, 163. It was even suggested that Arabic become the language of instruction, because it was more essential for the Arabs and would also enhance even more the Italian image. See Nava, op.cit., p. 238.

<sup>100</sup> Luigi Villari, Italian Foreign Policy under Mussolini, (New York: The Devin-Adair Co., 1959), p. 58.

<sup>101</sup> GB & E, XXXIII, Mar 29, 1928, pp. 388-389. See also XXXIX, June 4, 1931, p. 625. In 1931, 3500 Egyptians were learning Italian but only 3200 studied English. Italy could however, not hope to catch up with the 24,000 who were studying French. See Current History, XXXIV, p. 315.

<sup>102</sup> Boveri, op.cit., p. 284.

their language teachers, who were underpaid and held in low esteem, while the salaries of Italian teachers were subsidized by their own Government.<sup>103</sup>

The increasing attendance of Egyptian in Italian schools from 1921 to 1937 can be seen from Table I:

TABLE I.

## ITALIAN SCHOOLS AND THEIR PUPILS IN EGYPT

Date	1921-22	1924-25	1927-28	1930-31	1933-34	1936-37
No. of Schools	55	50	54	57	62	64
No. of Teachers	489	520	558	639	701	702
No. of pupils	9,137	8,900	9,809	10,688	12,121	12,609
Italians	4,706	4,482	4,570	4,849	5,765	6,451
Egyptians	2,895	2,896	3,728	4,405	4,521	4,688
Muslims	1,372	1,354	1,875	2,048	1,564	1,787
Copts	1,302	1,896	1,769	1,773	3,110	2,743

Sources: Egypt, Ministry of Finance, Statistique Scolaire 1930-1931, (Cairo: Government Press, 1933) pp. 220-221; Annuaire Statistique 1923-1924, (Cairo: Government Press, 1925), pp. 79-80, 83; Annuaire Statistique 1940-1941, (Cairo: Government Press, 1942), pp. 226-227, 238-239. The figures for Muslims and Copts need not equal the figures for the total of Egyptians. There were Egyptians of other religions at Italian Schools, while some of the Copts and Muslims were not Egyptians.

Elizabeth Monroe was mistaken when in 1938 she wrote that in Alexandria French and English schools were more important than Italian schools. She claimed that in the former 30%

<sup>103</sup> GB & E, XLI, Sept 29, 1932, p. 780; XLII, Feb 23, 1933, p. 144; XLIII, July 26 and Dec 20, 1934, pp. 578, 1018.



of the pupils were Egyptians, while in Italian schools only 30 out of 1000 were Egyptians! She further claimed that this small attendance was due to the Egyptians' desire to avoid Fascist indoctrination.<sup>104</sup> The figures show the opposite. The rate of increase in Egyptians attending Italian schools from 1930 to 1933, and from 1933 to 1936 remained about the same, with 116 and 167 respectively. In 1935, the Ethiopian Crisis should have caused a marked drop in Egyptian attendance, because Italy became feared and resented in Egypt. This is borne out by a drop in Copts of 367. The statistics do not show another possibility: By her confrontation of Great Britain, Italy gained a number of admirers. Therefore, while certain parents may have withdrawn their children from Italian schools, in protest against Italy's invasion of Ethiopia, the new admirers of Italy may have begun to send their children to Italian schools. Whatever the case may be, Italian schools in Egypt were quite successful among Egyptians, and Margret Boveri, writing in the same year as Elizabeth Monroe was correct in stating that "the Italian schools in Egypt keep a large number of free places for Egyptian children."<sup>105</sup> More details on the Italian schools in Egypt are found in the Chapter on the Italian community.

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<sup>104</sup> Monroe, op.cit., p. 198. Even Sammarco, op.cit., p. 165 is mistaken. He claims that 500 non-Italians visited Italian schools in 1936, in Alexandria. This actually applied only to governmental schools.

<sup>105</sup> Boveri, op.cit., p. 198.

Egyptians also went to Italy for higher education. Already in 1923, 123 Egyptian students had been sent by their Government to study in Italy.<sup>106</sup> The Italian Government and the Catholic Church strove to increase this number, and in 1931, twelve Egyptian scholarship students came to Italy.<sup>107</sup> In 1933, nineteen more went to Italian universities.<sup>108</sup> Study in Italy was made attractive by offering scholarships. But generally the student was offered a reduce fare for the voyage to Italy on an Italian ship, and was exempted from the fees only for the first year.<sup>109</sup> Italy demonstrated her willingness to aid Egyptians in education by conferring the Cross of the Order of the Crown on the Egyptian Minister of Education.<sup>110</sup>

Italy's cultural program did not neglect Egyptians who had passed school age. Roman, Italian and Fascist culture had to be displayed according to the new Fascist formula, which was "to make the natives come to us, conquering them by the virtue of achievements."<sup>111</sup> There already was in Alexandria a branch of the cultural institute of the Dante Alighieri Society. A separate organization for cultural activity, Italica, was established by the Fascist regime. Its purpose was to spread

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<sup>106</sup>The Moslem World, XIII, 1923, p. 207. Out of a total of 1031 Egyptians studying abroad, 581 were sent by their Government. Of these, 236 were in England, 163 in France. See also Boveri, op.cit., p. 285.

<sup>107</sup>Chafik Pacha, op.cit., p. 199. These had received scholarships through the Catholic mission.

<sup>108</sup>Il Corriere della Sera, Milan 27 July 1933, in OM, XIII, p. 450.

<sup>109</sup>Times, 22 Feb 1933.

<sup>110</sup>GB & E, XLI, Oct 27, 1932, p. 199.

<sup>111</sup>Italy, Ministry of Italian Africa, Gli Annali dell' Africa italiana, year I, vol I, (Verona: Casa Editrice Mondadori, 1938), p. 3.

the knowledge of Italian art and literature. On March 18, its president, Carlo Guidi Viscount di Moderone, organized an exhibition of Italian books in Egypt, which was inaugurated in the presence of King Fu'ad.<sup>112</sup> On May 21, a convention was signed at the Egyptian Legation in Rome, which gave Italica a concession by the Royal Theater of Cairo. Under this convention, Viscount di Moderone was charged with founding, organizing and directing a conservatory of music in Cairo which opened at the Royal Opera Theater on 1 January 1928.<sup>113</sup>

Music and Opera were Italy's most effective field, Nearly every winter, an Italian group was selected to play to Egyptian audiences.<sup>114</sup> Theater performances were directed by an Italian.<sup>115</sup> The Italian programs were so successful that

For weeks the Cairo newspapers will discuss the advent of an Italian operatic company with detailed and sensational descriptions of the tender and the youthful soprano.<sup>116</sup>

After 1929, Fascist propaganda was rendered more active.<sup>117</sup> Italian efforts had produced good results and were continued as a strong support to Italy's expansion in the

<sup>112</sup> OM, VII, p. 151.

<sup>113</sup> Il Messaggero Egiziano, Alexandria, 13 May 1927, 2 and 3 Jan 1928, in OM, VII, p. 291 and VIII, p. 28.

<sup>114</sup> Egypt, Ministry of Public Works, Annual Report for 1920-1921, (Cairo: Government Press, 1923), p. 133; 1921-1922 (Cairo: Government Press, 1925), p. 15; 1922-1923, Part I, (Cairo: Government Press, 1927), p. 5; 1925-1926, Part I, (Cairo: Government Press, 1930), p. XI; 1926-1927, Part I, (Cairo: Government Press, 1931) p. 5.

<sup>115</sup> See Ibid, 1925-1926, p. XI, and 1926-1927, p. 5.

<sup>116</sup> Boveri, op.cit., p. 285.

<sup>117</sup> Garratt, Gibraltar etc. p. 239.

Mediterranean.<sup>118</sup> In September 1930, for instance, an Egyptian artistic academy was opened in Rome, followed by an Italian one in Egypt.<sup>119</sup> Good propaganda also was a visit to Cairo on 17 February 1932 by Carlo Delcroix. He was a writer, orator and deputy, who had been blinded in the War, and had become president of the Association of the Mutilated. He gave lectures and the press took notice of him and writer May Ziayada especially lauded him.<sup>120</sup>

The Fascist Government did not limit itself to cultural activity. Early in 1932, a bilingual fortnightly, al-Mustaqbal al-Arabi - L'Avvenire Arabo, was founded in Rome under deputy Bernardo Barbiellini Amidei. Its purpose was to promote mutual understanding between Arabs and Italians and to acquaint the Arabs with Fascism.<sup>121</sup> For in Italian minds, Fascism, Mussolini and the new spirit were still insufficiently appreciated in the Near East, particularly in Egypt, and Egypt was not appreciated in Italy in spite of the large Italian community there.<sup>122</sup> Interestingly enough, the first book on Mussolini appeared about this time in Egypt.<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>118</sup> See Popham, op.cit., p. 1053.

<sup>119</sup> La Bourse Egyptienne, 19 Sept 1930, in OM, X, p. 652.

<sup>120</sup> OM, XII, p. 169.

<sup>121</sup> OM, XII, pp. 72-73. It consisted of 8 pages, illustrated, with the Arabic and Italian parts independent of each other. It was owned and edited by one Munir Lababidi, a Damascene. Previously, Italy had had al-Mustaqill for Tunisia, published in Cagliari, Sardinia. The French stopped its distribution in 1881 when they assumed control over Tunisia.

<sup>122</sup> Sammarco, et.al., op.cit., pp. 87-88.

<sup>123</sup> Karim Thabit, Musulini, (Cairo: 1933), see al-Muqattam, 9 Aug 1933, in OM, XIII, pp. 482-483.

The Oriental students in Italy, including Egyptians, received particular attention. On 21 December, a new Institute for the Middle and Far East was solemnly inaugurated at Rome, presided over by Senator Prof. Giovanni Gentile. He explained that the Institute was to help develop and promote cultural relations between Italy and the Orient and to study oriental economic problems. He concluded that "East and West will meet through Italy."<sup>124</sup>

From 22 to 27 December, about 600 Asian and African students in Europe including Egyptians, met in Rome as the guests of Guf (Gruppo Universitario Fascista). They were honoured with a speech by Mussolini.<sup>125</sup> France was not upset

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<sup>124</sup>OM, XIV, p. 17. The Royal Decree for the status of this Institute said: "It has the purpose of promoting and developing cultural relations between Italy and the countries of central, southern and eastern Asia and moreover of attending to the examination of economic problems of interest to these same countries.

The Institute undertakes: a) to establish direct relations with all analogous institutions of said countries; b) to make agreements with interested national institutions; c) to promote and aid the establishment of scholarships and housing for oriental students in Italy and the exchange of instructors and students between Italy and said countries; d) to care for the development of personal relations with persons representative of oriental economy and culture; to provide for a systematic collection of publications and information on the Asian world, caring for their classification; f) to undertake publications and to organize lectures useful to the increase of Italian understanding of oriental countries, and oriental understanding of Italy; g) to organize missions and study-trips and to eventually send out its own trustees with precise tasks to the countries of the Middle and Far East". Il Giornale d'Oriente, 12 Jan 1935, in OM, XV, pp. 7-8.

<sup>125</sup>OM, XIV, p, 18.

about such activity,<sup>126</sup> but Britain believed that Fascist propaganda attempted to mobilize Oriental nationalists to seek assistance from Rome.<sup>127</sup> The Union of Oriental Students in Rome also published the Magazine Jeune Asie. On 17 June 1934, a Committee of Arab Youth condemned it and accused the editors of being "creatures subsidized by colonialists". The Union protested by emphasizing its apolitical nature and rejected the accusation that it served any imperialist policy.<sup>128</sup> In January 1935, there was a second Congress of Oriental Students in Rome, which was again addressed by the Duce.<sup>129</sup>

Italian propaganda in Egypt and other parts of the Arab World aimed at stirring up the people against the British. The policy appears to have been successful. "In each country, the Italian agents, making full use of their nationals, adopted the line best calculated to embarrass the local Government." They "took full advantage of the Englishman's inherent difficulty in dealing with emotional and religious nationalism."<sup>130</sup>

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<sup>126</sup> See Maurice Pernot in L'Information, Paris, 31 Dec 1933, in OM, XIV, pp. 19-21.

<sup>127</sup> Daily Herald, 23 Dec 1933, in OM, XIV, p. 21.

<sup>128</sup> The condemnation was signed: Dervich el-Barazi, Toufic Murtada and Bachir Fakhoury. OM, XIV, pp. 322-324, 437. The Union of Oriental Students received support from Shakib Arslan, who wrote positively of Italy in La Nation Arabe, the monthly review of the Syro-Palestinian Delegation at the League of Nations, Sept-Oct 1934, in OM, XIV, p. 519.

<sup>129</sup> 130 students represented over 30 of the most important associations or groups of Oriental students in Europe, OM, XV, p. 69.

<sup>130</sup> Garratt, Gibraltar etc, pp. 240, 241.

These agents operated through the Italian local press and through news agencies. The agencies offered news services and news with pictures with a pro-Italian bias, and provided cinemas with free or inexpensive newsreels on Italy. Any potentially pro-Italian political group was contacted.<sup>131</sup> Broadcasts in Arabic and other oriental languages began to be transmitted from Bari. The Arabic propaganda programs from Bari were aimed at the simple man and had a wide audience. In them, England and France were described as the enemies of Islam and Arab nationalism. Through her propaganda, Italy became a danger and challenge to Britain.<sup>132</sup> In Italy, Egyptian students were granted interviews with Mussolini, who promised to support their national aspirations.<sup>133</sup>

The Italian community appears to have been used for subversive activity as well, particularly during the Ethiopian Crisis. The Community's participation in all spheres of Egyptian life could be exploited by the Italian Government:

All these are valuable assets for a policy of infiltration and they are backed up by an organization for propaganda which is startling in its scope and efficiency. Such an organization is costly, and the fact that it is maintained

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<sup>131</sup> See Times, 28 Aug, 18 Sept 1935; Hugh H. Schonfield, The Suez Canal in World Affairs, (London: Constellation Books, 1952), pp. 81-2, Garratt, Gibraltar etc, p. 242, and Monroe, op.cit., p. 199. On 28 Aug, Times first wrote that French bulletins were issued by an Italian agency pretending to be Egyptian but on 18 Sept the paper wrote that the news service was supplied by the local Italian paper Giornale d'Oriente. According to Garratt, the news was spread by the Italian news agency Stefani, according to Monroe by Agence Egypte Orient. Schonfield eclectically wrote that the service was supplied by Agence Egyptienne Orientale, a branch of Stefani.

<sup>132</sup> Monroe, op.cit., p. 200; and GB & E, XLIII, Aug 30, 1934, p. 677. and Times, 17, 18 and 21 Sept 1935.

<sup>133</sup> Times, 30 Oct 1935.

proves, if proof be needed, that . . . Italy's interest in the future relationships of Egypt is a very active one.<sup>134</sup>

In February 1937, Italy and Britain reached their Gentlemen's Agreement concerning their respective interests in the Mediterranean. In spite of this rapprochement, Italian broadcasts from Bari began a new campaign against Britain, because of Egyptian objections to the military clauses of the recently concluded Anglo-Egyptian Treaty.<sup>135</sup>

Italy's propagandistic activity produced various results. Some Egyptians became pro-Fascist. One Egyptian writer, using a pseudonym, praised the Duce's methods and saw him as a man who knows his people and their needs.<sup>136</sup> The poet Muhammad Hafiz Ibrahim wrote some poems (qasa'id) in praise of Italy and the Italians.<sup>137</sup> But others turned anti-Fascist. In Cairo, the Association of Young Muslims (Jam'iyat al-Shubban al-Muslimin) accused the Geneva Congress of Muslims in Europe of dealing in politics and making propaganda in favour of Italy

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<sup>134</sup>Maj. Lawrence Athill, "British Interests and Italian Ambitions" in The Fortnightly, CXXXIX, p. 26. See also GB & E, XLV, Aug 29, 1935, p. 259. The potentials of Italians in Egypt as a fifth column were greatly exaggerated and they were of little importance once World War II began. For a study proving the ineffectiveness of the much talked about German fifth columns from which interesting parallels may be drawn, see Louis de Jong, De duitse vijfde Colonne in de tweede Wereldoorlog, (Amsterdam; J. M. Meulenhoff, 1953).

<sup>135</sup>Royal Institute of International Affairs, Great Britain and Egypt 1914-1951, (London: 1952), p. 52.

<sup>136</sup>Al-Ahram, 4 Aug 1935, in OM, XV, pp. 475-476.

<sup>137</sup>Sammarco, et.al., op.cit., pp. 86-87.



and Spain, who oppressed Muslims in their colonies. The Congress was said not to represent Muslim opinion, which clearly condemned imperialism.<sup>138</sup>

Interesting by-products of Fascist influence also were the various new Egyptian organizations that arose after 1935. One of these was the Wafdist youth organization. Al-Qumsan al-Zarqa' (Blueshirts), led by the medical student Muhammad Bilal. They took the Fascist example of a united and disciplined youth under one man. In spite of this idea and their salute by slapping the chest with the right hand, they claimed to be Fascist only in appearance, not in object.<sup>139</sup> A similar organization was Misr-al-Fatah (Young Egypt), the Greenshirts of Ahmad Husayn. They also believed in discipline and strong leadership, and, like the Fascists of Europe, were disillusioned with the policies of western powers and parliamentary democracies.<sup>140</sup> Even the Muslim Brethren admired the Fascists, although they opposed them and Italy in principle. Their leader, Hasan al-Banna, expressed admiration "for Italy's resistance to the fifty-two nations which were imposing

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<sup>138</sup> Al-Fath, no. 464, 26 Sept 1935, in OM, XV, p. 504, Once more Arslan came to the defense of Italy by saying that such accusations could be leveled at all European countries. Al-Muqattam, 9 Oct 1935, in OM, XV, pp. 565-567.

<sup>139</sup> al-Jihad, 22 Jan 1936, in OM, XVI, p. 88. See also H. A. R. Gibb, "The Situation in Egypt" in International Affairs, XV, p. 361; and GB & E, XLVI, Jan 16, 1936, pp. 66. 78.

<sup>140</sup> Hirszowicz, op.cit., p. 13. On Green and Blue Shirts, see also Tom Little, Egypt, (London: Ernest Benn Ltd., 1958), p. 157. Both groups were dissolved in 1939.

sanctions against her (during the Ethiopian Crisis) and how she compelled these countries to respect her wishes without involving herself in war."<sup>141</sup> A brand of Arab Fascism was on the rise.<sup>142</sup>

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<sup>141</sup>Majallat al-Ikhwan al-Muslimin, no. 62, 15 July 1946, cited in I.M. Husaini, the Moslem Brethern, (Beirut: Khayats, 1956), p. 3. See also pp. 2, 59, and 74 ff. and Little, op.cit., p. 156.

<sup>142</sup>Arnold Toynbee, Survey of International Affairs, 1936, (London: Oxford University Press, 1937), p. 24.

### III. THE JAGHBUB QUESTION, 1922-1934

In history there is no lack of peaceful new divisions of territories, through which the new Powers safeguarded the peace and prosperity of their people. I am confident that when the occasion arises, Italy will not lack the means of obtaining her rightful due by peaceful agreements.

Benito Mussolini, 1925

After World War I, Italy intended to consolidate her hold over her colony Libya. To do this, she had to subdue the Sanusiya movement, which organized resistance against Italy. But the head-quarters of the Sanusis were in Egyptian territory, in the oasis of Jaghbub. Italy had to gain possession of Jaghbub, if she wished to succeed in her fight against the Sanusis. But to obtain territory from Egypt was to prove difficult. When Egypt was still a protectorate, Britain had ceded Jaghbub to Italy. However, once Egypt became independent in 1922, the Wafd and more nationalistic parties objected to ceding Egyptian territory, and made of the frontier question a major political issue. For this reason, although Jaghbub was ceded by Treaty to Italy in 1925, ratification was delayed until 1933. This lengthy diplomatic issue set the tone for the rest of Italo-Egyptian relations. Egyptian fears of Italy developed during this time, coming fully to the fore with the Ethiopian Crisis.

The Egypto-Libyan frontier question centered around the oasis of Jaghbub. Together with the other oases scattered today in Libya and Egypt, Jaghbub forms a geographical unit. Relations

between modern Egypt and Jaghbub date back to 1820, before the oasis became a center of the Sanusiya. In that year Al-Azhar University erected a mosque in Jaghbub, and it is reported that Muhammad 'Ali visited the oasis at that time.<sup>1</sup> During his reign, he occupied the western coast, taking possession of towns like Marsa al-Matruh and Sidi al-Barrani, but leaving aside the desert oases.<sup>2</sup> In 1841, a firman from the Porte conferred upon Muhammad Ali the hereditary pashalik of Egypt. A map accompanying the firman excluded Jaghbub and Sallum from Egyptian territory.<sup>3</sup> The map mysteriously disappeared from the Egyptian archives and the exact lines of the border were forgotten until Italy began to control Libya. In 1856, the Grand Sanusi, Sayyid Muhammad 'Ali al-Sanusi erected a zawiya in Jaghbub and made it the center of

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<sup>1</sup>Capt. Dixon-Johnson, "Egypt", a paper read at a meeting of the Near and Middle East Association at Hyde Park Hotel, 3 July 1925. Extract in The Near East, (later Great Britain and the East; hereafter referred to as GB & E), XXVIII, July 16, 1925, p. 67. The Grand Sanusi founded a zawiya there in 1856 and launched Jaghbub on its road to importance. See Nicola Ziadeh, Sanusiya, (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1958), p. 46.

<sup>2</sup>Oriente Moderno, (hereafter OM), II, p. 333.

<sup>3</sup>The firman was dated 21 Dhu al-Hijja 1256 (13 Feb 1841). It stated: "I have granted you the Government of Egypt with its ancient and known frontiers, as they are seen in the map which the present Grand Vizier is sending you, endorsed with his seal, together with the additional privileges of heredity . . ." From Gabriel Effendi Norandunghian, Legal Counselor to the Ottoman Porte, Receuil d'actes internationaux de l'empire Ottoman, vol II, 1789-1856, (Paris: Librairie Cotillon, 1900) p. 320, no. 110. Present writer's emphasis.

his movement.<sup>4</sup> The movement grew sufficiently strong for 'Urabi to ask it, although in vain, to aid him against Britain in 1882.<sup>5</sup> By 1902, most of the bedouins of Egypt's Western desert supported the Sanusiya.<sup>6</sup> In 1911, Italy invaded the Ottoman province of Libya. Egypt, with the consent of the Porte, occupied the coastal town of Sallum and claimed Jaghbub for "provisional administration", to prevent more territory from falling into Italian hands.<sup>7</sup> Britain supported this occupation. This fact was resented by Italy, because Britain was supposed to remain neutral.<sup>8</sup> In 1912 Italy was able to make the Porte renounce all claims over Libya<sup>9</sup> and became Egypt's neighbor.

Resistance to Italy was not taken up by the Sanusiya. Their stronghold, however, lay in Jaghbub which was now controlled by Egypt. If Italy expected to defeat the Sanusis, she needed to gain possession of that oasis. The Sanusis in Libya depended on supplies from Egypt, which reached them via Jaghbub.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>OM, II, p. 333. Ziadeh, op.cit., pp. 46, 49.

<sup>5</sup>Ziadeh, op.cit., p. 57. <sup>6</sup>Ibid, p. 100.

<sup>7</sup>GB & E, XXIX, Feb 11, 1926, p. 100. See also Times, 29 Dec 1925 and 29 Feb 1926. In effect, the Sanusis, not Egypt, controlled Jaghbub.

<sup>8</sup>OM, II, p. 333. Britain had previously suggested to Italy to occupy Libya. See Chapter I, p. 9.

<sup>9</sup>Ettore Rossi, "Per la storia della penetrazione turca nell'interno della Libia e per la questione dei suoi confini" in OM, IX, p. 156, al-Muqattam, 13 June and Il Giornale d'Oriente 14 June 1932, in OM, XII, p. 298.

<sup>10</sup>See Biagio Pace, "Il Fascismo: La riconquista e la politica indigena della Libia", in Tomaso Sillani (ed), La Libia: In venti anni di occupazione italiana, (Rome: La Rassegna Italiana, 1933) p. 64.

Jaghbub also had developed into a trade center, because all important caravan routes from Africa to Egypt passed through it. This made Jaghbub of economic interest<sup>11</sup> to whichever country possessed it. Italy was moreover interested in firm control of Libya for strategic reasons, because she hoped to develop her new territory as a balance to the British presence in Egypt and the Sudan.<sup>12</sup>

During World War I, Egypt became a British Protectorate, Italy withdrew from the Triple Alliance to support the Allies in expectation of compensation. The terms for Italy's switch of sides, which included border changes, were set down in the Pact of London of 26 April 1915.<sup>13</sup> During the War, Jaghbub demonstrated its strategic value, when Enver Pasha convinced the Sanusis to raid Western Egypt, causing the British much worry and expense.<sup>14</sup> The Sanusis were beaten back by British

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<sup>11</sup>Dixon-Johnson, op.cit., Only the caravan route through Sallum did not cross Jaghbub. Caravans from inner Africa came to Kufara, then to Jaghbub. Most of the goods would go to Libya, if Italy controlled it, or vice versa. There were 4 main caravan routes from Jaghbub into Libya. For a description of Jaghbub in 1920, see Ziadeh, op.cit., pp. 107-108. The source cited there gives less credit to Jaghbub's commercial importance.

<sup>12</sup>G. T. Garratt, Gibraltar and the Mediterranean, (London: Jonathan Cape, 1939), p. 330. Italy's expectations of Libya were expressed by Gaspare Ambrosini in his book I problemi del Mediterraneo, (Rome: 1937), p. 23, quoted in Elizabeth Monroe The Mediterranean in Politics, (London: Oxford University Press, 1938), p. 163. V.I. Lenin gave a different interpretation of the Italo-Turkish war in Pravda, no. 129, of 28 Sept 1912: "What caused the war? The greed of the Italian moneybags and capitalists who need new markets and new achievements for Italian imperialism" From The Awakening of Asia, (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1965) p. 16.

<sup>13</sup>Article 13 stipulated that if France or Great Britain should increase their African colonies at the expense of Germany Italy could also claim shares and especially rectify frontiers. See OM, VI, p. 1 and Times, 5 Jan 1924. For more details on the Pact of London and subsequent agreements, see chapter I, pp.12-13.

<sup>14</sup>Times, 5 Jan 1924, and Ziadeh, op.cit., p. 72, n. 93. For a military description of Jaghbub before this, see ibid, pp.105 106.

forces, but they had forced "the British authorities in Egypt to spend, even after the recapture of Sollum, several millions of pounds in fortifying the Valley of the Nile . . ."15 The strategic aspect received considerable attention once Fascist Italy became strong militarily.

In 1917, Italy was able to make Shaykh Muhammad Idris, the Sanusi leader, recognize her rights in Cyrenaica.<sup>16</sup> But she preferred to exercise direct control over the Sanusis, and at Paris in 1919 she began negotiations with Great Britain on the Egypto-Libyan border. These ended in an exchange of notes between April 10-13, 1920, known as the Milner-Scialoia Agreement. Britain agreed to allocate Jaghbub to Italy, while retaining Sallum for Egypt. Details of transfer were left to subsequent discussion.<sup>17</sup> In November, the Sanusi leader Muhammad Idris and the Italian Government concluded the Accord of Regima. By it, Idris acknowledged Italian sovereignty over the Kufara Oases and Jaghbub, while Italy recognized him as an "independent Emir", ruling these oases in behalf of Italy.<sup>18</sup> By 1922, however, armed clashes again occurred between Sanusis and Italians.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>16</sup>Times, 5 Jan 1924.

<sup>17</sup>"Italy and Egypt" in GB & E, XXVII, Feb 26, 1925, p. 209, and Times, 5 Jan 1924. See also Angelo Sammarco, et.al., Egitto Moderno, (Rome: Edizioni Roma, 1939), p. 74; Luigi Villari The Expansion of Italy, (London: Faber & Faber, Ltd., 1930) p. 76 and George Young, Egypt, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1927) p. 321.

<sup>18</sup>Times, 5 Jan 1924 and 29 Apr 1925.

<sup>19</sup>Times, 18 July 1922. Sayyid Idris does not seem to have provoked these clashes. See Times, 29 Apr 1925.

Pressures in Egypt led Britain to abolish its Protectorate on 28 February 1922, and Italy was informed that the border was now a matter between her and Egypt. One of newly independent Egypt's first major acts of foreign policy and relations was with Italy, a strong and potentially dangerous neighbor in the west.<sup>20</sup> The border issue was not a simple one. It took nearly four years to reach an agreement on paper, and ten years altogether to arrive at a full settlement.

In April 1922, a Foreign Ministry was set up by the new Egyptian cabinet.<sup>21</sup> In July, a mixed commission was appointed for the delimitation of the frontier. The Egyptian side was headed by Ibrahim Fathi Pasha, Minister of War.<sup>22</sup> No complications were expected, because the basis for an accord seemed to have already been worked out<sup>23</sup> by Milner and Scialoja. On August 23, Fathi left for a tour of the border area, including the port of Sallum and the oases Siwa and Jaghbub.<sup>24</sup> Early in September Fathi returned to Cairo. He reported that he had been cordially received by the Italian border officials and expected no difficulties in negotiations. There was no dispute

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<sup>20</sup>See Vernon A. O'Rourke, The Juristic Status of Egypt and the Sudan, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1935), p. 120, and Lord Lloyd, Egypt Since Cromer, vol II, (London: Macmillan & Co., 1934), p. 79.

<sup>21</sup>Mahmud Zayid, Egypt's Struggle for Independence, (Beirut: Khayats, 1965), p. 10.

<sup>22</sup>Times, 25 July 1922.

<sup>23</sup>GB & E, XXII, July 27, 1922, p. 206. and Times, 18 July 1922.

<sup>24</sup>Times, 24 Aug 1922.



over Sallum, which Italy recognized as an Egyptian port. In parts of the desert, however, the Italians erroneously believed themselves to be on Tripolitan territory.<sup>25</sup>

Marquis Negrotto Cambiaso, the Italian Minister to Egypt, was expected to return in autumn,<sup>26</sup> and the negotiations on the delimitation of the border were to begin in mid-October.<sup>27</sup> On October 28 the Fascists assumed power in Italy and the negotiations were postponed.

Italy did not agree with Fathi's territorial claims. In her opinion the original line of division dated back to the Ottoman period, and the disputed regions had been illegally acquired by the Anglo-Egyptian Government.<sup>28</sup> Even if the Tharwat Cabinet had been willing to accommodate Italy, it would have been difficult for it to do so. Milner had agreed that Italy should have Jaghbub, but Milner was British. The Egyptian political opposition wanted to erase all British tutelage as a sine qua non for any action. For example, Dr. 'Abd al-Hamid Sa'id Bey, the Egyptian leader of the League of Oppressed Peoples, whose seat was in Rome, hoped that the border question would be settled in a friendly manner. But

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<sup>25</sup>GB & E, XXII, Sept 28, 1922, p. 397; Times, 6 Sept, 1922; and al-Ahram, 4 Sept 1922, in OM, II, p. 332.

<sup>26</sup>Times, 18 July 1922.      <sup>27</sup>Times, 6 Sept 1922.

<sup>28</sup>OM, II, p. 333. The British were inclined to agree with the Italian argument; see Lloyd, op.cit., vol II, p. 149.

he insisted that the Egyptian Parliament should be in a position to act independently and that Britain must be kept out of questions exclusively concerning Italy and Egypt, including the Sudanese-Libyan frontier.<sup>29</sup> It was the question of sovereignty over the Sudan, which led to Tharwat's resignation on November 29, 1922. A period of political unrest followed in Egypt,<sup>30</sup> and the border negotiations were removed from the agenda until a new cabinet was formed under Yahya Ibrahim.

In 1922, fighting again flared up between Sanusis and Italians.<sup>31</sup> The new Italian Government, who planned to move Italian settlers to Libya, intended to deal harshly with armed opposition. On 23 May 1923, the Italian Consul-General of Alexandria informed Amir Muhammad al-Idris, who resided in Egypt, of a new order issued by Mussolini. According to it, Italy no longer recognized the Regima Accord of 1920 with the Sanusis and the administrative independence the Amir had so far retained. New military action against the Sanusis began

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<sup>29</sup>Il Popolo d'Italia (Fascist Organ of Milan), 2 Sept 1922, in OM, II, p. 250. At the time there were also negotiations between Italy, Britain and Egypt on the border between Libya and the Sudan. Sa'id called the Sudan "an integral part of Egyptian territory." It should be recalled that he was trying to enlist Italian aid against the British. See Chapter II, pp. 22-23.

<sup>30</sup>Zayid, op.cit., pp. 112-113; Lloyd, op.cit., vol II, p. 72.

<sup>31</sup>See above, p. 64.

in Libya.<sup>32</sup> Italy also intended to control the Sanusis who left for Egypt. Since Yahya Ibrahim proved less difficult to negotiate with than Tharwat, an accord was worked out between Italy and Egypt on the status of Libyans living in Egypt. It was ratified in Cairo on 30 December 1923. According to it, the Italian Consular authorities obtained a measure of control over those Libyans with Italian papers, who were agitating against Italy.<sup>33</sup>

Because of the Italian campaign, some Sanusis fled into Egyptian territory and several of these Tripolitan "nationalist agitators" were arrested on the frontier by the Egyptian authorities in December 1923. The Italians demanded their extradition, as they considered them criminals, not political refugees. The Egyptian press generally sympathized with these fellow Muslims, who seemed to be in a position similar to that of Sa'ad Zaghlul, who had lived in forced exile until a few months earlier.<sup>34</sup> Italy also asked the Egyptian authorities to keep a watchful eye on Libyans who

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<sup>32</sup>See Current History, XVIII, p. 703, and Dixon-Johnson, op.cit., p. 66. There had been reports of frontier incidents in March 1923, but they appear to have been untrue. See Times, 31 March 1923.

<sup>33</sup>Il Giornale d'Italia (Rome), 9 Jan 1924, in OM, IV, p. 64. For the official French text from Egypt's Journal Officiel of 17 Jan 1924, see Great Britain, Foreign Office, British and Foreign State Papers, vol CXVIII, 1923, part II, (London: H. M. Stationery Office, 1926), pp. 216-217. See also A. Assabghy and E. Colombani, Les questions de nationalité en Egypte, (Cairo: Imprimerie Misr, 1926), pp. 103-105; and Times, 9 Jan 1924.

<sup>34</sup>GB & E, XXV, Feb 21, 1924, p. 187. Zaghlul had been banned from Egypt by the British from December 1921 until March 1924. He came back in September.

did not fall under Italian jurisdiction. Italy perhaps - the Italian Legation denied this - even requested their arrest or expulsion. In view of the cordial relations between Yahya Ibrahim's government and Italy, it is possible that Egypt did ask a few individuals to leave the country<sup>35</sup> as she did at a later date.

Italy's pressure on the Egyptian Government and her complaints that Egypt did nothing to prevent supplies from reaching the Sanusis, evoked a new tone in some Egyptian papers, which had previously been well-disposed towards Italy.<sup>36</sup> The Egyptian press urged the new Cabinet under Zaghlul to be stronger than its predecessor. On 14 February 1924, it actually decided not to hand over the ten Tripolitans still requested by Italy. The Cabinet maintained that the nationality of the prisoners was not clear and that the true nature of their crimes would have to be checked in the dossiers.<sup>37</sup>

Nevertheless, on 24 February 1924, the Egyptian Government did officially communicate to Italy that the Libyan refugees "shall depart immediately to the place and the destination of their choice." As this expressed neither expulsion nor extradition, the Egyptian press reaction was rather favorable.

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<sup>35</sup> Al-Muqattam, 12 Jan 1924, in OM, IV, p. 128.

<sup>36</sup> GB & E, XXV, Jan 31, 1924, p. 110.

<sup>37</sup> Times, 16 Feb 1924, and Current History, XX, p. 154.

Actually there were individual expulsions, when the Alexandria police forcefully embarked some Libyans on outgoing ships and such actions were deplored by the press.<sup>38</sup> A few days later, nine more persons were arrested on the Cyrenaica border. According to the Italian Government, they intended to intrigue on Egyptian soil against Italian interests. On the basis of the new accord on Libyans in Egypt, they did not receive the refuge they sought.<sup>39</sup> They were expelled and warned not to return, lest they be re-expelled or turned over to the Italian authorities. Among them was 'Uthman al-Qizani, one of the most active organizers of anti-Italian resistance since 1919.<sup>40</sup>

Even the question of the Caliphate, an important issue at the time, became involved in the border problem. The Ottoman Caliph 'Abd al-Majid, was deposed on 3 March 1924.<sup>41</sup> Al-Ahram reported French accusations that Italy was supporting King Fu'ad in his aspirations to the Caliphate, so that he would assist the Italians in their intrigues against the most prominent Cyrenaica rebel residing in Egypt - Muhammad Idris,

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<sup>38</sup>OM, IV, p. 279 and Times, 25 Feb 1924.

<sup>39</sup>Agenzia Stefani, report of 28 Feb 1924, in OM, IV, p. 279.

<sup>40</sup>OM, VII, p. 99. See al-Siyasa, 20 Feb 1927, in OM, VII, p. 99. Qizani later returned. See below, p. 85.

<sup>41</sup>Times, 4 Mar 1924.

the Sanusi. This view seems not to have been widespread in Egypt.<sup>42</sup> Actually, giving Jaghbub to Italy was more likely to prejudice Egypt's position in Africa and the Islamic world, than to help the King in his aspirations. Also he would not have wanted to antagonize the Sanusis by openly helping a Christian power to gain control over the home and tomb of their founder.<sup>43</sup>

By June 1924, Italy and Egypt began negotiations on the border issue, but on 13 June, an attempt was made on Sa'd Zaghlul's life. Agents of the ex-Khedive 'Abbas Hilmi were suspected, and Egyptian troops were secretly concentrated, especially in the ports, to keep down any uprising. According to the Times, however, the military moves were too extensive for merely combating a conspiracy. Instead, the Times suspected that because negotiations had been inconclusive, the Egyptian Government used the suspicion that partisans of Hilmi were hiding in Sallum, as a pretext to fortify that port.

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<sup>42</sup>Al-Ahram, 9 Jan 1924, in OM, IV, p. 240. The paper referred to an article by M. Herbette in Le Temps, Italy had been active in the Caliphate issue by having the name of 'Abd al-Majid replaced by that of the Italian monarch in the du'a' of the Friday khutba. For this the Chief Executive Committee of the Islamic Congress in Egypt sent a letter of protest (see al-Ahram, 1 Apr 1924), in OM, IV, p. 241.) The counter-argument was that the du'a' simply mentioned the name of the sovereign, which 'Abd al-Majid certainly was not (see OM, IV, p. 241). For the letter, see al-Ahram, 7 Apr and a reply see al-Muqattam, 21 May, and a reply to it, al-Akhar, 27 May 1924, in OM, IV, pp. 292-293, 366-368. See also Times, 1 Apr 1924.

<sup>43</sup>Dixon-Johnson, op.cit., p. 67.

Apparently Egypt feared that Italy intended to occupy Sallum.<sup>44</sup>

The negotiations were postponed. Both parties, however, agreed to devise a modus vivendi for the supervision of the frontier, the prevention of contraband and the control of traffic. A representative for each side was to submit proposals.<sup>45</sup> But, in September Italy's intentions were once more doubted. The Italians were carrying out military operations in Libya against the Sanusis. Heavy troop movements west of Sallum made some Egyptians suspect that Italy intended to occupy Jaghbub without negotiations.<sup>46</sup> This possibility was discussed by the Egyptian cabinet,<sup>47</sup> and the Egyptian press "began to publish the most alarming accounts of the progress of the discussion" of the border issue. It declared the Italian demands to be impossible and accused Italy of massing troops with the intention of occupying not only Jaghbub, but also Sallum, and of dispatching a fleet to Alexandria to make Egypt comply. These accusations were believed in Egypt and were replied to in the Italian press.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>44</sup>See OM, IV, pp. 553-554. Perhaps this suspicion merely reflected British views of Zaghlul, who was not to their liking. According to Zayid, op.cit., p. 120, the attempt stemmed from a young man, who feared Zaghlul would make concessions to Britain regarding her position in Egypt.

<sup>45</sup>Times, 3 Sept 1924.

<sup>46</sup>Al-Muqattam, 19 Sept 1924, in OM, IV, p. 659.

<sup>47</sup>Times, 16 Sept 1924.

<sup>48</sup>See GB & E, XXVI, Oct 2, 1924, p. 343. The Egyptians were called unreliable friends, who alienated Italian good will. To foreigners, the uproar over the border issue meant that the Egyptians were incapable of acting without the guiding hand of Britain. See Times, 18 Sept 1924.

The press allegations were denied by Count Aldrovandi Marescotti, the Italian Minister to Cairo. Zaghlul was then in Paris, engaged in negotiations with Great Britain on the status of Egypt. Baron Avezzani, the Italian Minister to France conferred with him on the border issue, and Zaghlul promised to deal with it after returning to Egypt.<sup>49</sup> The Italian Minister to Egypt, however, stressed that Italy desired a quick settlement so that smuggling could be effectively curtailed. After some discussions in a "friendly spirit", the Egyptian Government agreed to help expedite negotiations and both sides named delegates.<sup>50</sup> Frontier officials were already conferring about provisional measures. On 17 September the Egyptians issued a communiqué, which assured that the negotiations were progressing smoothly. This served to calm the public somewhat.<sup>51</sup>

In the following two months, the Italian troops operated effectively against the Sanusis in Libya, and consolidated Italy's control over the colony. But Jaghbub continued to be a source of danger as a base for anti-Italian operations as long as it remained under Egypt. On 29 November 1924, Di Scalea, the Italian Minister of Colonies informed the Italian

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<sup>49</sup>Times, 18 Sept 1924.

<sup>50</sup>Al-Muqattam, 19 Sept 1923, in OM, IV, p. 659.

<sup>51</sup>GB & E, XXVI, Oct 2, 1924, p. 343. and Times, 18 Sept 1924.



Chamber that final pacification of Libya would depend on a permanent frontier regulation because Egypt had become a center for Sanusi agitation. But he felt that a settlement should be feasible, considering Italy's friendly relations with Egypt.<sup>52</sup>

In January 1925, Italy once more became the object of suspicion. Renewed Italian military activity in Libya re-awakened the Egyptian fears of an offensive against Jagh-bub or some other part of western Egypt.<sup>53</sup> To Egypt's queries, the Italians replied that they were conducting another anti-rebel campaign. A number of Egyptians distrusted this answer. They claimed that the areas of Italian military activity contained no rebels, so the troops could only be intended against Egypt. The new Premier, Ziwar, was accused of neglecting the defense of the frontier by permitting these troop concentrations and accepting such transparent excuses.<sup>54</sup>

Since Ziwar had served as Egyptian Minister in Rome, Italy expected him to be easier to negotiate with than Zaghlul. On 19 February 1925 the Italian Government remonstrated to the

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<sup>52</sup>OM, IV, p. 765, and Times, 1 Dec 1924, Di Scalea also pointed out that one of Italy's reasons for entering World War I on Britain's side was to rectify her borders. This could be interpreted as a threat.

<sup>53</sup>Al-Siyasa, 12 Jan 1925, in OM, V, p. 46.

<sup>54</sup>Al-Akhbar, 11 Jan 1925, in OM, V, p. 46. Zaghlul resigned on 23 Nov 1924, after the murder of the Sirdar. Italy by now regretted that the border issue had not been settled before 1922. See Times, 13 Feb 1925. The Milner-Scialoia negotiations were not concluded, because of Italian objections concerning wells and rights of pasturage. See Times, 17 Apr 1925.

new Egyptian Cabinet over the delay in reaching a definite settlement of the border issue. But the moment was rather inopportune because of the elections to Parliament in Egypt. The Egyptian Government stated that it wished to reach an agreement with Italy, but pointed out that the Egyptian political situation did not permit this at the time. The border matter was a sensitive national topic in Egypt and a new parliament could not begin its term with an action which would be considered a cession of Egyptian territory.<sup>55</sup> Although Italy agreed to postpone negotiations, the Egyptian press interpreted the Italian remonstrance as an ultimatum, the military occupation of Jaghbub being the alternative.<sup>56</sup> Italian skirmishes with Sanusis near the oasis on March 5 only served to confirm this suspicion.<sup>57</sup>

In spite of the violent press reaction, the Jaghbub issue seems to have had little significance for the population at large. The issue, however, became a political weapon which the Wafd used against Ziwar. Sayyid Idris sided with the Wafd in opposing the cession of Jaghbub, and Ziwar was deterred from concluding the negotiations with Italy.<sup>58</sup> Some Egyptians were even ready to cede to Italy Sallum in addition to Jaghbub.

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<sup>55</sup>Times, 21 and 23 Feb 1925; "Italy and Egypt" in GB & E, XXVII, Feb 26, 1925, pp. 209-210, and Current History, XXII, p. 152.

<sup>56</sup>GB & E, XXVII, Mar 5, 1925, p. 245, and GB & E, XXVII, Apr 23, 1925, p. 422. See also Times, 23 Feb 1925.

<sup>57</sup>Current History, XXII, p. 152.

<sup>58</sup>GB & E, XXVII, Mar 12, 1925, p. 273, and Times, 29 Apr 1925.

In their opinion, the port of Sallum was of no use to Egypt, but could serve Britain as a naval base, and they had no desire to promote British interests.<sup>59</sup> In April Italy raised the border question again, and the press reacted in the same way. Acceptance of the Milner-Scialoia Agreement was described as a diplomatic defeat and an unconstitutional surrender of Egyptian territory, for which the British were responsible.<sup>60</sup>

The Fascist regime had agreed to wait until after the Egyptian parliamentary elections, but on 13 April 1925, it asked for negotiations.<sup>61</sup> This once more caused the Egyptian press to accuse Italy of presenting an ultimatum, and the Egyptian Premier and the Italian Minister in Egypt felt obliged to issue a joint communiqué. They denied the press accusations and assured that negotiations were progressing in a perfectly normal fashion.<sup>62</sup> Italy actually could have occupied the coveted territory without serious resistance,<sup>63</sup> because Britain would hardly have objected in principle,<sup>64</sup> though it would not have been in her interest to have Ziwār thus weakened. Some Egyptians also favored the military solution, in order to have

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<sup>59</sup>Times, 4 Jan 1924, referring to al-Ahram.

<sup>60</sup>GB & E, XXVII, Apr 23, 1925, pp. 422, 425-426.

<sup>61</sup>Times, 16 Apr 1925.

<sup>62</sup>GB & E, XXVII, Apr 30, 1925, p. 451, and Times, 16 Apr 1925.

<sup>63</sup>GB & E, XXVII, Mar 12, 1925, p. 273.

<sup>64</sup>GB & E, XXVII, Apr 23, 1925, p. 426, thought the military solution not so bad: "From everybody's point of view it might be the simplest and easiest solution if the Italians just seized Jaghbub, and then, if necessary, sat down to discuss the question afterwards."

the Egyptian Government relieved from taking an unpopular decision.<sup>65</sup> But other Egyptians resented the fact that with regard to Egypt the British were usually only concerned about their own security, and now they were encouraging a potential enemy to come closer to Egypt than necessary.<sup>66</sup>

Italy had repeatedly made clear her interpretation of her claim. She insisted that Egypt had a right only to the territory which Egypt obtained through the firman of 1841. In it, Italy believed, Jaghbub and Sallum were excluded and were occupied by Egypt in 1911. Italy wanted only Jaghbub and recognized Sallum as Egyptian; she intended also to cede some of her territory near Sallum to Egypt. This had been agreed upon by Milner and Scialoia on the basis of the Pact of London. From the Italian view point, Egypt only stood to gain.<sup>67</sup> The Egyptian Government, however, was afraid of internal opposition if it agreed. When Italy again insisted on negotiations, her intentions were suspected and more closely scrutinized by Egypt. The major Egyptian objection was that Italy based her claims to Jaghbub on British war-time promises. Italy also maintained that Jaghbub was a center for smuggling supplies to rebellious Sanusis, but this charge could also be raised against other oases,<sup>68</sup> and Egypt therefore proposed

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<sup>65</sup>Times, 16 Apr 1925.

<sup>66</sup>GB & E, XXVII, May 21, 1925, p. 525.

<sup>67</sup>GB & E, XXVII, Apr 30, 1925, p. 451.

<sup>68</sup>GB & E, XXVII, May 21, 1925, p. 526.

to garrison Jaghbub herself and stop the contraband traffic.<sup>69</sup>

Early in April a committee was appointed under Shafiq Pasha to examine the strategic value of Jaghbub, and on 6 May 1925, he submitted his report to the Cabinet, According to it, Jaghbub was essential for Egypt, because it "constitutes an ideal jumping-off ground for organized raids into Egyptian territory by armed cars belonging to the Power that possesses the oasis."<sup>70</sup> These fears were valid, for offensive thrusts against Egypt could be carried out only along the coast - as happened in World War II - or through Jaghbub, while "everywhere else the waterless desert forms an impassable barrier."<sup>71</sup> The strategic value of Jaghbub had already been demonstrated by the Sanusiya against the British during World War I. Therefore it was "easy to understand why Egypt objects to surrender a strategical point like Jarabub to a first-class European military power provided with aeroplanes and motors and all the paraphernalia of modern warfare which the Senussi were without."<sup>72</sup>

Negotiations, however, progressed, and in June, notes were exchanged between the two Governments.<sup>73</sup> The Egyptians

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<sup>69</sup>Dixon-Johnson, op.cit., p. 66.

<sup>70</sup>GB & E, XXVII, May 21, 1925, p. 529.

<sup>71</sup>Dixon-Johnson, op.cit., p. 67. The Captain goes on in some detail.

<sup>72</sup>Ibid, During World War II, General Wavell remembered Jaghbub's value and ordered it to be occupied by a separate thrust. See Historia Magazine, 2<sup>e</sup> Guerre Mondiale, no. 15, "Batailles dans le Desert", p. 396, and map p. 401.

<sup>73</sup>Current History, XXII, p. 486.

still clung to the notion that Italy was presenting an ultimatum. The Italian Minister in Egypt assured them that this was not the case, but the Egyptians continued to express concern.<sup>74</sup> But after military evaluation of Jaghbub, the Ziwar Cabinet began to fear that Italy might resort to force after all. Rather than risking the loss of Jaghbub and of the concessions that Italy was ready to make in return, the Egyptian Cabinet was willing to brave opposition at home.<sup>75</sup> There came a few months of relative calm concerning the issue, and on October 25, a negotiating commission under Isma'il Sidqi Pasha was formed. Preliminary discussions were held in November at Alexandria and for once the press was quiet about the border issue.<sup>76</sup>

At last an accord was signed in Cairo between Italy and Egypt on December 6, 1925. Basically it followed the Milner-Scialoia Agreement. Jaghbub was transferred to Italy, while Egypt obtained a well - Bir al-Ramla - northwest of Sallum which was necessary for that town.<sup>77</sup> An 800 meter wide passage connected Sallum with the wells, while the border now run ten kilometers farther west of Sallum. It now included Sallum Bay and the fort of Umm Musa'id, which under Italian

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<sup>74</sup>Ibid, pp. 502, 674.

<sup>75</sup>GB & E, XXVIII, Dec 17, 1925, p. 736.

<sup>76</sup>GB & E, XXVIII, Nov 5, 1925, p. 549 and Times 25 Nov 1925.

<sup>77</sup>GB & E, XXVIII, Dec 10, 1925, p. 704; see also Young, op.cit., p. 322.

control had been a threat to the port of Sallum.<sup>78</sup>

The treaty<sup>79</sup> consisted of ten articles dealing with the border line (1-3), caravan protection (4), the wells (5-6), population protection and bedouin control (7-8), an arbitration commission for controversies (9) and ratification details (10). There was also an addendum on the Holy Places of Jaghbub and on political offenses. Regarding the latter, Italy issued a general amnesty applicable to Italian subjects until the Treaty would become effective. Concerning the Holy Places, Italy, according to negotiator Marquis Negrotto Cambiaso, acted "comme grande Puissance musulmane"<sup>80</sup> and declared the sites inviolable and granted free access to all Muslims. Both the amnesty and the access to the Holy Places were agreed to by Italy upon a request by Ziwar.<sup>81</sup> From Italy's point of view this was generous, as these were not strictly "Holy Places" but amakin diniyya - religious places - access to which was not an international obligation.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>78</sup>Al-Ahram, 16 Oct 1931, in OM, XI, p. 551, al-Muqattam 13 June and Il Giornale d'Oriente, 14 June 1932, in OM, XII, p. 298. Also Times, 8 Dec 1925.

<sup>79</sup>Text in British and Foreign State Papers, vol CXXXIII, 1930, part II, (London: H.M. Stationery Office, 1935), pp. 976-979. French text published 7 Dec 1925 in Journal Officiel du Gouvernement Egyptien in special issue. See OM, VI, pp. 10-13; Italian text pp. 3-6. See also Current History, XXIII, pp. 607, 767, and XXIV, p. 318.

<sup>80</sup>British and Foreign State Papers, vol CXXXIII, part II, p. 979.

<sup>81</sup>Assabghy and Colombani, op.cit., pp. 193-194.

<sup>82</sup>Amedeo Giannini, "L'Accordo Italo-Egizano per le frontiere della Cirenaica", in OM, VI, p. 6.

Protest against the treaty was not long in coming, especially from the Wafdist opposition. On December 10, Zaghlul Pasha received a delegation of students from the Egyptian university and expressed solidarity with them in objecting to the cession of Jaghbub.<sup>83</sup> A little later, the same party issued a proclamation against the Government which combined irredentism with religious and military considerations. The Wafd accused the Government that "with this cession, which makes Italy master of the Holy Sites venerated by our country, it has offended a religious sentiment and permitted the foreigner to enter on this side of our frontier, while first he was separated by an immense desert, completely arid, impossible to cross. In this manner, we are now under the perennial threat of an invasion, after having been in perfect security."<sup>84</sup> The proclamation also lamented the meager compensation in land, criticized the bad location and salty water of Ramla Well,<sup>85</sup> and called the entire accord unconstitutional. The Watani Party maintained that British war-debts should not be paid with Egyptian territory.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>83</sup>Times, 11 Dec 1925, and OM, VI, p. 48.

<sup>84</sup>Proclamation signed by Wafdist Secretary Mustafa al-Nahhas, in L'Imparziale, Cairo, 13 Dec 1925, in OM, VI, p. 47.

<sup>85</sup>Two Egyptian deputies, 'Abd al-Rahman 'Azzam Bey and ex-officer Salih Harb Bey, had gone to the western border and then published a study with these observations. See Wadi al-Nil, 5 May 1927, in OM, VII, p. 244.

<sup>86</sup>Young, op.cit., p. 322.



While the opposition stirred up public opinion against the treaty, the 1841 firman was conveniently rediscovered and with it the map that defined Egypt's borders. According to it, Jaghbub, Siwa and Sallum actually lay outside Egyptian territory. Legally speaking, therefore, Egypt had made significant territorial gains.<sup>87</sup> To dissipate all public doubt and suspicion, the Ziwar Cabinet prepared a "Green Book" - Egypt's first - on the negotiations, which included, among other documents, comparative maps with the old 1841 and the new borders.<sup>88</sup>

The Green Book also contained letters exchanged between the Egyptian Premier and the Italian representative in Cairo, on 6 December 1925, that provided for provisional execution of the Treaty. On the basis of these documents, Italy which finally saw herself in a position to strike a mortal blow at the Sanusis, swiftly occupied Jaghbub on February 7, 1926, although the accord had not yet been ratified by either country. Following the occupation, she reaffirmed her guarantees of free access to the holy places. In spite of great domestic opposition, the Egyptian Government could not but accept this action.<sup>89</sup> The

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<sup>87</sup>Times, 9 Feb 1925, GB & E, XXIX, Feb 11, 1926, p. 100 and OM, VI, p. 166. The map was found in the Turkish archives in Istanbul by the Egyptian Minister there.

<sup>88</sup>OM, VI, p. 165; VII, p. 244. This was al-Kitab al-Akhdar no. 1 entitled "The Egyptian Western Frontier." It contained the following seven documents in 11 pages: 1. The Accord of Dec 1925. 2. A map attached to it. 3. The Ratification Protocol. 4. Two letters exchanged between Ahmad Ziwar, Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Marquis Lazzaro Negrotto Cambiaso, Head of the Italian diplomatic delegation, 5. A letter from Muhammad Hidayat Pasha, Minister Plenipotentiary of Egypt at Istanbul to Ziwar, Minister of the Interior, concerning the 1841 firman. 6. A copy of the map attached to the 1841 firman. 7. Comparative maps, showing the differences between the 1841 and 1925 lines. See also Times, 24 Feb 1926.

<sup>89</sup>Times, 9 and 25 Feb 1926. OM, VI, pp. 134, 166, and

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<sup>89</sup>Times, 9 and 25 Feb 1926. OM, VI, pp. 134, 166, and

Sanusi chiefs fled and found refuge in Egypt where they settled mainly in Marsa Matruh.<sup>90</sup>

Details of the Treaty still remained to be worked out by an Italo-Egyptian commission, but the Wafdist administration under the Liberal Constitutionalist 'Adli that came into power in May 1926 proved harder to deal with. The biggest remaining problem concerned the nationality of the Sanusi family. The Italians claimed jurisdiction over them as residents of Jaghbub, although the family had opted for Egyptina citizenship. Egypt preferred to settle the matter by arbitration rather than through negotiation with Italy. Italy pointed out that according to article 9 of the Treaty, arbitration would have to be resorted to on all points, and thus Egyptian gains regarding customs, control of wells, etc, might be reconsidered.<sup>91</sup>

The Sanusis could of course also become a source of trouble for Egypt. It was therefore preferable that they be under someone else's jurisdiction. But the Egyptian administration feared that if it gave in to Italy, this influential family could spread the belief among Egyptians and other Arabs that it had betrayed Muslim interests.<sup>92</sup> The Sanusis soon were

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GB & E, XXIX, Feb 11, 1926, p. 100; see also Current History XXIV, p. 150.

<sup>90</sup>GB & E, XLV, Sept 26, 1935, p. 389; Heinrich Schiffers, Libyen und die Sahara, (Bonn: Kurt Schroeder, 1962), p. 55.

<sup>91</sup>GB & E, XXX, Sept 2, 1926, p. 244.

<sup>92</sup>Ibid, p. 241.

a cause for friction in Italo-Egyptian relations when Sayyid Muhammad Idris al-Sanusi attended the Congress for the Caliphate in Cairo, as "Amir of Libya". According to Italy, he was an "Ex-Amir", and the Italian Legation drew the attention of the Egyptian Foreign Ministry to this, stating that the Italian Government "cannot tolerate that a rebel subject, whom it had permitted to travel to Egypt for reasons of health, display political activity by attending the Congress in such a capacity."<sup>93</sup>

Because of the controversies over the nationality problem, the mixed Italo-Egyptian commission charged with executing the accord suspended work, but resumed it in October, after the Italian commission leader had received new instructions.<sup>94</sup> An agreement was reached on 28 October and 9 November 1926, when Tharwat, the Egyptian Foreign Minister, and Marquis Paternò, the Italian Minister, signed a protocol on the interpretation of the Treaty. The touchy Sanusi issue was left open and was to be solved by special diplomatic talks, while questions of road ownership and mutton exports were settled. Bedouins were permitted to cross borders duty free with their herds for one year. Access to the wells near Sallum was granted to Egypt by two roads. Special Egyptian and Italian courts were to deal with bedouin offenders, irrespective of nationality.

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<sup>93</sup>L'Imparziale, 13 May 1926, in OM, VI, p. 267.

<sup>94</sup>Times, 5, 8, 24 July and 27 Aug 1926; OM, VI, pp. 417, 512.

Only in case of a death penalty could the respective country intervene in favour of the bedouin.<sup>95</sup> Customs questions were to be dealt with after the expiration of the Italo-Commercial treaty in 1930. What remained now was ratification.

The Sanusis continued to provoke incidents in Egypt. Early in 1927, the expelled Tripolitan rebel 'Uthman al-Qizani,<sup>96</sup> returned to Egypt, in possession of a valid Turkish passport. He proceeded to al-Fayyum to meet some of his compatriots. The watchful Italian authorities advised the Egyptian Government of this, resulting in Qizani's arrest. His friends at Fayyum informed the Turkish Ambassador, General Muhyi al-Din, of the arrest of a Turkish subject. A week of talks between Muhyi al-Din and the Egyptian authorities resulted nevertheless in the Libyan's second expulsion from Egypt on February 16. This led the unfounded accusations in some papers that the Italian Legation had made moves to obtain the expulsion or extradition of all Libyan refugees in Egypt engaged in anti-Italian activities. It was also alleged that the Tripolitans intended to petition the Egyptian Government to reject any Italian request for expulsion or extradition. Amir Idris al-Sanusi, cousin of the Grand Sanusi Sayyid Ahmad al-Sharif, denied the rumor. He

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<sup>95</sup>Signatories were Marquis Paternò, Italian Minister in Cairo, and Zaki Abu al-Su'ud, interim Egyptian Minister of Foreign Affairs. *OM*, VI, p. 631; VII, p. 2; *l'Imparziale*, 29 Oct 1926 in *OM*, VI, p. 631; *GB & E*, XXX, Nov 18, 1926, p. 570. and XXXI, Jan 6, 1927, p. 5; *Current History*, XXV, p. 621; and *Times*, 25 Oct and 10 Nov 1926.

<sup>96</sup>See above, p. 70.

declared that as guests they had no right to disturb Egypt's relations with other powers. Under these circumstances he considered Qizani's return as inopportune.<sup>97</sup>

On April 25, 1927, the maps of the new borders were signed, and on the following day, there were further proceedings, to be annexed to the Treaty of 6 December 1925 and the protocol of 9 November 1926.<sup>98</sup> The provisional signs along the frontier were now to be replaced by permanent ones. But ratification was still to come, and these actions stimulated the old voices of protest. The Nationalist Party (al-hizb al-watani) lamented that Ziwar had not informed Parliament and accused him of having made secret commitments to Italy which permitted her to make the Treaty effective before its ratification, as was exemplified by the occupation of Jaghub. The Party also complained again about the unequal compensation which Egypt had been granted by the Treaty. It demanded fair compensation and guarantees for the future, since the growth of the Italian population and military might were causes for concern.<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> OM, VII, p. 99, and al-Siyasa, 20 Feb 1927, in OM, VII, pp. 99-100. Idris al-Sanusi was interviewed by the editor of al-Siyasa. Perhaps the Turkish Ambassador did not try too hard to defend Qizani, since Sayyid Ahmad al-Sharif himself had been asked by Mustafa Kamal Atatürk to leave Turkey in 1926, See Ziadeh, op.cit., p. 71.

<sup>98</sup> Acting for Italy were Col. Enrico de Agostini and Capt. Michele Campo, for Egypt the Qa'immaqams Mahmud Sabri Bey and A. W. Green Bey. See Il Messaggero Egiziano, 27 Apr 1927, OM, VII, p. 243.

<sup>99</sup> Wadi al-Nil, 5 May 1927, in OM, VII, pp. 243-244.

The Egyptian complaints were criticized in the Italian press and the army continued its operations in the Cyrenaica. But full control was impossible to achieve, until Egypt fulfilled her treaty obligations. The flow of contraband arms and food from sympathizers in Egypt to Libya was impossible to stop without close supervision on both sides of the border.<sup>100</sup> Armed bedouins entered Cyrenaica for raids, and then withdrew to Egypt. The Italian Legation complained that Egypt was not fulfilling her part of the Treaty and asked her to set up observation posts in the desert - a difficult task - and to turn over the raiders. Compliance would have been interpreted by the Egyptian opposition as yet another favour to Italy, so nothing was done for over a year. This led the Italian army to ignore Egyptian sovereignty, by carrying its pursuit of raiders across the border into Egyptian territory.<sup>101</sup>

The situation continued unaltered, although on 2 September 1929, an Italo-Egyptian commission for putting into effect the Jaghbub Treaty met in Alexandria to set up its program. It proceeded to Sallum, where the Egyptian flag was raised during a military ceremony in a friendly atmosphere.<sup>102</sup> Aside from this, nothing resulted from the discussions. On 23 November 1930,

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<sup>100</sup>Times, 13 Aug 1927 and GB & E, XXXII, Aug 18, 1927, p. 195.

<sup>101</sup>Al-Ahram, 4 Oct 1927, in OM, VII, p. 512, and 23 Jan 1929 in OM, IX, p. 94.

<sup>102</sup>Al-Siyasa, 2 and 3 Sept 1929, in OM, IX, p. 445.

Rodolfo Graziani, Vice-Governor of Cyrenaica, complained of strong contraband activity through Sallum and demanded Egyptian action against it. He directed operations against rebels and arms smugglers<sup>103</sup> rather energetically, and Italian airplanes and troops again entered Egyptian territory in pursuit of them. The Egyptian Foreign Ministry brought the reports about repeated border incidents to the attention of the Italian Legation.<sup>104</sup> For security reasons, the Egyptian frontier authorities disarmed the refugees, but they had no obligation to stop or seize them.<sup>105</sup> Al-Ahram expressed concern about the series of border incidents over the past eight years. It wrote that Italy should refrain from border violations, because Egypt had been very accommodating by even expelling some political refugees - called criminals by Italy. The paper asked Italy to issue definite orders to her troops not to enter Egyptian territory.<sup>106</sup>

Italy, however, thinking that success was around the corner, stepped up her operations. Her Saharan troops took the Kufara Oases and on 24 January 1931, they raised the Italian flag at al-Taj, another Sanusi center.<sup>107</sup> To ensure complete success, the Italian Minister of Colonies, De Bono,

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<sup>103</sup> OM, X, p. 651, and Current History, XXVII, p. 138.

<sup>104</sup> Al-Ahram, 27 Nov 1930, in OM, X, p. 649.

<sup>105</sup> Al-Siyasa, 28 Nov 1930, in OM, X, p. 650.

<sup>106</sup> Al-Ahram, 6 Dec 1930, in OM, X, p. 650.

<sup>107</sup> OM, XI, p. 84. Sayyid al-Mahdi, Sanusi head from 1859 to 1902, predecessor of Sayyid Ahmad al-Sharif, is buried there. See Ziadeh, op.cit., p. 65. n. 76.



demanded the closing of the entire Egypto-Cyrenaican frontier, because "our complaints to the Egyptian authorities have not produced any result of some practical importance."<sup>108</sup> The Italians closed the border, but the Egyptian press interpreted this as a sign of hostility.<sup>109</sup> An official statement in Egypt reassured the public that Italo-Egyptian relations remained cordial, and that the border was not closed as in time of war, but only controlled by military forces to impede contraband goods and arms from reaching the Libyan rebels.<sup>110</sup> To help dispel concern in Egypt, De Bono modified his statement about Egypt on 18 March before the Italian Senate. He stressed however, that Egyptian cooperation had not been of much help.<sup>111</sup> The difficulty was that the Italians had to secure a frontier of 280 kilometers, mostly in the desert, in order to keep supplies from reaching the Sanusis from Egypt. The Italian campaign became more brutal. The object was to either permanently dislodge the Sanusis from the oases, or to kill them in battle, or to arrest them.<sup>112</sup>

The new Italian operations provoked a strong anti-Italian sentiment in most Arab countries, where much was made of true and invented Italian atrocities during the Kufara

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<sup>108</sup>Il Messaggero, Rome, 19 Mar 1931, in OM, XI, p. 161.

<sup>109</sup>OM, XI, p. 161.

<sup>110</sup>Al-Ahram, 11 Mar 1931, in OM, XI, p. 161.

<sup>111</sup>Il Messaggero, 19 Mar 1931, in OM, XI, p. 161.

<sup>112</sup>Pace, op.cit., pp. 75-76.

occupation. The story of Libyans being thrown from flying airplanes is well-known. It is attributed to Amir Shakib Arslan who spread it through the Muslim organ al-Shura. From there it was picked up by the press in Egypt and elsewhere. Italy attributed the various reports of atrocities to anti-Italian propaganda, which was disseminated by Libyan refugees. The Italian Legation in Egypt strongly protested against the atrocity stories and the Inspector of the Egyptian police asked the papers to abstain from publishing such reports. The press, however, continued to have the same anti-Italian tone.<sup>113</sup> There always were new incidents to supply material for articles. For example, a patrol of the Desert Survey Department, led by an Englishman, saved 39 bedouins, who had fled from Kufara to Egypt and had lost their way.<sup>114</sup> The Arabic press concluded that the Italian policy was to drive the Sanusis into the wilderness to let them die. The Italian counter-accusation was that those bedouins were victims of a Sanusi plan to create martyrs and provoke anti-Italian action.<sup>115</sup> Refugees trying to reach Kharja and Dakhla were also helped on

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<sup>113</sup> See OM, XI, p. 218: Il Giornale d'Oriente, 18 Apr and al-Ahram, 24 Apr 1931, Such articles were especially found in al-Fallah al-Misri and al-Diya'. See also Il Giornale d'Oriente, 30 Apr 1931, in OM, XI, pp. 221-222, and Paul Hartmann, L'Egypte indépendante, (Paris: Groupe d'Etudes pour l'Islam, 1938) p. 34. For the Italian version see a letter by the Italian Consul-General in Beirut to L'Orient of 21 Apr 1931, in OM, XI, pp. 220-221.

<sup>114</sup> GB & E, XXXIX, June 4, 1931, p. 628.

<sup>115</sup> Il Giornale d'Oriente, 30 Apr 1931, in OM, XI, pp. 221-222.

other occasions by the Egyptian authorities. To prevent such problems in the future, General Graziani had the entire border between Bardia and Jaghbub lined with barbed wire.<sup>116</sup> This served to facilitate control of the frontier and to prevent future escapees from reaching Egypt and the Sanusis from returning. Arab reactions against Italy continued to be strong.<sup>117</sup>

In spite of the strong popular resentment against Italy, diplomatic relations did not suffer.<sup>118</sup> The Egyptian

<sup>116</sup>Margret Boveri, Mediterranean Cross-Current, (London: Oxford University Press, 1938) pp. 281, 285.

<sup>117</sup>The Libyans urged a boycott of Italy and met with success. In Beirut, 'ulama' and notables at the dar al-fatwa decided that Italian schools should be boycotted. The parents of the school-children resisted, but the Italian Consul-General was sufficiently worried to bring the matter to the attention of the High Commissioner, See Alif-ba, 24 and 27 May 1931, in OM, XI, p. 293, and L'Orient, 14 Oct 1931, in OM, XI, p. 540.

In Damascus, the Committee for the boycott of Italy issued "commandments": "1. Don't buy Italian goods and don't sell anything to Italy, 2. Don't buy from any shop without making sure the article is not Italian. 3. Remove immediately your money from Italian banks. 4. Remove your children from Italian schools. 5. Don't entrust the ill to Italian hospitals or doctors, 6. Don't embark on Italian steamers, 7. Don't employ any Italian in your business, 8. Instill in the hearts of your children from infancy hatred of the Italians." OM, XI, p. 540.

Of interest also is an article in Alif-ba on 9 Oct 1931, "How Innocents are killed" which speaks of Derna bedouin being executed by Italians, The author was a Danish journalist, Knud Holmboe, a recent convert to Islam, using the name of 'Ali OM, XI, p. 550. On Holmboe see also Ziadeh, op.cit., p. 132.

<sup>118</sup>A good example is the Wafdist ex-deputy 'Abd al-Rahman 'Azzam, who had agitated against Italy in Libya from 1912-1919. At the Muslim Congress in Jerusalem he accused Italy of having liquidated one third of the population of Libya, and of being a greater menace to Islam than the weak Zionists. But to prevent friction between Britain and Italy, the Mandate authorities expelled him from Palestine. See Falastin, 16 and 19 Dec 1931, in OM, XII, pp. 39-40, 42.

Foreign Minister, 'Abd al-Fattah Yahya Pasha, stated that "there has never been a question of the western frontier and . . . at no time were Italo-Egyptian relations disturbed."<sup>119</sup> But for the opposition the border incidents had another meaning. They insisted that the 1925 Treaty had not been ratified nor could it be, since "it is contrary to the Constitution and violates Egypt's rights, giving Italy the keys to our western borders."<sup>120</sup> Italy tended to support the generally anti-British opposition parties in Egypt. To repair her damaged image, Italy began to develop Libya into a display-case for Italian protection of Islam.<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>119</sup>The Egyptian Minister of Foreign Affairs, 'Abd al-Fattah Yahya Pasha, in Rome in early June. See OM, XI, pp. 456-457, n. 4.

<sup>120</sup>Watani deputy 'Abd al-Hamid Sa'id Bey to Chamber of Deputies on 1 July 1931. See OM, XI, pp. 456-457. Sa'id had been on good political terms with Italy, when it served his political objective. See Chapter II, pp. 22-23.

<sup>121</sup>In 1931, an Italian writer pointed this out: "Italy has a precious means for being exalted in the Muslim East: By acting appropriately in her North African territories. Only on this condition will the very wide doors of the Orient open up to Italian products, capital and labor . . . the wisdom of our Muslim policy will manifest itself in Libya." Santi Nava, Il problema dell'espansione italiana ed il Levante islamico (Padua: Casa Editrice A. Milani, 1931), p. 157.

After suppressing opposition in Libya, the Italians had become quite friendly, which must have influenced Arslan. They actually had achieved a number of things. They had restored the mosques of Saksdi, Sidi Shanshan, al-Ghizghu and Sidi Darghut in Tripoli, the mosque and shrine of Adi 'Abd al-Salim at Zalitan, the Sanusi mosque and tomb in Jaghub, and the Zawiya al-Rifa'iya at Darna. They had constructed mosques in Suq al-Muma'a, Tripolitania, and Suluq, Cyrenaica. Similar works had been done in Eritrea. The Italian Government also built schools for Muslims sanitary facilities, hospitals, and public buildings. See Ce que fait L'Italie pour l'Islam en Afrique, (Rome: Societa' Editrice Novissima, n.d.). Missionary activity was forbidden. In Libya qur'anic schools were maintained and only sanitized. Balbo insisted on qur'anic law for Muslims, which, in theory, strengthened Italian rule. After discussions with the qadat and the muftin, who stated it to be alright by Muslim law, Italian citizenship was given to the Libyans. This equality was

On 11 October, Premier Isma'il Sidqi Pasha and the Ministers of Agriculture and War made an inspection tour of the frontier, which was lined with barbed wire and many Italian troops. Italian officers met them and supplied transportation along the border.<sup>122</sup> A few months later a Parliamentary Commission for the study of the border also inspected the border in Italian military vehicles and planes.<sup>123</sup>

The Egyptian Government continued to maintain good relations with Italy by accommodating Italian wishes. For example, Hamad al-Basil Pasha, a Wafdist ex-deputy and chief of the Fayyum bedouins who had good relations with the Sanusis intended on November 12 to hold a ceremony in commemoration of

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theoretical, even if the Muslims assimilated, and effective control stayed in Catholic Italian hands. Nonetheless, Balbo insisted that the Arabs play their part in achieving Libyan autarchy and improve their conditions, so as not to give other Muslims occasion to propagandistically exploit any negative aspects. His motto was expressed thus in 1938: "We shall have in Libya not rulers and ruled, but Catholic Italians and Moslem Italians, united in the common lot of being the constructive element of a great and puissant organism - the Fascist Empire - Rome thus proves herself still the great and fruitful Mater gentium." See Martin Moore, Fourth Shore: Italy's Mass Colonization of Libya, (London: Routledge & Sons Ltd., 1940), pp. 167-169, 177-179. For the juridic status of Catholics, Muslims and Jews in Libya, see Adelgiso Ravizza, "Gli ordinamenti giuridici della Libia", and on education, Angelo Piccioli, "L'istruzione pubblica in Libia", in Tomaso Sillani, La Libia: In venti anni di occupazione italiana, (Rome: La Rassegna Italiana, 1933), pp. 98-100 and 114 ff. Nevertheless, Italy was accused of desecrating mosques in Libya, See Robert L. Baker, "Arab Fears of Italy", in Current History, XLIII, p. 181.

<sup>122</sup>Al-Ahram, 15 Oct 1931, in OM, XI, p. 55.

<sup>123</sup>Al-Muqattam, 31 Mar 1932, in OM, XII, p. 254.

the Libyan hero 'Umar al-Mukhtar. But shortly before the ceremony, police and soldiers surrounded his house and left only after it was called off. The Premier later denied that this was done to please Italy.<sup>124</sup> On December 31, Egypt even issued an order which was to help maintain "good relations with the Italian Government and give no cause for complaint," and forbade the Sanusi "chiefs from going to Siwah, as it is near Jarabub . . . At the same time the chiefs were authorized to send a representative trained in agriculture to look after their lands in their name."<sup>125</sup> Egypt, urged by Britain, may have wished to expedite matters also for another reason: Libyans dislodged from Kufara had made forays into the province of Dongola in the Sudan.<sup>126</sup>

Finally, on 13 June 1932, the Treaty of 1925 was debated in the Egyptian Chamber of Deputies. A commission for the border gave a report on the background of the issue and maintained that Italy's claims had been substantiated by the rediscovery of the 1841 map. Next a group of military experts submitted its analysis of the strategic aspects of the border accord. According to them, Jaghub was of no use as a defense base, because Egypt's defensive line begins 60 kilometers east of it. Thus

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<sup>124</sup>Al-Ahram, 13 Nov, al-Muqattam, 14-15 Nov, 1931, in OM, XI, pp. 581-582; also n. 2, p. 581. Nov 13 the anniversary of Egypt's national struggle, so political activities were suspected, particularly since the ceremony was not held 40 days after the man's death, as is customary.

<sup>125</sup>GB & E, Sept 26, 1935, p. 389; Government Communiqué.

<sup>126</sup>Sir Harold MacMichael, The Anglo Egyptian Sudan, (London: Faber & Faber Ltd., 1934) p. 281.

they dismissed the military fears voiced earlier by Shafiq Pasha on 6 May 1925. They then stressed the significant advantages Egypt had gained through the ability of her negotiators, regarding Sallum's strategic position and the Ramla Well. The border commission then referred to the favorable impressions it had received during its last visit to the border and recommended acceptance of the 1925 Accord.<sup>127</sup>

The Treaty of 1925 was then put to a vote in the Chamber of Deputies, which approved it with 90 votes in favor, four against and one abstention. The negative votes were the Nationalists deputies Dr. 'Abd al-Hamid Sa'id Bey, Ibrahim Zaki, 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Sufani and Mustafa al-Shurbaji. They still maintained that Jaghbub belonged to Egypt and was essential for her defense. They further stated that Isma'il Sidqi, now Premier, had been of the same opinion in 1925, when he took part in the negotiations with the Italian delegation. Sidqi objected on the basis of the border commission's report and defended his change of attitude with the fact that at the time the Italian claims had not been so well documented.<sup>128</sup>

On June 28, 1932, the Egyptian Senate approved the Treaty as well, with 59 votes for and two against.<sup>129</sup> On 1 Oct-

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<sup>127</sup> Al-Muqattam, 13 June, and Il Giornale d'Oriente, 14 June 1932, in OM, XII, p. 298.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid.

<sup>129</sup> Il Giornale d'Oriente, 29 and 30 June 1932, in OM, XII, p. 350.

ober the Fascist Grand Council reviewed the Treaty and approved it in mid-November.<sup>130</sup> Next it was passed on to the Parliament. The Senate approved it on 16 December 1932, the Chamber of Deputies on 16 February 1933, after which it came into effect.<sup>131</sup> Ratification documents were exchanged in Rome on 25 April 1933.<sup>132</sup>

This ended the frontier negotiations, but the small Watani Party still refused to bow to the majority. At a meeting on their executive committee on March 2, their secretary 'Abd al-Rahman al-Rafi'i voiced the party's protest. According to Rafi'i, Jaghbub must be kept by Egypt on grounds of racial, linguistic and religious unity. The party declared the Treaty null and void, because a state can only cede territory by consulting the people in a referendum or general elections, which had not occurred. Now the protest continued a dangerous precedent had been set and the existence of the country endangered. Because the party feared that the loss of Jaghbub would initiate further losses of Egyptian soil it intended to persist in its protests.<sup>133</sup>

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<sup>130</sup>Times, 15 Nov 1932.

<sup>131</sup>Law no. 49 of 16 Feb 1933; OM, XII, p. 486, and XIII, pp. 124-125, 152. According to Times, 17 Feb 1933, the frontier bill was debated in the Chamber and then referred to "secret scrutiny."

<sup>132</sup>Great Britain, Foreign Office, British and Foreign State Papers, CXXXIII, Part II, (London: H. M. Stationery Office, 1935), p. 976.

<sup>133</sup>Al-Ahram, 4 Mar 1933, in OM, XIII, pp. 152-153.



Once Cyrenaica fully pacified, the restrictions on the Sanusi chiefs<sup>134</sup> were eased, and in May 1934 they "were consequently allowed to visit Siwa alone or in couples, to look after their family affairs, on the condition that none stayed more than a month at a time, and that they did not leave Egyptian territory. This permission, however, was not extended to El Sayed El Idris El Mahdi El Senussi."<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>134</sup>See above, p. 94.

<sup>135</sup>GB & E, XLV, Sept 26, 1935, p. 389.

#### IV. THE ETHIOPIAN CRISIS, 1935-1937

There must be no misunderstanding of the centuries-old task that I assign to this and future generations of Italians. There is no question of territorial conquests - this must be understood by all both far and near - but of a natural expansion which ought to lead to a collaboration between Italy and the peoples of Africa, between Italy and the nations of the Near and Middle East.

Benito Mussolini, 1934

On 5 December 1934, Italian troops clashed with Ethiopians at Walwal<sup>1</sup> on the border between Ethiopia and Italian Somaliland. The clash became an international issue before the League of Nations, whose arbitration Italy rejected. Italy, who had not received any former German colonies after World War I, could find no other area than Ethiopia on the African continent, which was not already under the control of a colonial power.<sup>2</sup> She rejected the League's arbitration and launched her conquest of Ethiopia. Great Britain supported Ethiopia's case in the League of Nations and moved troops to Egypt in case the League were to decide on military action against Italy. The Egyptians began to fear that their country would be turned into a theater of war and a British base, because their relationship with Britain was not fixed by a treaty. The Italo-Ethiopian War and fears that Egypt could also become the target of an Italian attack

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<sup>1</sup>Walwal was Ethiopian, but Italy administrated it since 1928 and occupied it in 1930. See G. M. Gathorne-Hardy, A Short History of International Affairs, 1920-1939, (London: Oxford University Press, 1952), p. 405.

<sup>2</sup>A. Gingold Duprey, De l'invasion á la libération de l'Ethiopie, vol I, (Paris: Paul Dupont, 1955), p. 87.

caused the Egyptians to press for quick negotiations for a Treaty of Alliance with Britain. The Treaty was concluded in December 1936, and Britain obtained by it considerable military privileges in Egypt, which strengthened her position vis à vis Italy.<sup>3</sup>

In June 1934, Italy readjusted her Libyan frontier with the Sudan,<sup>4</sup> and soon after this General De Bono was appointed High Commissioner of Italian East Africa, causing the Egyptians to expect a new Fascist enterprise there.<sup>5</sup> The clash at Walwal justified such expectations, because Italy and Ethiopia reached no agreement after it and by mid-1935 war seemed inevitable. Already in March some Egyptians suggested that as a safety-measure the Sudanese regiments, which had been placed under British control after the murder of Sir Lee Stack

<sup>3</sup>Arnold Toynbee compares Mussolini's role to that of Mephistopheles in Goethe's Faust:  
 "Ein Teil von jener Kraft  
 Die stets das Böse will und stets das Gute schafft."  
 ("Part of that force which would  
 Do evil evermore, and yet creates the good.")  
 (Verses 1335-6; English from Walter Kaufmann's bilingual edition, (New York: Anchor Books, 1962), p. 159). See Arnold J. Toynbee, Survey of International Affairs, 1936, (London; Oxford University Press, 1937), p. 664.

<sup>4</sup>Near East and India (later Great Britain and the East; hereafter referred to as GB & E), XLIV, Feb 28, 1935. During these negotiations, the British Ambassador and the Italian Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs referred to the 1906 Anglo-French-Italian Agreement on Ethiopia's integrity.

<sup>5</sup>The Times of London, 15 May 1935, and Amin Sa'id in al-Muqattam, 19 Jan 1935, in Oriente Moderno (hereafter referred to as OM), XV, pp. 86-87. De Bono wrote in his diary already in 1933 of "coming operations in East Africa," known only to him and the Duce. See Leonard Mosley, Haile Selassie, the Conquering Lion, (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1964), p. 188.

in 1924, be reconstituted as Egyptian units.<sup>6</sup>

Fear of an Italo-Ethiopian war also decided the Egyptian Government not to issue any more passports to Egyptians who had been hired for road construction in Eritrea and Somaliland. Although the Italian construction companies guaranteed strictly non-martial employment for the workers,<sup>7</sup> and although the workers pleaded for permission to leave Egypt, the Government remained adamant.<sup>8</sup> Only fifteen were permitted to leave after the Italian Government promised to send them back to Egypt in case of war. Many workers, however, must have managed to reach the Italian colonies without permits from the Egyptian Ministry of the Interior.<sup>9</sup>

Another question of vital interest to Egypt was the Nile's water supply. Premier Muhammad Tawfiq Nasim Pasha had his cabinet spokesman declare that "the Government is studying the question attentively in order to protect Egypt-

<sup>6</sup>Al-Ahram, 21 Mar 1935, in OM, XV, p. 178. See also Mahmud Zayid, Egypt's Struggle for Independence, (Beirut: Khayats, 1965), p. 121.

<sup>7</sup>Al-Ahram, 1 Apr, and al-Muqattam, 31 Mar 1935, in OM, XV, pp. 177-178. According to al-Ahram, 500 already had their passports. By the end of March, 3 to 4000 workers had left for the Italian colonies. The Government stopped departures because of press protests. See Times, 2 Apr 1935.

<sup>8</sup>Al-Ahram, 10 and 26 Apr 1935, in OM, XV, pp. 178, 232. The contractor sued the Egyptian Government for losses. See al-Ahram, 29 May 1935, in OM, XV, p. 288.

<sup>9</sup>Al-Ahram, 28 May 1935, in OM, XV, p. 288. According to it, the Daily Mail reported 2000 Egyptian workers on the way to Italian Somaliland. The restrictions on the workers were soon lifted until war broke out in October; OM, XV, p. 575. The reason for this might be that Italy replaced the Egyptians with Syrians, who began to arrive in Italian East Africa in August; see OM, XV, pp. 515-516.

tian interests in the waters of Lake Tana, according to vested rights."<sup>10</sup> Egypt had invested £E 21 million in a project to regulate the flow of the Blue Nile.<sup>11</sup> The Blue Nile originates in Lake Tana and Egypt feared that Italy intended to divert the waters by irrigation projects to develop cotton fields in Ethiopia after conquest.<sup>12</sup> This fear was not completely unjustified<sup>13</sup> and there were British reports of "a special mechanized Italian division whose sole objective is Lake Tana."<sup>14</sup> This raised economic fears, for American cotton was already more than sufficient competition for Egypt and the Sudan. Mardock Macdonald, technical advisor to the Egyptian Ministry of Public Works, reassured the Egyptians that their water supply could not be tampered with through any project, no matter who controlled the Lake.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> OM, XV, p. 286.

<sup>11</sup> GB & E, May 23, 1935, XLIV, p. 627; Morning Post, 23 May 1935, in OM, XV, pp. 284-285. For Egyptian interests in Ethiopia, see also Robert R. Baker, "Egypt's Stake in Ethiopia" in Current History, XLII, pp. 553 ff.

<sup>12</sup> Halford L. Hoskins, "The Suez Canal in Time of War" in Foreign Affairs, Oct 1935, p. 101. See also H. A. R. Gibb, "The Situation in Egypt" in International Affairs, XV, p. 351.

<sup>13</sup> R. Cantalupo, a former Italian Minister in Cairo, had written in his book, Italia Musulmana, of making Ethiopia into "a producer of cotton that would assume its place at the side of Egypt." See Le Temps, 4 Aug 1935, in OM, XV, p. 407. But the opposite argument could be heard as well: "No one in Italy had ever thought of changing the natural course of the waters and of removing the contributions of the lake to the cotton plantations of the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan and to the supply of the Nile." See Italy, Ministry for Italian Africa, Gli Annali dell'Africa italiana, year I, vol I, (Verona: Casa Editrice Mondadori, 1938), pp. 9-10. See also Margret Boveri, Mediterranean Cross-Currents, (London: Oxford University Press, 1938), pp. 313, 323.

<sup>14</sup> GB & E, XLV, Aug 29, 1935, p. 259 and Aug 15, p. 193.

<sup>15</sup> See al-Ahram, 16 June 1935, in OM, XV, p. 338.

In spite of concern in Egypt, the Egyptian Government and Italy in May 1935 signed a six-month agreement, allowing Italian military planes to overfly Egyptian territory,<sup>16</sup> and thus facilitating Italian military transports. The British Government did not object to this, but some members of Parliament voiced their concern.<sup>17</sup> In June, the Italian Government inquired about Egypt's attitude in case of a war and hinted that if Egypt did not observe strict neutrality, relations might be severed.<sup>18</sup> In order to have expert advice on Egypt, Count Emilio Pagliano, the Italian Minister to Egypt, was recalled to Rome in July and was assigned to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.<sup>19</sup>

A debate in the House of Commons on the possibility of closing the Suez Canal to Italy aroused further concern in Egypt.<sup>20</sup> Italy would interpret such a measure as an act of war, and the Egyptians feared that in case of an Italo-Ethiopian war in which Britain intervened, their neutrality would be violated by favoring one of the belligerents.<sup>21</sup> The

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<sup>16</sup>GB & E, XLIV, May 30, 1935, p. 667. Times, 1 Aug 1935. In the first half of 1935, 26 Italian planes requested and received permission to overfly Egyptian territory.

<sup>17</sup>GB & E, XLIV, June 6, p. 694, and XLV, Aug 1 and 8, 1935, pp. 144, 174, 176.

<sup>18</sup>Al-Ahram, 29 June 1935. The inquiry was denied by the Italians. See Il Giornale d'Oriente, 30 June 1935, in OM, XV, pp. 406, 472.

<sup>19</sup>GB & E, XLV, July 18, 1935, p. 78.

<sup>20</sup>Times, 8 and 11 June 1935; OM, XV, p. 291, n. 1; GB & E, XLV, p. 514. See also Moustapha El-Hefnaoui, Les problèmes contemporaines posés par le Canal de Suez, (Paris: Guillemot et De Lamothe, 1951), p. 180.

<sup>21</sup>Le Temps, 4 Aug 1935, in OM, XV, p. 406.

question of the Suez Canal was complex and was submitted to study at Geneva. The Canal was operated by a private company, and according to the Canal Convention of 29 October 1888, it was to remain open in time of war. But the Covenant of the League of Nations was supposed to supersede all former agreements which were incompatible with the League's decisions. According to the old Convention, the defense of the Canal was to be referred to the now non-existing Concert of Europe. But by her Unilateral Declaration of Egypt's independence in 1922, Britain reserved for herself the defense of the Canal. Egypt, the territorial sovereign of the Canal, had not officially recognized the British reservation. Egypt was also neither a signatory of the 1888 Convention, nor a League member, which meant that she was bound by no agreements.<sup>22</sup> Egypt would have to be consulted before any action was taken, and she favored the 1888 Convention.<sup>23</sup> But some Egyptians feared that Britain would unilaterally close the Canal.<sup>24</sup> The Suez Canal Company also considered itself bound by the 1888 Convention and objected to closing.<sup>25</sup>

Italy adhered to the 1888 Convention and intended to interpret a closing of the Canal by any power as a casus belli.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>22</sup>Times, 28 Aug 1935.

<sup>23</sup>Al-Ahram, 31 July 1935, in OM, XV, p. 410.

<sup>24</sup>Abd al-Qadir Hamza in al-Balagh, 22 Aug 1935, in OM, XV, p. 473. See also al-Balagh, 6 June 1935, in OM, XV, p. 291; Times, 28 Aug 1935. See also George Slocombe, Dangerous Sea, (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1937), p. 206.

<sup>25</sup>Il Giornale d'Oriente, Alexandria, 29 Sept 1935, in OM, XV, p. 538.

<sup>26</sup>Affari Esteri, Rome, 15 June 1935, in OM, XV, pp. 292-293. See also El-Hefnaoui, op.cit., p. 181.

Nevertheless Mussolini took the possibility into account and told De Bono to prepare for it.<sup>27</sup> Italy, however, hinted that if the Canal were blocked to her ships, she would bomb it.<sup>28</sup> Since neither the League nor any individual power favored closing the Canal, Britain abandoned the idea.<sup>29</sup>

When British troops began to arrive in Egypt for possible intervention, the Egyptians suspected that the Ethiopian question was a British rather than a League of Nations issue. Al-Ahram reported that 100,000 soldiers were to be sent to Egypt for protecting British interests in Ethiopia, while military preparations also went on in other British-controlled areas.<sup>30</sup> The Egyptian Government leaders professed to know nothing of British military activity in Egypt, although the High Commissioner and British military authorities in Egypt had visited Marsa Matruh, Sallum and Siwa. The press feared that Egypt would once more become a protectorate and her own problems would be neglected. Al-Ahram accused Britain of

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<sup>27</sup>Letter from Mussolini to De Bono, 18 May 1935, in G. A. Borgese, Goliath: The March of Fascism, (New York: The Viking Press, 1938), p. 403.

<sup>28</sup>Iwan Kirchner, Der nahe Osten, (Munich: Rudolf M. Rohrer Verlag, 1943), p. 728. The British diverted most of their Suez traffic around the Cape in fear of an Italian blockade of some sort. G. T. Garratt, Gibraltar and the Mediterranean, (London: Jonathan Cape, 1939), p. 324.

<sup>29</sup>See Hoare's speech to the House of Commons of 22 Oct 1935, in Times, 23 Oct 1935.

<sup>30</sup>GB & E, XLV, Oct 24, 1935, p. 515, and OM, XV, p. 286. The Government of Transjordan was instructed to double its troops in 'Aqaba, and British troops in 'Amman were transferred to Ma'an, where barracks to house 10,000 troops were under construction.



treating Egypt like a colony and resented the Government's unconditional and unrewarded support of Britain and criticized its inability to decide where Egypt's interests lay. The paper also feared that Egypt would again be declared a protectorate, as in 1914.<sup>31</sup> It seemed that Egypt was going to be dragged into another war from which she would derive no benefit.<sup>32</sup> A number of Egyptian writers also expressed their concern,<sup>33</sup> but on 29 August the British Mediterranean fleet left Malta for Alexandria, where it was to be reinforced by units of the home fleet.<sup>34</sup> When al-Balagh asked about Egypt's position in case of a war between Ethiopia and Italy, Nasim Pasha replied that "the Government has not yet decided its stand, but in any case it will conform with that of the British Government."<sup>35</sup> This statement provoked further attacks from the Egyptian press.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>31</sup>Al-Ahram, 2 and 13 Aug 1935, in OM, XV, pp. 406, 472.

<sup>32</sup>This attitude was even shared by some Englishmen, who expressed it in the House of Commons. See al-Ahram, 9 June 1935, in OM, XV, p. 378.

<sup>33</sup>See articles by Prince 'Umar Tusun, al-Ahram, 25 July; ex-deputy 'Abd al-Rahman 'Azzam Bey, al-Ahram, 31 July; Fathi Ridwan, Secretary General of Misr al-Fatah, in al-Balagh, 27 July; 'Abd al-Qadir Hamza, director of al-Balagh, in the same paper on 28 July, in OM, XV, pp. 405-409.

<sup>34</sup>Toynbee, Survey 1935, vol II, (London: 1936), p. 529.

<sup>35</sup>Al-Balagh, 1 Aug 1935, in OM, XV, p. 406.

<sup>36</sup>Ibrahim 'Abd al-Qadir al-Mazini, in al-Balagh, 4 Aug in OM, XV, p. 472; al-Ahram, 6 Aug 1935 and al-Balagh, 14 Sept 1935, in OM, XV, p. 472 and p. 533; OM, XV, p. 532; Current History, XLIII, p. 108.

Italian propaganda sided with the Egyptian press and began to paint a black picture of British intentions towards Egypt.<sup>37</sup> It encouraged the press "to criticize Great Britain for maintaining a paramount position in Egypt and the present Egyptian Government for being 'subservient' to her."<sup>38</sup> Italian-influenced papers demanded that British inconsideration of Egypt must be met with violence if necessary.<sup>39</sup> Italy reinforced these anti-British arguments by claiming that Britain was trying to persuade Egyptian troops to cross over into Libya<sup>40</sup> to provoke war. But a number of the Egyptian papers also demanded a Treaty of Alliance with Great Britain.<sup>41</sup>

The Egyptian Premier, Tawfiq Nasim Pasha, was concerned over the protests and conferred about them with the British High Commissioner. The British Government sent Nasim a statement, saying that it was "fully alive to the interests of Egypt and the anxiety felt there," and that it would keep the Egyptian Government informed and enter into consultations with them with regard to any development of the international situation" of concern to Egypt.<sup>42</sup>

In early September, Italy suspected the British Intel-

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<sup>37</sup>GB & E, XLV, Sept 26, 1935, pp. 385-386, 389.

<sup>38</sup>Times, 6 Sept 1935.      <sup>39</sup>Times, 16 Sept 1935.

<sup>40</sup>GB & E, XLV, Sept 19, 1935, p. 354.

<sup>41</sup>See al-Ahram, 27 Aug 1935, in OM, XV, p. 533, and several of the articles referred to in notes 32 and 35.

<sup>42</sup>See GB & E, XLV, Sept 26, 1935, p. 389. See also Zayid, op.cit., p. 149.

ligence Service of instigating the 10,000 Libyans living in Egypt to create disorder in Libya.<sup>43</sup> On 14 September, Mussolini declared at a Cabinet meeting: "In view of the unrest manifested by certain natives of Cyrenaica, our defences in Libya are now being reinforced."<sup>44</sup> The Egyptian Government denied the Italian press accusation<sup>45</sup> "that the Senussi chief, El Sayed Safy-ed Din, met the Egyptian War Minister and the British Army inspector at Marsa Matruh. It further denies categorically that Abdul Galil, or any other Senussi, has offered his services to the Egyptian authorities to foment trouble in Cyrenaica."<sup>46</sup> The Egyptian Government also recalled the restrictions it had placed on the Sanusis.<sup>47</sup> The latter, however, were in fact standing ready, awaiting developments that would permit them to act.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>43</sup>GB & E, XLV, Sept 19, 1935, p. 354.

<sup>44</sup>Toynbee, Survey 1935, vol II, p. 253, n. 2.

<sup>45</sup>See Voce d'Italia, article by Gayda, in GB & E, XLV, Sept 26, 1935, p. 389.

<sup>46</sup>Times, 16, 17, 18 Sept 1935. Great Britain also issued a denial. The Italian Government publically disassociated itself from the anti-British accusations.

<sup>47</sup>GB & E, XLV, Sept 26, 1935, p. 389. See also above, chapter III, p. 94 and 97.

<sup>48</sup>Al-Muqattam, 9 Oct 1935, in OM, XV, p. 539.

On August 6, an Italian plane crashed in Egypt, resulting in the death of all passengers. In the wreckage there were allegedly found Italian plans for an attack on Egypt. This untrue story found widespread belief in Great Britain and Egypt.<sup>49</sup> It may be a coincidence that two week later the British fleets took course for Alexandria,<sup>50</sup> to arrive there in the first half of September.<sup>51</sup> It may be a further coincidence that Mussolini gave order to reinforce the Libyan garrison at a time when the British naval units were assembling in Alexandria.<sup>52</sup> Italy assured the British that the Italian troops were not for hostile purposes,<sup>53</sup> and asked Britain to reduce her forces in Egypt.<sup>54</sup> The Egyptians were either inclined to believe the rumors about an Italian invasion<sup>55</sup> or at least feared that Egypt would become a battlefield in a war between two imperialist powers.<sup>56</sup> The Egyptian Govern-

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<sup>49</sup>Times, 25 June and 2 July 1936.

<sup>50</sup>Luigi Villari, Italian Foreign Policy Under Mussolini, (New York: The Devin-Adair Co., 1956), p. 144, claims that the British fleet movements were caused by rumors about a planned Italian invasion of Egypt and a bomb attack on Malta.

<sup>51</sup>Toynbee, Survey 1935, II, p. 529.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid., p. 253, n. 2, says that the Italian troop movements were an answer to British naval moves.

<sup>53</sup>GB & E, XLV, Sept 26, 1935, p. 385. There was also strong British military activity in Palestine. See OM, XV, p. 539.

<sup>54</sup>Toynbee, Survey 1935, II, p. 253, n. 2.

<sup>55</sup>Hugh J. Schonfield, The Suez Canal in World Affairs, (London: Constellation Books, 1952), p. 81.

<sup>56</sup>GB & E, XLV, Oct 3, 1935, pp. 417-418.

ment informed Italy that Egypt would not participate in the Tripoli Fair of 1936.<sup>57</sup> This decision Italy attributed to British pressure.<sup>58</sup> The movement of Italian troops along the frontier also led to a stock-market drop and mass withdrawals from banks in Egypt.<sup>59</sup>

The fears of war, already expressed previously, became more acute. Egypt's 10,000 man army was useless in case of an Italian attack. The logical ally in these circumstances was Britain, but an alliance had to be set down in clear terms. The radical section of the Wafd under Mahmud Nuqrashi and Ahmad Mahir pressed the moderate leaders Mustafa al-Nahhas and Makram 'Ubayd to make use of the situation to reach an accord with Britain. The entire party was dissatisfied with the British declaration about keeping Egypt informed and the Italian propagandists supported the radicals. The Italian intention, however, was the opposite - they wished to prevent an Anglo-Egyptian Accord.<sup>60</sup>

Military preparations were begun in Egypt and on 13

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<sup>57</sup>Al-Ahram, 27 Sept 1935, in OM, XV, p. 540. The reason given was that previous participation had not produced an increase in sales.

<sup>58</sup>OM, XV, p. 669, n. 1. The Egyptian Ministry of Commerce and Industry was then, according to OM, virtually directed by an English expert.

<sup>59</sup>GB & E, XLV, Oct 3, 1935, p. 420.

<sup>60</sup>Times, 21 Sept 1935; OM, XV, p. 500. See also Jehn Marlowe, Anglo-Egyptian Relations, 1800-1953, (London: The Cresset Press, 1954), p. 294.

September the first Egyptian troops moved to the western border, with more to follow.<sup>61</sup> The possibility of an Italian attack on Egypt was still not dismissed, although such an invasion was unlikely.<sup>62</sup> There were camouflage experiments at Al-Maza Airport and new landing strips were built at Salihyya. Fresh British troops were air-lifted to Marsa Matruh to dig trenches and construct fortifications.<sup>63</sup> The Egyptian Government was now fully aligned with British policy.<sup>64</sup>

On 3 October 1935, Italy invaded Ethiopia and more Italian troops were dispatched to the front. The Italian Government requested 500 Italian volunteers from Egypt, and 82 departed on October 4.<sup>65</sup> On the same day, the Italian Government suggested to the British Government that both should decrease their forces in the Mediterranean, but no agreement was reached.<sup>66</sup> British troops and armor were sent to Suez

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<sup>61</sup>Al-Ahram, 17 Oct 1935, in OM, XV, p. 604.

<sup>62</sup>The sand dunes and the vast, waterless expanse formed a nearly absolute barrier. Only small raiding parties with air-cover could create trouble, but not launch an invasion. The only good possibility was the coastal route from Sallum, which required command of the sea, because of the narrow frontage. See Major C. S. Jarvis, "Three Deserts", Lecture to the Royal Central Asian Society, on Sept 18, 1935, in GB & E, Sept 26, 1935, XLV, p. 394. But see also the possibility of launching an invasion from Jaghbub, above, chapter III, p. 78.

<sup>63</sup>Al-Balagh, 28 Sept, and al-Ahram, 2 Oct 1935, in OM, XV, p. 536.

<sup>64</sup>GB & E, XLV, Oct 3, 1935, p. 418.

<sup>65</sup>Times, 5 Oct 1935.

<sup>66</sup>Times, 5 and 7 Oct 1935; Villari, op.cit., p. 146.

and the eastern desert, because Britain feared that Italy might make trouble in the Canal.<sup>67</sup> The Egyptian Cabinet then authorized £E 200,000 for war materials and supplies to be purchased from England.<sup>68</sup>

A joint British and Egyptian military parade to show strength and togetherness and to inspire confidence was organized by the two Governments in Alexandria on October 11. This display of force was violently opposed by the nationalist circles,<sup>69</sup> while pro-British Egyptians "were quick to recognize the gesture, and . . . are convinced . . . of the sincerity of the Administration of Nessim Pasha and of the British."<sup>70</sup> The British fleet in Alexandria continued to make an impressive show of strength.<sup>71</sup> Reports of Italian stocks of poison-gas bombs in Libya evoked new fears in Egypt. When the Italians moved two more divisions into Libya, a British battalion was sent to reinforce the Egyptian one at the frontier, while a brigade was sent to Alexandria.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>67</sup>Al-Ahram, 5 Oct 1935, in OM, XV, p. 536.

<sup>68</sup>Times, 9 Oct 1935.      <sup>69</sup>OM, XV, p. 538.

<sup>70</sup>GB & E, XLV, Oct 17, 1935, p. 482. See also G. T. Garratt, Mussolini's Roman Empire, (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, Ltd., 1938), p. 89; see also Times, 9 and 12 Oct 1935.

<sup>71</sup>GB & E, XLV, Nov 21, 1935, p. 64.

<sup>72</sup>Al-Ahram, 17 Oct 1935, in OM, XV, p. 604; Times, 17 and 18 Oct 1935; see also G. T. Garratt, Gibraltar and the Mediterranean, p. 266.

After Italy's invasion of Ethiopia, the League of Nations applied sanctions against her.<sup>73</sup> Egypt intended to follow the League's invitation to non-members to do the same, although she was not obliged to do so. A number of Egyptians objected to Egypt's applying sanctions against Italy. Sanctions implied breaking off diplomatic relations, barring Italian ships from Egyptian ports, dismissing Italian employees and breaking contracts with Italian companies.<sup>74</sup> 'Ali Rifa'at stated that not only Egypt's trade with Italy would cease, but that even Anglo-Egyptian trade would suffer, because many Italians represented British firms in Egypt, and a considerable amount of Egyptian imports from Britain passed through the hands of the local Italians.<sup>75</sup> Legally, sanctions were impossible, because the Capitulations prohibited Egypt from placing such restrictions on foreigners.<sup>76</sup> Even if there were no Capitulations, Egypt, as a non-member of the League, would be breaking her trade accord of 1931 with Italy.

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<sup>73</sup>According to M. H. H. Macartney and P. Cremona, Italy's Foreign and Colonial Policy, 1914-1937, (London: Oxford University Press, 1938), p. 179, the League applied sanctions primarily in order not to leave the British act alone and thereby create a casus belli for Italy.

<sup>74</sup>Al-Ahram, 12 Oct 1935, in OM, XV, p. 538.

<sup>75</sup>Times, 12 Oct 1935.

<sup>76</sup>Kawkab al-Sharq, in Giornale d'Oriente, 2 Nov 1935, in OM, XV, p. 608.



The Italian Government reassured Britain that its troops were not intended as a threat to Egypt or the British Empire, and stated that the British fleet action was not carried out under the auspices of the League. Britain and Italy continued to discuss the problem of a mutual reduction of forces, and Italy withdrew one division from Libya with the hope that there would be a reciprocal British action.<sup>77</sup> But on October 25, three more British battalions - 2500 men - arrived in Egypt. The usual four squadrons of planes were also increased and aerial maneuvers were carried out over the western frontier. War material was shipped to the Sudan.<sup>78</sup> The Italians then again reinforced their air force and mechanized units in Libya and began to fortify al-'Uwaynat Oasis near the angle formed by the Egypto-Sudanese border. By now their normal troops of 1100 officers and 35,000 men - 26,500 of whom were Libyans - had been tripled.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>77</sup>Times, 19 and 25 Oct 1935; GB & E, XLV, Oct 31, 1935, p. 547.

<sup>78</sup>Times, 26 Oct; al-Ahram, 17 Oct and 2 Nov 1935, in OM, XV, pp. 604, 605. See also George Slocombe, op.cit., p. 188. According to Times, 28 Oct 1935, even after the Italian withdrawal there were 60,000 troops in Libya against 25,000 in Egypt.

<sup>79</sup>Al-Balagh, 20 Nov 1935, in OM, XV, p. 670, and Slocombe, op.cit., p. 182. See also Wm. E. Lingelback, "Italy on the Eve of the War" in Current History, XLIII, p. 174 ff. Britain also reinforced Palestine and Aden; OM, XV, pp. 577-578, 601. British reinforcements worried Palestinians and other Arabs that the Mandatory power was building bases of a very permanent nature, while also favoring, or at least tolerating, Zionist arms smuggling. See OM, XV, p. 617.

For a comparison of the military buildup, the following might be of interest:

The Italian withdrawal eased Egyptian fears of Italy, but the presence of large numbers of British troops walking through Egypt's streets offended Egyptian national pride.<sup>80</sup> Britain was suspected of intending to make Alexandria into a naval base, because she considered Malta to be endangered by Italy.<sup>81</sup> Egyptian political leaders like Isma'il Sidqi, Mu-

Type	British Fleet			Italian Fleet	
	Home	Medit.	Projected	Active	Proj.
Battleships	12	3	2	4	2
Battle Cruisers	3	3			
Cruisers <sup>Heavy</sup>	5	4	12	28	3
Cruisers <sup>Light</sup>		5			
AA Cruisers		2			
Cruiser Mine Layers	1				
Aircraft Carriers	8	1	2	1	
Destroyers	169	38		96	8
Submarines	51	8	8	64	13
Anti-Sub Trawlers		10			
Minesweepers		19	3	48	
Torpedo Boats	6			2	
Coastal Sloops	2			26	
Convoy Escorts	2				
Gunboats				6	
River Gunboats	1			2	
Coastal Motorboats and other small craft		6		42	

From Slocombe, op.cit., pp. 99-100, 264. The British Mediterranean fleet could therefore be quickly increased to match Italy's. The large quantity of anti-submarine craft and minesweepers shows that the British fleet considered Italy its most likely enemy, with her strong fleet of submarines. As a Mediterranean country, Italy specialized in speedy small craft suited for her waters.

<sup>80</sup> Robert L. Baker, "Egypt and British Policy", in Current History, XLIII, p. 327.

<sup>81</sup> Al-Ahram, 26 Oct 1935, in OM, XV, p. 603; see also GB & E, XLV, Oct 31, 1935, p. 546.

hammad Mahmud and Prince 'Umar Tusun began to object that the Nasim Government had been too compliant towards Britain, who was now more firmly established in Egypt, while nothing had been given in return.<sup>82</sup> Some Egyptians who were supported by the Italian propagandists, even called on the Egyptians to resort to violence.<sup>83</sup>

The Egyptian complaints were combined with another issue - the restoration of the Constitution of 1923, which had been abolished in 1930.<sup>84</sup> Its restoration had been called for on several occasions.<sup>85</sup> On 18 October, Kawkab al-Sharq reported that the British Government would agree to the following: 1. Suspension of the Capitulations for one year, after which they were to be completely abolished. 2. Egypt's entry into the League of Nations. 3. The strengthening of Egypt's army. The question of the Constitution, however, was to be deferred.<sup>86</sup>

This British move did not fully satisfy the Egyptians, but the suspension of the Capitulations facilitated the appli-

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<sup>82</sup>Al-Ahram, 19 Oct 1935, in OM, XV, p. 602. See also Il Giornale d'Oriente, 1 Nov, and Daily Mail, Paris edit., 8 Nov 1935, in OM, XV, pp. 610-611; and al-Ahram, 8 Nov 1935, in OM, XV, p. 657; al-Jihad, 10 Nov 1935, in OM, XV, p. 658; GB & E, XLV, Nov 7 and Nov 10, 1935, pp. 579, 609-610, 616. See also al-Fath, Muslim weekly, no. 469, 31 Oct 1935, in OM, XV, p. 569.

<sup>83</sup>GB & E, XLV, Nov 7, 1935, pp. 578-579.

<sup>84</sup>Zayid, op.cit., pp. 138-40. <sup>85</sup>Ibid., p. 146.

<sup>86</sup>Kawkab al-Sharq, in Giornale d'Oriente, 19 Oct 1935, in OM, XV, p. 603.

cation of sanctions. Italy still supported the Egyptian demand to abolish the Capitulations, and Mussolini even promised that Italy would unilaterally renounce her capitulatory rights in return for Egypt's support of Italy in Ethiopia.<sup>87</sup> Egypt did not intend to side with Italy, and Italy, under these circumstances, was going to insist on her capitulatory privileges.<sup>88</sup> Nevertheless, on 31 October, the Egyptian Government informed the League of Nations that it decided in principle for the application of sanctions against Italy.<sup>89</sup> Italy, in expectation of Egypt's decision, had bought large amounts of cotton in Egypt.<sup>90</sup> Although the Government's decision was received with considerable criticism in the Egyptian press,<sup>91</sup> the Government set up a sanctions committee to work out a program for applying sanctions.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>87</sup>Times, 30 Oct 1935. These were unofficial promises to private Egyptian visitors.

<sup>88</sup>GB & E, XLV, Nov 7, 1935, p. 579.

<sup>89</sup>Times, 1 Nov 1935. <sup>90</sup>Times, 31 Oct 1935.

<sup>91</sup>Al-Ahram, 1 and 2 Nov, and Kawkabl al-Sharq, 1 Nov 1935, in OM, XV, p. 608; Il Giornale d'Oriente, 3 Nov 1935, in OM, XV, p. 610, n. 1; Al-Ahram, al-Balagh and Egyptian Gazette of 6 Nov 1935, in OM, XV, p. 669.

<sup>92</sup>Times, 4 Nov 1935; al-Ahram, 3 Nov 1935, in OM, XV, p. 609. The committee consisted of Ahmad 'Abd al-Wahhab Pasha, Minister of Finance; Amin Anis Pasha, Minister of Justice; Ahmad Najib al-Hilali Bey, Minister of Commerce and Industry; and Sir Arthur Booth, Legal Advisor.

The Italian press of Egypt objected to sanctions and pointed out that Egypt, not Italy would suffer.<sup>93</sup> On 3 November, Pellegrino Ghigi, the Italian Minister, delivered a strong verbal protest to Nasim Pasha, recalling that Italy supported Egypt's aspirations and that Egypt had no obligation to apply sanctions. Ghigi stated that Italy now insisted on all her capitulatory privileges and that she intended to take reprisals. The Egyptian Premier promised to reconsider the issue. In Alexandria, the Italian Consul called on the Italians in Egypt to boycott British goods. His appeal was immediately observed.<sup>94</sup>

So far merchants in the Suez Canal Zone profited from supplying Italian troop ships on the way to Italian East Africa,<sup>95</sup> and dealers in Egypt had been called upon for an increased supply of certain goods to the Italian colonies.<sup>96</sup> But already in August, the Egyptian Government prohibited the import of slaughter cattle from the Italian colonies.<sup>97</sup> With Egypt's decision to apply sanctions, economic relations between

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<sup>93</sup>Il Giornale d'Oriente, 3 Nov 1935, in OM, XV, p. 610.

<sup>94</sup>Times, 5 Nov 1935; al-Ahram, 5 Nov 1935, in OM, XV, p. 609.

<sup>95</sup>GB & E, XLV, Aug 15, 1935, p. 198.

<sup>96</sup>See Ignatius Phayre, "The Risks of the Game" in Current History, XLII, p. 586.

<sup>97</sup>G. Meyer in Le Temps, 4 Aug 1935, in OM, XV, p. 407.

Italy and Egypt became more severed, and the Egyptian Ministry of Agriculture announced a shortage of products which it used to obtain from Italy.<sup>98</sup>

Internal turmoil was growing in Egypt during this time. The repeated accusations against Nasim's submissiveness, the call for a united front, and British objection to the 1923 Constitution combined into a force that united the various opposition parties. The spark came on 9 November 1935, when Sir Samuel Hoare, British Foreign Minister, spoke on Egypt. He denied that Britain tried to exploit the Ethiopian Crisis for her own ends. He further stated that Britain was in favor of a new constitution for Egypt, but that she viewed negatively the re-enactment of the 1923 or 1930 constitutions, since the former "was proved unworkable and the other universally unpopular."<sup>99</sup> Before the Egyptians reacted towards this speech, Ghigi once more, on 10 November, reiterated Italy's threat to take reprisals if Egypt applied sanctions, but the Egyptian Government adhered to its decision.<sup>100</sup>

Hoare's speech provoked the Wafd, which so far had remained rather calm. On November 12, the Wafdist Parliamentary Group met and the next morning the Wafd asked Nasim Pasha to resign. The latter, however, felt it to be his duty to re-

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<sup>98</sup> OM, XV, p. 669.

<sup>99</sup> Times, 11 Nov, 1935, and Zayid, op.cit., p. 153.

<sup>100</sup> Times, 11 Nov 1935; al-Ahram, 11 Nov 1935, in OM, XV, pp. 668-669.

main in office during such a delicate situation.<sup>101</sup> On this same day, November 13, the Wafdist anniversary, Mustafa al-Nahhas publicly withdrew his support of Nasim and gave an anti-British speech. Following the speech, demonstrations began in the streets, which ended in clashes with the police in Cairo.<sup>102</sup> According to one author, the Italian Fascist Youth of Egypt marched with the Wafdist youth groups demanding the restoration of the 1923 Constitution.<sup>103</sup> A number of sources attribute the rioting to Italian subversive activities.<sup>104</sup>

A chain reaction of protests and manifestos began in Egypt, and most parties - the radical Wafdist wing, the Sha'bists, and the Ittihadists - called for a united front in Egypt.<sup>105</sup> The Wafd stressed that it was neither pro-Italian, nor trying to exploit the Crisis,<sup>106</sup> but in a letter to the League of Nations it called Egypt "the victim of manifest

<sup>101</sup>Times, 14 Nov 1935, and Zayid, op.cit., p. 153.

<sup>102</sup>Il Giornale d'Italia, Rome, 15 Nov 1935, in OM, XV, pp. 612-613; GB & E, XLV, Oct 17, 1935, p. 482; Zayid, op.cit., p. 154.

<sup>103</sup>Kirchner, op.cit., p. 730.

<sup>104</sup>Maj. Lawrence Atthill, "British Interests and Italian Ambitions" in The Fortnightly, CXXXIX, p. 27, wonders "whether that agitation was of purely indigenous origin." G. A. Borgese, op.cit., p. 439, considers the demonstrations to have been "obviously financed and drilled by Fascism . . ." See also Garratt, Mussolini's Roman Empire, p. 236. GB & E, XLV, Nov 21, 1935, p. 643, however believes that only the British activities in Egypt caused the riots.

<sup>105</sup>Al-Balagh, 16 Nov, and al-Ahram, 19 and 20 Nov 1935, in OM, XV, pp. 662-663.

<sup>106</sup>Al-Ahram, 18 Nov 1935, in OM, XV, p. 662; R. L. Baker, "Behind the Egyptian Riots" in Current History, XLIII, p. 440.

aggression."<sup>107</sup> Groups of magistrates, lawyers and professors also issued protests and declared support for the Wafd.<sup>108</sup> Great Britain and the East suggested that Britain and Italy should make a rapprochement, so that Britain would be able to remain secure in Egypt.<sup>109</sup>

On November 28, after the turmoil subsided to some degree, the Egyptian Government passed decree-law 145, by which Egypt had to apply economic sanctions against Italy.<sup>110</sup> The law banned all exports of arms, material to make arms, meat and draught animals to Italy and her colonies.<sup>111</sup> Although Egypt's cotton export to Italy was not affected, the Liberal Constitutional and Watani Parties protested against sanctions in their organs al-Siyasa and al-Balagh.<sup>112</sup> The Italians

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<sup>107</sup> OM, XV, p. 618. See also Toynbee, Survey 1936, p. 675, and R. Baker, "Arab Fears of Italy" in Current History, XLIII, p. 181.

<sup>108</sup> Al-Ahram, 23, 26 and 27 Nov 1935, in OM, XV, p. 663.

<sup>109</sup> GB & E, XLV, Nov 28, 1935, p. 675.

<sup>110</sup> The High Commissioner of Syria had issued decree 251/LR on November 5 for sanctions, and the Syrians regretted that they could not take the decision themselves; see al-Ayyam, 5 Nov 1935, in OM, XV, p. 630. Sanctions were also applied by Palestine and Iraq on 1 November (OM, XV, pp. 639, 649), while independent Yemen and Hijaz maintained neutrality (OM, XV, pp. 653-654). The Sudan Government also sent a note to the League saying that it would apply sanctions; this independent action went contrary to the 1899 Condominium Treaty; see al-Ahram, 18 Dec 1935, in OM, XVI, p. 47. Tunisia also applied sanctions. See OM, XVI, p. 95.

<sup>111</sup> OM, XV, p. 667.

<sup>112</sup> OM, XV, p. 669.



in Egypt were relieved to be able to continue in their daily work, instead of being dismissed, as they had feared.<sup>113</sup> There appears to have been no immediate protest from the Italian Government, which, perhaps, was waiting for a new government to be formed in Egypt.

A new speech by Hoare to the House of Commons on 5 December only caused more ferment in Cairo and the Government was finally forced to resign.<sup>114</sup> A national front (al-jabha al-wataniyya) was formed by the Wafdists, Sha'bists and Liberal Constitutionalists; the small Watani Party remained in its role of opposition. The Front demanded that the 1923 Constitution be re-enacted,<sup>115</sup> and on December 12 the King signed a royal prescript (amr malaki) to be put into effect after the May 1936 parliamentary elections. Nasim believed that the crisis was over, and withdrew his resignation. The National Front petitioned the High Commissioner, requesting the negotiation of a treaty on the basis previously worked out between Sir Arthur Henderson and Nahhas in 1930.<sup>116</sup> In its letter, the Front stressed the need for such a treaty with Britain and reminded her that Egypt had been cooperative to such a degree that she even applied sanctions

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<sup>113</sup>GB & E, XLV, Dec 12, 1935, p. 743.

<sup>114</sup>OM, XV, pp. 665-666.

<sup>115</sup>Osservatore Romano, 13 Dec 1935, in OM, XV, p. 666.

<sup>116</sup>OM, XV, p. 667. See also Zayid, op.cit., pp. 133, 156-157. For previous treaty proposals, see Great Britain, Papers Regarding Negotiations For A Treaty with Egypt, (London: H.M. Stationery Office, 1928), and Papers Regarding The Recent Negotiations for an Anglo-Egyptian Settlement, March 31 - May 8, 1930, (London: H.M. Stationery Office, 1930).

against Italy.<sup>117</sup> The Watani Party rejected the idea of dealing with an "occupying power" and thereby recognizing the occupation.<sup>118</sup>

On December 16, Anthony Eden, Hoare's successor, reiterated before the House of Commons that the 1923 Constitution was not in Egypt's interests. Again riots broke out in Cairo, Alexandria and Port Sa'id, acclaiming the King, denouncing Britain and demanding complete independence. The Egyptian Government had to recognize the National Front and to cooperate with it.<sup>119</sup>

Later in December reports of new Italian military preparations in Libya reached Egypt, and the previous fears of an attack on Egypt were revived.<sup>120</sup> Reports of Italian planes which bombed Egyptian ambulance units in Ethiopia aroused indignation in Egypt and led the Government to protest to Italy.<sup>121</sup> Further reports in early 1936 of Italian troop movements along Egypt's western border increased anxiety in Egypt.<sup>122</sup> But Egypt was now quite well-armed. Sidi Bishr had become a military city and 80 units of the British navy were crowded in the port of Alexandria.<sup>123</sup> Between 16

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<sup>117</sup>Al-Ahram, 13 Dec 1935, in OM, XVI, p. 37.

<sup>118</sup>Al-Ahram, 11 Dec 1935, in OM, XVI, p. 35.

<sup>119</sup>OM, XVI, pp. 38-39, 42.

<sup>120</sup>Times, 23 Dec 1935.      <sup>121</sup>Times, 6, 10 Jan 1936.

<sup>122</sup>GB & E, XLVI, Feb 13, 1936, p. 34.

<sup>123</sup>Morning Post, 19 Dec 1935, in OM, XVI, p. 46.

and 18 January 1936, three more British infantry battalions - 5 to 6000 men - arrived. The British forces between the Nile Valley and the Libyan border now totaled 80,000 fully equipped troops, overshadowing the 13,000 Egyptian soldiers.<sup>124</sup> The Egyptian Government expected planes and pilots from Britain and prepared for defense against air raids. A railway and roads to the western border were constructed.<sup>125</sup>

On 29 January 1936, Italy's Minister in Egypt, Pellegrino Ghigi, finally presented a formal protest to Egypt because of the sanctions. Italy reiterated that Egypt had no legal obligations to apply sanctions and demanded compensation for Italian subjects in Egypt, who were affected by them.<sup>126</sup> In view of the military preparations on both sides, it is not surprising that Italy received an unsatisfactory reply from Egypt, which she answered with a renewed protest on 31 January.<sup>127</sup> But Italy was convinced that Egypt's policy resulted from British pressure and she pointed out that she "was not animated by any hostility towards Egypt, whose incompletely independent position was fully understood"<sup>128</sup> by Italy.

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<sup>124</sup> About 55,000 British troops were on land, the rest on the ships; see al-Ahram, 18 Jan, and le Temps, 30 Jan 1936, in OM, XVI, pp. 47, 89. See also Allan Nevins, "The Ethiopian Crisis" in Current History, XLIII, p. 168 ff., and Slocombe, op.cit., p. 187. Villari, op.cit., p. 144, says that half of the British army was concentrated in Egypt.

<sup>125</sup> Al-Ahram, 23 and 24 Jan 1936, in OM, XVI, pp. 89-90, and al-Jihad, 8 and 10 Feb 1936, in OM, XVI, p. 169.

<sup>126</sup> Il Giornale d'Oriente, 30 Jan 1936, in OM, XVI, p. 82.

<sup>127</sup> Times, 1 Feb 1936.

<sup>128</sup> GB & E, XLVI, Feb 6, 1936, p. 162.

The new military situation caused the Egyptians to seek a hurried settlement with Britain, in spite of the fact that Britain wanted to change the military clauses which had already been agreed to in 1930.<sup>129</sup> On 22 January 1936, Nasim resigned and on January 30, a new government was formed under 'Ali Mahir.<sup>130</sup> Negotiations for an Anglo-Egyptian treaty began in Cairo on 2 March 1936.<sup>131</sup>

Initially at least, the sanctions did not prevent Italian ships, which were passing through the Suez Canal to Eritrea, from taking on supplies in Port Sa'id, and "one of the recent ships completely depleted the stocks of clothing in the local stores."<sup>132</sup> But in the rest of Egypt the effects of sanctions were soon noticed. When Italy realized that she could continue to purchase Egyptian cotton, she hastened to buy as much as she could, because she feared that other countries might not supply her. By this action, she caused a frantic rush on cotton in Alexandria. Anxiety, inspired by the war, induced others also to buy and the price of cotton began to sky-rocket.<sup>133</sup> The construction industry was affected by the absence of Italian marble. The Egyptian authorities, however, hoped that this would encourage both the quarrying

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<sup>129</sup>Toynbee, Survey 1936, p. 686, n. 1.

<sup>130</sup>OM, XVI, p. 45, and Zayid, op.cit., p. 160.

<sup>131</sup>Zayid, op.cit., p. 161.

<sup>132</sup>GB & E, XLV, Dec 12, 1935, p. 744.

<sup>133</sup>GB & E, Jan 2, 1936, XLVI, p. 29.

of Egyptian marble at Minya, which excels the Carrara type, and the building of roads in that area.<sup>134</sup> Glycerine exports to Italy were not prohibited and the Italian cars in Egypt continued to receive spare parts from Italy.<sup>135</sup>

As the effects of sanctions became more pronounced in Egypt, some Egyptians expressed concern. The newspaper al-Jihad asked whether the Nasim Government had made an agreement with the League of Nations or with Britain for obtaining compensation for the losses incurred by imposing sanctions on Italy.<sup>136</sup> On April 6, the new Council of Ministers finally had to approve an authorization for the importation of certain products, including goods already ordered before sanctions became effective. A list of importable items was issued by the Ministry of Finance.<sup>137</sup> The Watani Party saw its ear-

<sup>134</sup> Al-Ahram, 9 Jan 1936, in OM, XVI, p. 92. In Iraq, the price of the sidara, the national headgear, which had been imported from Italy, went up 20%. As with marble in Egypt, this was expected to be an incentive for a national sidara factory; see al-Balagh, 6 Dec and al-'Iraq, 13 Dec 1935, in OM, XVI, pp. 29-30. In Syria and Lebanon repercussions for the local trade were also feared. See l'Orient, 8 Nov 1935, in OM, XV, p. 630. Palestinian students in Italy were forced to return due to the financial repercussions; those with money in Italy remained there. See Filastin, 1 Nov 1935, in OM, XV, p. 639.

<sup>135</sup> Al-Ahram, 21 and 22 Jan 1936, in OM, XVI, p. 93.

<sup>136</sup> Al-Jihad, 5 Feb 1936, in OM, XVI, p. 171.

<sup>137</sup> For the list see al-Ahram, 9 Apr 1936, in OM, XVI, p. 287.

lier warnings justified by this list. The party stated that sanctions would not help Ethiopia and only hurt Egypt.<sup>138</sup>

From the beginning of and throughout the entire Ethiopian Crisis, the Egyptian public expressed its sympathy for Ethiopia. For Muslims, who sympathized with their Ethiopian coreligionists, Ethiopia was also the country that had sheltered the first Muslim emigrants in 615 A. D.<sup>139</sup> The Coptic Christians of Egypt had close ties with the Ethiopian Church, whose Patriarch was by tradition an Egyptian.<sup>140</sup> Italy was not trusted as an imperial power, and to Egyptians, Italian policy was contradictory. For while Italy advocated the aspirations of Muslims and Copts in Egypt, she either fought, ruled or threatened the same religious groups in Libya, Eritrea, Somaliland and Ethiopia.<sup>141</sup> Reference was again made to Italy's war against the Sanusis.<sup>142</sup> The Egyptian press published anti-Italian articles, but Italy suspected British

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<sup>138</sup> Al-Balagh, 18 Apr 1936, in OM, XVI, p. 287.

<sup>139</sup> See W. Montgomery Watt, Muhammad, Prophet and Statesman, (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), pp. 65-70.

<sup>140</sup> See a statement by 'Uthman Muharram Pasha at the banquet for the new Ethiopian Minister to London on July 22; al-Ahram, 23 July 1935, in OM, XV, p. 409. See also Paul Hartmann, L'Egypte indépendante, vol I, (Paris; Groupe d'Etudes pour l'Islam, 1938), p. 86.

<sup>141</sup> GB & E, XLV, Sept 26, 1935, p. 386, and Le Temps, article by G. Meyer, 4 Aug 1935, in OM, XV, p. 406.

<sup>142</sup> See Allan Nevins, "Test for Diplomacy" in Current History, XII, p. 582.

pressure behind such articles.<sup>143</sup> Some Arabs, however, expressed themselves in favor of Italy during the Ethiopian Crisis. One of the most pro-Italian figures was Amir Shakib Arslan,<sup>144</sup> who considered Italy as pro-Arab and pro-Muslim, and who pointed out that the Ethiopian Government was much more hostile to Muslims than Italy was.<sup>145</sup> In March 1935 he argued that Ethiopia had supporters in Britain and France, who were anti-Arab. He suggested that Italy, who was at least pro-Arab, should not be turned into a hostile power.<sup>146</sup> Arslan's opinion evoked vehement criticism from the Arab press,<sup>147</sup> but the Italians nevertheless won some Arab support.<sup>148</sup> Repre-

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<sup>143</sup> Amin Sa'id in al-Muqattam, 25 July 1935, in OM, XV, p. 390, refuted this Italian suspicion.

<sup>144</sup> Al-Jam'iyya al-'Arabiyya, 4 Apr 1935, in OM, XV, p. 197. Arslan once had allegedly spread stories of Italian atrocities; see above, chapter III, p. 90. Now he reminded his critics that in 1931 they had been indifferent towards Italy.

<sup>145</sup> Al-Jam'iyya al-'Arabiyya, 8 Mar 1935, in OM, XV, p. 195, article "Italy, Abyssinia and Italian policy in the Muslim East." The 'ulama' of Ethiopia denied these charges of maltreatment in a letter to al-Ahram, 30 June 1935, in OM, XV, p. 351. But Arslan's accusation still seems to hold true today, because in May 1968 Ethiopian Muslims complained of discrimination by the Emperor and the Government. See L'Orient, 7 and 8 May 1968.

<sup>146</sup> Al-Jam'iyya al-'Arabiyya, 31 Mar 1935, in OM, XV, p. 196.

<sup>147</sup> Criticism was most strongly expressed in the Palestinian publications al-Karmel and Filastin; see OM, XV, pp. 198-199.

<sup>148</sup> As early as April 1935, some Yemenis volunteered for the Italian forces that were sent to the Ethiopian frontier. See al-Ayyam, Damascus, 8 Apr 1935, in OM, XV, p. 223. Arabs from Syria, Palestine and Transjordan usually volunteered for Ethiopia; see l'Orient, 9 July, Filastin, 5 and 17 July, and al-Jam'iyya al-'Arabiyya, 25 July 1935, in OM, XV, pp. 381, 393.

sentatives of the Libyan community in Egypt thanked Arslan for his pro-Italian stand.<sup>149</sup>

On 26 July 1935, 'Abd al-Hamid Sa'id, President of the Association of Young Muslims (Jam'iyyat al-Shubban al-Muslimin) in Egypt invited Egyptian notables and officials to discuss the Crisis and the expected war. They formed a General Committee for the Defense of Ethiopia (Al-Lajna al-'Amma lil-Difa' 'an al-Habasha), which was to keep up to date on the course of events in Ethiopia.<sup>150</sup> The Committee immediately received letters from engineers and officers in Egypt and elsewhere, volunteering for service in Ethiopia. One group of retired Egyptian officers who volunteered, caused serious concern to the Egyptian Government, who feared an adverse Italian reaction.<sup>151</sup>

Shakib Arslan continued to support Italy, insisting that he was anti-British rather than pro-Italian. He explained

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<sup>149</sup> Unsigned letter to al-Jam'iyya al-'Arabiyya, 25 June 1935, in OM, XV, p. 370. Libyans residing in Damascus also wrote to the Governor of Libya to thank him for amnesties and Italian magnanimity. See Le Colonie, 18 Apr 1935, in OM, XV, p. 201.

<sup>150</sup> Al-Fath, Cairo weekly, no. 456, 1 Aug 1935, in OM, XV, p. 408. It is worth recalling that 'Abd al-Hamid Sa'id used to conduct an anti-British campaign from Italy. See above, chapter II, p. 22.

<sup>151</sup> Al-Balagh, 30 July, and al-Ahram, 27 July 1935, in OM, XV, p. 408, and p. 410.



that Italy's imperialism copied that of other imperialist powers, and claimed that if Britain and France would surrender their possessions, Italy would do the same and seek no new ones. According to Arslan, therefore, the best way to make Italy leave Ethiopia in peace, was for Britain to evacuate Egypt, to give independence to Palestine and Transjordan, and to cede 'Aqaba to Hijaz and the Protectorates to Yemen. He considered it illogical for subjugated Arabs to defend the liberty of the independent state of Ethiopia. Furthermore, he argued, if Ethiopia were a Muslim country, Europe would not be concerned over its fate. When Britain bombarded Yemen, Arslan continued, when the French fought in the Rif, and when Italy pacified Cyrenaica, no Egyptian or Syrian Muslim offered help. Britain, he added, was turning one of the most sacred Muslim lands over to the Jews and the Arabs did nothing against this combined British and Hebrew aggression.<sup>152</sup>

Perhaps in reply to Arslan, the Egyptian lawyer Fathi Ridwan on August 17 attributed the previous lack of support to the leaders of the nationalists. Although the Egyptian masses

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<sup>152</sup> Kawkab al-Sharq, Cairo, 25 Aug 1935, in OM, XV, pp. 441-444, article "The bitter truth which it is our duty to know at this critical moment." Arslan was wrong in stating that no Egyptian or Syrian had helped in any of the battles. There had been a number of active supporters, like 'Abd al-Rahman 'Azzam. See above, chapter III, p. 91. Accused of being an Italian propagandist, Arslan became less effective and Radio Bari stopped broadcasting summaries of his articles in its Arabic program, though the reading of other anti-British articles was continued; Filastin, 9 Aug 1935, in OM, XV, p. 445.

wanted to fight for their independence, they were always told to wait. Thus the national cause lost ground and foreign domination became stronger. Ethiopia, according to Ridwan, served as an outlet for the zeal that could not be expressed at home.<sup>153</sup>

Ethiopia then was seen as bearing the brunt in the Arabs' fight against imperialism. Italy countered with propaganda in Egypt, and a daily Arabic broadcast from the powerful Bari radio station presented Italy's case and attacked the arguments of Ethiopia and Great Britain.<sup>154</sup> Italian propaganda was dismissed by those who now recalled the Italian battles with the Sanusis in Libya, and who now thought British friendship to be more sincere.<sup>155</sup> The results of Italian propaganda were not productive at this time, because even anti-British Egyptians came to regard "the Italian intentions upon Ethiopia as a direct menace to the whole Nile Valley."<sup>156</sup>

At the beginning of August, the Egyptian Committee for Ethiopia's defense sent cables to the League of Nations in pro-

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<sup>153</sup>Al-Balagh, 17 Aug 1935, in OM, XV, p. 473. Ridwan was Secretary-General of Misr al-Fatah, a Fascistoid organization.

<sup>154</sup>Robert L. Baker, "Arab Fears of Italy", in Current History, XLIII, p. 181.

<sup>155</sup>GB & E, XLV, Sept 12, 1935, p. 336. For similar reactions in other parts of the Arab world, see GB & E, XLV, Oct 17, p. 482; Alif-ba, 5 July 1935, in OM, XV, p. 381; OM, XV, pp. 506, 515, 520. The paper Filastin was particularly anti-Italian, al-Jam'iyya al-'Arabiyya moderately so, l'Orient remained neutral; see OM, XV, p. 575.

<sup>156</sup>GB & E, XLV, Sept 26, 1935, p. 386.

test against Italy's policy. Another group under Sayyid Muhammad al-Ghunaymi al-Taftazani joined the Committee<sup>157</sup> and various organizations became active in protest. The Wafdist organ al-Jihad launched a series of strongly anti-Italian articles.<sup>158</sup> The Patriarch of the Orthodox Copts cut short his cure in Europe to deal with the problem. He made a public plea for peace in a signed appeal to the League of Nations.<sup>159</sup> The Association of Young Muslims condemned Italian imperialism, claimed that Italy intended to apply methods tested in Libya to Ethiopia and held "that Italy's aggression against Abyssinia corresponds to an aggression against Egypt herself, rather against the whole Muslim world."<sup>160</sup> The nabil Isma'il Dawud prepared to leave for Ethiopia<sup>161</sup> in a show of solidarity.

In September a mysterious sort of propaganda related to the Ethiopian Crisis began to appear. Muslims in Ethiopia began to receive leaflets in Arabic from Cairo. The leaflets accused Egypt of hypocrisy by stating that she was not a disinterested friend of Ethiopia. Actually, the propaganda

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<sup>157</sup> Al-Ahram, 2 Aug 1935, in OM, XV, p. 473.

<sup>158</sup> OM, XV, p. 473.

<sup>159</sup> GB & E, Aug 15, 1935, p. 198; al-Ahram, 7 Aug 1935, in OM, XV, p. 473.

<sup>160</sup> Al-Fath, no. 464, 26 Sept 1935, in OM, XV, p. 504.

<sup>161</sup> Times, 2 Oct 1935; al-Muqattam, 1 Oct 1935, in OM, XV, p. 568. The Amir of Transjordan also made a declaration of sympathy.

sheets stated, Egypt was seeking her own material profits and would not be against uniting with Italy against Ethiopia, if it proved useful to her aims.<sup>162</sup>

All these protests did not deter the Italians from launching their invasion on 3 October 1935. Prince 'Umar Tun-sun and Patriarch Yo'annes, both patrons of the General Committee for the Defense of Ethiopia, made an appeal to the Egyptian nation. They recalled once more the bonds of religion, politics and water which united the Ethiopian and Egyptian peoples, asked for financial contributions, and prepared to send medical missions composed of Christians and Muslims to Ethiopia. These left on 14 and 23 October and 12 November.<sup>163</sup> Influential Wafdists also joined the Committee and the Freemasons also aided the Ethiopians.<sup>164</sup>

The help of the Egyptian volunteers was of no avail. Egyptian Red Cross and Red Crescent units operated in the Ethiopian front lines.<sup>165</sup> There were reports that one Egyp-

<sup>162</sup>The leaflets were distributed by an "Egyptian agency for the diffusion of daily news" in Cairo, Sulayman Pasha St. 27; see al-Balagh, 3 Sept 1935, in OM, XV, p. 481. Perhaps this was an Italian agency, although their interpretation of the situation makes this unlikely.

<sup>163</sup>Times, 8 Oct 1935; al-Balagh, 6 and 24 Oct, 12 Nov; al-Ahram, 11 and 18 Oct 1935, in OM, XV, pp. 538, 613, 671; and GB & E, XLV, Aug 15, 1935, p. 198. There were also medical volunteers from Lebanon; see l'Orient, 11 Oct 1935, in OM, XV, p. 576.

<sup>164</sup>Al-Ahram, 29 Oct 1935, in OM, XV, p. 613, and Fi-lastin, 8 Nov 1935, in OM, XV, pp. 670-671.

<sup>165</sup>Times, 9 Nov 1935. One unit was led by prince Isma'il.

tian ambulance unit was bombed by Italian troops on January 4, 1936, causing Prince Tusun and Patriarch Yo'annes to protest to the League of Nations. On January 22, another complaint was sent by the Egyptian Red Cross. But in February at least the first accusation was withdrawn, when the Egyptian Consul in Addis Ababa stated that the bombed unit had been marked neither with the red cross nor with the Egyptian flag.<sup>166</sup> The Egyptian Red Crescent later testified in favor of Italy's accusations regarding Ethiopian atrocities. The Ethiopians claimed that Italy bribed the Egyptian medical team.<sup>167</sup> After the conquest of Ethiopia, the Copts of Egypt resented Italian disrespect of the Abuna, a native of Egypt, and the decreeing of an autonomous Coptic Church in Ethiopia.<sup>168</sup> But Egyptian internal affairs had become aggravated to such a degree that the Anglo-Egyptian settlement fully absorbed the interest of the population.

In March, after the Anglo-Egyptian negotiations began, delicate political talks, shrouded in secrecy, took place between Premier 'Ali Mahir Pasha and the Italian Minister, Pelle-

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<sup>166</sup> OM, XVI, pp. 90-91; al-Balagh, 17 Feb 1936, in OM, XVI, p. 170; Times, 6, 10, 11, 12, 13 Jan and 6 Feb 1936.

<sup>167</sup> Toynbee, Survey 1935, II, p. 410.

<sup>168</sup> Garratt, Gibraltar and the Mediterranean, p. 242, and Elizabeth Monroe, The Mediterranean in Politics, (London: Oxford University Press, 1938), p. 202.

grino Ghigi. Rumors arose that they spoke of a non-aggression pact, but these were denied.<sup>169</sup> The Times of London suspected that Italy launched the rumor to disrupt the Anglo-Egyptian negotiations.<sup>170</sup> Actually Mahir inquired about Italian intentions in Lake Tana, because he was concerned about the Nile waters.<sup>171</sup> The Watani Party in its paper al-Balagh dismissed the concern about the Lake. According to them it resulted from a British stratagem to spread fear about the possible consequences of Italian possession of Lake Tana. The British, the Watani Party claimed, acted in this manner in order to make Egypt accept clauses in the proposed treaty, which would give Britain military privileges in Egypt.<sup>172</sup> Britain did want more military concessions than she had agreed upon in 1930, because Italy's strategic position and military power had improved.<sup>173</sup> Husayn Sirri Pasha, the Under-Secretary of Public Works reiterated that nothing could affect Egypt's water supply.<sup>174</sup> To support the Watani Party and to reassure Mahir, Italy issued this declaration:<sup>175</sup>

It is simply absurd that the Italian Government could have the intention to attack or even threaten Egypt. Italy has not, nor can she ever have in the future, aims of conquest or colonization in Egypt. The common frontiers between Libya and Egypt should not be grounds for any concern.

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<sup>169</sup>Al-Ahram, 31 Mar and 1 Apr 1936, in OM, XVI, p. 227.

<sup>170</sup>Times, 1 Apr 1936. <sup>171</sup>Times, 6 Apr 1936.

<sup>172</sup>Il Giornale d'Italia, Rome, 8 Apr 1936, in OM, XVI, p. 228.

<sup>173</sup>Toynbee, Survey 1936, pp. 684, 690.

<sup>174</sup>See note 172.

<sup>175</sup>OM, XVI, p. 228. For a slightly different English version, see Times, 8 Apr 1936.

For her part, Italy is even disposed to conclude agreements with Egypt, guaranteeing the maintenance of the mutual frontiers and of a policy which, on the part of Italy, is and will always be inspired by feelings of profound friendship.

The alleged Italian intention of diverting the Tana waters were considered absurd and unworkable by Italy and were termed a product of British anti-Italian propaganda.<sup>176</sup> One is inclined to suspect Britain's fear of Italy, if one looks at Hoare's statement on 19 December 1935 to the House of Commons, where he proclaimed that "we had no fear as a nation of any Italian threats."<sup>177</sup> Instead, he claimed, Britain was afraid the League of Nations would fall apart if Britain did not show her willingness to act by dispatching her fleet.<sup>178</sup> It is also of interest that Britain continued to send men with Italian family connections - like the High Commissioner of Egypt - to the Mediterranean throughout the Ethiopian Crisis.<sup>179</sup>

The Italians occupied Gondar on April 4, 1936,<sup>180</sup> and Lake Tana was sure to be taken shortly afterwards. This led

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<sup>176</sup> Il Popolo d'Italia, 3 Apr 1936, in OM, XVI, p. 240. See also Il Messaggero, 12 Apr, according to Times, 13 Apr 1936.

<sup>177</sup> Gathorne-Hardy, op.cit., p. 414.

<sup>178</sup> Ibid. Britain acted peculiarly fast when her empire was threatened, while it took her nearly one year to move against Germany after it had conquered Poland, which did not lie on the British imperial route.

<sup>179</sup> Garratt, Gibraltar, etc., p. 274.

<sup>180</sup> Paul Gentizon, La conquete de l'Ethiopie, (Paris: Editions Berger Levrault, 1936), p. 112.

the British once more to convince Egypt of her need for permanent military aid.<sup>181</sup> In the past years, some Italian papers on several occasions had spoken of an "Italian Egypt" and some Egyptians did feel that had it not been for the British, Egypt rather than Ethiopia would have been the target.<sup>182</sup> Because such notions were expressed in the Egyptian press, the Italian Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Suvich, explained the Italian stand once more.<sup>183</sup>

The repeated Italian statements of Italy's good intentions towards Egypt caused the press to shift over in favor of the Italian point of view. Italy supported the Watani Party's belief that British forces were not necessary for Egypt.<sup>184</sup> That party then again circulated the rumor of an intended non-aggression pact between Italy and Egypt - allegedly already suggested by Italy during the 1925 frontier negotiations.<sup>185</sup> On April 13, the Italian forces reached Lake Tana<sup>186</sup> and Ghigi and Mahir met twice. Some Egyptian papers speculated that they intended to negotiate agreements on the use of the water of the Lake for irrigation.<sup>187</sup>

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<sup>181</sup> OM, XVI, p. 254.

<sup>182</sup> Kingsley Martin, "British Opinion and the Abyssinian Dispute" in Political Quarterly, VI, p. 589, and Pierre Crabitte, "Egypt Signs A Treaty" in Current History, XLV, p. 97. See also Marlowe, op.cit., pp. 306-307.

<sup>183</sup> OM, XVI, p. 254.

<sup>184</sup> GB & E, XLVI, Apr 16, 1936, p. 503.

<sup>185</sup> Al-Balagh, 9 Apr 1936, in OM, XVI, pp. 288-289.

<sup>186</sup> Times, 14 Apr 1936.      <sup>187</sup> Times, 20 Apr 1936.



On April 24, 1936, Lake Tana was captured, offering Italy a new strategic base for continuing her war,<sup>188</sup> and Egypt had no choice but to believe the Italian guarantees regarding the Lake. The Italians did reassure the Egyptians that their interests in the Lake would be strictly safeguarded and offered to make an agreement on the usage of the water.<sup>189</sup> Four days after the capture of Lake Tana, King Fu'ad died. In vain did Dr. Cesare Frugoni of Rome try to save his life. The Italian Government declared that Italy had lost "a sincere and tested friend."<sup>190</sup>

On May first, Haile Selassie fled from Addis Ababa and on 9 May Ethiopia was annexed by Italy and Victor Emmanuel III became Emperor. As the Anglo-Egyptian negotiations progressed, Italian attempts to disrupt them increased. The Egyptians seemed convinced that Italy did want a non-aggression pact. Their opinion, however, was split. Some felt that such a non-aggression pact would permit a refusal of Britain's military demands. Others still distrusted Italy, who had invaded Ethiopia in disregard of earlier agreements.<sup>191</sup>

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<sup>188</sup>Gentizon, op.cit., p. 123.

<sup>189</sup>GB & E, XLVI, May 7, 1936, p. 591. See also Hartmann, op.cit., p. 86. Originally Haile Selassie was to continue to rule Ethiopia by the grace of Italy. This would have kept Italy legally out of the issue over Lake Tana. See Walter Crotch, "Whither Mussolini" in Current History, XLV, p. 42.

<sup>190</sup>OM, XVI, pp. 282, 283.

<sup>191</sup>Times, 26 May 1936; GB & E, XLVI, May 7, 1936, p. 591.

But Mussolini was satisfied with his conquest and he introduced a new note by speaking of friendship for the British Empire, in an attempt at a rapprochement.<sup>192</sup> On June 3, the Italian Ambassador in London visited Anthony Eden at the Foreign Office and repeated Mussolini's desire to reach a friendly understanding.<sup>193</sup> Within the next few days considerable British forces were withdrawn from the western desert to Alexandria.<sup>194</sup> In the end of June, all British forces were removed from the Cyrenaica border, leaving only one Egyptian battalion. On July 18, the greater part of the British fleet left for Malta.<sup>195</sup>

The Italian propagandists, notwithstanding Mussolini's declaration of friendship for Britain, closely followed the

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<sup>192</sup>GB & E, XLVI, May 28, 1936, p. 686, and Monroe, op.cit., p. 185.

<sup>193</sup>Times, 4 June 1936.

<sup>194</sup>Al-Ahram, 6 June 1936, in OM, XVI, p. 418, and Gentizon, op.cit., pp. 194-195. Supposedly the withdrawal was not due to the ease in tension, but to the heat.

<sup>195</sup>Al-Ahram, 19 and 29 July 1936, in OM, XVI, pp. 475, 532. Of the land forces, half the battalion was at Sallum, the other half at Marsa Matruh, where there was also an Egyptian artillery battery. Of the naval forces, 8 cruisers, 13 destroyers, some other larger units, and the dreadnought Queen Elizabeth left, while 3 big cruisers, 4 destroyers, one small carrier and several lesser units remained. The greater part of the normal Mediterranean fleet therefore remained in Alexandria. Cf. above, note 79, p. 114.

Anglo-Egyptian negotiations to conclude a treaty and were very quick to take advantage of any difficulty in the negotiations.<sup>196</sup> But fear of Italy was still sufficiently strong in Egypt, and the Egyptian negotiators agreed with the British on the terms of the proposed treaty.<sup>197</sup>

The Treaty of Alliance was signed in London on 26 August 1936 and ratified by Egypt on 22 December. The major objection in Egypt to the Treaty was Article VII, which permitted British military measures "in the event of war, imminent menace of war or apprehended international emergency." This statement could be open to a wide range of interpretations.<sup>198</sup> An Annex to Article VIII permitted Britain to station 10,000 troops in the Canal zone, which gave her military control over it, and in case of an "apprehended international emergency", all of Egypt's military facilities stood at her disposal.<sup>199</sup> Part B, paragraph 17 of the annex stated that the

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<sup>196</sup>See GB & E, XLVI, June 25, 1936, p. 838.

<sup>197</sup>See Marcel Colombe, L'Evolution de l'Egypte: 1924-1950, (Paris: Editions G. B. Maisonneuve & Cie., 1951), p. 67; see also H. W. Jarvis, Pharaoh to Farouk, (London: John Murray, 1955), p. 278.

<sup>198</sup>See Zayid, op.cit., p. 185. Objection was particularly strongly voiced by deputy Muhammad Bahi al-Din Barakat; see El-Hefnaoui, op.cit., p. 87.

<sup>199</sup>See Great Britain, Foreign Office, Treaty of Alliance Between H. M. In Respect of the United Kingdom and H. M. The King of Egypt, (London: H. M. Stationery Office, 1936), p. 7.

British military authorities shall be at liberty to request from the Egyptian Government to send parties of officers in civilian clothing to the Western Desert to study the ground and draw up tactical schemes. This permission shall not be unreasonably withheld.<sup>200</sup>

The next paragraph committed Egypt to improve the roads and railroads to Marsa Matruh.<sup>201</sup>

Britain had in effect secured a base for any potential operations against Libya and Italian East Africa and had insured her ability to cut communications between Italy and her possessions in case of war.<sup>202</sup> She was also in a position to prevent a crisis like the Ethiopian one to recur. The Treaty was also debated in Italy at a National Congress on the Study of Foreign Affairs at Milan on 16 October. Count Volpe di Misurata believed that it made an Italo-British rapprochement doubtful, and believed that the presence of British troops

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<sup>200</sup> Ibid., p. 9.

<sup>201</sup> Ibid.

<sup>202</sup> Marlowe, op.cit., pp. 298, 306. See also Vernon O'Rourke, "The British Position in Egypt" in Foreign Affairs, April 1936, p. 700. Although such a war actually did take place in 1940 because of the peculiar circumstances then, neither Italy nor Britain were likely to start one directly between themselves because "a continental power's possession of overseas territories that are liable to be cut off tends to be a curb on her aggressive inclinations. That was manifest in Italy's prolonged hesitations to enter the war that started in 1939 - until her ally's victory seemed certain. An entanglement of bases is a restraint even though it may not be a preventative." See B. H. Liddell Hart, Strategy, (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1962), p. 196, n. 1.

should not alter the Suez Canal regulation on free transit.<sup>203</sup> Italy's concern regarding free passage through Suez can be understood from her increase in military transits, as is shown in Table 2.

TABLE 2  
BRITISH, FRENCH AND ITALIAN MILITARY SUEZ CANAL TRANSITS\*

Year	Italy	Britain	France
1925	8	63	18
1926	16	73	(5)**
1927	3	104	11
1928	12	77	(9)
1929	2	54	8
1930	2	60	11
1931	2	69	6
1936	113	(79)	(13)
1937	69	72	(6)

\* Other Canal users were negligible.

\*\* Figures less than those of Italy are in parentheses.

Sources: Egypt, Annuaire Statistique, 1927-1928, p. 423; 1929-1930, p. 473; 1931-1932, p. 375; 1940-1941, p. 351. Figures for 1932-1935 were not available.

<sup>203</sup>Times, 17 Oct 1936. Other members of the Congress saw one road for Italy to obtain her desires in the Mediterranean: War. They considered two possibilities: 1. Either as an ally of Britain on the condition that Italy's demands would be satisfied. 2. Or as the leader of a group of powers against Britain, on the condition that Italy's demands be recognized from the outset. For the latter they stressed the need for good relations with the Arabs, Greece and Turkey. It is worth remembering that Germany soon recognized Italy's aspirations in the Mediterranean.

In lieu of a better solution, Italy adopted a friendlier attitude towards Britain. Finally both countries signed a Gentlemen's Agreement on 2 January 1937, in which they resolved to respect each other's Mediterranean interests, which were defined as being "in no way inconsistent with each other."<sup>204</sup> For Italy this agreement was a success, because it meant that she had been recognized as an equal by England.<sup>205</sup> She came to have a free hand in Ethiopia and the war atmosphere of the Crisis evaporated. Egypt recognized the new Italian Empire in October 1937.

The problem of the Suez Canal remained unsolved. The Anglo-Egyptian Treaty defined the Canal as an integral part of Egypt but also provided British troops to defend it. The presence of British forces contradicted the 1888 Convention which did not permit territorial privileges to any one signatory over the Canal.<sup>206</sup> On 16 October 1938, Italy and Britain signed an accord which reaffirmed the 1888 Convention. This, however, contradicted the Treaty of Alliance between Britain and Egypt,<sup>207</sup> according to which Britain continued to maintain troops in the Canal Zone.

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<sup>204</sup> See text in British and Foreign State Papers, vol CXLI, 1937, (London: H. M. Stationery Office, 1950), pp. 387-388. See also Garratt, Gibraltar, etc., p. 288, and Maj. Gen. I. S. O. Playfair, et. al., The Mediterranean and the Middle East, (London: H. M. Stationery Office, 1954), vol I, p. 7.

<sup>205</sup> Italy, Ministry for Italian Africa, Gli annali dell' Africa italiana, year I, vol I, (Verona: Mondadori, 1938), p. 7.

<sup>206</sup> Monroe, op.cit., pp. 177-178, and Macartney and Cremona, op.cit., p. 189.

<sup>207</sup> El-Hefnaoui, op.cit., pp. 89, 182.

By her conquest of Ethiopia, Italy demonstrated that she could defy Great Britain and the League of Nations. Events proved that Italo-Egyptian relations had passed through the Ethiopian Crisis relatively unscathed, and more Arabs became interested in benefitting from Italy.<sup>208</sup> But actually Italy's position was still very vulnerable. Like Britain, she now had most of her colonial interests beyond Suez. But Britain, according to her Treaty with Egypt, could still exercise a strangle-hold on Suez and cut Italy off from her African possessions. The Ethiopian conquest, however, increased the importance of the Canal for Italy, who now depended on it more than before. And although the bulk of Italy's shipping still passed through Gibraltar, Britain was there as well as in Suez. Italy's life-line was still threatened.<sup>209</sup>

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<sup>208</sup> Lukasz Hirszwicz, The Third Reich and the Arab East, (London; Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1966), p. 14. See also Monroe, op.cit., pp. 163, 202, and Angelo Sammarco, et. al., Egitto Moderno, (Rome: Edizioni Roma, 1939), p. 75.

<sup>209</sup> See Monroe, op.cit., pp. 15, 140, 148, 170. Before 1935, 17% of Italy's supplies passed through Suez, 70% through Gibraltar. Only for the remaining 13% was she relatively independent of Britain. Under these circumstances, the Rome-Berlin Axis was a rather logical step.

## V. THE ITALIAN COMMUNITY IN EGYPT

It is known that the Italians are the European people closest in temperament to the Orientals; they are inclined to mingle with them and to assimilate to them in habit and diet, and to contract matrimonial relationships. This has helped them to introduce themselves into the oriental societies of the countries where they have settled, especially in Egypt and in Syria.

Al-Muqattam, 4 August 1927

When Egypt was opened to European influence after Napoleon's invasion, thousands of Italians of all walks of life went there and began to play a considerable role in Egypt's development. A small nucleus of Italians was already in Egypt, who were a remnant of the old-established trading colonies. In 1187, 3000 European merchants were reported to be residing in Alexandria, of whom two thirds were Italians.<sup>1</sup> A few more came with Napoleon,<sup>2</sup> but they really flourished under Muhammad 'Ali who became ruler of Egypt in 1805. He

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<sup>1</sup>L. A. Balboni, Gl'Italiani nella civiltà egiziana del secolo XIX, vol I, (Alexandria: Società Dante Alighieri, 1906), p. 32. He refers to al-Maqrizi, who lived in the 14th and 15th centuries. Actually there were more Greeks, as until this century, but then the Greeks were still Ottoman subjects. See Angelo Sammarco, Gli Italiani in Egitto, (Alexandria: Edizioni del Fascio, 1937), p. 29.

<sup>2</sup>Allegedly one Mamluk officer challenged the Frankish soldiers in Italian. See Louis Bréhier, L'Egypte de 1798 à 1900. Etudes d'histoire contemporaine, (Paris: 1901), p. 35, in Balboni, op.cit., vol I, p. 94.



called for European assistance and knowledge, and

To Mohammed Ali's appeal responded in greater numbers and more willingly than other peoples, the Italians, who knew from long times the ways of the Levant and who also received an impulse to emigrate because of the sad political conditions of the fatherland.<sup>3</sup>

Some Italians became advisors and aides<sup>4</sup> of the ruling house and thus assisted in the introduction of western ways into Egypt.

During the first half of the nineteenth century, military men, professionals and technicians arrived from Italy as political refugees. By 1820, there were already some 6000 Italians in Egypt,<sup>5</sup> and Italian also became the language of instruction at the Citadel school in Cairo, besides being the official language in relations with foreigners under Muhammad 'Ali.<sup>6</sup> The assistance of the Italians was immediately utilized

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<sup>3</sup>Sammarco, op.cit., p. 31.

<sup>4</sup>See Balboni, op.cit., vol I, pp. 205-237. Balboni gives short biographical sketches for a good many Italians. At that time the interests of various European states were represented by such influential Italians.

<sup>5</sup>Sammarco, op.cit., p. 40. Moustafa Fahmy, La révolution de l'industrie en Egypte et ses conséquences sociales au 19<sup>e</sup> siècle (1800-1850), (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1954), p. 82, n. 1, gives only 2000 Italians for 1833. He also mentions 5000 Greeks, 800 Frenchmen and 100 Englishmen.

<sup>6</sup>Ahmed Pacha Chafik, L'Egypte moderne et les influences étrangères, (Cairo: Imprimerie Misr, 1931), p. 192, and Sammarco, op.cit., pp. 36, 192.

by Muhammad 'Ali to build up a strong navy. The predominant role played by the Italian city-state of Leghorn in the formation of this navy elicited protests from the Porte. An arsenal which was built in 1826 in Alexandria had mostly Italian staff. Although in 1830 it was put under the command of a Frenchman, the Italian personnel and nautical terminology remained. The newly formed navy helped Muhammad 'Ali undertake his ill-fated wars in 1832.<sup>7</sup>

When revolutions in Naples and Piedmont in 1820 and 1821 failed, a good number of military men fled from Italy and became instructors in Egypt.<sup>8</sup> The Egyptian forces employed in Morea in 1826 had six Italian instructors out of a total of seven.<sup>9</sup> Gun casting and the making of ammunition were largely in the hands of Italians, who, in turn, trained skilled local workers. When Acre was besieged in 1832, the key operations were carried out according to the plans of three Italian engineers,<sup>10</sup> thus opening the road to Konya and Istanbul.

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<sup>7</sup>Sammarco, op.cit., p. 67. Sammarco has devoted an entire volume on the Italian contribution to this navy: La marina egiziana sotto Mohammad Ali. Il contributo italiano, (Cairo: Societ  Royale de G ographie d'Egypte, 1931). For other aspects on this navy, see chapter I above, p. 7.

<sup>8</sup>Sammarco, op.cit., p. 71. He records over 40 experienced officers by name.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid. The seventh was a Spaniard. The report on these instructors was written in Italian by the Austrian Consul in Morea; see n. 3.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 72.

From the start, Italians were also active in the medical field. The European hospital established in Alexandria under Muhammad 'Ali had an Italian character,<sup>11</sup> and the pharmaceutical service was handled by an Italian. During the anti-Wahhabi campaign of 1814-1819, Italians were among the medical corps, and Ibrahim's personal physician was an Italian who later saved his employer's life.<sup>12</sup> Muhammad 'Ali also set up a public health service which was manned primarily by Italians. For the Consular Health Committee, knowledge of Italian was essential. Clot Bey, a Frenchman, who has been credited with founding the School of Medicine in Egypt, could have done little without the assistance of the Italians and their pioneer work in medicine in Egypt. Most of the instructors in the School of Medicine in Cairo of 1825 were Italians.<sup>13</sup>

The first printing press was set up by an Italian-trained Maronite and the first regular printing job done in Egypt was the publication of an Italian-Arabic dictionary in 1822. Even as late as 1895 the "Royal Printer" employed 38 Italians.<sup>14</sup> In 1834 an Italian expert, Camiagi, with the

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<sup>11</sup>Balboni, op.cit., vol I, p. 485.

<sup>12</sup>Sammarco, op.cit., pp. 92, 103. See also H. Petermann, Reisen im Orient, (Leipzig: Verlag von Veit, 1865), vol I, p. 79.

<sup>13</sup>Sammarco, op.cit., pp. 92, 94 ff., 99.

<sup>14</sup>See Ibid., pp. 145-146. There were 56 foreigners altogether. During his stay in Egypt, this writer was able to observe that Italians still are of importance in non-Arabic printing, such as in the press of the French Archaeological Institute.

help of European-educated Yusif Abadi, set up a paper factory.<sup>15</sup>

Under the reigns of 'Abbas (1848-54) and Sa'id (1854-63) European influence was less strong and many prominent posts were no longer filled by Italians. But with the accession of the pro-European Isma'il (1863-79), the Italian community really flourished, again grew in size, and assumed the features which it continued to possess in the twentieth century. Whereas during the first half of the nineteenth century primarily military men had come to Egypt, in the second half new economic opportunities caused an influx of merchants, industrialists, men of the professions and laborers. The latter especially grew steadily with the construction of the Suez Canal (1859-69) which required machinery as well as semi-skilled labor. Thousands of Italians came, among them engineers, and many remained behind for further employment.<sup>16</sup> The Suez Canal itself was constructed according to the plans of Luigi Negrelli, an Italian engineer. Another Italian, the Piedmontese Minister of Public Works, Pietro Paleocarpa, developed the plan to prevent the Canal from sanding up. Edoardo Gioja built the sweet water canal, and General Menabrea proposed the use of excavating machines.<sup>17</sup> Italian specialists

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<sup>15</sup>Fahmy, op.cit., p. 46.

<sup>16</sup>Sammarco, op.cit., pp. 33, 35, 72, 122, 172.

<sup>17</sup>Enciclopedia Italiana, vol XXXIII, p. 958 ff., article "Suez".

in the service of English firms later built the greater part of the Nile barrages.<sup>18</sup>

By the 1850's, the community had become sizeable enough to require the establishment of Italian schools.<sup>19</sup> From 1859 onward, arms and funds were sent to Italy to contribute to the wars of independence. In 1870 the colony had grown to about 16,000.<sup>20</sup>

Italy's lack of political power<sup>21</sup> permitted France and Britain to suppress Italian influence in Egypt. During Tawfiq's reign (1879-92) Italians began to be dismissed from their jobs in the Egyptian administration. At the same time French began to replace Italian as the major foreign language. When finally in 1882 the occupation by Britain took place, most of the Italians remaining in the administration were replaced.<sup>22</sup> By then the community had grown to 18,665, according to the census, which was also made by an Italian.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>18</sup>Iwan Kirchner, Der nahe Osten, (Munich: Rudolf M. Rohrer Verlag, 1943), p. 602.

<sup>19</sup>Chafik, op.cit., p. 193.

<sup>20</sup>Sammarco, op.cit., pp. xxvii, 40.

<sup>21</sup>Cesare Brunelli, Emanuele Dentamaro, (Tolentino:Stab. Tipografico F. Filelfo, 1910), p. 31.

<sup>22</sup>Sammarco, op.cit., pp. 37-38.

<sup>23</sup>Federigo Amici Bey made the first census. An Italian had already directed the first cadastre in 1820; ibid., p. 83. Italians also established the Egyptian Statistics Bureau at the turn of the century; ibid., p. 89.

Under Isma'il a new navy was built up by his vice-admiral, F. N. Federigo Pasha, the only European charged with such an important task. He also served as Isma'il's special emissary.<sup>24</sup> When in 1876 Isma'il's financial position became precarious, he engaged Antonio Scialoia, an Italian financial expert, who made the basic reform plans for the establishment of the Caisse de la Dette Publique.<sup>25</sup>

In 1820 a certain Carlo Meratti began a service for distributing and dispatching letters in Alexandria. The enterprise worked well, and in 1840 he established a branch in Cairo. He hired Italians to keep the mail service going. After his death the mail service was continued by Giacomo Muzzi. Between 1854-56, more post offices were opened in lower and upper Egypt. In 1862, this company came to handle government mail as well, and, for a fee of £E 780, was permitted to use the state railways. After 1862 their use became gratis. The whole organization was later perfected by the Inspector General of the Italian Mails. In 1864, the Egyptian Government, realizing the importance of the mail service, bought it for 950,000 francs and began to run it in 1865 with 19 post offices. The mail service, however, continued to maintain its Italian character, with Muzzi as Director-General and the title of Bey. The old staff was kept and Italians continued to be hired. Until 1876 Italian remained the official lang-

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<sup>24</sup>Ibid, pp. 74, 80, 81.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., pp. 80, 81. See also above, chapter I, p. 9.

uage in the administration of the mails, but in 1877 French and Arabic replaced it.<sup>26</sup>

So much for the achievements of this community. But as a social unit it is no less interesting. The general impression seems that they were dedicated, hard-working, popular and close to the Egyptians. Lord Cromer painted a favorable picture of the Italian community:

Many of the skilled artisans in Egypt, the brick-layers, masons, carpenters, etc. are Italians. They are as a rule a steady, industrious race, whose presence is very useful to the Egyptians, as it enables the latter to learn various crafts requiring skill in their application. As a body, these Italians do not differ from their countrymen of the same social position in Italy.<sup>27</sup>

In spite of their closeness to the Egyptians the Italians did not assimilate.<sup>28</sup> In fact they were more homogeneous than other foreign groups, except for the Greeks. Thus the

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<sup>26</sup>The Sudanese mail services were then also in Italian hands. See Balboni, *op.cit.*, vol I, pp. 491-521; Egypt, Annuaire Statistique 1925-1926, (Cairo: Government Press, 1927), pp. 316-317; Sammarco, *op.cit.*, pp. 86-87; and Cattau's article "Aperçu historique et organisation de l'état" in Joseph Cattau Pacha, (ed.), L'Egypte, (Cairo: Imprimerie de l'Institut Français, 1926), pp. 63-64.

<sup>27</sup>Earl of Cromer, Modern Egypt, (London: 1911), p. 652; see also Giovanni Wian, Il nuovo Egitto e l'Italia, (Pescara: Arte della Stampa, n.d.), p. 99; Kirchner, *op.cit.*, p. 600; and Pellegrino Ghigi, Italian Minister in Cairo, in his foreword to Sammarco, *op.cit.*, p. xii.

<sup>28</sup>They followed the general pattern of not being tied to the land. Only a few Italians, exceptions, not the rule, acquired some sizeable holdings. See Gabriel Baer, A History of Landownership in Modern Egypt, 1800-1950, (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), p. 121.

colony of Cromer's days, 24,000 in 1897 and 34,926 in 1907, contained almost exclusively ethnic Italians, while the other foreign groups were often mixtures of all national and racial origins.<sup>29</sup> They had a number of schools and institutions for themselves, and in 1876, Enrico Debono and Frederico Fabbri founded the newspaper Il Messaggero Egiziano in Alexandria; in 1892 another paper, L'Imparziale, was published by Emilio Arus in Cairo.<sup>30</sup>

Hence in spite of a few criminals - who again demonstrate the wide spread of social types - the Italian community was able to be quite influential before the British occupation and contribute to Egypt's modernization.<sup>31</sup> This happened because of the special circumstances in which Egypt found herself. Angelo Sammarco described it thus:

Due to the density of the Egyptian population, the Nile Valley could not be an area for population for the Europeans, neither in the form of direct colonization, nor in the form of indirect, that is administrative, colonization. Egypt provided the Europeans with a market for labor in the most noble and vast sense of the word, because if it

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<sup>29</sup> Cromer, op.cit., p. 650, and Sammarco, op.cit., pp. 40-41. In 1897, there were 12,060 males, 12,394 females; in 1907, 17,078 and 17,848 respectively. The War must have caused the ratio of 18,038 males to 22,140 females in 1917. Between 1882-1917, the Italian colony increased by 122% (Greeks: 53%, French: 31%, British: 22%).

<sup>30</sup> Oriente Moderno (hereafter OM), X, p. 181. See also Sammarco, op.cit., p. 152.

<sup>31</sup> See Avv. E. Manusardi, in OM, I, p. 496.



comprised manual labor, it comprised above all intellectual labor. The country offered a field of activities of all kinds for the foreigners and gave them means to attain material and moral positions of the first order . . . In turn the Europeans had the merit of having effectively collaborated in the task of regeneration.<sup>32</sup>

In 1917 the Italians numbered 40,198, that is 19.5% of all foreigners in Egypt and were second in number to the 56,731 Greeks. Of the Italians, 44.9% were men and 55.1% women. Only 32,519 (80.9%) were actually Italians. Like all foreigners, they concentrated in the urban areas, with 17,860 (44.4%) in Alexandria, 15,655 (38.9%) in Cairo, and 2038 (7.5%) in Port Sa'id. Only 1212 (3%) lived in Lower, 984 (2.8%) in Upper Egypt. Table 3 shows these and other figures on the Italians of Egypt also for the years 1927 and 1937.<sup>33</sup>

Of the Italians, 21,094 (52.4%) were born in Egypt, while 13,700 (34.1%) had immigrated from Italy. The rest came from various parts of Africa and Asia.<sup>34</sup> The bulk of the Italian families in Cairo and Alexandria lived in three to four rooms, which placed them well above the Egyptian ratio of families to rooms, but a little below other foreigners, except Greeks and Ottomans.<sup>35</sup> Table 4 shows that most Itali-

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<sup>32</sup>Sammarco, op.cit., p. 33.

<sup>33</sup>See also Henein Bey Henein, "La population d'Egypte et l'exode estival", in Cattau, op.cit., p. 372.

<sup>34</sup>Egypt, The Census of Egypt Taken in 1917, vol II, (Cairo: Government Press, 1921), pp. 576-577.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., pp. 658-659, 662-663. The families averaged 4 members.

TABLE 3  
THE ITALIAN POPULATION OF EGYPT

		1917	1927	1937
Total population of Egypt		12,750,918	14,217,864	15,926,694
Egyptians		12,512,306	13,952,264	15,734,179
Foreigners		205,949	225,600	186,515
Italian subjects in Egypt	total	40,198	52,462	47,706
	men	18,058	24,725	22,824
	women	22,140	27,737	24,882
Italians	total	32,519	37,287	39,535
	men	14,497	17,514	18,882
	women	18,022	19,773	20,653
Egyptians	total	2,438	1,237*	2,233
	men	1,211	625	1,092
	women	1,227	612	1,141
Greeks**	total	1,625	4,942	2,143
	men	702	2,311	968
	women	923	2,631	1,175
Jews***	total	668	4,949	
	men	314	2,428	
	women	354	2,521	
Tripolitans	total	547	1,721****	1,751
	men	353	994	1,043
	women	194	727	708
Eritreans	total	10	39	12
	men	7	25	9
	women	3	14	3
Others	total	2,394	2,287	2,032
	men	974	828	830
	women	1,417	1,459	1,202
Italians living in Cairo		15,655	18,575	16,443
in Alexandria		17,860	24,280	22,881
in Port Said		33,028	4,172	4,336
Literacy rate	men	73.0%	86.9%	88.1%
	women	62.9%	78.5%	78.5%

\* There is no evident reason why the Italians of Egyptian origin should have decreased by 50% in 1927 and nearly reached their old proportions again in 1937.

\*\* The sharp increase between 1917-1927 of Greeks holding Italian passports is puzzling, because Egypt and Italy did not reach an agreement on the status of the Dodecanese Greeks

in Egypt until 26 July 1928. More puzzling, in view of the accord, is their decline by 1937.

\*\*\* The sharp increase in Italians of Jewish "race" is equally puzzling. Even more so is their complete statistical disappearance in 1937.

\*\*\*\* The great increase in Tripolitans in 1927 can be explained by the Italo-Egyptian accord on their nationality of December 1923.

Sources for Table 3: Egypt, Annuaire Statistique 1925-1926, pp. 32-35, 38; 1931-1932, pp. 19, 20, 23; 1940-1941, pp. 20, 21, 23.

TABLE 4

## THE ITALIANS OF EGYPT IN AGE GROUPS

		5-	5-9	10-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60+
All Ita- lian sub- jects 1917	T	3,706	4,529	7,979	5,916	6,135	5,454	3,491	2,902
	M	1,926	2,310	3,814	1,901	2,429	2,647	1,705	1,290
	W	1,780	2,219	4,165	4,015	3,706	2,807	1,786	1,612
Ethnic Italians 1917	T	3,013	3,676	6,445	4,634	4,918	4,498	2,871	2,400
	M	1,572	1,838	3,051	1,425	1,926	2,182	1,395	1,078
	W	1,441	1,838	3,394	3,209	2,992	2,316	1,476	1,322
All Ital. subjects 1927	T	4,330	4,312	10,223	9,833	8,263	6,984	4,597	3,765
	M	2,187	2,233	4,934	4,454	3,692	3,353	2,225	1,575
	W	2,143	2,089	5,269	5,379	4,571	3,631	2,372	2,190
Ethnic Italians 1927	T	2,931	2,885	7,125	6,981	5,916	5,076	3,424	2,821
	M	1,495	1,524	3,425	3,157	2,586	2,418	1,653	1,196
	W	1,436	1,361	3,700	3,824	3,330	2,658	1,771	1,625

Sources: Egypt, The Census Taken of Egypt in 1917, pp. 522-525, and Population Census of Egypt 1927, Part I, pp. 208-209.

ans were young and able to work, as 17,505 (43.5%) were between 20-49 years of age. Only 6,393 (15.9%) were over 50, while 16,214 (40.3%) were below twenty.<sup>36</sup> Most of the working men were artisans, specialized workers, technical directors, merchants, entrepreneurs, men of the professions and employes, while virtually none were engaged in unskilled manual labor.<sup>37</sup> Their literacy rate of 73% and 62.9% for males and females respectively - 75.5% and 65.9% for pure Italians - was higher than that of the Greeks, English, or French.<sup>38</sup> In proportion of single, married, divorced or widowed persons, they were about the same as other foreigners and Egyptians.<sup>39</sup> They read four regular Italian publications, three of them dailies,<sup>40</sup> and about half of their children attended 55 Italian

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid., pp. 524-525.

<sup>37</sup> Sammarco, op.cit., p. xvii; Santi Nava, Il problema dell'espansione italiana ed il Levante islamico, (Padua: Casa Editrice A. Milani, 1931), p. 180.

<sup>38</sup> Census 1917, pp. 530-531; 11,783 men and 12,813 women were literate. Although the pure British and French out-rated pure Italians, their overall literacy was lower. Egyptian literacy rate then: 12.7% men, 12% women.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., pp. 532-533.

<sup>40</sup> The Near East (hereafter referred to as GB & E), Aug 21, 1924, p. 195. In Egypt, 12 publications were French, 8 Greek, 4 English. The article calls them colony-centered and of little political value. See also George Young, Egypt, (New York: Charles Scribners' Sons, 1927), p. 285. By 1926, the figures increased slightly. There were out of 30 non-Arabic dailies 3 Italian ones - l'Imparziale and Roma (since 1918) in Cairo, and Il Messaggero Egiziano in Alexandria. Of 79 non-Arabic periodicals, 5 were Italian and one was bilingual in Italian and French. See Achille Sékaly Bey, "La Presse" in Cattai, op.cit., pp. 402-404. See also Paul Hartmann, L'Egypte indépendante, vol I, (Paris: Groupe d'Etudes pour l'Islam, 1938), p. 400.

schools. Such was the composition of the group that Fascism was to take a special interest in. Elizabeth Monroe was mistaken when she wrote that

The Italian emigrant . . . eked out a hand-to-mouth existence as a stone-mason, knife-grinder, or waiter, and lived in a slum almost indistinguishable from the native quarter. He forgot his Italian origin, and accepted wages lower than did other westerners. In fact, he sank to the depths of poverty in everything but the size of his family.<sup>41</sup>

Of course that author speaks of Italians everywhere in the Mediterranean. In Tunisia they might have lived in slums and to some extent lost their identity, because the Italians there, unlike those in Egypt, were primarily poor Sicilian and Sardinian agricultural workers.<sup>42</sup> On the basis of the professions of Italians in Egypt, Angelo Sammarco's view appears more acceptable, namely that

This aristocracy of labor not only did not let itself be assimilated by the environment in which it came to find itself, but preserved its national and spiritual individuality and exerted with it an important influence on its environment.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>41</sup>Elizabeth Monroe, The Mediterranean in Politics, (London: Oxford University Press, 1938), p. 196. She attributes the Italians' poverty to their lack of business drive, which, she claims, the Greeks had, who became millionaires.

<sup>42</sup>Enciclopedia Italiana, vol XIX, article "Italia", p. 1031.

<sup>43</sup>Sammarco, op.cit., p. xvii; see also Nava, op.cit., p. 32.

There were societies and associations for these Italians which reflected their homeland. These were private, not governmental, and gave evidence of Italy's weakness as a power. Furthermore, Italian politicians considered the Italian emigrants as inferior citizens, and the colony had been practically forgotten by Italy. Mussolini, however, intended to have no Italian neglected by Fascism, and already in 1921, the first fascio<sup>44</sup> was set up in the Italian center of Alexandria, shortly followed by fasci in Cairo and the Canal Zone. Fascism was most active in Alexandria, due to the largest concentration of Italians there.<sup>45</sup> In 1922, a convention defined the fasci outside Italy as

Salvage posts of italianità and centers of collection and defense under the sign of the Lictor's Rods, of all the compatriots forced to live beyond the confines of the Motherland for reasons of work.<sup>46</sup>

From the beginning Mussolini insisted that all care and provisions be supplied to reinvigorate and to exalt national sentiment among the Italians abroad. To begin, he abolished the word "emigrant", speaking only of the "Italian abroad".

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<sup>44</sup>At first, a fascio was no more than a party cell in Italy.

<sup>45</sup>Sammarco, op.cit., pp. 44, 45, 153, and Carlo Grassi, "La participation des Italiens à la vie économique de l'Egypte" in Journal du Dimanche, L'Egypte indépendante devant la Conférence des Capitulations, (Cairo: Imprimerie Proccaccia, 1938), no pagination.

<sup>46</sup>Sammarco, op.cit., p. 44. Italianità is sometimes translated as "Italianism", but in this writer's opinion, the translation conveys no more meaning than the original. The word roughly corresponds to the German Deutschtum or to the Arabic 'uruba.

Because of this Italian's remoteness from the fatherland, he was deemed meritorious of special compensation, affection and care.<sup>47</sup>

The gradual Fascist exercise of control over the Italians in Egypt based itself on Article I of the Constitution for the Fasci Abroad of 5 February 1928:

Foreign Fasci are the organizations of Italians residing abroad who have chosen obedience to the Duce and the Law of Fascism as a rule to govern their private and civic life, and whose aim it is to gather the colonies of Italians living in foreign lands around the symbol of the Lictor's Rods.<sup>48</sup>

<sup>47</sup> Sammarco, op.cit., p. xvi; see also Enciclopedia Italiana, vol XIX, p. 1032.

<sup>48</sup> The Constitution continues as follows:  
The commandments issued by the Duce as a daily guide to Fascists living abroad are the following.

1. Fascists living abroad must obey the laws of the country which has given them hospitality. They must give daily proof of this obedience and, if necessary, be an example to the citizens themselves.
2. They should not participate in the internal politics of the countries in which they reside.
3. They should not arouse factional quarrels in their colonies but they should rather settle them in the shadow of the Lictor's Rods.
4. They should be exemplary in public and private honesty.
5. They should respect the representatives of Italy abroad and obey their directions and instructions.
6. They should defend Italianism of the past and of the present.
7. They should give assistance to needy Italians.
8. They should be disciplined abroad, even as Italians at home are disciplined.

Art. II. The organs of the foreign fasci are:

1. The General Secretariat with headquarters at Rome.
2. The foreign fasci.

Art. III. In connection with every fascio there shall be established a section of the Advance Guard and of the Balilla, and a Feminine Fascio.

As a result of the Government's implementation of this article, for the first time the Italians of Egypt began to feel the unifying power of and energetic direction by a government.<sup>49</sup> The Italian Consulates were among the first to be turned Fascist, because, according to commandment 2 of Article I, the Fascists in Egypt "should respect the representatives of Italy abroad and obey their directions and instructions."<sup>50</sup>

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The foreign fasci are directly dependent on the General Secretary. The General Secretary may group the fasci in a single consular district if necessary. In this case, the secretary of the fascio of the chief city in the consular district is also as a rule the secretary of the zone.

Art. IV. The secretary of the zone is nominated by the General Secretary.

Art. V. The secretary of the fascio, nominated directly by the General Secretary, has charge of the fascio.

Art. VI. The essential task of the fasci is the assistance of fellow-countrymen abroad. The secretary of the fascio will explain the implications of this task to the representatives of the Fascist State (the Consul-General, Consul, and Vice-Consul), cooperating with them in their undertakings and daily work.

Arts. VII-X. Details of administration.

Art. XI. The General Secretary of the foreign fasci shall have the power to apply immediately and without further procedure the various disciplinary punishments with respect to those officers or members who are found guilty

- (a) of exciting discord among the fasci or in the Italian colonies, or
- (b) of disobeying consular authorities or diminishing their prestige before other Italians and before foreigners.

Art. XII. The General Secretary is authorized to prescribe rules for the internal operation of the organizations.

Text taken from H. W. Schneider and S. B. Clough, Making Fascists, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1929), pp. 58-59. On the commandments, see also Times, 6 Feb 1928.

<sup>49</sup> Sammarco, op.cit., p. 44.

<sup>50</sup> See note 48.



Together with various new governmental organizations, the Consulates began to organize and unify all Italian activities abroad in order to eradicate autonomism and to create single-mindedness.<sup>51</sup> Commandment 6 of article I told the Italians in Egypt to "defend Italianism of the past and of the present."<sup>52</sup> Fascism awakened this national pride in the Italian of Egypt "by the simple method of making him feel important. It taught him to fly the Italian flag, and to display pictures of his King and Duce."<sup>53</sup>

Article VI of the Constitution for Fasci Abroad stated that "the essential task of the fasci is the assistance of fellow-countrymen abroad."<sup>54</sup> The Italians were accordingly organized in clubs and the dopolavoro (after work) organizations.<sup>55</sup> Through the Direzione generale degli italiani all'estero,<sup>56</sup>

<sup>51</sup> Sammarco, op.cit., p. 45.

<sup>52</sup> See note 48.

<sup>53</sup> Monroe, op.cit., p. 196; see also Luigi Villari, Italian Foreign Policy Under Mussolini, (New York: The Devin-Adair Co., 1956), p. 56.

<sup>54</sup> See note 48.

<sup>55</sup> Dopolavoro was the common Italian name that included all the activities organized and facilities provided by the Opera Nazionale Dopolavoro (National After-Work Project). It was begun on 1 May 1925 and provided art courses, excursions, tours, and evening courses to further one's education. Most of these activities took place after and outside work, hence the name. See Enciclopedia Italiana, vol XIII, p. 155. See also Times, 5 and 10 Feb 1926.

<sup>56</sup> The General Directorate for Italians Abroad. It was a department of the Foreign Ministry, and at first went under various names, like Direzione generale del lavoro italiano all'estero (General Directorate for Italian Labor Abroad). Before emigration was abolished on 28 Apr 1927, it was known as Commissariato generale dell'emigrazione. Its political section

and with the support of community contributions, the Italian colony in Egypt set up Case d'Italia, Case del Fascio, sports camps, swimming pools, dopolavoro recreation centers with drama, sports and libraries. A Veterans' Organization was created.<sup>57</sup> Commandment 7 of article I urged to "give assistance to needy Italians,"<sup>58</sup> and the fasci set up employment offices and gave out free food for the unemployed Italians. In 1935, the Alexandria fascio distributed 81,133 kilos of bread and 276,045 rations. Italian hospitals were modernized and better staffed. With such a system the Italians became the envy of other foreign communities.<sup>59</sup>

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was the Ispettorato dei fasci italiani all'estero, formerly Organizzazione dei fasci all'estero. See Enciclopedia Italiana, vol XXIII, p. 256, XIX, p. 1032.

<sup>57</sup> Sammarco, op.cit., pp. 45-47, xvi, xvii; Monroe, op.cit., p. 197; and Charles Issawi, Egypt: An Economic and Social Analysis, (London: Oxford University Press, 1947), p. 116. The Case d'Italia (Houses of Italy) and the Case del Fascio (Houses of Fascism) were something in the nature of community club houses, which provided recreation and information. At times they were called Case degl'Italiani (Houses of the Italians). See Enciclopedia Italiana, vol XIX, p. 1032.

<sup>58</sup> See note 48.

<sup>59</sup> Sammarco, op.cit., p. 47; see also Enciclopedia Italiana, vol XIX, p. 1032.

Fascism took a great interest in shaping the young, and article III of the Constitution for Foreign Fasci required the establishment of Fascist Youth Organizations (Organizzazioni Giovanili Fasciste)<sup>60</sup> - the Balilla, Avanguardisti, Piccole Italiane and Giovane Italiane.<sup>61</sup> Fascism turned the "ragamuffin children into spick-and-span Balillas, complete with black shirt, blue neckerchief and toy gun."<sup>62</sup> They were all well cared for. In Alexandria alone, 3800 youngsters were organized. Under the Ente Opere Assistenziali (Organization for Relief Works), extensive health services were set up, which conducted regular check-ups. Every year 500 boys and girls were sent to Italy to mountain camps, while 2000 Christmas packages came from Italy for the poor children in Egypt. For

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<sup>60</sup>See note 48.

<sup>61</sup>Sammarco, op.cit., p. 45. All these groups fell under the Opera Nazionale Balilla (National Balilla Project), for "the physical and moral assistance and education of the young." Balilla is said to have been the name of the boy who sparked off the insurrection that forced the Austrians out of Genoa in 1746. The project was organized on 3 Apr 1926 under the Ministry of Education. The Balilla was for boys from 8-14, the Avanguardisti (Advance Guards) for boys aged 15-18. The latter provided regular military training. The Piccole Italiane (Little Italians) were girls from crawling age till 13, while the Giovane Italiane (Young Italians) were girls from 13 to 14 years. Apart from their stress on physical education and political indoctrination, they resemble the Scouts. They perhaps were somewhat inbetween the Falken (Hawks) of the Socialist Party in Germany today and the Hitler Youth of the Nazi period. See Enciclopedia Italiana, vol X, pp. 965-971.

<sup>62</sup>Monroe, op.cit., p. 196.

the needy there also were free sunlight therapies at the seaside, nurseries for children of working mothers, scholarships and free text books. In one year, £E 5000 were spent on the children of Alexandria.<sup>63</sup>

But the Italian Government did not want its citizens abroad to create trouble in diplomatic relations. Therefore on 5 August 1923, a convention in Rome of the Grand Council of Fascism ordered the fasci abroad to be sure to observe the laws and customs of the host countries and to refrain from political agitation.<sup>64</sup> The Fascist Government began to exercise more power over the community by a law passed in Italy in December 1925, which went into effect on 31 January 1926. This law empowered the Italian Government to revoke the citizenship and to confiscate the property of any Italian abroad, who, in word or deed, caused disorder in the realm or damaged the Fascist regime's prestige abroad.<sup>65</sup> The purpose of the law was twofold - to control the Italians abroad and to combat "un-Italian" activities among them, i. e. to fight opponents of the regime, particularly communists. In fact, Ital-

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<sup>63</sup>Sammarco, op.cit., p. 46.

<sup>64</sup>Current History, XVIII, p. 1071.

<sup>65</sup>English text in Great Britain, British and Foreign State Papers, vol CXXV, 1926, part III, (London: H. M. Stationery Office, 1932), pp. 862-863. Original text in Gazzetta Ufficiale, no. 28, 4 Feb 1926. For comments, see Current History, XXIII, p. 750; XXIV, p. 296; XXV, p. 266; XXVII, p. 138; XXIX, p. 156. See also Times, 26, 27 and 29 Jan 1926.

ian communists did agitate in Egypt, and on 7 May 1928 they were arrested and deported.<sup>66</sup> For those Italians, communists or not, who disagreed with the regime, Egypt nevertheless was a good asylum, as it had been for the Italian patriots in the preceding century. Especially after the mid-thirties, some of these tried hard to organize anti-Fascist resistance among the Italians in Egypt.<sup>67</sup>

The non-Italian subjects of Italy abroad also were kept under control. At a reception in June 1928 for Italian colonial subjects studying at al-Azhar, Marquis Paternò di Manchi, the Italian Minister in Cairo, informed them:

My presence here is to show you that the powerful Government of Italy has its eyes on you. This means that you are enjoying its high protection, but this also means that severe obligations rest upon you. These are: 1st,

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<sup>66</sup>Times, 1 May 1928.

<sup>67</sup>See C. F. Delzell, Mussolini's Enemies, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961), p. 141. Of special interest was Velio Spano, also known as Paolo Tedeschi, who came to Egypt in 1936 to agitate for Communism. He was forced to leave the country. Once World War II broke out, many Italian exiles, the fuorusciti, who had been in France, arrived in Egypt to collaborate with the British. Although communists in the main, particularly after the Soviet Union entered the War, some were merely anti-Fascists. All joined in the group for Giustizia e Libertà, and were called giellisti (G-L-ists). Known names are Umberto Caloso, Paolo Vittorelli, Stefano Terra and Renato Mieli. Ibid., pp. 195-196. Terra and Vittorelli are now Italian MPs. Because they, Spano and Mieli were Jews, Italian resistance abroad helped increase anti-Semitism at home, where Jew was made equal to traitor or vice versa. During the present writer's stay in Egypt, he met no old admitted Fascists, but he was able to converse with an old resistance leftist.

absolute devotion and loyalty to the powerful Government of Italy which protects you; 2nd, the indispensable duty to pursue your studies and enrich your minds, so that some day, back in your colonies, you can render yourselves useful to their governments and help them to proceed on the road of welfare for your brothers; 3rd, the obligation not to interfere in local political questions and to be deferent towards the authorities of the country which offers you hospitality; 4th, to submit yourselves to the control of Delegate Carnevali [the head of this student group], who, in the name of the fasci of Cairo, will assist, advise and supervise you.

Know also that on each one of you I will receive a report from Mr. Carnevali, and that the deserving shall be justly rewarded, while whosoever, by chance, has not done his personal duty, shall be severely punished.

May Almighty God protect you and your families.<sup>68</sup>

The effect of Fascism on the community was regularly manifested on all important days of the Fascist calendar in demonstrations and parades. In these parades, the Italians of Egypt "now march through the . . . streets as the equal of all men, with bands playing, colours flying and courage high."<sup>69</sup> They had become Italy's pride in the Orient, the model colony, and the best embodiment of italianità.<sup>70</sup>

The Italian schooling system in Egypt had a two-fold purpose: to enable as many Italians as possible to go to

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<sup>68</sup>In L'Imparziale, 13 June 1928, in OM, VIII, p. 267.

<sup>69</sup>Monroe, op.cit., p. 197.

<sup>70</sup>Nava, op.cit., p. 31.

Italian schools, and to offer Italian education to an increasing number of Egyptians. The former objective was primarily fulfilled by the Government, with its few but big schools, which concentrated in the cities. The religious schools, instead, which were spread all over Egypt, taught more to Egyptians.

The Fascist program strove to renovate all "scholastic institutions abroad, in a way to make them adequate to the renewed Italian prestige in the world."<sup>71</sup> On 15 July 1923, all schools abroad were ordered to change their curricula according to the school reforms in Italy.<sup>72</sup> Between 1922 and 1924, five schools were closed down, because they did not fit the new Italian image. The remaining schools were made more uniform. The old school buildings were improved in appearance and **hygienic** facilities, and they were enlarged in order to hold more pupils. New text books were introduced both for scholastic and propagandistic reasons, and a new staff with adequate facilities became the rule.<sup>73</sup> The Ispettorato per le organizzazioni giovanili (Inspectorate for Youth Organizations) organized the physical education programs at the schools in order to make them conform to the standards of the Balilla organization.<sup>74</sup> The Times of London commented on the

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<sup>71</sup>Sammarco, op.cit., p. 163.

<sup>72</sup>Enciclopedia Italiana, vol XIX, p. 1033.

<sup>73</sup>Sammarco, op.cit., pp. 45, 47, 163-164. See also Monroe, op.cit., p. 197.

<sup>74</sup>Enciclopedia Italiana, vol XIX, p. 1032.

Italian activity in the field of education:

The Italian Government is very liberal in its support of Italian schools, realizing, as the British Government apparently does not, that if trade follows the flag, that flag can be shown just as effectively in a classroom or over a school building as in a battleship.<sup>75</sup>

In 1928, the Organization for Fasci Abroad in Rome ordered all Italians abroad to send their children only to Italian schools.<sup>76</sup> Theoretically this was possible in Egypt, because the Italian schools could contain all Italian pupils. But in practice, the schools were also attended by Egyptians and in the religious schools more than half of the pupils were Egyptians. The Italian Government therefore had to seek more places for its citizens by the construction of new schools. On 21 April 1931, the cornerstone was laid for new schools in Alexandria, which covered an area of 30,000 square meters, with gardens, squares and a sports field. The new school was built to hold 3,600 pupils,<sup>77</sup> which was more than one third of the total pupils that attended Italian schools in 1931. In early 1933, the Scuole Littorie (Schools of the Lictor's Rods) of Alexandria were inaugurated in the presence of the Italian King. On October 11, a boarding school for boys was annexed to these schools.<sup>78</sup> In 1933, Italy could boast of sixty-two

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<sup>75</sup>Times, 22 Feb 1933.

<sup>76</sup>Current History, XXVIII, p. 1045.

<sup>77</sup>Il Giornale d'Oriente, 22 Apr 1931, in OM, XI, p. 242.

<sup>78</sup>Sammarco, op.cit., p. 164, and Corriere della Sera, 12 Oct 1933, in OM, XIII, p. 537.



schools, five more than two years earlier. Construction of schools continued, and on 21 April 1934, the cornerstone was laid for the Scuola XXVIII Ottobre (School of 28 October) at Shubra near Cairo.<sup>79</sup> Table 5 shows how the Italian school reform progressed.

The new schools were markedly more modern than their predecessors and helped build up the image that Fascist Italy tried to create of itself. Aside from this, the Italian Government offered the children free vacations in Italy to acquaint them better with Fascism and the fatherland. In Egypt, excursions were organized from Cairo and Alexandria to Suez, when Italian warships passed through the Canal.<sup>80</sup> The improvement in the schools can also be seen in the rise of the Italians' literacy rate, as was shown in Table 3. But the Italian organization for the spreading of Italian books, Agil, was not very successful in reaching its new reading public. In 1935 it sold only 8,000 volumes in Alexandria.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>79</sup>Il Giornale d'Oriente, 22 Apr 1934, in OM, XIV, p. 253; Sammarco, op.cit., p. 164. On Italian schooling in Egypt, see also Nava, op.cit., pp. 183-184; al-Ahram, 9 July 1933, in OM, XIII, p. 481.

<sup>80</sup>Sammarco, op.cit., pp. 47, 163; Monroe, op.cit., p. 197.

<sup>81</sup>Sammarco, op.cit., pp. 156-157. Plenty of old Italian literature was available in Egypt, but modern books were more readily available in English, French, and even German. Italian was spoken by a large number of Egyptians also, but these often belonged to lower strata with less pronounced literary tastes. See below, p. 176, and Table 8, p. 177 on languages spoken in Egypt.

TABLE 5  
THE ITALIAN SCHOOLS IN EGYPT

School Years		1921-22	1924-25	1927-28
Italian Schools	Total	55	50	54
	For Boys	15	13	18
	For Girls	13	14	16
	Coed	27	23	20
Government Schools	Total	17	14	13
	For Boys	3	2	3
	For Girls	2	3	2
	Coed	12	9	8
Religious Schools	Total	27	21	34
	For Boys	9	3	11
	For Girls	10	11	14
	Coed	8	7	9
Laic Schools	Total	10	11	4
	For Boys	3	7	3
	For Girls	1		
	Coed	6	4	1
Independent Schools	Total	1	4	3
	For Boys		1	1
	Coed	1	3	2
Egyptians attending Italian religious Schools	Total	2,895		
	Boys	1,325		
	Girls	1,570		
Total pupils in Italian religious schools		3,935	3,042	4,749
Egyptians attending Italian government Schools	Total	395		
	Boys	276		
	Girls	119		
Total pupils in Italian government schools		3,617	3,652	4,048
Teachers at Italian Schools with qualifications	Total	489	520	558
	Men	241	231	247
	Women	248	289	311
			440	480

TABLE 5 continued

School Years		1930-31	1933-34*	1936-37
Italian Schools	Total	57	62	64
	For Boys	17	16	21
	For Girls	18	16	22
	Coed	22	30	21
Government Schools	Total	14		
	For Boys	3		
	For Girls	2		
	Coed	9		
Religious Schools	Total	38		
	For Boys	11		
	For Girls	16		
	Coed	11		
Laic Schools	Total	3		
	For Boys	2		
	Coed	1		
Independent Schools	Total	2		
	For Boys	1		
	Coed	1		
Egyptians attending Italian religious Schools	Total	2,771		
	Boys	802		
	Girls	1,969		
Total pupils in Italian religious schools		5,370		
Egyptians attending Italian government Schools	Total	892		
	Boys	583		
	Girls	309		
Total pupils in Italian government schools		4,464		
Teachers at Italian Schools	Total	639	701	702
	Men	294	335	335
	Women	345	366	367
	with qualifications	560	639	647

\* A part of the figures for 1933-34 and 1936-37 was not available.

Sources: Egypt, Annuaire Statistique 1923-1924, p. 83 ff.; 1925-1926, pp. 90-95; 1929-1930, p. 136 ff., 1940-1941, p. 226 ff; Statistique Scolaire 1930-1931, pp. 220-221.

By 1936, the ideal of having all Italians attend only Italian schools was not yet achieved, but considerable progress had been made. This was due to the fact that the Italian schools kept a large number of places free for Egyptians.<sup>82</sup> To attract them, Arabic was made compulsory in the Italian schools, beginning in elementary school.<sup>83</sup> Tables 6 and 7 show that although the number of Italian pupils in Italian schools steadily increased from 56.7% of all Italian pupils in 1921, to 70.7% in 1936, their proportion to their Egyptian classmates increased only from 31.6% to 37.2%. It should also be kept in mind that the number of Egyptian pupils also increased over this period.

Italian schools in Egypt were outnumbered by French schools which mainly taught Egyptians. English and American schools were less in number than the Italian schools, and they also instructed more Egyptians than English or American pupils. This is due to the fact that none of these nations had numerous representatives in Egypt. A better comparison can be made with the Greek schools. The Greek community outnumbered the Italian one and had about the same number of schools. But the pupils were almost exclusively Greeks, because the schools were restricted to the service of the Greek community. Greece was not a great power, and its schools and language did not attract the Egyptians.

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<sup>82</sup> Margret Boveri, Mediterranean Cross-Currents, (London; Oxford University Press, 1938), p. 198.

<sup>83</sup> Sammarco, op.cit., p. 163.

TABLE 6  
PUPILS IN ITALIAN SCHOOLS IN EGYPT

School Years	1921-22	1924-25	1927-28	1930-31	1933-34	1936-37	
Pupils in Italian schools	Total	9,137	8,900	9,809	10,688	12,121	12,609
	Boys	4,440	4,052	4,734	5,139	5,573	6,069
	Girls	4,697	4,848	5,075	5,549	6,548	6,540
Italian pupils in Egypt	Total	8,343	9,148	8,032	8,141	8,400	8,478
	Boys	4,282	4,603	4,118	4,392	4,445	4,375
	Girls	4,061	4,545	3,914	3,749	3,955	4,103
Italian pupils in Italian schools	Total	4,706	4,482	4,570	4,849	5,765	6,061
	Boys	2,462	2,202	2,477	2,555	3,024	3,234
	Girls	2,244	2,280	2,093	2,294	2,741	2,827
Italian pupils in French schools	Total	2,994	3,236	2,949	2,185	1,664	1,239
	Boys	1,475	1,862	1,586	1,220	922	666
	Girls	1,519	1,374	1,363	965	742	573
Egyptians in Italian schools	Total	2,895	2,896	3,728	4,305	4,521	4,688
	Boys	1,325	1,312	1,625	1,983	1,926	2,265
	Girls	1,570	1,584	2,103	2,322	2,595	2,423
Muslims in Italian schools	Total	1,372	1,354	1,875	2,048	1,564	1,787
	Boys	727	702	856	1,021	818	799
	Girls	645	652	1,019	1,027	746	988
Copts in Italian schools	Total	1,302	1,896	1,769	1,773	3,050	2,743
	Boys	441	615	696	734	1,228	1,388
	Girls	861	1,281	1,073	1,039	1,822	1,355
Non-paying pupils in Italian schools	Total		4,319	4,683	4,748	5,979	7,191
	Boys		2,336	2,441	2,343	2,775	3,864
	Girls		1,983	2,242	2,405	3,204	3,327

Sources: See Table 7 for references

TABLE 7  
PERCENTAGES OF ITALIAN PUPILS AND SCHOOLS

School Year	1921-22	1924-25	1927-28	1930-31	1933-34	1936-37
Pupils						
in						
Italian schools	51.5	50.3	46.4	45.3	49.3	38.1
Italians						
Egyptians	31.6	32.5	38.0	40.2	37.2	37.2
Others	16.9	17.2	15.6	14.5	13.5	14.7
Italian pupils						
in Egypt	56.7	48.5	55.1	59.4	68.7	70.7
in:						
Italian schools	36.1	35.4	36.7	26.8	19.8	14.6
French schools						
Other schools	7.2	16.1	8.2	13.8	11.5	14.7

Sources: Egypt, Annuaire Statistique 1923-1924, pp. 80-83.  
Annuaire Statistique 1927-1928, pp. 108-113.  
Annuaire Statistique 1940-1941, pp. 226-227, 238-239.  
Statistique Scolaire 1930-1931, pp. 220-224, 264-265.

The percentages given here are based on the figures shown in Table 6.

The Italian schools were of excellent quality. According to official statistics, they had a high number of qualified teachers, higher than the schools of other nationalities. In spite of this, some Italian politicians were not fully satisfied. For example, during a session of the Chamber on 22 May 1933, Martire, a deputy, exalted the spirit of italianità of the religious missions abroad, and cited Egypt as the best example abroad of Italians sending their children to Italian schools. Nevertheless, he lamented that in some of these schools, the teachers were at times only good nationalists, who were unqualified as teachers.<sup>84</sup> The preponderance of Italian religious schools required cooperation between State and Church. These schools - especially the Jesuit ones and the Don Bosco Institutes - were quite efficient and sufficiently imbued with italianità. The 1929 Concordat with the Vatican enabled closer cooperation than before.<sup>85</sup>

The use of Italian was quite widespread in Egypt before Fascism. In 1917, 74,127 persons above the age of five

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<sup>84</sup> Il Messaggero, 23 May 1933, in OM, XIII, p. 292.

<sup>85</sup> Murray Harris, Egypt Under the Egyptians, (London: Chapman & Hall Ltd., 1925), p. 15; G. T. Garratt, Gibraltar and the Mediterranean, (London: Jonathan Cape, 1939), pp. 238-239. Catholicism had already considerable influence through the French schools, but now Italian Catholicism became stronger. Of interest is that the editor, the assistant editor and the head of publishing of al-Ahram were all educated in Jesuit schools in Syria; see Boveri, op.cit., pp. 199-200.

spoke Italian, putting the language in third place after French and English. Of those who spoke English, only 1780 also spoke Italian, while 21,817 knew both French and Italian. Alexandria contained the greatest amount of persons who spoke Italian - 32,091; here English ranked third. In the Canal Area, Italian was the predominant foreign language with 6,590 speakers.<sup>86</sup> According to one author, English and French were the languages of educated Egyptians below and above the age of 45 respectively, while "the common people are most likely to speak Italian."<sup>87</sup> Even in cities in Lower Egypt many Egyptians and foreigners spoke Italian.<sup>88</sup> Table 8 shows the distribution of the three major foreign languages in Egypt. The fact that so many spoke Italian and French in Egypt, was for some Englishmen a good reason - among others - to let Italy replace Britain in Egypt.<sup>89</sup> In 1932, one Englishman saw the Italians as the most influential community in Egypt. According to him a newcomer would

Find Italy immediately apparent to all his senses. He will see large buildings constructed and owned by Italians, colleges, hospitals, and shops; he will hear Italian spoken in the streets.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>86</sup>Census 1917, vol II, p. 332. 117,317 people knew English, 113,687 French. In Alexandria, only 37,507 spoke French and 19,899 English.

<sup>87</sup>Boveri, op.cit., p. 285. <sup>88</sup>Nava, op.cit., p. 144.

<sup>89</sup>Josiah C. Wedgewood, "The Future of Egypt" in Observer, 23 Jan 1927, in OM, VII, p. 34, and GB & E, Jan 27, 1927, p. 74. See also above, chapter II, pp. 27-28.

<sup>90</sup>Geoffrey Popham, "Under the Lictor's Emblem" in GB & E, XLI, Dec 29, 1932, p. 1052.



TABLE 8  
FOREIGN LANGUAGES SPOKEN IN EGYPT IN THE YEAR 1917

Nationality	Languages spoken:	Italian	English	French
Ethnic Italians	Men	92.1%	17.4%	57.5%
	Women	92.5%	7.5%	46.6%
Other Italian subjects	Men	68.6%	32.6%	80.2%
	Women	73.5%	15.2%	72.5%
Egyptian Non-Muslims	Men	8.1%	85.7%	30.9%
	Women	14.0%	57.3%	52.1%
Egyptian Muslims	Men	6.7%	88.6%	24.2%
	Women	6.3%	58.0%	49.9%
Other Egyptian subjects	Men	24.8%	43.5%	76.5%
	Women	47.6%	21.2%	83.0%

Persons who only spoke Italian, excluding Arabic:

Nationality	Men	Women
Ethnic Italians	4,435	7,035
Other Italian subjects	288	537
Egyptian Muslims	635	96
Egyptian Non-Muslims	233	319
Other Egyptian subjects	1,233	1,206

Languages spoken by Egyptians in figures:

		Italian Only	French Only	English Only	Italian & French	Italian & English	All Three
Muslims	Men	635	4,807	39,157	529	273	2,211
	Women	96	2,128	2,698	130	14	112
Non-Muslims	Men	233	3,683	21,309	649	141	1,508
	Women	319	2,902	3,973	642	46	259
Others	Men	1,233	5,549	2,143	2,323	153	2,016
	Women	1,206	4,987	567	2,126	60	691

Source: Egypt, Census of 1917, vol II, pp. 332-335.

The local Italian press also received the impact of Fascism. Already from the start, newspapers were provided for the Italians abroad - Il Legionario for adults and Il Tamburino for children<sup>91</sup> - but the local Italian press was usually preferred. Yet everything had to become Fascist, and on March 31, 1930, the Italian papers of Egypt succumbed. Il Messaggero Egiziano of Alexandria and L'Imparziale of Cairo merged and appeared as the Giornale d'Oriente, to "continue the noble Italian journalistic tradition in Egypt in the spirit of the new era."<sup>92</sup>

During the Fascist period the community continued to grow, as can be seen in Table 1. By 1927, it increased by 31% to 52,462. 18,575 lived in Cairo, 24,280 in Alexandria and about 5000 in the Canal Zone, with the rest scattered all over Egypt. Ten years later, the total of Italian citizens dropped to 47,706, but pure Italians increased up to 39,535.<sup>93</sup> They formed nearly one third of the Italians in the Mediterranean outside Italy.<sup>94</sup> This increase of 2000 must be attributed to births alone, because Fascism stopped emigration except to Libya and probably caused a number of Italians abroad to re-

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<sup>91</sup> Current History, XXIX, p. 156, and Enciclopedia Italiana, vol XIX, article "Italia", p. 1032.

<sup>92</sup> OM, X, p. 181; see also Sammarco, op.cit., p. 152.

<sup>93</sup> Egypt, Annuaire Statistique 1940-1941, (Cairo: Government Press, 1942), pp. 20-21. See also al-Siyasa, 5 Dec 1928, in OM, VIII, p. 590; Hartmann, op.cit., pp. 274-275; Nava, op.cit., p. 179; Sammarco, op.cit., pp. 41-43.

<sup>94</sup> Monroe, op.cit., p. 196. About 100,000 lived in Tunisia, the biggest colony, while the rest were in various countries.

turn to their mothercountry. Because there were many Italian Jews in Egypt, it is not surprising that since 1926 the Rabbi of the Jewish community of Alexandria was David Prato, an Italian.<sup>95</sup>

In 1927, most Italians were still engaged in the mechanical industries, finance, insurance, commerce (about 6000 each), transport (3000), free professions and domestic help (2000 each). Over half- 28,560 - of which 20,598 were men, were employed; there were 1940 unemployed men.<sup>96</sup> Among the working force were also the best rock-cutters in Egypt, who were regularly hired by Italian and foreign companies in Egypt and outside in preference to local labor, in spite of occasional Egyptian protests.<sup>97</sup> There were also architects,<sup>98</sup> engi-

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<sup>95</sup>He had taken office in 1926, and on 31 October 1933 he tendered his resignation to the majlis milli of the Alexandrian Jews. Allegedly this was for family reasons, but actually a new law was about to be promulgated, which would establish that all heads of religious communities must hold Egyptian citizenship. He preferred to remain Italian, but perhaps the rise of Nazism in Germany made him anticipate that anti-Semitism would spill over into Italy. In any case, ten days later he withdrew his resignation, declaring himself ready to accept Egyptian citizenship. See al-Ahram, 2 and 12 Nov 1933, in OM, XIII, p. 595 and XIV, p. 46.

<sup>96</sup>Sammarco, op.cit., p. 42. Of the 23,902 unemployed, 17,632 were women engaged at home, 4330 were children below the age of 5.

<sup>97</sup>Al-Ahram, 22 Aug 1933, in OM, XIII, p. 483.

<sup>98</sup>An Italian architect, by having demonstrated excellent understanding of the style of the 'Amr Mosque in Cairo, won for his team the contest for its reconstruction. See OM, VII, p. 358, article by A. Sammarco.

neers,<sup>99</sup> taxi-drivers, clockmakers and waiters.<sup>100</sup>

A good number of Italians were also in Egypt's administration,<sup>101</sup> but the Liquidation Law of 1923, passed under Zaghlul, drastically reduced the number of foreigners. The Italians disliked Zaghlul and protested that foreigners were needed in Egypt. Although one of the 48 members of the new Zaghlulist Senate elected in February 1924, was of Italian descent,<sup>102</sup> dismissals were continued.<sup>103</sup> But many Italians continued to occupy high positions, and the Egyptian press asked

Whether the high-placed favour which is known to be shown in this country today towards Italian objects and Italian persons is to continue in this manner to the detriment of Egypt's interests and Egypt's good name.<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>99</sup>In 1927, specialist Lello Pontecorvo was put in charge of the Aswan Dam Electricity Project; see al-Siyasa, 3 Aug 1927, in OM, VII, p. 382. On Dec 19, King Fu'ad opened a new barrage at Naj' Hamadi, which had been constructed under the direction of the Italians De Santory and Pizzagalli; see Il Giornale d'Oriente, Alexandria, 20 Dec 1930, in OM, XI, p. 35.

<sup>100</sup>Boveri, op.cit., p. 284. On Italians employed in Egypt, see also Hartmann, op.cit., p. 143; Issawi, op.cit., p. 166; and Harris, op.cit., p. 177.

<sup>101</sup>The Egyptian Economic Council (majlis iqtisadi) in 1922, e.g., consisted of 22 members, 5 permanent, the rest elected. Of the latter, 7 were Europeans, 3 of which were Italians. See OM, II, p. 390.

<sup>102</sup>Times, 26 Feb 1923, and Current History, XX, p. 154. For protests, see L'Imparziale, 3 Jan 1924, in OM, IV, pp. 126, 127.

<sup>103</sup>E.g. in the Alexandria police; see La Bourse Egyptienne, Cairo, 8 Dec 1923, in OM, IV, pp. 126-127.

<sup>104</sup>GB & E, XXVII, May 28, 1925, p. 556.

Italian officials remained in the Mixed Tribunals,<sup>105</sup> the Public Debt,<sup>106</sup> the Customs Regime,<sup>107</sup> the Alexandria Municipality, the Quarantine Council and the Police.<sup>108</sup> Many remained in non-governmental administration - in industrial societies, banks, stores, etc. Some foreign agencies often had an almost purely Italian staff.<sup>109</sup> Last but not least came the Italians surrounding the Italophil King.<sup>110</sup>

Although in 1925 the Italians were offended because Italy was "completely forgotten" in the selection of classical texts and instructors for the new Egyptian university,<sup>111</sup> they soon regained influence in higher education. Italians had chairs for Italian and Greek literature, and Arab history was taught by Italians in Arabic at the Egyptian University.<sup>112</sup>

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<sup>106</sup> See l'Imparziale, 28 Dec 1926, in OM, VI, p. 632.

<sup>107</sup> See GB & E, XXXIII, Jan 26, 1928, p. 104.

<sup>108</sup> See GB & E, XLI, Nov 3, 1932, p. 886.

<sup>109</sup> Sammarco, op.cit., pp. 89-90.

<sup>110</sup> See Il Giornale d'Oriente, 17 May 1936, in OM, XVI, p. 358.

<sup>111</sup> Il Mediterraneo, Fascist Organ of Egypt, quoted in Idea Coloniale, Rome, 18 July 1925, in OM, V, p. 434.

<sup>112</sup> Among the professors were men like G. Meloni, D. Santillana and C. A. Nallino; see al-Siyasa, 3 Aug 1927, in OM, VII, p. 382, and OM, VII, p. 628, n. 1; and Sammarco, op.cit., pp. 148, 166.

The Italians also held several chairs for law and produced some of the best legal experts. The most outstanding was Ettore Pezzi Bey, who was held in high esteem by Egyptians and foreigners. He was a lawyer of the King's da'ira khassa, of the waqf administration, and of other organizations. When negotiations took place at Lausanne in 1931 to make 'Abbas Hilmi II renounce his aspirations to the throne, Pezzi Bey was a member of the delegation.<sup>113</sup>

The Italians also contributed actively to other fields of learning. At a Congress of the Khedivial Geographic Society of Egypt, held in Cairo in April 1925, most of the outstanding European speakers were Italians.<sup>114</sup> In December 1929, the Alexandria fascio held a contest for a monograph on Italo-Egyptian relations with a prize of 10,000 Lire, which was won in February 1931 by Professor Angelo Sammarco with Scienza e cultura italiana in Egitto.<sup>115</sup> The Italian work in archaeology

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<sup>113</sup> Pezzi was born in Alexandria in 1871, studied in Egypt, then in Turin, where he received his law degree. In 1894 he began his lawyer's career in Egypt. He soon distinguished himself in the Mixed Tribunals. Although he acted in behalf of Messrs. Rothschild and the British Government against Egypt, the Egyptian Government, which he had defeated so successfully, recognized his ability and hired him. See OM, XI, p. 312, XII, p. 97, and GB & E, XLI, Jan 28, 1932, p. 82.

<sup>114</sup> See OM, V, p. 319.

<sup>115</sup> Libro e Moschetto, Milan, 7 Dec 1929, in OM, X, pp. 39-40, and Il Giornale d'Oriente, 5 Feb 1931, in OM, XI, p. 161. Three topics were given: 1. Economic, commercial and maritime relations, including possible developments. 2. Italian science and culture in Egypt. 3. The Capitulatory Regime in Egypt, origins, history and effects. The present writer would greatly enjoy to get hold of some of the manuscripts that were submitted. Sammarco, who has been extensively used for this paper, has done extensive work on the Italians in Egypt. His notes have not been posthumously published, although much could be gained from them.

was ably continued by Professor Evaristo Breccia, Director of the Graeco-Roman Museum and Secretary-General of the Royal Archaeological Society in Alexandria, who had been in Egypt since 1904.<sup>116</sup>

The growth of Fascism among the Italians of Egypt was quite visibly expressed. Glancing once more at the Italian Community of Egypt in 1921, we find it terrified by anti-European riots, in which many suffered. In May of that year they armed themselves and demanded more weapons and British or other foreign protection.<sup>117</sup> This was perhaps their last major spontaneous, non-Fascist action for the next two decades.

A new, large and very modern hospital for Italians, which had been built in two years from colony funds, was inaugurated on 25 July 1923. The ceremony, attended by the Italian Minister in Cairo, an Italian Government Representative, and prominent Italians of Egypt, became "a solemn demonstration of

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<sup>116</sup> See GB & E, XLI, Apr 14, 1932, p. 307. In October 1932, he led an Italian expedition to Siwa Oasis to search for the tomb of Alexander the Great; GB & E, XLI, Oct 27, 1932, p. 867. In April 1934, his group made findings near Fayyum. See Il Giornale d'Oriente, 1 May 1934, in OM, XIV, p. 253.

<sup>117</sup> Harris, op.cit., p. 20, and H. W. Jarvis, Pharaoh to Farouk, (London: John Murray, 1935), p. 270. Harris describes the scene as follows: "Colonel Ingram - the British Assistant Commandant of the Alexandria City Police - on arriving at the Governorate that morning [after Red Monday, Tuesday, 24 May 1921] found it besieged by a crowd of Italians. Revolvers were being brandished. The moment that he was seen, prolonged shouts arose of 'Long live the English!!' . . . [They] were clamoring for arms to protect themselves and their families."

italianità.<sup>118</sup> Such a spirit of solidarity and service to civilized progress was lauded by the Egyptians as well, and was held up to their nation as an example.<sup>119</sup> Already the Fascists had become a model to be imitated.

But the model was not always desirable, and when during the Greco-Italian Crisis, Italians and Greeks in Egypt in September 1924 prepared to fight out their countries' battles in street brawls, the Egyptian Government advised their consuls to restrain their nationals.<sup>120</sup> By fighting the Greeks, the Italians disobeyed a ruling by the Grand Council of Fascism.<sup>121</sup>

The feelings of Italians towards Egyptians - and vice versa - also had their highs and lows. When the Egyptian press was rather unfriendly over the Jaghbub issue, the Italians became quite upset. But when the same press feared Italian military action, the Italians enjoyed the Egyptians' horror and wished that the "medicine" had been stronger.<sup>122</sup> But the Italians continued to create good publicity. On 7 March 1927, a new revolving bridge on the Mahmudiyya Canal, designed and constructed by Italians, was inaugurated in the presence of Sabri Pasha, the Governor of Alexandria, of Count Della Croce, the Italian Consul-General, and of many Egyptian, Italian and foreign personalities.<sup>123</sup> In Octo-

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<sup>119</sup>Wadi al-Nil, 27 July 1923, in OM, III, p. 250.

<sup>120</sup>Current History, XIX, pp. 158-159.

<sup>121</sup>See above, p. 164, on the rule; see also p. 159, note 48, for a later ruling.

<sup>122</sup>Times, 18 Sept 1924, and GB & E, XXVI, Oct 2, 1924, p. 343.

<sup>123</sup>L'Imparziale, 7 Mar 1927, in OM, VII, p. 151.



ber the Italian Legation asked for a concession near Alexandria to build yet another hospital, this time Fascist-financed, in memory of Victor Emanuel's 25th anniversary of his accession to the throne.<sup>124</sup>

Sports received an unprecedented stress under Fascism. On 15 January 1928, a stadium was opened at Port Sa'id at the initiative of the sports society Virtus, with the support of the section of the local fascio and the Consular authorities.<sup>125</sup>

Events of more political significance were also exploited. When Prince Umberto of Savoy visited Alexandria on 31 January 1928, the colony received him with great enthusiasm. The Prince himself "spared no trouble to establish contact with the important communities which his fellow-countrymen have established in Egypt."<sup>126</sup>

Construction remained the best publicity though. On April 21, 1931, the cornerstone was laid for Italian schools in Alexandria once more with great ceremony. Present were Roberto Cantalupo, the Italian Minister to Egypt, Dr. Piero Parini, the Director-General of Italians Abroad, the Apostolic Vicar in Egypt, and the Governor of Alexandria.<sup>127</sup> Truly

<sup>124</sup>Al-Ahram, 11 Oct 1927, in OM, VII, p. 513.

<sup>125</sup>L'Imparziale, Cairo, 18 Jan 1928, in OM, VIII, pp. 80-81.

<sup>126</sup>OM, VIII, p. 79; GB & E, Feb 16, 1928, p. 197.

<sup>127</sup>Il Giornale d'Oriente, 22 Apr 1931, in OM, XI, p. 242.

an excellent combination of people, party, pope and "protector." In 1933 and 1934, two more schools were inaugurated with great publicity.<sup>128</sup>

Royalty was soon to arrive again and the Italian community made elaborate preparations to receive its King. When he arrived, he paid tribute to the recent establishments, like the King Umberto I Hospital in Cairo, the Princess Maria Asylum, and the Queen Elena School, as well as the Aswan Construction sites, where large numbers of his subjects were employed.<sup>129</sup>

Wishing to please the local authorities, the Committee of the Italian Colony of Alexandria met on February 15, 1929, and decided to spend £E 10,000 on the erection of a statue to Khedive Isma'il. On May 3, 1933, Count Pagliano, the Italian Minister, finally could inform King Fu'ad that the statue of his father would be erected.<sup>130</sup>

Fascist displays could also be observed on sadder occasions. A great impression was made after an official funeral, following an Italian plane crash. A body of several hundred Fascists put on a good show of order and discipline. They

<sup>128</sup> Stefani report in Corriere della Sera, 12 Oct 1933, in OM, XIII, p. 537, and Il Giornale d'Oriente, 22 Apr 1934, in OM, XIV, p. 253.

<sup>129</sup> GB & E, XLII, Feb 23, 1933, p. 144; OM, XIII, p. 148.

<sup>130</sup> Il Messaggero Egiziano, 16 Feb and al-Ahram, 20 Feb 1929, in OM, IX, pp. 140-141, and Il Giornale d'Oriente, 6 June 1933, in OM, XIII, p. 376.

lined up in military fashion, the bugle sounded, followed by a roll-call of the dead. After each name, all shouted "Presente!" to show that the dead person's spirit was still within the greater Fascist body.<sup>131</sup> Such shows could not fail to impress.

When the Ethiopian Crisis was in the air, shows of Italian Fascist solidarity with their mother-country were not infrequent. Thus was a scene in Port Sa'id on August 27, 1935:

Thousands of Fascists, brought by special trains from Cairo to Alexandria, came to greet the two sons of Signor Mussolini, Vittorio and Bruno, and the Duce's son-in-law, Count Ciano, Minister of Propaganda. They were on board the 24,000 ton Saturnia, on their way to Eritrea. The town was full, black shirts and uniforms being noticeable everywhere. On the front every building was packed from floor to top, the Fascists lining the quayside and all the length of the break-water past the de Lesseps statue. The ship anchored at 7.20. p.m. to deafening cheering and the most infectious enthusiasm. The port was crowded with launches and smaller craft, all lit up, and with the huge ship, the harbour made a most brilliant scene. There was very strict police surveillance throughout, and with the exception of one isolated incident, everything passed off remarkably well.<sup>132</sup>

The Egyptians resented the Italian display of nationalism.<sup>133</sup>

<sup>131</sup>GB & E, XLV, Aug 22, 1935, p. 228. Allegedly in the wreck were documents of an intended Italian attack on Egypt. See above, chapter IV, p. 108.

<sup>132</sup>GB & E, XLV, Sept 5, 1935, p. 292. See also Times, 28 Aug 1935.

<sup>133</sup>Times, 16 Sept 1935.

With the development of the Ethiopian Crisis, the British military in Egypt were no longer disposed to trust Italian employes at their airports at Abu Qir and elsewhere, and dismissed about 300 of them. The latter assembled to leave under shouts of "Viva il Duce!"<sup>134</sup> The presence of the British fleet in Alexandria caused Italians to ridicule it.<sup>135</sup> On October 2, six Italian troopships passed through the Canal, carrying troops and members of the royal family. This gave the Italian community occasion for another enthusiastic welcome.<sup>136</sup>

But not only in spirit did the community help the mother country. Gold was collected to help the Government finance its exploits in Ethiopia, and the community spontaneously gave nearly two quintals,<sup>137</sup> probably after having learned with relief that no financial sanctions were being applied by Egypt. More interesting yet was that the Italian Fascist Youth marched along with the Wafd in November 1935 to demand the re-enactment of the 1923 Constitution.<sup>138</sup>

At various times during the period under consideration, the Italian community of Egypt was considered by a variety of authors. Invariably they either repeated certain misconceptions or were too laudatory. One can fully agree with the Egyptian author, who found it remarkable

<sup>134</sup>Al-Ahram, 24 Sept 1935, in OM, XV, p. 534.

<sup>135</sup>GB & E, XLV, Oct 17, 1935, p. 485.

<sup>136</sup>Times, 3 Oct 1935.

<sup>137</sup>Sammarco, op.cit., p. 48, and Times, 16 Dec 1936. On the walls of Port Sa'id soon appeared this poster: "Mothers, do not give your wedding rings. They will be used to kill your sons and the sons of Abyssinian mothers." Times, 3 Jan 1936.

<sup>138</sup>Kirchner, op.cit., p. 730.

That they are integrally representative of all social classes of their mother country and that, due to this fact, they are in direct contact with all the strata of the autochthonous population.<sup>139</sup>

For an Englishman, they were "unique among foreigners in . . . that they are found in every class and profession from top to bottom, from the leading bankers and merchants down to the small shop-keepers, the artisans and the labourers."<sup>140</sup> To an Italian, "no other foreign colony is so varied and multi-form like ours, which, for that reason, found and still finds itself, in contact with all social levels of the native population."<sup>141</sup>

But none seemed to remember that in spite of their basic correctness, these statements forgot that Egypt was primarily agricultural and that the foreign communities had no peasant representatives and were only rarely landowners. One author nevertheless commits a gross error, when he remarks that Italian influence is "found on both ends of the social scale," by saying that

The Italian peasant immigrant is able to work and live alongside his fellow Egyptian peasant without surrendering his own standard of culture, which, of course, is immeasurably higher than that of the fellah.<sup>142</sup>

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139 "Les colonies étrangères" in Cattani, op.cit., p. 386.

140 Times, 22 Feb 1933. 141 Sammarco, op.cit., p. 42.

142 Geoffrey Popham, "Under the Lictor's Emblem", in GB & E, XLI, Dec 29, 1932, p. 1052.

Due to their wide social spectrum, the Italians were said to exercise on the Egyptians "an empirical educational action vaster and more effective than the other foreign colonies,"<sup>143</sup> and to have conferred upon "Egypt its European façade."<sup>144</sup> This occurred to such a degree that the Egyptian "in every street of his own land, in every big public work, in every urban quarter, sees every day reflected the contributions and the activity of [the Italians]."<sup>145</sup> One can agree with this to a great extent, although one Italian drew a somewhat exaggerated conclusion:

It can be affirmed without fear of exaggeration that the Italians have been those Europeans, who have best contributed to putting the Egyptians in contact with European life, and those who enjoy the most respectful sympathy with the Egyptian people.<sup>146</sup>

All this was due to the fact that the Italians "mingle with the Egyptians more than any other European race."<sup>147</sup> In the language of these times, an Englishman found that

Racially [the Italian race] is more penetrative than are the foreign elements of Nordic stock. The Italian, especially the poor Italian, adapts himself readily to Egyptian conditions and is not divided from the indigenous population by any very marked line of cleavage between their respective tastes, modes of living, or general outlook. The Egyptian climate is not uncongenial to him.<sup>148</sup>

<sup>143</sup> Sammarco, op.cit., p. 42.      <sup>144</sup> Times, 22 Feb 1933.

<sup>145</sup> Il Giornale d'Oriente, 3 Nov 1935, in OM, XV, p. 610.

<sup>146</sup> Sammarco, op.cit., p. 42.      <sup>147</sup> Times, 22 Feb 1933.

<sup>148</sup> Maj. Lawrence Athill, "British Interests and Italian Ambitions" in The Fortnightly, CXXXIX, p. 26.

For an Italian of Egypt, they shared "the most ancient traditions of the same Mediterranean civilization,"<sup>149</sup> and for an Egyptian, they were "the European people closest to the Orientals in temperament; they are inclined to mingle with them and to assimilate to them in habit and diet and to contract matrimonial relationships."<sup>150</sup> A German very simply stated that "they do not live apart from the Egyptian people,"<sup>151</sup> while an Englishman exaggerated that the Italians "live in the country and identify with local life and traditions."<sup>152</sup> To an Italian, all came from the "fact" that "the liberal and generous character, free of religious and racial prejudice, is inherent in our people."<sup>153</sup>

Difficult to accept is a comment by yet another Englishman:

An important factor in Italian influence in Egypt is the strong natural inclination of the Egyptian ruling and educated classes towards Latin culture . . . This race adaptability is seen in its perfection in Malta, where the Latin and Arab races have fused, producing a vigorous, clever and hard-working community and even forming an Italian-Arabic language. This fusion would not be possible in Egypt, but it is an example of how the Italian race attracts, and in a way absorbs, other races of the Levant Basin.<sup>154</sup>

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<sup>149</sup>Il Giornale d'Oriente, 3 Nov 1935, in OM, XV, p. 610.

<sup>150</sup>Al-Muqattam, 4 Aug 1927, in OM, VII, p. 381, and Nava, op.cit., p. 252.

<sup>151</sup>Boveri, op.cit., p. 84.      <sup>152</sup>Harris, op.cit., p. 177.

<sup>153</sup>Sammarco, op.cit., p. 42; see also p. xii, foreword by Pellegrino Ghigi, Italian Minister in Egypt.

<sup>154</sup>Popham, op.cit., pp. 1052-1053.

He confused the results of Italian and French "civilizing" efforts with an Egyptian inclination towards their culture. And he apparently misunderstood the history of Malta, where Arabic, once implanted, maintained itself as a dialect inspite of Latin cultural predominance, which ultimately led it to absorb a large Italian vocabulary. To speak of Maltese as Italian-Arabic would be the same as calling the English language French-German.

To conclude, the Italian community was "not on the whole a wealthy or individually influential one."<sup>155</sup> but it was dedicated, hard-working, and provided a basis for lasting relations with Italy.<sup>156</sup> Its influence was moral rather than political,<sup>157</sup> and for one Italian of Egypt, "the development of the Italian community can be considered as an example of the industriousness of our race."<sup>158</sup> On the whole, the Italians were proud of what they had done, "since they regard it as a proof that, there are certain functions in dealing with the races of Northern Africa and Western Asia, which they are more apt to fulfill than any other European race."<sup>159</sup> This attitude, reinforced by Fascism, "produced a collective arrogance which greatly increased the Italians' unpopularity."<sup>160</sup>

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<sup>155</sup>Maj. Lawrence Athill, "British Interests and Italian Ambitions" in The Fortnightly, CXXXIX, p. 26.

<sup>156</sup>Wian, op.cit., p. 99.

<sup>157</sup>Brunelli, op.cit., p. 31.

<sup>158</sup>Angelo Sammarco, et.al., Egitto Moderno, (Rome: Edizioni Roma, 1939), p. 85.

<sup>159</sup>Times, 22 Feb 1933.

<sup>160</sup>Issawi, op.cit., p. 166.



These last statements tell much of what the others omitted. To non-Mediterraneans, like the English, Italian dietary habits, like the use of oil, their relatively easy adaptation to the Egyptian climate, etc., might have implied assimilation, which is not true. Actually, the Italians, like other foreigners in Egypt, always considered themselves distinct and separate from the Egyptians, on whom they looked down. The only "Egyptians" with whom they perhaps identified, and vice versa, are those of Syrian and Lebanese origin, who came to settle in Lebanon over the past decade, and who, when in Egypt, always tried to identify with the foreign elements.<sup>161</sup>

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<sup>161</sup>The concluding paragraph is based on the experience of the writer. After 1958, while in Italy, he met a number of Italians who had left Egypt. He became acquainted with more Italians in Lebanon and Egypt. The writer has further known a great number of Greeks from Egypt, who confirm the opinion of the foreign communities. Lastly, the writer has personally known a great number of families of Syrian origin who have left Egypt, and is related to several of these families.

## C O N C L U S I O N

After World War I, Ottoman domination over the Eastern Arabs had ended, but Arab independence - to whatever it could have led - was not the result. Instead, the two greatest imperial powers of Europe, Great Britain and France, assumed control over them. Egypt, however, shared the fate of the North African Arabs, by having already experienced European rule for a longer period. Arab general discontent over this state of affairs was collected under a comprehensive Arab nationalism.

In Europe, the two only recently unified and imperialist nations, Italy and Germany, also were malcontent. The latter's position had suffered an immense setback, and the eventual return of the pendulum was to prove violent in unprecedented proportions. Italy had only lost in relation to the gain of her war-time allies, Britain and France, and she intended to obtain rectification.

Hence Arabs and Italians had common objects of complaint: Great Britain and France. Such a state of affairs could not but directly enter into the political events of the years to come. Because Britain and France had proved themselves, in Italy's opinion, as rather greedy and self-interested allies, she now considered them as potential enemies. Italy took stock of her strategic position. To the North lay enemies of the last War, who had suffered at her hands. To the West lay France, Spain, and Britain on Gibraltar. To the South lay France

again in Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia, then Britain on Suez in Egypt. To the East, Palestine was under Britain, Syria under France, and farther North was a new and independent Turkey. Directly East was the Balkan Peninsula, whose new nations were in general not potential friends of Italy's. But there was Italian Libya, largely desert, just south of Italy, now dangerously squeezed between the two rival powers, France and Britain. It was, however, a potential wedge to split the enemies, or even a bridgehead for expansion. And there were the Dodecanese Islands off Turkey's Coast, near British Cyprus, while Italy's island Pantelleria could be developed to offset Malta. If every British stronghold was a player on the imperial team, Italy had a guard for each one. If Britain was in Aden, Italy made friends in the Yemen. Her African colonies of Somaliland and Eritrea were strengthened to balance British ones, and the conquest of Ethiopia offset British gains taken from Germany. This was Italy's capital - potentially good strategic positions and dissatisfaction in the territories ruled by the rival powers. If well-invested, the capital could grow rapidly and yield rich interest.

Italy was weak after the War, where she had suffered relatively more than her allies, and she had to cope with a growing population. The accepted solution at that time was emigration to underpopulated areas, usually to colonies. Italy then set about on her scheme of the pacification of Libya - which required good terms and a fixed border with Egypt -

and mass colonization there, in order to ultimately have an improved strategic position as a true wedge and/or bridgehead.

The Fascist Revolution in Italy, under which the country was run and organized along unprecedented lines, caused world-wide interest. Here was a definitely undemocratic regime, yet one which seemed to represent the vast majority of the people better than any parliamentary democracy, and within a short time it had achievements to be proud of. By many Arabs, Fascism was viewed as a method to use in achieving independence and then strength. Mussolini became an object of admiration - later Hitler too - and this notion can still be observed in a surprisingly large number of Arabs today.

The numerous Italians abroad also pricked their ears when they heard of the new regime and began to take interest in it. This was not necessary, for Fascism took an extreme interest in them. Not one Italian was to be forgotten and every Italian abroad was to be made a Fascist. While the foreign communities were not developed into saboteurs for an eventual Italian invasion, they did provide experts on the Middle East, who were acquainted with the local situation and could engage in politically meaningful actions on a variety of planes. The communities as a whole, however served as show-cases, as living examples of Fascist Italy abroad for all to admire. Therefore the Italian Government was not in the least stingy in providing the best facilities for them, and in inviting the native people to also share in Italy's achievements, particularly through schooling.

The more anti-British Arab leaders readily made contact with responsible Italians and could always find an ear willing to listen. Their aspirations received outspoken support in the Italian means of communication and less outspoken support from the Government itself. But it must be kept in mind that the Arab leaders who considered themselves to be absolute pro-Italians were quite rare. Usually they were anti-British or anti-French, and pro-Arab or pro-Egyptian, and only saw Italy as an ally of the moment. Shifts in attitude towards Italy could be observed most pronouncedly in men like Shakib Arslan and 'Abd al-Hamid Sa'id. It was on the whole the case of a common opponent, Britain, bringing together different sorts of people, who tried to exploit each other in the best way they could for their own ends.

Italy could hardly hope for true allies in the Arab world as the colonizer of Libya. The Sanusiya would probably have appealed no more to a progressive Arab government than it did to the Italian Government, but that is another matter. Italy during her pacification campaign shed Arab blood and showed herself to be ruthless. Her actions were widely condemned in the Arab world and her image was irreparably stained. In spite of this, the Libyan pacification was the logical course under the circumstances, since the Fascist regime could not permit a rival center of allegiance in a region which was to become part of the Italian mainland. Italy eventually tried to offset her imperialist image by a new policy of kindness towards her Muslims, by building and restoring mosques

and by improving the lot of the Libyan Arabs. Although to the more traditional Muslim this made little difference, others did get convinced that Italy was neither anti-Arab nor anti-Muslim.

For Egypt, Italy's Libyan policy had different implications. She realized that Italy had great interest in dislodging Britain from the Suez Canal, and even if Italy disclaimed any intention to desire control over Egypt, the law of power politics implied that should Britain withdraw, some power with interest in the Canal - obviously Italy - would see herself forced to fill the vacuum and make sure the Canal did not fall into hostile hands. Such an attitude can be gleaned from the suspicion that was expressed about Italy's intentions in regard to the settlement of the Libyan border issue. Having seen Italy deal with opposition in Libya, British repressive methods against opposition in Egypt seemed more digestible to the Egyptians. Only a few calculated that Egypt could benefit by playing the two powers against each other.

It should be recalled though, that Egypt did not at all suit Italy's population policy, which meant mass resettlement. Heavily populated Egypt was the wrong place to go to, while Tunisia, with 100,000 rural Italians, who were different from the urban Italians in Egypt, could have fit such a scheme much better. A settlement scheme for Egypt would have implied measures resembling those applied by the Nazi occupants of Eastern Europe, which the Fascist regime could not have carried

out. Egypt was only of strategic interest. A truly independent Egypt could have satisfied Italy, although as long as Britain remained in Palestine, Italy would have had to try to control Egypt. Since Britain continued to remain in both, the logical thing for Italy to do was to support demands for independence in those areas.

The Italian community in Egypt was a two-edged sword. As a show-case it caused admiration, and the youth organizations of the Blue and Green Shirts followed the Fascist example, which they had observed at first hand in the cities of Egypt. But at the same time Fascism also brought with it a certain national arrogance beyond the natural arrogance of the Europeans of Egypt, which was not appreciated by the Egyptians, who were themselves growing ever more nationalistic. The Egyptian reaction perhaps was a combination of envy and resentment.

As a group, the Italians, together with the Greeks, formed an urban bourgeoisie and a bit of a proletariat in Egypt, now largely replaced by Egyptians. In spite of the Italian stamp still visible in Egypt and in spite of the community's vast contacts with the Egyptian population, the Italians remained aloof. As Europeans they considered themselves superior and when looking at their achievements, they would ask where Egypt would be without them. A combination of fear and contempt for the natives made them try to hold on to the Capitulations as long as possible. The Europeans

were the lords in the cities and acted as such, and the Italians were no different. The Italian Government tried to offset this, and managed to do so with some success by supporting Egypt's demands against France, whether it was the Public Debt or the Capitulations - contrary to the wishes of the Italians in Egypt.

An interesting development came with the Ethiopian Crisis. The fear of Italy in Egypt must have been due to memories of the Libyan campaigns, when suspicion of Italy had often been voiced. Relations with Egypt sunk to as low as never before, even to the point of Egypt's application of sanctions against Italy. During the Crisis, Egypt believed herself to be threatened by an Italian invasion against the British in Egypt, which would turn Egypt into a battlefield. In order to avoid a complete British takeover in Egypt, the cry for a Treaty appeared. It is not clear what initiated the dispatching of British forces to Egypt and who circulated the rumor of a planned Italian attack on Egypt. But it seems doubtful that Britain seriously expected an Italian attack, while it is clear that she obtained military concessions in the Treaty, because Egypt feared Italy.

Italy's possession of Ethiopia enabled Italy to encircle Egypt. When Italians spoke of Ethiopia and Libya as tongs, with which "Italy will catch the English in Egypt and the Sudan in a grip of iron and will crush them," Egyptian fears of Italy were rearoused. But by her conquest Italy



nevertheless became a world power that commanded respect, a power that had successfully opposed the League of Nations led by Britain. To some Arabs, therefore, if Italy had been a potential ally before, after the conquest she definitely became a power who had to be heeded.

The Italian investment had produced interest. Libya was firmly controlled, Ethiopia had been conquered and annexed. Spain became a potential ally, who soon gave Italy the use of some islands. Greece had already been shown her place when Italy took the island of Corfu (Kerkyra), and her anti-Zionism paid off in Palestine. To the North, Nazi Germany began to rise as another anti-British and anti-French force. Not yet full Mistress of her beloved Mediterranean, Italy had woven ties to every port and made her presence felt in all countries of that sea. Her colonies were living propaganda and her goods were found in all markets.

Italy's laboriously invested capital became lost due to an unfortunate alliance. Mussolini forgot that he intended to trust no one and linked himself with Hitler's fateful crusade against Communists and Jews. Ironically, Hitler's attack on Poland brought him a declaration of war from a nation which he did not intend to fight - Great Britain. But his apparently certain victory over Britain and France led Mussolini to enter the war against his principal foes. His country was badly prepared militarily and the gamble failed.

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