The Revolution that took place in Egypt in July 1952 was an important landmark in the evolution of Egypt's polity and its outlook on world affairs, particularly on Africa. The leadership that emerged under Nasser from the Revolution took interest in Africa from the very beginning and started establishing contacts with Africa. It made strenuous efforts to foster good relations between Egypt and the newly independent African states. Under the revolutionary leadership Egypt's interests in Africa got a broader perspective and within a short time sub-Saharan Africa assumed considerable significance in its foreign policy.

The aim of the present study is to inquire into the mainsprings of this Egyptian interest in sub-Saharan Africa and to analyse and evaluate its policies since the Revolution of July 1952. The study attempts to answer, among others, the following questions: What are Egypt's national interests in pursuing this policy and how far has it succeeded in promoting them? What are the instruments created to follow this policy? What are the principles guiding this policy? What is Egypt's attitude towards Pan-Africanism? Is there any conflict between Pan-Africanism and Pan-Arabism? What is Egypt's attitude towards other intra-Africa issues? How far has Israel been a factor in shaping Egypt's Africa policy? How far is this policy one of expediency or tactics and how far is it one of conviction? The study stops at 1970, the year of the death
of Nasser -- the hero of the July Revolution and the main architect of Egypt's Africa policy.

The reason for choosing the subject matter of this study was that though the revolutionary leadership made tremendous efforts to foster Egypt's relations with Africa, the subject has almost been neglected by scholars. The single, extent work on the subject takes into account only the general characteristics of Egypt's Africa policy and discusses two case studies -- the Sudan and the Congo. Subjects like Egypt's role in African freedom movements, Egypt and Pan-Africanism, Egypt's attitude towards intra-African issues, and Israel as a factor in Egypt's Africa policy are not dealt with in that study. The present study mainly concentrates on these latter subjects.

The reason for limiting Egypt's Africa policy only to sub-Saharan Africa in this study is that to Egypt Africa means only Africa south of the Sahara since in both official and non-official Egyptian parlance North Africa forms part of the Arab world. This usage is in conformity with that employed by the Egyptian Foreign Ministry and also in Egyptian trade and educational statistics. Nasser too used it very frequently and so do many Egyptians even now while referring to sub-Saharan African countries.

A word of explanation is also required about the official name of the country whose Africa policy is the subject

of this study. During the period under study the country has changed its name thrice -- from the Kingdom of Egypt it became in June 1953 the Republic of Egypt. It continued to have this name till February 1958 when after the merger of Syria the country became the United Arab Republic by which name it was referred to till the end of the period under study. However, throughout the present study the name Egypt has been used, except when citing quotations or referring to documents, because this is the name by which the country has been popularly known through the ages and throughout the world.

The study mainly follows the historical method and makes an analytical study of the available material. Besides examining the documentary evidence I have drawn certain conclusions from my informal discussions with Egyptian officials and non-officials dealing with Africa. This also helped me in the analysis and collection of new data and in substantiating my findings.

As with many other countries a researcher on Egypt, especially on its foreign policy, has to encounter two totally opposite phenomena: the Western sources either play down the role of Egypt or greatly minimize it; the local sources in Egypt either glorify it or exaggerate it. It, therefore, becomes very difficult to get objective information — much less analysis — of the events that have occurred. I had to depend mostly on these two kinds of sources.
However, this drawback in source material was partly mitigated by my field study in Egypt for four months supplemented by two months' work in Lebanon. The field trip proved extremely valuable to me for, apart from introducing me to numerous original sources and personalities familiar with the subject, it gave me the 'feel' of Nasser's foreign policy towards Africa. I was in a position to judge for myself the efforts made to establish Egypt's contact with Africa and to create an awareness of Africa among the Egyptians.

During my field study I had an opportunity to visit many offices connected with Egypt's involvement in Africa. Important among them are the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade, Higher Education, and Information. Among the other offices I visited were those of the African Association, Cairo Radio, Central Agency for Public Mobilization of Statistics, Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs, El Nasr Export & Import Company, Egyptian Federation of Labour, al-Azhar University, and Institute of African Studies.

Lack of opportunity to meet top policy-makers in Cairo and the reluctance of middle-level officials, particularly of the Foreign Ministry, to grant formal interviews compelled me to rely upon informal discussions with them and with Egyptian journalists, university teachers and other members of the intelligentsia.

The study is divided into eight chapters which for the most part follow an issue-wise chronological pattern except the chapters on Israel and Economic and Cultural Policies. After
giving a historical background in the first chapter, the foundations of Egypt's Africa policy are discussed in the second chapter. The third chapter deals with Egypt's role in African liberation movements -- its first contact with Africa. After the independence of African countries Egypt came in direct contact with them. Its attempt to project itself in Africa and its attitude towards African unity movements are discussed in the fourth chapter. Once in Africa Egypt had to take a stand not only on the question of African unity but also on many other intra-African issues. Its attitude on intra-African issues forms the subject-matter of the fifth chapter. Containment of Israel, one of the main planks of Egypt's Africa policy, is dealt with in the sixth chapter. To round off Egypt's Africa policy, its economic and cultural aspects are discussed in the seventh chapter. The eighth and final chapter gives a broad summary and my concluding observations.

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(ANKUSH B. SAWANT)