INTRODUCTION: A BRIEF HISTORICAL SURVEY OF EGYPT'S RELATIONS WITH GREAT BRITAIN PRIOR TO 1945

A. Background of Britain's occupation of Egypt in 1882

Egypt's unique position of being situated at the crossroads of Asia, Africa and Europe, (1) the stories of her magnificence and splendour as also the fact of most convenient trade-routes lying across her lands, have always fascinated the great empire-builders and conquerors of the world.

The Assyrians who were the first to annihilate the Pharaohs in 671 B.C., and their successors, the Persians, the Greeks, the Romans, the Byzantians, the Arabs and the Turks, (2) were all irresistibly drawn to the Valley of the Nile for the single reason of her vital strategy and resources. They all knew that Egypt was the "pivot of world-power-status". The European Powers of the modern era also recognized that the possession of Egypt was a

1. Egypt occupies the north-eastern corner of the African Continent with an extension across the Gulf of Suez into the Sinai region which is usually, but not always regarded as lying in Asia. The area of Egypt's approximately 386,200 sq. miles. Of this only 4 per cent is permanently settled, while the remainder is desert and marsh. Egypt lies between lat. 22° and 32°N; and the greatest distance from north to south is about 674 miles and from east to west 770 miles giving the country a roughly square shape, with the Mediterranean and the Red Sea forming respectively the northern and eastern boundaries. Egypt has political frontiers on the east with Israel (which she has recognized so far), on the south with the Republic of Sudan, and on the west with the United Kingdom of Libya. See The Middle East 1958 (Europe Publications, London, W.C.1), p.93.

great advantage in any contest for supremacy in the world.

It is thus rightly said that:

... those who took roots blossomed forth as world
powers while those who failed to imbed their roots
in the roots in the verdent delta of the Nile, were
destined to perish. (3)

Napoleon's Expedition

Napoleon who aspired to extend the hegemony of France far
and wide into the East and the West, also admitted that "Egypt
was the most important country" in his plan of action because of
her strategic importance. (4) He had fully realized that the
conquest of England very much depended on the conquest of Egypt
because she was then the keystone of British ascendancy in the
Indian Ocean. (5) His expedition to Egypt was therefore evidently
motivated by his desire to obtain mastery over the Mediterranean
in order "to cripple Britain communications with India", and thus
to strike a blow at the English trade and politics in the entire
East. (6) He succeeded in occupying Egypt because the Egyptians
who were already sick and tired of misrule, corruption and
cruelty of the Mamelukes, did not offer any resistance to him.
On the contrary they well-received him hoping that the revolu-
tionary banner of 'Liberty, Equality and Fraternity' raised in France

3. Emile Lingyll, Egypt's Role in World Affairs (Washington,
   pp. 10-11.
5. A.J. Marriot, The Eastern Question - A Study of European
would also fly over Egypt and hence restore their national dignity. (7)

Russia and Britain, however, became seriously alarmed by the ascendancy of France over Egypt as it was bound to alter the existing balance of power in her favour. (8) They warned the people of Egypt and the Porte that the real motive of the French General was to make Egypt a permanent military base in order to expand his country's political influence and power in the Orient. (9)

The Egyptians saw this danger within a short while of their association with the French rule of their country. They disliked Napoleon's economic reforms and administrative innovations. They were also seriously annoyed to discover that his 'love of Islam' was merely a pretention for political purposes. Hence, they readily agreed to make a common cause with the Powers and the Porte to get rid of the French occupation of Egypt. (10)

The defeat and departure of the French army from Egypt in 1799 was followed by a period of anarchy and administrative instability from which emerged Mohammed Ali - 'the founder of


8. The British Minister at Istambul had warned Lord Granville that "the possession of Egypt by any independent power would be a fatal circumstance to the interests of his country". Quoted in John Marlowe, Anglo-Egyptian Relations 1800-1953 (London, 1956), p. 15.


modern Egypt whose last descendant was Faruk. (11)

Mohammed Ali did many things to raise Egypt's social and political status. In 1841 he secured from the Sultan an autonomous status for Egypt, (12) and thus initiated the process of Egypt's transformation from the position of a canton of Islam to that of a national state. But he could never become popular because of his autocratic methods and personal whims. (13)

His successors were his true replica - self-centred and devoted to their own aggrandizement at the cost of the people and dignity of the nation. They all failed to associate themselves with the land and the people they ruled over. Instead, they always cherished and relied on the friendship and protection of European friends and Missions in Egypt, and thus, virtually made Egypt a pawn of power-politics.

Among his successors, Said and Ismail were mainly responsible for Egypt's political subjugation and suffering during the past several decades. In 1856 Said Pasha obliged his engineer-friend, Ferdinand de Lesseps of France, by granting him permission to construct the Suez Canal on terms which proved to be most harmful and burdensome for Egypt. (14)


14. For text of the Suez Canal Concession Act, see Select Studies Committee, The Suez Canal - facts and documents (Cairo, 1956).
Great Britain had strongly opposed the project and had refused to participate in its implementation, considering it unfeasible and politically inadvisable. Nevertheless, after the Canal was completed and was formally opened in 1869 for navigation, Britain became greatly interested in its political aspects. She realized that previously it was possible to neutralize Egypt by keeping all the Powers away, but now France was very much there and her influence could be countered only by adding equal influence of another power. Moreover, the new water-channel had largely reduced the time and expense of shipping to and from India - then Britain's most important colonial outpost as compared to the arduous and tire-some journey via the Cape of Good Hope. (15) Therefore, it now became a cardinal principle of British diplomacy to acquire maximum control over this most strategic waterway and the country which owns it. (16)

Ismail Pasha provided the British with opportunity and the excuse to intervene in Egypt's domestic matters and, eventually to forcibly occupy her in 1882. (17) He borrowed huge sums on

15. Ibid.
16. See, H.C. Deb, vol. 327, cols. 99-100. See also, E.W.P. Newman, Great Britain in Egypt (London, 1928), pp. 7-9. George Young, whose book Egypt has been wide-acclaimed as a fairly objective treatment of the Egyptian question, wrote that it was the Canal that "changed for the worse the relations between the British Empire and Egypt by shifting the main objective of British policy from Constantinople to Cairo. Thereafter, it would have been difficult for Egypt ... to prevent the British Empire from guarding so vital and vulnerable a line of communication by garrisoning at least the Isthmes." See, George Young, Egypt ( ), p.
exorbitant rate of interest - 12 to 15 per cent (18) from the European moneylenders, apparently for the realization of his misconception of modernization of Egypt. His spent-thrift habits and luxurious trips of European capitals, further indebted his country. Being unable to repay the debts from his meagre local resources, he unwisely sold out his country's shares of the Suez Canal, Maritime Company at a 'throw-away' price to Britain. (19)

Selling away his shares was a confession of his bankruptcy and admission of his inability to manage his country's economic affairs. The British and the French who had vast financial interest in stabilizing Egypt's economy, first imposed a 'Joint Control' to look after all financial matters of Egypt, and finally when Ismail resisted this interference, they persuaded the Sultan to depose him, and appoint his son Tewfik Pasha in his place. (20)

B. Orabi's Nationalist Campaign and Britain's occupation of Egypt

Thus, in 1882 Egypt was already under the authority of the 'Joint Control' of Britain and France. The new Khedive, being installed in office with the blessings of the two Powers could not, indeed he did not wish to, become independent of their influence. He was just a figure head, acting upon the advises

and according to the wishes of the British and the French Agents who did not wish to encourage the native's participation in their country's affairs. (21)

The people of Egypt were awfully sick and tired of the incompetence of their rulers and the growing alien interference in their internal matters. They resented the discriminatory policy of the administration and suppressive methods adopted by the 'Dual Control', and were preparing to agitate against injustice and malpractices prevalent in the entire administrative set up. Colonel Ahmed Orabi, a son of the soil, finally led them to protest against the 'hold' of the outsiders over the Palace and the public affairs, and put an end to the rule of self-interested aristocrats. His objectives were purely nationalist. He fought for his country's freedom and to preserve the rights of his fellow-countrymen. The British were alarmed by the rise of a nationalist upsurge and wished to nip it in the bud. They forcibly suppressed the popular uprising and purposely called it a 'rebellion' to justify their naked aggression and capture of political authority of the world's most important country.

From that moment Great Britain exercised her exclusive authority and influence over all matters connected with Egyptian affairs until the Revolution took place in July 1952. During the crucial period of the two Great Wars, Great Britain did not allow Egypt to slip out of her hold, despite continuing nationalist

agitation. Egypt was too important a link in her communications with Asia and Africa to let it go free or go against her own economic and strategic interests. By virtue of their strong political position, backed by their standing army and naval units, they imposed their preferences in making and unmaking of governments in Egypt to suit their requirements and war time.

The Establishment of Protectorate

At the outbreak of the Great War in September 1914, Egypt's political status underwent a sudden and significant change. His Majesty's Government's formal declaration of war on Germany on 4 August had placed Egypt in a peculiar politico-legal anamoly. Legally, Egypt owed allegiance to the suzerain - the Sultan of Turkey - who was intending to join the side of Britain's enemy. (22)

While practically she was already under the occupation of Britain. In the event of Turkey's siding with Germany, all his subjects, including the Egyptians, were to be considered at war with Britain and all of their hostile acts were to find a legal justification. To avoid the creation of such an awkward and difficult situation, Britain declared Egypt to be a 'Protectorate' free from the suzerainty of the Turkish Sultan. (23)

Britain's action was, nevertheless, unilateral and illegal in character and consequences, but she justified it on the

22. War between Great Britain and Turkey was declared on 6 November 1914. See Times, 7 November 1914.

ground of Egypt's peculiar position in their strategy of the war. Under the given circumstances, the least embarrassing course for them was to declare Egypt a 'protected' territory. The alternatives being annexation or full independence were neither desirable nor expedient from their viewpoint. Annexation not only would have prompted suspicion among the neutral nations as well as the allies, but also aroused serious resentment and disorder throughout Egypt, while full autonomy would have added to Britain's strain and anxiety to maintain her vital interests. A protectorate therefore, appeared to them to be the only practicable solution to meet the requirements of the situation. In the words of Elizabeth Monroe, the protectorate was to be "less humiliating to Egyptians, more platable to allies, and making no difference to the British military grip on the country." (24)

The Egyptians felt humiliated and were annoyed by the establishment of the protectorate and more so by the war-time regulations. The highhandedness of the British military rule destroyed whatever chance there had been of an understanding between the British and the Egyptian national movement.

During the war period, the Egyptians however remained neutral. When the Sultan of Turkey sent around a call for 'Jihad' the Egyptians did not respond to it. This was not solely because their towns and cities were turned into armed camps in which the people were compelled to be 'hewers of wood and drawers of water' but also because they hated the Turks. They were too sick and tired of the Turkish domination of their country to wish her a

military victory. In Turkey’s defeat they saw their national emancipation and freedom from the Khedive’s repressive tutelage. There was also the prospect, upon Turkey’s collapse, of the Muslim and Arab leadership devolving upon Egypt. Precisely, it was not solely the dislike of Turkey but certain calculations as well that determined the Egyptian’s and other Arab’s attitude towards the Ottoman Empire at the time when her dismemberment seemed imminent. The news of Turkey’s attack on the Suez Canal on 2 February 1915, and the atrocities of Jemal Pasha in Syria further compelled them to outrightly break with the Sultan of Turkey, hitherto their suzerain and their Caliph. By attacking on Egypt, Turkey sank into the estimation of nationalist groups. (25)

C. Egypt’s Nationalist Struggle and the Award of Partial Independence in 1922

After the war, the Egyptians naturally expected a relaxation in British control and to receive independence as a reward for their contribution and sacrifices, without which Sir Archibald Murray, Commander of the Allied Forces in the Suez Canal Area could not have repulsed the Germans. (26)

But to their utter dismay, the Egyptians were to find that President Wilson’s announcements that the Allies were fighting


26. There were 21,000 Egyptians working with the Canal Transport Service in 1917. Of them 220 were killed, 1,400 wounded and 4,000 died in hospital. In all, there were 135,000 Egyptians taking part in the Syrian campaign alone. Besides that, there were 30,000 men of Egyptian army serving under British command in the Sudan, 8,500 serving in the Labour Corps in Mesopotamia and 10,000 men in France. See Little, op.cit., p. 70.
the war 'to preserve the liberties of small nations' (27) and the Anglo-French Declaration of November 1918, (28) were to be applied to all nations but Egypt. The British showed no regard for Egyptian national sentiments. Soon after the end of the War, they further intensified their hold over business of the State. The number of British officials increased from 300 in 1898 to 1,700 which was obviously an unbearable burden on Egypt's limited resources. (29) In place of a relatively smaller body of well-disciplined troops of the pre-War period, there was now a large number of British and imperial troops who were quite insensitive to the political importance of their good or bad behaviour. It was thus clear from almost every act of Britain in Egypt that they had no intention of leaving Egypt to the Egyptians.

The presence of such a large number of officials and troops were bound to create obstacles for Egypt in the exercise of her sovereign rights. Their large-scale spending caused inflation in the economy of the country. Forced recruitment of peasants for the 'Egyptian Labour Corps' and the seizure of her cattle and crops to feed their troops, badly affected the agriculture which resulted in the acute shortage of food supplies. (30) Above all, the post-War unemployment and moral degeneration of the European soldiers inflamed the people's indignation against the imperialists.

27. British Parliamentary Papers Cmd. 5974, p. 49.
This was the political climate in which Egypt, insensed
with a feeling of injustice, decided that she should take her
place, not merely as an independent nation, but also as the
leading Muslim and Arab state. In Saad Zaghlul Pasha, a lawyer
of Fellahiro origin, Egyptian nationalism found a successful
and energetic champion. Soon after the armistice agreement was
signed between the two sides of the Great Powers, he sought
permission to go to London to present their demands before His
Majesty’s Government.

Great Britain’s refusal to permit Zaghlul and his associa-
tes, was followed by an outbreak of violence which seriously
threatened the life and property of the British subjects in Egypt.
It seemed that Egypt’s legitimate grievances could only be
ventilated by means of agitation. In this moment of crisis, when
the ruthlessness of administrative machinery had failed to prevent
disorder and lawlessness, the Acting High Commissioner, Sir
Cheetham committed a serious political mistake by arresting the
nationalist leaders and deporting them to Malta. Certainly, Sir
Cheetham had underrated Zaghlul’s mass popularity and completely
misunderstood the Egyptian’s mood and their desire for freedom,
if he had imagined that a display of firmness was all that was
necessary to restore order in the country.

Though the new High Commissioner of Egypt, Lord Allenby,
succeeded in suppressing the revolt by force, nevertheless seemed
to have fully realized that in such circumstances Britain could
not maintain her interests without giving Egypt some
concessions. (31) The growing influence of the middle class,

demands of the modernization programmes and increased need for civil servants, sway of new ideas of democracy and self-determination, had allied even the 'moderates' in the nationwide protest. All this revealed the gravity of the situation and the strength of the movement for liberation. Lord Allenby also seemed to have learnt and accepted that the main clamour in Egypt was for independence rather than internal reforms. His immediate reaction was, therefore, to release the acknowledged leaders of nationalism from deportation and to permit them to go to Paris, where the interests of Egypt were sacrificed at the alter of the Great Power politics. Zaghlul failed to receive recognition of Egypt's participation in the war, and thereby to secure its reward. Great Britain had already convinced the world dignitaries that Egypt's constitutional inhibitions were not yet sufficiently developed, and that they would grow up in the shadow of the protectorate.

The Egyptians were seriously disappointed and disgusted at the turn of events. They unanimously boycotted Lord Millner's Mission that arrived in Egypt towards the end of November 1920 to study Egyptian conditions and recommend on that basis a working arrangement under the British Protectorate. In his report to the Foreign Secretary of State, Lord Millner, who had been deeply impressed by the thoroughness of the nationalist determination, recommended to abandon the Protectorate and to redefine Britain's relations with Egypt on the basis of a bilateral treaty. (32) On 28 February 1922, His Majesty's Government in

UK admitted that a policy of forcible repression of nationalist forces in Egypt could not continue indefinitely, when it made a unilateral declaration of partial independence:

Whereas His Majesty's Government, in accordance with their declared intentions, desire forthwith to recognize Egypt as an independent sovereign state; and whereas the relations between His Majesty's Government and Egypt are of vital importance to the British Empire; the following principles are hereby declared:

1. The British Protectorate over Egypt is terminated and Egypt is declared to be an independent sovereign state.

2. As soon as the Government of His Highness shall pass an Act of Indemnity with application to all inhabitants of Egypt, Martial Law, as proclaimed on 2 November 1914, shall be withdrawn.

3. The following matters are absolutely reserved to the directions of His Majesty's Government until such time as it may be possible by free discussion and friendly accommodation on both sides to conclude agreements in regard thereto between His Majesty's Government of Egypt:

   a) The security of the communications of the British Empire in Egypt.
   
   b) The defence of Egypt against all foreign aggression or interference, direct or indirect.
   
   c) The protection of foreign interests in Egypt and the protection of minorities.
   
   d) The Sudan.

On the conclusion of such agreements the status quo in these matters shall remain in tact. (33)

This declaration of independence would have been generally welcomed in Egypt but for the reservations which constituted a serious limitation on her sovereignty. The protection of minorities was merely a pretext for interference in anything and

everything relating to internal affairs. Her right of diplomatic representation was also nullified by the necessity to consult the British High Commissioner that is to say, in fact, to submit to his direct control in the conduct of foreign affairs. The document also did not propose for Egypt's membership in the League of Nations. Lord Lloyd, who later as High Commissioner based his entire policy on the text of declaration, pointed out that it had given Egypt 'a qualified independence, an independence which was subject to certain definite reservations', and that these reservations 'were an absolutely vital part of that declaration. (34) The Egyptian nationalists refused to accept the limitations on their sovereign independence involved in the reserved points. Zaghlul Pasha expressed his disappointment but later persuaded himself and his followers to accept it as a useful forward step towards the attainment of complete independence. And, therefore, soon after assuming office of the Prime Minister Zaghlul raised the issue of the presence of the British troops being incompatible with Egyptian independence and the Sudan being an integral part of Egypt. He had hoped that the new British Prime Minister, Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, who had often sympathised with the Egyptian cause and had openly criticised Lloyd George's Government for its repressive policies in Egypt, (35) would be more considerate towards Egypt's aspirations. In September, he went to London to discuss his country's outstanding problems.

34. Lord Lloyd, Egypt Since Cronver (London, 1933).
with the new Labour Government. (36) But the reality turned out to be quite different. Mr. MacDonald did not agree with his demands regarding the Sudan. He plainly told the Egyptian Premier that no arrangement could be contemplated that would jeopardise the administration and development of the Sudan. (37)

It was mainly on the question of the Sudan that their negotiations broke down. On his returning home, anti-British activities broke out in all the major cities of the country. Even in the Sudan the agitation became widespread. Fuel was added to the fire by yet another folly committed by the British administration in the Sudan. They announced to divert more of the Nile water for irrigation of the British-owned cotton fields in Gazira, which was obviously damaging for the Egyptians. (38)

This unilateral action infuriated the Egyptians and was an immediate provocation which culminated in the murder of Sir Lee Stack on 19 November 1924. (39) He was simultaneously the

36. The Times, September 1924.

37. Even before Zaghlul had reached London, MacDonald had written to Lord Allenby that: "Until I have some indication that his (Zaghlul's) aspirations do not conflict too hopelessly with our irreducible requirements regarding the Sudan and the defence of the Canal in particular, I would be unwilling to ask him to undertake negotiations in London." See Foreign Office Despatch, Mr. MacDonald to Viscount Allenby, 3 April 1924 in Lloyd, op.cit., p. 85. Similarly, on 24 June 1924, Lord Paramour had emphatically stated before the House of Lords that the Government was not going to abandon the Sudan in any sense whatever. See House of Lords Debates, 5th Series, vol. 57, col. 986.

38. J.C. See also, Reader Bullard, op.cit., p. 185.

39. On 19 November, he was going from the war office to his house in Cairo when he received a volley of shots from seven men dressed as students who were lined up on the side wall. He died the following day. See Egyptian Gazette, 20 November 1924.
Commander-in-Chief of the Egyptian Army and the Governor-General of the Sudan.

The reaction of the British High Commissioner on the incident was unduly severe and vindictive. He demanded the Egyptian Government to apologise for the crime, inquire 'with the utmost energy' and punish the culprits 'without respect of persons'; pay an indemnity of £500,000 and suspend all political demonstrations; immediately withdraw all Egyptian forces from the Sudan (within 24 hours); notify to the competent Department that Great Britain reserves the right to 'increase the area for irrigation at Gazira from 300,000 feddams (acres) to an unlimited figure'. (40) (Italics mine)

The tone and nature of these demands and the accompanying warning that "failing immediate compliance with the demands, His Majesty's Government will at once take appropriate action to safeguard their interests in Egypt and the Sudan", (41) however, showed that Allenby merely intended to use the incident, as a means of discrediting Zaghlul and his Wafdist Government in the eyes of his people, and a pretext to establish Britain's position in the Sudan on permanent basis by forcing the Egyptian officers and troops out of that territory. (42)


41. Ibid.

This was a clear violation of Egypt's sovereignty and an uncalled-for interference in her domestic affairs. Zaghlul resigned in protest on 24 November 1924. (43) King Fuad, who was jealous of Wafd's popularity and held its prominent leaders, and thus became an absolute dictator and ruled with great assertion of personal authority. The British High Commissioner preferred to support him in his bid to suppress the Wafdist. (44)

He exercised his constitutional authority liberally in making and unmaking of ministers. This state of uncertainty and ministerial instability, demagogy and chaos continued until Fuad's death in April 1936.

The Wafd found its chance to reassert its influence on Egypt's politics vis-a-vis Britain's domination, only after the King died in April 1936. The growing 'menace' of Mussolini in the surrounding areas, Tripolitan and Abyssinia, also enhanced Wafd's bargaining position regarding modifications in the 'Four Reserved Points'.

D. Egypt's Struggle for Full Freedom and the conclusion of the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty of 1936 - Brief Analysis of its main provisions and their Implications

Nahas Pasha, who had again become Prime Minister in May 1936, (45) however, soon realized that in the event of a major war,

43. The Times, 25 November 1924.


45. In the General Elections held on 2 May 1936 the Wafdt swept the polls by securing 99 out of 132 seats in the Senate and 186 of 232 in the Chambers. It is to be noted here that on 12 December 1935 Fuad had restored the original 1923 Constitution as a result of which his prerogative to appoint

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rival powers would fight for the possession of Egypt mainly because of its most important strategic location and transit routes connecting Asia, Africa and Europe. She could not have, therefore, remained neutral or disinterested in this struggle. The defiance of the League of Nations by Italy had already shaken her confidence in international security, in general and her own in particular. Being situated so near to the victim of the Italian invasion, Abyssinia, Egypt would, in no time, be the next to fall. Fear of Italy therefore seemed to have 'temporarily damped the ardour of the Wafd and other Egyptian nationalists to rid themselves too quickly of the British'. (46)

In August 1936, Nahas paid a visit to London and opened negotiations with His Majesty's Government, (47) and finally signed a treaty with the British Government. (48) Under this treaty the Egyptian leaders agreed to collaborate in the Allied-War efforts against the Axis in recognition of Egypt's complete independence. The principal objective of the arrangement, valid for twenty years (Art. 16), was expected to establish a basis for

45. (contd. from back page)


47. His team consisted of representatives of all Egyptian political parties, a total of thirteen. This multitude of signatories was an unusual but necessary precaution. In this way all the parties shared the responsibility and it was difficult for any one of them to evade the agreement later. See Anthony Eden, Memoirs - Full Circle (London, 1959), p. 224.

more cordial and permanent relations between the two countries, by formally terminating the 'Protectorate' (Art. 1). The treaty also provided for the removal of British forces from Cairo and Alexandria to the Canal Zone, and limited their number to 10,000 troops and 400 pilots. (49) Britain also agreed to permit unrestricted immigration of the Egyptians into The Sudan and promised to help Egypt in securing membership of the League of Nations (Art. 3) as well as in the abolition of the capitulations (Art. 13). The approved draft of the agreement also contained a very significant provision - Article 16 which says that the high contracting parties, could 'any time after the expiration of a period of ten years', enter into negotiations for its revision.

Implications of the Treaty

The Treaty was an important landmark in the history of Anglo-Egyptian relations. The Egyptians generally welcomed it as a step forward towards complete independence. (50) Being primarily a treaty of mutual defence and alliance, it also appeared to solve, for the time being, the problem of Egypt's sovereignty and independence by terminating the 'occupation' which had long been abhorrent to the Egyptians.

Nahas Pasha was widely hailed as its chief architect. But, in fact, Britain's predominant position was not fundamentally changed. A closer examination of its provisions would show that Britain actually gave up nothing with the exception of certain responsibilities pertaining to Egypt's internal administration and

49. See Annex to Article 8 in the Appendix.
50. Mustafa Ağa, op.cit., p. 81.
protection of foreign and minority interests (Art. 12). She fully retained her position regarding 'imperial communications', 'the Sudan', and 'the defence of Egypt' as provided in the unilateral declaration of 1922. Besides, it was exclusively for the British Military Mission to advise the Egyptian Army in all military matters. Above all, the alliance was perpetual because it could never be broken or repudiated unilaterally. (51) Any demand for a revised treaty which did not contain provision for ultimate British military control was in itself a breach of the Treaty. The nationalist movement demanding full independence, therefore, could be considered not only an act hostile to British interests but also unconstitutional, because the King had bound himself, by ratifying the treaty, to regard British vital interests as also being vital interests of his own country. (52) The abolition of capitulations too could not be regarded as convincing evidence of Britain's sincerity or good intentions. By compelling other Powers to relinquish their 'capitulatory privileges', Britain only eliminated European opposition to her position and activities in Egypt. The provision that the British Ambassador in Cairo would always be given precedence over all the other members of the diplomatic corps, clearly manifested the desire of Britain to maintain its position in Egypt. Finally, the Sudan problem which had been the principal stumbling block in all previous negotiations was not satisfactorily settled. The Governor-General of the Sudan, essentially a British agent, still exercised the

'supreme military and civil command' as originally provided by the 1899 Convention. (53) Restrictions on the size of British forces also were not only unbinding to the Sudan, but not applicable to Egypt also 'in the event of war, menace of war or apprehended emergency' (Art. 7, para 2). Financially too, the treaty was a burden on Egypt's limited resources. She was required (Annex to Art. 8, paras 3 and 4) to 'make available the land and construct the accommodation, water supplies, amenities and convalescent camps', for the British Forces at her own expense. Furthermore, to meet the needs of the increased garrison in the Canal Zone, Egypt was to provide facilities for rapid entrainment of personnel, guns, vehicles and stores, for which she had to construct and maintain several roads, bridges and railways.

The Wafd Party's achievement in concluding this treaty and its later success in securing the abolition of Capitulations at the Montreaux Conference in 1937, and Egypt's admission to the League of Nations in the same year, (54) vastly increased its popularity with the masses. It was therefore naturally expected that the Wafd would remain in power for quite some time. But a series of unpleasant events in Egypt's national politics, rivalries and splits in the ranks of the ruling party, and clashes with the young King, seriously undermined its position and prospects.

The Wafd also entered into conflict with the young and "popular" King as soon as the latter came of age on 29 July 1937, and evinced a keen interest in the affairs of the State. Nahas


Pasha seemed seriously alarmed by the start of the King Faruk, and felt it necessary to renew his attempt to diminish the 'royal prerogative'. His efforts in this regard, however, only further annoyed the King and consequently widened the gulf between them. Following in the footsteps of his father, Faruk refused to grant the requisite 'royal assent' to any such measure by invoking his authority on the basis of the 1923 constitution which was then in existence. They became more antagonistic to each other when a 'Green Shirt', a member of the Misr al-Fatah, a small extremist body, generally believed to be patronised by the Palace, made an unsuccessful attempt on Nahas Pasha's life. Pro-Nahas demonstrations by students and the 'Blue Shirts' only delayed the King's action until 30th of December 1937, when he dismissed Nahas from the Prime Ministership. The ground of the dismissal was described by the King that he no longer enjoyed public support; that his cabinet's method of work undermined the spirit of the constitution, and that he 'failed to protect public liberties'. (55)

E. Britain sought Egypt's Collaboration in the War

At the outbreak of the war in September 1939, and specially at the advent of a pro-Axis Government in France which rendered the African theatre of war vulnerable, Egypt once again became a major base for the Allied troops. Britain became more concerned about Egypt's internal affairs after their setback in Libya and

the Italian air-raids on her borders in June 1940. (56) With successful German blitzkrings in Europe and the decision of the Albanians to seal their destiny with Italy by offering the Crown of Albania to Victor Emmanuel III, King of Italy and Emperor of Ethiopia, (57) it became absolutely imperative for Britain to secure Egypt's "administrative cooperation" in resisting the Axis advances in the Mediterranean. Their anxiety was fully appreciated by the Government of Ali Mahir who promptly assured to carry out the obligations of the 1936 Treaty. He repeated the assurance of his country's collaboration with the Allies when he said:

Egypt and its people are loyal and sincere friends of Britain, and will do everything in our power to help her. We shall oppose with all our might any attempt at domination by brute. ... We struggled for years to obtain our independence, and to preserve this independence we are ready to make any sacrifice. (58)

Under the terms of Article 7, para 2, of the Treaty, a state of seige was proclaimed in Egypt, the Prime Minister became the Military Governor of Egypt, solely responsible for the maintenance of security, her communications, ports and aerodromes were placed at the disposal of Great Britain; severed her diplomatic relations with Germany, arrested its nationals and seized their property. (59) Yet her international position remained

58. The Times, 8 September 1939.
anomalous. Despite the fact that Egypt had most sincerely fulfilled the obligations of 1936 Alliance, she had not yet officially declared war on Germany. 'The only practical difference, however, between the existing state of affairs and the state of war was that the Egyptian armed forces were not committed to active hostilities against Germany.' (60)

Ali Mahir seems to have based his attitude on the situation of the war in Europe as well as in the East which had then brightened the prospects of Axis victory. (61) His hesitation in committing his people to Britain, therefore, was not unjustifiable. His anxiety to renew contacts with the Axis Powers (62) too does not seem to have been unwise or impolitic in such circumstances. The intelligentsia of the country, impressed as it had been by the Axis propaganda abroad, their respect for the principles of Islam and the promise of independence from colonial yoke, (63) favoured a non-committal attitude. It was argued that Egypt's declaration of war "would not provide any important accretion of strength to the Allies". On the other hand, if the Allies emerge victorious in this conflagration, Egypt would, no doubt, have many

60. Marlowe, op. cit., p. 313.
advantages and 'share in the spoils of the victory, but in case they collapse, Egypt will be 'exposed to the vengeance of the Axis'. (64) Such a risk could only be avoided by not making a formal declaration of war against the Axis Powers, who would then admit that Egypt being under actual British control with large contingents of European armies, could not have done otherwise. (65)

But the very fact that Britain still possessed the power to maintain its rights and to assert its views in Egypt's internal affairs, however, did not permit any Government to go against its wishes. At this stage of the war Britain needed Egypt's full and active cooperation to meet the growing strength of the enemy in North Africa. The prospects of Germany's 'summer offensive' against Russia, required speedy and uninterrupted flow of men and material to the Egyptian military base. Any reluctance to openly intervene in Egypt's domestic policies was now overcome by what was regarded by them as 'overwhelming necessity of war'. (66)

On 3 February the British Ambassador is understood to have requested of the King that, in accordance with the constitutional practice, a government should be formed which commanded a majority in the country and would therefore be able to control the internal situation: only a government headed by Nahas Pasha, as leader of the Ward, in the opinion of His Excellency, could be sure to commanding such a majority.

64. Marlowe, op.cit., pp. 313-14. See also Egyptian Gazette, 16 September 1940.

65. Ali Mahir who was impressed by the recent Axis victories in the Far East and the western Desert and propaganda sought to avoid any conflict with them. He maintained his country's role of non-belligerency even after the actual invasion of Egyptian territory by the Italians who, by October 1939 had advanced 70 miles inside Egyptian territory. See Henry Maitland Wilson, Eight Years Overseas 1939-47 (London, 1950), p. 45. See also The Daily Telegraph, 17 June 1940.

King Faruk who had already made up his mind to bring in a government less committed to support the British efforts, did not like the British Ambassador suggesting to appoint a person he did not like, to the position of the Prime Minister. He, however, replied that 'he would consult the leaders of all parties, including Nahas, with a view to the formation of a coalition government'. British sources believed that the King intended to recall Ali Mahir, which they could not have tolerated at a time when 'the strategic outlook was far from good'. Hence they decided to take no chances, and the very next day the British Ambassador clearly warned that

unless I hear by 6 p.m. that Nahas Pasha has been asked to form a Cabinet, His Majesty King Faruk must expect the consequences. (67)

On the King's rejection of the ultimatum, HE Sir Miles Lampson, called on him at 9 p.m. and 'insisted upon the absolute necessity of his sending for Nahas, as representing the majority of the country'. In this epoch-making meeting with the Egyptian King, he was accompanied by the GOC British troops in Egypt and an armoured escort. He was bent upon securing the maximum collaboration of the Egyptian Government in carrying out the terms of the 1936 Treaty of Alliance, and he thought Nahas would not disappoint. Surrounded thus by British guns, tanks and troops, Faruk conceded the British demand. (68)

67. Ibid.

68. A Cairo newspaper, close to the King, gave the following account of what happened on that day:

"... at 9 p.m. on 4 February 1942, the Britishers perpetrated a treacherous violation of Egyptian sovereignty. Tanks with guns trained, surrounded Asdin Palace and thousands of troops, fully armed, patrolled the neighbour-

(contd. on next page)
The British Ambassador's insistence upon Nahas Pasha's appointment seemed to have been based first on his understanding that Nahas was more amenable to the British cause while in office, and more critical even harmful, when outside the office. (69) Secondly, after the expulsion of the Italians from Egypt in December 1941, Nahas Pasha himself was convinced of the wisdom of siding with the Allies. He had calculated that in the event of an Axis victory the Wafd would have no political future. Its basic stand of democratic government and rights of the common man quite incompatible with the political philosophy of the Axis Powers. Above all, Nahas being himself the principal architect of the 1936 Treaty could be trusted to fulfill its obligations in the most sincere and suitable manner. (70) Finally, the Wafd in a situation in which the King had been 'completely written off' owing to his pro-Axis sympathies', the constitutional Liberals

68. (contd. from back page)

hood. One tank forced the Palace-gate and was followed by the British Ambassador who had the GOC, British troops, with him in his car.

"The bodyguard was overpowered and eight fully armed officers accompanied the Ambassador to the King's study and remained a guard. The palace telephone links were cut and broadcasting House was surrounded by British troops. The King ordered that there should be no resistance to avoid useless bloodshed. When the Ambassador demanded the appointment of Nahas Pasha (leader of the Wafd) as Prime Minister, His Majesty turned to his suite and remarked that while he could have rejected the ultimatum and turned the country into a battlefield, he wished to spare the lives of his subjects and to let history judge his actions."

See John Kimche, Seven Fallen Pillars, pp. 32-33.


70. See Chicago Daily News, 6 February 1942.
were weak and indecisive about the stand in the war, the
Saadists did not command much influence over the nation's political forces and were too weak to withstand the intrigues of the Palace clique, had become almost indispensable for the British Government. It alone was straightforward in its anti-Palace and anti-Axis attitude.

Great Britain's intervention to place Nahas Pasha at the helm of affairs to ensure for themselves security and cooperation during the military crisis, bitterly annoyed the Palace and all the anti-Wafd elements. They openly accused him of having compromised Egypt's integrity and the nation's interest. Ahmed Mahir publicly charged the Wafd leader of having accepted the office "supported by bayonets".

To undo the effects of such damaging propaganda, Nahas made it public that "he had agreed to form Government on the basis that neither the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty nor Egypt's situation as a sovereign independent country permits her ally to interfere in the internal affairs of the country and particularly in the formation and dismissal of ministers". (71) He also declared that he intended to carry out his job with the assistance of a freely elected parliament in which the Wafd had only 12 seats as a result of the 1938 elections, in his opinion, was not a 'free elected' Parliament. He actually got it dissolved on the 7th of February and ordered for immediate elections.

71. This is the main portion of the letter which Nahas Pasha wrote to the British Ambassador, upon taking office of the Prime Minister in which he explained to the addressee that his acceptance of Premiership at this critical juncture would not oblige him to give up his country's main interests. Text of the letter in Survey of International Affairs 1939-46 (1951), p. 210.
As a result of the elections, held in March 1942, the Wafd returned with undisputed majority. (72) Thus armed with a massive vote of confidence in his leadership, Nahas earnestly pursued his policy of wholeheartedly backing the Allies in every way. He took immediate action against Ali Mahir and other pro-Axis elements. (73) During the critical days of June and July 1942 when the British Army was forced by Rommel's advance, to fall back from Tabruk to El-Alamein, the Wafd Government stood firm with Great Britain. The British Ambassador paid generous tribute to hold statesmanship and firmness in dealing with 'the enemies of democracy and liberty'.

Acknowledging the British Ambassador's appreciation of his work, Nahas sent the following reply:

72. In the elections, the Wafd secured 223 seats in the Chamber and 81 in the Senate. The election results, under the circumstances, could hardly be regarded as proof or evidence of the Wafd's popularity with the masses. Their victory at the polls has no relevance to the popular inclination towards the Axis. The Wafd's success was due to several reasons: Firstly, there was no contest in 110 out of 264 electoral constituencies. Secondly, freedom of speech and expression of and on behalf of the candidates was limited during the election campaign. They were not allowed to make any reference to the 'recent events leading to the change of government, to the King or to the British'. Political commentators find that thus Nahas had shrewdly disabled the opposition to arouse public sentiments by saying that the Wafd was hoisted into power on British bayonets. Another factor responsible for the Wafd's success in this election was that the Saadists and the Liberal Constitutionalists did not officially participate in the contest. The voters were thus left with no choice.

73. In a bid to preserve order and public morale in the uncertain situation of the war, Nahas Pasha confined Ali Mahir to his country house, interned the fifth columnists and closed the Royal Automobile Club which was a meeting place of pro-Axis elements.
I had to act with a view to the preservation of the interests of the Egyptian people, to secure their rights and guard them from all injury and to inspire confidence amongst them. It gives me pleasure to say that the Egyptians gave proof of their courage and firm conviction. Each of them is conscious of the duty of supporting our friend and ally, England, in the hour of its need. The Egyptian Government and people offered, as I too offered, with the greatest willingness every possible assistance which did not conflict with the interests of the country, and I am proud to say that every Egyptian did at that moment his duty to his country and to Egypt's ally. (74)

The Egyptian Prime Minister mentioned about Egypt's contribution in the Allied war efforts only to ask in return for British support for Egypt's interests in the post-war settlement. At that time His Majesty's Government seem so much indebted to the Egyptian assistance at 'al-Alamain' that they authorised the Ambassador to assure Naha Pasha that the British Government would use its good offices to secure Egypt the right of representation, on a footing of equality, at all peace negotiations which would directly affect her interests, and that 'Britain would take no part in discussions directly affecting Egypt's interests without having prior consultations with the Egyptian Government. (75)

F. Egypt and the Making of the Arab League
Britain's Interest in Arab Unity

Earlier in 1939, Britain had, however, admitted the advisability of harnessing the Arabs' aspirations for independence and unity, in their favour. They seemed fully convinced that Rashid Ali al-Gilam's uprising, which they had been able to quell

74. Al-Wafid al-Misri (Cairo), 5 August 1942.
75. The Daily Telegraph, 20 November 1942.
only by force (May 1941) and the hostility of the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem Haji Amin-al-Hussaini, were in fact the expression of Pan-Arab sense of frustration with regard to the settlement of the Palestine question and the future of the Levant States. (76) The German promises to favour the Arabs in their struggle for independence seemed to have played quite an important part in the drift to extremism. (77) It was, therefore, not unnatural to visualize the consequences of ignoring the Arabs' discontent.

Their first step therefore was to issue a White Paper in 1939 which almost nullified the Balfour Declaration of 1917. (78) It was an attempt to appease the Arab sentiments. (79) Another impelling

76. In 1939, Mustafa Nahas Pasha, in a letter to the President of al-Itehad al-Arabi, a Pan-Arab club in Cairo, expressed his party's grave concern for the Arabs of Palestine. He wrote, "The Government takes great interest in the affairs of the sister Arab nations, and is always ready to defend their interests and rights. It also views with great interest the question of Arab unity." Quoted by G. Anwar, "The Egyptian Attitude towards Pan-Arabism", The Middle East Journal II (Summer, 1957), p. 258.

77. Survey, op. cit., p. 334.

78. Cmd. 5479, p. 22.

79. As a result of the Arab rebellion in Palestine, the British Government issued an important statement of Policy in 1939, declaring that neither their undertakings to the Jews nor the national interests of Britain warranted that they should continue to develop the national Jewish home beyond the point already reached. It said: (1) "... the Jewish National Home as envisaged in the Balfour declaration and in previous statements of British policy had been established"; (2) "That to develop it further against Arabs' wishes would be a violation of Britain's undertakings to the Arabs, and that such a policy could only be carried out by the use of unjustifiable force"; (3) "That therefore after the admission of a final quota of 75,000 more Jewish immigrants over a period of five years, Jewish immigration should stop"; (4) "that during this period of five years, a restriction should be placed on the acquisition (contd. on next page)
consideration in determining Great Britain's policy towards the Arabs was the emergence of several Arab states as independent entities which made it necessary for Britain to try to keep them knit together as an integrated whole by a common bond of unity. A united Arab world, in the opinion of Britain's foreign policy experts, could be expected to adopt a coherent if not uniform attitude towards Britain. Anthony Eden, Churchill's Foreign Secretary, finding it imperative to "line-up the Arab backing in a region so vital to their imperial defence", assured the Arabs of his Government's assistance in bringing them closer to each other. He once said:

... the Arab world has made great strides since the settlement reached at the end of the last war and many Arab thinkers desire, for the Arab peoples, a greater degree of unity than they now enjoy. In reaching out towards this unity, they hope for our support. No such appeal from our friends should go unanswered. It seems to me both natural and right that the cultural and economic ties, too, should be strengthened. His Majesty's Government, for their part, will give full support to any such scheme that commands general approval. (80)

Egypt's Position in the Arab League

Egypt, hitherto, more enthusiastically engaged in her own struggle for 'full independence and unity of the Nile', now found

79. (contd. from back page)

of further land in Palestine by the Jews"; (5) "that at the end of five years, self-governing institutions should be set up in the country." Text of the Statement in Parliamentary Papers 1939, Cmd. 6019, pp. 1-12.

a new vista to play a vital role in the realization of the common Arab aspirations. Her geographic position and her status as the centre of Islamic learning and culture justifiably encouraged her to assume the leadership. Mustafa an-Nahas claimed:

The bonds which bind us to the Arabs and Eastern peoples are many beyond numbering and disturbing. They have increased in firmness and strength by their common attitude towards the war, in that all of them took for the victory of democracy and await the dawn of the day in which the rights of the young peoples to determine their own future shall be uppermost. On that day these Arabs and neighbouring Eastern states will present, with Egypt in the forefront, a powerful and cohesive bloc, capable of fulfilling its international responsibilities and its moral duties and of taking its fitting place among the free peoples. (81)

It was thus in keeping with this attitude that Egypt virtually stole the initiative from Iraq, (82) in organizing

81. Al-Misri, 14 November 1942.

82. It is generally believed that the first proposal for the creation of a union of Arab States came from Iraq's Premier Nuri Pasha, al-Said, in December 1942. In his plan he suggested unification of Syria, Lebanon, Palestine and Trans-Jordan into a Greater Syria and the latter's merger with Iraq as the first step in the formation of a League of Arab States. But this plan met with little favour because of dynastic rivalries between the Hashimites, the Saidies and the Egyptians. The area covered by his plan constituted a natural geographical and economical, if not an ethnic unit, its political integration, would undoubtedly have strengthened Iraq's position vis-a-vis Egypt and Saudi Arabia. Whether unitary or federal in character, the proposed 'Greater Syria' was to be dominated by Baghdad. The young republics of Syria and Lebanon also did not approve of it. They wished to preserve their newly acquired independent status. The Lebanese Premier, Riyad as such clearly stated on 5 January 1944, that 'Syria and Lebanon, being independent countries would endeavour to cooperate with other Arab States on condition that their independence should not be infringed. According to Majid Khadduri, "Towards an Arab Union", American Political Review (February 1946, XI, p. 95), the President of Syria,

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meetings and conferences of Arab leaders and representatives of heads of the state to discuss the ways and means of furthering the cause of Arab unity, prosperity and strength. Finally a general Arab Conference was held on 25 September in Alexandria under the chairmanship of Nahas Pasha as Egypt's Prime Minister which produced the historic Alexandria Protocol on 7 October 1944 under which a League of Arab States was to be created. (83) But this Charter of Arab unity could not become an 'Act' so as to be binding upon all its signatories until 22 March 1945.

The delay in the creation of the Arab League on the basis of the Protocol could be attributed mainly to the political events that occurred in Egypt as a result of Nahas Pasha's dismissal from the Prime Ministership and also because certain modifications in the Alexandria Protocol were being suggested by the new Egyptian delegation to safeguard the sovereignty of its member states. For instance, whereas the Protocol had envisaged a progressively increasing surrender of sovereignty, the Pact in its final shape laid emphasis on its retention.

Another clause of the Protocol which stated that 'in no case will a state be permitted to pursue a foreign policy which would be detrimental to the policy of the League or to any of its member states, was dropped from the Pact. The Egyptian delegation

82. (contd. from back page)
Shukri al Quwatly endorsed the view that their independence would be retained in all circumstances. He said: "Syria will refuse to have raised in her sky any flag higher than her own, save that of an Arab Union."

83. Text of the Protocol in, Arab Information Centre, Basic Documents of the League of Arab States (N.Y., 1955), pp. 5-8.
also succeeded in incorporating into the Pact a clause binding each member state not to interfere in the system of government of the others. The Pact also stressed the importance of Palestine and pledged support in general terms for the Palestine Arabs; "without the inclusion of Palestine, public opinion in the Arab world would not have regarded the League as complete". (84) The Alexandria Protocol also made it explicit that the Arab leaders believed that the prospects of future peace and stability in the Arab world largely depended upon satisfactory solution of the Palestine problem. (85)

Though the formation of the League of the Arab States recognized Egypt's important position vis-a-vis other Arab States, (86) the feuds in her internal politics, particularly the tussle between the Palace and the Wafd continued uninterrupted. The King could never reconcile himself to the humiliation he had to undergo in appointing under British pressure Nahas as Egypt's Prime Minister against his utter dislike of him and his party. Towards the end of April 1944 Faruk made a serious attempt to dismiss Nahas Pasha, but again the British Ambassador openly intervened against the King who might have thought that, after the


86. Article 10 of the Pact between the seven Arab States which participated in the making of the League of Arab States, provided that the permanent seat of the League is established in Cairo. The first Secretary-General of the League, appointed under Article 2 by a majority of two-thirds, was also an Egyptian, Abdul Rehman Azzam Pasha.
defeat of the Axis forces in Egypt and Tunisia, the British won't be so very keen to see Nahas continue as Egypt's Premier. But the British still needed Egypt's support and sympathy because the strategic bases of Lower Egypt still remained vital to them for the wider prosecution of the war. (87) They were particularly more seriously concerned about public security in Egypt, which the Wafd under Nahas's leadership had thus far successfully maintained. The British Ambassador, therefore, declared:

... this was no time for a change of personnel in the United Nations front, and informed the King that if he did not recind the dismissal they would take the strongest measures. (88)

As he also had the consent of the Foreign Office to again resort to military action, if this were necessary to deter the King from his proposed action, Faruk put off the matter for some more opportune hour. And, he did not have to wait too long. The opportunity for him to dismiss Nahas and furnish his reputation arose in the wake of serious dissensions inside the Wafd itself.

As soon as the preparatory conference for a League of Arab States, being held at Alexandria under Nahas Pasha's chairmanship, was over, the King sent him a carefully worded letter of dismissal on the 8th of October. His recent tours of the provinces of his kingdom had shown to him that the Wafd was still well-rooted and that Nahas was dearly loved by the people. (89) He therefore so

drafted his letter as to impress upon the people that his action against Nahas Pasha was in fact motivated by his desire to safeguard constitutional rights of his people and to see them happy and prosperous:

As I am anxious to see my country governed by a democratic Ministry working for the fatherland and enforcing the laws of the constitution in the spirit as well as in the letter, giving equality to all Egyptians in rights and duties and bringing to the masses food and clothing, I have decided to dismiss you from office. (90)

By this time the whole Allied position in the war had greatly changed. 'The actual danger from the Axis on Egypt had long receded; the war was now being fought on the West-European continent with the Axis forces clearly in retreat'. Britain seemed no longer interested in the continuance of Wafād Government in Cairo. Moreover, now Egypt's other political groups, the Saadists, the Liberals and even the newly founded 'Kutla' were equally convinced of the benefits of siding with the Allies. (91)

There was, therefore, no particular reason for the British Foreign Office to insist on the retention of Nahas Pasha in office. The King had thus chosen the right time to take his revenge. 'Conveniently the British Ambassador happened not to be in Cairo on that day'.

On Nahas's dismissal, a coalition government was set up under the leadership of Dr. Ahmed Maher Pasha. New elections were held in January 1946, but no single party could secure absolute

90. Text of King Faruk's letter of dismissal in The Times, 9 October 1944. See also Rashid al-Barawi, op.cit., p. 147.
majority to form government. The Saadists having received a majority of 125 against 74 of Liberals, 29 Kutla, 7 National Party and 29 Independents, (92) its leader Ahmed Maher was again asked to head a coalition government. The Wafd had boycotted the elections alleging that the Government was using its power under the state of emergency for obtaining falsified results. (93)

As the British had expected, the new coalition Ministry of Dr. Maher, soon after taking the oath of office, declared his desire for sincere cooperation with Britain and expressed the opinion that "it was due to friendship, rather than the legal requirements of the Treaty, that Egypt had faithfully discharged her obligations and pooled all of her resources with Britain; she would continue to do so until the war with Japan had been brought to an end". Surely, like his predecessor, he too was


93. The Times' Cairo Correspondent's comment (1 August 1947) that 1945 election was 'at least as fair as any elections that have taken place in Egypt', was considered 'unfair to the Wafd', by Professor H.A.R. Gibb. See his article "Anglo-Egyptian Relations, a Revaluation", International Affairs, October 1951, p. 449. Wafd's refusal to participate in the 1945 elections was indeed a vital decision based on mature understanding and good sense of judgement. In an environment in which the King and the Government both were determined to keep the Wafd out of power and its own former members, now the dissidents, were doing everything to damage the reputation of the Wafd and tarnish the image of its leaders, by a malicious propaganda campaign, the Wafd would not have been able to swing the polls as before. Thus by not joining the elections in 1945, the Wafd leaders saved the party from running into the disrepute of having lost the elections, which could have been cited as a proof of its unpopularity with the masses.
anxious to secure a position for his country in the post-war Assembly of Nations. But a formal declaration of War against the Central Powers was an essential prerequisite for participation in the projected United Nations Conference at San-Francisco to be held on 25 April. (94) He had made up his mind to make a declaration to this effect. There was nothing now that Egypt was likely to lose by acquiring the status of a belligerent nation, on the other hand, Egypt had all the prospects of becoming a 'founder-member' of the world organization by making a formal statement of partnership with the Allies. He secured the consent of the Chamber of Deputies, meeting in Camera 25 February 1945, but when he was going to obtain a similar approval of the Senate he was shot dead by a young lawyer who belonged to the extremist Misr al-Fatah Party. (95)

His successor, Mohammad Fahmi En Nokrashi Pasha, however, adhered to the same policy. On 28 February, with the King's

94. As early as 17 October 1944, the British Prime Minister had stated before the House of Commons that 'the only countries which can be represented as of right at a peace conference are those which have participated in the war as belligerents'. H.C. Debates, 5th Series, vol. 403, col. 2195.

95. Thomas Russell, Egyptian Service 1902-46 (London, 1949), pp. 215-16. See also Egyptian Gazette (Cairo), 26 February 1945. The late Prime Minister's friend and successor, Nokrashi, believed that the 'Muslim Brotherhood' had a hand in the crime. He had immediately rounded up the founder-head of the Ikhwan, Hassan el Banna and other known members of the 'extremist organization of the religious fanatics', but later released them for want of proper evidence. But he could never give up the idea that the 'Brotherhood' was involved in his colleague's murder. See Tom Little, op.cit., p. 164.
assent, he declared a 'defensive war' against Germany and Japan, (96) which certainly enhanced his country's prestige and status in the comity of nations as a founder-member of the United Nations. (97)

96. The Egyptian Gazette (Cairo), 27 February 1945; also Al Ahram of the same date and day. It should, however, be noted that under Article 46 of the 1923 constitution while the declaration of a 'defensive war' was a prerogative of the King, an 'offensive war' could not be declared without the consent of Parliament. See Helan M. Davis, Constitutions, Electoral Laws, Treaties of States in the Near and the Middle East (Durham, M.C., 1953), p. 79.

97. Ibid.