

M1 Mameluke Resurgence

As time went on, an inflationary trend that historians have noted in 16th-century Europe had repercussions in Egypt as well. Rising prices led to rivalry among the *ocaks* over the country's wealth. This weakened their control, and the Mamelukes stepped into the breach. By the mid-17th century the Mameluke emirs, or beys, had established their supremacy. Land taxes were farmed out among them, and the urban guilds, which were closely allied with the Roman *ocaks*, were heavily taxed as a means of diminishing Ottoman influence and of increasing revenue. The Ottomans acquiesced in the system so long as the tribute was regularly paid.

The period from the 16th to the mid-18th century was an age of commercial prosperity when Egypt, at the crossroads of several commercial routes, was the centre of a flourishing intermediary trade in coffee, textiles, and spices.

The Ottoman governor quickly became a puppet, first in the hands of the regiments, which held the military power, and then in the hands of the Mamelukes, who came to control the *ocaks*. The leading Mameluke bey, called the Shaikh al-Balad (chief of the city), thus became recognized as the real ruler of the land. The beys imposed higher taxes to finance their military expeditions in Syria and Arabia. Although defeated in Syria by the Ottomans, who once more sought to reinforce their authority, the Mamelukes dominated Egypt until 1798. The last 30 years of the 18th century were marked by plagues and famine that reduced the population to a bare 4 million.

M2 The Time of Muhammad Ali

Mosque of Muhammad Ali, Cairo The Mosque of Muhammad Ali stands within the walls of the Citadel in Cairo, Egypt. It was built between 1830 and 1857 and is the largest and grandest of the four mosques contained in the Citadel. Muhammad Ali led a resurgence of national strength which put much of Arabia in Egyptian hands and almost led to the toppling of the Ottoman Empire. However, the momentum of his conquests and his modernization efforts was not sustained by his successors after his death in 1849. Richard Evans

The French occupation of Egypt in 1798, led by Napoleon Bonaparte, was a brief interlude, for the French never acquired full dominion or control. The grain-producing regions of Upper Egypt remained in Mameluke hands. Napoleon's invasion was too short-lived to have any lasting impact, but it marked the beginning of a renewed European interest in Egypt. In 1801 an Anglo-Ottoman force expelled the French. For the next few years, struggles between Mamelukes and Ottomans for mastery ruined the country until Muhammad Ali, an Ottoman general of Albanian origin, seized power with the cooperation of the local population. In 1805 the Ottoman sultan declared him the Governor of Egypt.

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Muhammad Ali, a man of genius, slowly and methodically destroyed or bought off all his opponents until he became the only source of power in the country. To gain control of all the trade routes into Egypt, he embarked on wars of expansion. He first conquered Al *ʿijz* (now in Saudi Arabia) in 1819 and Sudan from 1820 to 1822; by 1824 he was ready to help the Ottoman Sultan put down an insurrection in Greece.

The European powers, however, intervened to halt Egyptian advances in Greece, and Muhammad Ali was forced to withdraw his army.

At home, Muhammad Ali encouraged the production of cotton to supply the textile mills of Europe, and he used the profits to finance industrial projects. He established a monopoly over all commodities and imposed trade barriers to nurture industry. He sent Egyptians abroad for technical education and hired experts from Europe to train his army and build his manufacturing industries (which, however, were never as successful as he hoped they would be).

In 1831 Muhammad Ali and his son Ibrahim Pasha invaded Syria, thereby coming into conflict with his Turkish overlord. The Egyptians defeated the Ottoman armies, and by 1833 they were threatening the Turkish capital, Istanbul. Once again, Russia, Britain, and France intervened, this time to protect the Sultan. Muhammad Ali's forces withdrew, but he was left in control of Syria and Crete.

Egyptian expansion and control over trade routes conflicted with Britain's growing interest in the Middle East as a market for its burgeoning industrial production. The threat to the integrity of the Ottoman Empire also disturbed Britain and roused fears of Russian encroachment in the Mediterranean. For these reasons the British opposed Egypt, and when Muhammad Ali again rebelled against the sultan in 1839, they stepped in for the third time to make him back down. He was offered hereditary possession of Egypt, but had to give up his other conquests and remain an Ottoman vassal.

M3 Bankruptcy and Foreign Control

After the death of Muhammad Ali in 1849, Egypt came increasingly under European influence. His fourth son, Said Pasha, made some attempt to modernize the government, but left a huge debt when he died. His successor, Ismail Pasha, increased the national debt by borrowing lavishly from European bankers to develop the country and pay for the Suez Canal, which was opened in 1869. These spendthrift rulers drove the country into bankruptcy and ultimately into the control of their British and French creditors. In 1876 an Anglo-French commission took charge of Egypt's finances, and in 1879 the sultan deposed Ismail in favour of his son Tawfik Pasha. Army officers, disgusted by the government's weakness, then led a rebellion to end foreign control. Tawfik appealed to the British for help, and they occupied Egypt in 1882.

N Egypt Under the British

British interest in Egypt stemmed from the Suez Canal as the short route to India. Promises to evacuate the country once order had been restored were broken, and the British army remained in occupation until 1954. Although Tawfik remained on the throne as a figurehead prince, the British consul-general was the real ruler of the country. The first and most important Consul-General was Sir Evelyn Baring (known after 1892 as Lord Cromer).

A nationalist movement led by Mustafa Kamil, a European-educated lawyer, was backed by Tawfik's successor, Abbas II, during the late 1800s and early 1900s. Kamil

agitated for self-government and an end to the British occupation but was ignored by British authorities.

In this period Egyptian agriculture was so completely dominated by cotton grown to feed the textile mills of Lancashire in England that grain had to be imported to feed the rural population. Irrigation projects were carried out to increase the arable land, and in due course the entire debt to Britain was paid.

British promises to evacuate diminished as Egypt and the Suez Canal became an integral part of British Mediterranean defence policy. The illegal occupation was, in fact, internationally sanctioned in 1904, when France recognized British rights in Egypt in return for British acknowledgement of French rights in Morocco.

N1 Protectorate Declared

The outbreak of World War I in 1914 brought nationalist activities in Egypt to an end. When Turkey entered the war on the side of Germany, Britain declared Egypt a protectorate and deposed Abbas II in favour of his uncle, Hussein Kamil, who was given the title of Sultan. Legal ties between Egypt and Turkey were finally severed, and Britain promised Egypt some changes in government once the war was over.

The war years resulted in great hardship for Egyptian peasants, the fellahin, who were conscripted to dig ditches and whose livestock was confiscated by the army. Inflation was rampant. These factors were responsible for increasing resentment against the British and set the stage for the violent upheaval that was to come after World War I ended in 1918.

N2 The Puppet Monarchy

Allied promises that former Ottoman territories would be allowed self-determination raised hopes in Egypt of independence once the war was over. A new nationalist movement, the Wafd (delegation), was formed in 1918 to plan for the country's future. Hopes were dashed when Britain refused to consider Egyptian needs, and Saad Zaghlul, the leader of the Wafd, was exiled. The country erupted in violent revolt, and Britain was forced to reconsider its decision. Zaghlul was released, but his efforts to get a hearing at the Paris Peace Conference were thwarted by the British. Violence continued until 1922, when Britain unilaterally declared Egypt an independent monarchy under Hussein's successor, who became king as Fuad I. The British, however, reserved the right to intervene in Egyptian affairs if their interests were threatened, thereby robbing Egypt of any real independence and allowing British control to continue unabated.

The new constitution of 1924 set up a bicameral legislature but, under pressure from the British and Fuad, gave the latter the right to nominate the premier and to suspend Parliament. The result was a tripartite struggle for mastery over Egypt involving the king, the British ambassador, and the Wafd, which was the only grass-roots party. One government after another fell after trying unsuccessfully to extract concessions from the British. In 1936, under pressures caused by the Italian invasion of Ethiopia, an Anglo-Egyptian treaty was finally signed, but it continued the physical occupation of Egypt by the British army and the involvement of the British army in internal affairs.

N3 The Coup of 1952

World War II suspended further political bargaining. The war years brought inflation, inter-party strife, and disillusion with the Wafd. Fundamentalist religious organizations, such as the Muslim Brotherhood, and Communist groups developed.

In 1948 Egypt and several other Arab states went to war in an unsuccessful attempt to prevent the establishment of the state of Israel. Blaming the government for its defeat, the army turned against King Faruk I, Fuad's son, who showed no aptitude for government and a blatant disregard for public well-being and morality. In 1952 a group of army officers carried out a successful coup d'état that ousted the king and in 1953 declared Egypt a republic.

The first President of the Republic, General Muhammad Naguib, was a figurehead. The real leader was Gamal Abdel Nasser of the Revolutionary Command Council, the officers who had plotted the revolution. In April 1954 Nasser became Prime Minister. In November of that year, Naguib was removed from power, and Nasser assumed complete executive authority. In July 1956 Nasser was officially elected President.

O The Nasser Years

At first Nasser followed a pro-Western policy and successfully negotiated the evacuation of British forces from Egypt in 1954. Soon he turned to a policy of neutrality and solidarity with other African and Asian nations and became an advocate of Arab unity.

O1 The Suez Crisis

Gamal Abdel Nasser Gamal Abdel Nasser led a nationalist movement in 1952 which ousted the Egyptian monarchy from power and transformed Egypt into a republic. Nasser became president of Egypt in 1954 and subsequently negotiated an end to Great Britain's 72-year occupation of Egypt. Nasser was President of Egypt until his death in 1970, and his accomplishments included the construction of the Aswan High Dam, the institution of land reforms, a programme of industrialization, and the restoration of Egyptian identity as a self-governing nation. Intending to create a unified nation of all Arabs, Nasser also led the short-lived United Arab Republic, which combined Syria and Egypt under one presidency, from 1958 to 1961. UPI/THE BETTMANN ARCHIVE

In efforts to acquire armaments, which the Western world would not supply to Egypt, Nasser turned to the Eastern bloc. In retaliation, the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (World Bank) turned down Egypt's request for a loan to finance the Aswan High Dam project. Nasser therefore nationalized the Suez Canal and sought to use its revenues to finance the dam. Angered by that move, Britain and France, the main stockholders in the canal, joined with Israel in attacking Egypt in 1956. Pressure from the United States and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics forced the three countries to evacuate Egyptian territory, and United Nations forces were placed as a buffer between Egypt and Israel. See also Suez Crisis.

Pursuing his dream of Arab unity, Nasser in 1958 effected a union between Egypt and Syria under the name of the United Arab Republic. Although it lasted only three years before the Syrians rebelled and reaffirmed their independence, Egypt retained the official name of the republic for many years afterwards.

O2 Arab Socialism

Within Egypt the Nasser regime suppressed political opposition and established a one-party system as a means of reforming political life. A series of decrees limited land ownership and undermined the authority of the landowning elite. In 1961 foreign capital invested in Egypt was nationalized, as were public utilities and local industries, all of which became part of the public sector. This new order, which Nasser called Arab Socialism, aimed at greater social equality and economic growth. In 1962 a national charter was drawn up, and the official National Union party was renamed the Arab Socialist Union. Women, who had been emancipated earlier, were elected to the union, as were workers. The first woman Cabinet minister was appointed.

O3 Wars of the 1960s

In 1962 Egypt became embroiled in a civil war in Yemen, backing a republican movement against monarchist forces. This venture cost lives and money and left the country weakened. In 1967 Nasser, continuing the Arab struggle against Israel, closed the Strait of Tiran to Israeli shipping and requested that the UN forces be withdrawn from the border. The Israelis, believing that Nasser was preparing for war, struck first, attacking and destroying Egyptian airfields and positions in the Sinai. Israeli forces advanced until they reached the right bank of the Suez Canal. This Six-Day War left Israel in possession of the whole Sinai Peninsula. The UN Security Council passed Resolution 242, which emphasized the “inadmissibility of acquiring territory by war” and called for Israeli withdrawal from occupied territories. Israel read the resolution as withdrawal from “some territories” and continued to occupy the Sinai. When negotiations seemed to be leading nowhere, Nasser turned to the USSR, which rearmed Egypt in return for a naval base.

Nasser died suddenly in September 1970. Problems of succession to the post of president were settled when Vice-President Anwar al-Sadat, a long-time colleague of Nasser, was chosen to succeed him.

P The Sadat Regime

Sadat was elected by opposing political factions as a compromise candidate, on the assumption that he could be manipulated. The new president, however, outwitted his would-be puppeteers and, with the support of the army, put them under arrest. He freed political prisoners who had been incarcerated by Nasser for opposing his policies, and called for a regime of economic and political liberalization, especially of the press, which Nasser had strictly controlled.

P1 The Yom Kippur War

Skirmishes between Egypt and Israel had continued after 1969, and this “war of attrition” had resulted in high Egyptian casualties and burdensome military

expenditures. Sadat tried to find a way out of that impasse by negotiation. Unsuccessful, he secretly planned another round against Israel. He first repaired his fences with the Arab states, especially Saudi Arabia, which financed arms purchases from the Soviet Union. Then, on October 6, 1973, on the Jewish holy day of Yom Kippur and during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, Egypt launched an air and artillery assault across the Suez Canal, beginning the Yom Kippur War. Within hours, thousands of Egyptian soldiers had successfully crossed into the Sinai. Protected by a missile umbrella that destroyed Israeli aircraft, they overran and captured the string of Israeli fortifications known as the Bar-Lev line. Israel was caught unprepared. By the middle of the month, however, it had regained the initiative and was able to encircle Egyptian units on the outskirts of Suez. The UN then imposed a ceasefire, and an armistice line patrolled by UN forces was eventually established between the Egyptian and the Israeli armies.

P2 Rapprochement with Israel

Although Egypt did not win the war, it effectively challenged the 1967 boundaries and, helped by the “shuttle diplomacy” of US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, regained control of the Suez Canal. Having boosted Egyptian morale, Sadat was ready for negotiations. In 1974 and 1975 Egypt and Israel concluded agreements—again mediated by Kissinger—providing disengagement on the Sinai front. In June 1975 Egypt reopened the Suez Canal, permitting passage to ships carrying Israeli cargoes. Israel withdrew beyond the strategic passes and from some of the oilfields in the Sinai.

Meanwhile, Egypt’s economic position was growing rapidly worse; by early 1976 the country’s debt to the USSR was estimated at US\$4,000 million. The following year, surprising all, Sadat asked the Soviet military advisers to leave the country and threw his lot in with the United States, declaring it held the key to peace in the Middle East. Even more surprisingly, on November 19, 1977, Sadat flew to Israel and addressed the Knesset (parliament) in a bid for peace. The historic journey was followed by further negotiations under US auspices. At a tripartite conference with US President Jimmy Carter at Camp David, Maryland, in September 1978, Sadat and the Israeli prime minister Menachem Begin agreed on a framework for an Israeli-Egyptian settlement. A peace treaty between the two nations, based on the Camp David accords, was signed in Washington, D.C., on March 26, 1979.

P3 Sadat’s Assassination

The rest of the Arab world denounced Egypt for making a separate peace with Israel, and some of the more hard-line Arab leaders branded Sadat a traitor to the Arab cause. The Sinai was gradually restored to Egypt, but later Egyptian-Israeli talks on a settlement of the Palestinian issue made little progress. Egypt was expelled from the Arab League in 1979 because of the peace treaty, and the league’s headquarters were moved from Cairo to Tunis, Tunisia. In 1989 Egypt was readmitted to the league; the headquarters were moved back to Cairo the following year.

By 1981 Sadat was meeting increasing opposition within Egypt itself, especially from Muslim fundamentalists, who opposed any accommodation with Israel. Sadat responded with a crackdown, arresting and jailing hundreds of his opponents, and

placing restrictions on the press. In such an atmosphere he was assassinated by religious fanatics within his own army on October 6, 1981, during a military parade commemorating the Yom Kippur War.

Q Egypt Under Mubarak

Hosni Mubarak Rising Islamic fundamentalism is one of the main challenges facing President Hosni Mubarak. Growing support for the fundamentalist Muslim Brotherhood, in particular, reflects both the country's growing economic problems, and also reaction to his shift away from Egypt's traditional nonalignment towards increasing association with Western interests, and especially Egypt's participation in the US-led coalition which defeated Iraq in the 1991 Gulf War. However, the army's clampdown on fundamentalist extremists, whose attacks on tourists have undermined a key Egyptian industry, have led to allegations of human rights abuses and alienated many ordinary people, particularly in southern Egypt. REUTERS/THE BETTMANN ARCHIVE

Sadat was succeeded by Vice-President Hosni Mubarak. While adhering to the Camp David accords, Mubarak sought political liberalization within Egypt as well as improved relations with other Arab states. Israel completed its withdrawal from the Sinai on April 25, 1982. In January 1984 Egypt accepted an invitation to rejoin the 42-member Islamic Conference. That April, in Egypt's first parliamentary elections under Mubarak, the ruling National Democratic Party captured 87 per cent of the vote. After a national referendum in February 1987 authorized the dissolution of the People's Assembly, new elections were held in April. Although the National Democratic Party (NDP) won 338 of 448 seats, the Muslim Brotherhood showed increased strength. President Mubarak was re-elected in a referendum in October 1987. After Egypt took part in the US-led coalition that defeated Iraq in the Gulf War of 1991, about half of its US\$20,200 million debt to the allies was forgiven, and the rest was rescheduled.

Q1 Growing Militant Violence

In 1992 Muslim fundamentalists began launching violent attacks against government officials, Coptic Christians, tourists, unveiled women, and others in a campaign to replace Mubarak's government with one based on strict Islamic law. As a result of the attacks, revenues from tourism dropped 42 per cent between 1992 and 1993. The government cracked down severely on the militants, executing 29 of them in 1993.

In October 1993 Mubarak won a referendum electing him to his third term as President. Continuing Islamic militant violence in 1994 included more attacks on tourists and the stabbing of the Nobel Prize-winning author Naguib Mahfouz on October 14. On June 26, 1995, President Mubarak narrowly escaped an attempted assassination while visiting Addis Ababa in Ethiopia; he subsequently accused the Sudanese fundamentalists of involvement, thereby exacerbating the deterioration in relations with Sudan which began in the early 1990s. He also used the attempt to crack down further on Islamic fundamentalists at home. More than 200 members of the Muslim Brotherhood were arrested in July on terrorism charges, despite earlier denials by the movement that it advocated terrorism. In late November, 54 Muslim Brotherhood members were sentenced after a military trial to up to five years'

imprisonment. The general election held in early December was marked by violent clashes between rival party supporters, leaving 60 people dead and over 400 injured. The National Democratic Party won an overwhelming victory, but the election was denounced by opposition parties as a farce.

The militant Islamic group, Gama'at al-Islamiyya, responsible for many terrorist attacks, hit the headlines again in early 1996 after a period of relative inactivity. The announcement in February that two of the group's leaders had been shot dead by the police led to rioting in Upper Egypt, the main fundamentalist stronghold, and the deaths of up to 24 people. On April 18, 18 Greek tourists were killed and 15 others wounded when Gama'at al-Islamiyya gunmen attacked a Cairo hotel; the group subsequently claimed to have mistaken them for Israeli visitors. The action had a swift adverse effect on the tourism industry, which was starting to recover after more than a year without attacks on foreign visitors.

On November 17, 1997, 62 people were killed and 24 people were injured at Luxor in an attack by terrorists of the main fundamentalist Gama'at al-Islamiyya group. Fifty-eight of the victims were tourists; the six terrorist attackers were later shot by police. The group claimed that they carried out the attack in order to secure the release of their leader, Sheikh Omar Abdelrahman, who had been imprisoned in the United States for conspiring to blow up the World Trade Centre in 1993. The interior minister, Hassan al-Alfi, resigned days later after being publicly castigated by the president for doing nothing to prevent the massacre. Mubarak, having acknowledged that security measures had been totally inadequate, appointed General Habib el-Adeli to replace him. This incident had serious implications for the country's encouragement of tourism at the historic sites such as Luxor and Aswan on the Nile, and the Red Sea resort of Sharm el-Sheikh.

Q2 A Fourth Term for Mubarak

In September 1999 Hosni Mubarak was declared president for his fourth term, gaining about 94 per cent of votes in the popular referendum. In the parliamentary elections of October and November 2000, the NDP again achieved a huge majority, winning 353 seats outright and gaining another 35 from conversions. While less violent than the elections of 1995, the occasion was similarly marked by clashes between supporters and accusations of intimidation and obstruction of anti-government voters. The outlawed Muslim Brotherhood, who won 17 seats through independent candidates, was the most successful opposition party, although its achievement was tempered shortly afterwards by the imprisonment of 15 of its leading members following a military trial condemned by human rights organizations.

A new law passed in January 2000 considerably expanded the rights of women in Egypt, making it easier for them to divorce their husbands. Whereas previously women had to prove that they had suffered abuse in the marriage, the new legislation, apart from speeding up the proceedings, allowed them to divorce their spouses on grounds of incompatibility. Egypt became one of the few countries in the Middle East to extend such divorce rights to women. The human rights organization Amnesty International criticized the Egyptian government for shirking its responsibility on another matter, however. According to a report in March 2001, there are still widespread and indiscriminate incidents of torture in the country's police stations and

detention centres. The perpetrators have rarely been brought to justice, though there are signs that this may be changing.

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