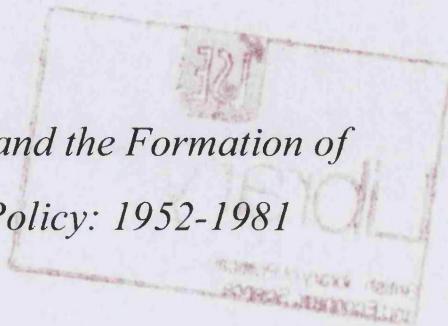


The London School of Economics and Political Science

*Conceptions of Israel and the Formation of
Egyptian Foreign Policy: 1952-1981*



Ewan Stein

A thesis submitted to the Department of International Relations of the London
School of Economics and Political Science for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy,
London, December 2007

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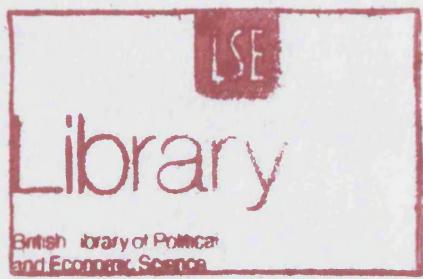
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Abstract

This thesis examines conceptions of Israel in the formation of Egyptian foreign policy during the eras of Nasser and Sadat, with the particular goal of clarifying the way in which Israel was conceptualised following the October 1973 War and the beginning of a process of ‘normalisation’ between the two states. It suggests that examining ideas in terms of paradigms is more useful than using the concept of ‘identity’ to understand the evolution of ideas about Israel in Egypt. I argue that Israel has been conceptualised by Egyptian intellectuals and regimes from within three main paradigms, which I term ‘anti-imperialism’, ‘the nation-state’ and the ‘culture-clash.’ Although these paradigms were closely associated with Egyptian Marxist, liberal and Islamist political movements, the thesis shows that from 1952 thinkers associated with these movements, as well as regimes, combined elements of the different paradigms in conceptualising Israel in ways that changed over time. The thesis draws on Antonio Gramsci, Karl Mannheim and E.H. Carr to make the theoretical argument that conceptions of other state actors must be understood in relation to a state’s international and regional priorities as well as the way in which regimes, and ‘counter-hegemonic’ movements, seek to connect intellectually with key domestic constituencies. While Carr and modern constructivist IR theorists help shed light on the regional and international factors contributing to the adoption of certain conceptions of Israel at the level of the state, viewing Egyptian politics through a Gramscian lens highlights domestic political factors and their interaction with regional and global dynamics. I conclude that where there is an ideological disconnect between elites and masses—where a Gramscian ‘historical bloc’ is absent—conceptions of international politics and the nature of other state actors may be configured with reference to the idea systems promoted and accepted by ‘counter-hegemonies’ and constitute neither ‘masks’ for self-interested foreign policy nor reflections of an evolving national identity.

Acknowledgements

First, I thank my supervisor, Professor Fred Halliday, for his unwavering encouragement, generosity of spirit, humour and wisdom. In addition, I would like to thank the Department of International Relations at the London School of Economics for financial support throughout the writing of this thesis, as well as for providing a supportive and stimulating research environment. Professors Margot Light and Michael Cox as well as Drs Roy Allison and Amnon Aran have, in the context of research workshops provided incisive comments and suggestions at different stages of the thesis, as have many fellow students. I am also grateful to the staff of the al-Ahram Centre for Political and Strategic Studies in Cairo for their hospitality and assistance in August 2006 and for the use of their library. I thank Mr. Adel Sadik and Drs El-Sayed Yassin, Emad Gad, Gamal Abdel Gawad, Sa'd Eddine Ibrahim, Abdel Wahhab Elmessiri and Hazim Saghie for generously offering me their time and insights. I have also valued the friendship of Carl Dundas and Richard Ratcliffe, who read and commented on draft chapters, and provided much helpful discussion and reassurance. I am eternally grateful to my mother, Hilary Bridge, and my mother-in-law, Wende Ang, for providing childcare without which this thesis would definitely have remained a madman's fantasy. Above all, I thank my wife Jennifer for her constant love and support, willingness to read and re-read drafts, and hawk-like proofreading services. And Maisie, our baby girl, who arrived just in time for the final stages of writing, reminded me every day with her smiles that there were more important things than this thesis.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Although Egypt has been formally at peace with Israel since 1979, Egyptian society, including many intellectuals, maintains a generally antagonistic attitude toward it. A realist analysis of foreign policy would suggest that ideas respond to the state's own foreign policy interests, whereas a more idealist, or constructivist, account might suggest that the policies themselves flow from the ideas. In the Egyptian case, it seems that neither of these two propositions can be true. A prevailing intellectual attitude of antagonism towards Israel, what the Egyptian liberal Tarek Heggy¹ has termed a 'culture of war', has not induced the state to reconsider its policy of reconciliation with Israel; and neither has this foreign policy priority led to a major reshaping of public perceptions of Israel. This thesis attempts to shed light on this apparent paradox and to examine ideas on Israel in their domestic, regional and international context from 1952 until 1981. In this introductory chapter I discuss my core argument that the impact of global and regional dynamics on the development of ideas on foreign policy in a given state-society complex is mediated by the nature of the state, conceived in Gramscian terms, and that in the Egyptian case the absence of 'hegemony' helps explain the lack of congruence between ideas and foreign policy. I also summarise the evolution of ideas on Israel in Egypt, situate my contribution within the existing literature on the role of ideas in international relations and foreign policy and that on Egyptian conceptions of Israel, and clarify my rationale and methodology.

Since the end of the Cold War the role of beliefs, images, values and ideas has attracted significant attention from students of foreign policy.² Within constructivism, 'the framework of meaning within which foreign policy takes place is seen as the basis of the way in which interests and goals are constructed.'³ Although this thesis takes issue with elements of constructivist scholarship, it seeks to elucidate this framework, or more precisely, frameworks of meaning in Egypt with respect to Israel by viewing ideas on Israel in terms of three distinct *paradigms*, which will be discussed below.

One important point of divergence from constructivist literature is my treatment of ideas on Israel as a dependent variable. I do not seek to prove that ideas 'cause' specific foreign policy choices since this would require a close empirical examination of the background behind manifold foreign policy 'events', an impossible task over the timescale selected for this thesis, and one for which sources would be unlikely to provide conclusive evidence. It is significant that the title of the thesis is conceptions of Israel *and*, rather than, *in* the formation of Egyptian foreign policy, with the term 'formation' hinting at the broader set of

factors and contexts surrounding actual policy outputs. The thesis also does not purport to show that ideational factors are necessarily more significant in understanding the international relations of the Middle East, or elsewhere, than, say, economic, structural or balance of power explanations – the explanatory power of these factors likely varies over time. My goal is to elucidate the interplay, and often incongruence, between ideas and foreign policy rather than to establish firm causal links, and as such I problematise both the realist argument that ideas reflect interests and the constructivist axiom that interests and policies emerge from ideas.

The ‘Universalisation’ of Foreign Policy Goals

One of the key ways in which ideas have interacted with foreign policy has been through the ‘universalisation’ of foreign policy goals, as conceptualised by E.H. Carr (See Chapter 2). Universalisation involves the packaging or presentation of ostensibly self-interested foreign policies in order to legitimise them for a domestic and/or international audience. I rely heavily on this concept to help explain the elaboration of the three paradigms for understanding Israel with reference to Egypt’s broad foreign policy objectives. Egypt’s foreign policy goals with respect to Israel, it must be emphasised, represent only one part of the external rationale for their universalisation, with its posture vis-à-vis other Arab states, the United States, the USSR and the Afro-Asian and Non-Aligned Movements also contributing, perhaps more significantly, to the ways in which policy toward Israel was universalised.

With respect to Israel, the regime’s foreign policy priorities evolved broadly as follows: From 1952 until 1955, Israel did not constitute a priority for Egypt, whose foreign policy was orientated mainly toward the eradication of British imperialism. Egypt turned to the United States to facilitate the Suez Agreement that secured British withdrawal and tended, if anything, toward an ‘Egypt-first’ orientation that conceptualised the border dispute with Israel as one between two sovereign states, universalising it in terms of international law. Following Israel’s raids on Gaza in 1955 and participation in the Suez campaign in 1956, Israel moved up in Egypt’s foreign policy agenda, with Nasser’s main goal being to *contain* it militarily while maintaining Egypt’s regional dominance as the key champion of the Arab, most centrally Palestine, cause.⁴ The goal of containment arguably guided Egypt’s actual foreign policy toward Israel until 1967 and tended to be universalised in terms of combating the spread of imperialism in the region and, indeed, the world. Following the Six Day War, Nasser and then Sadat prioritised the recovery of the occupied Egyptian territory either through negotiation or war. Sadat also sought, from 1973, to end the financially draining

state of war with Israel and, relatedly, attract US aid, which entailed the universalisation of the conflict in the terms of the nation-state paradigm. These relatively straightforward foreign policy objectives can explain some of the ways in which foreign policy was universalised. But it is a crucial argument of this thesis that in order to understand the far more complex and often contradictory universalisations that were actually employed by the regime and intellectuals we must look at other factors, categorisable as domestic, regional and international.

It must be stressed that the importance of Israel for Egyptian foreign policy transcended the bilateral relationship. For Nasser, Israel fulfilled two important purposes with domestic, regional and international significance. First, it facilitated the continuation of the anti-colonial movement on the back of which the Free Officers had seized power in 1952. After Suez, as I discuss in Chapter 5, Israel was seen to embody an abiding imperialist threat, onto which popular anti-British and anti-European sentiments could be transferred, not only in Egypt but in the broader Arab world. This also provided a key rationale for Egypt's role as a staunch anti-imperialist ally of the Soviet Union. Second, particularly during the period of 'Unity of Action', which Chapter 6 addresses, Israel constituted a unifying 'other' to underpin inter-Arab (including conservative Arab) cooperation, for which it had to acquire attributes other than those associated with imperialism and 'reaction'. Sadat's foreign policy toward Israel, at least after 1973, had a markedly more international focus in that his visit to Jerusalem and peace negotiations could be presented as the ultimate concession Egypt could make in order to convince the West, particularly the United States, of its worthiness as an aid recipient. In addition to the domestic 'instrumentalisation' that Israel allowed, then, these broader foreign policy implications highlight the centrality of Israel, and ideas on Israel, to Egyptian foreign policy as a whole.

Ideas and Foreign Policy Decision-Making in Egypt

Most analysts of Egyptian foreign policy have asserted the preponderant role of the president (the 'leader-dominant' or 'presidential centre' model), to the exclusion of other actors in the decision-making process, such as ministries of defence and foreign affairs, parliament, the military, or elite and general public opinion.⁵ Ideas, according to this focus, have causal importance to the extent they underpin the president's personal belief system and psychology. But ideas also have broader significance in a sense less often acknowledged, but nonetheless implicit in discussions of Egyptian foreign policy that privilege the concepts of regime autonomy and legitimacy.⁶ Students of Egyptian politics often assert that the Suez

and October wars vastly increased the domestic and international freedom of action of Nasser and Sadat, respectively. Thus, for Hinnebusch,

The legitimacy [Sadat] won as “Hero of the Crossing” positioned him to … pursue new solutions to the regime’s main vulnerabilities, namely its alienation from the Egyptian bourgeoisie and from the United States, the superpower whose support was needed to resolve the conflict with Israel.⁷

A series of policy choices (*infitah*, sacrificing of the Soviet relationship, courting the United States and, ultimately, peace with Israel) are thus viewed as flowing from this newly acquired ‘legitimacy’. It follows, therefore, that if legitimacy is ‘withdrawn’, the president’s freedom of action in foreign, as with public, policy will decline, which is often held to explain Mubarak’s apparent retreat from Sadat’s drive for normalisation with Israel in the 1980s.

Implicit in the idea that it is ‘legitimacy’ that allows the president autonomy to make bold foreign policy decisions is the assumption that when legitimacy is low, foreign policy-making depends in part on favourable public opinion of some kind. Even if the president enjoys the institutional freedom to make foreign policy decisions more or less alone, then, he does so with some consideration of the likely public, including elite, reactions to foreign policy choices and the consequences that may flow from them. Public reactions, though, depend on the way in which groups interpret foreign policy actions (or inactions), which is itself a factor of how foreign policy—or more precisely how the universalisation of foreign policy by the regime, the media, intellectuals and other sources of knowledge production in society—resonates intersubjectively with established public beliefs or ‘world-views’. I argue that the existence of a plurality of world-views—or frameworks of meaning—in Egypt, as reflected in conceptions of Israel, has militated against the articulation of a coherent universalisation of Egypt’s relations with Israel since the mid-1970s, and that the concept of ‘hegemony’, more than legitimacy, helps account for and suggest the effects of divergent world-views with respect to Israel.

The picture is further complicated by the fact that the regime has also sought to position itself in regional and international ‘societies’, in the English School sense, and hence engage with or seek to influence regional or global ideological frameworks. The universalisation of foreign policy is thus not intended for purely domestic consumption. If we accept, then, that public opinion during times of low presidential legitimacy, as well as exogenous forces, play a constraining role on foreign policy making, it behoves us to understand the ways in which domestic and international approval for a particular stance is sought, which in turn depends on an understanding of the paradigms through which other international actors—in this case

Israel—have been conceptualised domestically, regionally and internationally. It is this complex of influences on ideas, as well as the ideas themselves, that the thesis seeks to elucidate, by examining the Egyptian regime's own pronouncements on Israel and those of intellectuals sympathetic to or opposing its foreign policy agenda, with close reference to the evolving domestic, regional and international ideological context.

The ‘Non-Hegemonic’ Nature of the Egyptian State

In discussing the interplay between the formation of foreign policy and ideas it is essential to take into account the nature of the state in question. This thesis makes use of Antonio Gramsci's theory of the state (Chapter 2) to argue that because Egyptian regimes have failed to organise 'hegemony', or the ideological and cultural integration of state and society in an 'historical bloc', conceptions of Israel developed by leftist and liberal intellectuals, and those articulated by the regime in these terms, have not become 'common sense' among the broader Egyptian public.

This non-hegemonic status has had two main implications for the ways in which the international, regional and domestic factors discussed in the thesis influenced the development of ideas. First, it limited the extent to which ideas developed at the level of the regime or intelligentsia filtered down to Egyptian society as a whole. Egypt's close relationship with the socialist and Afro-Asian countries in the 1950s, for example, was an important reason for Nasser's adoption of socialism as an element of his foreign policy doctrine. But since socialist ideas never penetrated Egyptian society far beyond the intelligentsia—due to the regime's inability or unwillingness to create structures connecting state and society in an 'organic' way—conceptions of Israel expressed solely in terms of Leninist anti-imperialism, like those articulated in liberal nationalist terms, had limited resonance. Second, the absence of hegemony facilitated the survival and growth of 'counter-hegemony', the most significant of which was Islamist and embodied in the Muslim Brotherhood. The strength of the counter-hegemony lay in its ability to connect with a mass constituency, via intellectuals organic to it, more successfully than the regime. An exposition of how this tension developed in Egypt is given in Chapter 4.

The presence of the Islamist counter-hegemony and the instrumental rehabilitation of the Muslim Brotherhood in the 1970s facilitated the regime's ideological rejection of revolutionary socialism and economic anti-imperialism as universalisations of foreign policy, while limiting the extent to which liberal nationalism could take its place, even in the context of Egypt's firm move into the Western camp and Sadat's desire to make peace with Israel. As such, the lasting intellectual influence of both the USSR and the USA was

relatively limited. In contrast, the Sadat regime was led to support the ascendancy of Islam as the basis of regional solidarity—long promoted by Saudi Arabia and resisted, if not completely rejected, by Nasser. Regional and domestic influences triumphed over the global in terms of shaping the universalisation of foreign policy toward Israel.

It can be further argued that the greater the regime's perceived autonomy from domestic constraints—or legitimacy—the more able was it to adopt global ideological frameworks and universalise its foreign policy toward Israel in terms of anti-imperialism (in a Marxist-Leninist sense) or liberal nationalism. Such a ‘globalisation’ of ideology was most in evidence after the Suez and October wars. But the fact that neither Nasser nor Sadat fully capitalised on these popularity boosts to organise a properly hegemonic order in Egypt prevented these conceptual frameworks from becoming ‘common sense’. Egypt’s non-hegemonic nature and the persistence of the Islamist counter-hegemony thus help explain the limited extent to which the Western ‘international society’ into which Egypt was moving ‘socialised’ Egypt.

It is in this context that Egypt’s interaction with 20th century ‘zeitgeists’ should be understood. The post-war rise of socialism internationally and the increased prominence of more nationalist ideas of sovereignty and peaceful coexistence in the context of détente in the 1970s were certainly echoed in Egypt at the levels of the regime and intelligentsia. But to a great extent the absorption of these global norms in Egypt was skin deep. Cultural and atavistic conceptions of international relations, including of Israel, continued to prevail in society. Although outwith the scope of this thesis, it is interesting to note that the rise of ideas on identity, culture and ‘civilisations’, including their clash, after the end of the Cold War supported this long-standing societal norm in Egypt, as arguably elsewhere.

Paradigms for Understanding Israel

I consider ideas on Israel as deriving from more comprehensive theories of international relations developed by intellectuals associated with broad political and ideological currents in Egypt, specifically Marxism, Liberal nationalism and Islamism. I argue that this has led to Israel being conceptualised within three paradigms, which I term (1) anti-imperialism, (2) the nation-state and (3) the culture-clash. Anti-imperialism conceives of Israel primarily as organically connected to world imperialism, which is itself driven by the imperatives of capitalism, and acts mainly to further capitalist imperialist interests in the face of ‘progressive’ forces in the region. Under the nation-state paradigm, Israel emerges as a sovereign state in its own right, not reducible to colonialism, and having its own distinct

national interests which may or may not be compatible with those of other states in the region. The culture-clash paradigm prioritises Israel's status as a Jewish entity and manifestation of Jewish culture, or part of a broader Western civilisation, presenting a cultural, intellectual and political threat to Arab or Islamic societies.

Although there are clear parallels and overlaps between these paradigms and the three political ideologies mentioned, they are not coterminous. The concept of ideology is essential to the discussion on the domestic, regional and international context in which ideas on Israel were elaborated in Egypt. But in studying those ideas themselves, I argue that it is useful to divorce them from ideology and view them instead within paradigms. For Thomas Kuhn, 'men whose research is based on shared paradigms are committed to the same rules and standards for scientific practice. That commitment and the apparent consensus it produces are prerequisites for normal science...'⁸ For our purposes, then, the paradigms of anti-imperialism, the nation-state and the culture-clash each comprise distinguishable assumptions, rules and axioms about Israel. To use more recognisably Kuhnian terms, Israel represents for Egyptian intellectuals a 'puzzle' within 'scientific communities' whose view of international relations is defined by different paradigms, and who consequently see different things when they 'look at' Israel. Paradigm shifts, or 'revolutions' represent, as Kuhn himself argued, 'changes in world-view.'⁹

On the face of it, this definition differs little from the concept of 'ideology'. But I argue that discussing views on Israel in terms of the anti-imperialism paradigm is more useful than elaborating the 'Marxist conception of Israel.' For one, it frees the descriptive or methodological aspect of ideologies like Marxism from the programmatic or prescriptive. It is not necessary, then, to enter into discussion of what is the 'correct' Marxist analysis of Israel, or the extent to which Egyptian Marxists have 'deviated' from any such correct position in approaching Israel. Neither does it behove us to enquire to what extent a particular thinker is a 'real' Marxist, or the extent to which Nasser, in articulating a specific conception of Israel or regional relations was directly informed by Marxism, particularly since, in focussing on the evolution of thought on specific issues such as Israel, many assumptions are shared across ideologies. It also allows us to avoid the methodological problems associated with generalisation when hybridised, and potentially contested, ideological schools, such as the 'Islamic left', of 'Islamic liberalism', may exist.

The objection may also be made that using the concept of paradigm, with its emphasis on Kuhnian 'scientific communities', implies a certain organisational coherence among those who share the same paradigm. But Kuhn was clear that paradigms are often unconsciously

held and a product of educational experiences. More than this, I argue that applied to the study of ideas on foreign policy, the concept of paradigm helps reflect the extent to which political discourses in a single state-society complex have interacted with and influenced each other, as well as the role of assumptions prevalent in particular ‘international societies’ in which that social formation has existed. Thus, while I do not intend to deny the existence of, or validity of studying, ‘ideological’ communities, such as the Egyptian communist movement, or transnational ideological movements, such as Islamism, much less imply that ‘ideological’ labels are meaningless, I recognise that within the Egyptian case Islamists, Marxists, Nasserists and liberal nationalists inhabited to a great extent a common ‘public sphere’. Looking at approaches to a particular ‘puzzle’, such as Israel, it is clear that liberal nationalists and Marxists concurred on some issues in the 1970s, as did Maoists and Islamists—although naturally there were many issues on which they differed.

Using the concept of paradigm in this way also facilitates the examination of conceptualisations shared between, in Gramscian terms, ‘hegemonic’ and ‘counter-hegemonic’ forces in Egyptian society and hence elucidate the combining of ‘old and new’ that was central to Gramsci’s analysis of ideology, as well as Carr’s observations on the role of ‘propaganda’ in international relations. Regimes too drew on ideas associated with different ideologically defined groups, in direct relation to the political salience of these groups domestically. Thus although the parallels with Kuhn’s scientific communities (which tended to exist without competition) should not be over-stressed, his recognition of the shared experiences which shaped adherents to a particular paradigm is useful in the context of this thesis. In the paragraphs that follow I briefly summarise the elaboration of the abovementioned paradigms with respect to Israel in Egypt since 1952.

Anti-Imperialism

The anti-imperialism paradigm for understanding Israel rose to the fore in Egypt after 1956. It represented an extension of the Egyptian communist, and Soviet, analysis of Zionism as a tool of imperialism prior to 1947 and transposition of this analysis onto the State of Israel itself. Domestically, a ‘socialist intelligentsia’ and the deep-rooted popular resonance of anti-British colonialism facilitated the conception, particularly after Suez, of Israel in imperialist terms, a resonance that extended onto the regional level via the Ba’th, Arab Nationalists Movement and other groups informed by Marxist-Leninist ideology and accustomed to anti-colonial mobilisation. The international setting was important in providing a broader context and potential support reservoir for anti-imperialist causes. The USSR and Afro-Asian Movement actively promoted the cause of anti-colonialism internationally and, particularly after Nasser’s attendance at the Bandung Summit of 1955,

Egypt and other Arab states saw the value in promoting their own causes in terms of a broader anti-colonialist struggle. After the 1967 Six Day War, Israel was still largely treated as a manifestation of US imperialism, but defeating it was not seen as the endgame of a broader struggle against imperialist influence in the region. From the beginning of Sadat's presidency, Israel, Zionism and imperialism were isolated as separate threats. By 1974, Sadat was able to pronounce that 'expansionist Zionism' was dead, and, in the context of moving closer to the West, renounce the anti-imperialism paradigm for understanding Israel. From this point, the paradigm became primarily oppositional and, as will be shown, 'counter-hegemonic', receiving a boost regionally from the ripples of the Iranian Revolution.

Nation-State

Although the Nasser years are probably most closely associated with this paradigm for understanding Israel, it was neither consistently nor exclusively applied. In the early years of the revolution, when the regime adopted a tentatively pro-West posture, Israel was not treated as an appendage of imperialism (a conclusion that the so-called 'Lavon Affair' in which Israeli operatives sabotaged British and American targets supported). Indeed, it seemed possible until 1955 that Egypt-Israel relations could proceed toward some kind of normalisation. But as hopes for peace faded, negotiations for American arms floundered, Israel attacked Egyptian-controlled Gaza, and the Nasser regime blamed Israel, and its influence within the United States, rather than imperialism. Further, apart from during brief periods when the imperative of a 'unity of progressive forces' underpinned Nasser's foreign policy doctrine, the regime pursued relations—often couched in terms of 'peaceful coexistence'—with so-called 'reactionary' Arab regimes. It also, particularly after 1958, sought to improve Egypt's relations with the West. This meant that viewing imperialism as the principal enemy, and Israel as a mere tool of imperialism, was harder to sustain. Instead, Israel and Zionism emerged as independent threats, with Zionist influence in America deemed more important as an explanation of US support for Israel than the imperatives of capitalism and imperialism in a Leninist sense. The nation-state conception of Israel was, however, largely recessive in Egyptian foreign policy discourse until 1973, with Nasser's regional posture foreshadowing, rather than defining the paradigm. This reflects the limitations of international powers in shaping the ideas of their clients on specific issues, as opposed to providing an 'international society' for general ideas, since the USSR emphatically upheld Israel's right to exist as a legitimate nation-state.

Culture-clash

The culture-clash paradigm, which prioritised the role of Jews over imperialism or national interests, never formed the main component of the Nasser or Sadat regime's view of Israel,

although each used certain of its motifs on occasion. Nasser, for example, drew on the idea that communism and Zionism were two sides of the same quest for Jewish domination to denigrate Arab communists. Sadat, prior to the October 1973 War, also described the Jews as a long-standing adversary of Islam aimed at subverting the Egyptian ‘creed’ (*aqida*). The paradigm was consistently promoted by Islamist actors, foremost of which was the Muslim Brotherhood, from the 1930s until the end of the 1970s. As with other aspects of Brotherhood thought, while the regime may have pursued policies and promoted ideas that contradicted it, neither Nasser nor Sadat directly challenged the culture-clash paradigm with respect to Israel, and, particularly after 1967, it appeared in various state-sanctioned publications. The culture-clash paradigm stressed Jewish control of the United States and Soviet Union, in a similar way to nation-state analyses which stressed Zionist or Jewish influence over US policy, as an instrument of Israeli foreign policy, over the imperatives of global capitalism, and as such was not incompatible with Sadat’s strategy of engaging America and trying to weaken Israeli influence there. But the view of Israel in terms of a culture-clash also shared with the anti-imperialism paradigm the conviction that the Jews, or Zionists supported by imperialism, aspired to establish a state from the Nile to the Euphrates and hence dominate the Arab world. Following 1977, the culture-clash paradigm became increasingly counter-hegemonic. In the 1960s Sayyid Qutb had concluded that Nasser had been co-opted by the Jews, and after Sadat’s visit to Jerusalem, this interpretation of the regime became increasingly plausible. This was a key assumption underpinning the ideology of radical *jihadi* groups in Egypt, such as the Society of Muslims (*al-Takfir wa-al-Hijra*) and al-Jihad, groups that opposed confrontation with Israel in favour of toppling the infidel regimes that encouraged nefarious Western and Jewish influence in the Muslim world.

In analysing the elaboration of these paradigms for understanding Israel I discuss regime statements as well as the ideas of a number of authors through an analysis of books and articles. It is interesting to note, and consistent with the Gramscian conceptual framework I adopt, that intellectuals moved between paradigms over the course of their careers in ways that can be related to the shifting political context. Lutfi al-Khuli and Sa’d Eddine Ibrahim, for example, made significant contributions to the articulation of both the anti-imperialism and nation-state paradigms. Nasser’s key spokesman, Muhammad Hasanein Heikal too, particularly in keeping pace with Nasser’s own foreign policy shifts, oscillated between these two perspectives. Paradigms, moreover, did not always appear in ‘pure’ or self-conscious form: the student *Gama’at Islamiyya* in the 1970s, for example, often re-stated anti-imperialist conceptions of Israel in Islamic terms. Some thinkers, most particularly

Abdel Wahhab Elmessiri and Sa'd Eddine Ibrahim explicitly addressed the contradictory ways in which Arabs have interpreted Israel and located their own ideas within particular paradigms (without using that term), but most discussed Israel unreflectively. Having said that, most of the authors discussed in the thesis were clearly aware of, and actively attempted to debunk, contending paradigms and recognised that the way in which Israel was perceived had important implications for political action. Constantine Zurayq, for example, took aim at communist analyses and strategy. Sadiq al-Azm was harshly critical of the Islamist focus on culture regarding Israel. Muhammad Galal Kishk, Yusuf Qaradawi and writers in the Muslim Brotherhood's *al-Da'wa* newspaper took explicit aim at Egyptian and Arab communists, with communist complicity in the Zionist project and ignorance of the threat Israel posed to Arab and Islamic culture representing a central part of the Islamist camp's own 'instrumentalisation' of Israel against their domestic political rivals.

The Role of Ideas in International Relations and Foreign Policy Analysis

The central contribution this thesis seeks to make to IR and FPA is to suggest, by studying the Egyptian case, a new way of conceptualising the role of ideas through the incorporation of the intervening variable of 'nature of state'. I argue that accounting for the role of ideas should involve asking not only 'whether' ideas drive foreign policy or merely provide ideological cover for self-interest, but 'why' particular ideas are chosen and encouraged both to articulate policy and to describe the nature of the international environment and other actors. Further, in asking the 'why' question, I argue that we need to go further than a concept of 'national identity' that is forged through 'debates' and 'dialogues' to become 'momentarily fixed' and to consider the role of power, both international and domestic, in the development of ideas, a consideration which requires an understanding of the nature of the state-society complex in question. Looking at the choice of paradigms employed by 'counter-hegemonic' movements and the state's intellectual responses to their challenge, may help us understand why foreign policy orientations, in cases such as that of Egypt toward Israel, have resisted stabilisation over many years. This thesis, in examining the evolution of ideas in a domestic, regional and international context, thus represents a step toward increasing the utility of studying ideas in FPA and IR in general.

Within the field of IR, ideas are relegated to secondary importance in the dominant neo-realism paradigm.¹⁰ Considered as 'ideology' they function mainly to justify policies that are in reality determined by *raison d'état*. The eschewal of ideology, identity and other 'unit-level' variables in neo-realism approaches arguably relates to the separation between IR and its subfield, FPA. At its inception, foreign policy, including the philosophy seen to underpin

it, was at the heart of the discipline, as evinced in the work of E.H. Carr. Thus, although Carr's approach to the role of ideas in foreign policy can be construed as 'realist', in that he saw ideas as responding to and buttressing foreign policy orientations in reality dictated by *raison d'état*, he nonetheless considered it crucial to understand the way in which ideas were formed and used by intellectuals, bureaucrats and statesmen, which arguably stemmed from his conviction that some genuine convergence between the 'real' reasons for foreign policies and the ideas used to justify them was both possible and necessary to avert war. Carr's use of the sociology of knowledge to this end was not replicated by realists who followed him, particularly Kenneth Waltz and his 'neo-realist' followers who designated the 'international system' as the primary unit of analysis and treated states as functionally alike 'billiard balls'.¹¹

Analysts of foreign policy prioritise the internal characteristics of international actors to identify the various internal and external factors that contribute to foreign policy formulation. Ideas are considered significant at the 'state', or foreign policy decision-making, level, whether narrowly in terms of elites' psychological profiles, or more broadly in terms of the role played by culture, norms, or 'world-view' in shaping leaders' perceptions. Some, like Ibrahim Karawan, have opted for the 'leader-dominant' model and viewed Egyptian foreign policy in the 1970s to be a result of Sadat's own psychology and perceptions.¹² The focus on ideas as influencing elites reflects the realist designation of the state as the primary unit of analysis, and, while not misplaced, neglects the consideration of ideas in a broader sense. Part of the problem with using realism to study the foreign policies of Middle East states, as arguably elsewhere, is that the states of the region are in the 'process' of consolidation.¹³ As such, 'the realist model, in which elites represent loyal populations insulated from external influence in the conduct of foreign policy, must be substantially modified in analysis of the region.'¹⁴

In studies of authoritarian states, such as those of the Middle East, the 'public' is often assumed to have only a limited influence on foreign policy,¹⁵ although it has been noted that where the prevailing public 'mood' or 'core values' tend in a certain direction, toward anti-imperialism or anti-communism, for example, public opinion may play a 'constraining' role on foreign policy decision-makers.¹⁶ Within the Egyptian context, McLaurin et al have shown how, just as in democratic states, the role of public opinion must be viewed in terms of the channels through which 'publics' interface with decision-makers, through the actions of 'interest-groups'.¹⁷ Where ideas are perceived to matter in foreign policy decision-making, as for Keohane and Goldstein, they 'influence foreign policy when the principled or

causal beliefs they embody provide road maps that increase actors' clarity about goals or end-means relationships, when they affect outcomes of strategic situations in which there is no unique equilibrium, and when they become embedded in political institutions.¹⁸ Further, they continue, 'once institutionalised...to guide action in the absence of costly innovation.'¹⁹

Keohane and Goldstein divide ideas into three categories to explain their relevance to foreign policy. At the foreign policy decision-making level, most significant are 'principled beliefs', which 'mediate between world-views and particular policy conclusions; they translate fundamental doctrines into guidance for contemporary action,' and 'causal beliefs', which incorporate 'beliefs about cause-effect relationships which derive authority from the shared consensus of recognised elites, whether they be village elders or scientists at elite institutions.'²⁰ Broader conceptually are ideas that form 'world-views', which include 'modern', and 'pre-modern', and seem synonymous with 'culture' or 'identity'. This classification is echoed in Buzan and Wæver's taxonomic differentiation between the security concerns of 'pre-modern', 'modern' and 'post-modern' states. The latter authors see most Middle Eastern states as modern, defined as 'closed off' nationalist states and sharing this characteristic with fascist states. Pre-modern states, for Buzan and Wæver, include such examples as Somalia that are on the brink of collapse.²¹ Keohane and Goldstein, citing Ruggie, argue that 'fundamental modernist concepts such as market rationality, sovereignty, and personal privacy would not have been comprehensible before the development of appropriate terms of social discourse,' and that 'neither human rights nor sovereignty nor Stalinism would have made any sense in those pre-modern societies in which people's lives were governed by notions of magic or fate.'²² 'For traditionalist or religious fundamentalist societies even today,' they conclude, 'the individualistic and secular scientific premises of this world-view remain intellectually and morally alien.'²³

Neither Buzan and Wæver nor Keohane and Goldstein explore the possibility that pre-modern, modern and post-modern characteristics may coexist within a given state-society complex. Their conceptual framework suggests a relatively straightforward conjunction between society (which may be pre-modern) and foreign policy decision-makers, with the principled or causal beliefs that may form the road-maps for policy deriving ultimately from a much broader cultural bedrock. This thesis suggests that, judging by the case of Egypt at any rate, such a conception of the role of ideas in foreign policy replicates the realist assumption referred to above, that 'elites represent loyal populations insulated from external influence' and cannot account for not only a multiplicity of political views, but of divergent *world-views*. In the Egyptian case, such a framework leaves important questions

unanswered: If Egyptian ‘society’ was pre-modern in the 1950s and 1960s, being defined by a predominantly religious world-view, how do we analyse the role of socialism and positive neutralism in Nasserist foreign policy doctrine? How do we interpret the role of anti-imperialism as a component of Egyptian ‘core belief’? Anti-imperialism may form an important component of the ‘public mood’, but can take multiple forms: the anti-imperialism of Sa’d Zaghlul differed from that of Hasan al-Banna, Henri Curiel or Gamal Abdel Nasser. Recognising that socialist-oriented anti-imperialism, and the conception of Israel from within these terms, had weak social roots helps us understand why such conceptions were not ‘institutionalised’ and may help explain how Nasser was able to, almost reflexively, argue against ‘left-wing nationalism’ after 1967, and how Sadat felt able to make peace with Israel, the erstwhile ‘arm of imperialism’. Similarly, how do we explain Sadat’s use of not only religious, but also liberal, justifications for Egyptian foreign policy in the 1970s, particularly his appeal to distinctly modern categories such as ‘sovereignty’?

Turning to the question of Israel, the occupation of the West Bank in 1967 could be interpreted within a ‘modern’ liberal or Marxist world-view in terms of Israel pursuing its own strategic interests, but violating international law, or blindly serving its imperialist masters. In ‘pre-modern’ terms, it could be seen as the natural and predictable continuation of an age-old Jewish conspiracy against Islam. Such interpretations would clearly constitute different ‘principled’ or ‘causal’ beliefs, and suggest different foreign policy recommendations (recognise Israeli interests and seek a negotiated solution, continue to fight imperialism in all its forms, launch a *jihad*, or mark time until Egypt is civilised, socialist or Islamic enough to reverse the defeat). Causal beliefs, in turn, would be different depending on the ‘recognised elites’ whose consensus is sought to inform foreign policy choices. A group of *al-Azhar* sheikhs may offer different causal explanations for Israeli actions than scholars at the al-Ahram Centre for Strategic and Political Studies, or Marxist intellectuals in the Arab Socialist Union’s Vanguard Unit. Either we assume that in cases such as Egypt, where modern and pre-modern coexist in state and society, the ‘culture’ of the decision-making group is all that matters, or we look for other ways of broadening our conceptualisation of the role of ideas in such states.

From the late 1980s, what would become known as ‘constructivism’ began to challenge the realist distaste for studying the role of ideas in international relations. Constructivism examines how certain ideas become ‘socialised’ in the international system through the interaction of units, mainly states; as well as, secondarily, how socialisation within states contributes to the institutionalisation of norms at the state level and helps shape the state’s

foreign policy ‘role’. Major examples of the application of the former to the Middle East are Michael Barnett’s *Dialogues in Arab Politics*²⁴, and Raymond Hinnebusch’s *International Politics of the Middle East*.²⁵ Although Barnett’s inter-state variant of the constructivist approach to Middle East international politics presents useful analysis of the role played by inter-Arab one-upmanship in driving the evolution of identities like Arabism in the region, I argue that this dynamic, while crucial, represents only one among many that influenced the development, and potentially operationalisation, of ideas on various questions, including the nature of the State of Israel. For one, the treatment of the Arab world as a states system, while analytically important, arguably downplays the effects of broader global ideological change on the types of ‘identity’ promoted by Arab states, a dynamic that Hinnebusch’s more holistic approach, which draws on constructivist, structuralist, realist and pluralist theories, goes some way toward incorporating. Moreover, the focus of IR constructivists on the spread of norms internationally through the interaction of states largely obviates the integration of sub-state interactions, which tend to be treated as *a priori*, into their international theory. Constructivists that focus more on FPA address this latter issue, with the most recent and comprehensive application to the Middle East being Barnett and Telhami’s *Identity and Foreign Policy in the Middle East*.²⁶ They nevertheless apply themselves to considering how and why certain national identities become ‘momentarily fixed’ at the level of the state to allow analysis of state-state ideational interactions.

In taking aim at neo-realists, constructivists did not herald a return to the more integrated approach of Carr, but rather sought to show that ideas in the main *constituted* rather than bolstered or masked interests. Thus, Barnett and Telhami contend that ‘Arabism constituted Arab states with Arab national interests’.²⁷ They view identity construction in terms of political ‘debates’ or ‘dialogues’ through which a ‘particular formulation becomes momentarily fixed’.²⁸ Barnett and Telhami recognise that under the general rubric of identity more nuanced categories exist, such as conservative versus radical Arabism, and highlight the fact that ‘International Relations scholars have not been quick to examine these debates’²⁹ due to a preoccupation with introducing the concept of identity to the field, but nonetheless maintain a strong focus on ‘identity’ as the primary category for understanding the role of ideas. To argue that Egypt’s ‘Arab’, ‘Islamic’, ‘Mediterranean’ or other ‘identity’ shaped regime and intellectual approaches to Israel conceals the variations within identities thus defined: as Barnett and Telhami have noted, for example, Pan-Arabism can be radical or conservative. Equally, though, viewing the formation of foreign policy ideas in terms of identity obscures the many compatibilities that exist between certain ‘identities’ and

conceptions of the international and other actors. Thus proponents of an ‘Islamic’ identity may share with those who see Egypt as Western, or Mediterranean, a view of Israel that highlights the role of Jews and Jewish culture in defining its interests, as well as the role of Jewish Americans in furthering them. Those that see Egypt as ‘Arab’ may view Israel as an arm of imperialism in a way that is conceptually similar to an ‘Islamic’ view of Israel as representing a tool of world Jewish and crusader forces, with both ‘identities’ supporting a view that Israel’s primary task is to fragment the unity of the Arab world.

Although only the most radical of constructivists deny that the available forms identity can take in a given social formation are ‘limited by history’,³⁰ and culture, Barnett and Telhami consider identities to be available to regimes for selection from a ‘menu of choices’. The conceptualisation of identity in terms of an item selected from menu, or formed through debate and dialogue, substantially removes from the equation the category of power, and thus an adequate theorisation of the state, for IR constructivists, arguably due to a fear of sliding back into the territory of realism. Ideas emerge as substantially delinked from power in both its international and domestic forms, as well as concrete interests. They are not, as Perry Anderson has pointed out with reference to postmodernism, recognised as being ‘rooted in things,’ a consequence also attributable to the centrality accorded to language as the basis of identity and of group images about other actors and the nature of the international system. For Anderson, assumptions about the fundamentally arbitrary relationship between the ‘signifier’, ‘signified’ and ‘referent’ in language borrowed from the field of structural linguistics should not be extended to other fields, such as economics, where value is not arbitrary but ‘rooted in things.’³¹

In self-consciously eschewing the realist attribution of all ideational factors to the imperative of *raison d'état*, constructivists largely discount the role of power. As Hinnebusch and Ehteshami note,

constructivism’s neglect of power leads it to ignore the extent to which the decline of Pan-Arabism was ultimately rooted in the power struggles unleashed by three major wars—the 1967 Arab-Israeli war and the two Gulf wars. ... Anwar Sadat’s separate peace with Israel, the classic case where Arab collective interests were sacrificed to reason of state, was legitimized by appeal to the doctrine of sovereignty and precipitated a similar recourse to self-help by the other Arab states...³²

Constructivists also arguably underplay the role of power on the domestic, and not just international, level. This thesis suggests that rather than simply constituting ‘debates’ or ‘dialogues’, political discourse in Egypt has been characterised by the frequent resort to repression, whether in the form of mass arrests and torture of intellectuals and activists, or

through censorship. At this level interests are indeed important in the sense that most have an interest in avoiding incarceration and torture. Power is also used domestically to induce—the promise of a role in government, the editorship of a major newspaper, or simply the opportunity to occupy an academic, journalistic or scientific post—all these work to encourage or inhibit the articulation of ideas that form the basis of ‘identity debates.’ Recognising this is thus not to suggest that all elements of foreign policy discourse are self-consciously orchestrated by the state to justify *raison d'état* on the international stage. It is rather to argue that *raison d'état* constitutes just one motivation for the wielding of state power in the domestic context. Since, as I argue in this thesis, ideas on foreign policy are articulated in the context of broader political ideologies by groups that have a bearing on domestic politics, regimes also have purely domestic reasons for using power to limit or set the terms of so-called identity debates.

A further problem with constructivism, with which this thesis seeks to engage, is the assumption, even among those that study sub-unit-level identity construction, that particular identities become ‘momentarily fixed’ at the level of the state.³³ As the theoretical discussion in Chapter 2 shows, such an assumption continues the ‘Eurocentric’ assumption that all states are alike, and that through democratic political action a consensus, albeit fleeting, on what national identity constitutes, can be reached. In other areas of IR and FPA, the distinction between ‘strong’ and ‘weak’ states is made³⁴, in generally Weberian terms, to reveal the variable integration between state and society, or the extent of a regime’s ‘legitimacy’ in the eyes of a population. While states in the Middle East have frequently been asserted to suffer from ‘legitimacy deficits’, the focus on the Weberian notion of legitimacy in many studies of Middle East politics, as well as in security studies and FPA, furthers the idea of a straightforward dichotomy between state, on the one hand, and society on the other. Under the legitimacy paradigm, regimes manipulate identity to bolster their legitimacy before society. Thus, in Egypt, the regime adopts Arabism or Islamic symbols in order to appear more legitimate: ‘Sadat attempted to bolster Egypt’s Islamic identity for political reasons, only to discover that religious groups violently opposed his version of that identity.’³⁵ If, the logic follows, Sadat had got the identity ‘right’, he would not have had to pay the ultimate price. It is hard to imagine what identity, as opposed to shift in actual policy, Sadat could have chosen to save his life.

Even when distinction is made between ‘strong’ and ‘weak’ states, the application of the concept of legitimacy reveals a corresponding disregard for power *within society*. Ideologically-defined groups may, often through the combination of material services,

occasional resort to coercion and an intellectually ‘resonant’ political vision, command a grass-roots and thus political power that may represent both a threat and an opportunity for regimes. Such, ‘counter-hegemonies’ may operate domestically as ‘states within states’ and act to sustain certain terms of reference, conceptions of other international actors and theories of international relations irrespective of political ‘dialogues’ conducted at the regime level in ways that discussions of strong and weak states organised around the concept of legitimacy fail to recognise. Regimes will, based on assessments of the strength of counter-hegemonies versus their own, including international, sources of power, choose to either borrow or discredit elements of the counter-hegemonic ideology in ways that change over time. It is thus necessary, as Gramsci would have it, to conduct an ‘accurate reconnaissance’ of the particular state in order to assess the relationship between ideas and foreign policy and incorporate an understanding of the role of counter-hegemonic groups.

The concept of ‘ideology’, which is used extensively in this thesis, foregrounds some of the features of an intellectual landscape that ‘identity’ obscures, particularly in the Gramscian usage, which links ideas to state, or class, power. Thus, rather than comparing views of Israel from within ‘Mediterranean’ or ‘Arab’ identity, one could ask how liberal nationalists or Marxists viewed Israel. Rather than asking what impact ‘Muslim identity’ had on conceptions of other state actors, one would ask how ‘Islamists’ conceptualised them. Other problems arise, however, when using ideology to study ideas on a specific issue, like Israel. Ideologies change over time and distance. Egyptian Marxists in the 1960s viewed Israel differently from Soviet Marxists, or Egyptian Marxists in the late 1940s. Individuals may change their politics, differ over their interpretations of ideology or defy easy categorisation. Ideological schools split and merge. Ideological tags may be misleading (the Egyptian Labour Party may in reality be Islamist) or be used as smears (followers of Gamal Abdel Nasser may be conflated with communists; communists equated with Zionists; Islamists dubbed fascists). How does one determine whether ideological conviction or opportunism has led to intellectual change on the part of the individual Marxist or liberal, or whether an individual has ‘defected’ ideologically, rather than that the ideology is itself evolving in a national context? I contend that the paradigm approach followed here overcomes some of these difficulties with the concepts of identity or ideology in that it highlights the ideological synergies and disconnects between groups and the regime in a given state on a specific issue.

Studies of Egyptian Ideas on Israel

This thesis also seeks to make a contribution to our understanding of Egypt by providing a historically integrated study of intellectual and regime approaches to Israel from different

parts of the political spectrum, and using a sociology of knowledge approach to this end. Egyptian ideas on Israel tend to be discussed in the context of the broader ideological evolution of particular political movements, such as the Egyptian communist movement, or the—still relatively few—studies of the Muslim Brotherhood.³⁶ More focussed on international issues is the work of Walid Abdehnasser³⁷ on the Egyptian Islamist movement’s approaches to international relations—still perhaps the only work to deal systematically with this topic.* This work, which includes substantial discussion of the role of Israel in Egyptian Islamist thought is a useful contribution to the subject from an IR, or FPA, perspective. But, despite some theoretical discussion of social movements, ideology and foreign policy in its introduction, the work tends toward the descriptive rather than analytical in tracing the evolution of ideas. Alongside Abdehnasser’s work, Gilles Kepel’s seminal study of Islamism in Egypt³⁸ provides probably the most comprehensive analysis of Islamist conceptions of Israel, and valuable discussion of Brotherhood activities during the normally neglected Nasser period, and also usefully highlights Islamism’s many intellectual debts to the left.

In these empirical studies, though, conceptions of Israel are considered alongside other issues pertinent to the movements in question and necessarily exclude detailed consideration of the views of other political movements or the ways in which regimes draw on ideas formulated by intellectuals of different political persuasions. Studies of the Nasser and Sadat regimes³⁹, including their foreign policies⁴⁰, likewise address intellectual approaches to Israel tangentially.

Nothing yet exists on Egyptian domestic and international politics to rival Yezid Sayigh’s theoretically informed history of the Palestinian national movement,⁴¹ which contains important evidence of evolving Palestinian positions regarding Israel, with detailed discussion of the internal Palestinian as well as regional and international political dynamics that underpinned shifting conceptions. Although the question of Israel obviously loomed larger in Palestinian than other Arab societies, Sayigh’s work provides a useful model for examining the interaction of political factors on multiple levels and the reflections of this interplay in ideology. His focus on the role of state-building as a key element driving ideological change is also one that can be applied to other ‘incomplete’ state-building projects in the region.

* In recent years a number of works have appeared on ‘*Jihad*’, but they tend, for obvious reasons, to focus on radical Islamist groups. See e.g. Fawaz A. Gerges, *The Far Enemy : Why Jihad Went Global* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

Work that analyses Nasser and Sadat's own conceptions of Israel includes P.J. Vatikiotis' *Nasser and His Generation*,⁴² the several books by Muhammad Hasanein Heikal⁴³, and most recently an archival study by Laura James.⁴⁴ Particularly in the work of Vatikiotis, Nasser's conceptions are considered largely as independent variables that help explain Egyptian foreign policy in light of his desire for regional domination, with the role of other political movements only considered significant to the extent that, prior to the revolution, they informed the world-view of Nasser, and his generation. Following the revolution, for Vatikiotis and many other observers of Egypt, the sphere of relevant politics in Egypt contracted to the narrow confines of the regime itself, reflecting a particular understanding of Egyptian political economy. Avi Shlaim's *The Iron Wall*⁴⁵ provides evidence of the Egyptian regime's actual, as opposed to rhetorical, perceptions of Israel that challenge, particularly for the 1952-1955 period, the dominant Israeli narrative of perpetual Arab and Egyptian hostility to that state.

The literature that focuses on the role of Palestine in Egyptian politics is more substantial, but often takes for granted Arab and Egyptian antipathy toward Zionism as the antithesis of Arab or Muslim identity. It has also largely been from an historical rather than social science perspective. The vast majority concentrate on the pre-1952 (or 1954) period when, admittedly, most of the foundational conceptions of both Palestine and Zionism/Israel were established. One, by Thomas Mayer⁴⁶, considers the evolution of Egyptian policy on the Palestine question up to the end of the Second World War, while another, that of Abd al-Fatah al-Awaisi⁴⁷ considers the role of Palestine in the thought and politics of the Muslim Brotherhood in the same period. Talhami's *Palestine and Egyptian National Identity*⁴⁸, which actually deals with far more than the title suggests, examines political discourse in Egypt through the end of the Sadat period and persuasively argues that many of the Egyptian regime's international positions, including Pan-Arabism, were rooted in traditional strategic concerns, usefully combining this external focus with attention to domestic politics. The book constitutes a valuable resource on many important intellectual developments, but does not discuss conceptions of Zionism and Israel in depth. Similar in tenor, but with a narrower chronological scope to Talhami's work is Raymond Baker's *Sadat and After*⁴⁹, which explores debates on a variety of issues, including Israel, within Muslim Brotherhood, Marxist, liberal and Nasserist intellectual circles. Baker's work, while invaluable as evidence of the diversity in Egyptian political discourse, arguably downplays the role of power and coercion in regulating intellectual production in Egypt in favour of highlighting the intellectual vitality of Egyptian civil society.

Studies that do tackle the issue of Egyptian attitudes to Israel head-on focus mainly on Islamic thinkers, and question whether intellectuals are ‘anti-Semitic’ or ‘anti-Israeli’, or whether they support or oppose peace with Israel, without addressing the more complex issues and contexts surrounding such positions.⁵⁰ Other, mainly orientalist, scholars place contemporary thinking on Israel in the context of a long historical encounter between Muslims and Jews.⁵¹ Another tendency in the literature is to focus on Islamist discourse on Israel, either with a view to placing apparent anti-Semitism in an historical and political context and excusing it⁵² or in order to suggest that Islam, or Muslims, are somehow inherently anti-Jewish.^{*53} The emphasis on Islamist discourse has encouraged works which draw together such figures and groups as Sayyid Qutb, Usama Bin Laden, Hamas and Hizbullah in a way which, even though it may stress the variations between these movements’ approaches, in neglecting the influence of non-Islamist Muslim and Arab thinkers contributes to a different kind of essentialisation. The recent work of Matthias Küntzel on the ‘Nazi roots’ of Islamist anti-Semitism is similarly focused on Islamists while ignoring the broader Arab intellectual field, perhaps also ascribing too much weight to the role, and continuity, of imported ideas.⁵⁴ Such focus on Islamist actors, particularly historically, has led not only to the neglect of other approaches to Israel within Egyptian society, but also to an exaggeration of the impact the Muslim Brotherhood and others have had on Egyptian-Israeli relations. Thus, Jacob Abadi makes the unsubstantiated claim that ‘One of the main obstacles to normalization was the attitude of the Islamic groups towards Zionism and Israel.’⁵⁵ The available correctives to the rather ‘presentist’ preoccupation with Islamists include, alongside Baker’s book cited above, the work of Joel Beinin⁵⁶, which reviews the parallel histories of the Egyptian and Israeli communist movements and provides important evidence of an internationalist conception of Israel, as well as, slightly more tangentially, Gudrun Krämer’s⁵⁷ work on the Jews of Egypt.

There is thus a gap in the literature on the Middle East which this thesis seeks to fill, namely a systematic consideration of the role Israel has played in Egyptian political thought *as a whole*, particularly in the post-revolutionary period, in an international, regional and domestic context; a task for which the sociology of knowledge approach followed here is particularly suited.

* For Karsh, ‘It has been rightly observed that modern, ideological, anti-Semitism is an invention of nineteenth century Europe ... But the ease and rapidity with which the precepts of European anti-Semitism were assimilated by the Muslim-Arab world testify to the pre-existence of a deep anti-Jewish bigotry.’ Efraim Karsh, “The Long Trail of Islamic Anti-Semitism,” *Israel Affairs* 12, no. 1 (2006): 2.

Rationale and Methodology

In examining Egypt I seek to provide what has been termed a ‘hypothesis-generating’ or ‘heuristic’ case study, or one that will ‘exploit the author’s familiarity with a given case to help generate new hypotheses or theories, which can be subsequently tested in a more rigorous design.’⁵⁸ With this in mind, in studying the role of ideas in foreign policy, Egypt represents a useful case study for several reasons. First, Egypt’s foreign policy orientation has undergone significant changes since the end of the Second World War when, formally free from British control, the Egyptian government began to pursue an independent foreign policy. It thus represents an interesting test case for the contention that ideas evolve to justify or render intelligible self-interested policies. Since the regime had the freedom of action to change its international and regional orientation, it is a good case for examining the impact of foreign policy itself on the formation of ideas. Second, unlike many other post-colonial entities in the region, the Egyptian state has been quite stable. Egyptian society is not particularly sectarian as compared with some of the other states in the region, its borders have been recognised as to a large degree ‘natural’ and the country has a long history of centralised government. These factors have often been considered to afford the regime a relatively high freedom of action vis-à-vis society in conducting foreign policy and, relatedly, in shaping and responding to ideas about foreign policy and international relations.⁵⁹ This apparent autonomy of the regime from domestic pressures, which has permitted dramatic policy shifts, allows us to examine the types of ideas drawn on to keep pace with these shifts and question the forces behind these choices. Third, Egypt has a rich and dynamic intellectual history and a broad cultural and political footprint. Egypt can be regarded as a crucible for the production of many of the ideas that accompany the shifting position of Zionism and Israel in the thinking of a global Islamist movement, as well as within the context of the Arab nationalist and Third World movements. Although the cultural significance of Cairo may have declined since the end of the 1960s, Egyptian publishing and broadcasting has long occupied a central place in the Arab world and ideas developed in Egypt influence Arab intellectuals elsewhere. Finally, despite the frequent recourse of Egyptian regimes to repression, the significance of which is discussed in this thesis, Egypt has constituted a relatively open society, both in terms of the extent to which the regime has tolerated discussion of foreign policy issues and in the access intellectuals have enjoyed to ideas originating internationally.

Within the Egyptian case study, focussing on thinking on Israel is also instructive. Perhaps more than any other issue of foreign policy, the question of Israel has been instrumentalised, or even ‘securitised’, and come to impinge directly on domestic politics: Nasser’s Arab

nationalism, with its socialist dimensions, entailed a certain idea of Israel that emphasised its imperialist and capitalist, as well as non-Arab, character. Proponents of the greater Islamicisation of Egyptian society, the eradication of atheism, and the marginalisation of Egyptian Copts, emphasised Israel's Jewish character and its occupation of the Holy Places, as well as the identity between its interests and those of the—communist and capitalist—West. Liberal Egyptian nationalism, with its focus on economic and political reform at home, tended to view Israel as a state like any other that, negatively, presented a strategic or security challenge to Egypt or, positively, represented a potential partner in a reconfigured multi-ethnic 'Middle East' system. Combined with the fact that the discourse on Israel has been *popularised* to a substantial degree (far from constituting a matter of high politics, Egypt's attitude to its neighbour has been a matter of broad public concern since the 1930s), this factor makes the question of Israel an ideal issue area for examining the interaction of domestic and international factors and the effects of this interaction on ideas.

This study is interpretive, rather than exhaustive. It does not purport to survey everything written about Israel in Egypt during the Nasser and Sadat periods, or follow a 'discourse analysis' methodology. The long time frame was chosen to highlight the influence of social and political change as well as a shifting regional and international context had on both the development of ideas and their exploitation by regimes. The analysis ends, with the exception of some brief observations in the conclusion, in 1981 for the practical reason of space as well as my conviction that the period of the 1970s marked the key foreign policy transition for Egypt vis-à-vis Israel and as such represents a fruitful period on which to concentrate in depth. In the concluding chapter I suggest some implications of this study for present-day Egypt.

The paradigms that form the underlying structure of the thesis emerged in my mind midway through the research phase and resulted from the recognition that tracing the evolution of liberal nationalism, Islamism and Marxism—which I identify in Chapter 2 as the key intellectual traditions in Egypt—as 'pure' discourses and generalising about the approach of each with respect to Israel was not only essentialist, but also obscured the extent to which elements of these broad politico-intellectual trajectories were combined by the Nasser and Sadat regimes and in the writings of individual intellectuals. Categorising ideas on Israel in terms of paradigms thus prioritised the ideas themselves and helped illustrate the particular contributions of the central assumptions of liberal nationalist, Islamist and Marxist political thought to Egyptian discourse on Israel as a whole. I thus make no claim that the interventions selected represent the most 'important' or most representative of political

movements, or that every political sect is accounted for in the thesis. Works chosen for detailed analysis reflect, however, my conviction through discussions with scholars and Egyptian intellectuals and reading that their authors were well-known in Egyptian intellectual society and would, as such, be fairly widely read.

The Organisation of the Thesis

The thesis concentrates on the period from 1952 until 1981, but in the interests of contextualising the ideas developed in this period, it devotes a chapter to the way in which liberal, Islamist and Marxist ideology emerged in Egypt, particularly in relation to forms of Egyptian nationalism, from the late nineteenth century until the July 1952 revolution. The reasons for taking a long historical view relate to the importance I ascribe to the history of ideas as a factor in explaining the conceptualisation of Israel and the need to show that many of the interpretations articulated between 1952 and 1981 built on ideas formulated prior to the revolution. Conceptions of Israel formed in the post-1973 period, that is in the period when Egypt's relations with Israel began to change dramatically, resonated with ideas that had already gained acceptance in intellectual and popular circles in the two preceding decades. This historical element is, I argue, essential to understanding the ways in which Israel was conceptualised after 1973 when considered in light of the actual international, regional and domestic transformations of the 1970s.

The thesis is organised as follows: Chapter 2 elaborates ideas drawn from the sociology of knowledge that will inform the analysis in subsequent chapters. Chapter 3 provides an historical analysis of the evolution of liberal nationalism, Islamism and Marxism in Egypt, particularly concerning the approaches of these theories to the international and their rootedness in the domestic and international transformations of the late 19th and early to mid-20th centuries. Chapter 4 continues this historical sociological analysis to examine the domestic, regional and international factors that influenced the development of ideas on Israel from the revolution of 1952 until 1981. It demonstrates above all the continuing salience of Islam in society that, despite the formation of a 'socialist intelligentsia' under Nasser, facilitated the regime's recourse to an Islamic conceptual framework after 1967, and particularly after 1973.

Chapters 5, 6 and 7 explore the elaboration of the three paradigms for understanding Israel that this thesis identifies: anti-imperialism, the nation-state, and the culture-clash. Each chapter is laid out as follows: the first half deals with the ways in which these paradigms were elaborated under Nasser until 1967, toward Israel as well as in the context of broader

conceptions of regional and international relations. Both ideas and policies are examined to show how they encouraged the particular paradigm. The second half of each chapter then proceeds to examine more closely particular intellectual interventions that draw on or promote one particular paradigm over others after the 1967 Six Day War. This is appropriate on account of the fact that 1967, in shaking the hegemonic project upon which Nasser embarked in the early 1960s, prompted the regime to allow far greater latitude in political and intellectual life than had hitherto been the case, and that the defeat itself encouraged intellectuals to question the ways in which Israel had been conceptualised. As such, work produced after this point allows us to scrutinise not just reactions to the war, but the way in which Israel had been viewed prior to it.

Chapter 8 is devoted to considering the period from 1973 until 1981 and examining the regime's evolving positions and some intellectual interventions in light of the discussion of paradigms formed and shaped up until that point, as well as the evolving domestic, international and regional context. It was after the October War of 1973 that the Egyptian regime's attitude toward Israel changed dramatically, and looking at a variety of works from liberal nationalist, Marxist and Islamist perspectives written in the mid- to late 1970s allows us to evaluate the extent to which conceptions of Israel changed or were consistent with the various paradigms on which the regime and intellectuals had relied prior to the initiation of peace negotiations.

¹ Tarek Heggy, *Culture, Civilization, and Humanity* (London ; Portland, OR: Frank Cass, 2003).

² See Robert O Keohane and Judith Goldstein, *Ideas and Foreign Policy : Beliefs, Institutions, and Political Change* (London: Cornell University Press, 1993) and Stephen G. Walker, 'Beliefs and Foreign Policy Analysis in the New Millennium' in *Conflict, Security, Foreign Policy and International Political Economy*, ed. Michael Brecher and Frank P. Harvey, (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2002)

³ Walter Carlsnaes, 'Foreign Policy', in Walter Carlsnaes et al, eds, *Handbook of International Relations* (London: Sage Publications Ltd., 2002) 340. Quoting Henrik Larsen.

⁴ See Avraham Sela, *The Decline of the Arab-Israeli Conflict: Middle East Politics and the Quest for Regional Order* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1998): 57

⁵ See e.g. Ibrahim A. Karawan, "Identity and Foreign Policy: The Case of Egypt," in *Identity and Foreign Policy in the Middle East*, ed. Shibley Telhami and Michael N. Barnett (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002) and Ali E. Hillal Dessouki "The Primacy of Economics: The Foreign Policy of Egypt" in *The Foreign Policy of Arab States: The Challenge of Change*, 2nd ed, ed. Bahgat Korany and Ali E. Hillal Dessouki (Boulder: Westview Press, 1991)

⁶ See e.g. Ann M. Lesch, 'Domestic Politics and Foreign Policy in Egypt' in *Democracy War and Peace in the Middle East*, ed. David Garnham and Mark Tessler (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1995)

⁷ Raymond A. Hinnebusch 'The Foreign Policy of Egypt' in *The Foreign Policies of Middle East States*, ed. Raymond A. Hinnebusch and Anoushiravan Ehteshami, (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2002): 97

⁸ Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 3rd ed. (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1996) 11.

⁹ *Ibid.* 111-35.

¹⁰ Stephen Walt's *Origins of Alliances* remains the classic realist treatment of Middle East IR. Stephen M. Walt, *The Origins of Alliances*, Cornell Studies in Security Affairs (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987).

¹¹ Kenneth Neal Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Pub. Co, 1979).

¹² Ibrahim A. Karawan, "Identity and Foreign Policy: The Case of Egypt," in *Identity and Foreign Policy in the Middle East*, ed. Shibley Telhami and Michael N. Barnett (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002).

¹³ Raymond A. Hinnebusch and Anoushiravan Ehteshami, *The Foreign Policies of Middle East States* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2002) 5.

¹⁴ Ibid. 7.

¹⁵ Ryan K. Beasley, *Foreign Policy in Comparative Perspective : Domestic and International Influences on State Behavior* (Washington, DC: CQ Press, 2002) 14.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ R. D. McLaurin, Don Peretz, and Lewis W. Snider, *Middle East Foreign Policy : Issues and Processes* (New York, NY: Praeger, 1982) 7.

¹⁸ Robert O Keohane and Judith Goldstein, *Ideas and Foreign Policy : Beliefs, Institutions, and Political Change* (London: Cornell University Press, 1993) 4.

¹⁹ Ibid. 5.

²⁰ Ibid. 9.

²¹ Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver, *Regions and Powers : The Structure of International Security* (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003) 24.

²² Keohane and Goldstein, *Ideas and Foreign Policy : Beliefs, Institutions, and Political Change* 8.

²³ Ibid. 9.

²⁴ Michael N. Barnett, *Dialogues in Arab Politics : Negotiations in Regional Order* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998).

²⁵ Raymond A. Hinnebusch, *The International Politics of the Middle East, Regional International Politics Series* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003).

²⁶ Shibley Telhami and Michael N. Barnett, *Identity and Foreign Policy in the Middle East* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002).

²⁷ Ibid. 5.

²⁸ Ibid. 6.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid. 13.

³¹ Perry Anderson, *In the Tracks of Historical Materialism : The Wellek Library Lectures* (London: Verso, 1983).

³² Hinnebusch and Ehteshami, *The Foreign Policies of Middle East States* 9.

³³ Telhami and Barnett, *Identity and Foreign Policy in the Middle East* 6.

³⁴ See Buzan and Wæver, *Regions and Powers : The Structure of International Security*. and K. J. Holsti, *The State, War, and the State of War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

³⁵ Telhami and Barnett, *Identity and Foreign Policy in the Middle East* 12.

³⁶ On the communist movement, Joel Beinin, *Was the Red Flag Flying There?: Marxist Politics and the Arab-Israeli Conflict in Egypt and Israel, 1948-1965* (London: Tauris, 1990)., Selma Botman, *The Rise of Egyptian Communism, 1939-1970, Contemporary Issues in the Middle East* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1988). and Rifa'at El-Sa'id and Y. Ismael Tareq, *The Communist Movement in Egypt : 1920-1988, Contemporary Issues in the Middle East* (Syracuse ; London: Syracuse University Press, 1990). On students, Ahmed Abdella, *Students and Egyptian National Politics 1923-1973* (Cambridge: University of Cambridge, 1983)., Hagai Erlich, *Students and University in 20th Century Egyptian Politics* (London: Cass, 1989)., Wa'il Uthman, *Asrar Al-Harakah Al-Tullabiyyah [Secrets of the Student Movement]* (1976). and Ghali Shukri, *Egypt : Portrait of a President, 1971-1981 ; the Counter-Revolution in Egypt ; Sadat's Road to Jerusalem, Middle East Series* (London, England) (London: Zed Press, 1981). On the Islamist movement, Richard P. Mitchell, *The Society of the Muslim Brothers* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993)., Brynjar Lia, *The Society of the Muslim Brothers in Egypt : The Rise of an Islamic Mass Movement 1928-1942* (Reading: Garnet, 1998)., Gilles Kepel, *The Prophet and Pharaoh : Muslim Extremism in Contemporary Egypt* (London: Al Saqi Books : Distributed by Zed Books, 1985)., Halah Mustafa, *Al-Nizam Al-Siyasi Wa-Al-Mu'aradah Al-Islamiyah Fi Misr [the Political System and the Islamic*

Opposition in Egypt], 1st ed. (al-Qahirah: Markaz al-Mahrusah lil-Nashr wa-al-Khidmat al-Suhufiyah, 1995)., and Abd al-Fattah El-Awaisi, *The Muslim Brothers and the Palestine Question, 1928-1947, Library of Modern Middle East Studies ; Vol. 16* (London: Tauris Academic Studies, 1996).

³⁷ Walid Abdelnasser, *The Islamic Movement in Egypt : Perceptions of International Relations, 1967-81* (London: Kegan Paul International, 1994).

³⁸ Kepel, *The Prophet and Pharaoh : Muslim Extremism in Contemporary Egypt.*

³⁹ E.g., John Waterbury, *The Egypt of Nasser and Sadat : The Political Economy of Two Regimes* (Guildford: Princeton University Press, 1983)., Kirk J. Beattie, *Egypt During the Sadat Years* (New York ; Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2000)., Raymond A. Hinnebusch, *Egyptian Politics under Sadat : The Post-Populist Development of an Authoritarian-Modernizing State*, Updated ed. (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1988). and Anouar Abdel-Malek, *Egypt: Military Society : The Army Regime, the Left, and Social Change under Nasser, A Vintage Book* (New York: Vintage Books, 1968).

⁴⁰ E.g., Adeed I Dawisha, *Egypt in the Arab World : The Elements of Foreign Policy* (London: Macmillan, 1976)., Malcolm H. Kerr, *The Arab Cold War, 1958-1964; a Study of Ideology in Politics* (London, New York,: Oxford University Press, 1965)., McLaurin, Peretz, and Snider, *Middle East Foreign Policy : Issues and Processes.*, Hinnebusch and Ehteshami, *The Foreign Policies of Middle East States.*, Bahgat Korany, Ali al-Din Hilal, and Ahmad Yusuf Ahmad, *The Foreign Policies of Arab States: The Challenge of Change*, 2nd ed. (Boulder: Westview Press, 1991)., and Ann Moseley Lesch and Mark A. Tessler, *Israel, Egypt and the Palestinians : From Camp David to Intifada* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989).

⁴¹ Yezid Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for State : The Palestinian National Movement, 1949-1993* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

⁴² P.J. Vatikiotis, *Nasser and His Generation* (London: Croom Helm, 1978).

⁴³ Muhammad Hasanayn Haykal, *Cutting the Lion's Tail : Suez through Egyptian Eyes* (New York: Arbor House, 1987)., Muhammad Hasanayn Haykal, *The Road to Ramadan* (New York: Quadrangle/New York Times Book Co., 1975)., Muhammad Hasanayn Haykal, *Kharif Al-Ghadab : Qissat Bidayat Wa-Nihayat 'Asr Anwar Al-Sadat [Autumn of Fury: The Story of the Beginning and End of the Era of Anwar Sadat]*, 2nd ed. ([S.l.]: Sharikat al-Matbu'at lil-Tawzi' wa-al-Nashr, 1983)., and Muhammad Hasanayn Haykal, *Sphinx and Commissar : The Rise and Fall of Soviet Influence in the Arab World* (London: Collins, 1978).

⁴⁴ Laura M. James, *Nasser at War : Arab Images of the Enemy* (Basingstoke ; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006).

⁴⁵ Avi Shlaim, *The Iron Wall : Israel and the Arab World*, 1st ed. (New York: W.W. Norton, 2000).

⁴⁶ Thomas Mayer, *Egypt and the Palestine Question 1936-1945, Islamkundliche Untersuchungen ; 77* (Berlin: Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 1983).

⁴⁷ Muhammad El-Awaisi Abd al-Fattah, *The Muslim Brothers and the Palestine Question 1928-1947, Library of Modern Middle East Studies ; 16* (London: Tauris Academic Studies, 1998).

⁴⁸ Ghada Hashem Talhami, *Palestine and Egyptian National Identity* (New York ; London: Praeger, 1992).

⁴⁹ Raymond Baker, *Sadat and After : Struggles for Egypt's Political Soul* (London: Tauris, 1990).

⁵⁰ E.g., David Sagiv and Gila Svirsky, *Fundamentalism and Intellectuals in Egypt, 1973-1993* (London: Cass, 1995).

⁵¹ E.g., Ronald L. Nettler, *Past Trials and Present Tribulations : A Muslim Fundamentalist's View of the Jews* (Oxford: Published for the Vidal Sassoon International Center for the Study of Antisemitism, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem by Pergamon, 1987)., Livnat Holtzman and Eliezer Schlossberg, "Fundamentals of the Modern Muslim-Jewish Polemic," *Israel Affairs* 12, no. 1 (2006)., and Ronald L. Nettler, *Muslim-Jewish Encounters : Intellectual Traditions and Modern Politics, Studies in Muslim-Jewish Relations ; V. 4* (Amsterdam, The Netherlands: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1998).

⁵² E.g., Suha Taji-Farouki, "Thinking on the Jews," in *Islamic Thought in the Twentieth Century* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2004)., and Lia, *The Society of the Muslim Brothers in Egypt : The Rise of an Islamic Mass Movement 1928-1942*.

⁵³ E.g., Karsh, "The Long Trail of Islamic Anti-Semitism."

⁵⁴ Matthias Küntzel, "Hitler's Legacy: Islamic Antisemitism and the Impact of the Muslim Brotherhood," (Leeds University, 2007).

⁵⁵ Jacob Abadi, "Egypt's Policy Towards Israel: The Impact of Foreign and Domestic Constraints," *Israel Affairs* 12, no. 1 (2006): 160.

⁵⁶ Beinin, *Was the Red Flag Flying There?: Marxist Politics and the Arab-Israeli Conflict in Egypt and Israel, 1948-1965*.

⁵⁷ Gudrun Krämer, *The Jews in Modern Egypt, 1914-1952* (London: Tauris, 1989).

⁵⁸ Jonathon W. Moses and Torbjorn L. Knutsen, *Ways of Knowing: Competing Methodologies in Social and Political Research*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2007): 136

⁵⁹ See Karawan, "Identity and Foreign Policy: The Case of Egypt."

Chapter 2: Theorising Foreign Policy Ideas in Non-Hegemonic States

The theoretical framework of this thesis draws on a body of work known collectively as the sociology of knowledge. It includes particularly the insights of Antonio Gramsci and E.H. Carr, as well as those of the German sociologist Karl Mannheim. Gramsci, for his part, developed a powerful critique of the modern state that highlighted the role of intellectuals in ideologically linking what he termed ‘political society’ with a broader ‘civil society’. As will be shown, these ideas resonate powerfully when applied to the Egyptian case and enable us to clarify the political role of thinkers and the social and intellectual movements with which they were associated. But although his work has been applied to the major concerns of IR as a discipline, most notably by Robert Cox¹, Gramsci dealt in broad terms with the ideological underpinnings of the bourgeois state, without applying himself in a systematic fashion either to an analysis of international relations or, more pertinent to this thesis, to the impact of foreign policy on the history of ideas and the development of ideas *on* international relations in the modern state. It was to this subject that E.H. Carr turned in his 1939 polemic *The Twenty Years’ Crisis*². Drawing on the ideas of Mannheim, Carr sought to identify and critique the intellectual pedigree and function of Western ‘utopian’ understandings of the international and inaugurate a ‘science of international politics.’ Although Carr acknowledges his debt to Mannheim in tackling the social underpinnings of ideology, his treatise on the development, and limitations, of both ‘realist’ and ‘utopian’ approaches to international relations at the elite level and their effect on actual foreign policy positions neglects a full discussion of the broader social dynamics that supported this development, most particularly in relation to the idea of ‘intersubjectivity’, or the notion that statesmen and intellectuals build ideas through a continuous dialogue with groups, classes and movements in society. Also, Carr, in applying Mannheim’s insights to the international plane, transfers the latter’s observations about groups or classes in society to states as corporate, pre-constituted, actors in international affairs, sharing in international society attributes associated with contending groups in a domestic context. Reviewing Mannheim’s contributions in this chapter represents, then, a reapplication of Mannheim’s focus on the domestic to Carr’s international relations, or, as will be discussed, a fresh look at Mannheim the Marxist, as opposed to Mannheim the Hegelian, in the context of Carr’s work.

The current chapter provides a theoretical framework to substantiate the following contention underpinning this thesis: In order to understand the way in which ideas on

foreign policy, including perceptions of other actors, develop within a given state we must examine (1) the ways in which foreign policy goals are ‘universalised’ for domestic and international consumption; (2) the nature of the state in question and the role intellectuals play in supporting state policies and interpreting them for public consumption, and (3) the role of intellectuals and groups that challenge the world-view of the regime. The first factor is an essentially realist precept: ideas flow from or legitimise a state’s foreign policy. E.H. Carr’s treatment of the state as an *a priori* corporate actor, despite limitations that will be elucidated in this chapter, lends itself well to elucidating the role of the Egyptian state’s foreign policy goals and actions in setting the parameters of ideological production at the regime level. At this level of analysis we are not so much interested in the impact that ideas developed by intellectuals about Israel had on Egyptian foreign policy itself, so much as the extent to which the Egyptian regime adopted, or was receptive to, conceptions of Israel that supported or rendered intelligible foreign policy choices. Carr assumed that powerful international sponsors, or would-be sponsors, exert an intellectual influence on clients, or within what Hedley Bull would term a particular ‘international society.’ The second and third contentions are more sociological, involving an unpacking of the ‘black box’ of the state to look at the relationships that intellectuals, social groups and political movements have with each other and with the regime.

The Universalisation of Foreign Policy

Recognition of the role a state’s foreign policy plays in shaping ‘ideology’, or at least the components of ideology dealing with international relations, can be construed as a realist proposition since it assumes that something other than ideas is guiding that foreign policy in the first place, namely interests. The elaboration of this position can be traced back at least to the birth of IR as a discipline and the work of one of its founding fathers, E.H. Carr. Carr’s ‘manifesto’ for IR, *The Twenty Years’ Crisis*, first published in 1939, identified two opposing interpretations of international politics prevalent in the world. The first, realism, accepts that states’ policies are governed by self-interest, while the second, ‘utopianism’, interprets international behaviour in terms of morality, justice and other universal goods. One of Carr’s primary aims is to show that utopian thinking merely disguises national self-interest by ascribing universal values to national interests and that it serves mainly to justify foreign policies. In this way, Carr sees both realist and utopian thinking as responses to a state’s actual foreign policy interests, although only realism does this without hypocrisy.

Carr identifies two strategies by which statesmen, politicians and ‘professional thinkers’ justify (or mask) self-interested foreign policy. The first is the denigration of enemies and

the suggestion that they are somehow inferior or out of step with history in a Darwinian sense; the second is by ‘universalising’ national interests. Regarding the former, for Carr, ‘Theories designed to discredit an enemy or potential enemy are only of the commonest forms of purposeful thinking. To depict one’s enemies or one’s prospective victims as inferior beings in the sight of God has been a familiar technique at any rate since the days of the Old Testament.’ As for the latter:

The utopian, however eager he may be to establish an absolute standard, does not argue that it is the duty of his country, in conformity with that standard, to put the interest of the world at large before his own interest; for that would be contrary to his theory that the interest of all coincides with the interest of each. He argues that what is best for the world is best for his country, and then reverses the argument to read that what is best for his country is best for the world, the two propositions being, from the utopian standpoint, identical...³

The universalisation of foreign policy, as well as the denigration of enemies, by statesmen and intellectuals, is directed toward both external and internal audiences. Externally, universalisation must accord with world-views existing internationally, which Carr notes are intimately connected to power. ‘Power over opinion’, Carr writes, ‘cannot be dissociated from military and economic power.’ In reference to the fact that internationalism as an ideology was merged with power of the Soviet government, he explains that:

...this development ... gives us a clue to the whole problem of the place of what are now known as “ideologies” in international politics. For if it be true that power over opinion cannot be disassociated from other forms of power, then it appears to follow that, if power cannot be internationalised, there can be no such thing in politics as international opinion, and international propaganda is as much a contradiction in terms as an international army.⁴

Carr argues that even ideologies that ostensibly deal with international or universal issues, such as liberalism, Marxism or, we might add, Islamism, are impotent without the backing of a powerful state.

The ideas of the French Revolution, free trade, communism in its original form of 1848 or in its reincarnation of 1917, Zionism, the idea of the League of Nations, are all at first sight (as they were in intention) examples of international opinion divorced from power and fostered by international propaganda. But reflexion will set limits on this first impression. How far were any of these ideas politically effective until they took on a national colour and were supported by national power?⁵

Carr’s observation goes far to explain the dramatic regional rise of radical Pan-Arabism in the 1950s under the sponsorship of Nasser’s Egypt, as well as contextualise the ideological role of other powers with respect to Egypt, particularly the Soviet Union and China, the

United States and Western Europe and, particularly after 1967, Saudi Arabia and other Islamic oil states.

The way in which ideas are formulated to resonate in an international setting is consistent with the English School IR theorist Hedley Bull's ideas on an 'international society.' Different norms or rules apply in different international contexts, particularly as between the 'Western' and non-Western worlds. For Bull, whom many consider to have been 'constructivist before his time',⁶

As Asian, African, and other non-Western peoples have assumed a more prominent place in international society it has become clear that in matters of values the distance between them and Western societies is greater than, in the early years of national liberation or decolonization, it was assumed to be. In making their demands for equal rights on behalf of oppressed states, nations, races or cultures, the leaders of the Third World spoke as supplicants, in a world in which the Western powers were still in a dominant position. The demands that they made had necessarily to be put forward in terms of charters of rights (the Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen, the American Declaration of Independence...the UN Charter) of which Western powers were the principal authors. The moral appeal had to be cast in the terms that would have most resonance within Western societies. But as Asian, African and other non-Western peoples have become stronger relative to the Western powers, they have become freer to adopt a different rhetoric that sets Western values aside, or at all events places different interpretations upon them.⁷

Thus in a Third World milieu ideas about foreign policy would be expressed in terms distinct from the terms in which they are expressed before a Western audience, particularly in the context of the Afro-Asian and Non-Aligned Movements, as well as regionally.

In evaluating the role and development of ideas, states like Egypt, which are major powers regionally but minor powers internationally, must be approached as both producers and recipients of 'propaganda' or political ideas. The notion of intersubjectivity that underpins Carr's observations above, applies regionally and internationally as well. Thus, even if a state is engaged in trying to spread a new ideology across its borders—to export a revolution—the role of the recipients in the formation of that ideology must be considered key, as has been demonstrated recently in the Middle East context within the Copenhagen School of security studies. The concept associated with the latter school, that of 'securitisation' offers considerable analytical utility to the study of ideas on Israel in the Arab world. Securitisation, for Buzan and Wæver, is an 'extreme form of politicisation' whereby issues are elevated not only as important but as existential threats. For these authors, an issue is securitised only when an 'audience' accepts it as such. In much the same way as Carr explained, a securitising attempt will be successful only insofar as it resonates with preconceived notions. Securitisation works not only on a national level, whereby

issues are securitised through dialogue between regimes and masses, perhaps via the intermediary of the intelligentsia, but also on global and regional levels.⁸ Similarly, the constructivist scholar Michael Barnett, analyses the spread and development of regional ‘norms’ such as Pan-Arabism, and sovereignty, in terms of the interaction of states and particularly the ability of regimes, such as that of Gamal Abdel Nasser, to influence the societies of other states and hence affect the ‘rules of the game’ of Arab politics.⁹

Universalisation of foreign policy also operates domestically. Carr points out that a state’s foreign policy goals and perceived role in the world impact on conceptions of self and others, not only at the level of statesmen and professional scholars of politics, but in the general public. He cites such examples as the shift in British public opinion toward Germans and Russians in the early twentieth century as a result of the shift in Britain’s political relations with these countries. Carr explains that following the First World War, the subject of international politics became one that exercised the general public thanks, in large part, to the conscription that brought war into the heart of every community. The ‘science of international politics’ arose as an intellectual effort to prevent a repeat of destructive total war. Carr stresses that it is ‘not only professional thinkers’ who are influenced by international and foreign policy factors but everyone who ‘reads the political columns of a newspaper or attends a political meeting or discusses politics with his neighbour’ such that ‘the judgement which he forms becomes (especially, but not exclusively, in democratic countries) a factor in the course of political events.’¹⁰ Carr goes so far as to argue that the attitude of the public *is the determining factor in political life*. For Carr, then, the public perceptions of the world and of foreign policies, are crucial to their actualization and the durability of their portrayal. He concludes that:

It is symptomatic that most people, when challenged, will indignantly deny that they form their opinions in this way; for as Acton long ago observed, “few discoveries are more irritating than those which expose the pedigree of ideas”. The conditioning of thought is necessarily a subconscious process.¹¹

Carr points out that the scope for the state to promote ideas as ‘propaganda’ for domestic and, we might add, international, consumption is not limitless. One of the ways in which it is limited is ‘the necessity of some measure of conformity with fact. There are objective facts which are not totally irrelevant to the formation of opinion.’¹² Recalling the failure of German propaganda describing the enemy as ‘ridiculous and contemptible’, he concludes that ‘The propaganda was unsuccessful simply because it was, as the German soldier in the trenches discovered, untrue. This danger that the “truth will out”, especially in an age of competitive propaganda, is a serious limitation on power over opinion.’¹³ Ideas will be

accepted in society to the extent that they are in ‘conformity with fact’, or in less positivist terms, at least in conformity with established understandings and perceptions.

Although Carr stresses the role of the general public in intersubjectively shaping or influencing ideas on foreign policy, his assumption of the state as a unified corporate actor obscures the role of contending groups domestically in also informing conceptions of international actors. This is explicable in terms of Carr’s emphasis of the Hegelian in Mannheim at the expense of the Marxian. Carr recounts Marx’s discovery that ‘all thought was conditioned by the economic interest and social status of the thinker’, noting that ‘This view was perhaps unduly restrictive. In particular Marx, who denied the existence of “national” interests, underestimated the potency of nationalism as a force conditioning the thought of the individual.’¹⁴ But Carr notes that Marx succeeded in driving home the principle of the ‘interestedness’ of thought, which had since been a technique used by everyone to discredit the intellectual contributions of others. Carr’s critique of Marx in this regard arguably stems, but differs slightly, from Mannheim, who credits Marxism with being the first system of thought to recognise the relationship between the total and particular forms of ideology and, proceeding from its Hegelian roots, to see in the struggle between classes, rather than nations, the motor of social, and hence, ideological development. The political conception of the world used by the new ruling classes as a weapon was appropriated first by Marxism as a challenge to the capitalist system, and then by other groups.

For Mannheim, Hegel, who responded to popular sentiments of nationality after the Napoleonic wars, saw the objective unity of consciousness as subject to continual historical change, varying with nationality as a *volkgeist*. The progression to historical thought was completed, for Mannheim, by Marxism and the emergence of class consciousness as the source of objective truth, with the realisation that intellectual forms and world-views varied with social class, not *only* between states or nationalities. Importantly, for Mannheim, the historicity of the nature of the mind that Hegel recognised and Marx adopted was not discovered by the internal reasoning of philosophers but by the ‘penetration of political insight into everyday life.’ Carr, while acknowledging Marx’s contribution in recognising that some ideas are specific to classes, brings Hegel ‘back in’ by stressing the ‘potency of nationalism’. This has the, perhaps necessary for his analytical purposes, effect of allowing nation to eclipse class as the determinant of ideology, as well as the conception of ideological change in a nation-state as a primarily top-down process. Thus while Carr’s

idea of the role foreign policy plays in shaping public opinion is important, other factors are at work, to which this chapter now turns.

The State and Intellectuals

Carr's ideas about the role foreign policy priorities play in the spread of ideas about international actors presupposes a broader sociology of knowledge explaining how ideas produced at the level of the state (where foreign policy goals are formulated) are somehow transmitted into society in order to shape public opinion. The sociology of knowledge that Carr assumes likely stems from the work of Karl Mannheim.¹⁵ Mannheim formulated a model of society that took into account social change and interpreted the multiplicity of 'world-views' in terms of the expression of intellectuals sympathetic to one or more contending groups or classes in society. Carr, in extending Mannheim into the international realm, transposed the latter's ideas about classes and groups in domestic society onto states in the international system. Thus states, in their interactions with each other, are conceived as having more or less unified idea systems and perceptions of each other. This conceptual unity at the level of the state presupposes a certain degree of social balance domestically.

Mannheim conceptualised a 'free intelligentsia' in modern states that due to the diverse origins of its members, as well as their perceived need to convince a public 'inaccessible to them without their own efforts' of the validity of their ideas, collectively synthesises the ideas and world-views of society's diverse strata, meaning that 'ideology' at a given historical conjuncture represents the ideational reflection of the balance of social forces in society. It is this view of the intelligentsia that arguably lies behind much recent constructivist scholarship, with 'identity' being substituted for ideology: through 'debates' and 'dialogues' a particular ideational synthesis will become 'momentarily fixed' as national identity.

For Mannheim, systems of thought, such as the rationalism of the enlightenment, although they came to be perceived as the exclusive domain of a minority of intellectuals, originated in the world-views of social groups, such as the rising bourgeoisie in the states of Europe. Mannheim shows that although the enlightenment shattered the objective truth of the Middle Ages and brought conflicting idea systems into contact with one another, modern states adopted the absolutist strategy of attempting to order society according to the world-view of the ruling group:

The absolute state, by claiming as one of its prerogatives the setting forth of its own interpretation of the world, took a step which later on with the democratization of society tended more and more to set a precedent. It showed that politics was able to use its conception of the world as a weapon and that politics was not merely a struggle for power but really first became fundamentally significant only when it infused its aims with a kind of political philosophy, with a political conception of the world.¹⁶

Mannheim saw the vertical social mobility produced by capitalism as having led to the concerns of the lower strata being increasingly adopted by intellectuals, and the intellectual crisis to which Mannheim's work is addressed arose out of the growing inability of intellectuals to construct world-views based on objective truth when so many competing versions of truth abounded. The need for there to be a unitary interpretation of reality was inherited from the Christian ideal of the objective unity of the world. With the enlightenment and the breakdown of objective truth based on religious unity, a new basis for unity—and thus social stability—was required. The objective unity of Christianity became the unity of consciousness in itself. Mannheim observes that the problems of enlightenment philosophy were reflected in society as a whole, in 'even the simplest minds,' as religious conflict. This is partially to be explained by the fact that 'most political states in the period of enlightened absolutism attempted to weaken the Church by means which they had taken over from the Church itself, namely, through attempting to replace an objective interpretation of the world guaranteed by the Church, by one guaranteed by the State.'¹⁷ As such, via modern institutions like political parties, 'the forms of thought characteristic of industrial society gradually penetrated into those areas which had any contact whatever with industry and sooner or later undermined one element after another of the religious explanation of the world.'¹⁸

Mannheim's portrayal of states with their stratum of free intelligentsia and the potential for a unitary world-view applies to 'modern' capitalist, democratic states, by which latter point he intends, like Carr, the arrival on the political scene of the masses, politically insignificant under pre-modern regimes. It is only in modern industrial states, infused with a 'political conception of the world', replacing religion, that the ruling group relies on the articulation of a common ontology to unify and render governable the population, involving the intersubjective participation of all strata in society via intellectuals linked to them. To the extent that the society is 'modern', then intellectuals can play a leading role, largely due to the existence of structures connecting the state with society, such as the political party and the media, which act as transmission belts for modern ideas from the intellectuals to the masses. Mannheim's sociology of knowledge constitutes an exposition of the interestedness of the ideas expressed by intellectuals associated with social groups in an attempt to prevent

the conflict that ideological discord inevitably produced and encapsulates the conviction, again like Carr, that the intelligentsia can by the force of its own labours shape or stabilise the social world through its influence over and interaction with public opinion.

Theorising Elite-Mass Disconnect: Gramsci

The Egyptian regime after 1952 depended on intellectuals associated with already existing political and intellectual movements for the articulation of state foreign policies. Intellectually speaking, the political ideologies available were liberal nationalism, Marxism and Islamism. Since these ideologies were, with the partial exception of Islamism, imported from abroad and adapted rather than representing the synthesised world-views of Egypt's social classes, and the intellectuals associated with the liberal and Marxist trajectories were, in general, without mass constituencies, it may be necessary to look beyond Mannheim in conceptualising these questions, to his contemporary Antonio Gramsci. Gramsci's internationalist political agenda obliged him to take stock of the way in which ruling classes instrumentalise ideas and enlist intellectuals to bolster existing political systems in multiple contexts. Although Mannheim also recognises this dynamic, Gramsci is perhaps more alert to the possibility of an overweening role for the state, particularly outside the Western world, as well as the historicity of a state treated as largely *a priori* by Mannheim and Carr.

Gramsci's ideas, most completely stated in his *Prison Notebooks*, were formulated in a rather different socioeconomic context to those of Mannheim or Carr. The Italy, not to mention Sardinia, of the 1920s and 1930s, was perhaps less like the Germany or Britain of Mannheim and Carr, and more like Egypt both before and after the revolution of 1952. Attempting to theorise a modern revolutionary movement in the industrial city of Turin, but informed by his own upbringing in the still largely peasant society of Sardinia, in which religion played the predominant ideological role, Gramsci developed a theory of the state and intellectuals that reflected a cultural disconnect between elites and masses. Gramsci was thus perhaps more alert to cases in which the ideology of the state did not constitute a synthesis of the ideas of diverse classes in the way Mannheim envisaged. Instead, Gramsci tied ideology at the state level directly to that of the ruling class, to which the intelligentsia, rather than being a class-less 'free' stratum, belonged.

Gramsci's observations on intellectuals constitute a central component of his broader theory of the state, organised around the concept of hegemony. His political thought largely hinges on the distinction between the categories of civil and political society. Civil society constitutes the realm in which a dominant or ruling class seeks to organise consent for the existing order, and in which opposition movements also seek to garner support for political

programmes. The state, or political society, on the other hand is the context in which cultural and ideological power exists alongside the monopoly of legitimate coercive power. The ideological resources of the state are extended, while its coercive resources are augmented in civil society by a system of cultural, intellectual and moral principles to which all social groups willingly subscribe. For Gramsci the decisive factor in ensuring the durability of a political order or providing opportunities for challengers, is the extent to which the relationship between state and civil society is ‘proper’, or ‘hegemonic’. Such a ‘proper’ relationship between political and civil society is, for Gramsci, closest to realisation in the advanced Western bourgeois democracies. The antithesis of this relationship is the situation in the ‘east’, by which Gramsci intended Tsarist Russia. In one of his more famous passages, Gramsci writes:

In the East the State was everything, civil society was primordial and gelatinous; in the West, there was a proper relationship between State and civil society, and when the State trembled a sturdy structure of civil society was at once revealed. The State was only an outer ditch, behind which there was a powerful system of fortresses and earthworks, more or less numerous from one State to the next, it goes without saying—but this precisely necessitated an accurate reconnaissance of each individual country.¹⁹

In the east, with its ‘gelatinous’ civil society, a ‘war of manoeuvre’ was possible in order for a revolutionary class to seize power through a swift, decisive assault on the repository of real power—the state itself. In the west, the ‘fortresses and earthworks’ of civil society, only a ‘war of position’ could be waged wherein the challenging group would have to organise its own counter-hegemony, or ‘win over’ society to its world-view and agenda.

Integral to Gramsci’s theories on the ideological dimensions of the modern state is his conception of the intellectuals. In precapitalist states, for Gramsci, traditional intellectuals—similar conceptually to Mannheim’s free intelligentsia—provided the intellectual direction for society, a role inherited to a greater or lesser extent by the intellectuals of the bourgeois state. As Gramsci describes it,

Every “essential” social group which emerges into history out of the preceding economic structure, and as an expression of a development of this structure, has found (at least in all of history up to the present) categories of intellectuals already in existence and which seemed indeed to represent an historical continuity uninterrupted even by the most complicated and radical changes in political and social forms.²⁰

These categories of ‘traditional’ intellectuals are typified by the ecclesiastics, which can be considered the ‘category of intellectuals bound to the landed aristocracy,’ with which they shared the ‘use of state privileges connected with property.’²¹ Traditional intellectuals also

came to include ‘other categories, favoured and enabled to expand by the growing strength of the central power of the monarch...’ These thinkers constituted the ‘*noblesse de robe*, with its own privileges, a stratum of administrators, etc., scholars and scientists, theorists, non-ecclesiastical philosophers, etc.’²² It is the ‘*esprit de corps*’ felt by these categories of intellectuals that gave rise to the idealist utopian idea among traditional intellectuals who feel themselves to be ‘independent’ or ‘autonomous.’²³ The traditional intellectuals include “the man of letters, the philosopher, the artist.” Additionally, ‘journalists who claim to be men of letters, philosophers, artists, also regard themselves as the “true” intellectuals.’²⁴

While the traditional intellectuals provide ideological leadership at the level of the state, Gramsci identified a second category of intellectual that links this ideological milieu with civil society. The category of ‘organic intellectual’, provides this linkage due to the intellectuals’ organic connection (shared interests vested in the production system) to the ruling class. It is the organic intellectual that plays the crucial role of organising hegemony in civil society by making the idea system of the ruling class ‘common sense’ in society.²⁵

Organic intellectuals for Gramsci, play the role of reinforcing the hegemony of the bourgeoisie only to the extent that society is ‘set in motion by capitalism.’ In examining parts of society where social relations remain organised along pre-capitalist, or pre-modern, lines, Gramsci’s ideas on intellectuals of ‘the rural type’ are thus instructive. In rural areas, for Gramsci, the traditional intellectuals are dominant. ‘Intellectuals of the rural type are for the most part “traditional”, that is they are linked to the social mass of country people and the town (particularly small-town) petite bourgeoisie, not as yet elaborated and set in motion by the capitalist system.’ The rural intellectual connects the peasants with the local and state administration and thus plays an important ‘politico-social function.’²⁶ The rural intellectual—such as a priest, lawyer, or notary represents an object of aspiration for the peasant and thus wins his respect, but also engenders a latent envy. The subordination of the peasant to the intellectual means that ‘every organic development of the peasant masses, up to a certain point, is linked to and depends on movements among the intellectuals.’²⁷ Rural intellectuals, then, by exercising hierarchical control over the ‘peasant masses’ prevent the more unconscious nurturing of ideas undertaken by the urban ‘organic intellectuals’. As such, there is thus no transmission of modern ideas from the state to rural society.

In delineating rural intellectuals as a category in Egypt, Maxime Rodinson’s observations about the nature of capitalism are instructive. Rodinson distinguishes between a ‘capitalist sector,’ as constituting ‘all enterprises in which, in this society, the capitalist mode of

production is operative,’ and the capitalist ‘socio-economic formation’, which ‘is marked by a particular “economic system” in which the capitalist sector occupies a predominant place, and by an ideological and institutional superstructure corresponding to this.’²⁸ Thus while it is possible to identify a growing ‘capitalist sector’, it is less appropriate to describe Egypt, both before and after the revolution of 1952, as a ‘capitalist socio-economic formation’. Rodinson points out that in pre-revolutionary Egypt land was more important to the bourgeoisie than capital, which meant that ‘capital does not dominate the countryside, where, moreover, non-capitalist relations continue to be important,’ since ‘agrarian capitalism...is incapable of transforming society in the direction of a capitalist socio-economic formation.’²⁹ There thus exists a bifurcation between the capitalist sector and a non-capitalist socio-economic formation. The capitalist sector developed as part of Egypt’s industrialisation prior to the revolution:

In the struggle for political independence the bourgeois leaders of the struggle called upon Egyptians to contribute to the financing of [Bank Misr].... This was the start of the slow process of forming a really modern Egyptian capitalist sector—which, moreover, had many links with foreign capitalism. It was this sector that was to be, in large part, progressively nationalised after 1952, and managed by the military bureaucracy of Nasser’s regime.³⁰

Gramsci’s ‘intellectual of the rural type’ resonates well in Egypt and concerns us here not so much because rural-based intellectuals made important contributions to Egyptian conceptions of Israel, but more because they acted as brakes on the spread of radical, particularly left-wing but also liberal, ideology in the Egyptian countryside. Rural intellectuals—the mayor, the village sheikh, the local *faqih*—tended to resist the spread of socialist ideas and the potentially disruptive implications of these ideas.

The local mayors, or *umdahs*, were generally large non-absentee landowners (*kibar al-ayan*). But despite their shared interests with the bourgeoisie prior to 1952 and the Nasser and Sadat regimes following the revolution, the *umdahs* cannot be considered to function as organic intellectuals for the ruling class, or regime. The population with which they were in contact was not ‘set in motion by capitalism.’ Despite the fact that *umdahs* often supported liberal political parties in the pre-1952 period³¹, as well as in the 1970s, they did not play the role of disseminating liberal values in the countryside. Instead, they supported liberal, secular, apparently Westernising parties while ensuring that the ideological superstructure of the countryside remained in its pre-capitalist state.³² Rural elites were attracted to the moderation of the liberal intellectuals and the opportunities for political advancement that their liberal ideas promised. They did not, however, attempt to use their intermediary position to involve the peasantry in a national project. They were, rather, engaged in

imposing the imported Western legal and political reforms on an ambivalent rural population as vividly depicted by Tawfiq al-Hakim in his 1937 novel *Yawmiyat Na'ib fi al-Aryaf* [published in English as *Maze of Justice*]. Ilya Harik notes that '[d]uring the old regime, the language of the law did not cross the barrier between the ruling class and the peasantry...Nor did any other medium of communication exist to bridge the gap between the few elite and the rest of the overwhelmingly peasant population of Egypt.³³ Similarly, although the *umdahs* formed part of the fabric of Nasser's state, they did not facilitate the transfer of socialist ideology from the intelligentsia to the peasantry. Westernisation in the countryside constituted a veneer under which a patronage and kinship-based system of control existed. While they may have been outwardly liberal in orientation, the rural intellectuals promoted the continuation of a religious, pre-modern, mindset in the countryside throughout the period examined in this thesis that worked to the advantage of the, distinctly modern, Islamist movement of the cities, which was perhaps most successful in the universities which increasingly were populated by the rural and urbanised poor. As such, the role of these rural 'traditional' intellectuals should be acknowledged in examining the longevity of conceptions of Israel that rest on religious or culturalist assumptions.

The main difference between Gramsci, on the one hand and Mannheim and Carr, on the other, is that the latter thinkers in viewing the intellectuals as collectively representative of the various social forces in a society, yet at the same time providing overall leadership, assume that consensus on the part of intellectuals will reflect consensus nationally as the intelligentsia collectively adjusts its ideas to account for shifts in public mood. This supposition allows Carr to extend Mannheim's ideology/utopia dialectic into the international plane and posit that a state's foreign policy priorities can shape public opinion via intellectuals who have the choice of either articulating foreign policies in realist or utopian terms.

In Mannheim's work, as in Weberian political science, the state is defined in counterposition to 'civil society', which acts as a constraint on the power of the former. It is this state that forms the primary unit in most IR theory. Gramsci's conception of the state, on the other hand, encompasses civil society. The Weberian distinction between state and civil society becomes, instead, a differentiation between political and civil society within the 'integral' state. In the *hegemonic* state, that is the resilient bourgeois capitalist states of the West, civil society does not constrain the state, but rather supports it ideologically. In reality, few states can be described as fully hegemonic, whereby the world-view of political society—itself an expression of the interests of the ruling class—matches exactly that prevalent throughout

civil society. But Gramsci would place the Western capitalist ‘strong’ states closer to the hegemonic end of the spectrum than the type of ‘weak’ state characteristic of the developing world. Groups in civil society that challenge the hegemony of the ruling class are, for Gramsci, *counter-hegemonic*.

Nazih Ayubi has persuasively advanced reasons for the ‘lack’ of hegemony in Egypt. Rejecting explanations that rest on the cultural specificity of Arabs or Muslims, or those that view the region in terms of ‘democratic transition’, Ayubi draws on Gramsci and others to posit that the way in which Egypt and other states in the Middle East encountered capitalism, via colonialism, resulted in the ‘articulation’ of modes of production in the region. Although critiquing aspects of the Marxist conception of an ‘Asiatic mode of production’, Ayubi argues that in Egypt ‘the story of the modern state can be regarded in some ways as the political and institutional expression of an articulation between the Asiatic mode of production and the capitalist mode of production, characterised by a rapid move towards the superiority of the latter.’³⁴ The ideological framework of the pre-capitalist mode of production in Egypt and elsewhere, Ayubi characterises thus:

Sunni Islam was developed as a moral and intellectual system not only inspired by God’s will but also shaped and adjusted throughout Islamic history by the world-view of the dominant strata, and with the *‘ulema* and the educational system inducing the masses to consent to such an ideology.³⁵

Ayubi avers that ‘capitalism neither evolved mechanically from the modes of production that preceded it in the Arab World, nor did it completely dissolve these modes. As in many other societies, it sometimes coexisted with such modes and sometimes even buttressed and prolonged certain of their aspects.’³⁶ Since modes of production are ‘articulated’ in Egypt, two or more ‘instances’ (economic, political, ideological) may ‘coexist and interlink’. While Ayubi focuses more on the power-political and institutional consequences of this articulation for Arab state-building, and touches only tangentially on the ideological aspects, his observations are highly suggestive for the role of ideas in Egyptian politics and help clarify both the absence of ideological hegemony in Egypt and the significance of Islamist counter-hegemonies in Egyptian society. What I term the continuing salience of Islam in Egyptian society can be viewed in terms of the articulation with capitalism of the ideological, and to a great extent political, ‘instances’ of a pre-capitalist mode of production, competing with the ideological instance of the capitalist mode at the level of the regime and intelligentsia. The definition of the Egyptian state in this thesis follows the Gramscian model, but with some modifications. The greatest difficulty in using Gramsci uncritically in Egypt

is that his conception was intended to describe European bourgeois states, which were for him, by definition, instruments of rule for the bourgeoisie as a class. In Egypt, the extent to which we can describe the state as the instrument of any particular class is highly debated in the literature. Some, like Vatikiotis, argue that the Egyptian state has always stood above social classes.³⁷ The need to regulate irrigation in the populated centres clustered around the Nile Valley has, according to Vatikiotis and many other scholars, necessitated centralised control in Egypt since Pharaonic times. The founder of the modern Egyptian state is usually given to be Muhammad Ali, who initiated Egypt's modernisation, opened the country to the world capitalist system, introduced a system of private land-ownership and continued the ecologically determined centralised control. For Springborg and Henry, Egypt constitutes a 'bully praetorian state', relying on coercive institutional power and patronage networks to rule.³⁸ Other, primarily Marxist, scholars have emphasised the modern state's class basis, viewing the state as possessing 'relative autonomy', but representative of the Egyptian bourgeoisie following the revolution of 1919; of the petite bourgeoisie after 1952 and, soon after, of a new 'state bourgeoisie'; and a coalition of this state bourgeoisie and the old bourgeoisie from 1971.³⁹ Some scholars have questioned the extent to which the basis of the pre-revolutionary state, in the rural middle class, actually changed following the revolution of 1952.⁴⁰ More useful for the purposes of this thesis than focussing on the state as the instrument of a ruling class is to place more centrally in our analysis the category of *regime*.

The Egyptian regime, which, unlike the state, changed at least twice during the period under study, may have been relatively autonomous politically from class forces (even if emerging from or spawning a particular class base) but relied in changing ways on different classes for support. Thus, even if the Free Officers' regime was representative of the military wing of the petite bourgeoisie, and gave rise to a new 'state bourgeoisie', it turned to workers and peasants as a counterbalance to the old Egyptian bourgeoisie it replaced. Similarly, if Sadat's regime remained organically a part of the state bourgeoisie, the president sought to mobilise the old bourgeoisie against Nasser's support base as well as, particularly after October 1973, seeking to establish more mass support. In ideological terms the regime's objective class basis, or lack thereof, was less important than the classes to which it turned for political support. For Ayubi, this dilemma results from the phenomenon of 'articulated modes of production' that is found in Egypt and other Arab states.⁴¹ To the extent that the capitalist mode of production was adopted in Egypt, it is possible to speak of an economically dominant bourgeoisie, but this bourgeoisie may not have established control of the mode of persuasion (ideology) and thus ideology may not reflect a purely bourgeois world-view. Political society, then, may not correspond to the dominant economic class.

The bourgeoisie, rather, has exercised a variable influence in both political and civil society. In recognition of this ‘non-correspondence’, I prefer to use the concept of ‘regime’ instead of ruling class, state or ‘political society.’

In the Egyptian case, it may be possible to link intellectuals with their class of origin and, thus explain the provenance of their thinking, although empirically, this is difficult to establish beyond the formative years of the Egyptian state and perhaps too many exceptions exist than would prove the rule. There is some parsimony to the argument that the post-1952 Egyptian state was the instrument of the petite bourgeoisie, or a fairly heterogeneous state bourgeoisie, and, by the composite nature of these classes, their intellectuals held diverse and seemingly contradictory viewpoints, but such a conclusion deprives the class-bound analysis of intellectuals of much explanatory significance when studying the provenance of ideas. A more useful approach, and the one that this thesis follows, is to accept the Gramscian argument that groups, including classes, elaborate their own categories of organic intellectuals, but to associate more closely the category of traditional intellectuals post-1952 not with the ruling class, but with the ‘regime.’ Mannheim’s free intelligentsia, then, would find its ‘freedom’ is distinctly limited in the Egyptian context both by an unconscious assimilation to regime preferences and more overt suppression, censorship and control; that is, by the coercive resources of the state that Gramsci stressed were ‘augmented’, rather than replaced, by its ideological power.⁴²

The regime may recruit intellectuals based on their abilities or the compatibility of their ideas with the regime’s priorities. Prominent for much of the period in question was the figure of Muhammad Hasanein Heikal, the editor of the largest, state-controlled, newspaper *al-Ahram* and Nasser’s close friend and advisor.* Often considered to be part of the Nasser regime, Heikal continued to advise Sadat until, for reasons largely to do with foreign policy positions, the latter dismissed him from his post in 1975. Other intellectuals were considered more expendable than Nasser viewed Heikal, but the ambiguity of Heikal’s position as a newspaper editor and presidential advisor not only signals the permeability of any state/society divide but also highlights the necessity of clearly defining the relationship of intellectuals, and hence their ideas, to the regime. Although categorisation will always reduce individuals to ‘ideal types’ to which they will rarely conform, it is helpful to distinguish between those thinkers working directly in the service of, and thus sanctioned by,

* For Laura James, ‘by the 1960s, almost everyone read Heikal’s [articles]. It was widely believed that Nasser used it to test public reaction to his new plans.’ James, *Nasser at War : Arab Images of the Enemy* 48.

the regime; those protected by or working in the same vein as regime intellectuals—the regime’s ‘organic intellectuals’—and those working in opposition to, or in defiance of, the regime. Individuals will, of course, move between categories over the course of their careers. Examples of the former may include Heikal and Marxists like Lutfi al-Khuli and Khalid Muhi al-Din during parts of the Nasser years, as well as Islamist thinkers like Sufi Abu Talib and pro-West liberal nationalists like Anis Mansur and Ihsan Abd al-Quddus that Sadat held close. Of the second category we can count the ‘in-house’ thinkers of the various state-sanctioned organisations and publications, such as *al-Ahram* and its Centre for Political and Strategic Studies and *al-Tali'a*, as well as the al-Azhar establishment of *ulema*. To reiterate, these represent broad ideal-type categories. Individuals fall in and out of regime favour, misjudge regime preferences, or, even if enjoying regime sponsorship, work to push the regime’s orientation in particular directions.

The role of Counter-Hegemonic Intellectuals

A third category of intellectuals may be termed ‘counter-hegemonic’ and would include some Marxist, Nasserist and Islamist thinkers in the 1970s. Counter-hegemonic thinkers and political movements should be sharply distinguished from mere ‘opposition’, primarily in their rejection of the systemic, ideological and institutional bases of the regime as a whole. Gramsci was particularly sensitive to the opportunities available to mobilise socially against the bourgeois state. As such, his discussion of ‘civil society’, reveals this category to constitute not only the main bulwark of support for an existing order—the realm in which intellectuals organic to the bourgeoisie replicate a national culture formulated by the ruling class’s traditional intellectuals—but also the primary sphere of action for counter-hegemonic movements. Conceived of in Gramscian terms, Carr’s theories on the ways in which ideas on foreign policy develop and become accepted by the public would apply in cases where the relationship between political and civil society is ‘proper’, that is where hegemony exists. This ‘properness’ is highly contingent, for both Gramsci and Mannheim, on the industrialisation of society, or on the universalisation of capitalist modes of production, which has not obtained in Egypt.

As such, it is necessary to look at the socio-political forces that prevent such a balance from being achieved and hence complicate the straightforward concord between intellectual elites and masses assumed by Carr. Thinking that undermines the status quo, by exposing official ideology as bogus or myth, necessarily must contain ideas that seem to a target audience more plausible. The strength of a counter-hegemonic movement in the modern state, then, lies in its ability to connect with a mass constituency more successfully than the state itself.

The state, for its part, in defending itself against counter-hegemonies may choose to incorporate components of the counterideology into its own theories. In a sense Carr recognises this intersubjectivity when he discusses the role of propaganda. In using propaganda, Carr argues, the state must ensure that it contains a grain of truth. Put another way, the state cannot simply generate completely new ideas that the general public cannot relate to. In the sphere of foreign policy, he argues, the state cannot depict an enemy as ridiculous or contemptible unless the general public is somehow given to believe this to be the case. This was the essence of the '*Twenty Years' Crisis*.' The fact that war had broken out between the so-called rational and civilised European nations exploded the universalist myths of utopianism repeated by the intellectuals and statesmen of Europe. Carr escapes from the apparent cul de sac in his argument—that a degree of utopianism is necessary in politics, but that the public will not believe utopianism when it plainly is not true, and that, as realism has shown, utopianism is never more than a disguise for self interest—by positing the existence of a stock of universal values held by people everywhere. Rather than relating these existing public inclinations to the machinations of counter-hegemonic groups, Carr assumes the *a priori* existence of an international morality to which intellectuals can appeal to shape a new approach to conceptualising foreign policy.⁴³

Gramsci, though, offers an explanation that may be more applicable to the Egyptian case. Gramsci believed that in order to create the new culture that would accompany a revolution, the masses would have to create their own organic intellectuals, some of whom would become 'leaders.'

One of the most important characteristics of any group that is developing towards dominance is its struggle to assimilate and to conquer 'ideologically' the traditional intellectuals, but this assimilation and conquest is made quicker and more efficacious the more the group in question succeeds in simultaneously elaborating its own organic intellectuals.⁴⁴

These leaders would differ from the organic intellectuals of the bourgeoisie in that their ideas would reflect the real-world concerns of the masses.⁴⁵

For Gramsci, the revolutionary organic intellectuals can organise hegemony in a state once the 'traditional intellectuals' have been conquered. This process will be a combination of old and new, but the type of ideology that will be accepted as a basis for cultural transformation cannot be arbitrary as such construction will be:

...rapidly eliminated by historical competition...whereas constructions which respond to the demands of a complex organic period of history always impose themselves and prevail in the end, even though they may pass through several

intermediary phases during which they manage to affirm themselves only in more or less bizarre and heterogeneous combinations.⁴⁶

Gramsci's views on this issue arguably stem from his early practical experience in revolutionary politics, in which he recognised the need for Marxists to reach out to young Catholics in the countryside.⁴⁷

The elaboration of a 'counter-hegemony' in a state where the relationship between political and civil society is not 'balanced', then, involves a process comparable to that of state formation, with a parallel set of structures, including intellectuals, mirroring and competing with those of the really existing state. The need to construct counter-hegemony based on a combination of old and new conceptions of the world presupposes substantial intellectual overlap between the state and the counter-hegemony. The counter-hegemonic movement, however, is spared the need to actually implement foreign policies. As such it enjoys a comparative advantage in its ability to frame foreign policy issues to resonate with its public and expose as lies those proffered by the state itself.

Conclusion

The exposure to scrutiny via Gramsci of Carr's conception of the way in which foreign policy thinking develops in states demonstrates that Carr, and, it should be added, much of IR and FPA, cannot fully account for the role ideas play in foreign policy on account of an *a priori* assumption that state and society are intellectually integrated, or can be made thus through intellectual labour. An 'accurate reconnaissance' of individual cases needs to be made in order to understand idea formation: although international interactions play their role, the domestic social and political context configures the ways in which ideas are adopted by the state and elaborated by intellectuals. Mannheim and Carr use a sociology of intellectuals that assumes a complete statebuilding project, or at least one that is liable to be completed through the efforts of an intelligentsia. Carr extends Mannheim's optimism here to the international plane in arguing that statesmen can, by exploding the myth of utopianism, develop a more 'realist' international ideology to maintain world peace. Carr's framework is, as the following chapters will show, apposite to studying the role of foreign policy and a state's external environment in influencing the development of ideas on foreign policy. Where the approach of Carr is less useful, as with much constructivist scholarship, is in explaining how this international context intersects with domestic political and social struggles. Following Gramsci, it is possible to argue that incomplete state-building projects produce hegemonies and counter-hegemonies in which no unitary world-view, or national identity, becomes 'momentarily fixed.' This observation is crucial in analysing conceptions

of other international actors in a state/society, and in exploring the divergence, or incompatibility, between a state's foreign policy orientation and the ideas surrounding, as understood in terms of 'paradigms'.

¹ Robert W. Cox, "Social Forces, States and World Orders: Beyond International Relations Theory," in *Neorealism and Its Critics*, ed. Robert O. Keohane (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), 204-55.

² E. H. Carr and Michael Cox, *The Twenty Years' Crisis, 1919-1939 : An Introduction to the Study of International Relations*, 2nd ed. (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001).

³ Ibid. 71.

⁴ Ibid. 125.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Hedley Bull, Kai Alderson, and Andrew Hurrell, *Hedley Bull on International Society* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 2000).

⁷ Bull in Hedley Bull and Adam Watson, *The Expansion of International Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984) 224.

⁸ Buzan and Wæver, *Regions and Powers : The Structure of International Security*. and Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver, and Jaap de Wilde, *Security : A New Framework for Analysis* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Pub., 1998).

⁹ Barnett, *Dialogues in Arab Politics : Negotiations in Regional Order*.

¹⁰ Carr and Cox, *The Twenty Years' Crisis, 1919-1939 : An Introduction to the Study of International Relations* 67.

¹¹ Ibid. 68.

¹² Ibid. 129.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid. 66.

¹⁵ See Charles Jones, "Carr, Mannheim, and a Post-Positivist Science of International Relations," *Political Studies* 45, no. 2 (1997). for an analysis of Carr's debt to, and modification of, Mannheim's sociology of knowledge.

¹⁶ Karl Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia : An Introduction to the Sociology of Knowledge*, *Routledge Paperbacks* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1960) 32.

¹⁷ Ibid. 31.

¹⁸ Ibid. 32.

¹⁹ Perry Anderson, "The Antinomies of Antonio Gramsci," *New Left Review* 1, no. 100 (1976): 10.

²⁰ Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci* (New York ; London: International Publishers : Lawrence & Wishart, 1971) 7.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid. 8.

²⁴ Ibid. 9.

²⁵ Ibid. 5.

²⁶ Ibid. 14.

²⁷ Ibid. 15.

²⁸ Maxime Rodinson, *Islam and Capitalism* (London: Allen Lane, 1974) 33.

²⁹ Ibid. 174.

³⁰ Ibid. 162.

³¹ Iliya Harik, *The Political Mobilization of Peasants : A Study of an Egyptian Community* (Bloomington ; London: Indiana University Press, 1974).

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Nazih N. Ayubi, *Over-Statting the Arab State : Politics and Society in the Middle East* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1995) 100.

³⁵ Ibid. 84.

³⁶ Ibid. 41.

³⁷ P.J. Vatikiotis, *The Middle East : From the End of Empire to the End of the Cold War* (London ; New York: Routledge, 1997).

³⁸ Clement M. Henry and Robert Springborg, *Globalization and the Politics of Development in the Middle East* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

³⁹ Mahmoud Hussein, *Class Conflict in Egypt, 1945-1970*, trans. Michel Chirman (New York & London: Monthly Review Press, 1973) 100-05.

⁴⁰ Leonard Binder, *In a Moment of Enthusiasm : Political Power and the Second Stratum in Egypt* (Chicago ; London: University of Chicago Press, 1978)., also Hamied Ansari, *Egypt, the Stalled Society* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1986).

⁴¹ Ayubi, *Over-Statting the Arab State : Politics and Society in the Middle East*

⁴² For a discussion of the role of security forces in Egypt see Henry and Springborg, *Globalization and the Politics of Development in the Middle East* 153.

⁴³ Carr and Cox, *The Twenty Years' Crisis, 1919-1939 : An Introduction to the Study of International Relations* 130.

⁴⁴ Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci* 5.

⁴⁵ Ibid. 325.

⁴⁶ Ibid. 321.

⁴⁷ See Giuseppe Fiori, *Antonio Gramsci : Life of a Revolutionary* (London: New Left Books, 1970) 105.

Chapter 3: Egyptian Liberal Nationalism, Islamism and Marxism from the 1870s until 1952

This chapter outlines the early development in Egypt of three major political discourses: liberal nationalism, Islamism and Marxism, particularly as they deal with conceptions of the international and Egypt's role therein, which, later chapters will show, had important effects on conceptions of Israel. Using a Gramscian framework of analysis, it highlights the social and political factors that underpinned this evolution. The period under consideration here, from the late nineteenth century until 1952, is important for the purposes of the thesis since many of the dynamics that affected intellectual production and its exploitation by Egyptian regimes in the second half of the twentieth century took shape at this time. The birth of the Egyptian bourgeoisie and its encounter with the West in the late nineteenth century, particularly after the British occupation began in 1882, was accompanied by an intellectual quest for 'authenticity,' increasingly coalescing around forms of nationalism that would inform approaches to Israel throughout the 20th century. The bifurcation of this quest, on the one hand inspired by Western liberalism while on the other Islam, owes much to the manner in which a bourgeoisie with a particular relationship to the state and the global capitalist system elaborated its intellectuals. During the pre-revolutionary period the role of class in the formation of ideas was central in a way that cannot be said to apply during the Nasser and Sadat eras. The composition of Egyptian society was an issue with which political discourses dealt, but it also affected the elaboration of ideologies themselves. This is perhaps most evident in the development of Marxist thinking in the Egyptian communist movement, which was born within a European and Jewish 'egyptianised' community that would increasingly be regarded as 'foreign.'

All these developments go far to explaining the contending interpretations of Zionism, and later Israel, that form the main subject matter of this thesis. Responses to Zionism were not central to Egyptian political thought until near the end of the period examined in this chapter. But the form in which these responses took was, initially, largely conditioned by the intellectual history discussed here, since Zionism and Israel were viewed in relation to major preoccupations; namely, whether Egypt was a modern state with national interests and citizenship based on choice rather than ethnicity or religion; the extent to which Egyptian freedom and self-determination were limited by imperialism; whether Egypt belonged to the European, Arab or Islamic worlds; and whether Egyptian patriotism should serve some more universal goal than national interests. Divergent approaches to these questions led, as

subsequent chapters show, to different paradigms for understanding the role and nature of the State of Israel.

Traditional Intellectuals in Egypt: the Ulema

As Chapter 2 explained, in Gramsci's thought the 'traditional' intellectual performs the function of ideological leadership in political society, that is at the level of the state. In the Egyptian context, the emergence of such a category in the nineteenth century was, as in the West, related to the birth and growth of a national bourgeoisie. The founder of the dynasty that would rule Egypt until 1952, Muhammad Ali, abolished the system of tax-farming (*iltizam*) which had underpinned the old social order and replaced it with a system of private land ownership in which land was parcelled out, initially to relatives and friends of the ruler, and eventually able to be bought and sold. Land was increasingly devoted to the cultivation of cotton for sale on the world market. A class of large landowners—often absentee and living in cities—emerged alongside an urban commercial bourgeoisie of largely European, Jewish and Levantine origin,¹ defined mainly by interests in the international cotton trade. 'Less than a century after Bonaparte and Mohammad Ali,' Abdel Malek writes, 'a class of landed proprietors owned the soil of Egypt under a system of private property and sold its products on world markets ... The Egyptian bourgeoisie was born.'²

Just as the bourgeoisie itself emerged as a result of state reforms, the intellectuals that would be associated with this bourgeoisie owed their status as such to Muhammad Ali's policies. As with the European societies that Gramsci described, the intellectuals belonged to the religious establishment as the primary source of knowledge production in society. The educational policies of Muhammad Ali and his successors sought to expand the Egyptian educated class to support Egyptian modernisation and were aimed initially at the only educated individuals in Egyptian society, the religious scholars (*ulema*, sing. *alim*) of al-Azhar University. Al-Azhar students and teachers became the first to enrol in new schools, translating and interpreting European political and economic ideas. Muhammad Ali rewarded those *ulema* who had shown receptivity to the new modernisation regime with high positions in the administration.³ The Egyptian ruler, in selecting *ulema* for public service, had initiated a process of creating a cadre of Egyptian 'traditional intellectuals' in the Gramscian sense—as an ideological reflection of 'articulated' modes of production as discussed in the previous chapter. The *ulema* who achieved prominence and success in the administration combined fidelity to its modernisation policies with adherence to the orthodox Islamic world-view of the milieu in which they worked. Modernity thus by no means replaced the existing ideological system but, rather, interacted with an established

Islamic world-view. The relationship between the intellectuals and the Egyptian regime at the time was unambiguous. The intellectuals in the time of Muhammad Ali acted almost wholly in accord with the ruler's wishes. It was the time of what Vatikiotis terms the 'supreme rapprochement' between ruler and intellectual.⁴

One of the pioneers of modern Egyptian political thought, Rifa'a al-Tahtawi (1801-1873), was an al-Azhar scholar who spent five years in Paris and absorbed many of the ideas of the enlightenment before returning to Egypt to serve the regime as a translator and educational administrator. Like his patrons, Tahtawi did not regard Europe as a danger, but as a source of ideas and inventions. On the cultural level, Tahtawi felt that 'Muslims...could and should enter the main stream of modern civilisation, by adopting the European sciences and their fruits.' As Albert Hourani notes, 'the thought of the French Enlightenment left a permanent mark on him, and through him on the Egyptian mind.'⁵ He introduced the idea of patriotism, or 'love of country' (*hubb al-watan*), as 'the main motive which leads men to try to build up a civilised community'⁶ The country (*watan*) corresponded with Egypt in Tahtawi's thought, rather than the Arab or Islamic world.

It is for this reason that he is often credited as the forefather of Egyptian nationalism. But while Tahtawi extolled the virtues of Egypt, his inclinations tended to be universalist. He translated *La Marseillaise* into Arabic and, as Hourani suggests,

When he uses the term *watan*, it is clearly the equivalent of the French *patrie*, and the *patrie* of the French Revolution was not the self-regarding, self-worshipping nation of modern ideologies, it was the servant of the universal. For Tahtawi too the new Egypt could serve something beyond herself: the modern sciences, which were bringing in a new age and changing the lives of the communities of the east.⁷

Bourgeois Intellectuals outside Al-Azhar

By the 1870s, many Egyptians were educated solely in the Western fashion in the new schools. The British policy of favouring Egyptian, rather than Turkish, administrators and functionaries aided the development of a group of native Egyptians trained in European methods and prominent in the Egyptian administration, military and literate society who 'constituted the nucleus of a class in society seeking to share power.'⁸ By the end of the century modernisation had 'made it possible for a new generation of Egyptian intellectuals to supplant the Azharite sheikhs as the educational and cultural leaders of modern Egypt.'⁹ *Ulema* came increasingly to share their role as traditional intellectuals with Egyptians who, though Muslim, felt less constrained by the strictures of the Islamic world-view than the *ulema*. But these new intellectuals, stimulated by Western philosophy and the writings of Syrian and Lebanese secularists such as Shibli Shumayyil and Farah Antoun, were not a

class apart from the modernising *ulema*.¹⁰ Together they represented a national bourgeoisie with direct or indirect interests in the international cotton trade, favouring autonomy and a curbing of the power of the Egyptian ruler, the Khedive, that would allow them greater influence in the political process.¹¹

In the military, in the apparatus of government, and in cultured society at large, intellectual ‘circles’ and secret societies were formed, often around respected and influential thinkers. The circles were important incubators of ideas. The newspapers and journals that proliferated in the 1870s, essential for the dissemination of ideas among a larger literate society, also tended to be defined by the ideas of a leading intellectual or group of intellectuals, such as the *Jarida* of Ahmad Lutfi al-Sayyid or the *Liwa'* of Mustafa Kamel. Similarly, the first political parties were formalisations of groupings that had previously existed in the forms of circles and societies.

The intellectual centre of gravity gradually moved out of al-Azhar and into the cultural world of a ‘modern’ non-ecclesiastical Egyptian intelligentsia. The idiom of modernity came increasingly to replace that of orthodox Islam. Language itself changed, reflecting the need to express modern ideas in newspapers and journals. The ideas of Islamic reformism as well as those of secularism were expressed in this new language and media. The discourse of those al-Azhar sheikhs who had not been drawn into modernity appeared archaic and obsolete.¹² As Berque writes, ‘there was some considerable distance between the scholastic classicism practiced at al-Azhar...and the idiom, intended for mass diffusion, which was being forged by intellectuals very far removed from the traditional ideal.’¹³

The Emergence of Nationalism

By 1882, the conditions created by imperialism, namely the narrowing of the scope for elite political action and advancement, had led intellectuals to challenge European domination and call for self-determination. As Mitchell notes, the institutions of modernity such as the schools, barracks and press, could easily turn into scenes of revolt.¹⁴ A group in the military around Colonel Ahmad Arabi mobilised a popular following and revolted in that year. For perhaps the first time, the mass of the Egyptian population was involved in political action on a national level. Arabi drew on ideas that were being digested within the circles and secret societies, primarily the need to rid Egypt of foreign interference and khedival—rationalised as Turkish—domination. The intellectuals of the bourgeoisie were overwhelmingly behind him, including prominent modernising *ulema* like Muhammad Abduh, whose contributions are discussed below.¹⁵ Vatikiotis notes that ‘the effect of the

apparent triumph of Arabi was to elicit the support of civilian elements, among whom the journalists provided the necessary publicity for his cause.¹⁶

The nationalist ideas of the intellectuals who supported the Arabi revolt were not absorbed directly by the Egyptian masses it mobilised but instead had to be translated into a popular idiom: ‘This would-be champion of modernity, it seems, retreated in the face of the alliance between Imperialism and the Caliphate, and reverted to popular piety.’¹⁷ That the peasantry (*fellahin*, sing. *fellah*) suffered from debt, bankruptcy and dislocation is clear. But there is no necessary connection between this and their support for the proto-nationalist movement of Arabi.* Arabi’s promise to ‘cancel fellah debts and banish the usurers’,¹⁸ a major factor in the popular support he received, would have to be linked to the anti-imperialist project and expressed outside the idiom of modernity.

Nationalist ideas were disseminated among the peasantry via personalities skilled in translating the ideas expressed in the press into terms, and importantly language, that the peasant could understand. A key figure in this process was Abdullah Nadim. Nadim had gained popular fame in the villages and towns of the Delta as:

...one of those *adabatiya*, improvisers and minstrels, who roamed about, earning their living by a shrewd *nukta* (witticism) or by a skilful *takhmis* (versification)...His fame grew, and so did his aspirations...he became known as a teacher and reformer, and proved himself an orator capable of stirring crowds.¹⁹

Nadim became an important spokesman among the peasantry for Arabi’s group, who ‘found in him an indispensable adapter; when a speech was made in classical Arabic, he would rise and transpose the pompous formalities into racy dialect. Then, and only then, the speech became revolutionary.’ The Arabi revolution failed but, as Berque contends, ‘one cannot but be impressed by the bonds of solidarity which in 1881 and 1882 and even earlier, had begun to form between the masses and their champions.’²⁰

But most bourgeois Egyptians disliked the implications of a peasant uprising and, with the quashing of the insurrection which led to occupation by Britain, there was a backlash among intellectuals against the Arabi venture. The potential of using mass feeling as a political weapon for the national bourgeoisie against the Khedive was balanced by fear of what it could become, and genuine inability to control it. The mass demonstrations in support of Arabi—a movement defined at the organisational level by aspirations for equality and

* Wickham has critiqued the use of ‘grievance-based’ explanations of why individuals join social and political movements. Carrie Rosefsky Wickham, *Mobilizing Islam : Religion, Activism, and Political Change in Egypt* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002) 6-8.

greater autonomy, turned violent. Christian shopkeepers in particular were attacked in rampages that threatened to spin out of control.²¹ The traditional methods of dissemination among the peasantry resulted in the venting of peasant grievances toward distinctly pre-modern goals:

...the inspiration of liberal Islam, which was hardly recognizable, to a man like 'Abduh, in these acts of violence now found a rival in that belief in the coming of the millennium which aroused profounder echoes not only in the remote Sudan, but in the heart of the Egyptian people.²²

These themes: the need for the nascent national movement to connect with the peasantry through a popular idiom, and the nervousness of the bourgeoisie about uncontrollable unrest would, as the following chapter discusses, also colour the political and ideological strategies of the Nasser and Sadat regimes.

British Occupation

In 1882 Egypt's relationship with the West changed dramatically. A state of economic dependency that had prevailed since Egypt succumbed to massive foreign debt under the Khedive Ismail in the latter half of the century was compounded by the loss of political autonomy brought on by the British occupation. The response of bourgeois intellectuals was to embrace more stridently European-style nationalism, both as a weapon against colonialism and as a means of suppressing revolutionary tendencies in Egyptian society. While Tahtawi was moved by the internationalist sentiments of the French Revolution, Muhammad Abduh (1849-1905), another al-Azhar scholar, drew inspiration from the conservative reaction to that revolution. Abduh's ideas were constructed on Comtean positivism and the need to 'close the revolutionary period' by finding a system of ideas universally acceptable. For Abduh, that system could be found in Islam.²³ Abduh wrote for his own class, but in particular for those elements in his class that had been seduced by the universalist ideas of the Enlightenment. For Abduh, 'it was this class which was the greatest danger to the *umma* [Islamic community] if it was won to metaphysical secularism; but equally it was from this class only that the leadership of a revived *umma* could be drawn.'²⁴

The problem facing Egypt was that:

...some Egyptians indeed had drunk at the fountain-head [of the Enlightenment]...This meant not only the absence of a common basis shared by the two groups; it meant also the danger that the moral bases of society would be destroyed by the restless spirit of individual reason, always questioning, always doubting.²⁵

Of great significance in Abduh's thought is the scope for interpretation in whether to concentrate on the rejuvenation of 'traditional' values or embrace modernity.²⁶ His

followers in the early 20th century would thus divide broadly into Egyptian liberal nationalists and Islamists. Both initially evinced a commitment to independence without mass upheaval.

Thanks to the popular mobilisation that accompanied the Arabi revolt, the masses had become an important factor in Egyptian politics. But if intellectuals were engaged in a discourse of modernity, increasingly coalescing around nationalism, there were no Gramscian organic intellectuals to promote this world-view among the people. Those intellectual leaders who sought to mobilise public opinion thus tended to stress traditional Islamic themes and a nationalism bound up with fidelity to the Caliphate.²⁷ Populist political leaders like Mustafa Kamil saw the potential for mobilising Egyptian workers and dislocated peasants as a political weapon, particularly after the 1906 uprisings in response to the shooting of some Egyptian peasants by British troops in the village of Dinshaway. Kamil's Ottomanist brand of Egyptian nationalism spread among the masses, aided by new sources of intermediaries between elites and the masses. The student population, particularly those of al-Azhar, came to constitute a powerful political force through strikes and demonstrations.²⁸ The peasant unrest that flared after the Dinshaway incident also found a counterpart in a new form of class consciousness —that of the nascent proletariat.²⁹ It was through workers and students, rather than the popular storytellers that had aided Arabi, that modern activist intellectuals like Kamil attempted to direct and shape popular feeling.

Although Kamil's populism depended on his fidelity to the Caliphate and Islamic identity, he was also taken by the example of the French Revolution and may have hoped to replicate it in Egypt, using Islam to mobilise the public. As Berque writes, 'On the occasion of Dinshawai, it [the French Revolution] conferred a meaning on the explosion of submerged violence. Yet it cannot be said to have been in contact with the mainstream of Egypt's realities.'³⁰ The nationalist movement's lack of real 'organicity' with the masses was evident:

The following year [1909] the *Liwa'* tried to organise a demonstration on the occasion of the twenty-seventh anniversary of the British Occupation. But the moment happened to coincide with the *ru'ya*, the end of the fasting period, and nothing could interrupt public rejoicings. A diplomat notes that the party 'was too Europeanized to act in unison with the feelings of the people. It seemed to delight in demonstrations that were incomprehensible to the masses.'³¹

Peasant and worker protest again got out of hand and frightened the intellectuals of the bourgeoisie, threatening their interests through violence and 'terrorism'.³² As with the fallout from the Arabi revolt, many intellectuals rounded on Kamil and the strategy of his

Watani (National) party. Among those intellectuals who turned against Kamil's activism was Ahmad Lutfi al-Sayyid [1872-1963], who had initially supported the nationalist movement.

Liberal Nationalism

Ahmed Lutfi al-Sayyid, like Abduh, was concerned to construct a value system that could be embraced by all Egyptians, gaining autonomy while forestalling popular revolution. Lutfi al-Sayyid proceeded to 'secularise' Abduh's theories and tie them more explicitly to Egypt, and for this reason he is credited with pioneering a liberal interpretation of Egyptian nationalism. He replaced Abduh's general notion of patriotism with a more specific celebration of Egyptian identity. He glorified Egyptian rural life³³, rejected the concept of the Islamic *umma* as a focus for national feeling, and stressed the need for all 'nationalities' resident in Egypt, such as the Levantine and European middle class to adopt Egyptian nationality. 'What makes an Egyptian,' Lutfi argued, is the willingness to take Egypt as his first and only mother country.³⁴ Lutfi al-Sayyid and the circle that would go on to form the *Umma* Party in 1908, were part of the Egyptian bourgeoisie, but were not *ulema*. Thus they had no wish to restrict guardianship of the common idea system to intellectuals of al-Azhar. Their interactions with and exposure to the ideas of Syrian and Lebanese nationalists as well as a desire to incorporate the Coptic and Jewish middle classes into their vision, encouraged them in this endeavour. Lutfi al-Sayyid was against the Pan-Islamism articulated by Mustafa Kamil, and concerned instead to construct a political culture rooted in Egyptian national interests. Thus, for Lutfi al-Sayyid:

The idea that the land of Islam is the home-country of every Muslim is an imperialist principle, the adoption of which could be useful to any imperialist nation eager to expand its territory and extend its influence...It [Pan-Islamism] is a bogey created by the British in order to arouse European feeling against the national movement in Egypt, and even did it exist it would be bound to fail, since States are based on common interest and not on common sentiment.³⁵

By the end of the First World War, a certain liberal consensus had developed that privileged the interests of the nation above all others. European civilisation as defined by European liberal thinkers of the nineteenth century was accepted as the basis on which Egyptian nationality should be founded. As encapsulated by Hourani, this definition included,

...the existence of the national community, ruling itself in the light of its own interests; the separation of religion and politics; the democratic system of government—the prevalence of the general will as expressed by freely elected parliaments and ministries responsible to them; the respect for individual rights, particularly the right to speak and write freely; the strength of the political virtues, of

loyalty to the community and willingness to make sacrifices for it; above all, the organisation of modern industry and the ‘scientific spirit’ which lay behind it.³⁶

Taha Hussein (1889-1973) arguably represented the last great representative of this line of thought in Egypt until the 1970s, ‘the writer who has given the final statement of the system of ideas which underlay social thought and political action in the Arab countries for three generations.’³⁷ His seminal work *Mustaqbal al-Thaqafa fi Misr (The Future of Culture in Egypt)*, published in 1938—two years after the British occupation of Egypt formally ended—contains his vision of what the character of an independent Egypt should be. Hussein believed that a close study of Egypt’s history revealed that it was, in fact, part of Europe, the pinnacle of human progress, a truth obscured by the centuries of Turkish domination.³⁸ The treaty that Britain signed with Egypt in 1936 revealed the extent to which Europe now accepted Egypt as one of her own, as a nation of Europe. For Hussein, as with Lutfi al-Sayyid, ‘his national feeling is a warm romantic feeling focused on the country itself rather than on the community, and fed by a vivid evocation of Egyptian country life with its joys and sorrows.’ Hussein excluded European and Levantine residents of Egypt from his concept of the nation,³⁹ reflecting the institutionalisation of a narrower conception of Egyptian authenticity, itself arguably a result of the permeation of lower class concerns into bourgeois thought.

Socialism

Although less widespread, socialism, particularly its Fabian iteration, was also a part of elite intellectual discourse in the early twentieth century and constituted in many ways a variant of liberal nationalism. Credit for introducing socialism to a wide intellectual audience is usually accorded to an associate of Taha Hussein’s, Salama Musa (1887-1958), whose 1913 work, *al-Ishtirakiya (Socialism)*, is one of the first works in Egypt on the subject. At this time, similarly inclined Egyptian intellectuals focused on publishing general expositions of Western socialist thought and translations of Marx and other European socialist thinkers. By 1915, works were appearing that applied socialist concepts to the specific Egyptian context, including engaging with the nationalist discourse. Such engagement is evident in one of the earliest such works. In Mustafa Hasanein al-Mansuri’s 1915 book *Tarikh al-madhahib al-ishtirakiya [History of Schools of Socialism]*, he writes:

If socialists became internationalists as a result of the doctrines of Karl Marx, this does not mean that their national feelings have died away, as some have wrongly believed. Instead, these feelings tend to be aroused if someone attacks their country. They do not refrain from defending their homeland; however they refuse to have a part in a war that seeks to deprive a weak nation of its freedom.⁴⁰

Salama Musa was impressed by Fabianism while a student in London. In 1921, as part of an ideologically diverse group of leftists, he founded the Egyptian Socialist Party (ESP). The party was divided geographically, intellectually and socially. Musa was one of the leaders of the Cairo wing, which tended more toward the socialist, rather than communist, end of the left-wing spectrum, was constituted of a higher proportion of native Egyptians, and was, intellectually, more attuned to the nationalist movement than the party's Alexandria branch.⁴¹ Although distinguished by his pioneering advocacy of social reform, Salama Musa's thinking shared much with the liberal ideas of Lutfi al-Sayyid or Taha Hussein in its preoccupation with Egypt's cultural authenticity. Writing later, in 1958, Musa reflected:

When I meditate on my personality and objectives, I feel that I am playing the same role, in 20th Century Egypt, as the men of the Renaissance did from 1400 to 1800...My overall purpose is to transform Egypt from a weak Oriental country, locked in its agricultural and other traditions, into a modern European country reliant on science, industry and the independence of its own personality, and with an economic structure oriented towards socialism.⁴²

Musa went so far as to 'stress the need to adopt Latin script the moment I became convinced that our Arabic script was acting as a brake on our scientific progress and on our culture.'⁴³

Islamism

More divergent from the secular liberal tradition was that of another disciple of Abduh, Rashid Rida (1865-1935). If Lutfi al-Sayyid took Abduh's modernism in the direction of secular liberal nationalism, Rashid Rida directed his mentor's thought more toward reinvigorating Islam. He expanded upon Abduh's conviction that the ideas of the *Salaf*—the first generation to know the Prophet Muhammad—represented the ideal in terms of Islamic knowledge. Rida was Syrian but moved to Cairo in 1897, where he began publishing the journal, *al-Manar*, as the mouthpiece for Abduh's Islamic reformist ideas.⁴⁴ Rida upheld the virtue of patriotism. Muslims had a duty to defend their country, even if it meant cooperating with non-Muslims to do so. For Rida, 'the contemporary notion of patriotism expresses the unity of the people of different religions in their homeland, and their cooperation in defending the homeland they share. They cooperate to preserve its independence, to win it back if it is lost, and to develop it.' This notion was sanctioned in Islam, which states, 'Muslims are obligated to defend the non-Muslim who enters under their rule and to treat him as an equal according to the just rules of the Shari'a.'⁴⁵ But for Rida, Egyptians—indeed all Muslims—had a higher responsibility to Islam and,

...in the service of his homeland and his people he must not neglect Islam which has honoured him and raised him up by making him a brother to hundreds of millions of Muslims in the world. He is a member of a body greater than his people, and his

personal homeland is part of the homeland of his religious community. He must be intent on making the progress of the part a means for the progress of the whole.⁴⁶

Thus the community of which Egyptians formed a part was not Europe, but the Muslim world and Egyptian identity was based first and foremost on Islam. Rida headed the influential *Salafiya* movement in the 1920s and 1930s and was instrumental in giving the Wafd-led nationalist movement an Islamic dimension, particularly among educated Muslims. Rida's socially inclusive notion of patriotism reflects the *Salafis'* recognition of the popularity the secular liberal Wafd (see below) enjoyed among Egyptian intellectuals and students at the time and the aversion of the bourgeoisie as a whole to social upheaval. Certainly after the demise of the Caliphate in the 1920s, Pan-Islamism of the type espoused by Mustafa Kamil was difficult to sustain. Instead, Rida, for perhaps the first time in Egypt, adopted a more ethnic notion of Egypt's supranational identity, according significance to the 'Arab' as well as Muslim world.

The *Effendiya*

Whereas with the Arabi and Kamil movements the disconnect between the elite vision and the aspirations of the masses had been marked by the paucity of organic intellectuals, by 1919 Egyptian society had evolved such that a cadre of intermediary intellectuals which may be described as organic to the bourgeoisie could be said to exist. The increased access to education; the growth of the public bureaucracy, which required educated functionaries; and the opportunities for enrichment and social advancement afforded by the First World War resulted in the expansion of the lower middle classes, including a broader and less homogeneous intellectual cadre and a body of secondary and university students large and interested enough to become politically involved. This younger group of rising elites—the *effendiya*—produced what Gershoni and Jankowski term 'secondary intellectuals,' those that would interpret the ideas of 'luminaries' and repackage them for public consumption.⁴⁷ They were, in other words, potential organic intellectuals of the Egyptian bourgeoisie. It is this mixed group that Mahmoud Hussein terms the 'intellectual petty bourgeoisie,' which shared to a large extent the interests of the established bourgeoisie, as they,

...had no objective interest in the survival of this oppressive, obstructed transitional system, but they did have a stake in the growth of a national capitalism. An extension of capitalism would enable the intellectuals of this class to achieve a higher social level; and expanding capitalism would need middle-level cadres and intellectual and cultural spokesmen.⁴⁸

But they also resented the established bourgeoisie's monopolisation of political authority, positions and social prestige. Although the British-initiated reform programme opened up more opportunities for large landowners and bourgeois intellectual and political elites, the

bureaucracy could not absorb the new educated generation. Gramsci, it is worth noting, recognised that the expansion of such a generation is ‘not without its disadvantages: it creates the possibility of vast crises of unemployment for the middle intellectual strata.’⁴⁹ For the excluded, ‘those among the students in institutions of higher learning (law, medicine, teachers colleges), administrators and landowners who nursed political ambitions did so outside the purview of the British administrative programme.’*

A critical segment of the *effendiya* was the student population, already important in the early years of the twentieth century but by now a significant force. Like the rest of the *effendiya*, the students were ‘subject to the ideological and political pull both of the classes above and below them.’⁵⁰ Being of largely rural origin and studying in cities, the students also represented a crucial link between the urban intellectual milieu and the countryside.⁵¹

The party to recognise and exploit this new reality was the Wafd, which intellectually evolved the liberal Egyptian nationalism of Lutfi al-Sayyid. Intrinsic to the philosophy of the Wafd Party was a secular conception of Egypt’s national identity, reflecting a desire to involve non-Muslim, and female, Egyptians in the national movement.⁵² But unlike Lutfi al-Sayyid, the Wafd’s leader Sa’d Zaghlul did not advocate that all residents of Egypt should become Egyptians. He celebrated the ‘disappearance of the Turkish element from Egyptian politics,’⁵³ and, while Copts and women were part of the nation, the Levantine and European residents who controlled economic life were not.⁵⁴ The introduction of this restriction on Egyptian identity most likely related to the growing resentment among a new class of less ‘Westernised’ Egyptians against the ‘foreign’ presence and domination.

In 1919, the Wafd harnessed uprisings against British rule throughout Egypt.⁵⁵ The party encountered a population more politicised than had been the case in previous upheavals.[†] The mobilisation efforts of 1919 had a decisive effect on the Egyptian *effendiya*, politicised to the extent that they formed the ‘street’ which would become increasingly significant to intellectual production in Egypt. For Ghali Shukri, ‘the Egyptian street, from the end of the 1920s up to the beginning of the 1950s, remained Wafdist, whether or not that party was in

* Interestingly, Lutfi al-Sayyid opposed the contemporary education format which was geared toward preparing graduates for civil service jobs on the grounds that strengthening the moral character of the individual should take priority over vocational training, perhaps recognising the risk involved in having young educated people uninvolved in public life. Vatikiotis, *The History of Modern Egypt: From Muhammad Ali to Mubarak* 251.

† For Shuhdi Atiyya al-Shafī'i, the 1919 revolution was spearheaded by students, young lawyers and journalists. Shuhdi Atiyyah Shafī'i, *Tatawwur Al-Harakah Al-Wataniyah Al-Misriyah, 1882-1956 [Evolution of the Egyptian Nationalist Movement: 1882-1956]* (Cairo: Dar Shuhdi, 1983).

power,’ since ‘belonging to the Wafd...represents an attachment to an assembly of values, ambitions and personalities, rather than representing an attachment to a party or political organisation.’⁵⁶ These values were ‘an attachment to independence, democracy, the personality of Sa’d Zaghlul and later that of Mustafa An-Nahhas.’⁵⁷ But this ‘street’ also gave birth to major political movements opposed to the Wafd that would shape political discourse in Egypt throughout the twentieth century.

As with the aftermath of 1882 and 1906, many intellectuals repudiated the recourse to mass mobilisation of 1919. The Wafd split into left and right wings, with the left oriented more toward the *effendiya* and the right sharing more with the smaller bourgeois parties such as the Liberals (*Ahrar*) that followed the more gradualist tradition of Lutfi al-Sayyid. It is notable that there was little distinction ideologically between the right wing of the Wafd and the smaller parties, reflecting their dependence on and orientation toward a common support base—the bourgeoisie—much of which was sympathetic to liberal nationalism. The traditional sources of societal cohesion remained strong enough to enable the bourgeoisie to retain this orientation without conceding too much politically or ideologically to the popular movement for change.⁵⁸

Changes in Bourgeois Orientations

Rida’s *Salafi* movement rivalled the Wafd in mobilising the Egyptian masses, and was aided by the fact that Islam, far more than liberalism, resonated with the new generation of educated Egyptians, closer socially to the mass of the peasant population. In a way that foreshadowed similar developments in the 1970s, many avowedly secular bourgeois liberal intellectuals began to embrace Islamic themes around this time. Most notable perhaps is what Israel Gershoni describes as Muhammad Hussein Haykal’s ‘recantation of positivism.’ In Gershoni’s study of Haykal, and his intellectual migration from positivism to Easternism and then to Islam, the author shows that Haykal’s shift was to be explained not only in terms of the thinker’s response to international intellectual currents—in this case the discrediting of positivism among the European intelligentsia and the disillusionment with enlightenment philosophy after the human disaster of the First World War—but primarily reflected Haykal’s understanding of, and response to, the social changes sweeping Egypt.

From the late 1920s, Haykal understood that his reading publics were:

...assuming a new “mass-oriented” character. To reach them and be relevant to them, intellectuals were constrained to take into account their world-views, norms, and horizons of expectations. In other words, they had to shape a popular Eastern-religious discourse which would enable a meaningful dialogue to be conducted between the elite and the masses.⁵⁹

His intellectual transformation reflected an important shift in the way intellectuals perceived their roles:

Haykal allocated to the intellectual elite the role of producing a modern common literate culture which the masses were no longer supposed to accept passively, 'from the top down', but in the shaping of which they were meant to be active partners while identifying with its symbols and values. This was an act of cultural creation that assumed a two-way dialogue.⁶⁰

Haykal's promotion of Islamic identity involved recognition of the need for other intellectual elites to accept his ideas. The goal of modernising Egyptian society along a Western model—thus ensuring the continued prosperity and leadership of the Egyptian bourgeoisie—had not changed. Rida himself was committed to this. But it is also clear that Haykal realised the masses must be engaged in a Gramscian sense: they should be led, rather than directed, in order that the culture supporting the division of labour in an industrial, capitalist Egypt would appear as 'common sense.' Gershoni continues,

to narrow the cultural gap between the intellectual elite and the broader lower strata, now perceived as the *sine qua non* for the modernisation and advancement of the Egyptian society, science and reason were insufficient: a common belief-system was required. Intellectuals had to 'go down' to a level from which they could communicate with the masses. They must discard their false expectation that the masses would reach their high level or, alternatively, would remain in their inferior state but would blindly accept an elitist message simply because they acknowledged its eternal truth.⁶¹

Perhaps the key factor in the disappearance of liberal nationalism as an ideology was the fact that liberal ideas never penetrated the consciousness of the vast majority of Egyptians due largely to the fact that the rural middle class, a potential source of 'organic intellectuals' for the Egyptian ruling elite, did not play a role of spreading liberal ideas among the peasantry. Most members of the rural middle class—or *kibar al-ayan*—escaped the land reforms. For Binder, this 'second stratum' represented a support base for the regime, without which it could not rule. Other scholars have questioned the centrality he accords to the rural middle class⁶², but whatever their role in the regime's political economy, it must be noted that the village mayors, or *umdahs*, as authority figures in direct contact with the peasantry (unlike the absentee landowners that Nasser targeted) played a crucial role in the ideological development—or more correctly lack thereof—of the countryside. The *umdahs* had maintained generally liberal, or Wafdist, voting patterns. Their interests were directly connected to the maintenance of the overseas cotton trade, to the safeguarding of which the ruling class also was dedicated. But the *umdahs* were not interested in transmitting liberal ideology to the countryside, since the relations of production there were distinctly pre-modern.

***Effendiya* Intellectual Orientations**

By the 1930s, the *effendiya* were not merely acting as conducting rods between bourgeois intellectuals and the Egyptian masses, but were forming their own political movements. The groups formed in this period and among this class would define the ideological complexion of Egypt for the duration of the period under study in this thesis. The Free Officers that seized control in 1952, including two future presidents, were involved to varying degrees in the *effendiya* political movements that formed in the 1930s and 1940s. They were, in the main, more radical and populist than the bourgeois groups that preceded them. In tune not only with mass sentiments and bourgeois nationalism, the *effendiya* groups also connected with political philosophies emerging from Europe, particularly fascism and communism. By the end of World War II, intellectual leadership in Egypt had clearly shifted from the bourgeoisie to the *effendiya*, reflecting generational as well as social change. The main feature, as well as stimulus, of the intellectual shift was the greater priority given to mass mobilisation and the incorporation of popular sentiments into ideology.

Liberal Nationalists

There was no clean break with liberal nationalism, and not all *effendiya* were opposed to it. Of the new political groupings that emerged among the *effendiya* in the 1930s and 1940s the Society of National Renaissance (SNR) was perhaps the one that most faithfully reflected the liberal nationalist tradition of intellectuals like Lutfi al-Sayyid and Taha Hussein. The SNR defended the political system that had been in place since 1923 and, like Hussein, viewed the 1936 treaty with Britain as a crucial turning point in Egypt's history. For one of the SNR's members, the Copt Mirit Boutros Ghali, Egypt's national identity was not shared by all classes and individuals⁶³, due in large part to the coexistence of competing conceptions of nationalism. Given the different social milieu in which these liberal *effendiya* intellectuals found themselves, the thinkers of the SNR focused on deepening Egypt's transition to liberal democracy, avoiding the paternalistic attitude of the older generation of liberal nationalists who had held that democracy could not be expanded in Egypt until the country's social education was complete. The SNR concentrated on achieving a democratic society in Egypt through internal reforms which would result in the 'transformation of the Egyptian personality and the creation of the Egyptian citizen.'⁶⁴ This involved instilling a spirit of free enterprise and profit-making, legal reforms, and the reform of political parties to abolish clientelism. Reflecting the more ambivalent attitudes of his readership toward Europe, as well as the ambivalence of Copts to Pan-Islamism, Ghali proclaimed that Egypt belongs to 'neither East nor West,' and is characterised by a general openness.⁶⁵

Islamists

But, the *effendiya* political and intellectual field became increasingly dominated by Islamism. A generation after Rida, ‘Islamic nationalist’ intellectuals of or sympathetic to the Muslim Brotherhood continued to argue that Egypt’s national identity should be based on Islam. For the Muslim Brotherhood, patriotism was encouraged ‘because Egypt is a Muslim land,’ and sacred because it was thus ‘in the service of the faith.’⁶⁶ Love of Egypt is all the more desirable because of the central role Egypt has played in the historical development of Islam. The Muslim Brotherhood stood for more than simply defending Islam and, to them, Egypt’s goal transcends defending its own narrow interests to include ‘the spread of the word of God across the face of the earth.’⁶⁷ Like Rida, the Muslim Brotherhood thinkers embraced Arabism as a substitute for the Caliphate. Egypt ‘is part of the general Arab nation and...when we act for Egypt, we act for Arabism, the East and for Islam.’⁶⁸ As Mitchell notes:

the necessary prelude to a truly Islamic renaissance is not only the liberation of each Muslim land ... but the ‘unification of the Arab nations,’ the goal of Arabism. In serving Arabism, the Muslim Brothers are ‘serving Islam and the welfare of the entire world.’⁶⁹

Egyptian nationalism and Pan-Arabism were thus intermediary steps toward the more important goal of establishing an Islamic state which would safeguard the welfare of all humanity.⁷⁰

Hasan al-Banna, the founder and leader of the Muslim Brotherhood, having witnessed the most overt forms of British military and economic occupation in the Suez Canal Zone while a teacher in Ismailia, developed an excoriating critique of ‘foreign’ influence in Egypt. In stark contrast to the liberal nationalists, al-Banna did not welcome the cultural aspect of British colonialism. Cultural imperialism was, for him, spearheaded by imperialists resident in Egypt and those foreigners who had ‘assumed Egyptian nationality.’ Mitchell points out,

The importance of this attitude cannot be over-emphasised...its implications were many, for the foreigner—the *khawaja*—was invariably a Christian or Jew; the posture of the Society [of the Muslim Brotherhood] “in defence of Islam” led necessarily to a view of the foreigner which included religious and cultural as well as political and economic objections. And not the least of the implications of this view was the identification of the foreigner with the *local* Christian or Jew, a relationship between majority religious and cultural inferiority and the minority.⁷¹

The Communist Movement

The development of the communist movement in Egypt was, initially, almost entirely separate from the intellectual history discussed above. If Salama Musa represented the ‘left

wing' of the Egyptian bourgeoisie in the first two decades of the 20th century, the leaders of the Alexandria branch of his Egyptian Socialist Party represented the left of the diverse 'egyptianised' (*mutamassir*) or European and Jewish urban bourgeoisie—those, like Levantines, not deemed 'Egyptian' in liberal and Islamist nationalist discourse, but also often not speaking Arabic.* The Alexandria branch of the ESP was led by a Jew of Russian extraction, Joseph Rosenthal. This latter group attracted mainly Italians, Greeks, Armenians and Jews in its rank and file as well as leadership, while the Cairo branch was overwhelmingly Egyptian. The Alexandria branch of the ESP was more in tune with international communist intellectual currents than the nationalist discourse in Egypt, although Rosenthal himself refrained from signing the party's programme, fearing that his 'foreign name, in spite of my Egyptian citizenship, might be considered as a foreign intervention in an Egyptian issue.'⁷² In 1922 the Alexandria party renamed itself the Egyptian Branch of International Communism and joined the Third International.

The communists focussed on building links with labour (expatriate and Egyptian), taking control of the General Union of Workers, which had a membership of twenty thousand in 1923.⁷³ This inevitably put them in direct conflict with the Wafd, which, with the support of the British, managed to decimate the party by breaking up the trade union network. The government also, again with British support, launched attacks on Bolshevism and socialism in the press which, along with a *fatwa* (religious edict) from the Mufti of Egypt, succeeded in bringing communism into the national intellectual discourse. The party was revived through direct intervention by the Comintern, which dispatched communists from abroad to lead it. The new party's programme, which was in tune with that of the Third International, paid scant attention to issues of Egyptian nationalism. It was relatively easy for the authorities to arrest and deport its members, thus terminating organised communism in Egypt.

***Effendiya* Communists: Egyptianisation**

In the mid-1930s, a new generation of communists began organising, like the first mainly among the 'foreign' community. But this new movement came to enjoy closer integration with the *effendiya* national movement. The revival of communist activity was in many ways a reaction to the rise of fascism in Europe and the sympathy for the Nazis expressed in the Egyptian press.⁷⁴ In 1934 the Union of Peace Partisans was established by Paul Jacquot-

* The capitulations policy of the nineteenth century favoured minorities like Jews and Christians in Egypt, including the provision of European citizenships. As a result communities that had long been part of the Egyptian social fabric became not only a privileged class, but almost inevitably came to be regarded, and often saw themselves, as foreign.

Descombes, a Swiss Jewish engineer. He worked with groups of Greek communists in Cairo. The Union joined the World Peace Organisation and attracted a membership of mainly bourgeois intellectuals, both Egyptian and foreign, and including Wafdist. In parallel, the Democratic Union was founded in 1939 by Henri Curiel, Hillel Schwartz and Marcel Israel, all members of the Egyptian Jewish bourgeoisie. From the outset, these leaders differed on the issue of the 'egyptianisation' of the movement. At one extreme, Schwartz considered the very notion of egyptianisation chauvinistic for a supposedly international movement. Instead he 'maintained that in the development of Egyptian class consciousness, foreigners came at the first stage, then Egyptian intellectuals, followed by workers.'⁷⁵ At the other, Israel wanted to prohibit non-Egyptians from any leadership role. Curiel fell somewhere in between, working to encourage Egyptian membership.

In the political climate of the 1930s and 1940s, egyptianisation meant engaging with the issue of nationalism, a thorny one for individuals like Curiel who, although viscerally sympathetic to the plight of the Egyptian poor, spoke little or no Arabic and, as 'foreigners', were increasingly being associated with the problem, rather than the solution, to Egypt's travails. It must be noted, however, that Curiel and his colleagues were not the Comintern activists that had been sent to Egypt to revive communism in the 1920s. Curiel's biographer notes that:

What distinguished and will always distinguish their little body of activists from the hordes of European militants was the fact of being born in the Third World (as it would come to be called), into a supremely cynical system of production that had achieved the ultimate in the exploitation of man by man. Theirs was no theoretical awareness based on some ideological opus or clever calculations of surplus value. It was a gut reaction that permeated their being and shaped their consciousness for ever.⁷⁶

But at the same time, Curiel was no Abduh, Taha Hussein, or Rashid Rida. At school he and his brother Raoul recited 'Our ancestors the Gauls' and studied nothing of Egyptian history beyond the Pharaonic period.⁷⁷ Curiel's concern was not to show how Egyptian culture could be accommodated to foreign ideas but to impress upon Egyptians the notion that Marxism could solve the problems of Egyptian society, as it could any society, thinking 'how could they fail to become communists when Marxist doctrine so exactly fitted the situation they had discovered?'.⁷⁸

The Communists and Nationalism

Curiel, Israel and Schwartz founded three separate communist organisations in the early 1940s: the Egyptian Movement for National Liberation (EMNL, or Haditu), founded by Curiel; Iskra, by Schwartz; and People's Liberation by Israel. In addition, in the early 1940s

a group of young Egyptian Jews established the Youth Group for Popular Culture, which in turn spawned a group known for its magazine, *al-Fajr al-Jadid* (*New Dawn*). The activities of these groups divided between mobilisation among the labour movement, literacy and educational projects in poor neighbourhoods, and cultural and intellectual activities for the middle classes and *effendiya*. It is notable that the more a group focussed on activities among Egyptian workers and poor, the less orthodox became its orientation. Iskra, for example restricted its activity to outreach among intellectuals focussing on theoretical issues. Although by the mid 1940s many Egyptian students and other *effendiya* had joined the group, it remained aloof from nationalist issues. On the other hand, the New Dawn group, which had a following among workers, engaged with nationalism and issues of authenticity more readily, reflecting its need to compete with nationalist activists.

Until the Second World War, the leadership of the movement was largely restricted to the Jewish and international community. But the successes of the Soviet Union during the war, in addition to those of the communists in China, attracted many Egyptian Muslims and Copts to the communist groups. The largest and most significant group in terms of attracting members among students and intellectuals was Hillal Schwartz's Iskra, whose members were recruited via the lycée, the university, and political clubs. Iskra projected its ideas via the House of Scientific Research, established in 1945, which acted as a forum for the digestion of ideas emerging from the other leftist groups—the EMNL publications *Umdurman* and *al-Tali'a*, as well as *New Dawn*—in addition to producing its own publications, including a monthly periodical. Botman suggests that 'it was through lectures, discussions, and reading offered by the body that a generation of leftists received their early political education.'⁷⁹ The egyptianisation of the communist movement also marked its social transition from the 'foreign' bourgeoisie to the Egyptian *effendiya*, the same social class from which the Muslim Brotherhood and other organisations emerged.

In 1945, Youssef Darwish, one of the leaders of the New Dawn group, directly linked class struggle to national liberation in the founding of a new communist group, the Workers Committee for National Liberation. For Tariq al-Bishri,

..the program represented the first time that class struggle had been directly linked to national liberation. In articulating the comprador relationship between the Egyptian ruling class and British imperialism, the program maintained that 'it is not possible to liberate the working class without liberating Egypt from imperialism.'⁸⁰

In addition to calling for 'the evacuation of British troops,' Darwish demanded 'the freeing of Egypt from foreign influence through the nationalisation of foreign-owned monopolies and Egyptianisation of major economic and cultural institutions.'⁸¹

It must be recognised, however, that although the emphasis on liberating the working class was a distinctly communist demand, the socialist thinker Rashid al-Barawi translated Lenin's *Imperialism: the Highest Stage of Capitalism* in 1945. From Lenin, Barawi 'provided a theoretical basis to the growing tendency to equate capitalism with imperialism and ascribe the retardation of the Egyptian economy to the domination of foreign firms.' Nevertheless, as Raoul Meijer suggests, the popularity of Lenin's book in Egypt can be attributed to 'the rise of a radical nationalist movement and of the economicistic, secular trend within it.'⁸² For this, the communists can claim some credit.

The linking of the class issue with the nationalist movement related to the question of the egyptianisation of the communist leadership and the question of how the Egyptian communist movement should relate to the national movement as a whole. Differences tended to follow generational lines, with the old guard—as represented by Curiel—encountering opposition from young revolutionaries eager for action.⁸³ For the old guard, more influenced by orthodox communism than the new *effendiya* activists, nationalism was anathema. But for younger leaders like Shuhdi Atiya al-Shafi'i or Anwar Abd al-Malek, engagement with the national struggle was essential if communism was to hold its own against the Muslim Brotherhood and other nationalist forces, such as the right-wing Young Egypt group. Al-Shafi'i was the first Egyptian Muslim to become a leader of a communist group. In 1946, with Muhammad Abd al-Ma'bud al-Gibayli, a fellow Iskra leader, al-Shafi'i published *Our National Goals (Ahdafuna al-Wataniya)*. The book highlighted the paramount importance of political and economic independence and stressed that 'all means of struggle appropriate to the international situation' be pursued.⁸⁴ The book contended that the international situation was appropriate for achieving this goal and the opportunity must be seized without delay.

The Convergence of the Communist and Nationalist Movements

The surge of nationalist activity following the end of World War II, spearheaded mainly by the Wafd as well as the Muslim Brotherhood and Young Egypt organisations, made it difficult for the communists to remain aloof if they wanted to retain what support they had among workers and students and build their movement. The key nationalist demand at the time was the abrogation of the 1936 treaty with Britain and full withdrawal from Egypt and Sudan. In February 1946 mass demonstrations were held by students in Cairo following the publication of Anglo-British exchanges on the treaty, in which the Egyptian government's position was perceived as being too lenient. Leftist groups including the communist groups and the left-wing 'Wafdist Vanguard' formed the National Committee of Workers and

Students (NCWS) in an attempt to coordinate the demonstrations. Through the NCWS, the communists moved into the nationalist mainstream, moderating their Marxism, but injecting certain of their ideas and values into nationalist discourse. Thus the NCWS combined the general goals of ending the occupation with eliminating the agents of colonialism—feudalists and monopolists—and uniting anticolonialist forces, including forging contacts with international anti-colonial and democratic movements. Botman reports a participant as saying ‘probably many of the suggestions came from them [organisers in left-wing movements] because they saw things somewhat more clearly.’⁸⁵

To the communists, Egypt’s conflict with Britain was part of a global struggle against imperialism, of which the Egyptian component was no more or less significant than any other. It was on this basis that some communists supported Arabism. For Haditu, while Arab unity was treated as a means to the end of throwing off colonialism, it was itself a function of imperialist oppression. Haditu did not prioritise the ‘Arabness’ of the Arab world in arguing for unity. Thus, in its magazine, *al-Malayin*:

If we are not a racial unity tied by one origin, one language, and one history, then we are a tremendous emotional unity, the origin of which is deprivation of all dignified human rights; its language is the inevitable hatred against the tyrannical rulers, and its history is those scandals and tragedies which are committed in our countries by the allied colonial bloc.⁸⁶

The communists dismissed religious or ethnic conceptions of either Egyptian or Arab identity. It is possible that part of the reason for this was the cosmopolitan nature of the communist movement and the need for the Egyptian members not to alienate their Jewish and other *mutamassir* comrades. In support of this argument, Beinin points out that many of the non-Jewish intellectuals of Iskra, including Shuhdi ‘Atiya al-Shafi’i, Anwar Abdel-Malek, Latifa al-Zayyat, Michel Kamil, and Muhammad Sid Ahmed, ‘shared a local Egyptian patriotic orientation with the Jewish leaders of the group,’ but, in the 1950s and 1960s ‘became leading advocates of pan-Arabism in the communist movement.’⁸⁷ But whatever the motivation, the communists’ analysis of the Arab context resonated in intellectual circles and would form an important component of Egyptian regional policy discourse in the 1950s and 1960s.

Conclusion

This chapter has traced the early development of liberal nationalist, Islamist and Marxist thought in the context of the emergence of the Egyptian bourgeoisie in the nineteenth century, the growing politicisation of the Egyptian population and, particularly following World War I, the social diversification of the intelligentsia and the transformation of

bourgeois political thought by the thinkers of a new urban lower middle class and student population—the *effendiya*. Egypt's modernisation and integration in the world capitalist system created dynamics which led to the elaboration and exploitation by the Egyptian state of a category of Gramscian 'traditional intellectuals' associated with the bourgeoisie. Modernisation, particularly in education had, by 1919, enlarged the Egyptian public sphere to the extent that a corresponding category of 'organic intellectuals' could be said to exist among the *effendiya*. Thanks to these organic intellectuals, such as students, journalists and teachers, ideas of modernity, liberal nationalism and Islamic reformism developed by the traditional intellectuals reached a wider audience. The most important mechanism for the spread of these ideas was the Wafd Party. Liberal nationalism, however, did not resonate with the Egyptian lower classes and, due in large part to the role of the *effendiya* as mediators between bourgeois intellectuals and the masses, the ideas of some traditional intellectuals began to change. By the 1930s the *effendiya* had formed their own political and social movements, characterised by a closer relationship with the Egyptian lower classes, and became the new focus for the national movement.

The foundations of the three main intellectual discourses, liberal nationalism, Islamism and Marxism, had, by 1945, been largely laid. Sociological factors continued to influence the development of these discourses after this point, with the most significant new factor being the influence of a regime that sought to mobilise public support in various ways through the construction of ideologies that drew on these three traditions. Liberal nationalism, Islamist and Marxist discourse continued to evolve, and influence each other, in ways that will be discussed in the following chapters, but the central assumptions explicated in the formative period that was the subject of this chapter remained relatively constant. This included to a large extent paradigms for conceptualising Israel, namely anti-imperialism, the nation-state and the culture-clash.

¹ Hisham Sharabi, *Arab Intellectuals and the West : The Formative Years, 1875-1914* (Baltimore ; London: Johns Hopkins Press for the Middle East Institute, 1970) 4.

² Abdel-Malek, *Egypt: Military Society : The Army Regime, the Left, and Social Change under Nasser*.

³ Bassam Tibi, *Arab Nationalism : Between Islam and the Nation-State*, 3rd ed. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996) 84.

⁴ P.J. Vatikiotis, *The History of Modern Egypt : From Muhammad Ali to Mubarak*, 4th ed. (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1991).

⁵ Albert Habib Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age, 1798-1939* (London ; New York: Oxford University Press, 1962) 74.

⁶ Ibid. 78.

⁷ Ibid. 81.

⁸ Vatikiotis, *The History of Modern Egypt : From Muhammad Ali to Mubarak* 108.

⁹ Ibid. 101.

¹⁰ See Abdallah Laroui, *The Crisis of the Arab Intellectual : Traditionalism or Historicism?* (London: University of California Press, 1976).

¹¹ Afaf Lutfi al-Sayyid-Marsot, *Egypt's Liberal Experiment, 1922-1936* (Berkeley [etc.] ; London: University of California Press, 1977) 39.

¹² Sharabi, *Arab Intellectuals and the West : The Formative Years, 1875-1914*.

¹³ Jacques Berque, *Egypt, Imperialism & Revolution* (London: Faber and Faber Ltd, 1972) 207.

¹⁴ Timothy Mitchell, *Colonising Egypt* (Berkeley ; Oxford: University of California Press, 1988).

¹⁵ Berque, *Egypt, Imperialism & Revolution* 118.

¹⁶ Vatikiotis, *The History of Modern Egypt : From Muhammad Ali to Mubarak* 151.

¹⁷ Berque, *Egypt, Imperialism & Revolution* 107.

¹⁸ Gabriel Baer, *A History of Land Ownership in Modern Egypt, 1800-1950. [with Maps.]*, [Middle Eastern Monographs. No. 4.] (London: Oxford University Press, 1962) 36.

¹⁹ Berque, *Egypt, Imperialism & Revolution* 117-18.

²⁰ Ibid. 119.

²¹ Ibid. 121.

²² Ibid.

²³ Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age, 1798-1939* 139-40.

²⁴ Ibid. 139.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ See John L. Esposito, *Islam and Politics*, 4th ed., *Contemporary Issues in the Middle East* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1998).

²⁷ Tibi, *Arab Nationalism : Between Islam and the Nation-State* 180.

²⁸ Berque, *Egypt, Imperialism & Revolution* 255.

²⁹ Ibid. 241.

³⁰ Ibid. 258.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid. 259.

³³ Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age, 1798-1939* 177.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid. 178.

³⁶ Ibid. 324.

³⁷ Ibid. 326.

³⁸ Ibid. 331.

³⁹ Ibid. 321.

⁴⁰ El-Sa'id and Ismael Tareq, *The Communist Movement in Egypt : 1920-1988* 6.

⁴¹ Botman, *The Rise of Egyptian Communism, 1939-1970*.

⁴² Anouar Abdel-Malek, ed., *Contemporary Arab Political Thought* (London: Zed Press, 1983) 164.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age, 1798-1939* 226.

⁴⁵ Ibid. 59.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ James P. Jankowski and Israel Gershoni, *Egypt, Islam, and the Arabs : The Search for Egyptian Nationhood, 1900-1930, Studies in Middle Eastern History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986).

⁴⁸ Hussein, *Class Conflict in Egypt, 1945-1970* 32.

⁴⁹ Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci* 11.

⁵⁰ Hussein, *Class Conflict in Egypt, 1945-1970* 29.

⁵¹ See Shukri, *Egypt : Portrait of a President, 1971-1981 ; the Counter-Revolution in Egypt ; Sadat's Road to Jerusalem*.

⁵² Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age, 1798-1939* 215.

⁵³ Ibid. 216.

⁵⁴ Ibid. 333.

⁵⁵ Berque, *Egypt, Imperialism & Revolution* 267.

⁵⁶ Shukri, *Egypt : Portrait of a President, 1971-1981 ; the Counter-Revolution in Egypt ; Sadat's Road to Jerusalem* 232.

⁵⁷ Ibid. 233.

⁵⁸ Abdel-Malek, *Egypt: Military Society : The Army Regime, the Left, and Social Change under Nasser* 19.

⁵⁹ I. Gershoni, "Haykal's Recantation of Positivism," in *Middle Eastern Politics and Ideas : A History from Within*, ed. Moshe Maoz and Ilan Pappe (London: I.B.Tauris, 1997), 54.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 55.

⁶¹ Ibid., 54.

⁶² E.g., Waterbury, *The Egypt of Nasser and Sadat : The Political Economy of Two Regimes*.

⁶³ Roel Meijer, *The Quest for Modernity : Secular Liberal and Left-Wing Political Thought in Egypt, 1945-1958* (London: Routledge Curzon, 2002) 56.

⁶⁴ Ibid. 45.

⁶⁵ Ibid. 57.

⁶⁶ Mitchell, *The Society of the Muslim Brothers* 264.

⁶⁷ Ibid. 266.

⁶⁸ Ibid. 264.

⁶⁹ Ibid. 268.

⁷⁰ Ibid. 269.

⁷¹ Ibid. 221.

⁷² El-Sa'id and Ismael Tareq, *The Communist Movement in Egypt : 1920-1988*.

⁷³ Ibid. 22.

⁷⁴ Ibid. 33.

⁷⁵ Ibid. 51.

⁷⁶ Gilles Perrault, "Henri Curiel, Citizen of the Third World," *Le Monde Diplomatique*, April 1998.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Botman, *The Rise of Egyptian Communism, 1939-1970* 49.

⁸⁰ El-Sa'id and Ismael Tareq, *The Communist Movement in Egypt : 1920-1988* 43.

⁸¹ Joel Beinin and Zachary Lockman, *Workers on the Nile : Nationalism, Communism, Islam and the Egyptian Working Class, 1882-1954* (London: I.B.Tauris & Co., 1988) 323.

⁸² Meijer, *The Quest for Modernity : Secular Liberal and Left-Wing Political Thought in Egypt, 1945-1958* 76.

⁸³ El-Sa'id and Ismael Tareq, *The Communist Movement in Egypt : 1920-1988* 64.

⁸⁴ Ibid. 47.

⁸⁵ Botman, *The Rise of Egyptian Communism, 1939-1970* 61.

⁸⁶ El-Sa'id and Ismael Tareq, *The Communist Movement in Egypt : 1920-1988* 62.

⁸⁷ Beinin, *Was the Red Flag Flying There?: Marxist Politics and the Arab-Israeli Conflict in Egypt and Israel, 1948-1965* 57.

Chapter 4: Ideological Development in Egypt: 1952 -1981

The pages that follow analyse the shifting domestic, regional and international context for the production of ideas on Israel. From 1952 until 1954, the Egyptian public sphere allowed for considerable intellectual diversity. The space allowed for liberal nationalist intellectuals, combined with the reticence of the Egyptian communists and Muslim Brotherhood toward the new regime, encouraged a general ‘Egypt-first’ orientation, for which the USSR’s hostility toward Nasser and the USA’s tentative support provided international support. From 1955 until 1958, the intelligentsia became socialist—with the Brotherhood crushed, the bourgeoisie tamed, and many imprisoned communists released—as well as Arabist, which related not only to regional dynamics, but also the dramatic Arabisation of Egyptian urban society after the Suez War. Due to the limited scope of the mass parties created during this period this intelligentsia enjoyed only limited connections with the mass of the population, with Nasser increasingly relying on his own charisma and a direct connection with the Egyptian public. Regional and international factors, particularly Nasser’s prominent role in the Afro-Asian movement, the regime’s move into the Soviet orbit, and its desire to connect ideologically with the Ba’th, encouraged the consolidation of the socialist intelligentsia. From 1958 until 1964, the intellectual sphere was ‘de-radicalised’ in the context of perceived rising regional communism, particularly in Iraq and Syria. The regime’s move toward a more ‘non-aligned’ posture internationally supported this. At the same time, from 1962 the regime tried to consolidate, or ‘deepen’ the revolution through the establishment of the Arab Socialist Union (ASU), into the ‘Vanguard’ of which many Marxist thinkers entered from 1964. The attempt to disseminate a revolutionary ideology was interrupted, however, by the June War in 1967.

The rise, or return, of both liberal nationalist and Islamist ideology in the period following the 1967 war must also be viewed in terms of domestic, regional and international factors. Under Sadat, the release of Muslim Brotherhood members from 1971; a resurgent, and conservative, rural middle class; and the rise of an independent student movement; as well as the economic, political and ideological rise of Saudi Arabia, and after 1979, Iran; contributed to the Islamicisation of the intelligentsia, while Sadat’s neo-liberal economic policy, move into the US orbit, détente, and the related decline in Egyptian-Soviet relations combined with the rehabilitation of the old bourgeoisie to encourage a return of liberal nationalism and an ‘Egypt-first’ posture. These shifts were made possible by the boost Sadat’s personal prestige received as a result of the October 1973 war, as well as the

dismantling of key elements of Nasser's regime, particularly the ASU, and the liberalisation of student life. A central argument of this chapter is that throughout the period under study Islam remained the only holistic ideological framework that integrated state and society in Egypt.

Ideological Development under Nasser

The revolution of 1952 greatly increased the salience of the Egyptian state in intellectual life. Whereas under the monarchy the state, bolstered by British power, remained limited and operated generally to safeguard the interests of a relatively small ruling bourgeoisie connected to the overseas cotton trade, after 1952 the expanded class basis of the regime entailed both a larger and more complex state infrastructure and an expansion of the ability of the state to control ideas. Like bourgeois intellectuals prior to the revolution, the Nasser regime recognised that it needed the support, or at least acquiescence, of the Egyptian public in order to maintain stability. It thus took ideological production seriously. Viewing the Nasser, and Sadat, regimes in the context of pre-revolutionary Egypt, as was the subject of the previous chapter, it becomes less useful to view the relationship between class and intellectuals as the main factor in ideological development in the Egyptian public sphere, and more pertinent to examine those social groups the regime aimed to influence or connect with ideologically and their relationship with the regime. At least from 1954, when the regime cracked down on its main societal rival the Muslim Brotherhood, as well as the communist movement and eliminated the rival focus of power represented by President Nagib, ideology became to a great extent directed by the regime itself. The regime drew on political ideologies, including analyses of foreign policy, that already enjoyed some currency within politically salient sections of the Egyptian population—particularly the lower-middle classes to which the Free Officers and other political movements prior to the revolution belonged.

As described in Chapter 3, Egypt's pre-revolutionary intellectual history had a class basis. Forms of liberalism, including Fabien socialism, were developed by a Western-looking bourgeoisie. The 1930s and 1940s, which saw the arrival on the political scene of a large petite bourgeoisie, or *effendiya*, with a more Egyptian orientation, were characterised by the gradual rejection or modification of liberal nationalism both by *effendiya* intellectuals and by luminaries of the bourgeoisie itself. This rejection was manifest in the evolution of Islamist thought from its more theoretical and reformist iteration under Rida, to the practical anti-colonial doctrine of Hasan al-Banna; the near-wholesale adoption of Arabism by *effendiya*

political movements¹; as well as the ‘egyptianisation’ of the communist movement and its intersection with the national struggle in the 1940s. The petite bourgeoisie had in the 1930s and 1940s formed the main reservoir of support for the political movements that had led the societal protest against British imperialism, the monarchy and the creation of the State of Israel in 1948.

The Free Officers recognised the centrality of the petite bourgeoisie when they took power in Egypt in 1952. This class was for them a key source of potential support as well as opposition, and included most Egyptian writers, academics and journalists—they were, for the new regime, potential organic intellectuals. Those thinkers that had reached prominence under the old regime—Gramscian ‘traditional intellectuals’ like Taha Hussein and Tawfiq al-Hakim—were not slow to acknowledge their new patrons and also directed their ideas to the large lower middle class. The Free Officers themselves were overwhelmingly of lower-middle class origins and were collectively represented in the major political opposition forces of the immediate pre-revolutionary period. The Muslim Brotherhood, Young Egypt and the communist movement, all of which mobilised primarily among the petite bourgeoisie blocked from power under the *ancien régime*, hoped to assume control once the military had returned to barracks. Gaining the support of this heterogeneous class, or at least weakening its links with potential opposition movements, was thus an early priority for the new regime. From the end of the 1940s, not least because of the boost in popularity it gained through the Palestine War, it was the ‘state within a state’ embodied in the Muslim Brotherhood that most threatened the survival of the military regime. One indication of the Brotherhood’s continued appeal among the petite bourgeoisie is that of the Muslim Brothers arrested during the crackdown of 1954, there were no workers or peasants, but all were of the lower-middle class, having some education.² As Ghali Shukri notes, the Free Officers, even in seeking to undercut the Brotherhood, had to win favour among its ‘masses.’³

Tentatively Pro-West and ‘Egypt-First’: 1952-1954

The revolutionary regime was critical of Egypt’s liberal experience. In addition to political and economic challenges to the bourgeoisie, such as land reforms and a law banning parties, the regime also sought to eliminate the ideological influence of the old parties in the public sphere through the proscription of their official publications. But while the regime brought most publishing and press organs under its control, a diversity of political opinions was nevertheless allowed for the first two years of the revolution, including those of liberal ‘bourgeois’ intellectuals. This initial laissez-faire attitude to ideas on the part of the military

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officers owes more to factionalism within their own ranks (particularly those around the titular leader, Muhammad Nagib, and the strongman of the younger generation of officers, Nasser) and lack of strong ideological consensus at the regime level, than to any principled commitment to freedom of speech.⁴ The public sphere from 1952 until 1954 was open to, and indeed witnessed a brief resurgence of, liberal and ‘Egypt-first’ ideas.

The openness to liberal and ‘Egypt-first’ ideas in Egyptian intellectual society must also be considered in light of Egypt’s relationship with the United States at the time, and the attitude of that country in turn toward Egypt. The liberal discourse that the United States promoted globally to justify its own foreign policy was one in which Egypt, like other countries, participated wholeheartedly, in the first two years of the Egyptian revolution, as had Egyptian governments prior to it. Advocates of ‘Egypt-first’ tended to be pro-Western. Values like freedom, self-determination and the rule of law were ones to which the United States tied its own destiny. Kirk Beattie notes that ‘it was U.S. policy to back reform-minded regimes in the developing world, whether democratic or not, to reduce the threat of communist revolutions’ and concludes that the ‘Free Officers acted with an awareness of American support for a coup and the absence of British support for [King] Faruq.’⁵ The United States was instrumental in facilitating the Anglo-Egyptian ‘Head of States’ agreement in 1954 securing the withdrawal of British troops from Suez, which had itself produced a distinct warming of Anglo-Egyptian relations, as evinced by Nasser’s assessment that ‘After the Suez settlement there is nothing standing in the way of our good relations with the West.’⁶ Furthermore, nearly seventy-five years of British colonial rule, and much longer integration into the international capitalist system, was not to be easily swept aside, and until the Suez Crisis in 1956, Egypt was home to a substantial European business community and continued to have strong Western financial and economic ties. Given the demonisation Nasser provoked in the West after he nationalised the Suez Canal, it is worth recalling the terms under which Egypt had secured British withdrawal: ‘no Egyptian pasha—not even a master of manipulation such as Ismail Sidqi in 1946—could have consented to the loss of the Sudan or to a military treaty giving Britain the right of *automatic* re-entry in wartime. Nasser did both, in 1953 and 1954, as the price of evacuation.’⁶

The cautiously optimistic stance of the United States toward the new regime stood in stark contrast to the USSR’s attitude, which was to immediately denounce it as a dictatorship.

^{*} Beattie, *Egypt During the Nasser Years : Ideology, Politics and Civil Society* 58-59. The US was also not above taking sides in the Nasser-Nagib power struggle, favouring Nasser over the more democratically-inclined Nagib as the least likely to allow communism to take hold in Egypt.

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According to the Marxist Khalid Muhi al-Din, the only Free Officer to side with Nagib, Nasser could not understand why communists around the world were labelling the regime fascists when the officers had worked so long with Haditu, the main communist formation in Egypt prior to the coup. Muhi al-Din later recalled, ‘The result was to make the left-wing officers very vulnerable and hand the trump cards to the right-wing officers. My opinions were well known. How could I defend them and get people to agree when every day saw us insulted by the communist press all over the world?’⁷

The USSR’s position affected the Egyptian communist groups’ attitude toward the regime, which also encouraged the regime’s anti-communism at the time. Although initially supportive of it, Haditu soon reversed its position, as had the other communist groups. The Soviet position, coupled with the regime’s execution of striking workers soon after it seized power, had turned the initial goodwill into deep suspicion. Through its newspaper, *al-Kifah (The Struggle)*, Haditu condemned the Suez agreement and the apparent pro-Western orientation of the regime:

Finally the military junta has taken off its latest mask, which had covered its treacherous nature, and signed with the imperialist British. This, under the guidance of its American masters, has created a treaty of disgrace and humiliation, a treaty of treason, imperialism, and war. The treacherous junta is not shirking its basic role, that of subjugating our people to American imperialism forever.⁸

The communist intellectuals, alone among political prisoners in Faruq’s jails, were not released on the grounds that communism was an ‘economic’ and not a political crime. In late 1954, in the context of the struggle between Nasser and Nagib, the regime launched a large-scale crackdown of its own. Two hundred and fifty-four leftists were sent to concentration camps; Khalid Muhi al-Din, who supported Nagib, was exiled; and the left-wing press that had been allowed to flourish after the coup was suspended. The main charge levelled against the communists by the regime was related to the process of creating an Egyptian national identity: that the communists worked for an ‘external’ organisation against Egypt’s ‘national interests.’⁹ As Nasser explained, ‘We have not permitted the establishment of a communist party in Egypt because we are sure it cannot act in conformity with its own will or work for the interest of the country. We are sure it will receive inspiration from abroad and will work for foreigners.’¹⁰

A Pan-Arabist and Socialist Intelligentsia from 1955

Domestic, international and regional factors combined to facilitate the formation of an Arabist and socialist intelligentsia in Egypt after 1955. Domestically, regime policies were

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key. Many intellectuals of the urban bourgeoisie either left Egypt or, if they remained active, came to support Nasser's programmes after he had consolidated his position. Thinkers like Tawfiq al-Hakim and Taha Hussein, Egypt-centred liberal nationalists before the revolution, had by 1956 become prominent supporters of Pan-Arabism and at least some form of socialism. After 1954, with the old liberal parties proscribed and the Muslim Brotherhood banned, virtually the only intellectuals still gaining a public audience were those of centrist or left-of-centre persuasions, even though most communists remained imprisoned. They staffed the press, publishing houses and universities, forming not only an ideological resource for the regime, but also framing issues of policy for the domestic audience.¹¹ This socialist intelligentsia was enriched by the reintegration of Marxist thinkers into civil society. Nasser's participation in the Bandung Conference and the Czech Arms Deal in 1955 delighted Egyptian communists who, though tortured, wrote letters of support for Nasser from their prison cells. Many imprisoned communists were released in 1955 and 1956 and the main groups united in their support of Nasser.¹² The Suez nationalisation intensified the support that Nasser had won from the communist movement after Bandung, with even the most intractable communist opponents tending to support the nationalisation of the canal as 'a new blow received by the imperialist camp from the Egyptian people'.¹³

The Suez War also altered the demographic, economic, political and ideological context in Egypt, which contributed to making the intelligentsia not only socialist, but also Arabist. In addition to nationalising the Suez Canal, which precipitated the invasion, the Egyptian regime sequestered assets and nationalised businesses of foreigners, particularly French, British and Jews, in its aftermath.* The vast majority of foreigners left the country, either because their businesses were gone or through the fear that this would happen.[†] Although Nasser took some pains to reassure foreign investors that the country was still safe and welcoming, foreign investment dwindled as companies feared for the stability of the country and the apparent lack of protection from sequestration. The exodus of foreigners also had the effect of vastly increasing the ethnic homogeneity of the cities. After Suez, to be

* Most Jews had already left after 1948. For Mahmoud Amin al-Alim, the signs were that when the Free Officers returned from the Palestine War of 1948, they had a wish to 'get even with the Jews', which encouraged many to leave. Mahmud Amin al-Alim and Sulayman al-Hakim, *I'tirafat Shaykh Al-Shuyuyi'in Al-Arab: Mahmud Amin Al-Alim [Confessions of the Sheikh of the Arab Communists: Mahmud Amin Al-Alim]* (al-Qahirah: Maktabat Madbali, 2006) 29.

† It is important to note that though they were later celebrated as evidence of Nasserism's revolutionary character, the sequestrations and subsequent departure of foreigners may not have been planned, but rather represented a reflexive reaction to the shock of the Tripartite Invasion. For a discussion of this perspective, see Robert Tignor, "Foreign Capital, Foreign Communities, and the Egyptian Revolution of 1952," in *Egypt from Monarchy to Republic : A Reassessment of Revolution and Change*, ed. Shimon Shamir (Boulder ; Oxford: Westview Press, 1995).

Egyptian more than ever meant to be ‘Arab’, in many ways marking the end of a long process of the ‘Arabisation’ of a hitherto cosmopolitan society. Greeks, Jews and others who left may have considered themselves Egyptian on account of their permanent residence, often for generations, in the country, even if ‘native’ Egyptians had increasingly viewed them as outsiders and resented them due to their perceived complicity with imperialism. Nasser’s radical Pan-Arabism, and socialism, arguably followed, rather than prompted, the nationalisations and exodus of Egypt’s foreign communities after the Suez War; which marked the disappearance of a constituency that was comfortable with a more Mediterranean—and state-centric—version of Egyptian national identity.

The regime encouraged the re-establishment of a left-wing press, free enough to come up with creative policy analyses but nevertheless under state auspices and operating under the regime’s blessing. Communist-run publishing houses were opened and communists began to write for mainstream daily newspapers such as *al-Jumhuriya* (*The Republic*) and *al-Sha'b* (*The People*).¹⁴ The most significant development was the establishment in 7 October 1956 of *al-Misa* (*Evening*), edited by the previously exiled Free Officer Khalid Muhi al-Din, and staffed by ‘numerous communists and communist sympathisers’.¹⁵ Although as the regime’s official left-wing paper, *al-Misa* was not an overtly communist newspaper, it constituted the main legal platform for the Marxist left. Abdel-Malek describes the paper as ‘the ideological workshop of the new Egypt’.¹⁶ The unification of the communist groups behind Nasser in 1957 and the ideological approval they granted to Nasserism marked the final abandonment of internationalism in favour of Pan-Arab nationalism as a feature of communist, and thus general, political discourse, and facilitated the regime’s left-wing focus.¹⁷ Many Marxists embraced their new role as intellectuals in the service of what they perceived to be the new progressive Arabist regime—as Gramscian traditional intellectuals. The accommodation was perhaps best symbolised by the expulsion in 1957 of the staunchly cosmopolitan, and Jewish, leader of Haditu, Henri Curiel.¹⁸

Internationally, Bandung marked the beginning of Nasser’s association with the Afro-Asian movement, of which he came to be regarded as a leader, which was important in encouraging the regime to frame foreign policy issues, including those pertaining to Israel, within the terms of socialism and anti-imperialism. Nasser adopted the doctrine of ‘positive neutralism’* that would be associated with the movement. According to Sayegh, although

* Nasser first used the actual term ‘positive neutralism’ in September 1956 after the Brioni conference of the Afro-Asian Solidarity Movement. Leonard Binder, *The Ideological Revolution in the Middle East* (New York ; London: Wiley, 1964) 240.

positive neutralism presupposed nonalignment, ‘a country may trade with countries belonging to the two cold-war blocs or receive aid from them; but, in order to qualify as “positively” neutral, it must avoid aligning itself with either bloc.’ Crucially, though, according to an Egyptian information department document, positive neutralism for Egypt did not mean equidistance between the blocs. It rather called for ‘safeguarding national independence against imperialist aggression’ and solidarity with other neutralist countries in Africa and Asia and *‘the socialist countries* as the parties most interested in the preservation of peace, an essential condition for the consolidation and development of their economies. This fusion … creates the possibilities for economic assistance to be furnished by the former to the latter without political conditions.¹⁹ The regime was willing to push the boundaries of positive neutralism to the ‘outer edge’ and to risk dependence on the Soviet bloc,²⁰ a factor that placed it squarely within the ‘radical’ camp in the Afro-Asian movement, which had adopted anti-imperialism as its primary *raison d'être*.

The USSR itself had revised its negative opinion of the Egyptian regime by 1955. An important combination of factors: the Americans’ refusal to authorise a \$27 million arms request in February 1955, and Israel’s raids on the Gaza Strip that year, marked the beginning of Egypt’s attempts to seek assistance elsewhere.* Other Western actions in the region encouraged Nasser to turn to the Soviet Union. Nasser remarked shortly after concluding the Suez Agreement with Britain that ‘it is only by a period of complete independence during which mutual trust is built up between Egypt and the Western powers that Egyptians will be able to look without suspicion on any closer ties between this country and other powers.²¹ This trust was shattered in 1955. Britain was in the process of negotiating the defence agreement with Iraq, Iran, Turkey and Pakistan that would become known as the ‘Baghdad Pact,’ which the Revolutionary Command Council viewed primarily ‘as a British attempt to isolate Egypt from other Arab states and in the Middle East generally.²² Nasser vehemently opposed the pact and launched a press campaign against Western alliances. For Sayegh, ‘that there was such a possibility [for an alliance with the West] in 1954 is as certain as the fact that that possibility was destroyed by the formation of the Baghdad Pact in 1955.’²³

Through China’s Zhou Enlai, Nasser probed the possibility of securing Soviet military aid, a gambit which came to fruition in the forms of the Czech Arms Deal in September of that year. The passing of Stalin, and Khrushchev’s support for national liberation movements

* Vatikiotis denies this motivation, arguing instead that Nasser was intent on pursuing a general anti-Western foreign policy to increase his regional standing. Vatikiotis, *Nasser and His Generation*.

meant that the USSR was now willing to lend *unconditional* support to such regimes, meaning Egypt could receive it in the spirit of neutralism. This shift in the USSR was evident by the appearance of works, some translated into Arabic, by Soviet scholars confirming ‘Nasser’s own belief that he could build socialism without a proletarian revolution.’²⁴ Especially given the scorn with which the coup in 1952 had been received in the Soviet Union, this more conciliatory tone not only allowed Nasser to accept aid, but strengthened regime leftists and allowed for the rehabilitation of communist intellectuals.

Nasser’s embrace of a radical, anti-imperialist and socialist-oriented Pan-Arabism must also be seen in a regional context. Since the end of the 1930s, Egypt had sought to dominate the emerging Pan-Arab movement.* Pan-Arabism in Egypt was historically associated with the Islamist movement, enjoying a pedigree stretching back through Hasan al-Banna and the Muslim Brotherhood to Rashid Rida and Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, whereas outside of Egypt Pan-Arabism was mainly of a secular and liberal variety until, in the 1940s, it merged with socialism in Syria to become a more radical anti-imperialist doctrine. The regional orientation of Syria was an issue that had preoccupied Egyptian foreign policy makers since the end of the 1930s, when Egypt began to pursue a foreign policy independent of Britain for the first time. Syria was perceived to be the lynchpin of the Arab world, and Egypt was keen to prevent it falling into the hands of the Hashemite regimes of Jordan or Iraq. For Seale, ‘...once Egypt opted for membership of the Arab family she quickly saw that her national interest lay in containing the Hashemites, in preventing the emergence in the Eastern Arab world of a power strong enough to challenge her, in preserving the *status quo* of small sovereign nation-states subordinate to herself.’²⁵ In order to remain the dominant Arab power, then, Egypt ‘needed in particular to prevent Syria from falling under the influence of either Baghdad or Amman.’²⁶ Nasser inherited this preoccupation with Syria, ‘the centre of the contest for influence in the Arab world’²⁷ and, given the wide popular resonance of socialist-oriented Pan-Arabism and the growing popularity of its main champions, the Ba’th Party, strove to connect with the Syrian public directly by tapping into Pan-Arab *and* socialist sentiments.

Syrian Pan-Arabists came to view Egypt as the ‘nucleus state’ from which Arab unity could spread. Sati’ al-Husri, a Syrian Arab nationalist who was the director of the Arab League’s

* Egyptian premier Ali Maher and the future Arab League secretary general Abd al-Rahman al-Azzam’s attendance at the London Palestine Conference in 1939 signalled the beginning of the Egyptian government’s intentions in this regard. See Patrick Seale, *The Struggle for Syria: A Study of Post-War Arab Politics, 1945-1958* (London, New York, Oxford University Press, 1965) 19.

Higher Arabic Studies Institute in Cairo, was particularly successful in arguing the point that Egypt was a central part of the Arab nation, against those intellectuals who rejected Egyptian ‘Arabness’. Al-Husri contended that Arab nationalism stemmed from a belief that ‘nationalism is a question of belonging to and identifying with a group, and that history and especially language create such conditions.’²⁸ He also argued that although geography and population were important, the concept of the nucleus state depended primarily on Egypt’s revolutionary ‘socialist’ political system. The Ba’th were also pioneers in advocating neutralism as a foreign policy stance for the Arab nation, anticipating Nasser’s adoption of the doctrine,²⁹ which increased the attractiveness of Ba’thism for the Egyptian regime, and vice versa. Nasser’s success in making this ideology synonymous with his leadership owed much to the appeal of socialism and anti-imperialism throughout the region, since ‘many of the underlying social and political causes that gave rise to the Free Officers’ coup—and later, revolution—also prevailed in the Fertile Crescent countries and may help to explain the meteoric rise of Nasser to the position of idol of the masses.’³⁰ The Ba’th developed an infatuation with Nasser after Suez. As Munif al-Razzaz, who would become secretary-general of the Ba’th’s National Command in 1965 phrased it, ‘So great was the excitement he generated that it was supposed that he could realise all our aims at a stroke, by a decree from the top. Rather than struggling for twenty-five years, it was tempting to let an officer such as Nasser do the job overnight.’³¹

In turn, Nasser’s prestige in the Arab world translated into greater support for these ideas at home. From 1956 Egyptian intellectuals made close connections with the Ba’th. Egyptian nationalist intellectuals, including the staff of the magazine *Ruz al-Yusuf*, which was edited by Ihsan Abdel Quddus, who wrote *Egypt First* in 1953, began to transfer their nationalist sentiments from territorial Egypt to the Arab world. They embarked upon in-depth studies of Arabic literature and Sati’ al-Husri ‘began to reach large sectors of the intelligentsia.’³² In Arabising their political outlook, left-wing thinkers, including Egyptian communists, were arguably reacting to the Arabisation of the regime’s foreign policy discourse and the mobilisatory potential of a Pan-Arab outlook as opposed to an internationalist or Egyptian territorial one.

Pupils without Teachers

Intellectuals in modern states contribute to the formation of Gramscian ‘historical blocs’ to the extent that their ideas evolve in interaction with a broader public, whose understandings and world-view the intellectual in turn seeks to change. Gramsci conceptualised this

intersubjectivity in terms of the relationship between a pupil and his teacher: ‘the relationship between teacher and pupil is active and reciprocal so that every teacher is always a pupil and every pupil is always a teacher.’ The ‘historical personality’ of the intellectual is to be found in ‘the active relationship which exists between him and the cultural environment he is proposing to modify. The environment reacts back on the philosopher and imposes on him a continual process of self-criticism. It is his “teacher”’.³³

In Egypt, intellectuals writing in the press mainly influenced the educated, and if the masses warmed to Nasser’s themes of independence and anti-colonialism, they did not necessarily engage actively with the finer points of socialism. Ilya Harik’s anthropology in the village of Shubra al-Gadida in the late 1960s found that although people there were aware of developments on the national level, they understood ideas locally in terms of ‘how they have been manifested in the village, not in their intellectual form.’³⁴ Until the 1960s the regime itself was divided and ambivalent about its commitment to socialism, and the series of mass parties created from 1954 failed to engage the Egyptian public, particularly in the countryside, in revolutionary change. To replace the political parties and pre-empt the organisation of opposition to the regime, the RCC established the Liberation Rally (LR) in 1954. Perhaps most importantly, the LR aimed at absorbing the extensive reservoir of support for the proscribed Muslim Brotherhood and as such was not intended to disseminate a revolutionary ideology. Due to the preoccupation with winning over the Brotherhood’s masses, it deferred to religious principles, teaching religious observance and orthodoxy to youth.³⁵ The brand of Islam taught was Hanbali, closely matching the doctrine of the Muslim Brotherhood.³⁶ The LR, while it effectively neutralised the scions of the old bourgeoisie as a political force at the top, left intact the traditional power structures, and hence ideological framework, at the bottom of the organisation. It was replaced by the National Union in 1957, which although intended more explicitly as a mechanism to structure political support for, rather than just neutralise opposition to, the revolutionary regime, also did not act as a transmission belt for new ideas and there was, as with its predecessor organisation, no attempt to restructure existing patterns of social control at the lower levels of the National Union structure, meaning that local leaders and patronage networks remained intact, as did the traditional ideological framework of the countryside.³⁷ Until 1961, then, the regime limited its efforts to preventing the effective organisation of opposition, without explicitly attempting to create a cadre of Gramscian ‘organic intellectuals’ that would spread a new ideology.

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Part of the problem was the regime's suspicion of intellectuals per se. From the early days of the revolution Nasser and other officers treated Egyptian intellectuals with a kind of distain. Revealing his frustration with trying to involve intellectuals in Egypt's 'rebirth' after the coup, Nasser wrote:

We were not yet ready. So we set about seeking the views of leaders of opinion and the experience of those who were experienced. Unfortunately we were not able to obtain very much. Every man we questioned had nothing to recommend except to kill someone else. Every idea we listened to was nothing but an attack on some other idea. If we had gone along with everything we heard, we would have killed off all the people and torn down every idea, and there would have been nothing left for us to do but sit down among the corpses and ruins, bewailing our evil fortune and cursing our wretched fate.³⁸

This mistrust of intellectuals was reflected in the failure of the Liberation Rally and National Union to garner any kind of 'organic' support for the regime, as well as Nasser's growing preference, particularly after Suez, for depending on his own personal charisma and his ability to connect with people directly through radio and television broadcasts. Nasser continued the practices of other populist leaders like Sa'd Zaghlul and his successor as leader of the Wafd, Mustafa Nahhas, who, while leading a party oriented toward a modernist political ideology, commanded a mass following through the appeal to more elemental themes of independence and national pride rather than the nuances of liberal political theory. Nasser's speeches dwelt on those ideas known to resonate with the Egyptian public since the day of Arabi in the late 19th century, primarily those of anti-colonialism, liberation and pride. One of Ghassan Salame's explanations for the 'Muslim state's' imperviousness to democracy, could shed light on the Egyptian regime's ambivalence toward intellectuals:

Populism...established a unilateral political link based on the active initiative of some emblematic figure, as much as on the passive support of the "masses"...and populism had the added advantage of doing away, in an authoritarian manner, with the need for representation by using the easy subterfuge of direct communication, first by radio and then by television, between power ultra-personified in one man and the masses increasingly relegated to formless anonymity.³⁹

Nasser's nationalisation of the Suez Canal and the subsequent nationalisations of foreign and Jewish concerns, portrayed as the fruits of a glorious victory against the imperialists, increased the regime's freedom of action vis-à-vis the petite bourgeoisie as a whole as it became far less feasible to mobilise against Nasser. Whereas prior to Suez, the regime had allowed a certain plurality of intellectual activity to take place, the vindication Nasser received afterwards allowed him to subvert the intellectuals and attempt to assert the regime's own vision of Egypt's role in the world. Like Zaghlul and Abdullah Nadim before

him, Nasser exploited his Egyptian peasant credentials, expertly combining plain talking colloquial and standard Arabic in his speeches to appeal to both the intellectual and the peasant. A good example of the latter is Nasser's explanation of his policy of containing Israel, rather than seeking to destroy it:

The Egyptian peasant, when he has a wart, does not attack it with the blade of a knife. Rather, he ties a horsehair around it which he tightens until the blood cannot reach it, and then it stops growing and falls to the ground.⁴⁰

Nasser's personal charisma enabled him to command a direct mass support that strengthened the regime's position vis-à-vis potential opposition from political movements in society via a cult of personality, but also encouraged him to use intellectuals in a highly selective and personalistic fashion, which mitigated against socialism and positive neutralism, and conceptions of Israel couched within these terms, becoming 'common sense.'

De-Radicalisation

Domestic, regional and international factors again combined in the late 1950s to, if not completely 'de-radicalise' the intelligentsia, at least place limits on its revolutionary socialist character. In 1958, a republican coup led by General Abdel-Karim Qasim in Iraq led to a revolution in Baghdad's foreign policy orientation and the signing of a UAR-Iraqi Mutual Aid Pact in July 1958. But the coup in Iraq, which made communists there the major party in the ruling coalition, unsettled the Egyptian regime about the potential emulative effect this would have in both the Syrian and Egyptian regions of the UAR. The Iraqis had 'the potential ability...to influence events in Syria, specifically by reviving the pre-union, Communist strength.'⁴¹ Unwilling to dissolve Iraq into the UAR as Syria had done, Qasim became a dangerous rival to Nasser as an inspiration to the Arab masses. The Iraqi position thus threatened Nasser's interest in maintaining Egypt's primacy in the Middle East, and in particular as the Pan-Arab, anti-imperialist 'nucleus state.' The communists in Iraq 'had no intention of acknowledging Egyptian centrality in "the common struggle against imperialism"' and 'Kassem, unlike Nuri [Iraqi prime minister under the monarchy], Saud [of Saudi Arabia], Hussein [of Jordan] or Chamoun [the Maronite president of Lebanon], was no "reactionary" but a "revolutionary" in his own right ... He was the enemy of the "imperialists" and the friend of Nasser's mentors, the Soviet Union.'⁴²

Links between the Egyptian and Iraqi communist parties were close.⁴³ In 1958, an envoy from the Iraqi leader asked the Egyptian communists to define their position vis-à-vis the conflict between Nasser and Qasim over unity. Their response was that they supported, with

Qasim, a federal union rather than the organic unity embodied in the UAR.⁴⁴ Although they publicly supported complete union, the communists' identification with their Iraqi counterparts, and actual support for Qasim's favoured union—as well as 'united front' approach to Iraqi communists—put them in actual contradiction with regime policy. They were punished harshly. On 23 December 1958, Nasser made a speech in Port Said attacking the communists and in early 1959 launched a wave of arrests that encompassed thousands, with trials in October of that year in which many received sentences of hard labour. The Marxist-oriented *Al-Misa* was closed in 1959. Over the next few years, leftist newspaper editors were removed, to be replaced with more centrist or liberal-minded individuals, the most significant of which was the appointment of Muhammad Hassanein Heikal, Nasser's close friend and advisor, as editor-in-chief of *al-Ahram*, the Arab world's largest circulating newspaper*, as well as a prominent pre-revolutionary liberal Fikri Abaza, as head of the al-Ahram al-Hilal publishing house and editor of *al-Musawwar*.⁴⁵ The journal *al-Ahram al-Iqtisadi* (*The Economic Ahram*) was established following the closure of *al-Misa* under the editorship of Boutros Boutros Ghali, which adopted a markedly less radical, though still socialist, tone on domestic and international issues. *Al-Ahram al-Iqtisadi* was founded to 'provide a privileged platform for interchanges...among journalists, scholars and government officials,' covering 'the views of academic specialists on national and international issues of political economy.'⁴⁶

The quarrel with Qasim's Iraq, as well as the harsh treatment meted out to Egyptian communists, was reflected in increasingly strained relations with the Soviet Union, although never to the point that aid was curtailed.⁴⁷ Nasser began to accuse the USSR of undue 'interference in domestic Arab affairs.'⁴⁸ The Soviet Union, for its part, responded to Nasser's assault on its Iraqi ally, and on Egyptian communists, by hedging its hitherto endorsement of Nasser's Egypt: Khrushchev remarked that 'it is natural that our sympathies should be on the side of those governments...which take into consideration the interests of their people' and criticised Nasser's anti-communist speeches in which 'the Egyptian leader had armed himself with "the tongue of the imperialists."'⁴⁹ Nasser responded with a direct attack on the USSR. 'He maintained that during the Suez crisis Egypt had not in fact received any assistance from the USSR and he warned that the Soviet Union's ultimate objective was the establishment of a "Red Fertile Crescent."⁵⁰ Relations were repaired with

* Heikal actually became an important defender of Marxist intellectuals, many of whom worked out of the al-Ahram building. His role in mediating between those intellectuals and the Nasser regime was crucial.

Jordan and Saudi Arabia and in 1961 Egypt supported the ‘reactionary’ Kuwait against Iraqi designs on it.

Deepening the Revolution?

In spite of these de-radicalisation measures, the regime sought more explicitly to ‘deepen the revolution’ after the Syrian secession from the UAR in 1961. Alarmed by the strength of the middle class in Syria, Nasser feared that the National Union could be used as a vehicle for the bourgeoisie to threaten the regime.⁵¹ It, like the LR, had failed—indeed was never intended—to alter significantly the traditional social relations and their ideological bases. Nasser intended the National Union’s successor organisation, the Arab Socialist Union (ASU) to not only prevent the mobilisation of independent opposition and structure support but to ‘re-educate’ society along socialist lines. Membership in the ASU was made voluntary to attract committed activists for the revolution (although for some professions, notably journalism, membership was necessary in order to obtain employment). The difference with the ASU was that rather than accepting the established social relations, it aimed at restructuring them in a corporatist fashion. Broadly defined social groups (including workers, peasants and intellectuals) were given representation at the top of the structure. It was not until the creation of the ASU that the regime seriously attempted to institutionalise the support that Nasser enjoyed from the Egyptian masses in the wake of Suez and systematically exclude the traditional ‘right-wing’ forces that dominated Egyptian social relations. It was intended, for Dekmejian, to prevent the infiltration of ‘capitalist, feudal, reactionary, opportunistic and foreign elements.’⁵²

The establishment of the ASU went hand-in-hand with other radical domestic measures. While the nationalisations and sequestrations that had been carried out in the wake of Suez in 1956 largely completed the ‘Arabisation’ of the Egyptian economy, ending the economic, and physical, presence of ‘foreigners’, Egyptian capitalists, belonging to the old commercial and industrial bourgeoisie, remained economically dominant, even benefiting from the increased demand for Egyptian goods and services in the absence of foreign competition. The military regime and its ever-expanding patronage networks—what is sometimes referred to as the New Middle Class, or the State Bourgeoisie⁵³—perceived that political and economic advantages would accrue through further nationalisations, which would eliminate the influence of this established bourgeoisie. The final blow against the middle class—at

least in the cities*—came in the form of the Socialist Laws of 23 July 1961. The decrees, which applied to both Egypt and Syria, nationalised 400 industrial, commercial and public utilities, 94 companies and ‘all remaining banks and insurance companies’ including the all-powerful Misr Group. In addition, land ownership was limited, income tax increased, and limits placed on the salaries of public and private companies, with 25 percent of the yearly profit to be set aside for workers and clerks.⁵⁴

In establishing the ASU alongside these reforms, the term ‘cultural revolution’ was used by the Egyptian regime years before the beginning of Mao’s famous experiment.⁵⁵ Such a cultural revolution could not, Nasser apparently concluded, come about without *active* intellectual support, which entailed giving intellectuals a degree of independence as well as the chance to connect with a broad constituency beyond the intelligentsia. Following the clampdown of 1959, most communist intellectuals were in prison and those thinkers that were not were cowed into ‘apathy, servility and forced formal political loyalty.’ The predicament was analysed, on behalf of the regime, by Heikal in a series of articles on the ‘crisis of the intellectuals.’⁵⁶ In 1964, most remaining communists were released from prison and offered official positions in the government and press. The following year a new left-wing publication was founded, with an editorial board that consisted of a dozen intellectuals of the dissolved movement, edited by Lutfi al-Khuli. *Al-Tali'a (The Vanguard)* was conceived, unlike *al-Misa*, as an explicitly Marxist journal. Its mandate was to analyse the ‘national and international obstacles to the “Arab/Egyptian road to socialism” and “Arab unity and struggle.”’⁵⁷ At one point, it seemed possible that the communist group Haditu would fuse with the newly created ASU Vanguard Unit (*al-Tanzim al-Tali'i*), that purported to consist of 20,000 ‘socialistically cultured’ individuals,⁵⁸ thus putting a communist party at the heart of government. But such a step was one too far for the rightist faction in the military regime, best represented by Field Marshal Abd al-Hakim Amir, who objected when news of the merger reached him.⁵⁹ Communists, including Lutfi al-Khuli and Mahmoud Amin al-Alim, were persuaded to join and provide intellectual leadership for the Vanguard Unit as individuals, a move that ultimately led to the dissolution of the communist party and the entry into the ASU of much of its leadership.

The promulgation of the National Charter in 1961, which provided the most complete statement of the socialist ideology intended to underpin the ASU, intensified Egypt’s

* Leonard Binder and his student Hamid Ansari have persuasively illustrated the abiding significance of the rural Middle Class during the Nasser era. See Binder, *In a Moment of Enthusiasm : Political Power and the Second Stratum in Egypt*. and Ansari, *Egypt, the Stalled Society*.

intellectual links with socialist-oriented political groups in the Arab world. In Syria and other countries, several Nasserist organisations, supported by the UAR, sprang up to promote the Egyptian conception of Arab nationalism, rooted in the authenticity of the Egyptian revolutionary experience and the socialist shift embodied in the National Charter. In mid-1962, the Arab Nationalists' Movement (ANM), created in the late 1940s with the goal of liberating Palestine, joined with the ASU in response to Nasser's call 'for the unification of all parties advocating Arab unity and socialism.'⁶⁰ The movement attracted many former Ba'thists. Comprising intellectuals from Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Kuwait and Iraq, the ANM promoted the unquestioning alignment of the movement as a whole behind Egyptian leadership, stating in a resolution in 1964 that 'The United Arab Republic is the main base of Arab revolution and Arab union, and every attempt at union away from the United Arab Republic is a new form of secession.'⁶¹ The ASU's regional scope was important in further solidifying the Arabism of the Egyptian left, as well as the socialist revolutionary orientation of Pan-Arabism itself.

Internally, though, the fact that the Egyptian communists were only permitted to join the vanguard as individuals diluted their influence on politics, and thus the extent to which they could pursue a coherent programme or reach a mass audience consistently via the ASU. Nasser was clearly interested in the communists' ideas—the creation of the vanguard was too grand a step simply to neutralise them, as their actual following in society was small—but although, as Waterbury has argued, the ASU was a serious attempt to engineer a new radical Egyptian society, it failed to win over the majority of Egyptians. For one thing, the ASU became tainted by corruption and nepotism, its legitimacy suffering from the heavy-handed authoritarian style of its leader, Ali Sabri.⁶² Perhaps more importantly, the June 1967 defeat brought the regime's radical experiment to an end.

The Continuing Salience of Islam in Society

In light of the failure of the Nasser regime to institutionalise support for the revolution, and revolutionary ideology, the institutions of religion remained the only ideological infrastructure in the country which could connect elites and masses in an organic way, and it was this 'parallel Islamic sector' that expanded dramatically under Sadat. Although it did not form the principal component of their political outlook, Nasser and his colleagues were not necessarily averse to religion. The links between the Free Officers and the Muslim Brotherhood had been strong since their shared experience fighting in the 1948 Palestine War, even though, as Vatikiotis reports, the Officers were somewhat baffled by the

Brothers' recourse to the Qur'an for guidance on how to wage war against the Jews.⁶³ The Muslim Brotherhood also shared with the Free Officers a common enemy in the Wafd Party,⁶⁴ which although its leadership and political ideology were decidedly 'bourgeois' enjoyed a substantial mass following up until the revolution due largely to its perceived commitment to Egypt's independence. In banning the Brotherhood in 1954, the regime eliminated its organisational integrity and capacity to stage a coup, but did not challenge its ideology.⁶⁵ Recognising the need to replace the Muslim Brotherhood as the custodians of Pan-Islamic ideals, the regime established the Islamic Congress in 1955, headed by Anwar al-Sadat, 'to serve as a bridge between Cairo and the whole Islamic world of Asia, Africa and the other continents' in collaboration with the Arab League.*

The turn against the left in 1959 coincided with the clandestine reformation of the Muslim Brotherhood. During this time, Nasser recruited some Muslim Brotherhood members, notably Kamal Abu al-Magd and Abd al-Aziz Kamil, to inject an Islamic component into regime ideology.⁶⁶ Many of the officers still identified with Brotherhood ideology from their pre-1952 activities, and the regime was conscious that the mass public that the Muslim Brotherhood had enthralled prior to its dissolution had not yet fully transferred its loyalty to the new order.⁶⁷ In 1960 the regime established the Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (SCIA), which published *Nasser's Encyclopaedia of Jurisprudence [fiqh]* as well as the monthly periodicals *Studies in Islam* and *Islamic Books*. The SCIA was instrumental in explaining Nasser's shift to socialism in the 1960s in Islamic terms, and also represented an important foreign policy instrument. The monthly magazine published by the SCIA, '*Minbar al-Islam*', was multilingual and designed to export a rejuvenated version of Islam 'for a new era' internationally.⁶⁸ Also, the Islamic Research Academy (*majama' al-buhuth al-islamiya*) was set up to confront the Saudi Islamic World League (*rabitat al-alim alislami*).⁶⁹ In addition, a Qur'anic radio station was launched, religion was made a compulsory subject in schools and a programme of mosque construction was launched.⁷⁰

In 1959 the former Muslim Brotherhood leader and later *Waqf* (religious endowments) Minister and Sheikh of al-Azhar, Hassan al-Bakuri, remarked in a book entitled *Arabism and Religion* 'if we say that the Arabs are the best nation offered to mankind it is because that is a truth revealed by the Koran and a reality expressed in its verses.'⁷¹ Non-Islamist

* Sadat's role in the Islamic Congress would have important consequences for his foreign policy outlook in the 1970s, in particular through the close relationship he came to enjoy with the Saudi King Faisal's advisor Kamal Adham. Its real impact was denigrated by Islamists like Yusuf al-Qaradawi, as Chapter 7 explains.

intellectuals were keen not to be overshadowed by Islamist discourse, arguing against the idea that religion was the basis of Arab unity and associating this argument with ‘imperialist propaganda’ which aimed at isolating ‘Christian Arabs and non-Moslem Arab communities in a general way from the rest of the Moslem Arabs ... We cannot emphasise the religious aspects of Arab solidarity and neglect its economic and social aspects.’⁷² The fact that there was a debate on this issue at all reveals the extent to which Islam remained a default reference point for conceptions of Arab nationalism at the time.

The regime’s main bulwark against the societal challenge of Islamism was the institution of al-Azhar, nationalised in 1962. Al-Azhar’s role actually acted to encourage Islamist opposition for two main reasons. For one, the institution’s impeccable Islamic credentials both domestically and internationally led the regime to use it as an instrument of state propaganda, and it was thus drawn into an Islamic discourse on policy issues. But, secondly, the fact that al-Azhar could thus be easily depicted as a servile arm of a dictatorial regime discredited it as a source of Islamic guidance, leaving the discursive field open to other, more credible, educated Islamic voices, most significantly those associated with the goals, ideals and conceptual framework of the Muslim Brotherhood.

With most Brotherhood members in prison after 1954 and the Society’s organisational structure decimated, those remaining activists, in coordination with imprisoned Brothers adopted a lower profile. In 1956 ‘those of the imprisoned Brethren who had never been brought to trial were released.’⁷³ Zaynab al-Ghazzali’s Society of Muslim Ladies, acted as a ‘link in the secret reconstitution of the organization that had been formally dissolved in 1954.’⁷⁴ In the late 1950s (from about 1957) other ‘nuclei’ of former Brothers and new sympathisers had emerged throughout Egypt, meeting ‘to hold collective discussions about the causes of the ordeal of 1954’⁷⁵ After the Suez War, an organiser at the time wrote, the Brotherhood adopted a new agenda. It continued to gather members—those without police records—on the basis of a gradualist approach involving Islamic education rather than revenge (*intiqam*). The educational programme included the *rasa’il* (messages) of Hasan al-Banna, studies of *fiqh* and the memorization of certain suras from the Qur’an—namely ‘al-Anfal’ and ‘al-Tawba’.⁷⁶ Via Zaynab al-Ghazzali and other women, the Brothers at large were in contact with imprisoned leaders, including Sayyid Qutb. Chapters from Qutb’s *Milestones* were distributed among the newly forming Muslim Brotherhood groups from 1962, and were published shortly after Qutb’s release from prison in 1964.⁷⁷ Ali Ashmawi, the young leader of the Brotherhood’s ‘Special Organisation’ [*al-Tanzim al-Khas*] at this

time notes that 'In fact, the meeting with Sayyid Qutb was to bring about a great change in people's orientation and the organisation, and a complete reformation of thought. I see that that stage was completely new, and had its influence on the progress of work in the next stage.'⁷⁸

An important contributing factor to the continuation of Islam as an ideological framework, particularly in the countryside, was the abiding political significance of the rural middle class (*kibar al-al-ayan*). *Umdahs*, the hereditary village headmen, became local representatives in Nasser's mass parties, thus ensuring a high degree of social stability in the countryside in spite of the revolution.⁷⁹ After the revolution, *kibar al-ayan* had become the largest landowning class, and they benefited further after the socialist reforms in 1961.⁸⁰ So long as their agricultural income was maintained, the regime could count on their loyalty. Prior to the revolution, they supported the liberal-oriented political parties of the urban bourgeoisie. Following it, to the extent that the Arab world represented a potentially lucrative market for agricultural produce, they were Pan-Arab. Similarly, the favourable terms of trade obtainable from the Soviet Union and Eastern Bloc made them willing to go along with the pro-Soviet bent of the Egyptian regime after 1955. This ideological flexibility on the part of the rural middle class concealed an essentially conservative role as suppressors of ideological change emanating from the revolution. *Kibar al-ayan* were not, in other words, organic intellectuals of the regime. They correspond more closely to Gramsci's category of 'intellectuals of the rural type' (see Chapter 2) and played a key role in preventing the spread of both liberal and left-wing values among the mass of the Egyptian peasantry.

In 1961-1962, the continuing salience of Islam in society, as well as the presence of key Islamist intellectuals close to the regime, was revealed in the workings of the Preparatory Commission for the National Charter. The debates over the precise nature of Egyptian socialism through the commission, chaired by Anwar Sadat, revolved around the extent to which Egypt should adopt 'Arab socialism' or the 'Arab application of socialism', with the former constituting, for Mahfouz, a 'right-wing' position and flowing from assumptions about Egyptian and Arab specificity. In May 1961, Anwar Sadat led a UAR delegation to the USSR, where Khrushchev belittled the Egyptian strategy of fusing socialism with Arab nationalism, chiding that 'you do not know much about socialism.' Sadat responded with an explanation of Arab socialism, which can only be furthered 'in a framework of national unity.' He added that 'we also believe that there are a number of spiritual factors, including

religion, which have their effects in addition to the accepted basis of material development.⁸¹

The former Muslim Brotherhood ideologue Muhammad al-Ghazzali addressed the commission to condemn ‘atheist socialism’ and presented a thesis on Muslim socialism founded on ideas of social justice. As Mahfouz points out, this was identical to the thesis Ghazzali had already presented in his Muslim Brotherhood capacity in 1950 entitled *Islam and Economic Systems*. This work appeared in the same year as a key work of another future Brotherhood thinker—Sayyid Qutb—*Social Justice in Islam*. Ghazzali’s recommendations were published without opposition from within the commission and were greeted with a critical article in *al-Ahram* entitled ‘Religious Reaction Rears its Head Again.’ The response to this article was the first incidence of violent demonstrations Egypt had seen since 1954 as Azharites and students took to the streets in protest. Mahfouz reports that nobody criticised Islamic socialism after that point.⁸²

Although the language and tone of the National Charter was Marxist, it explicitly condemned dialectical materialism because of its antipathy toward ‘God and His prophets and their sacred messages of truth and salvation.’ The Charter ascribed a positive role to religion in society and in guiding the individual and reconciles the teachings of Islam with socialism: ‘The All Powerful in his wisdom has placed equality of opportunity before all human beings as a basis of the final judgement.’⁸³ Other aspects of the Charter were also in tune with the programme of the banned Muslim Brotherhood. The rejection of political pluralism corresponded with the Brotherhood’s condemnation of political parties in the name of a ‘monolithic Islam’; the refutation of the dictatorship of the proletariat and the principle of class struggle were also fully in line with Brotherhood thinking.⁸⁴ Even as the pro-Islamist former Free Officer Kamal al-Din Hussein was dismissed or after the conspiracy of 1965 against Nasser in which Sayyid Qutb was executed, the regime did not renounce the ideals of Islamic socialism.

As a result of the inability, or unwillingness, of the regime to build an organic following based on secular socialism beyond the intelligentsia, and the corresponding dominance of Islam as an ideological idiom, the intellectual sphere was, through the Nasser years, socialist mainly at the pleasure of the regime. It was relatively easy for it to contain opposition from a Marxist ideological perspective, to selectively offer Marxists, as well as some liberal nationalists, media outlets without risking power. These political movements had weak roots in the mass of Egyptian society. The Muslim Brotherhood, however, had the distinct

advantage of having a religious orientation that resonated with broad sections of the Egyptian public. Wickham discusses the dynamics by which social movements such as the Egyptian Islamist movement mobilised in society. She argues that in authoritarian settings, ‘participation in an opposition movement is likely to be motivated less by self-interest than by deeply held values and beliefs.’ She continues, ‘[m]ovement organizers do not simply tap into the pre-existing grievances of potential recruits. Rather...mobilization is a form of persuasion, in which movement leaders deliberately and self-consciously promote new values, identities, and commitments as a basis for political action.’⁸⁵ In order to connect with the Brotherhood’s ‘masses’ the regime maintained an Islamic component to its ideology. The ‘turn to religion’ after the defeat in 1967 is best understood as the Nasser regime’s abandonment of the attempt to deepen socialism and, in the face of a serious blow to the leader’s credibility, the perceived urgent need to reconnect with the Egyptian masses—a task for which left-wing intellectuals were ill-equipped. Importantly, while 1967 represented an intellectual watershed in this regard, the discursive shift would have been ineffective had not Islam remained such a resonant framework for analysis throughout the revolution.

Ideological Change after 1967

The Six Day War in 1967 cut short the process of social change the regime was attempting to engineer, although the defeat was not the only cause. The political culture of the regime moved to the right under Sadat not because the radical turn had failed, according to scholars like John Waterbury and Ilya Harik, but because it had worked too well: too many powerful figures in the Egyptian state bourgeoisie felt alienated by attempts to deepen socialism.⁸⁶ This alienation was reflected at the regime level in manoeuvrings against Ali Sabri and the ASU in the latter years of Nasser’s life. In addition, the Muslim Brotherhood, under Qutb’s guidance from 1965, was increasingly reacting against the authoritarianism of Nasser’s rule, with one of Qutb’s main ideological contributions being to articulate an Islamic rationale for overthrowing an ‘unIslamic’ regime. Qutb also condemned communism, which was an oblique reference to the system that Nasser was seen to be following. Islamist critiques of communism in the 1970s were thus directly related to their attacks on Nasser.

When Sadat consolidated his position in May 1971, prevailing over the ‘centres of power’ associated with Nasser’s ruling coalition in what became known as the ‘Corrective Revolution’, he began what would be a four-year process of releasing imprisoned Muslim Brotherhood activists. Although in the early 1970s, the only counterweight to Nasserists at

the regime level were, because of Nasser's policy of reaching out to the left and their known antipathy to the Nasserist individuals in question, Marxists like Fu'ad Mursi, Lutfi al-Khuli, Muhammad Khafif and Ismail Sabri Abdullah, they too were soon displaced to make way for Islamist, and also liberal, figures. Similar personnel changes took place in the press. The changed ideological mix at the regime level had a class dimension: Sadat, in turning away from Nasser's support base, rehabilitated the old land-owning class, with some 5,000 receiving compensation for the land sequestered during the Nasser years.⁸⁷

The Domestic Impact of the October War

When, in October 1973, Sadat ordered the Egyptian army across the Suez Canal, it was to win a limited victory with the international goal of energising the US-led political process in Egypt's favour and arguably the domestic aim of boosting his popularity among the Egyptian masses. He had 'no thought of being able to crush the IDF and enter Israel; only a limited war was envisioned, one that would show Nixon and Kissinger that we wouldn't accept the status quo.'⁸⁸ Irrespective of the military balance-sheet at the end of the conflict, Sadat secured a resounding political victory. To those who had chided him over the past two years for his failure to confront Israel, the surprise attack showed the president not as indecisive or cowardly, but as a strategic genius patiently planning his masterstroke. For those who doubted the significance of the victory the scope for anti-regime mobilisation dropped to near zero as Sadat was feted across the country as '*Batal al-Ubur*', Hero of the Crossing. As with Nasser's similar 'victory' in 1956, the October War dramatically increased Sadat's freedom of action domestically and abroad. He could more stridently champion a vision of a new Middle East, aligned to the United States, and at home could afford to confront the left directly rather than through behind-the-scenes machinations. Sadat expressed a desire to see the Arab world become the 'sixth world power', given the cohesiveness with which it acted, and the apparent influence it wielded during the War.

The Egyptian press began to cover Islamist student activities in a favourable light, whereas before the war, the regime had felt constrained to criticise leftist students only with the simultaneous condemnation of the 'reactionary right' in the student body. Reflecting Sadat's desire to reach out directly to the people, as well as differentiate it from the 'revolutionary' or 'anti-imperialist' wars of Nasser, the conflict was presented in religious terms, taking place as it did during the holy month of Ramadan, the operation was code-named Operation Badr, in a reference to the Prophet's war against infidels. The October War bolstered Sadat's popularity at home and won him great praise from wide sections of

the intelligentsia. The ‘victory’, portrayed by the government in religious terms, pleased the Muslim Brotherhood and the Islamist student leaders who praised the *ra’is mu’min* [believer president] for his great strike against the Jews and solidarity with the Islamic oil states. Sadat attributed the victory to the ‘religious zeal’ of the Egyptian army.⁸⁹

The Ascent of Liberal Nationalism and Islamism in the Mid-1970s

The launching of Sadat’s economic policy, *infitah* [Open Door], in 1974 created opportunities for importers and a ‘comprador bourgeoisie’—the ‘fat cats’, as well as for rural capitalists—the so-called ‘fat *fellahin*.’ Many members of the rural middle class, *kibar al-ayan*, which somewhat passively facilitated the Nasser regime’s control of the countryside, were elevated under Sadat, where they were strongly represented in a newly invigorated parliament. For Hila Mustafa, the rural middle class helps explain the conservative/traditional orientation of the regime under Sadat. During Sadat’s time, the presence of the *ayan* in parliament meant that they played a more active role in setting the terms of public discourse than they had during the Nasser years, or even prior to the revolution when the liberal ideology of the Wafd and other parties was dominant. In the 1970s, the rural middle class in parliament was instrumental in keeping such issues as personal status and *shari’a* law on the agenda in a way that dovetailed neatly with the agenda of the Muslim Brotherhood.⁹⁰ The ASU itself became more Islamicised, with members referring to one another as ‘*hajj*’ (pilgrim) instead of the ‘*rafiq*’ (comrade) that had been more common during Ali Sabri’s tenure as leader.⁹¹ The Muslim Brotherhood was also supportive of Sadat’s open door economic policy. Beattie argues that ‘fat cat wealth’ knew no specific ideological orientation, and it is true that the proponents of *infitah* were just as likely to be Islamist as liberal. Just because the Muslim Brotherhood had previously shared with the Free Officers an antipathy to the liberal Wafd did not mean that its members did not now favour a capitalist developmental path for Egypt, or even building economic links with the West.⁹² For Kepel, the Muslim Brothers were part of the fabric of *infitah*. The fact of being given a stake in the regime, alongside their close links with conservative regimes in the Arab world, de-radicalised the Muslim Brotherhood (Kepel dubs them the ‘neo-Muslim Brotherhood’ to underscore this fact).⁹³

In 1974, Sadat dealt leftist journalists and intellectuals a serious blow in dismissing Heikal—hitherto a powerful protector of leftist commentators—from his post at *al-Ahram*. The monthly leftist publication *al-Katib* was also closed down after the October War. The appointment of rightist journalists—Musa Sabri, Anis Mansour and the Amin brothers, in

the mainstream press signified the growing marginalisation of Marxist ideas as compared to more liberal nationalist viewpoints. In early 1977, the editor of *al-Tali'a*, Lutfi al-Khuli, was forced to resign, in the context of the January bread riots which Sadat blamed on the left. The journal was gradually purged of leftist contributors and 'reoriented toward science and technology.'⁹⁴

By March 22, 1975, the last of the imprisoned Muslim Brotherhood were released. Although Sadat did not grant the Society permission to reform, he allowed the publication of a Brotherhood monthly newspaper, *al-Da'wa* [*The Call*] in 1976. Edited by Supreme Guide Umar al-Talimisany and Salih Ashmawi and with Brotherhood veterans Muhammad al-Ghazzali and Yusuf al-Qaradawi on the editorial board, *al-Da'wa* also gave voice to the student-based *gama'at islamiya* [Islamic Groups]. For Baker, 'A key element in laying the groundwork for the Brotherhood's early and formative cooperation with the state was the Sadat regime's effort to oppose Nasserism, which the Brothers saw as the strongest political force opposing their own movement, and thus as the greatest obstacle to the attainment of an Islamic society.'⁹⁵ This would be facilitated by the fact that the Muslim Brotherhood's thought 'enjoy[ed] cultural legitimacy, particularly since the 1967 war. The Brotherhood's political stands on most current issues reflect[ed] all Egyptian patriotisms: independence, nonalignment, anti-Zionism, and anti-imperialism.'⁹⁶

Students: Organic Intellectuals?

An important potential intermediary between the regime and the lower classes was Egypt's large student population. Student union activities 'are often an accurate reflection of political trends in Egyptian society at large.'⁹⁷ Under Nasser, and even more so under Sadat, the university system admitted more people from lower class backgrounds, such that by the 1970s the petite bourgeoisie had grown dramatically.* The student population was thus an important source of organic intellectuals for the regime as well as for opposition movements. Under Nasser, the student body was 'resocialised' in, albeit nebulous, Nasserist ideology, with courses on Arab Society, 'The July 23 Revolution' and 'Socialism' made compulsory in schools.⁹⁸

* 'Under Nasser the number of students enrolled in higher education rose by 325 percent.' University enrolment more than tripled. Sadat further increased intake such that by 1985 the number of university graduates was more than triple what it was in 1975. Wickham, *Mobilizing Islam : Religion, Activism, and Political Change in Egypt* 25,38.

But as Wickham and others have argued, the student body was depoliticised, incorporated into the state, and placed under heavy regime surveillance.⁹⁹ ‘Denied an independent voice in the new political order,’ Wickham concludes, ‘students and graduates acquiesced to the regime’s initiatives, dutifully affirming its achievements at official youth meetings, rallies, and demonstrations.’ The regime thus expended considerable energy trying to keep the students loyal. Until the 1970s, the student union was affiliated with the ASU and non-Nasserist activism was strictly forbidden. This began to change soon after the Six Day War. Nasser allowed independent student groups to form and, in 1968, established the General Union of Egyptian Students (GUES), which had more independence vis-à-vis the regime, a process further encouraged by Sadat.¹⁰⁰ The weakening of the links between the Arab Socialist Union and the student movement hastened the ‘de-Nasserisation’ of the latter.

The student movement in the early 1970s was dominated by communist groups, but they were gradually being supplanted by Islamist groupings in a process that would be completed by the late 1970s. As McLaurin et al. note, ‘By 1978, the Islamic groups had successes in gaining control of key student bodies by landslide victories in university students’ unions and in displacing the Marxist and Nasserite left as the dominant ideological movement in the universities,’¹⁰¹ although as late as 1977 the left were still able to mobilise support during the January bread riots. The Islamist groupings were not creations of the Egyptian regime and had, from 1968, sustained an autonomous existence and modest following, albeit with much greater success in the town of al-Mansoura.* But, by the admission of one of their leaders, the Islamists could not have taken control of the student movement without government support, chiefly via the appointment of the Islamist Uhtman Isma’il as ASU youth secretary, alongside government repression of the leftist activists.¹⁰² By the end of 1972, the Islamist groups, emboldened by their high-level support, began to more clearly break with the left, largely through focussing on domestic issues. Their central demand was the institution of *shari’ā* law in Egypt. They also promoted social reforms in the universities, such as the wearing of the veil for female students and the provision of (segregated) transport facilities. The Islamist student groups, like the Muslim Brotherhood to which they were linked, received substantial funding from the Gulf and Libya, and were able to supply cheap textbooks and Islamic clothing to poor students. Outside of the university, Islamic activists were also able to reach otherwise apolitical Egyptians through the provision of services otherwise unavailable: ‘[I]n the new neighborhoods of Greater Cairo, the poor state of state-

* Islamist inroads in the GUES at al-Mansoura University in 1968 prompted the regime to close the branch due to ‘right-wing’ elements.

run services and the virtual absence of secular community organizations created an institutional void that independent mosques and Islamic service organizations established since the mid-1970s were able to fill.¹⁰³

A large politicised student body was important not just in terms of its own numbers, as Chapter 3 noted regarding an earlier period in Egyptian history, but also because students interacted with their own networks in villages, towns and cities throughout Egypt, as well as through their outreach (*da'wa*) activities in popular (*sha'bī*) areas as graduates. In Wickham's study of Islamic activism, she notes that university graduates became a 'lumpen intelligentsia' forced into ever more overcrowded living quarters from the 1970s:

In sharp contrast to the image of the semi-literate rural migrant, such [people] included university-educated professionals, some of whom had prior experience in the Islamic student movement. After settling into their new neighbourhood, such graduates used the skill they had honed as Islamic student organizers to help establish and maintain a dynamic network of independent mosques, day-care centers, health clinics, and other community services.¹⁰⁴

As will be noted in Chapter 7, the Islamist student activists shared much of the substantive programme of the left as related to Israel and called for war using a conceptualisation of Israel that reflected an anti-imperialist framework. Interpreting the recollections of one of the Islamist student leaders of the time, it seems clear that the influence of the leftist student leaders over the student body was sustained not so much because of the resonance that socialism, much less communism, had with the students so much as through appeal to broadly populist themes. Indeed, Wa'il Uthman recounts, the communists were often keen to disguise their true ideological leanings, not only to avoid attracting unwelcome attention from the *mukhabarat* (intelligence services), but also because of the actual religiosity of the student population, which they were keen not to offend.¹⁰⁵ The Islamists had the advantage of being able to 'frame' their ideas in terms that resonated with the student body, as well as the general public through *da'wa*. In Gramscian terms, *da'wa* worked as it was a combination of old and new: 'In a social context in which a majority of the population are devout Muslims and other interpretations of Islam are not authoritatively presented, it may be difficult for a young man or woman to withstand the argument that "God requires you to pray or veil or fast" or "God requires you not to drink or smoke or interact with members of the opposite sex or socialise with non-Muslims.' Islamists would have enjoyed a similar advantage in the sphere of foreign policy discourse.¹⁰⁶

The Islamist movement, or more particularly the Muslim Brotherhood, was by the 1970s better able to exploit the large student and graduate body as ‘organic intellectuals’ than the regime or any of the left-wing opposition forces. Considering the Brotherhood as a counter-hegemonic group with its own ‘traditional intellectuals’, such as Sayyid Qutb or Yusuf Qaradawi, helps us understand its political significance. Such ‘traditional intellectuals’ generated ideas of a high level of complexity, which were ‘digested’ by petit bourgeois thinkers and simplified in pamphlets for public consumption. For Wickham, ‘In contrast to the sophisticated analysis of such prominent Islamic thinkers as Sheikh Muhammad al-Ghazzali, Yusuf al-Qarada’i [sic], and Sayyid Qutb, the pamphlets present Islamist themes in formulaic or excerpted form. And in contrast to the detached style of more scholarly Islamic works, such pamphlets read more like a sermon or lecture.’¹⁰⁷

The Abolition of the ASU and Creation of a Multi-Party System

In the mid-1970s Sadat set in train the deconstruction of the ASU and its replacement by a multi-party political system. The ASU Vanguard was abolished and leftists within the ASU were deprived of this connection with the masses, particularly as represented in and via the intermediary of the student population, a development also encouraged by the establishment of the independent, non-ASU-affiliated, GUES. The ASU’s influence in this regard depended on its links with communist and Nasserist activists in the universities, who were rapidly losing the initiative to Islamists.¹⁰⁸

The ASU as a whole was subdivided into *minabir* (pulpits, sing. *minbar*) in 1975, in a bid to give voice to ‘minority’ political forces. While Nasser had replaced the National Union with the Arab Socialist Union in 1962 in order to contain a perceived threat from the political right, Sadat embarked on his reorganisation of the ASU to restore the political participation of the bourgeoisie that Nasser had sought to undercut. There appeared subsequently around 40 *minabir*, including eight to ten with a religious orientation.¹⁰⁹ In 1976, the *minabir* were consolidated into three official platforms: right, centre and left. The right platform gave birth to the liberal socialist organisation under the leadership of former Free Officer Mustafa Kamel Murad, the centre became the government’s party, named the Egyptian Arab Socialist Organisation (later to become the National Democratic Party) and the left the Nationalist Progressive Unionist Grouping (Tagammu’) under the Marxist Free Officer and former *al-Misa* editor Khalid Muhi al-Din. The regime remained nervous of allowing the formation of parties that may have enjoyed genuine popular appeal, and used the socialist and secular underpinnings of the revolution to justify this. Under the Parties Law of 11

November 1976, no party could be formed based on religion—clearly aimed at preventing the Muslim Brotherhood from becoming a legitimate, legal, political force; also, all parties must be committed to socialism, which precluded the Wafd from reforming.¹¹⁰ The centre and right groupings were peopled by individuals who, during the Nasser years, would have been placed on the right of the political spectrum. Their members tended to be against the Soviet Union, supportive of economic and political liberalisation and open to the idea of a closer US relationship.¹¹¹ As for Tagammu', it comprised a diverse spectrum of communists, independent Marxists and Nasserists, a factor which militated against the crystallisation of a coherent left-wing ideology at the level of the state, and also allowed the regime and opponents of Nasserism to ascribe to Nasserists the same negative characteristics (atheism, subservience to the Soviet Union, and Zionism) they associated with communists.

The parties thus represented a democratic veneer without a strong popular base. Although the new system allowed for a greater multiplicity of political views to be aired at the state level, the dismantling of ASU structures meant that political mobilisation remained minimal, and combined with the encouragement of independent student political life, de-linked Nasserist and Marxist intellectuals from students as potentially 'organic intellectuals'. The traditional social structure—and hence conservative ideological orientation—of the countryside remained in place. The lack of popular support for the official parties, or indeed for Sadat's neoliberal economic initiatives, was revealed when, in 1977, Egypt was shaken by riots protesting the reduction of subsidies for basic staples. Sadat blamed the disturbances on communist subversion and thus sought to enlist the support of a party that had in the past combined a mass appeal with a commitment to liberal principles. In 1978, also under fire from the left and religious (including Coptic) groups over the nature of Sadat's engagement with Israel, he thus encouraged the reformation of the Wafd Party, renamed the New Wafd, led by its veteran leader Fu'ad Serag al-Din, and with a strong base in the upper classes as well as broad popularity.

Strict limits were also set on the extent to which the parties could criticise state policy, with foreign and economic policy declared outside the boundaries of 'constructive' criticism. Keen to distance Egypt from Arab causes after his visit to Jerusalem in 1977, Sadat was also keen to hear the voices of those in Egyptian society that supported an 'Egypt-first' version of Egyptian identity, characterised by a liberal democratic system, openness to the West and the rejection of the weight of responsibility for 'Arab causes.' The New Wafd initially seemed to fit these criteria as it was pro-Western and stood for a deepening of *infītah* and an

increase of political freedoms. The Wafd's reformation also apparently won considerable public support. But as with the Muslim Brotherhood, whose public support base was also well-established, the Wafd soon proved to be too 'independent' for the regime's purposes, proving to be anything other than a tame tool in Sadat's hand against the Islamists and the left.¹¹² In the middle of 1978, facing vocal opposition from the official leftist (Tagammu') and liberal oppositions he banned 'atheists' and pre-1952 figures from participation in politics. Sadat remarked to Sa'd Eddine Ibrahim that Serag al-Din wanted to see a return of the 'Pashas' to leadership of Egypt.¹¹³

An Islamic 'International Society'

The Sadat regime's turn to Islamic movements in the early and mid-1970s also reflected, and supported, its policy of breaking links with the USSR and strengthening ties with conservative Arab states. In the 1950s and 1960s, Saudi Arabia, along with other conservative states like Jordan, acted as a key champion of a Pan-Islamist and non-socialist version of Arab solidarity. Often in the firing line of Nasser's equation of Arab 'reaction' with imperialism, Saudi Arabia was keen to discourage this paradigm for understanding the Arab-Israeli conflict and other regional issues, preferring instead to view it in terms of a clash of cultures. The existence of such a rival ideological power using the justification of Islam contributed to Egypt's retention of Islamic rationales during the Nasser years. But Nasser's popularity among Arab masses meant that the Saudi influence was never such that anti-imperialism and socialism disappeared as key components of regime ideology. This started to change after 1967 and, particularly after the use of the oil weapon in 1973, Saudi regional prestige increased markedly.

Following 1967, Saudi Arabia supported Fatah and Arafat as 'a comparatively moderate leader, with nationalist goals, who would not foment revolution in the Arab world.' In addition, Arafat and his associates 'were Muslim...and in some cases had been associated with the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt. This helped convince the Saudis that they did not represent a dangerous radical trend.'¹¹⁴ Sadat, who was interested in fresh perspectives, found inspiration from Saudi Arabia. The Saudis were especially keen to build a strong relationship with a conservatively oriented Egypt. As Dessouki notes, King Faisal 'needed Sadat to sustain stability in the Arab East. He expected Sadat to diminish Nasser's revolutionary model of development, cut close relations with the Soviet Union and restrain radicals in Syria, Iraq and the PLO.'¹¹⁵

An important mechanism by which Saudi influence was extended to Egypt was economic aid, which Egypt started receiving after the Khartoum Arab League summit in 1967, as well as the large-scale migration of Egyptians to the Gulf for work. Although official Arab aid to Egypt was discontinued after the 1975 Sinai II agreement, private investment, in the context of *infitah* rapidly took its place. Under *infitah*, and largely fuelled by an oil boom, Egyptian GDP grew rapidly, with ‘a major source of capital [being] the remittances of Egyptian migrants working in Libya and the Gulf, who increased in number from about 10,000 in 1968 to 1.2 million in 1985.’ It was this vast wealth that fuelled the ‘parallel Islamic sector’ in the 1970s. These business relationships were greatly facilitated by Egyptian entrepreneurs residing in the Gulf, many of whom happened to have been Muslim Brothers who fled there during Nasser’s purges in the 1960s, or had been convinced by Islamist thought while there. Many Brotherhood members and sympathisers had, in the Gulf, amassed substantial fortunes in the 1960s. Osman Ahmad Osman, construction magnate and Egypt’s leading entrepreneur, for example, was pro-Islamist and a key advisor to Sadat. The experience of living and prospering in the rich Islamic oil states had convinced many Egyptians that there was no contradiction between wealth acquisition, particularly via free enterprise, and Islam, and even that the latter was a prerequisite for prosperity as the experience of the Gulf states proved. The commercial links thus had an ideological dimension, represented most strikingly by such prominent Brotherhood intellectuals as Yusuf al-Qaradawi and Muhammad al-Ghazzali. This symbiotic relationship was reinforced by the other major component of *infitah*, which was, in lieu of state-led industrialisation as a means of improving the lot of the landless and impoverished, to encourage the emigration of Egyptians as labourers abroad, particularly to the Gulf. Almost every Egyptian family had or knew of someone who was working in the Gulf, returning home a little wealthier, and a little more convinced that religion, rather than socialism, was the way to a better life.¹¹⁶ For Wickham, ‘the intensive exposure of Egyptian citizens to the social mores of Saudi Arabia and other Gulf countries where Islamic law was strictly applied pushed their own religious beliefs and practices in a more conservative direction upon their return home.’¹¹⁷

Egypt’s deepening rapprochement with Saudi Arabia and, on a personal level, the president’s close relationship with King Faisal’s advisor Kamal Adham, also affected Sadat’s developing view of the role of the superpowers in the region.* Faisal was keen to

* Sadat had known Adham closely since the 1950s when he headed the Islamic Congress, designed to strengthen Egypt’s Islamic credibility at home and abroad. Haykal, *Kharif Al-Ghadab : Qissat*

use this new-found leverage to assert a new form of ideological leadership in the region, based around a version of anti-Jewish and anti-communist Arab-Islamic solidarity that emphatically rejected socialism and any role for the Soviet Union in the politics and economics of the Middle East. While the Soviets argued that the Americans' pro-Israel bias disqualifies them from brokering a just solution, Adham impressed upon Sadat the need to distance Egypt from the USSR as a prerequisite to maximising US support, and argued strongly that this support was necessary for any acceptable resolution of the conflict with Israel.¹¹⁸

Another important regional factor encouraging the Islamist counter-hegemony in Egypt, and increasing the salience of Islam as a political framework, was the Iranian Revolution of 1978-1979. As Abdenasser notes,

The Islamic Revolution of 1979 in Iran has had a far reaching impact, direct as well as indirect, throughout the region. This has been the case whether at the level of other governments' policy-making options or at that of various groups and/or organizations upholding the banner of Islam as a political ideology and program in their quest for political control in different countries of the region.¹¹⁹

The Islamic Revolution contributed to the Islamicisation of political discourse in the region, but of a markedly different sort to that promoted by Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States. In overthrowing the Shah, who had himself promoted the idea of Pan-Islamism as a foil to Nasser's radical Pan-Arabism, Khomeini stressed the revolutionary character of Islam.* Sadat strongly opposed Khomeini and notoriously granted the deposed Shah sanctuary. The state-controlled institution of al-Azhar was initially nervous about, and then overtly hostile, toward the revolution.¹²⁰ The Muslim Brotherhood, on the other hand, saw the revolution as evidence of a global trend back to Islam and was, at least until the outbreak of the Iran-Iraq War in September 1980, highly positive about Khomeini.[†] As an inspiration and encouragement to those groups that aimed at overthrowing the Egyptian regime, the example of Iran was important, in terms of the 'spirit' it represented, if not the Shiite doctrine.¹²¹ For

Bidayat Wa-Nihayat 'Asr Anwar Al-Sadat [Autumn of Fury: The Story of the Beginning and End of the Era of Anwar Sadat] 29.

* Despite the shi'ite character of the Iranian revolution, Khomeini argued that the Revolution was in the service of Islam as a whole.

† After this point, the regime's support for Iraq made outright praise for the Islamic revolution difficult. The Brotherhood, at least as represented by Umar al-Talimisany, argued that the Iran-Iraq War was instigated by Zionists to divide Muslims.

Akhavi, 'the Iranian revolution has served to quicken, rather than cause, the Islamic resurgence in Egypt.'¹²²

The Decline in Egypt-Soviet Relations

The key issue that drove a wedge between the programmes of the Islamists and the leftists on university campuses and beyond related to foreign policy. Sadat's dramatic expulsion in 1972 of some 15,000 Soviet experts was condemned by the left and applauded by the Islamists. Sadat's bold move can be understood in terms of both foreign and domestic political calculations. On the foreign policy level, Sadat was keen to demonstrate to the United States that he was serious about building a new relationship with the West. But Kissinger himself expressed his surprise that Sadat had gone this far. Perhaps as important, as with Nasser before him, Sadat's anti-communism reflected a concern with his domestic position. In his memoirs, Sadat described the ASU secretary general and 'centre of power' Ali Sabri, as Moscow's number one man in Egypt, before his resignation in 1971.¹²³ By expelling the Soviets, Sadat sought to undercut regime Nasserists. The expulsion of the Soviet advisors, the release of Muslim Brotherhood members and the growth of Islamism on the university campuses were not unrelated phenomena. With the dominant political movements in Egyptian universities, in the press, and within the regime broadly supportive of Egypt's relationship with the USSR and suspicious of an exclusive relationship with the West, Sadat needed voices in society that would support his dramatic gesture. The Muslim Brotherhood and their supporters in the universities, while not natural advocates of rapprochement with the United States, could be relied upon to be critical of the Soviet Union and communism. Sadat also held that the communist movement in the university was sponsored and supported by the Soviets and, in his memoirs, justified expelling the advisors in these terms.¹²⁴ Despite the apparent benefits of the Egyptian-Soviet relationship that Egypt's worthy performance with Soviet arms and support in October 1973 suggested, in March 1976, Sadat unilaterally abrogated Egypt's treaty of friendship with the USSR.

One of the striking characteristics of Egypt's long, if tempestuous, relationship with Russia, which included cultural and educational exchanges and the presence of large numbers of Soviet personnel on Egyptian soil is the fact that Marxism-Leninism left scarcely a trace on the Egyptian public consciousness beyond the intelligentsia. The regime remained, even when relations were at their closest, and Egyptian Marxists were allowed to air their views, ardently anticommunist. The USSR was praised only to the extent that it was a 'friend' of Egypt and the Third World in its struggle for independence in the face of global imperialism,

and the Egyptian press was largely silent on the ideological and cultural underpinnings of its key international ally.¹²⁵

Conclusion

The Egypt of Nasser and Sadat in some ways resembled that of the ‘East’ as conceived by Gramsci. The ‘state’ seemed to be ‘everything’, and the role of regime coercion and orchestration to guide intellectual life was pronounced. But Egypt was not a totalitarian system. For one thing, until the 1960s there was no agreed-on ideology that could integrate state and society. There were diffuse principles selectively and gradually applied: Pan-Arabism, anti-colonialism, positive neutralism, socialism. Further, the state of Nasser and Sadat was never able to wholly replace, or indeed live without, the main political ideologies of the pre-revolutionary period and, in particular, the intellectual framework associated with the Muslim Brotherhood. The attempt via the Arab Socialist Union, established in 1962, to incorporate the Egyptian masses into the regime’s own socialist revolutionary project failed, partly due to internal political and credibility problems, and partly because the 1967 defeat at the hands of Israel stopped the experiment in its tracks. In the wake of 1967 the regime turned away from revolutionary socialism as a would-be hegemonic ideology and towards Islam, the only idea system that still had the potential to integrate civil and political society in Egypt. Sadat’s *politique des intellectuels* was in many ways more confused even than Nasser’s. Crucially, the problem that dogged Nasser’s regime, namely the inability to create institutions that would ideologically connect the regime with society on the former’s terms, remained—and perhaps intensified—under Sadat. The ASU, was dismantled, and political parties remained, with the partial exception of the ruling NDP, the elitist talking shops they had been in the pre-revolutionary period.

International and regional dynamics interacted closely with domestic developments. Nasser’s pro-Soviet turn from 1955 encouraged the grooming of a socialist intelligentsia at home, as did his involvement in the Afro-Asian movement. His turn against the left in 1959 coincided with the deterioration of relations with both the USSR and China, and the regime’s subsequent adoption of a more ‘non-aligned’ international posture reflected a desire to rebuild some bridges with the West in the wake of Suez. Regionally, both positive neutralism and Pan-Arabism were facilitated by the popularity of the Ba’th in Syria, a key focus for Egyptian regional policy. The Syrian secession from the UAR in 1961 stimulated a renewal of radicalism and the rehabilitation of Egyptian Marxists, who would provide ideological cover for the regional policy of peaceful coexistence with conservative Arab

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states and a scaling back of ambitions for full, organic, unity toward the more federal solution traditionally favoured by the communists. Following 1967, the gradual Islamicisation of political discourse was facilitated by the regional rise of Saudi Arabia and, after 1971, the regime's efforts to court the United States, seek rapprochement with Israel, and bury the Soviet relationship, in an international context of détente, contributed to the further 'deradicalisation' of the intellectual sphere and the emergence of a more liberal intelligentsia in the context of de-Nasserisation, particularly after 1973. The regional bombshell of the Iranian revolution of 1978-1979 also contributed to the Islamicisation of political discourse in Egypt, but this time in a distinctly counter-hegemonic form.

¹ P. Jankowski James and Israel Gershoni, *Redefining the Egyptian Nation, 1930-1945*, Cambridge Middle East Studies ; 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

² R. Hrair Dekmejian, *Egypt under Nasir : A Study in Political Dynamics*, 1st ed. (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1971).

³ Shukri, *Egypt : Portrait of a President, 1971-1981 ; the Counter-Revolution in Egypt ; Sadat's Road to Jerusalem* 178.

⁴ Kirk J. Beattie, *Egypt During the Nasser Years : Ideology, Politics and Civil Society* (Oxford: Westview Press, 1994).

⁵ Fayed A. Sayegh, *The Dynamics of Neutralism in the Arab World : A Symposium* (San Francisco: Chandler, 1964) 195.

⁶ Eran Lerman, "A Revolution Prefigured: Foreign Policy Orientations in the Postwar Years," in *Egypt from Monarchy to Republic : A Reassessment of Revolution and Change*, ed. Shimon Shamir (Boulder ; Oxford: Westview Press, 1995), 284. Emphasis in original.

⁷ Quoted in Gilles Perrault, *A Man Apart : The Life of Henri Curiel* (London: Zed, 1987) 188.

⁸ El-Sa'id and Ismael Tareq, *The Communist Movement in Egypt : 1920-1988* 76.

⁹ Sayegh, *The Dynamics of Neutralism in the Arab World : A Symposium* 205.

¹⁰ Rami Ginat, *Egypt's Incomplete Revolution : Lutfi Al-Khuli and Nasser's Socialism in the 1960s*, The Cummings Center Series (London: Frank Cass, 1997) 42.

¹¹ See Dekmejian, *Egypt under Nasir : A Study in Political Dynamics* 211.

¹² Beinin, *Was the Red Flag Flying There?: Marxist Politics and the Arab-Israeli Conflict in Egypt and Israel, 1948-1965* 178.

¹³ El-Sa'id and Ismael Tareq, *The Communist Movement in Egypt : 1920-1988* 84.

¹⁴ Beinin, *Was the Red Flag Flying There?: Marxist Politics and the Arab-Israeli Conflict in Egypt and Israel, 1948-1965* 178.

¹⁵ El-Sa'id and Ismael Tareq, *The Communist Movement in Egypt : 1920-1988* 178.

¹⁶ Abdel-Malek, *Egypt: Military Society : The Army Regime, the Left, and Social Change under Nasser* 120.

¹⁷ Beinin, *Was the Red Flag Flying There?: Marxist Politics and the Arab-Israeli Conflict in Egypt and Israel, 1948-1965* 178.

¹⁸ al-Alim and al-Hakim, *I'tirafat Shaykh Al-Shuyuyi'yin Al-Arab: Mahmud Amin Al-Alim [Confessions of the Sheikh of the Arab Communists: Mahmoud Amin Al-Alim]* 29.

¹⁹ Abdel-Malek, *Egypt: Military Society : The Army Regime, the Left, and Social Change under Nasser* 230.

²⁰ Sayegh, *The Dynamics of Neutralism in the Arab World : A Symposium* 200.

²¹ Quoted in Sayegh, *The Dynamics of Neutralism in the Arab World : A Symposium* 183.

²² Vatikiotis, *The History of Modern Egypt : From Muhammad Ali to Mubarak* 390.

²³ Sayegh, *The Dynamics of Neutralism in the Arab World : A Symposium* 182.

²⁴ El-Sa'id and Ismael Tareq, *The Communist Movement in Egypt : 1920-1988* 108.

²⁵ Seale, *The Struggle for Syria: A Study of Post-War Arab Politics, 1945-1958* 23.

²⁶ Ibid.

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²⁷ Kerr, *The Arab Cold War, 1958-1964; a Study of Ideology in Politics* 2.

²⁸ Kemal H. Karpat, ed., *Political and Social Thought in the Contemporary Middle East* (London: Pall Mall Press, 1968) 55.

²⁹ Binder, *The Ideological Revolution in the Middle East* 240.

³⁰ Avraham Sela, "Abd Al-Nasser's Regional Politics: A Reassessment," in *Rethinking Nasserism : Revolution and Historical Memory in Modern Egypt*, ed. Elie Podeh and Onn Winckler (London: Eurospan, 2004), 185.

³¹ Patrick Seale, *Asad of Syria : The Struggle for the Middle East* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989) 65.

³² Abdel-Malek, *Egypt: Military Society : The Army Regime, the Left, and Social Change under Nasser* 256.

³³ Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci* 350.

³⁴ Harik, *The Political Mobilization of Peasants : A Study of an Egyptian Community* 158.

³⁵ Dekmejian, *Egypt under Nasir : A Study in Political Dynamics* 38.

³⁶ Beattie, *Egypt During the Sadat Years* 104.

³⁷ Harik, *The Political Mobilization of Peasants : A Study of an Egyptian Community* 68.

³⁸ Gamal Abdel Nasser, *Egypt's Liberation : The Philosophy of the Revolution* (Washington, DC: Public Affairs Press, 1956) 34.

³⁹ Ghassan Salame, *Democracy without Democrats? : The Renewal of Politics in the Muslim World* (London: I. B. Tauris, 1994) 14.

⁴⁰ Haykal, *Kharif Al-Ghadab : Qissat Bidayat Wa-Nihayat 'Asr Anwar Al-Sadat [Autumn of Fury: The Story of the Beginning and End of the Era of Anwar Sadat]* 137.

⁴¹ Dawisha, *Egypt in the Arab World : The Elements of Foreign Policy* 26-27.

⁴² Ibid. 29.

⁴³ El-Sa'id and Ismael Tareq, *The Communist Movement in Egypt : 1920-1988* 107.

⁴⁴ al-Alim and al-Hakim, *I'tirafat Shaykh Al-Shuyuyi'yin Al-Arab: Mahmud Amin Al-Alim [Confessions of the Sheikh of the Arab Communists: Mahmoud Amin Al-Alim]* 43.

⁴⁵ Abdel-Malek, *Egypt: Military Society : The Army Regime, the Left, and Social Change under Nasser* 148.

⁴⁶ Baker, *Sadat and After : Struggles for Egypt's Political Soul*.

⁴⁷ Beattie, *Egypt During the Nasser Years : Ideology, Politics and Civil Society* 119.

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⁴⁹ Karen Dawisha, *Soviet Foreign Policy Towards Egypt* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1979) 23.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

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⁵³ See e.g. Binder, *In a Moment of Enthusiasm : Political Power and the Second Stratum in Egypt*., Hussein, *Class Conflict in Egypt, 1945-1970*. and Ayubi, *Over-Statting the Arab State : Politics and Society in the Middle East*.

⁵⁴ Ginat, *Egypt's Incomplete Revolution : Lutfi Al-Khuli and Nasser's Socialism in the 1960s* 15.

⁵⁵ Afaf el Kosheri Mahfouz, *Socialisme Et Pouvoir En Égypte [Socialism and Power in Egypt]*, *Bibliothèque Constitutionnelle Et De Science Politique*, T. 44 (Paris,; Librairie générale de droit et de jurisprudence, 1972).

⁵⁶ Karpat, ed., *Political and Social Thought in the Contemporary Middle East* 168.

⁵⁷ Baker, *Sadat and After : Struggles for Egypt's Political Soul* 123.

⁵⁸ Dekmejian, *Egypt under Nasir : A Study in Political Dynamics* 146-48.

⁵⁹ El-Sa'id and Ismael Tareq, *The Communist Movement in Egypt : 1920-1988* 123.

⁶⁰ Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for State : The Palestinian National Movement, 1949-1993* 79.

⁶¹ Karpat, ed., *Political and Social Thought in the Contemporary Middle East* 207.

⁶² Waterbury, *The Egypt of Nasser and Sadat : The Political Economy of Two Regimes*.

⁶³ Vatikiotis, *Nasser and His Generation*.

⁶⁴ Mustafa, *Al-Nizam Al-Siyasi Wa-Al-Mu'aradah Al-Islamiyah Fi Misr [the Political System and the Islamic Opposition in Egypt]* 126.

⁶⁵ el Kosheri Mahfouz, *Socialisme Et Pouvoir En Égypte [Socialism and Power in Egypt]*.

⁶⁶ Beattie, *Egypt During the Nasser Years : Ideology, Politics and Civil Society*.

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⁶⁷ Dekmejian, *Egypt under Nasir : A Study in Political Dynamics* 233.

⁶⁸ Mustafa, *Al-Nizam Al-Siyasi Wa-Al-Mu'aradah Al-Islamiyah Fi Misr [the Political System and the Islamic Opposition in Egypt]* 140.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid. 131.

⁷¹ Abdel-Malek, *Egypt: Military Society : The Army Regime, the Left, and Social Change under Nasser* 262.

⁷² Ibid. 263.

⁷³ Kepel, *The Prophet and Pharaoh : Muslim Extremism in Contemporary Egypt* 29.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid. 30.

⁷⁶ Ali Ashmawi, *Al-Tarikh Al-Sirri Li-Jama'at Al-Ikhwan Al-Muslimin : Mudhakkirat 'Ali 'Ashmawi Akhir Qadat Al-Tan.Zim Al-Sirri [the Secret History of the Muslim Brotherhood: Recollections of Ali Ashmawi, the Last Leader of the Secret Organisation]* (al-Qahirah: Dar al-Hilal, 1993).

⁷⁷ Kepel, *The Prophet and Pharaoh : Muslim Extremism in Contemporary Egypt* 42.

⁷⁸ Ashmawi, *Al-Tarikh Al-Sirri Li-Jama'at Al-Ikhwan Al-Muslimin : Mudhakkirat 'Ali 'Ashmawi Akhir Qadat Al-Tan.Zim Al-Sirri [the Secret History of the Muslim Brotherhood: Recollections of Ali Ashmawi, the Last Leader of the Secret Organisation]* 77.

⁷⁹ Harik, *The Political Mobilization of Peasants : A Study of an Egyptian Community* 68.

⁸⁰ See Ibid., Binder, *In a Moment of Enthusiasm : Political Power and the Second Stratum in Egypt., and Ansari, Egypt, the Stalled Society*.

⁸¹ Rami Ginat, *Syria and the Doctrine of Arab Neutralism : From Independence to Dependence* (Portland: Sussex Academic Press, 2005) 211.

⁸² el Kosheri Mahfouz, *Socialisme Et Pouvoir En Égypte [Socialism and Power in Egypt]*.

⁸³ Ibid. 103.

⁸⁴ Ibid. 122.

⁸⁵ Wickham, *Mobilizing Islam : Religion, Activism, and Political Change in Egypt* 119-20.

⁸⁶ Waterbury, *The Egypt of Nasser and Sadat : The Political Economy of Two Regimes*.

⁸⁷ Beattie, *Egypt During the Sadat Years* 82-87.

⁸⁸ Ibid. 134.

⁸⁹ Hinnebusch, *Egyptian Politics under Sadat : The Post-Populist Development of an Authoritarian-Modernizing State* 114.

⁹⁰ Mustafa, *Al-Nizam Al-Siyasi Wa-Al-Mu'aradah Al-Islamiyah Fi Misr [the Political System and the Islamic Opposition in Egypt]* 248.

⁹¹ Uthman, *Asrar Al-Harakah Al-Tullabiyyah [Secrets of the Student Movement]*.

⁹² Mustafa, *Al-Nizam Al-Siyasi Wa-Al-Mu'aradah Al-Islamiyah Fi Misr [the Political System and the Islamic Opposition in Egypt]*.

⁹³ Kepel, *The Prophet and Pharaoh : Muslim Extremism in Contemporary Egypt*.

⁹⁴ Beattie, *Egypt During the Sadat Years*.

⁹⁵ Baker, *Sadat and After : Struggles for Egypt's Political Soul* 247.

⁹⁶ McLaurin, Peretz, and Snider, *Middle East Foreign Policy : Issues and Processes*.

⁹⁷ Ibid. 48.

⁹⁸ Wickham, *Mobilizing Islam : Religion, Activism, and Political Change in Egypt* 30.

⁹⁹ Ibid. 29.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid. 117.

¹⁰¹ McLaurin, Peretz, and Snider, *Middle East Foreign Policy : Issues and Processes* 48.

¹⁰² Uthman, *Asrar Al-Harakah Al-Tullabiyyah [Secrets of the Student Movement]*.

¹⁰³ Wickham, *Mobilizing Islam : Religion, Activism, and Political Change in Egypt* 123.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Uthman, *Asrar Al-Harakah Al-Tullabiyyah [Secrets of the Student Movement]*.

¹⁰⁶ Wickham, *Mobilizing Islam : Religion, Activism, and Political Change in Egypt* 155.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid. 137.

¹⁰⁸ Mustafa, *Al-Nizam Al-Siyasi Wa-Al-Mu'aradah Al-Islamiyah Fi Misr [the Political System and the Islamic Opposition in Egypt]*.

¹⁰⁹ Beattie, *Egypt During the Sadat Years* 191.

Chapter 4: Ideological Development: 1952-1981

¹¹⁰ Mustafa, *Al-Nizam Al-Siyasi Wa-Al-Mu'aradah Al-Islamiyah Fi Misr [the Political System and the Islamic Opposition in Egypt]*.

¹¹¹ Beattie, *Egypt During the Sadat Years*.

¹¹² Hinnebusch, *Egyptian Politics under Sadat : The Post-Populist Development of an Authoritarian-Modernizing State* 73.

¹¹³ Saad Eddin Ibrahim, *I'adat Al-I'tibar Lil-Ra'is Al-Sadat [President Sadat Reconsidered]*, 1st ed. (al-Qahirah: Dar al-Shuruq, 1992).

¹¹⁴ William B. Quandt, *Saudi Arabia in the 1980s : Foreign Policy, Security, and Oil* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 1981) 32.

¹¹⁵ Korany, Hilal, and Ahmad, *The Foreign Policies of Arab States: The Challenge of Change* 182.

¹¹⁶ Rafiq Habib, *Al-Ihtijaj Al-Dini Wa-Al-Sira' Al-Tabaqi Fi Misr [Religious Protest and Class Struggle in Egypt]*, 1st ed. (al-Qahirah: Sina lil-Nashr, 1989).

¹¹⁷ Wickham, *Mobilizing Islam : Religion, Activism, and Political Change in Egypt* 122.

¹¹⁸ Haykal, *Kharif Al-Ghadab : Qissat Bidayat Wa-Nihayat 'Asr Anwar Al-Sadat [Autumn of Fury: The Story of the Beginning and End of the Era of Anwar Sadat]* 108.

¹¹⁹ Walid Abdenasser, "Islamic Organizations in Egypt and the Iranian Revolution of 1979: The Experience of the First Few Years," *Arab Studies Quarterly* 19, no. 2 (1997).

¹²⁰ Shahrough Akhavi, "The Impact of the Iranian Revolution on Egypt," in *The Iranian Revolution : Its Global Impact*, ed. John L. Esposito (Miami/Gainesville, FL: Florida International University Press, 1990), 141.

¹²¹ Ibid., 142.

¹²² Ibid., 152.

¹²³ Mustafa, *Al-Nizam Al-Siyasi Wa-Al-Mu'aradah Al-Islamiyah Fi Misr [the Political System and the Islamic Opposition in Egypt]* 148.

¹²⁴ Ibid. 151.

¹²⁵ See Shahrough Akhavi, "The Egyptian Image of the Soviet Union, 1954-1968 : A Study in Press Communication" (Columbia University, 1969).

Chapter 5: The Anti-Imperialism Paradigm

This chapter examines conceptions of Israel in the formation of Egyptian foreign policy that proceed from a primarily anti-imperialist perspective until 1973, as well as the domestic, regional and international dynamics that supported the elaboration of this paradigm. The anti-imperialism paradigm reflects the influence of Marxist-Leninism as propounded by socialist and communist intellectuals in Egypt, and expressed by the Nasser regime. In approaching Israel from within this paradigm the conflict was universalised as part of a broader anti-imperialist struggle, in terms of a division between ‘progressive’, on the one hand, and ‘imperialist’, and ‘reactionary’ forces, on the other. The United States, in this paradigm, was seen as the head of world imperialism, with the ‘natural’ friends of the Arabs being the socialist countries led by the Soviet Union. Defeating imperialism was seen as largely predicated on the unity of Arab ‘progressive forces’ and the promotion of socialist revolutions, the obstruction of both of which was imperialism’s main goal in the region. Israel, under the anti-imperialism paradigm, was organically a part of world imperialism, and its instrument in pursuing this goal. In this, Israel was aided by ‘reactionary’ regimes like those of Hashemite Iraq and Jordan, and Saudi Arabia, as well as domestic ‘feudalist’ and reactionary elements. Under the anti-imperialism paradigm, tackling Israel was no more urgent—and indeed could be considered a diversion from—confronting other manifestations of imperialist domination in the region.

The chapter outlines the contributions of the Egyptian communist movement to the elucidation of the anti-imperialism paradigm. It continues by highlighting those elements of Nasserist foreign policy doctrine that bolstered, or rested on, anti-imperialist assumptions, including the elaboration of positive neutralism and the ‘radical’ element of Pan-Arabism. It discusses the adoption of the Unity of Objective principle in the early 1960s and the concomitant downgrading of Israel and Zionism as specific threats in comparison to the broader threat posed by imperialism and ‘reaction’, and the increase in this anti-imperialist posture that, somewhat ironically, characterised the short period from 1966 until Egypt’s clash with the State of Israel in June 1967. The chapter also discusses the extent to which Sadat, until October 1973, continued to link the United States and Israel as Egypt’s key enemy, even though tackling Israel ceased to be seen as integral to a broader Arab struggle for liberation. The latter part of the chapter examines some intellectual interventions from the 1967-1973 period that highlight the persistence, and shifting nature, of the anti-imperialist position. Some responses of the writers of *al-Tali'a* to the Six Day War are reviewed, as well as an intervention in 1973 by a young Sa'd Eddine Ibrahim. The anti-

imperialism paradigm lived on, as a counter-hegemonic position, in the early 1970s within the Marxist and Nasserist-dominated student movement, receiving inspiration from the Palestinian resistance and the Arab New Left, which the chapter discusses.

Anti-Imperialism in International Context

The post-World War Two international milieu was conducive to the development of Leninist critiques of imperialism in many colonised countries, including Egypt. Egyptian governments up until 1952 were wary of communism (Sa'd Zaghlul had notably rejected Lenin's offer of Bolshevik assistance shortly after the Egyptian revolution of 1919¹) due largely to Britain's countervailing influence in the country, as well as their own fear of popular revolutionary activity. But, as the Egyptian communist leader Henri Curiel put it, '[i]f the salvos of October brought Marxism to China..., those of Stalingrad brought it to Egypt.'² Although it had been largely overlooked by the Egyptian nationalist movement prior to the war, the Soviet Union became markedly more attractive following it, both as a developmental model and as the major power in the world opposed to British colonialism. It was not until then that the communist movement in Egypt, as in other colonial settings, began to attract a significant mass following and convinced non-communist intellectuals of the benefits a relationship with the USSR could bring. The example of China was also important. The communist takeover there was more recent, having occurred only in 1949. It also appealed in that it was perceived, unlike Russia, as an Asian country, thus presenting an anti-imperialist model for the Arabs in much the same way as had Japan earlier in the 20th century. Further, the figurehead of the Chinese Revolution, Mao Tse Tung, had a charismatic appeal not shared to the same extent by Stalin, which encouraged many would-be revolutionaries in the Third World to look further east.

The Egyptian Communists

The Egyptian communists' main contribution was to introduce, through their analysis of Zionism, a depiction of Israel in terms of international political economy, rather than the cultural and national interpretations that also enjoyed currency among Egyptian intellectuals, as well as to recognise in the 1940s that it was the United States that would inherit the imperial mantle from Europe. The communists in Egypt were, in line with the international communist position, overwhelmingly opposed to Zionism and the creation of a Jewish state in Palestine until the Soviet Union reversed its attitude in 1947. In 1946, the founding members of the New Dawn group, Yusuf Darwish, Raymond Dauek and Ahmed Sadiq Sa'd published a book rejecting the UN plan for the partition of Palestine. The group's

condemnation of Zionism was expressed in internationalist rather than Arab nationalist or purely humanitarian terms. Zionism represented the:

...instrument of world imperialism which resorted to lying to the peoples of the world and the toiling Jews and resorts to terror today, enslaving the Arab people...The Arab peoples, at the head of which is the Palestinian people, are determined through their unity, organised ranks, and dependence on the other democratic people to stop the overwhelming Zionist danger.³

For New Dawn, Zionism was further:

...the immediate danger which not only threatens the toiling people in our Arab sister Palestine, but also threatens the lives of the toiling people in the Middle East in particular and the peoples of the world in general. It threatens the cause of world peace because Zionism is the rotten colonial Jewish capitalism which misguides the toiling Israeli people, whether workers or agriculturalists, to exploit them...It puts poison in the honey by raising the racial persecution complex...blinding their sight from the truth in the interest of a group of tyrannical Zionist capitalists.⁴

Perhaps not coincidentally, given the increasing tendency, particularly of the Muslim Brotherhood, to conflate Zionists with Jews, the leaders of the anti-Zionist orientation in the communist movement were mainly Jewish. Beinin notes that 'non-Jewish intellectuals of Iskra were often less militantly anti-Zionist than the Jews, who saw Zionism as a threat to their status as Egyptians.'⁵ The general Iskra line was one of hostility to Zionism and support for a binational state. For Iskra, Zionism was simply one kind of colonialism. 'It is a territorialistic colonialism, totally tied to the world imperialists.' As such, 'its danger is not confined to Palestine alone but threatens the independence and freedom of all other Arab countries.' The group was clear to distinguish between Zionism and Judaism. In *Ahdafuna al-Wataniya* [Our National Goals] in 1946, al-Shafi'i and al-Gibayli wrote that Jewish workers, peasants and intellectuals should 'form a united front to struggle against colonialism and its Zionist instrument.' Most controversially perhaps, they criticised 'Arab reactionary elements' for their refusal 'to recognise the right of the Jewish people to cooperate on equal terms with the Arab people to achieve independence and democracy which gives Zionism the chance to cheat the Jewish masses in the name of nationalist sentiments and the British colonialists to assign themselves as an arbiter in every dispute that erupts.' Their solution was the establishment in Palestine of 'a democratic government in the shadow of which Arabs and Jews cooperate.'⁶

From 1947 until 1955, most Egyptian communists approached Israel more from within the nation-state paradigm, as the following chapter discusses. But it was the regime's left-wing intellectuals, including, from their prison cells, the communists, who provided the theoretical support for the anti-imperialism paradigm after that point. For the United Egyptian

Communist Party in 1955, ‘American imperialism...has made Israel its spearhead in its Middle Eastern policy directed against Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and Saudi Arabia—a springboard for extending its influence and domination over the economy and politics of the Arab countries.’⁷ ‘Imperialism is the principal enemy’ stated a 1956 report by the Party, while the Marxist-edited paper *al-Misa* announced soon after the Suez War that Israel was an ‘imperialist base’ and ‘tool against the Arab liberation movement.’ The Egyptian communists were, by 1955, providing the theoretical framework for this interpretation of Israel’s role, minimising if not eliminating their argument that Israel had a right to exist in the area of the 1947 Partition Plan or that peace could be achieved via negotiation. Egyptian communists subtly transposed their previous analysis of Zionism, as an imperialist tool directed against Arabs and Jews, to the actually existing state of Israel, with the target being only Arabs.

An early *al-Misa* editorial manifesto by Khalid Muhieddin, although it did not dwell on the Palestine question, stressed that the threat of Israel and that of imperialism were one and the same. ‘The conclusion was that the primary beneficiary of Israeli actions was Western imperialism’ and that the aim of its attacks in 1955 and 1956 was to ‘break the Arab front and turn the attention of the Arabs from the direct battle with imperialism to an indirect battle with its stepdaughter [*rabiba*], Israel.’⁸ Beinin concludes that this element of the communist analysis entailed the view ‘that since Israel was merely “the stepdaughter of imperialism,” it was not a legitimate expression of the Israeli people’s right to self-determination; thus its existence had no justification.’⁹ The communist groups began to incorporate ‘the more extreme anti-Zionist rhetoric of the Pan-Arab nationalist movement.’¹⁰

Islamist Use of the Anti-Imperialism Paradigm

The intersection of the communist and nationalist movements in the 1940s, as Chapter 3 explained, meant that a Marxist-Leninist conception of imperialism became familiar to *effendiya* political movements. As such, the Muslim Brotherhood, although it tended to stress the religious component of the Zionist threat—the culture-clash—nevertheless articulated the anti-imperialism paradigm in the 1930s and 1940s when arguing that a Jewish state ‘would be an outpost of Western imperialism and a weapon for stabbing Arab countries.’¹¹ The fact that Islamists were using Marxist categories is understandable. Even if Marxism, like liberal nationalism, was an imported ‘foreign’ ideology, as an existing ideology of protest against imperialism and oppression it was available to the Muslim Brothers for adaptation. And if Marxism and Islamism were poles apart in some ways, in

others they were more compatible. As Wilfred Cantwell Smith reminds us about the Muslim Brothers:

To regard the Ikhwan as purely reactionary would, in our judgement be false. For there is at work in it also a praiseworthy constructive endeavour to build a modern society on a basis of justice and humanity, as an extrapolation from the best values that have been enshrined in the tradition from the past. It represents in part a determination to sweep aside the degeneration into which Arab society has fallen, the essentially unprincipled social opportunism interlaced with individual corruption; to get back to a basis for society of accepted moral standards and integrated vision, and to go forward to a programme of active implementation of popular goals by an effectively organised corps of disciplined and devoted idealists.¹²

The Muslim Brotherhood had emerged in Egyptian society as an anti-colonialist movement at roughly the same time as the communist movement was growing. Both sought to attract the same followers by linking the inadequacies of the Egyptian government to British imperialism, and identifying the solution as the removal of both. It is tempting, despite the Muslim Brotherhood's aversion to 'imported' doctrines, to suggest that many of its categories stemmed as much from those of a global, overwhelmingly leftist, anti-colonial phenomenon during and after the Second World War as from Islamic intellectual history. For Eric Hobsbawm, 'What needs explaining is why, after all, anti-imperialism and the colonial liberation movements inclined overwhelmingly to the Left...The fundamental reason is that the Western Left was the nursery of anti-imperialist theory and policies.'¹³

The Anti-Imperialism Paradigm in Nasserist Foreign Policy Doctrine

Nasser apparently shared the interpretation of Israel as a creation of imperialism at the time of the Egyptian Revolution. In *Philosophy of the Revolution*, he opined:

It has been clear that imperialism is the most prominent force in this region. Even Israel herself is not more than a product and manifestation of imperialism. Had not Palestine fallen under a British mandate, Zionism could not have found the needed assistance to realise its idea of a National Home in Palestine. It would have remained a madman's fantasy, with no hope of ever materialising.¹⁴

But as Vatikiotis observes, 'At that stage...he did not pass the death sentence on Israel. Rather he speculated on what this new state was, represented or could become.'¹⁵ Until 1955 the regime held to an essentially liberal nationalist 'Egypt-first' line, prioritising Egypt's independence in much the same was as had the pre-revolutionary governments. Anti-imperialist sentiment remained primarily directed against the British occupiers and, as the next chapter discusses, the conviction that Israel owed its origins to imperialism did not

mean that it continued to be reducible as such, or constituted a part of the overall battle against British colonialism. Speaking in Gaza in May 1956, though, Nasser predicted that in response to the growing strength of the Egyptian army ‘they’ would arm Israel, with ‘they’ referring vaguely to ‘the enemies of this country [*a’da’ hadha al-watan*]. The ‘they’ undoubtedly refers to a broadly defined Western imperialism:

They always aimed to weaken us and shake our trust in ourselves...As [the Egyptian and Palestinian] army grows strong, those who created Israel will support it with arms. It was announced in Paris yesterday that France will give Israel 12 new planes, but this talk does not alarm us. We knew before that we do not face Israel alone, but we face those who created Israel.¹⁶

The ‘Tripartite Aggression’ of November 1956 seemed to offer bald proof of Israel’s links with imperialism through its collusion with the old imperialist powers, Britain and France. Anti-British, anti-colonial sentiments, were thus expanded to include Israel. As Koshari Mahfouz notes, the Suez War marked the morphing of national resentment against Britain as the coloniser, and Israel as the conqueror of Palestine into a unified hostility toward the west ‘provoked by the appearance of intimate links between Zionism and Western power.’ After Suez, she continues, the Arabs considered the West as whole as the real enemy—an enemy that used Israel to perpetuate its domination and exploitation.¹⁷

International Support for the Anti-Imperialism Paradigm under Nasser

Although the Soviet Union supported the UN Partition Plan of 1947 and the creation of the State of Israel in 1948, it had historically opposed Zionism as an imperialist force. Its support for Israel *and* Zionism persisted only until the early 1950s, after which point the USSR reverted to its previous anti-Zionist position. Crucially, though, as the next chapter discusses, this reversion did not entail the rejection of Israel’s right to exist as an independent nation-state. In Soviet thinking, Israel was aligned with the imperialist United States, but through socialist action within Israeli society, could be detached. This differed from the Egyptian view post-1956, and as such was important only indirectly in that it provided an international vocabulary of anti-imperialism, or an ‘international society’ into which the Egyptian leader and intellectuals could tap in putting their case against Israel. On the international plane, the most significant country to view *Israel*, and not just Zionism, as a manifestation of imperialism, was China, although at Bandung the Chinese—mirroring Nasser’s own moderation at this stage—insisted that the conflict could be resolved peacefully by the parties themselves. The Chinese were an influential voice in the Afro-Asian movement, and as such helped sustain a more explicit international context for the Egyptian view of Israel as part of imperialism.

The Chinese position from 1956, like that of Egypt, was to regard Israel as an ‘instrument of Western imperialism for exerting pressure on the Arab countries and for maintaining tension in the Middle East.’ After Suez, ‘for the first time the Chinese named Israel as a “tool” (*kung-chu*) of imperialist aggression.’¹⁸ China linked its own problems with Formosa (Taiwan) with imperialist meddling in the Middle East, viewing both as two fronts in the same struggle. In 1958, the Chinese government announced, ‘Our artillery shelled Quemaoi to engage the imperialists during the revolution in Iraq and the American landing in the Lebanon...The enemy should be engaged on all fronts.’¹⁹ China was the only non-Arab country to deal directly with the PLO after its creation in 1964:

In the 1960s ... Israel was no longer considered a part of the Afro-Asian community but rather as an extension of US imperialism. Hence the principal and antagonistic contradictions existed now between the Arabs on the one hand, and Israel together with the United States on the other. Since antagonistic contradictions were in their view irreconcilable, the Chinese now rejected any suggestion that the Palestine question should be settled peacefully, and advocated instead a people’s armed struggle as the only way to settle the Arab-Israeli conflict.²⁰

China’s interpretation of the Arab-Israeli conflict radicalised further with the Cultural Revolution in 1966, again largely keeping step with the increased bellicosity of Arab rhetoric. It revised its previous call, with the Soviet Union, that the conflict could be resolved peacefully and called instead for armed struggle as the only option for the Arabs.

On the international level, Chinese rhetoric acted to encourage Soviet propaganda efforts to counteract the effects of the Chinese radical campaign. Although Nasser was often ambivalent, if not hostile, towards China (which supported Nasser’s rival Qasim during the Iraqi revolution of 1958 and criticised his treatment of Egyptian communists), the Chinese conception of Israel and imperialism in the region was actually more in tune with Nasserism’s more radical permutation in that it eschewed peaceful coexistence with ‘reactionary’ states and cautioned against coming to terms with Israel, the bridgehead of imperialism in the region.

The Regional Resonance of the Anti-Imperialism Paradigm

Following Suez, Nasser’s standing among the broader Arab public increased, with the compatibility of his interpretation of Israel with major popular-based political movements in the region being a critical factor. Perhaps most significant at this time was the Ba’th Party in Syria, to whose philosophy on Arab unity the anti-imperialist interpretation of Israel was

integral.* The Ba'th's slogan, 'Unity, Liberty and Socialism', flowed from the assumption that the Arab world was fragmented due to the legacy of colonialism, but that its natural condition was to be united. 'The imperialist countries', the party's chief ideologue, Michel Aflaq, wrote in 1956, 'established Israel in order to prevent the revival of the Arabs and hamper their unity.'²¹ For the Ba'th, by falling prey to the direct control of imperialism and Zionism, Palestine became one of the major focuses of the Arab revolution whose liberation, along with that of Algeria, would both require and promote socialist revolution and unification. The Ba'th's prioritisation of the Palestine issue, making it synonymous with the Arab revolutionary struggle as a whole, was a critical factor in pushing the Nasser regime to likewise seek to direct the Palestinian struggle, associate it with a broader anti-imperialist project, and adopt a framework of analysis vis-à-vis Israel that resonated with that of the Ba'th. The Ba'th's intellectual ambiguity on the issue of how unity was to be achieved and at what point in the process of unification and socialist revolution the liberation of Palestine would occur was in line with general Arab uncertainty on this issue.

The Palestinian guerrilla movement, which interacted closely with the Ba'th, also provided a regional context for the anti-imperialism paradigm. For the Arab Nationalists' Movement (ANM), which, from the 1950s, shaped its policy according to that of Nasser,²² the goal of liberating Palestine 'could not come about unless the Arab countries were free from Western colonial control and therefore able to concentrate their resources against Israel.' For Wadi' Haddad, one of the group's leading lights, 'the road to Tel Aviv passes through Damascus, Baghdad, Amman and Cairo.'^{23†} Up until the Six Day War in 1967, the other main Palestinian guerrilla group, Fatah, proceeded from the axiom that Israel was a manifestation of imperialism to argue:

...the process of liberation is not only to eliminate a colonial base but, more importantly, to eradicate a society. Armed violence must ... aim to destroy all the military, political, economic, financial, and intellectual institutions of the Zionist occupation state until it is impossible for a new Zionist society to arise [again]. Military defeat [of Israel] is not the only aim of the Palestinian liberation war, but also elimination of the Zionist character of the occupied homeland, both human and social.²⁴

As such, in the Palestinian analysis Zionism and Israeli society are inseparable from one another, with Israel as a whole representing a manifestation of imperialism.

* The Ba'th's own political discourse was arguably influenced in a leftward direction by the strength at the time of the Syrian Communist Party.

† In the 1980s another Egyptian political activist, Ayman al-Zawahiri, also remarked that 'the road to Jerusalem passes through Cairo'. See Gerges, *The Far Enemy : Why Jihad Went Global*.

Unity of Objective: Exporting Revolution

The anti-imperialism paradigm received a further boost in 1961 and, as such, Israel itself as a specific threat was downgraded. The Syrian secession from the UAR in that year was an important factor in Nasser's decision to include exporting social revolution in Egypt's foreign policy doctrine, drawing on another axiom long stressed by Egyptian communists—the link between local 'reaction' and imperialism. The secession was blamed on Syrian 'reactionaries' and capitalists, supported by the 'Syndicate of Kings' Hussein of Jordan and Saud of Saudi Arabia, in league with the CIA²⁵. Nasser was keen to regain his Pan-Arab credentials in the eyes of the Arab masses after the dissolution of the union. He launched a new foreign policy doctrine known as 'Unity of Objective' (*Wahdat al-Hadaf*), defined as the continuous struggle against 'reaction' in the Arab world and the strengthening of progressive elements supporting Arab unity. Echoing the tension in Soviet ideology between peaceful coexistence and proletarian internationalism, Heikal, in 1961, drew a distinction between Egypt as a state and Egypt as a revolution: 'If as a state Egypt recognises boundaries in its dealings with governments, Egypt as a revolution should never hesitate or halt before borders.'²⁶ A concrete manifestation of the policy shift came when Nasser dispatched troops to Yemen in 1962 to support a republican military coup.²⁷

Under Unity of Objective the salient divisions in the region were not those between states (vertical contradictions, as one Egyptian Marxist described them in the 1970s²⁸) but between progressive and reactionary forces. In this formulation, Israel, rather than constituting a hostile state, merged with the latter camp. In July 1962, the doctrine was enshrined in the UAR National Charter, which defined the UAR as 'the vanguard, base and fighting fortress of the Arab progressive struggle'.²⁹ The Charter called for moving beyond the stage of 'political revolution', since '[i]mperialism has now changed its attitude and has become incapable of directly confronting the people. Its natural hideout was within the palaces of reaction.' It was thus 'incumbent upon the people to strike at them and defeat them at one and the same time to assert the triumph of the political revolution in the remaining parts of the Arab Nation...'.³⁰ Explicitly challenging the nation-state paradigm for understanding regional relations, the Charter continued:

The United Arab Republic, firmly convinced that she is an integral part of the Arab Nation, must propagate her call for unity and the principles it embodies, so that it would be at the disposal of every Arab citizen, without hesitating for one moment before the outworn argument that this would be considered an interference in the affairs of other.³¹

The National Charter did not dwell on the Palestine question, consistent with the focus on anti-imperialism and the unity of progressive forces, but when it was discussed, the terms of reference were firmly within the anti-imperialism paradigm. The religious and national elements of the Palestine question were discarded in favour of portraying the Arab-Israeli conflict as an anti-imperialist struggle.³² The Charter and the Unity of Objective framework it laid out reinforced the Egyptian communist perception, as represented in *al-Misa*, that the main enemy was imperialism, that Israel was simply a local manifestation of imperialism, and that consequently to tackle Israel directly would be to dilute revolutionary energy. Instead the priority was to deepen the Egyptian revolution and broaden it throughout the Arab world in order to defeat imperialism. The lack of precision on what exactly should be the fate of Israel is testimony to the ideological downgrading of the specifically Israeli, as opposed to general imperialist, threat.

This division of the Arab world into progressive and reactionary forces and the prioritisation of unity between progressive forces only, did not last beyond the failure of unity talks between the UAR and the Ba'th in Syria and Iraq in 1963 as the next chapter discusses. With so-called 'progressives' unable, or unwilling, to unite as per the Unity of Objective doctrine, the idea of uniting progressive forces subsided, the politics of summity with 'reactionary' leaders took over in 1964, and the conception of Israel within the nation-state paradigm rose to the fore, although anti-imperialism with respect to Israel was downgraded rather than discarded. In addressing the National Assembly on 24 March 1964, Nasser revealed the extent to which he still saw Israel as an inextricable part of imperialism:

The danger of Israel is its existence as it now stands, with all it represents. The first thing it represents—as history and experience have proved—is that it cannot survive without imperialism. It stands for imperialism. It serves imperialism and its objectives of domination and exploitation...It follows that the triumph of freedom and peace in liquidating imperialism cannot occur without affecting Israel's existence....It is one and the same battle.³³

In September, Heikal echoed Nasser's sentiments in *al-Ahram* when he argued that 'those who established Israel' did so not just to create a Jewish national home, but to create a base in the Arab world for the furtherance of imperialist interests. Success in eradicating (*tasfiyat*) the Israeli aggression and furthering socialism, freedom and unity among the Arabs were thus, for Heikal, two sides of the same coin.³⁴ Nasser threatened to launch what would be essentially a 'people's war' against Israel in 1965: 'one day the Arabs will recruit two to three million men in order to liberate Palestine and restore the rights of the Palestinian people regardless of how many arms Israel receives from the West.'³⁵ From 1964 Israel was elevated as a specific threat to the Arabs, over the more nebulous imperialism, but the link

with imperialism was never disavowed and the rhetorical threat of people's war helped plaster over the ideological inconsistency. Heikal's discussion of Israel in *al-Ahram* after the second Arab summit in 1964 also attempted to reconcile the two perspectives. He elevated Israel as a more specific threat than imperialism in general, but continued to conceptualise the threat as emanating from Israel's role as a tool of imperialism. Heikal warned of future 'nakbas' that would threaten not just the Palestinians but all Arabs, 'expelling [them], on account of their abiding opposition [*al-ta'arrud al-abadi*] to imperialism and to end for good the hope for unity and the cause of progress [*al-khuruj min siyaq al-taqaddum*.]' In justifying the regime's decision to build bridges with 'reactionaries' in order to form a united front against Israel Heikal explained that the summit was possible due to the beneficial effect the progressive camp, primarily the UAR, but also revolutionary Algeria, Yemen and Iraq, were having on the Arab world: 'Cairo is no longer alone,' he exclaimed. Heikal applauded Kuwait for conditioning its foreign relations on countries' stance on Palestine as well as their commitment, enshrined in the summit's final resolution, to fighting British imperialism in the region. The 'new powers' in the Arab world, Heikal happily concluded, were having a positive effect on the old.³⁶

Return to Radicalism in 1966

The proposed 'Islamic Pact' (*al-Hilf al-Islami*) between Saudi Arabia, which had just secured a \$350 million arms deal with the West, and Iran threatened to marginalise Egypt and challenge the legitimacy of its Pan-Arabism, and led Nasser to declare once again that co-operation with these 'reactionary' forces had become impossible. In addition, the refusal of the US Congress to grant further aid to Egypt on 14 July 1966, and then the later offer conditional on financial reforms and withdrawal from Yemen, as well as suspicions in Egypt of a CIA-Saudi-Muslim Brotherhood plot against Nasser, contributed to a renewal of the anti-imperialism paradigm.³⁷ Nasser abandoned non-alignment and openly aligned Egypt with Brezhnev's Soviet Union.³⁸ *Al-Tali'a*, under Lutfi al-Khuli's guidance, was able to draw again on the previous logic of the Charter, to once again make Arab unity contingent on social revolution:

The fundamental meeting point revolves around social action which is responsible for building unity of struggle for all the revolutionary Arab forces without exception. ... It is a mistake to ignore or disavow the level of ideological differences, whatever they may be.³⁹

The editor of the journal *Ruz al-Yusuf*, Ahmad Hamrush, echoed al-Khuli's sentiments when, in March 1966 he sought to lay out 'The Road to the Unity of Progressive Forces' in the Arab world. 'The unity of progressive forces,' he wrote, 'must flow from their

realisation of the truth of their role in the societies in which they exist and an honest appraisal (*wuzn sadiq*) of their influence over the masses, and with a complete awareness of the possibilities for confronting the imperialist and reactionary forces surrounding them.⁴⁰ In the following issue he continued on this theme, citing Nasser's call that the union of all 'revolutionary forces' was necessary to break completely with imperialism, remove its remaining bases in the Arab world and confront the danger of Zionism: 'Cairo was and remains the base of the liberation struggle. Nasser declares always his support for liberation causes, not just in the Arab countries, but in all the countries of the world.'⁴¹

It is notable that in Ahmed Hamrush's editorials around this time the threats of Israel and Zionism were discussed only tangentially. When Israel was mentioned, it was largely to highlight the complicity of 'reactionary' states in its continued survival. In March 1966, Hamrush denounced the Islamic Pact as 'imperialist' and accused its prospective members—Iran, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Turkey, Tunisia and Morocco—of not being concerned with Israel. He pointed to the dubious Islamic credentials of the Shah and Bourguiba of Tunisia and drew attention to the strong economic and financial ties that existed between Israel and Iran, going as far as to suggest that since Israel had a controlling interest in many important Iranian companies, it was impossible for the pact to be aimed at confronting Israel.⁴²

The rejuvenation of the anti-imperialism paradigm was also encouraged by the Syrian coup in February 1966. The new Ba'thist government became markedly more radical, subscribing to 'Maoist doctrine of people's war against Israel, and advocat[ing] an alliance with the USSR and other socialist countries.'⁴³ On 27 July 1966, marking the fourteenth anniversary of the revolution, Nasser addressed the Arab Socialist Union with a clear statement of the reversion to a radical posture. He said that 'when the Syrian army asked us to participate with them in fighting Israel, we said to them that the battle is greater than Israel. There is a reactionary conspiracy inside Syria, and the battle is an expression of the alliance between Zionism, imperialism and reaction.' He pointed out that because Israel was able to match the Arabs plane for plane, tank for tank, the Arabs' most valuable advantage was people. 'If we wanted to liberate Palestine we could arm three, two, or four million and go and liberate Palestine without thought for the victims.'⁴⁴

The politics of summity had, for Nasser, been a mistake: though the Arab kings could help confront Israeli aggression, they could not help to liberate Palestine, since 'the only way to liberate Palestine is revolutionary action.' Nasser returned to an old theme—reminding his listeners that it had been the connivance of the reactionary King Abdullah of Jordan with the Zionists and the links of the Arab regimes with colonialism that had led to the loss of

Palestine in the first place. He stressed, 'I do not imagine in any case that Saudi Arabia can fight in Palestine when it has an American base in it and a British base. Saudi Arabia first has to be able to liberate itself from the American and the British, then after that it can turn to liberate Palestine.' Nasser complained that after three years of summits, 'Arab reaction has shown its true colours...We found that Arab reaction hates us more than it hates Israel, we found that there is coordination between Arab reaction and Israel. We found that the same [people] who support Arab reaction support Israel.' In concluding his point, Nasser stated, 'This is our position. We discover Arab reaction in all corners of the Arab nation. Arab reaction works with imperialism and Zionism works with imperialism. So how can Arab reaction fight Zionism? ... We cannot coordinate our efforts for Palestine with Arab reaction, because Arab reaction which betrayed us in 1948 is the Arab reaction present today in 1966.'⁴⁵

Anti-Imperialism and Israel after 1967

Although almost immediately after June 1967, Nasser began to tone down his anti-imperialist rhetoric with respect to the Arab world, he continued to describe Israel as a tool of imperialism. Soon after the war, Nasser announced that "liberating the homeland from Israel would be no easy matter, because Israel did not stand alone. It operated as a stooge of world imperialism and colonialism," a manifestation of a system of imperialist world domination.⁴⁶ Israel was still considered to be organically a part of imperialism, rather than being simply a state allied to the United States, as was the interpretation of the USSR, Egypt's major international backer, to which Nasser turned wholeheartedly after the war. In this way Israel differed from other pro-US states in the region. Domestically, an acceptable reason for Israel's resounding victory had to be provided to the Egyptian public and a credible appraisal of the challenge Egypt faced in recovering the lost territory. Portraying Israel as part of a grander imperialist design thus allowed the regime both to absolve itself of some of the responsibility for the defeat, as well as introduce a note of caution regarding the prospects of 'erasing the consequences of the aggression' quickly. Although in his endorsement of the Rogers Plan, based on UNSCR 242, Nasser effectively accepted the existence of the State of Israel, in 1970, he continued to associate Israeli designs with American imperialism, remarking that 'Israel is America's forward base in Western Asia,' and that US strategy since 1965 'has been to overthrow all progressive Arab governments...And they use Israel as their instrument in the execution of this policy.'⁴⁷

The defeat of 1967 threw the Egyptian, and Arab, left into two broad camps. The first sought to defend the Nasserist experiment and argue that the 'setback' had occurred as a

result of imperialist forces supporting Israel, or even instigating the battle, but that because the main aim of imperialism in the region was to destroy the Arab revolution and topple its regimes, the fact that this had not happened meant that Israel had not won the war. This position was adopted by the writers of the Marxist journal *al-Tali'a*, as well as externally in the pro-Nasser ANM. The second saw the defeat as indicative of the failure of the Nasser regime to mobilise the population, itself due to the fact that the socialist revolution in the region was in its infancy, stalled or a fiction. This position was associated with a 'post-Nasserist' Arab left, and was strongly represented within elements of the Palestinian guerrilla movement and its supporters, including in the Egyptian student movement.

Al-Tali'a

The Marxist journal *al-Tali'a* was quick to defend the regime's version of events, which held that the war was an all-out imperialist assault on the Arab revolution spearheaded by the United States, and that since its objective had not been achieved, Israel could only claim to have inflicted a superficial 'setback' on the Arabs. In the first issue after the war, Isma'il Sabri Abdullah argued that 'Israel is nothing in all of this other than the evil guard dog unleashed by the American master colouring the holy land with blood hoping that its owner would leave it some bones.'⁴⁸ Ibrahim Sa'd Eddine argued that US imperialism had failed to destroy the Arab revolution through economic and psychological means, and so had used external aggression instead. He called for the unity of the forces of liberation and peace to defeat imperialism, referring to the socialist countries, and referred to the division in the ranks of this support reservoir caused by the Sino-Soviet split, arguing that this had allowed imperialism to do what it had done.⁴⁹ In August 1967, *al-Tali'a*'s editor, Lutfi al-Khuli, remarked that the 1967 war showed Israel in her true light—as nothing more than an arm of imperialism. Israel's interests, like those of American imperialism, lay in toppling the revolutionary regimes and operationalising a "Greater Israel" (*Isra'il al-Kubra*) project whereby the boundaries of the Jewish state would extend from the Nile to the Euphrates.⁵⁰ That Israel failed to achieve these objectives in the Six Day War revealed that the war against Israel and imperialism was ongoing. Lutfi al-Khuli and other contributors also argued that strengthening socialism in Egypt was essential in order to erase the

* The idea that Israel aspired to extend its borders from the Nile to the Euphrates was frequently repeated by Egyptian intellectuals of different political persuasions. It acted to integrate the anti-imperialism (due to the oil and other resources Greater Israel would subsume) and culture-clash (due to its aspiration to incorporate the holy city of Medina and apparently Biblical origins) paradigms. For one view of the conspiracy theory's origins and continued resonance, see Daniel Pipes, "Imperial Israel: The Nile-to-Euphrates Calumny," *Middle East Quarterly* 1, no. 1 (1994).

consequences of the aggression and to ensure the ‘presence and continuation of the revolution.’⁵¹

The Arab New Left

Some Arab leftists were highly critical of the Arab regimes that had led their countries to defeat. Sadiq al-Azm was an important figure in the ‘Arab New Left’ after 1967 and formulated a critique of the defeat that would be influential among leftist intellectuals in Egypt, particularly within the student movement. Since al-Azm’s work represented a real shift in Arab left-wing thought in the wake of 1967, it deserves close attention here. Al-Azm was close to the Popular Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP, which would become DFLP) in the early 1970s when he continued to stress the inextricable relationship between Zionism, imperialism and reaction.

In his *al-Naqd al-Dhati ba’d al-Hazima*, [Self Criticism after the Defeat] published in 1968, al-Azm noted a contradiction on the part of the Egyptian and Syrian regimes and their apologists in the call to ‘erase the traces of the aggression,’ as well as to pursue negotiations. Negotiations legitimised the pre-1967 borders of Israel, while a war to recover the occupied territories would not be able to stop at that, since victory against the Israeli army would require military action inside Israel proper. In this he noted the parallel with Vietnam. The North Vietnamese had penetrated as far as Saigon. The Arab forces would, necessarily, have to take the battle to Tel Aviv in order to win a war with Israel. But for al-Azm the Arab world was no Vietnam, Cuba, China or Korea. In the latter cases, scientific socialism was advanced to the extent that the entire population could be mobilised in the war effort. In addition, these societies had reached the degree of technical and scientific sophistication and exhibited the ‘national feeling’ that would be necessary to confront imperialism. For al-Azm, the socialist revolution in the Arab countries was in its infancy, if not completely stalled, and as such a war could only be waged if this revolution were accelerated and deepened. Those who called for a more limited campaign were not serious according to al-Azm. Egyptian and other Arab officials, he pointed out, blamed the 1967 defeat on Israel’s links with American imperialism. If it was impossible to defeat imperialism then, he enquired, how would it be possible in any renewed struggle, no matter how well-prepared the Arab states were militarily? But a popular liberation struggle—the only type of war that would be successful against imperialism—could not be won at this stage.⁵²

Al-Azm critiqued the Arabs for not admitting a degree of responsibility for the defeat, accusing those who blame imperialism, or Soviet inaction or lack of faith of shirking this

responsibility. He was particularly scathing about those who seek to portray the conflict in religious terms, including the notion that Jerusalem was more important than the rest of occupied Palestine. For al-Azm, this attachment to Jerusalem in particular was yet another indication of the Arabs' backwardness and their lack of national feeling and attachment to the land as a whole. Religious thinking also led to paranoid conspiracy theories about world Zionist domination, in which the Jews were seen to control the United States and the West and the strength of an enemy which was seen to manipulate the course of history in its favour was exaggerated. This line of thought was particularly dangerous because it exonerated the US and the capitalist world of blame. Innocent of any wrongdoing, so this interpretation went, the West was simply in thrall to the global Jewish conspiracy, and was a 'natural friend' of the Arabs. The Arabs, by this reasoning, must try to win over the US in the same way as did the Zionists.

For al-Azm, this constituted a rightist, reactionary, position that grossly exaggerated Jewish influence in an essentially WASP-dominated US political system. The argument that Jews controlled America could not explain the latter's response to the Suez Crisis and its less-than-helpful attitude toward Jews during the Second World War. And ultimately, this theory ignored the fact that it was *capitalism* that drove American policy in the region. That American oil, strategic and cultural interests in the Middle East corresponded to the goals of Zionism constituted a happy symbiosis, not the control of the world's major capitalist power by Jews. American interests in the Middle East were to support Israel and the reactionary regimes, and to suppress liberation movements. The June defeat thus represented a major success for the United States and Israel in the region. It reinvigorated the reactionary regimes, reinforced Israel's strategic importance and, crucially, did not harm oil or other major interests. Any battle to liberate the land, then, for al-Azm, must go hand in hand with the struggle against imperialism through building socialism in the Arab world.

Al-Azm also lambasted those who, in blaming the defeat on imperialism, argued that the Arabs would have beaten Israel had they been able to fight it 'on its own' but not against the United States and Europe which armed and supported Israel. For al-Azm, this line of thought ignored the fact that Israel was always linked to colonialism and as such, barring a radical, and unlikely, shift in international power configuration, there would never be such thing as fighting Israel 'on its own.' The resort to blaming imperialism was, he argues, just another way of shifting blame and allowing the Arabs to continue as they were. Al-Azm did not dispute that Israel was organically linked to imperialism; his point, rather, was to stress

that the Arabs—as individuals and as a society—must change in order to be able to confront imperialism as a whole.

Sa'd Eddine Ibrahim

Some Egyptian leftists after the war maintained the view that the struggle against Israel was part of the broader anti-imperialist struggle and should thus form an integral part of a general Arab progressive movement in terms similar to those of Sadiq al-Azm. In 1973 Sa'd Eddine Ibrahim published a book, actually a collection of papers published in left-wing Arab journals and delivered at conferences in the Arab world and United States following the war. Sa'd Eddine was in June 1967 president of the Arab Students' Organisation of North America (*Munathamat al-Talaba al-Arab*) and had been vocal in his criticisms of the regime's handling of the conflict, a stance that had him stripped of his Egyptian citizenship.*

Sa'd Eddine's book *Sociology of the Arab-Israeli Conflict* nevertheless responded to the regime's desire following the defeat to promote more detailed and nuanced analyses of Israel in order to be better informed about policy choices in the future and maintained the Nasserist view on the nature of the conflict. Sa'd Eddine's Western training is evident in the theoretical and methodological substance of the book which purports to be an attempt to understand the enemy 'scientifically.' To do this, he structured his book in terms of Israeli values and ideology, demography and class structure, social contradictions within Israel and ruling elites. Zionism, he argued, constituted an amalgam of the Jewish religion and European ideas of social Darwinism crafted in such a way as to appeal to 'the religious among them, as well as secularists; the ordinary people and the intellectuals.'⁵³ It also incorporated the principle of permanent expansionism (*mabda al-tawassu' al-da'im*) and domination as prerequisites for Israel's survival.

Sa'd Eddine also analysed Arab approaches to Israel, which he noted had since 1967 emerged mainly from the al-Ahram Centre for Political and Strategic Studies, the PLO and the Institute for Palestine Studies in Beirut. The first, the 'traditional view' was widespread in the 1930s and 1940s and viewed Israel not as part of imperialism, but as a 'racial, religious entity.' The only stance to take towards the Jewish state, in this view, was to pursue *jihad*, as the Arabs' forefathers did against the crusaders. All enemies of the Jews, in this reading, were friends of the Arabs and vice-versa, even if this meant siding with Nazis

* Sa'd Eddine Ibrahim was through the 1970s a staunch critic of Sadat's moves toward peace with Israel, but would through the 1980s evolve in a more liberal direction in which he recognised the achievements of Israel and the rights of its citizens to live in peace. He acknowledged his intellectual affinity with Sadiq al-Azm. (Interview with Sa'd Eddine Ibrahim, Cairo, August 2006.)

as did Kaylani in Iraq and Aziz al-Masri in Egypt.⁵⁴ Sa'd Eddine pointed out that 'the traditional viewpoint is not wrong, but it is limited and partial,' since Israel was not solely to be understood in terms of religion.⁵⁵ The 'progressive conception of the Palestine question', which flowed from the Bandung Conference and positive neutralism was favoured by intellectuals in the 1950s and 1960s was one with which he agreed:

Israel is an indivisible part (*juz 'un la yatajaza*) of Western imperialism—and the battle between the Arabs and Israel is—or should become—an indivisible part of the world liberation movement...Consequently, striking world imperialism in any place and inflicting disaster on its armies in any land is a step toward the liberation of Palestine.

The problem from the Arab point of view, for Sa'd Eddine, was that 'the Arab information apparatus never changed its view from the traditional conception with the same speed or degree. As such, the ordinary Arab individual did not change his views of the nature of the conflict.'⁵⁶ Sa'd Eddine concluded that as part of imperialism Israel wanted to keep all of Palestine and conquer yet more Arab lands. He called for a return to a war footing in which Egypt and Palestine would face Israel in a 'people's war' of attrition.⁵⁷

Support for the PLO

From 1970, much of the Egyptian left shifted its focus from unity and socialist revolution to the PLO as the vanguard of revolution in the Arab world. The PLO's own universalisation of its struggle with Israel was key. Fatah's strategy after 1967 was to draw the Arab states once more into war with Israel and its conception of Israel reflected this: 'the Arab states would inevitably be drawn in because Israel was an expansionist state by its very nature and would eventually "swallow" other countries. It had merely "started with the Palestinian homeland and [had only] postponed swallowing the Syrian, Egyptian, Iraqi, Jordanian, Lebanese, and Hijazi [Saudi] homelands."⁵⁸ Fatah also reversed the position of the ANM that Arab unity was the route to liberating Palestine. Although Fatah also conceived of Israel as an imperialist base, it viewed its destruction as a *prerequisite* for unity: 'the slogan previously raised by Arab nationalists of "unity is the path to Palestine" needed to be reversed into "Palestine is the road to unity." As in Ba'thist ideology, though, the precise relationship between Arab unity and liberation is fluid, with the following quote illustrating that the two processes were to a large extent supposed to be intertwined:

As the battle of liberation reaches a stage in which enormous Arab forces clash with the Zionist occupation forces, the entry of other parties [into the conflict] becomes possible. This necessarily imposes widening the battlefield further than the armistice lines, and also compels the revolutionary Arab forces to draw together, smash the recalcitrant reactionary forces, eradicate division and unite Arab ranks and leaderships as a basic condition for victory in the battle.⁵⁹

By 1969, Fatah's aim of destroying Israel shifted to resolving 'Palestinian and Israeli problems [through] a popular democratic Palestinian state for Arabs and Jews alike in which there would be no discrimination and no room for class or national subjugation.' For Sayigh, 'The Palestinian assumption was that it was possible to eradicate all that made Israel a specifically Zionist state and society, yet avoid physical destruction of the Jews. This distinction may have been a complete fallacy, but it was the root of the contradictions in Palestinian discourse and behaviour.'⁶⁰ As Chapter 8 discusses, this 'fallacy' continued to underpin some Egyptian thinking on Israel in the 1970s.

The fact that this position closely matched the traditional communist view was important in encouraging Egyptian leftists to support the PLO. Also important for ideological reasons was Fatah's decision in 1970 that the goal of liberation could be furthered through striking 'colonialism and Zionist centres outside the homeland'.⁶¹ The Palestinian left, as represented by the PFLP and its major spokesman Ghassan Kanafani, took to hijacking planes in a bid to deal a 'blow to the US-Nasir conjunction' after the latter concluded a ceasefire with Israel in 1969.⁶² Perhaps most decisive, though, was the USSR's new endorsement of the PLO. In 1970, the Soviet Union reversed its previous scorn for the 'mythical diversionary groups', as it dubbed Fatah and the other guerrilla groups, and backed them as a 'progressive and patriotic liberation movement.' As Sayigh notes, the 'change of heart in Moscow towards the Palestinian guerrillas led to a similar shift among the Arab communist parties. From this point Arab communists supported the PLO guerrillas and celebrated their 'exalted position within the Arab liberation movement'.⁶³

Nasserist and Marxist Approaches in the Student Movement

From 1968, the students formed the backbone of a new Egyptian left, which formed a part of a broader New Arab Left, including figures like Sadiq al-Azm, and, indeed, part of a much larger international left-wing and student renaissance. The international student movement was defined largely by a general orientation against state authority. In Egypt in 1968, this entailed relatively mild criticism of the regime, nonetheless unprecedented at the time, which was dealt with harshly. By 1972, communists were contributing to a growing discourse that criticised the regime for various reasons. For them, Nasser had not taken the revolution far enough and erred in ignoring the fact that a popular war of liberation was essential to defeat Israel, and hence imperialism. The student movement of 1972 called for 'the rejection of any political solution to the conflict with Israel; withdrawal from the Egyptian acceptance of UN Resolution 242; the activation of full support to the PLO; the outright nationalisation of American firms operating in Egypt; the introduction of a war

economy, including a more egalitarian salary system and the elimination of foreign tourism in the country; [and] the separating of Egypt's economy from "the market of international capitalism"..."⁶⁴

Until early 1972, the student movement constituted the intellectual focus of the Egyptian left outside of the regime, with communist elements in the ascendancy following the anti-Nasserist purges in the Sadat regime. After large-scale student-led demonstrations in January 1972 were put down, this independent left-wing force was largely forced underground,⁶⁵ leaving radical left-wing analysis to the intellectuals of the Arab Nationalist Movement, particularly its Palestinian offshoots; a radicalised Ba'th party in Syria and Iraq; and intellectuals such as Sadiq al-Azm. The student movement as a whole in 1972 lambasted Sadat's apparent reluctance to go to war with Israel. In Nasserist student circles, the call for war centred on Nasser's call to 'erase the traces of the aggression' via conventional warfare, rather than a popular liberation struggle. The communist students, on the other hand, were calling for a 'popular struggle' to liberate the occupied lands, inspired largely by the Vietnamese struggle and the Algerian war of liberation.

Until 1967, many Palestinian and other Arab intellectuals had viewed the Palestine question as the Arab cause par excellence, with opposition to Israel perhaps the primary unifying factor in Arabism. As an Arab problem, it would be solved by Arab states and Palestine, once liberated, would return to the Arab Nation. The Six Day War had proved that the Arab states were not up to the task of liberating the land occupied by the Zionists. Those states had indeed made the situation worse by allowing yet more land to be occupied. From 1967 Palestinian nationalism rapidly replaced Arab nationalism for Palestinian intellectuals, alongside the revolutionary socialism of George Habash and the PFLP. That the Palestinians were apparently fighting imperialism through Israel made the PLO the new vanguard for the Egyptian and broader Arab left. The development of the concept of people's war was central to PLO thinking after 1967, due to the 'admission that Israel enjoyed clear superiority in several key areas' and that the Arabs' greater numbers should be leveraged in order to prevail.⁶⁶ From 1969 the ANM's left-wing successor, the PFLP, also supported the 'people's war' option and, via its eloquent spokesman Ghassan Kanafani among others, won over many Egyptian students to this cause in the early 1970s. Egyptian students in the early 1970s established links with Palestinian resistance groups, with Palestine becoming the focus of left-wing activism in Egyptian universities. After 1967, Fatah's call for a 'popular liberation war' proved a popular rallying cry in Egypt, where,

according to Fatah sources, ‘20,000 Egyptian students and former soldiers’ sought to join it in this endeavour.⁶⁷

Although they would not prevail over Nasserists and communists until later in the decade, in the early 1970s Islamist groups were gaining some prominence in university politics thanks, in part, to encouragement from the regime. Their discourse reflects the extent to which they used a conceptual framework designed to resonate with students accustomed to leftist categories. In 1972, Islamist student leaders, organised through the *Gama'at Islamiya*, joined with the left in calling for war with Israel, and, for Kepel, seamlessly transposed the key demand of the left into their own vocabulary. Thus, the “national liberation struggle against imperialism’s policeman in the Arab world” became, for the *Gama'at* activists, “jihad to end the usurpation by the infidels of one of the lands of Dar al-Islam.”⁶⁸

Conclusion

Anti-imperialism was a central component of Nasserist foreign policy doctrine and the view of Israel as a manifestation of imperialism and tackling it as part of a broader international struggle pitting ‘progressives’ against ‘reactionaries’ and imperialism was carried into the Sadat period largely by the student movement. Domestically, the regime’s assault on the old bourgeoisie, courting of communist intellectuals and turn to socialism after 1961 provided support for this paradigm, as did the historical legacy of anti-imperialism whose vocabulary could be meaningfully expanded to include Israel. Internationally, the Afro-Asian movement, particularly under the influence of China, provided an ‘international society’ in which conceptions of Israel in terms of anti-imperialism proved resonant. So too, despite real differences in approaches to Israel, did Egypt’s burgeoning relationship with the USSR. In both socialist and Third World settings, it made strategic and ideological sense to portray Israel as a manifestation of imperialism. Importantly, though, the fact that the USSR and many other socialist and Third World countries did not reduce Israel itself, as opposed to Zionist ideology, to imperialism, shows the limits of international society, in the 1960s and early 1970s at any rate, in shaping the views of individual states or regimes on other actors. China, even though after 1956 its conception of Israel matched closely that propounded by the regime and many leftist intellectuals, was a country with which the regime, and Egyptian communists, enjoyed generally frosty relations. The regional setting was also crucial, particularly in terms of Nasser’s need to appeal to those Arabs supportive of the goals and ideological framework of the Ba’th Party and Palestinian groups, which in turn were attempting to universalise their own struggle in terms of imperialism.

¹ Shafi'i, *Tatawwur Al-Harakah Al-Wataniyah Al-Misriyah, 1882-1956 [Evolution of the Egyptian Nationalist Movement: 1882-1956]*.

² Beinin, *Was the Red Flag Flying There?: Marxist Politics and the Arab-Israeli Conflict in Egypt and Israel, 1948-1965* 2.

³ El-Sa'id and Ismael Tareq, *The Communist Movement in Egypt : 1920-1988* 98.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Beinin, *Was the Red Flag Flying There?: Marxist Politics and the Arab-Israeli Conflict in Egypt and Israel, 1948-1965* 57.

⁶ El-Sa'id and Ismael Tareq, *The Communist Movement in Egypt : 1920-1988* 98.

⁷ Beinin, *Was the Red Flag Flying There?: Marxist Politics and the Arab-Israeli Conflict in Egypt and Israel, 1948-1965* 170.

⁸ Ibid. 180.

⁹ Ibid. 181.

¹⁰ Ibid. 179.

¹¹ Abd al-Fattah El Awaisi, "The Conceptual Approach of the Egyptian Muslim Brothers Towards the Palestine Question, 1928-1949," *Journal of Islamic Studies* 2, no. 2 (1991): 243.

¹² Quoted in Fouad Ajami, *The Arab Predicament : Arab Political Thought and Practice since 1967*, Updated ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992) 61.

¹³ E. J. Hobsbawm, *Age of Extremes : The Short Twentieth Century, 1914-91*, New ed. (London: Abacus, 1995) 172.

¹⁴ Vatikiotis, *Nasser and His Generation* 250.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Gamal Abdel Nasser, *Speech During Visit to Gaza, 13 May 1956* (Nasser Institute and Bibliotheca Alexandrina, [cited 10 October 2007]); available from http://nasser.bibalex.org/Data/GR09_1/Speeches/1956/560513.htm.

¹⁷ el Kosheri Mahfouz, *Socialisme Et Pouvoir En Égypte [Socialism and Power in Egypt]* 87.

¹⁸ Yitzhak Shichor, *The Middle East in China's Foreign Policy, 1949-1977* (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1979) 57.

¹⁹ Ibid. 73.

²⁰ Ibid. 116.

²¹ In Michel Aflaq, *Choice of Texts from the Ba'th Party Founder's Thought* (Firenze Cooperativa Lavoratori (Arab Ba'th Socialist Party), 1977) 104.

²² Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for State : The Palestinian National Movement, 1949-1993* 75.

²³ Ibid. 73.

²⁴ Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for State : The Palestinian National Movement, 1949-1993* 212.

²⁵ Muhammad Hasanayn Haykal, *Nasser - the Cairo Documents* (London: New English Library, 1972) 187.

²⁶ Ginat, *Egypt's Incomplete Revolution : Lutfi Al-Khuli and Nasser's Socialism in the 1960s* 84. Also Kerr, *The Arab Cold War, 1958-1964; a Study of Ideology in Politics* 38.

²⁷ Dawisha, *Egypt in the Arab World : The Elements of Foreign Policy*.

²⁸ Muhammad Sayyid Ahmad, *After the Guns Fall Silent : Peace or Armageddon in the Middle-East* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1976).

²⁹ Gamal Abdel Nasser and United Arab Republic, *The Charter : Draft of the National Charter Presented...At the Inaugural Session of the National Congress of Popular Powers on the Evening of 21st May, 1962* ([Cairo], 1962).

³⁰ Ibid. 78.

³¹ Dawisha, *Egypt in the Arab World : The Elements of Foreign Policy* 35.

³² el Kosheri Mahfouz, *Socialisme Et Pouvoir En Égypte [Socialism and Power in Egypt]* 121.

³³ Vatikiotis, *Nasser and His Generation* 250.

³⁴ Muhammad Hasanayn Haykal, "Bi Al-Saraha [to Be Frank]," *al-Ahram*, 18 September 1964.

³⁵ Vatikiotis, *Nasser and His Generation* 254.

³⁶ Haykal, "Bi Al-Saraha [to Be Frank]."

³⁷ Dekmejian, *Egypt under Nasir : A Study in Political Dynamics* 238.

³⁸ Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for State : The Palestinian National Movement, 1949-1993* 33.

³⁹ Ginat, *Egypt's Incomplete Revolution : Lutfi Al-Khuli and Nasser's Socialism in the 1960s* 86.

⁴⁰ Ahmad Hamrush, "Al-Tariq Ila Wahdat Al-Quwwa Al-Taqaddumiya [the Road to the Unity of Progressive Forces]," *Ruz al-Yusuf*, 14 March 1966.

⁴¹ Ahmad Hamrush, "Editorial," *Ruz al-Yusuf*, 21 March 1966.

⁴² Ahmad Hamrush, "Al-Hilf Al-Islami [the Islamic Pact]," *Ruz al-Yusuf*, 7 March 1966.

⁴³ Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for State : The Palestinian National Movement, 1949-1993* 32.

⁴⁴ Gamal Abdel Nasser, *Speech to Arab Socialist Union in Alexandria Stadium 27 July 1966* (Nasser Institute and Bibliotheca Alexandrina, [cited 10 October 2007]); available from http://nasser.bibalex.org/Data/GR09_1/Speeches/1954/540429_1.htm.

⁴⁵ Ibid.([cited]).

⁴⁶ Dawisha, *Egypt in the Arab World : The Elements of Foreign Policy*.

⁴⁷ Vatikiotis, *Nasser and His Generation* 258.

⁴⁸ Isma'il Sabri Abdallah, *al-Tali'a*, July 1967, 24.

⁴⁹ Ibrahim Sa'd al-Din, *al-Tali'a*, July 1967, 39.

⁵⁰ Lutfi al-Khuli, "Editorial," *al-Tali'a*, August 1967.

⁵¹ Ibid., July, 6.

⁵² Sadiq Jalal Azm, *Al-Naqd Al-Dhati Ba'da Al-Hazima [Self Criticism after the Defeat]* (Bayrut: Dar al-Tali'ah, 1969).

⁵³ Saad Eddin Ibrahim, *Fi Susyulujiyat Al-Sira' Al-'Arabi Al-Isra'ili [on the Sociology of the Arab-Israeli Conflict]* (1973) 80.

⁵⁴ Ibid. 131.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid. 274.

⁵⁸ Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for State : The Palestinian National Movement, 1949-1993* 198.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid. 212.

⁶¹ Ibid. 252.

⁶² Ibid. 257.

⁶³ Ibid. 250.

⁶⁴ Erlich, *Students and University in 20th Century Egyptian Politics* 208.

⁶⁵ Tareq Y. Ismael, *The Arab Left*, 1st ed. (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1976) 98. Note 15.

⁶⁶ Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for State : The Palestinian National Movement, 1949-1993* 197.

⁶⁷ Ibid. 181.

⁶⁸ Kepel, *The Prophet and Pharaoh : Muslim Extremism in Contemporary Egypt*.

Chapter 6: The Nation-State Paradigm

This chapter assesses conceptions of Israel in the formation of Egyptian foreign policy from the perspective of a nation-state paradigm, as well as the domestic, regional and international dynamics that supported the elaboration of this paradigm. The nation-state paradigm treated Israel as a sovereign state with its own motivations and interests independent of global imperialist forces. At a minimum, this meant that Israel and its cultural, historical and political underpinnings were worthy of study, and that it should not be treated as either a mere appendage of world imperialism or, as the next chapter discusses, a manifestation of Jewish enmity toward Islam. Prior to the revolution of 1952, this conception of Israel was closely associated with the communist movement and it arguably informed regime policy until 1955. The nation-state paradigm also intersected with territorial Egyptian liberal nationalism, and was supported by the discourse of ‘Egypt-first’ that prevailed during the first three years of the revolution, and re-emerged after 1973. Both liberal and Marxist discourse on Israel emphasised Israeli ‘stateness’ and modernity, often in comparison to a ‘backward’ Arab world. Some, like Ahmad Baha al-Din in the mid-1960s and Constantine Zurayq after 1967, stressed Israel’s skill at playing the game of modern international politics, which the Arabs would also have to learn in order to secure their interests, as well as the role of World Zionism as a force independent of imperialism. Importantly, acceptance of Israeli ‘stateness’ as the key factor did not necessarily mean acceptance that Israel had a *right* to exist. Indeed, the view of Israel as distinct from imperialism or other global forces facilitated the idea that Israel could be physically liquidated, either by Egypt alone or through the combined forces of all Arab states, regardless of those states’ international orientation and socio-political structures. As early as 1972, though, some Egyptian intellectuals suggested that peace with Israel should be an Egyptian foreign policy goal, a possibility that Sadat had probed in 1971. The attention to the role of World Zionism, particularly in the United States, in championing Israeli interests also suggested that the Arabs should play the same game, with the broader Arab world playing for Palestine the role played by World Jewry for Israel. This led, particularly after 1973, to some convergence between nation-state and culture-clash perspectives on Israel.

The chapter discusses the analysis of the Egyptian communist movement after its acceptance of the UN Partition Plan of 1947, which involved an acceptance that an Israeli state could and should exist, as well as elements of early Muslim Brotherhood thought that supported a view of Israel as a nation-state. It examines the regime’s tentative acceptance of Israel prior to 1955 in the context of ‘Egypt-first’ intellectual discourse at home, as well as the

international support for the nation-state paradigm in the form of the United States' and Soviet Union's approach to Israel. It examines the regime's regional promotion of models of solidarity or 'Unity of Action' that endorsed existing territorial borders, and highlighted Israel as a specific threat, and the decline of the idea of a 'unity of progressive forces' that underpinned the anti-imperialism paradigm. After 1967, this 'de-radicalised' conception of Arab nationalism became hegemonic and paved the way for a further shift after 1973 to accepting Israel as a nation-state with which Egypt could come to terms, and viewing Zionist ideology, rather than imperialism, as the main complicating factor in Arab-Israeli relations. The chapter also discusses the development of Nasser's 'positive neutralism' in the direction of non-alignment and some more optimistic appraisals of the potential for a positive US role in the region that, again, differentiated Israel from a general imperialist threat. Contributions by Ahmed Baha al-Din and Constantine Zurayq are reviewed in depth, along with discussion of liberal interventions after Sadat's consolidation of power.

The Nation-State Paradigm after 1948

The conception of Israel as a nation-state had its roots in the UN Partition Plan of 1947, which the Arab League rejected, but which was supported by the Soviet Union and, shortly afterwards, by the Egyptian communist groups. This marked a reversal of the existing Soviet and Egyptian communist position that viewed Zionism as an imperialist force. After the defeat of the Arab armies in 1948, the communists were the only Egyptian political current to argue in favour of Israeli self-determination. In spite of the apparent unpopularity of this position, however, the Egyptian regime was, until 1955, apparently willing to accept Israel: secret communications between Egypt and Israel were carried on, and the solution to the conflict was envisaged to be the return of the refugees and the establishment of a Palestinian state on the land allotted by the Partition Plan.

The Communist Analysis

Aside from the Muslim Brotherhood, the main Egyptian political movement to attempt to theorise Israel was the communist movement. The Egyptian communist movement before 1955 generally held the view that Arabs and Jews should not be distracted by sectarian concerns from confronting the real enemy, Western imperialism. From 1947, most Marxists in Egypt 'accepted the Soviet Union's determination that the first priority for advancing the anti-imperialist struggle in the Middle East... was to expel British imperialism from the region.' In supporting partition, and hence the establishment of a Jewish state, the communists thus came to view Zionism as a 'powerful anti-imperialist force in the Middle East.'¹ As Beinin observes, their position was conditioned by the 'teleological Marxism of

the Comintern, which regarded anti-imperialist national liberation movements as inevitably allied to the progress of international socialism.²

The USSR viewed Zionism as a potentially progressive force in an Arab world dominated by reactionary regimes. As Heikal saw it,

Stalin seems to have believed that the creation of a Jewish state might help to solve the Jewish problem in Russia and might also inject into the backward area of the Middle East a new progressive element. This thinking was probably influenced by a superficial knowledge of the kibbutz movement, by the number of Zionist leaders who came from Russia, and by the prominent positions held by Jews in the new communist regimes then establishing themselves in Eastern Europe. Moscow saw everything in terms of the struggle between communism and western imperialism. Jewish groups were in arms against British imperialism in Palestine. Jewish and Arab proletariats would march forward shoulder to shoulder towards the new red dawn.³

The Soviet Union's position was reflected in the Arab, including Egyptian, communist movement's position on Israel. With the 'principal contradiction' being for the Egyptian communists that between the nascent Jewish and Arab states in Palestine on the one hand, and the imperialist powers on the other, 'they focused on the imperialist ploy to destroy Arab-Jewish unity.'⁴ As Beinin puts it, after 1948,

...the Arab-Israeli conflict was transformed from a communal civil war into an international dispute whose resolution was perceived primarily as a problem of foreign policy. The Marxist parties themselves, adopting a rather un-Marxist line of thought, tended to regard foreign policy and international orientation as independent variables, more as commitments that could influence the internal character of a regime than as expressions of its prevailing balance of social forces. Thus, for the communists, Soviet support for the creation of Israel superseded their historic objections to Zionism.⁵

The Egyptian communists, in following the Soviet line on partition, exposed themselves to charges of both Zionism and subservience to the Russian Communist Party. The acceptance of the Soviet position marked another change in the previously held Egyptian communist consensus. Prior to 1947, Iskra, EMNL and then Haditu advocated 'a democratic Palestine for all the inhabitants.' But, as one Jewish leader commented, for Haditu:

...the analysis was that there were now in Palestine two nations under formation and each had the right to self-determination....Despite our radical opposition to Zionism, we analyzed the fact that a Jewish nation was already in formation. Even if it was wrong in the beginning, it was a fact....We thought that the formation of two states, one for each nation, could lead to the seeds of collaboration between these two states in the future....What happened in 1948 was that the Israeli state was proclaimed but no Arab state was proclaimed.⁶

In addition to Haditu's advocacy of the struggle against imperialist oppression of Arabs and Jews, the communists opposed the 1948 Palestine War on the grounds that it was intended to 'stop the trend of the rising nationalist movement and turn our holy war against the imperialist into a religious and racial war....The intent is to divert the attention of the toiling masses away from the struggle for an improved standard of living to an outside matter which neglects the battle.'⁷ The most extreme communist position, in terms of its distance from the mainstream of the Egyptian national movement which supported the Palestinians as aggrieved Arabs, was perhaps that of the group Voice of the Opposition (MISHMISH). MISHMISH viewed the war as one of 'the Arab bourgeoisies against their proletariats designed to divert the latter from the class struggle' and against the Jewish proletariat to prevent the emergence of socialism in Palestine given that Zionism was fading as a mobilising ideology. Defeating Israel, they posited, would 'destroy this island of democracy which might constitute a good influence on the Arab part of Palestine and play a positive role in the Middle East.'⁸

MISHMISH, like most of the communist groups at the time, was Jewish-led and less influenced by the Egyptian and Arab nationalist movements than other political organisations. The Egyptian Communist Party (ECP) led by Fu'ad Mursi was more representative of the *effendiya* communists who were spearheading the egyptianisation agenda within the movement in the 1940s. For the ECP also, though, the position until 1953 was that 'Egypt's feudalists and bourgeoisie invaded Palestine because of the feudal-imperialist struggle between Egypt's King Faruq and Jordan's King Abdullah and in order to distract the Egyptian people from their true problems.' He called for ending 'the state of war between Israel and Egypt and [the creation of] an "independent democratic Arab state in the part of Palestine that the UN allotted to the Arabs."'⁹ At the time of the Egyptian revolution in July 1952, then, the communist position was to support the rights of Israelis to their state, albeit only in the land designated for the Jewish state in the UN Partition Plan. This was also the *de facto* position of the Egyptian regime until the mid-1950s. Although Zionism was still perceived to be an imperialist ideology and the imperialist powers had colluded with Zionists to establish Israel, the creation of the Jewish state was now seen as a *fait accompli* and Israel itself was not considered illegitimate.

The National Interest for the Muslim Brotherhood

Although the main thrust of Muslim Brotherhood discourse on Israel and Zionism was to perceive a Jewish threat to Islam, the Brotherhood's discourse also contained elements of the nation-state paradigm. Israel 'would threaten the integrity of the Arab world, because it

would constitute a barrier between the Arab countries in Asia and those in Africa, obstructing contact between the two continents.¹⁰ In line with the mainstream nationalist concerns of the Egyptian government and the liberal Wafd Party prior to the revolution, the Brotherhood argued that ‘historically the security of Egypt had always been linked to that of Palestine. *Any threat* to Egypt had almost always come from beyond Sinai and Egypt’s decisive battles had always been fought in al-Sham (historic Syria) and especially Palestine.’¹¹ Notably, in this formulation, the *Jewishness* of the threat posed by Israel is not emphasised and it is to Egypt specifically that the threat is directed. Hasan al-Banna argued as early as 1938 that ‘the setting up of a Jewish state on the eastern borders of Egypt is a real threat to our entity, independence, trade, morals, and virtues,’ and that ‘we want to secure our eastern borders by solving the Palestinian problem in a way that meets the Arab point of view and prevents a Jewish takeover of the amenities of *this country*...We demand this as it secures our borders and represents our direct interests.’¹² Hardly Islamist universalism, this perspective clearly addresses the nation-state paradigm with its warning against ‘any threat’ to Egypt from beyond the Sinai—with a ‘Jewish state’ representing a fairly flat interpretation of the stated Zionist goal—as well as the issue of securing borders and safeguarding ‘Egyptian’ interests.

The Nation-State Paradigm in Nasser’s Foreign Policy Doctrine

Although Nasser’s rule is often most closely associated with the anti-imperialist principles discussed in the previous chapter, with the exception of brief periods, mainly between 1962 and 1963, and 1966 and 1967, the regime conceptualised Arab unity in state-centric terms, emphasising non-intervention and peaceful coexistence, rather than the ‘unity of progressive forces’. State-centric conceptions of Arab unity encouraged a view of Israel as a state, albeit an illegitimate one, as opposed to merely a local manifestation of imperialism. Although the regime did not publicly recognise the legitimacy of Israel, its apparent pragmatism vis-à-vis Egypt’s new neighbour was consistent with the framework of Egyptian nationalism that predominated during the first two years of the revolution. There was, shortly after the coup, a debate about Egypt’s national identity, which would have significance in later years as the regime’s foreign policy goals increased in coherence and adapted to changing circumstances. There was an initial resurgence of Egyptian territorial nationalism, of a form largely supplanted by the ideas of the Muslim Brotherhood and other *effendiya* groups in the 1930s and 1940s. The liberal intellectual Ihsan Abd al-Quddus called for ‘Egypt-first’ in 1953,¹³ while another old regime westerniser, Fikri Abaza and the Fabien socialist Mustafa Amin called for a Pharaonic national identity after the fashion of Taha Hussein’s conception some twenty years earlier.¹⁴ A Marxist, Hussein Mu’nis, in *Misr wa Risalatuhā* (*Egypt and its*

Message) ‘revived the notion of Egypt as the centre from which all civilization emanated. Even after the Arab conquest Egypt continued to influence Africa and the Mediterranean world with its unique Egyptian civilisation.’ As Talhami points out, ‘the impact of Arab culture on Egypt was totally ignored.’¹⁵

To the extent there was a supra-Egyptian nationalist discourse, it was based around a vision of a loose federation of Arab states. Writers such as Ali Amin Abd al-Rahman Azzam, Muhammad Ali Alubah and Sati’ al-Husri championed a Pan-Arab orientation, but in the form of a ‘United Arab States,’¹⁶ which the Egyptian Socialist Party had also called for in the early post-war period. Nasser himself, who published his *Philosophy of the Revolution* in 1954 stressed that Egypt belonged to three circles: the Arab, the Islamic and the African, with the Arab circle the closest to Egypt. But the emphasis was on the strategic benefits of such a conception for Egypt as a state. The Arabism articulated by intellectuals and officers was one of federation, rather than of borderless organic unity, and justified in terms of Egypt’s interests and strategic security rather than in historical-ideological terms.¹⁷

Until 1955, then, elite political discourse remained largely focussed on Egypt or at most federal arrangements. In this it is important to acknowledge the weight of intellectual history. As discussed in Chapter 3, Egypt’s pioneering modern intellectuals, from Tahtawi to Abduh to Lutfi al-Sayyid, had recognised that in order for Egyptians to engage with the modern world, Egypt must itself become modern. The essential component of modernity would be the idea of *the state* as the paramount political form and object of loyalty. The nation had become more or less hegemonic as the pre-eminent unit for political mobilisation by the time the Free Officers carried out their coup, as some of the communist groups ignored to their detriment.¹⁸ The international extension of this was the concept of ‘national interest,’ as distinct from, and superior to, all other group interests. This ‘Egypt-first’ conception meant that the Palestine question was not initially considered to be of existential import for Egypt, particularly as compared with the imperative of ending the British occupation. As such, although Egypt had serious issues regarding the borders between Israel and Egypt, the regime was not overly concerned with Israel’s existence as a state. Israeli leaders themselves sensed this, as Avi Shlaim reveals, ‘The Israeli Foreign Ministry’s experts on Arab affairs believed that once Nasser achieved his central goal of freeing his country from the presence of foreign troops, he would adopt an ‘Egypt-first’ policy and become more amenable to a settlement with Israel.’¹⁹

In the context of seeking to maintain good relations with the United States, the Egyptian regime was keen to stress that it was not interested in war with, let alone liquidating, Israel.

Although the idea that peaceful relations could be established was shaken by the Lavon Affair in 1954, when Israeli saboteurs exploded bombs in British and American cultural targets within Egypt, ‘to derail or postpone Anglo-Egyptian agreement’,²⁰ the affair lent credence to the idea that Israel acted as a (hostile) state in its own right, rather than as an appendage of US or Western imperialism. In 1955, Nasser drew a link between US reluctance to arm Egypt and the Israeli raid on the Egyptian-controlled Gaza Strip, concluding that the responsibility for both lay with Israel, and the influence of its supporters (Jews) in the United States: ‘Nasser blamed “Jewish and Zionist influence” for the failure of negotiations with the USA, concluding “it would be a miracle if we ever obtained any arms from this direction.”’²¹ Linking this to the Gaza raid, he concluded that America ‘was trying to keep Egypt weak and that this resulted from Jewish influence.’²²

Avi Shlaim has documented the extent to which, until the Gaza raid, the Free Officers, and Nasser in particular, were prepared to countenance reaching some kind of peace agreement with Israel, even if, as some Israelis at the time believed, president Nagib was adopting a conciliatory—or at least not overtly hostile—position toward Israel as a tactical ruse in order to win military and economic support from the West.²³ In meetings between envoys of Israel and the RCC in Paris, Nasser sent a letter saying ‘public opinion in Egypt and the Arab world made it prudent for the RCC to build its policy toward Israel gradually and that avoidance of aggressive statements against Israel was the first step in this direction.’ The Israeli government itself was apparently optimistic about the prospects for constructive relations with the Free Officers’ regime, hoping that it would adopt an ‘Egypt-first’ position in which it realised there was no reason not to further good relations with Israel. The Israelis viewed the RCC not as ‘collaborators’ but as Egyptian nationalists that would see building bridges with the Jewish state was in Egypt’s best interests. Shlaim’s research indicates that the RCC was in fact willing to move forward on talks with Israel, that Nasser was privately reconciled to Israel’s existence and that he saw Israeli prime minister Moshe Sharett as an honest man.²⁴

Nasser himself, according to Vatikiotis, was ‘ambivalent’ towards Israel and the Arab-Israeli conflict until 1955, with neither his *Philosophy of the Revolution* nor memoirs of the Palestine War revealing how he felt about Israel, since he was more focussed on overthrowing the old order in Egypt. Indeed, Vatikiotis goes so far as to suggest that in the late 1940s Nasser ‘perceived both Zionism and Israel as “progressive” elements in contrast to the “rotten” Arab regimes in the Middle East,’²⁵ a view not unlike that held by Egyptian communists at the time. According to Laura James’ sources, Nasser perceived the Free

Officers' enemies prior to the revolution to be 'our own superior officers, other Arabs, the British and the Israelis—in that order.'²⁶

At the same time, Vatikiotis contends that

Until 1954...Israel for Nasser was not an entity he perceived as having its own independent existence, momentum and dynamic. It was no more than a satellite in the firmament of the real threat to the Arabs—imperialism. To combat imperialism inevitably entailed fighting Israel, until fighting Israel replaced the struggle against imperialism.²⁷

If, as Vatikiotis argues, Nasser personally viewed Israel in this manner before 1955, the research of Shlaim and Egypt's calls at the time for the implementation of UN resolutions suggests that the regime as a whole was open to the idea of rapprochement with Israel as a nation state in the area allotted to it in the 1947 UN Partition Plan, and that as such the nation-state paradigm was more prominent in foreign policy discourse at the time than Vatikiotis suggests.*

Attitudes to Israel in International Context: the United States

The fact that the United States had wholeheartedly supported the creation of the State of Israel in 1948 and continued to do so was a factor in the RCC's relatively moderate approach to the latter following the revolution. In 1950, the United States had announced its 'unalterable opposition to the use of force or threat of force between any of the states in the area,' a principle on the adherence to which they conditioned the supply of arms to the region.²⁸ Nasser's recognition of this condition, and his aspirations for US military support, exerted an important influence on the regime's attitude to Israel for the first three years of the revolution, and it is perhaps no coincidence that the phase of maximum bellicosity toward Israel leading up to the 1967 Six Day War coincided with the cessation of the flow of US aid to Egypt. The United States' conception of Israel—heartily promoted by Israeli leaders themselves—hinged largely, though not exclusively, on its role as a regional bulwark against communism, and the Arab-Israeli conflict became inextricably linked in US foreign policy thinking with the Cold War. It goes without saying that the United States did not conceive of Israel as a tool of imperialism, but rather adhered to the view that it was a legitimate—and to a great extent victimised—nation state in a hostile region. At the same time, though, there was the view that Israel, as an island of democracy and modernity in a

* Vatikiotis is somewhat contradictory in that he argues that in the early 1950s Nasser 'was not yet a self-proclaimed revolutionary, projecting an Arab nationalist or Arab socialist ideology' and as such did not 'pass the death sentence on Israel,' while also saying he denied that Israel had an existence independent of imperialism. As a revolutionary, on the contrary, Nasser would deny Israel's independent existence—as the Egyptian communists came to do. Vatikiotis, *Nasser and His Generation* 251.

region of backward autocracies was, as Israel's founders and leaders constantly reminded them, an important civilisational presence. This fed into the nation-state paradigm of Israel, but also added grist to the mill of those who saw the Arab-Israeli conflict in terms of a culture-clash, part of a long series of Judeo-Christian attempts to subvert and destroy Islam that included the crusades, missionary activities and orientalist scholarship.²⁹

Promise of Normalisation: Bandung and the Soviet Link

The Bandung Conference in 1955 perhaps marks the high point of the nation-state paradigm under Nasser and the beginning of its being overshadowed by conceptions prioritising Israel's nature as part of imperialism. After this point, Nasser's desire to maintain stature in the global anti-colonial movement encouraged a view that the principal contradiction for Third World states like Egypt was that with imperialism. As such, it made strategic sense for Nasser to portray Egypt's confrontation with Israel, which had heated up with the latter's raids on Gaza in 1955, as part of this countervailing struggle, to which the Soviet Union would be prepared to contribute. It is notable, however, that at this point Nasser requested arms not to confront imperialism, but to defend Egypt against Israel. In a section on 'Other Problems', the Bandung Resolution on Palestine, which Nasser drafted, was couched largely in the language of international law and called on Israel to abide by UN resolutions:

In view of the existing tension in the Middle East, caused by the situation in Palestine and of the danger of that tension to world peace, the Asian-African Conference declared its support for the rights of the Arab people of Palestine and called for the implementation of the United Nations Resolutions on Palestine and the achievement of the peaceful settlement of the Palestine question.³⁰

The implication was that should Israel comply, there would be no obstacle to full recognition by the Arabs.³¹ This did not conform to the anti-imperialist view of the conflict, but did match the USSR's own conception of Israel, which was to recognise it as a legitimate state in the region.

Nasser's conception of Israel as reflected in the Bandung Resolution was compatible with Soviet thinking on Israel at the time, just as bilateral relations were being established, but for the last time until 1973. Soviet international relations thinking was, since the 1950s, underpinned by three apparently contradictory concepts: proletarian internationalism, anti-imperialism and peaceful coexistence.³² The USSR conceptualised Israel within the terms of these three broad concepts. Thus, the internal Israeli social struggle would, in the long run, resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict (proletarian internationalism). From the 1950s, the Soviets viewed Zionism as a tool of imperialism and Israel as part of the imperialist camp. Israel should thus be engaged with the goal of detaching it from the US orbit, as with all other US

clients (anti-imperialism). But the Soviet view on confrontation with Israel was strongly hedged by its concept of peaceful coexistence. As such, they were not against, and indeed encouraged, the Arabs to seek rapprochement with Israel on favourable terms, including through relinquishing territory, and they upheld the right of Israel to exist as a legitimate nation state. Significantly, Nasser did not follow up Bandung with a peace proposal, meaning that perhaps already the anti-imperialism, rather than nation-state, paradigm was rising to the fore, a trend that, as the previous chapter discussed, Israeli participation in the Suez invasion was instrumental in furthering.

The Nation-State Paradigm in Regional Context

The hastily enacted union between Egypt and Syria in 1958 notwithstanding, to the extent that the Egyptian regime actually desired Arab unity, it envisaged a federal arrangement wherein the states of the region would remain defined. The significance of this element of Nasserist regional policy doctrine is that it encouraged a view of regional identity that prioritised sovereign states either within or instead of an Arab Nation. This conception of Arabism would become hegemonic after the 1967 defeat, when Egypt focussed on internal development rather than regional unity, and was reflected in the gradual shift in Palestinian focus from mobilising Arab strength to liberate Palestine to establishing an independent Palestinian state on the territories occupied in 1967. Although the 1967 War is often presented as sounding the death knell for Arab nationalism, Egypt's approach to unity in the late 1950s and 1960s tended in large part toward visions of Arab solidarity and peaceful coexistence.

The tension between the nation-state and anti-imperialism paradigms for understanding Israel was reflected in the rivalry between the Palestinian factions Fatah and the ANM. Whereas the ANM reflected the UAR Charter in identifying the unity of progressive forces and spreading socialist revolution in the region as the only way to defeat Israel, Fatah, from its inception, leant more strongly in favour of a 'Palestine-first' position that viewed Arab regimes with deep mistrust and promoted the idea that the liberation of Palestine was a priority that should exist independently of socialist revolution or unity in the Arab world. Rather than predicated the liberation of Palestine on Arab unification, Fatah argued for the establishment of 'an autonomous political entity: 'there are Arab parts of Palestine, and it is on those parts that a leading, revolutionary national Palestinian rule should be established to act in cooperation with the Arab states to save Palestine.'³³ For Sayigh, 'The breakup of the UAR in 1961 marked a turning point. The defeat of hopes for Arab unity, which was seen by Palestinians as a necessary precursor to the destruction of Israel and liberation of

Palestine (and frequently stipulated by Nasir as such), drove a renewed search for autonomous nationalist organisations....³⁴

Although the Bandung Conference and Suez War marked a turn to the left for the regime, and the flourishing a radical Arab nationalism, the period from 1958-1961—during which the only concrete manifestation of Arab unity prevailed—was in fact one of retreat from ‘left-wing nationalism’ and projects of organic unity. Although the formation of the UAR between Egypt and Syria in 1958 represented a step towards a broader organic Arab unity, the Nasser regime had a year earlier shown a less ‘organicist’ preference. Nasser still viewed Arab unity primarily in territorialist, Egyptian state-centric terms: it was in Egypt’s national interests to lead other Arab states against a perceived common enemy. In signing the Treaty of Arab Solidarity in 1957 with two monarchies, Saudi Arabia and Jordan, alongside Syria, Nasser revealed this preference. As intellectuals shifted their conception of national identity from territorial Egypt to the Arab world, and the communists finally buried internationalism in favour of Arab nationalism, it was becoming clear to the regime that ‘Nasserism’ was outrunning Nasser. For the Ba’th and its Egyptian converts, Arab unity represented ‘urgently needed liberation of an already existing “Arab Nation” from political interference and pseudo-national divisions imposed on it by foreign interests,’ whereas for Nasser, Arab unity still constituted a federation of Arab states united under Egyptian leadership against foreign interference.³⁵

Shortly after the formation of the UAR in 1958, the Iraqi revolution seemed to offer the ideal opportunity for furthering the unity project by joining with another ‘progressive force’ in the region. Qasim’s unwillingness to join the UAR placed the vision of a union of progressive forces under strain. Although Nasser could use Qasim’s aloofness to denigrate him (through, among other strategies, accusing him of being a Zionist), his solution to the ideological threat at the beginning of the 1960s was to downplay the need for revolutions in Arab states as a step toward unification in favour of building a broader front against Iraq.³⁶ The regime reverted to a ‘more moderate and pragmatic objective of Arab solidarity’³⁷ under the slogan ‘Unity of Rank’ (*Wahdat al-Saff*).³⁸ A state-centric view of Arab nationalism was promoted, well illustrated by a 1960 work by Abd al-Rahman al-Bazzaz, who served as director of the Arab League’s Institute of Higher Arabic Studies in Cairo—a post previously occupied by another, rather different, theoretician of Pan-Arabism, Sati’ al-Husri—and would, in 1965, become prime minister of Iraq. In 1960, he wrote *Al-Dawla al-muwahhada wa-al-dawla al-ittihadiya* (*The Unitary State and the Federal State*) in which he argued for a federal state, without going so far as to deny that the Arabs constituted a single people.

The countries of the Arab world are, politically speaking, a most curious amalgam. Some are completely independent, others are semi-independent. Some are inferior to colonies in status, others are still protectorates of one state or another. Some are monarchies, others are republics, and some monarchies are absolute, while others are, at least theoretically, constitutional. There are also shaykhdoms, principalities, and so forth.

Our homeland, then, is vast in area, with diverse regions, political systems, and social standards. All this leads us to declare that a federation would be the best form of government for this one people, which still possesses, despite all divergences, the basic constituents of a single nation.³⁹

Al-Bazzaz also pointed out the complicating factor of ethnic and religious minorities, which ‘we must neither ignore nor overemphasise,’ concluding that:

...if we add to these considerations the fact that a total union of the whole Arab world would necessitate the destruction of all monarchies and that certain countries, because of their present situation or of the services rendered them by their kings, do not wish to change their status, it becomes perfectly obvious that a federal system is the most practicable solution under the circumstances.⁴⁰

With the publication of the UAR Charter—which called for unification on the basis of socialist revolutions in the Arab states—and Pro-Nasser coups in Baghdad and Damascus in 1963, Egypt was led once again into unity talks with the Syrian Ba’th and, this time, Iraq which was now interested in union.* The three countries began talks on resurrecting the UAR with Iraq as a third member. The tenor and vocabulary of the talks reflects the revolutionary unionism of the Charter, with, judging from the minutes, much of the time apparently given over to Nasser’s defence of Egyptian socialism against Ba’thist criticism, as well as accusations that Syria has not yet completed its social revolution.⁴¹ An official document quoted by Abdel-Malek reveals, in any case, the regime’s more state-centric approach to the union, in that ‘it is essential that national entities remain clearly defined within the structure of unity.’⁴² Further, for Seale, ‘none of the negotiators believed for an instant that the scheme had a future.’⁴³ The Ba’th itself was divided and the pro-unity faction represented by Aflaq and Bitar was in decline.⁴⁴ The bitterness of the unity talks sounded the death knell of the Ba’th’s conception of organic unity as a viable proposition, either in Syria or Egypt. Their collapse also largely discredited the Ba’th as a source of Arab nationalist ideology in the Arab world, thanks in large part to the publishing in *al-Ahram* of the minutes of the meetings which Nasser had threatened to do to awaken ‘the anger of the masses.’ In Seale’s view, the transcript showed Aflaq and Bitar up as ‘poor, even fumbling, negotiators.’⁴⁵ The collapse of this round of unity talks effectively silenced

* As a gesture of this new goodwill Egypt withdrew its previous support for Kuwait.

the idea of a union of progressive forces in the Arab world and paved the way for the politics of ‘summitry’ on the basis of ‘Unity of Action’ with independent Arab states, and hence a move away from the anti-imperialism paradigm for viewing Israel.

Non-Alignment

Egypt’s global reorientation also supported this shift. Following the cooling of relations with the USSR in 1958 over the Qasim affair, which also placed Egypt at odds with China, as well as mended bridges with the United States the following year, anti-Soviet articles began to appear in the Egyptian press.⁴⁶ Pro-West journalists, such as Fikri Abaza who edited *al-Musawwar* newspaper, and was formerly a spokesman for one of the royalist parties prior to 1952 and linked to Egypt’s largest private conglomerate, the Misr Group, denounced submission to the USSR.⁴⁷ *Al-Ahram* strongly recommended emulating Titoist Yugoslavia in its defiance of the Soviet Union.⁴⁸ The new stance was eventually confirmed by Nasser’s attendance at the Belgrade Conference on September 1961. The conference signposted the demise of the Afro-Asian Solidarity Movement and the emergence of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) born in Belgrade.

The NAM marked a more moderate general direction for the Third World (reflected in the fact that ‘at this conference the moderates affected the temper and tone of the final Declaration rather more than the militants’), although the presence of ‘militants’, like Sukarno and Nkrumah, who promoted anti-colonialism, tempered this somewhat.⁴⁹ The item on the Middle East in the final document, although it reflects the continuing resonance of anti-imperialism, also implicitly sustains the nation-state conception of Israel embodied in UN resolutions on Palestine, particularly the Partition Plan:

The participants in the Conference condemn the imperialist policies pursued in the Middle East and declare their support for the full restoration of all rights of the Arab people of Palestine in conformity with the Charter and resolutions of the United Nations.⁵⁰

Boutros Boutros Ghali, who would go on to become foreign minister under Sadat, and later UN Secretary General, became the main theoretician of a version of neutralism that would distance Egypt from the Soviet Union. Ghali rooted his analysis of Egypt’s international role in the principles and vocabulary of the United Nations Charter. This non-alignment would necessitate ‘abstention from all participation in the military alliances that the two competing blocs are trying to create.’ In terms of foreign policy, for Ghali, ‘the non-aligned state is in a position to evaluate the situation in terms of its own interest.’⁵¹

Sayegh sees the shift toward non-alignment, which he terms ‘messianic neutralism’ for its absolute refusal to adopt any position with reference to the Cold War, as the redressing of the neutralist balance after the break with the West in 1956 had produced a disproportionate reliance on the USSR. For Abdel-Malek, on the other hand, the phase of non-alignment marks the beginning of a swing toward the West in response to nervousness about allowing ‘positive neutralism’ to drift too far to the left, thus empowering leftist opposition at home. The shift signalled that ‘the time had passed for the great alliance between the countries of the socialist bloc on the one hand, and on the other, the new independent states and the national-liberation movements in the colonial countries, under the cloak of positive neutralism.’⁵² From the point of view of the US and its containment policy, non-alignment was, in effect, just as useful, if not more so due to the lessened risk of internal turmoil, as open alignment with the West.

The new non-aligned posture, and its effect on conceptions of Israel, was reflected in Heikal’s editorials in *al-Ahram*. As early as September 1959, Heikal wrote not that the problems with United States policy in the region were due to imperialism, or capitalism, but instead to a lack of understanding or awareness of the essential conflicts in the Middle East. This shortcoming, what he called the ‘greatest tragedy of our age in this region’, was due largely to Zionist influence in the United States and the perceived importance of the ‘Jewish vote.’ The American people, Heikal lamented, were unaware of the extent to which their government served Israeli interests and were ignorant of the plight of the Palestinians.⁵³ The implication was that if this misunderstanding could be rectified, the United States would be a force for good in the region. In January 1963 Heikal maintained that ‘Israel [was] a tool of imperialism, which created it’. But he added that Israel had its own special plans and goals that transcended those of imperialism. He argued that while Israel may have been a ‘tool’ it was not a puppet. He used the analogy of a hired killer whose employer finances and arms him, but who has his own ambitions, views and dreams. Especially in times of danger, he warned, he may act on its own initiative. Heikal warned that Israel was beginning to feel cornered, by the successes of the UAR on the one hand, and the increasing tendency of the United States to overlook Israeli concerns in favour of its own national interests, itself a result of the Arabs’ success in convincing the US that it could not ignore Arab interests, on the other.⁵⁴

In December 1963, an article in *Ruz al-Yusuf* presented two apparently contradictory arguments: firstly, that ‘the United Arab Republic will not let itself be pushed into a battle with Israel before the attainment of unity among all the Arab countries’—this is indicative of

the traditional anti-imperialist conception of Israel—and second ‘the UAR know [sic] how and when it will eliminate Israel, and it knows itself to be capable of shouldering this burden by itself.’⁵⁵ This second point marks the development in thinking to regard Israel, and Egypt, as sovereign states. The idea that the UAR could defeat Israel on its own implied this, since it is unlikely that Nasser would boast that Egypt could prevail alone in a battle with the United States.

1964-1966: Unity of Action (Against Israel)

Despite the Nasser regime’s rehabilitation of communists in the 1960s to support the radical policy shift from 1961, from 1964 until 1966 the regime pursued a policy of moderation regionally, for which intellectuals of the left provided ideological support, with the bulk of the imprisoned communists released in 1964. The ‘politics of summity’ that Nasser undertook from 1964 was largely explicable in terms of economics. The Yemen campaign was draining Egypt financially and the country was suffering from serious food shortages. This pressure eventually led Nasser to seek reconciliation with Saudi Arabia, which was supporting the royalist side in the Yemen war, which in turn necessitated a reformulation of foreign policy doctrine. Egypt also sought further aid from the United States. The radical left-wing doctrine Unity of Objective became ‘Unity of Action.’ Not unlike the Soviet doctrine of peaceful coexistence, Egypt would work with all Arab states—reactionary and progressive—under Egyptian leadership to secure common goals,⁵⁶ postponing unification and Arab socialist revolution. Although framed differently, this strategy essentially entailed a reversion to the ‘Unity of Rank’ model that preceded the Syrian secession from the UAR in 1961 but with a more socialist justification provided by recently released communists. The abovementioned analysis of Heikal, distinguishing ‘Egypt as a state’ from ‘Egypt as a revolution’ was again applied to the current situation. Under Unity of Action, Lutfi al-Khuli wrote in *al-Tali'a*, ‘in the first stage, Egypt will appear in the map of the [Arab] social forces as a separate entity, but later on it will become [an integral] part of the Arab nation [and thus could] lead the over-all battle against imperialism.’⁵⁷

Under the Unity of Action framework, the issue of Israel rose to the fore in Arab politics in a way it had not done since Suez. Inter-Arab one-upmanship played a key role, particularly in the context of Qasim’s proposal for a Palestinian ‘entity’ and his ridiculing of Nasser for not having a ‘plan’ for the liberation of Palestine. The Egyptian, and other Arab, regime’s appetite for the politics of Arab unity on the basis of socialist revolutions had waned as a focus for regional politics and Israeli policies—particularly its plans to divert the Jordan River—seemed to present a new threat to the Arabs. Although at this time Arab rhetoric

toward Israel became its most confrontational, it was also a time when an analysis rooted in nation-states began to supersede that of anti-imperialism. Israel, rather than imperialism, emerged as the essential adversary of the Arabs, and for the first time the 'liberation' of Palestine and the 'liquidation' of Israel became official Egyptian policy goals. Conservative states like Jordan and Saudi Arabia, as well as pro-Western Lebanon, signed up to an Arab League declaration pledging to 'liquidate' Israel.⁵⁸

Although the Unified Arab Command that would theoretically liberate Palestine was never more than a chimera, the fact that Egypt envisaged working with non-socialist Arab regimes against Israel was evidence of the downgrading of the Israel/imperialism link in favour of a linkage that prioritised the specifically Israeli threat. The Palestinian movement itself, moreover, was moving in a distinctly state-centric direction, which would have an important influence on Arab and Egyptian conceptions of Israel. In May 1964, following an Arab League summit the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) was established, essentially becoming an arm of Egyptian foreign policy. The following year Fatah launched armed struggle against Israel, keen to 'assert its own brand of Palestinian nationalism'⁵⁹

Israel as a Civilisational Challenge

In March 1965, during the period of Arab summity, Dar al-Hilal published a book by the Egyptian journalist Ahmad Baha al-Din entitled *Isra 'iliyat*⁶⁰. Baha al-Din would return to the main theme raised in the book after the Six Day War in a series of articles in the liberal journal *al-Musawwar*, some of which are discussed below. Baha al-Din noted in the introduction to this book that even though Israel was never out of the Arab media, the Arabs knew little about it. He complained that Israel was too often interpreted at face value, as an invading, occupying state, carrying out the will of foreign forces in the Arab world and eager for further expansion. What was rarely acknowledged though, for Baha al-Din, was 'Israel as a civilisational challenge to the Arab nation'.⁶¹

The book comprises a series of vignettes designed to illustrate components of the Israeli and Zionist phenomena. It includes a review of Alan Taylor's *An Analysis of Zionist Diplomacy*, which stresses the Zionists' skill at using American politics as an instrument;⁶² as well as an analysis of Ben Gurion's speeches to show how the Zionist movement succeeded in

* The term '*isra 'iliyat*' has Islamic resonance, referring to distortions introduced into *hadith* and jurisprudence by Jews, as Chapter 7 explains. Baha al-Din does not explain his choice of title in the book, so it is unclear whether it was intended to be perceived as such. It could also have the meaning of 'stories about Israel' or 'facts/anecdotes about Israel'.

mobilising ‘World Judaism [*al-yahudiya al-alimiya*]’ behind Israel. Baha al-Din was clear to highlight the differences between Zionists and Jews, noting that ‘Israel is afraid that the Jew will follow religion and not nationalism.’ To reinforce this, he pointed out that no religion requires that its followers return to the source of the religion (all Christians are not expected to live in Jerusalem, nor all Muslims in Mecca). ‘Jewish emigration,’ he concluded, ‘is nothing but a political, reactionary, imperialist and extremist objective.’⁶² Baha al-Din discouraged the view, discussed further in the next chapter, that the conflict between Israel and the Arabs was a reflection of a religious struggle between Judaism and Islam. In reviewing a novel by Yael Dayan he showed that ‘Israel is a state established by people with no relation to religion’.⁶³ He argued that Zionism was a political ‘religionist’ movement (*haraka siyasiya dinawiya*) and not a religious movement (*haraka diniya*). It emerged as a result of persecution in Europe, and its religious dimension derived from the religious overtones of that persecution, as well as the fact that religion could be instrumentalised to inflame the emotions of Jewish people. But he stressed that it was Zionist political action that populated Israel, not Judaism, and that Jews did not of their own volition flock there after the establishment of the state.⁶⁴

Baha al-Din also probed the issue of anti-Semitism in Europe, which he argued represented the ‘racism’ that created Israel and which the Arabs should oppose ‘not just for humanitarian reasons, but so [the Jew] won’t want to move to Israel’.⁶⁵ He warned that Israel was hoodwinking the world by exaggerating global anti-Semitism as a way of legitimising its crimes in Palestine, and making everyone feel responsible for the Jewish plight. He particularly criticised Jean Paul Sartre’s *Reflections on the Jewish Question* for furthering this project while remaining silent on Zionism.⁶⁶ The Zionist success in convincing much of the world that all Jews were victims could, for Baha al-Din, be combated by identifying the links and similarities between Zionism and Nazism, a universalisation that would become increasingly resonant in Egyptian writings on Israel in the 1970s, and which also supported Baha al-Din’s thesis that Israel, more than anything, represented European civilisation. To help draw this link, Baha al-Din quoted the historian Arnold Toynbee that ‘the Zionist movement embraces the worst of Western civilisation’.⁶⁷ Baha al-Din noted that Zionism predated Nazism, but came from the same ‘racist philosophy’. The Nazi extermination of Jews occurred because the Nazis were stronger. If the balance of forces had been different, he suggested, ‘we can imagine that the Zionists would have slaughtered the Nazis.’⁶⁸ The Arabs should clarify this point both to themselves and to the world, ‘so that Israel does not benefit from world enmity toward Nazism, as if it were the opposite of Nazism.’ In reality,

for Baha al-Din, the Nazis attacked the Jews ‘because [Zionism] resembled them, and was in competition with them.’⁶⁹

Significantly, although Baha al-Din stressed Israel’s nature as an outgrowth of European civilisation, his focus was on Israel’s modernity, rather than its function as a ‘tool’ of imperialism. He described Jews who emigrated to Israel as Europe’s ‘illegitimate sons,’ toward which the West feels responsible but, due to anti-Semitism, cannot live with. America’s role in supporting Israel was explicable in terms of civilisation, as well as anti-Semitism. The United States was linked to Israel for the same reasons that it was linked to Europe, and it also supported the creation of the State of Israel largely because it did not want the Jews to emigrate to America.⁷⁰ Although he celebrated the revolution of Gamal Abdel Nasser, the word ‘socialism’ (*ishtirakiya*) does not appear in the book’s 257 pages. The real source of Israeli power lay in its modernity, and its ‘civilisation’, particularly as compared to Arab ‘backwardness’. For him, ‘The establishment of Israel itself was an expression of the weakness of the Arab region and its civilisational backwardness.’⁷¹ Baha al-Din drew a parallel between the ineptitude of the Mamluks in confronting Bonaparte’s invasion in 1798 and that of the Arab kings in 1948. In each, backward ‘reactionary’ leaders were powerless in the face of European ‘modern’ civilisation.* ‘Zionism’, for Baha al-Din, ‘represented the West and all its power, with its modern political, scientific and civilisational tools.’⁷² In the context of addressing the Jordan River diversion plan, he discussed the role of agriculture as a way for the Zionists to foster an attachment to the land of Palestine, despite the fact that the Jews were not historically peasants,⁷³ which Baha al-Din—as with Sadiq al-Azm’s book discussed in the previous chapter—saw as an essential prerequisite for modern, ‘national’, political action.

Baha al-Din described the Egyptian revolution as having national, social, cultural and industrial dimensions, marking the turning point in the Arabs’ development, and breathing life into their struggle against Israel. Since Nasser, he wrote, ‘half the world opposes Israel and supports us.’ This was to be explained by the Arabs’ modernisation and, particularly, the fact that they now had people ‘who understand the logic of modern international

* In the late 1990s, the Egyptian economist Galal Amin took issue with Baha al-Din’s comparison, which the latter had restated after 1967 to explain the more recent defeat. For Amin, the implication that the Arabs were in the same predicament they were in almost 170 years earlier played into the Israeli myth promoted after the Six Day War, that the Arabs were, by nature, cowardly and unable to fight, and contributed to a more general Arab ‘self-loathing’ in the wake of the defeat. Galal A. Amin, *Al-Muthaqafun Al-Arab Wa-Isra'il [Arab Intellectuals and Israel]* (al-Qahirah: Dar al-Shuruq, 1998) 21-24.

politics.⁷⁴ It was the Arabs' continued modernisation that would define the 'clash of destinies' over the long term, since 'backwardness is the only thing that guarantees Israel can remain on our land forever.'⁷⁵ Interestingly, though, while Baha al-Din was clear to defend and celebrate Nasser's role in accelerating Arab development in his 1965 book, after 1967 this author, and others, attributed the defeat in the Six Day War to the same backwardness that had lost Palestine in 1948. Baha al-Din's preoccupation with Israel's 'modern' and 'civilised' characteristics, including its ability to pursue its interests rationally through modern international diplomacy, was echoed in a form more directly critical of the Nasser experiment by the influential Syrian intellectual Constantine Zurayq, as discussed below, and helped support Sadat's rejection of an 'adventurist' foreign policy and focus on economic and political development at home. Baha al-Din's work also foreshadowed his own call after 1967 for a Palestinian state to be established alongside Israel, and reflected the conviction that the basic political units, and repositories of modernity and civilisation, in the modern world were states. It was this 'stateness' that Israel possessed, then, that posed the greatest challenge to the Arabs, rather than its function as an appendage of imperialism or manifestation of Jewish enmity toward Islam.

The Nation-State Paradigm after 1967

The nation-state paradigm came to the fore again following the June 1967 defeat at the hands of Israel, most immediately in the form of a return to something like the Unity of Action model of Arab solidarity. After 1967, Israel became increasingly not only studied as a 'state', rather than appendage, but also accepted as a permanent, though not yet legitimate, feature of the regional landscape within its pre-June borders. From 1967 until 1973 the regime continued to describe Israel as a forward base for US imperialism, but neutralising it ceased to be, for the regime, the goal of a broader regional and global anti-imperialist alliance against 'reactionary' forces. The regime was, moreover, growing increasingly sceptical of the Marxists' certainty that Israel was nothing more than imperialism's guard dog, and grew more sympathetic to the notion that if nothing else Egyptian thinkers and decision-makers had been poorly informed about Israel before the war.⁷⁶ The view of Israel encouraged in Egypt and other Arab countries was revealed to be dated and inaccurate. As Sadiq al-Azm remarked, in blaming 1948 on the inadequacies of the *ancien régime*, and still considering the Jewish state '*dawailat al-asabat*' ('statelet of gangs'), Arab leaders ignored the fact that Israel had, in the almost two decades leading up to the war, become a powerful modern state and an occupying power.⁷⁷ By the end of Nasser's rule Egyptian foreign policy discourse was focussed on 'erasing the consequences of the aggression,' with the previous stated policy goal of 'liberating Palestine' pushed far into the background. Egypt

accepted a package of aid from the oil-rich Arab states at the Arab League summit in Khartoum. Nasser argued soon after the defeat that the Israeli army did not distinguish between 'left-wing' and 'right-wing' nationalism in the Arab world and that all Arab states must stand together in the face of the Israeli threat.⁷⁸

The state-controlled Islamic institution of al-Azhar also engaged with the 1967 defeat via the terms of the nation-state paradigm. In 1968 a conference of al-Azhar *ulema* called for launching a *jihad* against Israel on the following grounds:

The causes for which combat and *jihad* must be taken up as defined in the Holy Qur'an are all manifest in the Israeli aggression, since the Israelis had launched attacks against the Arab and Muslim territories, violated what is regarded as most sacred in Islam...For all these reasons, striving with one's life and wealth against the aggressors has become a binding duty every Muslim has to fulfil.⁷⁹

It is notable that the Islamic institution condemned *Israeli* 'aggression' and 'attacks against the Arab and Muslim territories' rather than the usurpation of Palestine as a whole by the Jews or the existence of the state. It should be interpreted, as such, as a restatement of Nasser's call to 'erase the consequences of the aggression' in Islamic terms and thus a step toward accepting Israel's existence as a state.

The PLO position in the aftermath of 1967 also reflects this shift. Before Nasser concluded a strategic alliance with Fatah in May 1968, he was still propping up the formal structure of the PLO. The PLO's chairman, Yahya Hammuda, evinced in early 1968 a moderation that the Egyptian leader must have shared when he 'stated his conviction that the Jewish citizens of Israel could not be expelled to the countries from which they had originally come.' For Sayigh, 'although he soon retracted the statement, his moderation suggested [to Fatah] a worrying willingness to come to terms with the existence of Israel.'⁸⁰ Further, in the Egyptian press, Nasser's journalists struggled to ensure that Egypt remained the vanguard of the Arab struggle, downgrading the 'revolutionary' ant-imperialism of the Palestinian guerrillas. Heikal wrote in *al-Ahram* in early 1968 that guerrilla actions and 'people's war' could not be the decisive factor in the struggle against Israel. In this, Heikal echoed the Soviet view that, until 1970, held Fatah and other groups to be 'mythical diversionary groups' backed by 'well-known services or agencies of these services for provocation purposes.'⁸¹ In accepting the Rogers Plan based on UNSCR 242 in 1969 Nasser implicitly recognised Israel's right to exist. The view of Israel as only a part of imperialism was thus harder to sustain from this point.

Liberal Voices

Although Egypt had occupied a central position in the Arab ‘liberal age’ before the Second World War, explicitly liberal voices had become marginal in Egypt, and the rest of the Arab world, since at least 1948 and had more or less died out with Taha Hussein’s endorsement of the Free Officers’ regime in 1956. After 1967, liberal nationalism began to re-emerge as an alternative to socialism in the Arab world, though not immediately in Egypt. The liberal position on Israel that emerged after 1967 shared much with the traditional view of the communists prior to their conversion to Arab nationalism. Israel was, for liberal nationalists, a state much like any other whose citizens had rights and, crucially, rational interests with which the Arabs could engage.

Perhaps the first important (re)statement of the liberal position after 1967 came not from an Egyptian but from the Syrian Arab nationalist, Constantine Zurayq, whose work would mark the first point of engagement for liberal Egyptians seeking to understand and react to the defeat.⁸² A teacher at the American University in Beirut, Zurayq had written two important books, at either end of the Nasser experiment, attempting to explain the Arabs’ inability to defeat Zionism. The first, *Manā al-Nakba*⁸³ (*The Meaning of the Catastrophe*), was written during the first Arab-Israeli war in 1948. The second appeared after the 1967 defeat, entitled, *Manā al-Nakba Mujaddidan*⁸⁴ (*The Meaning of the Catastrophe Again*). As with the work of Baha al-Din, Zurayq’s post-1967 work did not represent a dramatic intellectual reorientation, but a restatement of earlier views in light of the defeat. A central problematic for Zurayq after June 1967 was that Arab nationalism, whose greatest achievement was the ending of Egyptian isolation, had failed to defeat Israel.⁸⁵

Zurayq’s views were similar to those of the Egyptian journalist Ahmad Baha al-Din discussed above. The Arabs, for Zurayq, had suffered two crushing defeats at the hands of Israel because Israeli society was modern and united, whereas the Arabs were backward and divided: they belonged to different civilisations.⁸⁶ The conflict with Israel was, he concluded in his 1967 book, essentially civilisational. But this was no ‘clash of civilisations’ thesis that posited the primordial animosity between Muslims and Christians or Jews, or East and West. Instead, Zurayq viewed civilisation as a relational and relative concept. It was not evenly spread around the world. Thus, even in the advanced countries, not all of society was civilised. But, relatively speaking, the developed world—to which Israel belonged—was more civilised than the Arabs, who must, as a first priority, strive to rectify this imbalance and thus stand a chance of defeating Israel.⁸⁷

Whereas leftists like Sadiq al-Azm argued for deeper socialist transformations, Zurayq was in favour of modernisation along the lines of the French, rather than October, revolution. Zurayq pointed out that the reform of Arab social systems was a prerequisite for this unity. But he stressed that communists did not have the monopoly on progressive ideas about social reform. He saw ending feudalism, tribalism and sectarianism as prerequisites for nationalism, but was against divisive class conflict.⁸⁸ Arab unity depended on the deepening of bourgeois revolutions throughout the Arab world, with the attendant embrace of modern science and learning, democracy and the separation of church and state. Zurayq criticised the socialist movements for sowing disunity and class conflict in the Arab world, diverting energies from the real problem that faced the Arabs—Zionism.

Zurayq considered it axiomatic that the defeat of Zionism is the Arabs' paramount interest. With his view of Arabs and Jews as 'peoples' Zurayq complained that even though Arab leaders proclaimed that Palestine was their primary cause, they had been divided and pursued more marginal or vested interests at the expense of the paramount goal.⁸⁹ Like Baha al-Din, Zurayq saw the Arab world oppressed and Israel ascendant not because of global imperialism, but because the Arabs had not yet learned the rules of international politics. United and modernised the Arabs would be able to achieve their primary objective—the liberation of Palestine—by exchanging other, less central, interests. Also, socialism had clouded the issue by splitting the *umma* into 'progressives' and 'reactionaries', when the real enemy was Israel. Related to this was the fact that the Arabs did not yet exhibit 'fighting spirit' (*ruh nidali*), which should be based on an attachment to the land and the nation. The struggle for Palestine must thus emanate from the Palestinian Arabs, with other Arabs playing a supporting role, as the Jews did for Israelis. But this support could only be realised through a scientific revolution (*inqilab ilmi*) in the Arab world. While communism may have suited the Soviet Union, it was premature or inappropriate for the Arabs since the USSR was only successful because it had people with the focus and knowledge (*ilm*) to industrialise.⁹⁰ Like Sadiq al-Azm, Zurayq saw North Vietnam also as able to confront the United States because it had *ilm* and a fighting spirit. The Arab world, however, lacked these things.⁹¹

Zurayq, again like Baha al-Din, argued that increased understanding of the 'other' by both sides in the conflict was a central prerequisite to its solution. The Arabs must apply themselves to the detailed study of their primary international adversary. Only by learning about all aspects of Israeli and Jewish culture, society and politics could the Arabs hope to understand Israel's interests and political positions. The United States supported Israel

because it deemed it in its interests to do so, and those interests too must be studied and understood. On the other hand, Zurayq blamed US one-sidedness in the conflict on the failure of the Arabs to adequately publicise their position in international forums. He thus advocated strengthening Arab public diplomacy in the United States and Europe such that their citizens, and hence governments, would see that the Arabs' cause was valid and genuine and, crucially, corresponded to Western ideals of fairness, justice and self-determination. This public relations campaign must, he argued, form an indispensable part of the Arab strategy for securing the main Arab objective of liberating Palestine. Zurayq explained before the 1948 war was over that the struggle for Palestine was the fight of 'all humanity', since it concerned the safeguarding of universal values of justice and freedom, the rights of every people. It was these 'shared values' that would, in the end, present the solution to the problem.⁹²

In discussing Israel's interests, Zurayq assumed that the Zionist state represented, and was bolstered by, the Jews of the world. To a great extent Zurayq accepted the founding myths of the Israeli state. Jews were examined in both his books as a unified national community, with a common historical narrative and sophisticated strategy for achieving their political objectives. Israel was thus not the Arabs' only opponent, since it was the embodiment of World Zionism and Judaism, which counted on allies in the United States, Germany, Britain and elsewhere, and had managed to win over Western public opinion to its side.⁹³ This ethno-religious conception of Israel has its counterpart in Zurayq's Arab nationalism. In the Diaspora the Jews succeeded in sustaining and intensifying national feeling which, with their simultaneously wholehearted embrace of modernity, was sufficient to enable them to establish their state on firm foundations, creating an Arab Diaspora in their place. In order to turn the tables, the Arabs must adopt the methods of the Jews.

A Palestinian State?

Shortly after the Six Day War, Ahmad Baha al-Din wrote an article in the journal *al-Musawwar* that shared many of the liberal assumptions evident in the work of Zurayq, particularly a preoccupation with modernity and 'stateness'. The paper published a series of Arab responses to Baha al-Din's article in the following issue, which, along with Baha al-Din's subsequent rejoinder, were published as book in January 1968. In a significant departure from the established Arab orthodoxy of the 1960s, the author proposed that the solution to the Palestine problem was the creation of a Palestinian state in the Gaza Strip as

well as the West Bank and parts of Jordan east of the Jordan River.^{*} Baha al-Din echoed Nasser's call to 'erase the traces of the aggression', but insisted that reclaiming the Arab land occupied in June 1967 could not constitute a return to the *status quo ante*.

Like Zurayq, Baha al-Din noted that the Arabs approach to Palestine differed dramatically, and to their detriment, from the approach of the Jews to Israel. Whereas Jews had emigrated to Israel in large numbers following 1948, thus creating not only a mass of population but also a progressive and skilled society, the Palestinians had become refugees, leaving not only the land that became Israel in 1948, but also those parts of historic Palestine that fell under Arab control. Palestinians either languished in refugee camps or, as was the case with most educated 'progressive' elements of Palestinian society, emigrated to other Arab countries and the rest of the world. As such, there was no 'Palestine' to challenge Israel, but rather a group of Arab states challenging one Jewish state, a factor that led to widespread misunderstanding of the balance of power and interests in the region around the world.⁹⁴

Baha al-Din drew a sharp distinction between the nature and capacity of the Jewish Agency prior to the creation of the State of Israel, and the PLO. Echoing al-Azm as well as Zurayq, Baha al-Din pointed out that the 'Jewish Agency, like the Zionist movement itself, was only effective insofar as it was attached to the land.'⁹⁵ Although Zionism was a global political movement there was a concrete entity, Israel, around which this global campaign was focussed. The PLO, on the other hand, was not rooted in the land but instead operated out of Arab capitals. The Palestinian commitment to returning to the land, then, must equal or exceed that of the Jews. But, crucially for Baha al-Din, the Palestinian desire to return to homes lost in 1948 would not be fulfilled unless Palestinians first 'returned' to that land that had not been absorbed into Israel, land that 'is still Palestine.' Baha al-Din's proposed slogan was 'Palestinians for Palestine, and after that Palestine for the Palestinians.'⁹⁶

The Palestinian state, once established, would absorb the Palestinians from the refugee camps and constitute a modern productive society, with a functioning economy, educational system and military. Baha al-Din points out other international examples, such as North and South Korea and North and South Vietnam, where conflict has existed over land and national identity, but where each opposing side at least had a state from which to operate. The Palestinians, on the other hand, were denied this luxury, their cause becoming subsumed

^{*} Among the reactions to Baha al-Din's 'proposal' published in the book was that of Clovis Maksud, who stressed that the Arabs must maintain their 'rejection' of the legitimacy of Israel and cautioned that 'Palestine the state' must remain 'Palestine the cause,' since Zionism was not only aimed at Palestine, but at obstructing Arab unity, for which Palestine must remain the focus.

under the general Arab cause. The role of the Arabs, though, should be to provide support and ‘strategic depth’ to the struggle for Palestine, in which the Palestinians themselves would be the vanguard.

Also, reflecting a commitment to looser, perhaps federalist conceptions of Arab unity and a downgrading of the primacy of socialist revolution, Baha al-Din suggested that the political system established in the new Palestinian state was of secondary importance to establishing some kind of state as a priority, since while peoples differ in the type of political system under which they live, they do not differ in the desire to be organised in a state.

Baha al-Din’s intervention thus marks a departure from the anti-imperialist approach to Israel in several ways. For one, the acknowledgement of a Palestinian national identity is placed ahead of a commitment to Arab nationalism. For many left-wing Arab nationalists, including Egyptian communists, Arab nationalism was the means toward the end of defeating imperialism and reaction in the region. The liberation of Palestine was, by its very nature, a struggle against imperialism that could not be won until the Arabs themselves were united. This unity itself would come about through the spread of revolutions, such as that in Egypt, throughout the region. Israel, as an outgrowth of imperialism was an illegitimate entity in the region and the Arab stance until 1967 had been to reject, if not deny, its existence altogether. Baha al-Din’s suggestion that the struggle against Israel could be transformed if the Palestinians had their own independent, internationally recognised, state, gently turned this model on its head. Palestine had been the primary focus for radical Arab nationalism, with the goal of liberating occupied Arab land one which all Arab regimes rhetorically shared, and for which five of them had fought. But why should the Palestinians have to wait in refugee camps or in exile until Arab unification, Baha al-Din asked, when it was not even clear how that interim goal would be reached? Although Baha al-Din’s proposal was couched as a ‘first step’ toward the liberation of Palestine, his level of analysis entailed a shift from viewing the Middle Eastern dynamic as a battle between imperialism and revolution toward one between states with divergent interests and claims to sovereignty. Thinking strategically, Baha al-Din pointed out that creating a state with the name ‘Palestine’ on land historically known as such would alert the world to the justice of the Palestinian case, as well as highlight the flaws in Israel’s claim to be the underdog.⁹⁷

It did not matter for Baha al-Din if the new Palestinian state was a monarchy, a possibility clearly raised by his proposal that part of Jordan be transferred to Palestine. This again challenged the anti-imperialism paradigm. For the Nasserist left, the idea that a ‘reactionary’ Palestine would prevail, or even engage, in battle with a Zionist Israel when

both were organically a part of Western imperialism was preposterous. As such Baha al-Din's analysis is significant for the development of thinking on Israel not only because it brought a new focus on the importance of 'states' within the Arab nation, and in so doing a certain legitimacy to the Israeli 'state', but also because of his rejection—along with that of the Nasser regime after 1967—of the primacy of socialist transformation in the region.

Egypt, Civilisation and Peace

While Nasser continued to conceptualise Israel as a 'stooge' of imperialism until his death in 1970, despite recognising its existence via the Rogers Plan, his successor, Anwar Sadat, very early in his tenure identified three distinct threats to Egypt and the Arabs. In his inauguration speech, Sadat announced, 'we are required to define the enemies of our nation without equivocation, and our enemies are Israel, international Zionism and world imperialism,' and 'we are part of the great national liberation movement with its progressive socialist trend, that we are part of the major world progressive movement, and that we are, with our people and nation, an effective civilised current which gives and takes, acts and reacts.'⁹⁸ 'Reaction' was not mentioned as a threat to the nation, in stark contrast to the UAR Charter. Also, Sadat's designation of international Zionism and Israel as two separate enemies perhaps marks the beginning of the Egyptian regime's revisionism in which Zionism rather than Israel *per se* would constitute the real threat to the Arabs. It also marks his attempt to universalise the struggle as one serving humanity as a whole, beyond the 'progressive movement', with Egypt representing an 'effective civilised current'.

In 1971, Sadat expressed to the UN Middle East envoy Gunner Jarring that he was willing to negotiate for a peace based on UNSCR 242, the first Arab leader to signal that peace with Israel was a prospect. In March, he tied the Arab struggle against Israel to a more universal quest, in which anti-imperialism was not mentioned:

This Israeli challenge is not directed to us alone; it is directed to the whole international community and to all the human values which must prevail in our world. But there is a basic difference between our attitude towards this challenge and the attitude of the whole world. The challenge directed to the world is a moral, ethical and political one; the challenge directed to us is a material, patriotic, national and fateful challenge. In confronting this challenge, the world may denounce and condemn....But we cannot be satisfied with condemnation and denunciation. We are asked to resist and fight; we are asked to give life in order to have life; we are asked to sacrifice the soul in order to preserve the national integrity of our soil, untouched forever.⁹⁹

Following Sadat's consolidation of power in May of that year, some went even further than the strategic advice of Baha al-Din discussed above. Even some intellectuals who had been

luminaries under Nasser's regime, were, following the May 'revolution,' given space to voice alternative solutions to the conflict with Israel. Some Egyptian intellectuals, encouraged by Heikal who had earlier called for caution in the drive for war, began to voice doubts about the militaristic path.

Peace in Egyptian Interests

In April 1972 *al-Ahram* organised a symposium on the conflict with Israel, at which were present the Libyan leader Mu'ammar Qaddafi, Nasser's self-styled successor as champion of the radical Arab cause, and the intellectuals Tawfiq al-Hakim, Nagib Mahfuz and Hussein Fawzi. The latter thinkers, for perhaps the first time in an Egyptian semi-official forum, argued for negotiations and the renunciation of war with Israel. Mahfuz was later accused of 'submissiveness' to Sadat, although he claimed in the early eighties that 'The reverse is true. In fact, it was Sadat who supported me... When I announced that we must initiate talks, I did anticipate being bitterly denounced. Yet I never wavered from my position because I believed that first and foremost it was in Egypt's and the Arabs' interest to achieve peace...' ¹⁰⁰

Mahfuz's sentiments, shared by Tawfiq al-Hakim, who later that year published the first major critique of Nasser's rule in *Awdat al-Wa'i (Return of Consciousness)*, constitute perhaps the first real statement in Egypt of a liberal interpretation of Egyptian foreign policy and international relations following the Six Day War.* The main problem facing Egypt was the economic situation, which, if it deteriorated further, would have a retarding effect on Egyptian culture and society as a whole. Thus Mahfuz insisted that he was against Nasser's War of Attrition because 'prolonged military confrontation . . . will impoverish our resources and strength, while retarding our march to civilization by at least a hundred years. Why in the world should we not seek peace?'¹⁰¹ Describing the event later, Mahfuz recalled his statement:

. . . war is not an option [I said]. We must choose a different path, the path of negotiations. We find ourselves in a no-war-no-peace situation that has no parallel in history, and its consequences may be far more disastrous for us.¹⁰²

Mahfuz's statement encapsulates the liberal and nation-state position. On one level, it is realistic, believing in the necessity for compromise and dialogue to achieve more immediate national goals. On another, there is a grander objective at stake: the march to civilisation.

* Raymond Hinnebusch cites (but provides no reference for) Hakim describing Egypt and Israel as 'linked as islands of civilisation in a sea of barbarism.' Hinnebusch, *Egyptian Politics under Sadat: The Post-Populist Development of an Authoritarian-Modernizing State* 117.

The two are in no way incompatible, as achieving the more limited objectives involve playing the modern game of international politics which will, in conjunction with developing the economy, liberalising the political system and reforming social mores, make Egypt, and the Arabs, ‘civilised.’ What Egypt needed was peace and stability in order to focus on the greater goal of achieving civilisation.

Conclusion

Prior to 1955, the *de facto* position of the Egyptian regime was to accept Israel’s independent existence, in a way that corresponded with the positions of the United States, the Soviet Union, and Egyptian communist groups at the time. It was also a reflection of an ‘Egypt-first’ conception of Egypt’s foreign policy role that was allowed to flourish for the first three years of the revolution. Also, the Unity of Rank or Unity of Action models entailed a view of regional relations that downgraded the idea of a ‘unity of progressive forces,’ and hence anti-imperialism, as a guiding principle in regional politics as a whole. The apparently absolutist stance toward Israel that emerged out of the Arab League summits of 1964, namely that it could be ‘liquidated’ without Arab socialist revolution, meant accepting that there was something more, or less, to Israel than its links with imperialism. The work of Ahmad Baha al-Din in 1965 reflected the growing interest in studying Israel in itself, a trend that gathered momentum after the 1967. This, as well as the shift in the prevailing Palestinian position, which saw the PLO gradually begin to focus on establishing a Palestinian state on any liberated land, acted to encourage a view of the region as a whole in terms of separate states, and the eventual acceptance that Israel was one such state. Although Israel continued, until Nasser’s death, to be conceptualised primarily as a ‘bridgehead’ for imperialism, in the early 1970s Sadat began to approach Israel more from within the nation-state paradigm. After 1967, liberal intellectual voices emerged which reinforced the nation-state focus, including those of Baha al-Din and Constantine Zurayq, which in addition to recognising the independent existence of the State of Israel argued for a mode of interaction with it based on interests that could be negotiated, as well as stressing the role of universal liberal values in promoting the Arabs’ case in international, primarily Western, forums, a universalisation that Sadat increasingly depended on through the 1970s, and which was supported by respected liberal intellectual like Naguib Mahfuz and Tawfiq al-Hakim.

Egypt’s uneven relations with the United States during this period had important consequences. The shift from the late 1950s from a positive neutralism framework, which tended in fact toward reliance on the socialist bloc, to non-alignment in which dependence

on the Soviet Union as well as the United States were seen as equally dangerous, also encouraged voices that rejected the anti-imperialist stance of the Egyptian left and suggested that American support for Israel derived from Zionist influence in the United States, rather than the imperatives of global capitalism. It was not until the 1970s that the Egyptian regime prioritised the US over the Soviet relationship, and it was then that the anti-imperialism paradigm began to give way to conceptions of Israel as a nation-state, which is somewhat paradoxical given that the Soviet Union had since 1948 maintained a view of Israel that recognised, and promoted, its existence as a legitimate nation-state. The Egyptian adoption of this assumption coincided with the disintegration of its bilateral relationship with the USSR. This suggests that the role of international sponsors in directly influencing conceptions of other state actors may have been less significant than the nature of 'international society' as a whole, particularly on a regional level.

¹ Beinin, *Was the Red Flag Flying There?: Marxist Politics and the Arab-Israeli Conflict in Egypt and Israel, 1948-1965* 24.

² Ibid. 25.

³ Haykal, *Sphinx and Commissar : The Rise and Fall of Soviet Influence in the Arab World* 49.

⁴ Beinin, *Was the Red Flag Flying There?: Marxist Politics and the Arab-Israeli Conflict in Egypt and Israel, 1948-1965* 64.

⁵ Ibid. 67.

⁶ Botman, *The Rise of Egyptian Communism, 1939-1970* 87.

⁷ Ibid. 89.

⁸ Beinin, *Was the Red Flag Flying There?: Marxist Politics and the Arab-Israeli Conflict in Egypt and Israel, 1948-1965* 115.

⁹ Ibid. 116.

¹⁰ El Awaisi, "The Conceptual Approach of the Egyptian Muslim Brothers Towards the Palestine Question, 1928-1949," 243.

¹¹ Ibid.: 242. My emphasis.

¹² Ibid.: 243. My emphasis

¹³ Talhami, *Palestine and Egyptian National Identity* 65.

¹⁴ Dekmejian, *Egypt under Nasir : A Study in Political Dynamics* 87.

¹⁵ Talhami, *Palestine and Egyptian National Identity* 65.

¹⁶ Ibid. 66.

¹⁷ Ibid. 105.

¹⁸ Perrault, *A Man Apart : The Life of Henri Curiel* 118.

¹⁹ Shlaim, *The Iron Wall : Israel and the Arab World* 111.

²⁰ Ibid. 112.

²¹ James, *Nasser at War : Arab Images of the Enemy* 13.

²² Ibid. 14.

²³ Shlaim, *The Iron Wall : Israel and the Arab World* 78.

²⁴ Ibid. 118.

²⁵ Vatikiotis, *Nasser and His Generation* 249.

²⁶ James, *Nasser at War : Arab Images of the Enemy* 7.

²⁷ Vatikiotis, *Nasser and His Generation* 251.

²⁸ Seale, *The Struggle for Syria: A Study of Post-War Arab Politics, 1945-1958* 102.

²⁹ See e.g., Douglas Little, *American Orientalism : The United States and the Middle East since 1945* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2003).

³⁰ George McTurnan Kahin, *The Asian-African Conference, Bandung, Indonesia* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1956) 82.

³¹ Beinin, *Was the Red Flag Flying There?: Marxist Politics and the Arab-Israeli Conflict in Egypt and Israel, 1948-1965* 153.

³² Dawisha, *Soviet Foreign Policy Towards Egypt* 151.

³³ Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for State : The Palestinian National Movement, 1949-1993* 89.

³⁴ Ibid. 31.

³⁵ Dawisha, *Egypt in the Arab World : The Elements of Foreign Policy* 19.

³⁶ Kerr, *The Arab Cold War, 1958-1964; a Study of Ideology in Politics* 24.

³⁷ Dawisha, *Egypt in the Arab World : The Elements of Foreign Policy* 40.

³⁸ Sela, "Abd Al-Nasser's Regional Politics: A Reassessment," 188.

³⁹ Abd al-Rahman al-Bazzaz, "Al-Dawla Al-Muwahhada Wa-Al-Dawla Al-Ittihadiyya [the Unitary State and the Federal State]," in *Political and Social Thought in the Contemporary Middle East; Edited by Kemal H. Karpat*, ed. H. Karpat Kemal (London: Pall Mall Press, 1968), 257.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Karpat, ed., *Political and Social Thought in the Contemporary Middle East*.

⁴² Abdel-Malek, *Egypt: Military Society : The Army Regime, the Left, and Social Change under Nasser* 277.

⁴³ Seale, *Asad of Syria : The Struggle for the Middle East* 81.

⁴⁴ Ginat, *Syria and the Doctrine of Arab Neutralism : From Independence to Dependence* 225.

⁴⁵ Seale, *Asad of Syria : The Struggle for the Middle East* 81.

⁴⁶ Akhavi, "The Egyptian Image of the Soviet Union, 1954-1968 : A Study in Press Communication".

⁴⁷ Abdel-Malek, *Egypt: Military Society : The Army Regime, the Left, and Social Change under Nasser* 236.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Lyon in Bull and Watson, *The Expansion of International Society* 230.

⁵⁰ Ministry of Foreign Affairs Guyana, *Main Documents Relating to Conferences of Non-Aligned Countries, from Belgrade, 1961 to Georgetown, 1972* (Georgetown: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1972).

⁵¹ Abdel-Malek, *Egypt: Military Society : The Army Regime, the Left, and Social Change under Nasser* 235.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Muhammad Hasanayn Haykal, "Bi Al-Saraha [to Be Frank]," *al-Ahram*, 10 September 1959.

⁵⁴ Muhammad Hasanayn Haykal, "Bi Al-Saraha [to Be Frank]," *al-Ahram*, January 1963.

⁵⁵ Kerr, *The Arab Cold War, 1958-1964; a Study of Ideology in Politics* 131.

⁵⁶ Dawisha, *Egypt in the Arab World : The Elements of Foreign Policy*.

⁵⁷ Quoted in Ginat, *Egypt's Incomplete Revolution : Lutfi Al-Khuli and Nasser's Socialism in the 1960s* 85.

⁵⁸ Shlaim, *The Iron Wall : Israel and the Arab World* 230.

⁵⁹ Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for State : The Palestinian National Movement, 1949-1993* 32.

⁶⁰ Ahmad Baha al-Din, *Isra'iliyat* (al-Qahirah: Dar al-Hilal, 1965) 7.

⁶¹ Ibid. 50.

⁶² Ibid. 65.

⁶³ Ibid. 91.

⁶⁴ Ibid. 250.

⁶⁵ Ibid. 95.

⁶⁶ Ibid. 109.

⁶⁷ Ibid. 193.

⁶⁸ Ibid. 199.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid. 250.

⁷¹ Ibid. 7.

⁷² Baha al-Din, *Isra'iliyat* 253.

⁷³ Ibid. 67.

⁷⁴ Ibid. 256.

⁷⁵ Ibid. 257.

⁷⁶ Baker, *Sadat and After : Struggles for Egypt's Political Soul*.

⁷⁷ Azm, *Al-Naqd Al-Dhati Ba'da Al-Hazima* [Self Criticism after the Defeat].

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Taji-Farouki, "Thinking on the Jews," 341.

⁸⁰ Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for State : The Palestinian National Movement, 1949-1993* 176.

⁸¹ Ibid. 250.

⁸² Interview with Sa'd Eddine Ibrahim, Cairo, August 2006

⁸³ Qustantin Zurayq, *Ma'nā Al-Nakba* [the Meaning of the Catastrophe], 2nd ed. (Bayrut: Dar al-'Ilm lil-Malayin, 1948).

⁸⁴ Qustantin Zurayq, *Ma'nā Al-Nakba Mujadaddan* [the Meaning of the Catastrophe Revisited], 1st ed. (Bayrut: Dar al-'Ilm lil-Malayin, 1967).

⁸⁵ Ibid. 29.

⁸⁶ Ibid. 13.

⁸⁷ Ibid. 84-88.

⁸⁸ Ibid. 30.

⁸⁹ Ibid. 65.

⁹⁰ Ibid. 33.

⁹¹ Ibid. 20.

⁹² Ibid. 52-60.

⁹³ Ibid. 19.

⁹⁴ Ahmad Baha al-Din, *Iqtirah Dawlat Filastin* [Proposal for the State of Palestine] (1968) 15.

⁹⁵ Ibid. 19.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Ibid. 15.

⁹⁸ Anwar el Sadat, *Speech, October 7, 1970* (Anwar Sadat Chair for Peace and Development, 1970 [cited 15 November 2007]); available from <http://www.bsos.umd.edu/SADAT/archives/speeches.htm>.

⁹⁹ Anwar el Sadat, *Speech, March 7, 1971* (Anwar Sadat Chair for Peace and Development, [cited 15 November 2007]); available from <http://www.bsos.umd.edu/SADAT/archives/speeches.htm>.

¹⁰⁰ Sasson Somech, "I Dream of the Day When..." *Dissent* Winter (2004).

¹⁰¹ Somech, "I Dream of the Day When..."

¹⁰² Ibid.

Chapter 7: The Culture-Clash Paradigm

This chapter assesses conceptions of Israel in Egyptian foreign policy discourse in terms of the culture-clash paradigm, as well as the domestic, regional and international dynamics that supported its elaboration. The paradigm was most clearly expressed in the ideas of thinkers associated with the Islamist movement, but was also supported by Arab nationalism. One of the central assumptions of the culture-clash paradigm was that Israel represented a manifestation of Jewish religion and culture, in juxtaposition to an Arab or Islamic culture that was being threatened or degraded by its presence. In some ways similar to the anti-imperialism paradigm, the culture-clash paradigm treated Israel as 'epiphenomenal'. But rather than stressing Israel's status as a 'tool' of imperialism, such analyses highlighted the agency of 'World Judaism'. World Judaism itself was seen as being driven by enmity toward Islam as the cultural force best equipped to stymie its drive for world domination. Proponents of the culture-clash paradigm highlighted the distorting role of Jews in the foreign policies of external actors, primarily the United States and Soviet Union, which tended to form a 'West' unified by shared enmity to Islam, itself partially on account of Jewish machinations in those countries. The culture-clash paradigm equated Zionism with communism, with each representing instruments for the furtherance of Jewish domination. Although the Muslim Brotherhood was suppressed two years after the coup of 1952 only to re-emerge in the 1970s, many of its assumptions and analyses remained resonant throughout the Nasser period. The conception of Arab nationalism that the Nasser regime at times encouraged during this period was underpinned domestically by Muslim Brotherhood and other groups' analyses of the role of Arabism in Pan-Islamism that stressed the centrality of religion in the nationalist paradigm as well as the idea of an eternal mission and role for the Arab people.

The chapter discusses the emergence of anti-Jewish feeling in Egypt prior to 1952, and the linkage in Islamist thought between the historical position of Jews vis-à-vis Islam and the contemporary threat of Zionism. It examines the position of culture-clash perspectives within Egyptian Pan-Arabism, primarily as emanating from Egyptian Islamist thought, as well as, on a regional level, from the romantic nationalism of the Syrian Ba'th Party and the Arab Nationalists' Movement, and notes that Nasser exploited the Zionism-communism link for domestic and regional political purposes. The chapter also reviews the views of the Muslim Brotherhood leader Sayyid Qutb as expounded in the 1960s, which were crucial in drawing the link between Israel, the Jews and the Egyptian regime. The culture-clash

paradigm was one that Nasser encouraged after 1967, and Sadat's speeches in 1971 and 1972 reflect its influence, along with the regional significance of Saudi Arabia, toward which Egypt moved closer after 1967. The chapter examines in depth intellectual contributions by two Islamist thinkers in the post-1967 period: Muhammad Galal Kishk and Yusuf al-Qaradawi.

Zionism and the Egyptian Islamist Movement

It is notable that 'until well into the 1920s, certain politicians and writers, including Rashid Rida, even showed respect for the achievements of the Zionist settlers.'¹ At this time, 'neither the press nor the parties represented in parliament, not to mention the general public, took more than a passing interest in the developments in neighbouring Palestine.'² But the view of Israel within the culture-clash paradigm had, as far as Islamist thought is concerned, roots in the Islamic reformist trend associated with Rashid Rida and his mentor Muhammad Abduh. It will be recalled from Chapter 3 that Abduh sought to rejuvenate Islam for the modern age both as a means of governance and of resisting European domination. A central assumption of this project was that Islam, or the way it was followed in places like Egypt, had fallen into decay over the long centuries since the time of the Prophet. One of the reasons for this decay, reformists like Abduh argued, was that 'it had become distorted during its historical development ... largely as a result of the incorporation of sources at odds with its rational essence.'³ Of such distortions in *hadith*, *tafsir*, and *fiqh*, those introduced via Jewish sources, the *Isra'iliyat*, were deemed to be among the most pernicious: 'stories and legends within it thus often contained irrational, fantastical elements.'⁴ Abduh challenged the legitimacy of the *Isra'iliyat* and Rida conducted a more detailed investigation, identifying two Persian Jews who had converted to Islam as key culprits. After Rida, Mahmud Abu Rayya 'elaborated a formula that was destined to assume a more central and persistent presence in Islamic discourses on the Jews for the remainder of the twentieth century.'⁵ As Taji-Farouki notes, he 'conflated early Jewish convert transmitters with Zionist Jews in pre-1948 Palestine. He had interwoven perceptions concerning the *Isra'iliyat* and their "Jewish" transmitters as a critical problem in early Islam with the contemporary challenge posed by Zionist Jews in Palestine.'⁶

The Muslim Brothers were the first to engage with the question of Palestine as a central Egyptian political issue, campaigning and fundraising during the Palestinian revolt of 1936. According to Mitchell, their 'reasons for opposing Zionism in order of importance had to do with "the interests of Islam, the interests of Arabism and the limited interests of the nation."'⁷ The success of the Muslim Brothers in making Palestine a domestic issue with

wide resonance throughout Egyptian society led mainstream politicians and writers to recognise ‘the centrality of the Palestine question to issues of national independence, Arab strength and Islamic unity. In Egypt as in other Muslim Arab countries, the Palestine question promised to activate energies based on religion, patriotism, and Arabism.’⁸ Nevertheless, as Krämer points out, ‘while Islamic circles represented the conflict in religious terms as one involving Jews and Arab Muslims, the leading nationalist parties and their press still distinguished between Jews and Zionists.’⁹

It is a matter of some debate the extent to which the Muslim Brotherhood and other groups, like Young Egypt, helped create a popular antipathy toward, and conflation between, Jews, Zionists and Israel, as opposed to opportunistically responding to a pre-existing collective antipathy. Some, like Brynjar Lia, suggest that security concerns at the level of the state led to the adoption of more culturalist analyses of Zionism in terms with which E.H. Carr would no doubt approve:

The symbolic and religious significance to Muslims of Palestine and its capital, Jerusalem, can hardly be overstated. Moreover, *many Egyptians expressed their apprehension that the future security of Egypt and its favourable position as a cultural and economic focal point in the Middle East would be endangered if a Zionist state were to be established on its borders*. These and other considerations produced a definite change in Egyptian public opinion—from indifference in the late 1920s to a deep sympathy for the Palestinian Arabs in the late 1930s. This strongly *reinforced the shift of public opinion from secular Egyptian nationalism and Westernisation towards an Arab Islamic orientation, thus closer to the position of the Muslim Brothers.*¹⁰

Lia thus suggests that the Muslim Brotherhood were tapping into a sympathy for Palestinians and concomitant suspicion or fear of Zionism and Jews, sentiments themselves derived from Egyptian security concerns, and that the Arab Islamic orientation was a result, rather than the cause, of this sympathy. A similar conclusion is reached by Walid Abdelnasser, who, adding a social element argues that the Muslim Brotherhood were responsive to ‘dominant sentiments among the Egyptian population which was opposed to the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine,’¹¹ and that the Brotherhood ‘made use of the public hatred of Jews in Egypt, who, to a large extent, constituted an integral part of the upper stratum of the Egyptian bourgeoisie.’¹² Or, as Talhami argues ‘resentment against this high profile maintained by Egypt’s Jews [in political and economic spheres] resulted from the Jewish community’s open sympathy for the Zionist effort in Palestine.’¹³ Other historians, primarily Marxists, aver that the Brotherhood itself was guilty of stirring up anti-Jewish hatred and xenophobia in Egypt through the obliteration of any distinction between Zionists and Jews, using ethnic chauvinism to divert the national movement from its true

revolutionary course. Thus, for Abdel Malek: 'By fostering a psychosis of fear, they [Young Egypt and the Muslim Brotherhood], made every effort to create out of nothing an anti-Jewish sentiment hitherto unknown in Egypt.'¹⁴

In 1937 and 1938, the Brotherhood called for boycotts of Jewish merchants, 'backed up by the distribution of lists of names and addresses of Jewish stores and merchants in Cairo. Vitriolic attacks on Zionists and on Jews *qua* Jews (Jews as Jews as opposed to Jews as Zionists) were published in the society's newspaper, describing them as a "societal cancer."¹⁵ Lia again ascribes the Brotherhood a reactive, rather than proactive, role in anti-Jewish campaigns, absolving the Brotherhood of responsibility and instead placing the blame on the Egyptian Jews:

the official policy of the Muslim Brothers never came close to that of the Nazis in Europe. Apart from calling for the boycott of Jewish merchants, attacks remained verbal. The Brothers' anti-Jewish propaganda was inextricably connected to the Palestinian Revolt. *Anti-Jewish sentiments were kindled by the unwillingness of Egyptian Jews to support the Palestinian Arabs and the involvement of Egyptian Jewish associations in the financing of Zionist organizations in Palestine.*¹⁶

Although it is difficult in light of the evidence to reach a satisfactory conclusion regarding this debate, it seems fair to conclude that the Brotherhood was at the forefront of linking Palestine to broader Arab and Islamic issues, primarily around the axes of culture and religion, prior to 1948, and linking these concerns to the more conventional security concerns of the Egyptian government at the time in a way that the military regime inherited after July 1952.

Brotherhood thinkers, following in the footsteps of Rida and Abu Rayya, continued the 'presentist' practice of reading back into history the roots of the Zionist problem. In the 1940s and early 1950s a sympathiser, though not yet member, of the Brotherhood, Sayyid Qutb, elaborated a vision of a 14-century conflict between Islam and Judaism, stressing that 'The Jews have confronted Islam with enmity from the moment the Islamic state was established in Medina.'¹⁷ Qutb's articles on this issue were later collected in a book entitled *Ma'rakatuna ma' al-Yahud (Our Battle with the Jews)*. Qutb went further to suggest that the battle lines were never clearly drawn since,

Just as in the past, it was the Jews who had disrupted the early Islamic community...it was the Jews who had more recently undermined Islam by installing a generation of fifth-columnists in its midst, posing as true Muslims but in reality betraying the Muslim cause...The Jews have installed...a massive army of agents in the form of professors, philosophers, doctors, researchers...some even from the ranks of the Muslim religious authorities...intending to break the creed of the

Muslims by weakening the Shari'a in many ways...with this and that they fulfil the ancient role of the Jews.¹⁸

This picture of the nature of the Jewish, and by extension Zionist and Israeli, threat to Muslim societies was one to which Qutb himself would return, and which would resonate strongly during the Nasser and Sadat periods. But, as Nettler has pointed out, for Qutb, 'the State of Israel was a part of this universal Zionist conspiracy, but by no means was it the whole.'¹⁹ Israel represented a manifestation of an eternal Jewish threat, with the latter being the most important that Islam faced.

Although, as the previous two chapters have discussed, Muslim Brotherhood thinkers formulated objections to Israel in terms of anti-imperialism or conceptions of Egyptian national interests vis-à-vis a new state in the region, the Muslim Brotherhood's main contribution to the discourse on Israel both within and without Egypt was its essentialist conception of Jews, its equation of Jews and Zionists and its reduction of Israel (in line, it must be noted, with Israel's own propaganda) to a concrete manifestation of Judaism and Zionism. This concentration on cultural and 'civilisational' elements was in part, as Abdelnasser has averred, to distinguish its own programme from that of the communists and socialists.²⁰ He notes that the Brotherhood was less aware of the economic dimensions of colonialism, than the political and cultural.²¹

Abd al-Fattah Awaisi reports that the Brotherhood 'considered the conflict to be of a particular nature which distinguished it from other international conflicts and which made its peaceful resolution difficult.'²² This exceptionalism stemmed from its civilisational and historic dimensions. 'The Muslim Brothers [could not] overlook the historical encounter between Islam and Judaism since the time of the Prophet.'²³ He continues,

...they reviewed Jewish history prior to Islam and went on to argue that there was a continuous tradition of Jewish opposition to Islam from the period of the Caliphs to more recent times. They recalled the undertakings given by Umar Ibn al-Khattab at the time of the conquest of Jerusalem and insisted that every Muslim regardless of age and sex should be well informed and educated in these historical antecedents as well as relevant Qur'anic exhortations.²⁴

Arabism, Islamism and Israel

In the 1930s and 1940s, the Brotherhood supported Arabism as a 'second loyalty' after that to Egypt, but before that of Islam, and 'asserted that Arab unity was a prerequisite for the revival of the glory of Islam and for achieving Islamic unity.'²⁵ For them, 'there was no distinction between Arab and Islamic unity, except in extent. Their policy was gradualist: from national unity to Arab unity to Islamic unity.'²⁶ Arab unity was thus a key component

of the ideology promoted by Hasan al-Banna and other Muslim Brotherhood ideologues, with disunity (*fitna*) being equated with betraying Islam. Israel, then, in addition to usurping a part of the Islamic homeland, impeded the unification of the Arabs, itself a prerequisite for Islamic unity, and as such was a valid target for *jihad* on the part of all Arabs and Muslims. The Brotherhood adopted a conception of Palestine in 1948 that saw its liberation as an essential prerequisite for Islamic unity: ‘The blessing of Palestine will not stop merely at achieving Arab unity, it will also achieve Islamic unity.’²⁷ In this way, the Brotherhood’s discourse on Palestine resonated with other regional discourses such as that of the Ba’th and later that of the PLO, which often viewed the liberation of Palestine as the key to, rather than the goal of, Arab unity.

A discussion of the role of Islam in Nasser’s foreign policy discourse is thus inextricable from a discussion of the role of Arab nationalism. Islamism and Arab nationalism were closely linked in the post-War period. Although the pan-Arab Ba’th and Arab Socialist Parties had few adherents in Egypt, after 1948 radical Arab nationalist ideas became more popular and pushed Egyptian territorial nationalism in a more Pan-Arab direction.²⁸ The quasi-fascist Young Egypt party as well as the National Party competed with the Muslim Brotherhood for adherents and adopted many of the same ethno-religious assumptions. The successor to Young Egypt, the Egyptian Socialist Party led by Ahmed Hussein, presented itself as an ‘Islamic nationalist party’²⁹ and had previously written an anti-colonial manifesto entitled *My Faith (Imani)*. In the late 1930s Hussein had launched a campaign for Islamic laws in Egypt, the abolition of the constitution and parliamentary system.³⁰ The ethos of the Muslim Brotherhood and the Young Egypt and Watani currents differed from that of a previous generation of Egyptian Islamists represented by Rida and Abduh, as well as the liberal Arab nationalists of the Levant mainly in their eschewal of the imperative of integrating local Muslim tradition into modern liberal nationalism. The international context of their development—the 1930s and 1940s—was crucial, particularly the rise of fascism in Europe and the concomitant appeal of German, rather than French, models of nationalism, the former of which prioritised ‘blood’ and ethnicity over values and citizenship. By 1956 ‘partisans of westernisation supported Arab-Muslim renaissance’ and, as Mahfouz notes, ‘Arab nationalists found success with masses conscious of past glories’ and viewed Islamic civilisation as still capable of securing a better future.³¹ Even at the height of the Nasser regime’s revolutionary socialism, the ‘Arab’ component of the revolution was stressed. The UAR Charter of 1962 held that revolution in Egypt could only be successful if it was an ‘Arab’ revolution. The 1919 revolution had failed due to inward-looking leaders, ‘incapable

of deducing from history the fact that there is no conflict whatsoever between Egyptian patriotism and Arab nationalism.³²

In the first two years of the revolution there was close cooperation between the RCC and the Muslim Brotherhood, including with Sayyid Qutb, who, strikingly given his later assessment of the president, frequently met with Nasser.³³ The Brotherhood evidently shared many of the goals and policies followed by the new Egyptian regime. From an early date, though, it was foreign policy that drove a wedge ideologically between the regime and the Brotherhood. The Muslim Brotherhood expressed its opposition in 1954 to Nasser's agreement with Britain allowing for the return of troops during wartime.³⁴ But the influence of Islamist ideology on the regime's conception of Israel was evident in 1954 even as Nasser attacked the Muslim Brotherhood itself. In this year, Nasser was also attacking the communist movement which it linked to Zionism.³⁵ Nasser's equation of Zionism with communism at this stage was similar to that of the Brotherhood, as well as the stance taken by the Egyptian government in 1948.* According to Heikal,

...when in May 1948 Britain withdrew from Palestine and the first Arab-Israeli war broke out, one of the reasons Nokrashy Pasha, the Prime Minister, gave in parliament when asking for a declaration of war was that Israel was the vanguard of world communism. He cited the kibbutz movement to press his point. Both houses of parliament, in fact, voted for war against Israel 'in defence of Arab rights and against Communist atheism and nihilism.'³⁶

The linkage reflected international anti-communism as well as domestic concerns. Domestically, the regime's nervousness of communism was shared by the Brotherhood and other competing nationalist groups. The anti-Jewish campaigns in the few years preceding and following the 1948 war had explicitly linked the Jewish-led Egyptian communist movement with local Zionism, making no distinction between Jews and Zionists. In 1954, Nasser claimed that the communists were the greatest supporters of Zionism and attacked Curiel personally as both the biggest communist and the biggest Zionist in Egypt.³⁷ The public antipathy to Zionism was thus harnessed to discredit the communists, even though, as would become more apparent later, the regime was perhaps more influenced by the communists' own interpretation of Zionism,³⁸ as elucidated in Chapter 5. Following the

* This interpretation was not unique to the Islamic movement and was elaborated in the West soon after the Bolshevik revolution. Winston Churchill wrote in the early 1920s of the competition between communism and Zionism for the 'Jewish soul' and argued strongly in favour of Zionism as a way of discouraging Jews from becoming communists. Winston S. Churchill, "Zionism Versus Bolshevism: A Struggle for the Soul of the Jewish People," *Illustrated Sunday Herald*, 8 February 1920. Available from <http://www.scribd.com/doc/200538/1920-Churchill-Zionism-versus-Bolshevism-on-Illuminati-OCR-by-MatRoX>.

Israeli raid on Gaza in 1955, Nasser's interpretation of Israel revealed another culture-clash conviction, concerning its expansionist goal. In this formulation, Israel was '“a sword pointed at our dignity and liberty” seeking “domination from Nile to Euphrates.”'³⁹

The Regional Dimension

Although the Muslim Brotherhood as an organisation was banned from 1954 and existed only in the shadows from 1957, as Chapter 4 discussed the regime did not criticise its ideology, and many of the ideas surrounding Nasser's conception of Arab nationalism were to a large extent concordant with the Brotherhood's conceptual framework. Perhaps most significant during the 1950s in this regard, despite its secular underpinnings and Christian chief ideologue, was Ba'thism. Betraying close affinities with European fascism, the Ba'thist stress on the ethnic specificity of Arabs, as well as their glorification and the attribution to them of a sacred mission, was something that Muslim Brotherhood supporters could find appealing. This is not wholly surprising. Muslim Brotherhood ideology was forged in the 1930s and 1940s in close interaction with other right-wing political movements such as Young Egypt and the National Party. There was substantial crossover in membership between the two organisations and similarities in organisational structure, as well as between Ba'thists and the nascent Palestinian resistance, many of whose own founders were closely associated with the Brotherhood and Young Egypt. After the revolution in 1952 one of the National Party leaders, Fathi Radwan, was very close to Nasser, becoming Minister of Information.⁴⁰

Many Palestinian leaders had been members or fellow-travellers of the Muslim Brotherhood and Young Egypt. As such, they stressed the racial, cultural and religious elements of the liberation struggle, in addition to the national and anti-imperialist elements. In this, they were also in step with much Ba'thist thinking. The leaders of the ANM, George Habash and Hani al-Hindi were active in the late 1940s in the creation of the *Kata'ib al-Fida' al-Arabi* (Battalions of Arab Sacrifice), along with Syrian activists and 'a small group of Egyptian fugitives,' who were members of the right-wing nationalist Young Egypt movement. At one point, they offered to become the Ba'th's military wing.⁴¹ In addition to the influence of Young Egypt, the ANM was also inspired by the Muslim Brotherhood. Sayigh notes '[t]hese were strongly influential roots akin to the ideological springs of fascism, as the group's own dissidents were to point out many years later.'⁴² Moreover, '[t]he Fascist influence was painfully clear in the ANM diatribe against the “Jewish threat” and in its view

of Zionism and Judaism as identical.^{43*} This conception was also axiomatic for the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, which drew on a religious justification for this conclusion, that may have chimed with, rather than derived from, fascist thinking.[†]

Even Christian Arab nationalists like Constantine Zurayq⁴⁴ and Michel Aflaq, argued in favour of elevating Islam as a component of national identification. The fruits of Egyptian intellectual associations with the Ba'th from 1955 were to include the conversion of many Egyptian nationalist intellectuals to a Ba'thist-style Arab nationalism, dedicated to:

The creation of an aware and enlightened Arab generation having faith in God, dedicated to the Arab fatherland, conscious of its national and humanitarian mission, having faith in itself and its Nation, setting itself the highest ideals in the domain of personal and social conduct, inspired by the resolve of a joint struggle and possessed of the means for positive action, armed with knowledge and character, in order to reinforce the prestige of the glorious Arab Nation and to assure its right to freedom, security and a worthy life.⁴⁵

It is interesting not only to note the influence of the far right nationalist Young Egypt and Watani parties prior to the revolution, which shared with the Ba'th a substantial intellectual debt to European fascism, while the 'faith in God' recalls the ideas of Young Egypt and the Brotherhood as much as the Ba'th. Despite the crushing of the Muslim Brotherhood, 'the Islamic or even pan-Islamic trend was solidly institutionalised in the country.'⁴⁶

As early as 1946, Aflaq had described Zionism as not 'merely an economic invasion motivated by material greed, but [as] first and foremost a religious invasion which has no parallel in history except the crusades.'⁴⁷ Aflaq himself acknowledged his intellectual debt to German idealism: 'We learned from German philosophy that there is something deeper than external events or economic relations in explaining the march of history and the growth of society.' The Ba'th's slogan became 'One Arab nation with an eternal mission.'⁴⁸ For Aflaq, 'Unity...is not merely a clear-cut political objective: it is a search for the "treasure of hidden vitality", the moral and spiritual founts of nationalism.'⁴⁹

For the Ba'th, Islam was in no way incompatible with Arab nationalism, although whereas for the Muslim Brotherhood Arabism was an essential pillar of Islamic identity, Aflaq perceived Islam to be a vital component of Arabism: 'Islam...was an Arab movement, the

* Fatah's early leaders also had strong links with the Muslim Brotherhood in its origins—mainly through joint action in the 1948 Palestine War—including its future leader Yasir Arafat. Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for State : The Palestinian National Movement, 1949-1993* 81.

† Mathias Küntzel has stressed the 'Nazi roots' of Brotherhood ideology, particularly regarding Jews. Küntzel, "Hitler's Legacy: Islamic Antisemitism and the Impact of the Muslim Brotherhood."

reflection of a renewal and maturing of Arabism. There is no fear...that nationalism will clash with religion, "for, like religion, it flows from the heart and issues from the will of God."⁵⁰ Aflaq had said that 'Nothing but the awakening of faith in the Arabs, and the incarnation of that faith in a practical and efficacious form can ward off this menace.'⁵¹ Even in turning away from the Ba'th in the early 1960s, Nasser's propaganda campaign against the party revealed the extent to which ethnicity and religion had become essential components of Arab nationalism in Egypt, as his attacks centred on the 'doubtful Arab credentials' of the 'Cypriot Christian' Michel Aflaq.⁵²

Aflaq himself promoted a view of Israel which, while prioritising the anti-imperialism paradigm, also recognised a more specific 'World Zionist' threat. Aflaq's conception may reflect the Ba'th's desire to differentiate itself from its main rival, the Syrian communist party led by Khalid Bakdash, while also tapping into broader Arab nationalist sympathies. In July 1957 he wrote,

There are in fact two views of imperialism and Zionism, and each of them is inadequate and deviationist: it is known that the rightist front concentrates on Israel to divert the attention from imperialism. On the other hand, there is a liberation view which is not quite accurate when it makes Israel and imperialism two names for one entity. This partially conceals the danger of world Zionism which is undoubtedly an imperialist movement but an independent one. On our part, we consider Israel an imperialist base, beyond a doubt, for it is imperialism which has created, defended and fed it for this purpose. But...Israel is also an expression of the power of world Zionism, but world Zionism is capable of making use of imperialism itself. The success of the Arabs in shattering imperialism will solve the largest part of the problem but will not solve it in its entirety.⁵³

For Aflaq, imperialism cannot be defeated without also defeating the independent force that is World Zionism: 'the success in conquering imperialism has a pre-requisite and this is that the forces of world Zionism be taken into account. Therefore another struggle has to accompany our struggle against imperialism and this is our struggle against Zionism.'⁵⁴

Arab nationalism in Egypt acquired, despite the efforts of Egyptian communists for whom the Arabs were 'united in suffering', a distinct religious and ethnic underpinning. The rift between Egypt and Iraq, and between the regime and Egyptian communists, prompted Nasser to turn to an old slur against communism, that it was synonymous with Zionism, long a Muslim Brotherhood assumption. Nasser accused Qasim of being a Zionist as well as an ally of the British and the communists. The Iraqi communists had, he alleged, been vocal in their attacks on Arab Nationalism, while remaining silent on Zionism. Nasser's use of the concept of imperialism at this time also reflected his adoption of an element of analysis that contradicted that of the left, but reflected that propounded by the Muslim Brotherhood.

Following the challenge from Iraq in 1958, according to Hasan Hanafi, Nasser described imperialism as the same whether it came from the East or the West.⁵⁵ As a ‘neutral’ state, Egypt was against both forms of imperialism. Nasser’s elevation of the Zionist-communist link in political discourse also reflected the development of his neutralism, which was from the late 1950s moving toward reaching a reconciliation with the United States.

In spite of the prominent role of Marxist-Leninist ideas in Nasserist foreign policy discourse, particularly in relating Israel to imperialism, culturalist interpretations of domestic politics and the ethnic component of Arab nationalism, as well as the regime’s, albeit secondary, recourse to Islamic institutions as instruments of foreign policy, meant that the conception of Israel as a ‘usurper’ (*mughtasib*) in the Arab-Islamic world was never directly challenged. The turn in 1964 to the idea of ‘liquidating’ Israel and ‘liberating’ Palestine, rather than implementing UN resolutions and deterring further Israeli expansion, supported the view of Israel as a ‘cancer’ in the Arab landscape. Although in 1966 Nasser renounced the idea that cooperation with reactionary Arab states could ever liberate Palestine, due to Israel and those states’ shared links with imperialism, the argument that destroying Israel was nonetheless the objective interest of all Arab peoples was not abandoned until after the June 1967 War.

Sayyid Qutb in the 1960s

The Brotherhood, under Sayyid Qutb’s guidance in the 1960s, was increasingly reacting against Nasser’s authoritarianism and what was perceived to be the forcible imposition of an alien ideology on Egyptian Muslims, with one of Qutb’s main intellectual contributions being to articulate an Islamic rationale for overthrowing an ‘unIslamic’ regime. The crux of Qutb’s originality lay in his elaboration of the concept of *jahiliya* (literally, ‘ignorance’) and its application to existing Muslim societies as well as his call for the removal of so-called Muslim regimes. For Qutb the message of God had been simple and clear from Noah to Muhammad—there is one God. Christians and Jews lost sight of this fundamental precept and therefore their societies were *jahili* societies. But, crucially, Muslim societies had also gone astray and were Muslim only in name. For Ashmawi,

This was a new thing for us because it led...to the feeling that you are far from the beliefs of the people and that the people have grown away from their religion and you are able to feel that you are in one valley and they are in another, and that they are genuinely not Muslims. In correspondence with this feeling are many dangerous things like considering people to be infidels (*kufra*) and that you shouldn’t eat their slaughtered animals or marry them and isolate and avoid them. This was a dangerous direction, but we took it.⁵⁶

Qutb's views on Israel and Jews as expressed in the 1960s were coloured by his paramount preoccupation with the state of *jahiliya* in which Muslim societies found themselves, a state that cannot be reversed so long as infidel rulers remained in place. For Qutb, the Jews 'recruited' Nasser in 1948 and used the Free Officers' coup as a way of subverting Egypt, the lynchpin of the Arab-Muslim world. It is for this reason that Ashmawi considers Qutb's views on Zionism to be at the very heart of his political philosophy:

We discuss the opinion of Sayyid Qutb regarding the World Zionist Movement and its domination over the Eastern and Western camps as an entry from which will follow a discussion on the rest of his political opinions, because this precept is what governs, in my opinion, his political view, and is considered the wellspring of his thinking on getting to grips with matters.⁵⁷

Qutb's views on Jews and Zionism expounded in Muslim Brotherhood circles in the 1960s, at least as recounted by Ashmawi, epitomize the conspiratorial 'culture-clash' paradigm. Although Ashmawi does not mention it, it almost goes without saying that Qutb considered Israel to be another tool and result of the eternal Jewish plot. He took a long historical view that saw an age-old Jewish conspiracy aiming at world domination. For Qutb, many Jews embraced Christianity following the Spanish inquisition and aimed to subvert it toward that goal. Sephardic Jews also embraced Islam, 'but retained their Jewish religiosity, and those had a big influence on the plans to dominate the Islamic movement and destroy Islam, as they had worked to do with Christianity.'⁵⁸ According to Ashmawi, Qutb believed that the Jews had successfully infiltrated the Christian church and used it to attack their ultimate enemy, Islam. The infiltration was, apparently, not complete, because Qutb still allowed some independence of action for the Christian camp: 'The Christian powers were ready to cooperate with them [the Jews] because they considered Islam a power hostile to them, and it was easy for them to cooperate to strike the Islamic movement.'⁵⁹ This 'presentist' analysis offered clear explanations for why the 'West' supported Israel.

This Jewish-inspired venture was manifested in Christian missionary operations in Islamic countries, whose failure to convert Muslims resulted in a change of tack whereby orientalism would attempt to destroy the underpinnings of Islam 'by way of Westerners that had converted to Islam, or had not converted but wrote about it.' The 'Jew, Gibb' was mentioned specifically. Orientalist work criticising Islam in turn gave way to Western scholarship that praised it—but this only represented a more subtle, insidious, way of undermining the religion and people's faith in it by destroying 'tiny parts until the reader is convinced without realizing.'⁶⁰

The chief instruments of the Jews in their quest for domination over the world, and destruction of Islam, were for Qutb, control over money and information. Once they had gained control of ‘most European states’ and America, they set their sights on Russia. The means by which the Jews gained control of Russia was the communism of the ‘Jew, Karl Marx’. The communist ‘coup’ in 1917 was a Jewish plot: ‘many of the leaders of the coup were Jews, or married to Jews.’⁶¹ Qutb also condemned communism in *Ma’alim fi al-Tariq* [Signposts] which should be understood as an oblique reference to the system that Nasser was seen to be following. Islamist critiques of communism in the 1970s thus flowed directly from their attacks on Nasser. The fact that Nasser was perceived to be the leader of a communist regime which had led Egypt into a humiliating defeat against Israel in 1967 could be seen to confirm the Islamist link between communism and Zionism.

For Qutb, then, Jewish domination ‘extended to the Eastern and Western camps’ and aimed primarily at ‘war with Islam, besieging it and striking it in every place.’⁶² The Jews facilitated the fall of the Ottoman empire and were behind Ataturk’s revolution. After prevailing over Turkey, Egypt was considered the key to the Islamic world, and the initial approach to destroying Islam in Egypt was via its women. The movement for women’s rights in the early 20th century and the ‘throwing off’ of the *hijab*, was a manifestation of this strategy, which also underpinned the social policies of Gamal Abdel Nasser.⁶³ As stated above, Qutb apparently believed Nasser was a Zionist agent. His regime’s policy of industrialisation and the employment of women in factories in the countryside, which inevitably brought them into contact with men, was designed to destroy Islamic values in rural areas, specifically because it was there that ‘Islamic values were strongest.’⁶⁴ The ultimate goal in all of this was, and for Qutb in the mid-1960s, remained, to sustain a *jahili* society in Egypt and facilitate Zionist and crusader domination.⁶⁵ As such, the way of resisting this was to work incessantly toward reviving Islam in the souls of the Egyptian people.

In his final testimony, *Limadha a’aduni*, Sayyid Qutb blamed ‘Zionist and crusader’ forces for the regime’s suppression of the Muslim Brotherhood in 1954, and explained why he resolved to rebuild the Islamic movement: ‘I saw the real results in the life of Egyptian society from the great spread of atheist ideas and moral decline as a result of the destruction of the Muslim Brotherhood and the end of its educational activities.’⁶⁶ He wrote, ‘The issue is much greater than the simplifications of those who see what happened as simply development. It relates to Zionist and imperialist crusader plans to destroy the fundamentals

of the human elements in the region in order that these millions will become broken debris that do not possess resistance even if you put the strongest weapons in their hands.⁶⁷

Qutb continued that while in prison in the 1950s,

After a long review and study of the Muslim Brotherhood movement and a comparison with the first Islamic movement in Islam it became clear in my thinking...that the Islamic movement today faces a situation similar to that faced by the human societies the day Islam came for the first time from the part of ignorance of the true Islamic doctrine, and distance from Islamic values and morals. It is not just the distance from the Islamic system (*al-Nizam al-Islami*) and the Islamic *shari'a*—and at the same time the Zionist and imperialist crusader camps are strong, fighting every attempt at Islamic proselytising and working to destroy it by way of local regimes and apparatuses.⁶⁸

Qutb's analysis of the Jews would, after his death, continue to prove resonant, as evinced 'in fundamentalist pronouncements, which often designated the Arab rulers and regimes as Zionist lackeys whose activity strengthened the threatening Jewish Zionist hand.'⁶⁹

The Culture-Clash after 1967

Soon after the magnitude of the June 1967 defeat became apparent, Nasser encouraged Egyptians to seek solace in their religion and faith. As the anti-imperialism paradigm receded in the wake of the war, Nasser and then Sadat encouraged a new discourse. Some of this tended toward conceiving Israel more as a nation state, as Chapter 6 has described. Other Egyptian institutions, notably the Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (SCIA), also constructed analyses of the situation with Israel in 'culture-clash' terms. SCIA published in 1969 a book by Mustafa al-Sa'dani entitled '*Adwa ala al-sihyuniya. [Focus on Zionism]*'⁷⁰ The book constitutes a lengthy exposition of the eternal Jewish threat not only to Islam, but to the entire world. Relying heavily on, and translating much of, the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, the book reveals the other side of the Nasser regime's approach to Israel, one which stressed its Jewish nature in ways similar to those of the Muslim Brotherhood.

In January of 1971 Sadat gave a speech to the University and Higher Institute Professors at Cairo University that revealed his prioritisation of Zionism rather than anti-imperialism: 'We face today world Zionism supported by the power of the United States.' World Zionism's aim, he averred, 'has made for its objective "Greater Israel" from the Nile to the Euphrates.' In furtherance of this goal, 'Zionism never abandoned its main principle and its original objective. It wants to make itself an agent for any big power that emerges in this world so that it may be able to realise through this big power, its dream of establishing "Greater Israel".' Sadat indicated that 'Israel—according to the declarations of its ministers—is the

first line of defence for American interests in the region.’ He also pointed out that after June 5 1967, ‘Goldberg, the US delegate was a Zionist and declared that he was proud of being Zionist’ and concluded that ‘the problem is no longer Israel. The problem is America.’ He added that ‘Israel took its requirements from the budget of the US Defence Department. This means that Israel is part of the United States.’⁷¹

Sadat also relied heavily on religious language in his speeches. He described Egypt as ‘*dawlat al-ilm wa-al-iman*’ (state of science and faith) and became known as the ‘*ra’is mu’min*’ (believing president). Prior to 1972, Sadat expressed his position towards Israel in these terms as well. ‘Faith is not enough on its own’ he said in a 1971 speech, ‘because the enemy has the most recent innovations of the age and will win battle after battle if we do not arm ourselves with that with which it is armed.’⁷² But, he also said, ‘true power is not the power of guns, but is only the power of faith, the power of the individual, and the power of the message, faith in creed (*aqida*) and faith in principle (*mabda*).’ The issue against the US and Israel was not one of arms, Sadat explained, but an issue ‘of the believing individual: we believe that God is with us, we believe that right is with us, we believe, as God said, that we are the best nation offered to mankind (*khayr umma akhrajat li al-nas*); we believe that as God told us in his book that no one will receive other than those who are patient and have great destiny.’⁷³

In September 1972, Sadat drew on Islamic reasoning to explain his reluctance to negotiate directly with the Jews: ‘This is what our Prophet did...We will never negotiate with them directly. We know our history, and we know their history: a people disposed to treachery. This year I promise you we will celebrate not just the liberation of our land, but also the conquering of this noisy Israeli invasion so they will return again as our book said to us: “I have decreed for them ignominy and misery” and we will not relinquish that.’⁷⁴ The association of Zionism with imperialism was not abandoned, but Sadat also mentioned the cultural element to the Zionist threat, suggesting that this assumption had become axiomatic: ‘Today we must confront this evil invasion, the Zionist and imperialist invasion, because it is not aimed *just at our creed only*, but also at our land, our fate, the life of our descendants and to dominate everything.’⁷⁵

Sadat justified the policy of steadfastness (*sumud*) on 14 January 1971 by remaining faithful to Nasser’s policy of portraying Egypt as the leader of the Arab world. But above serving Arabism or neutralism, Egypt was defending Islam and its Holy Places:

Egypt is Egypt. It will preserve faith and spread faith, God willing, over this earth. Steadfastness was always to defend Islam and its holy places and this land will

continue, with God's help, to be a citadel to defend the Holy Places of Islam and Islamic heritage, whatever the battles, whatever the evils.

Much as Nasser had tried to do in the 1950s and 1960s, Sadat was keen to restore Egypt as a beacon for the Arab and Islamic worlds, arguing that Egypt has faith and will spread it over the world. Egypt was the centre of the Arab world in that 'the peace of the region as a whole depends on the peace of Egypt, and the problems of the region are Egypt's problems.'⁷⁶

Saudi Arabia

Regionally, until 1979, the culture-clash perspective was perhaps most strongly held by non-revolutionary states friendly to the West, and thus not overtly anti-imperialist, and whose self-justification rested on Islam. Most significant in this regard was Saudi Arabia. Resolving the Palestine issue was a priority for Saudi Arabia since, so long as it persisted 'the surrounding Arab world will be threatened by instability, the Soviets will be a source of arms and diplomatic support for some Arab regimes, and Saudi Arabia will be asked to use its oil to force the Americans to extract concessions from the Israelis.'⁷⁷ The Saudi position on resolving the conflict became more ambiguous after 1967, primarily due to the occupation of Jerusalem. Saudi Arabia's international legitimacy depended largely on its role as guardian of the Holy Places of Islam. As such, Saudi Arabia could not support any solution that left Jerusalem in Jewish hands.⁷⁸ The Saudi view of the Arab-Israeli conflict is articulated by Quant, who writes:

From the Saudi perspective, Israel was largely responsible for the collapse of the old order and the entry of the Soviet Union into the region. To many Saudis, it was Israel's ability in 1947-48 to defeat the conservative governments of Egypt, Syria, Iraq and Jordan that set off a wave of military coups in the Arab world. Displaced Palestinians became a radicalizing force in Arab politics as they sought support for their usurped rights.⁷⁹

He also avers that 'until quite recently the anti-Jewish forgery *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* could easily be found on public display in Saudi Arabia...And King Faisal's tirades against Israel often seemed to be tinged with more than a trace of hostility toward Jews.'⁸⁰ Heikal, recalling an encounter he had with King Faisal in Alexandria in the early 1970s, notes his surprise to learn that Faisal believed communism and Zionism to be identical.⁸¹

Jews, Zionists and Communists

Perhaps the most striking feature of many of the Islamist books that emerged following the 1967 war—such as those of Kishk and Qaradawi reviewed below—is that rather than representing dramatic intellectual reorientations, they were reissued volumes or collections of articles written or published before the June War, with new chapters or prefaces that

showed how the war confirmed their earlier prognoses. Statements of the Islamist case after 1967 emerged throughout the Arab world, including in a conservative form in Saudi Arabia and Jordan, where such a position bolstered, rather than challenged, the prevailing orders in those states. In Egypt, Islamist intellectual responses to 1967 represented, directly or indirectly, criticisms of the Egyptian revolution. As Fuad Ajami has recounted, the Islamist thinker Muhammad Galal Kishk laid the blame for the defeat squarely at the feet of regimes that had blindly followed Western political doctrines, including Marxism and liberal nationalism, while ignoring the basic driving force in all world conflicts, which was the clash of civilisations.⁸² Kishk shared with liberal nationalists and the left the conviction that Egyptian society must be reformed, but for him reform—indeed revolution—could only grow out of the objective reality of Egyptian Muslim life, not through the application of foreign ideas to an Egyptian reality. Translators, he wrote, have never transformed societies.⁸³

Muhammad Galal Kishk

Kishk wrote two books in the 1960s that formed the basis for his views on the role of the twin prongs of a Western ‘intellectual invasion’ in the 1967 defeat. Like Qutb, Kishk saw a unity of interest between the communist East and the capitalist West, both of which targeted Islam and helped establish Israel for this purpose.⁸⁴ In his own words, the conceptual framework of his books derived from the central assumption that Western civilisation represented one analytical category in terms of its ‘enmity toward Islam.’

This civilization divides into a number of states and systems, including communist and socialist and capitalist and republican and monarchist, but they are all coming from the same history from one point, the split from the East and the enmity towards Islamic civilisation. This is the historical unity that supports the unity of interests (*wihdat al-masalih*) and unity of ambitions (*wihdat al-atmi'a*) in our countries, invigorated today by the unity of Zionist activity which moves inside the communist and capitalist ‘camps’ for Israel’s benefit (*li-hisab Isra’il*)...⁸⁵

It is this unity of interests between Russia and America that explains the *naksa* [catastrophe] of June 1967, and it was in this context that Kishk emphasised the need to expose ‘the role played by communists in the service of Zionism’ and called on Arabs and Muslims to rely ‘on our own efforts alone’ to ‘achieve victory over our historic enemy.’⁸⁶

In *Marxism*’s first preface in 1966, Kishk laid out the historical scope of his analysis, as well as his focus on the intellectual invasion (*ghazw fikri*)—in terms that mirrored those explicated earlier by Sayyid Qutb.

I believe we are living in the third crusader war. The first was that which the Pope Urban II called for in November 1090. The second began with Napoleon's landing in Alexandria in July 1798. As for the third, it is hard to define its beginning because it does not depend on military campaigns so that we can date it to a day of invasion. Rather, its main impetus is the intellectual invasion, and this is a complicated factor, hard to define: maybe its roots go back to the first crusade. In confronting it we have no weapons other than our religion.⁸⁷

In the preface to the second edition of *Marxism* in May 1966, Kishk laid out his sense of Egypt's role in the world, which is in line with that of the Muslim Brotherhood, and to a great extent that of the Nasser regime:

'We believe in Arabism...the beating heart of Islam, respecting who respects it. Nobody rejects it except an unbeliever.'

'We believe in Egypt, the heart of Arabism...there is no greatness to the Arabs without its greatness and woe betide he who exposes it to harm.'

'We believe our Islam is greater than socialism and that our Arabism is over internationalism, and above the alignment with West or East.'

'We believe that Egypt will be nothing other than a head, and that every attempt to direct her spirit from outside is fated to fail miserably.'⁸⁸

For Kishk, Islam was the primary enemy of Israel, as well as the communist and capitalist 'West', due to the fact that Islam was the only viable basis of unity among African and Asian states. This was expressed in strategic terms: 'Israel, as a national enemy, wages a war against us in Africa with a war against Islam and Muslims, and attacks the Islamic states, because they know that Islam is our only way to Africa and nothing else.'⁸⁹

Communism was, for Kishk, an ideological weapon used by the West, as was Zionism. And the two were inextricably linked:

All communist parties in the Arab world, without exception were established by Jews in the Mashriq and by French in the Maghrib. The greatest danger threatening the Zionist presence in the Mashriq is Islam. This is the force that ended the French direct presence in the Arab Maghrib. It is still the main force that opposes the remains of this presence and is able to end it at the same time.⁹⁰

Kishk condemned the Arab communists as 'traitors to the Arab nation' for their stance on Palestine and for putting internationalism above national interests, arguing that 'it is not possible to accept the destruction (*ifna*) of our *umma* for the interests of world progress.'⁹¹ The Arab communists were mistaken in that they opposed Zionism in the beginning, but failed to understand the link between Zionism, Israel and the Jews, and in particular were unable to see the problem in the fact that '90 percent' of the leaders were Jewish while the Arabs were battling the Zionists.⁹²

The Arab communists were, Kishk wrote after 1967, more than simply a deluded or treasonous political force, but a ‘danger to national existence—a danger in our national struggle against Israel.’⁹³ It was world and Arab communism, working in the service of Israel, that wanted to force the Arabs to accept a peace settlement and make them ‘accept the reality that is the existence of Israel and co-existence with it.’⁹⁴ Although Kishk acknowledged—in terms that suggested this was beyond doubt—the links between Israel and the United States, which supported ‘all Israeli crimes against the Arabs’, the real danger did not come from the United States, because the people are all too aware of its aggressive intentions. The threat of communism was far greater, because the USSR was believed to be a friend, while it and the Arab communist parties were, in reality, acting to destroy ‘the Arab resistance to Israel.’ Those who supported the USSR, he concluded, ‘do not want to finish with Israel.’⁹⁵

The Syrian and Iraqi Ba’th also, for Kishk, were working in the service of Israel, since they focussed on internal revolution over the liberation of Palestine. He cited the Egyptian communist Mahmud Amin al-Alim who challenged progressives for focusing on development and internal political work instead of confronting Israel. Al-Alim had argued that such an approach deprived the progressive camp of any hope of mobilising support. But Kishk went further, tautologically, saying that the progressives did not actually want development, since their primary goal was preventing the liberation of Palestine, and ‘whoever supported a progressive power that allowed the occupation of land while concentrating on development.’⁹⁶

Although Kishk was clear that a unified ‘West’ represented a cultural and intellectual threat to the Arabs and Islam, he was also keen to stress the primacy of nationalism and national interests. In his book on Marxism, he devoted substantial space to a discussion of the Sino-Soviet rivalry, in the context of showing that communism was nothing more than a front for national interests. Similarly, he argued that despite the Zionist influence on world communism, ‘when Russian national interests are at stake, [Russia] does not hesitate to strike [the Jews].’ Suggesting that Kishk acknowledged that the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* was a forgery, he argued that Russian national interests explained the negative depiction of Jews found therein.⁹⁷ In terms worthy of E.H. Carr, Kishk also argued that internationalism was merely the ideology used by powerful nations to dominate weak ones, or by the weak to dissolve themselves into powerful nations.⁹⁸ Islam, apparently, was the mutual enemy of both communism and capitalism and as such would unite the West against it.

Kishk dismissed the communist position as expressed in *al-Tali'a* and *Ruz al-Yusuf* after the Six Day War that Israel presented a danger because it was an imperialist base, rather than because Jews lived there. For Kishk the two are inseparable. ‘We confront Israel fundamentally because of those Jewish citizens, not because they are Jews but because they occupied our land, destroyed its unity and expelled our people, and because they have limitless ambitions for our land. If they were English or German, or Gog and Magog (*ya'juj wa ma'juj*) then the danger of Israel would be embedded in the fact that the inhabitants were Gog and Magog, not just for their position in the global struggle.’ He pointed out that Israel’s establishment as an imperialist base could not be separated from the fact that its inhabitants were Jews, and this was the salient factor, not its political system: ‘We are against 1.5 million Jews as individuals as long as they accept their presence on another people’s land.’⁹⁹

In light of this, Kishk viewed as preposterous *Roz al-Yusuf*’s call for the liberation of the Israeli people and the alliance with progressive forces in Israel.* For Kishk, the difference between Israel and other imperialists like the US or Britain was that with the latter anti-colonial struggles aimed only at ending the occupation, and did not require hatred of British or Italian people. With Israel, such a rule could not apply—it was impossible to distinguish between the Israeli people and the Israeli government. Israel was an ‘aggressive entity: people and army, worker and peasant and soldier.’ When an ‘Israeli’ moves to Israel, Kishk pronounced, he loses the right to belong in the ‘camp of the people’ and becomes a violator of the rights of others, whether a peasant or a soldier. Rejecting a broader universalisation, Kishk concluded that this position—the Arab Islamic position—was just ‘even if the whole world denies it’ since ‘we own this land.’ The usurper must be evicted and returned to his original country.¹⁰⁰

Yusuf al-Qaradawi

In a series of influential tracts stating the Muslim Brotherhood’s political goals, Yusuf Qaradawi critiqued the Arab states in general and their performance in 1967 in particular. *Al-Hall al-Islami: Farida wa Darura [the Islamic Solution: Duty and Obligation]*, like the first volume in his series, published in 1971, represents a collection of documents written and published in the mid- to late-1960s. As such, they express ideas that were current before the 1967 War as well as after. In *al-Hall al-Islami*, Qaradawi excoriated both liberal nationalism and revolutionary socialism for their failings on all levels, including militarily.

* He is not surprised that Marxists said this, but astonished that such views can find their way into print in Egypt.

The military inadequacies were highlighted in Arab regimes' inability to defend the paramount Arab and Muslim cause, that of Palestine—the first of the *Qiblas* and the third of the Holy Places. The defeat of 1948 was testimony to the bankruptcy of liberal nationalism, while the 1967 defeat highlighted the failings of socialism. As with figures in the Arab New Left like Sadiq al-Azm, Qaradawi rejected the call to 'erase the traces of the aggression' since it legitimised the 5 June 1967 borders of Israel.

Just as Nasser critiqued the Egyptian revolutionaries of 1919 for not recognising the connection between the Egyptian revolution and a broader Arab world, Qaradawi lambasted the Free Officers for ignoring the 'organic link' between the Arab revolution and the Islamic *umma*. The post-1952 leaders thus got the 'Arab personality' wrong and were unable to see beyond the 'Arabian Gulf.' As the Arab nationalist Sati' al-Husri had accused the Egyptian nationalists of narrowness, so Qaradawi levelled the same accusation at Husri, suggesting that the title of the latter's famous work *Arabism First* should be *Islam First*. This narrow vision was particularly important in the struggle against Israel, since:

The Arabs entered the most dangerous stage of their struggle against world Judaism represented by Israel, and with the Western crusaders represented by Israel's supporters, without benefiting from the massive Islamic energy from the ocean to the ocean, or from Indonesia to Casablanca.¹⁰¹

'World Judaism', Qaradawi continued, recognised this potential in the past and so destroyed the Caliphate, the last embodiment of Islamic unity. The attempts of the Nasser regime to organise an international politics based on Islam were perfunctory. Islam was only mentioned at the end of the UAR Charter, in the section on foreign policy, and the Islamic Congress established by Nasser was a hollow structure, in reality no more than a building.¹⁰²

The failure of the Arab revolution was, for Qaradawi, intrinsic to revolutionary socialism. Following the 1967 defeat, which revealed its bankruptcy, Qaradawi saw two possible solutions to the decline of the Arabs. The first was overt communism (*al-Hall al-Shuyu'i al-Ahmar al-Sarih*), while the second was Islam. Qaradawi devoted substantial attention to discrediting the former possible solution. Communism denied Islam and all religion, it was materialist and against the *Shari'a*, amoral, against human nature in its call for violence and bloodshed, and against freedom and dignity. It was also against national sovereignty because of its allegiance to the USSR, and constituted a new form of imperialism. Most significantly, communism for Qaradawi was the child of World Judaism. This is evident because Marx, Lenin and Trotsky were all Jews, as were the leaders of the communist movement in the Arab world.¹⁰³

Qaradawi suggested that the world's six hundred million Muslims—one fifth of the world's population—could be a third bloc able to change the global balance of power. The Muslim countries occupied important strategic areas in the world and the numerical weight of Islamic states, meant that, were they all to take a single stance, they would represent a strong international power. For Qaradawi, the Muslim world encompassed all countries settled by Muslims, where Islamic slogans are raised and the call to prayer is heard from the mosques. This was the Islamic *watan* (country) to be protected. Muslims living as minorities in other countries were also part of the *umma* (community) and should be defended. For Qaradawi, the unity of the *umma*, was a given, its actualisation prevented by inauthentic regimes in each of the states of the Islamic *watan*. The solution was to eradicate atheism and ignorance in the administration of Muslim states. Arab leaders following independence were *khawagat bidun quba'at* (foreigners without hats). Through them, Western imperialism (communist and capitalist) continued to exert moral, cultural and intellectual influence over Muslim societies. Thus, he called for enforcing moral and religious entry criteria for all public offices, including candidates in parliamentary elections to ensure that Muslim states further Muslim interests.¹⁰⁴

The basic shortcoming of the Arab revolutions for Qaradawi lay in their failure to 'change souls' (*taghyeer al-nafs*), which alone would constitute real revolutionary change, and which was possible only through faith. The so-called revolutionaries also ignored and attacked the principle of freedom of expression, particularly for the 'best of the national elements,' by which he undoubtedly referred to Islamists. To the extent that the socialist regimes adopted some religious ideas, they were mixed with Western liberalism and scientific socialism to produce utter confusion and moral collapse. The Muslim masses, for him, were dissatisfied with these regimes, as they still 'love[d] God and the book' and had the 'deepest faith.' As such, they would challenge the leaderships.

There is a tension in Qaradawi between creating an authentic Islamic society and recognising the existence of an already existing Islamic *umma*, but Qaradawi represents the mainstream, non-Qutbist, or moderate, school within the Muslim Brotherhood in not denying that Islamic societies do exist—they are not all *jahili*. But this important distinction notwithstanding, Qaradawi echoes Qutb's perception of Israel as a manifestation of a long-standing Jewish conspiracy against Islam. 'World Judaism' is the real enemy alongside the Western crusader states that support Israel.

Revolutionary Thought Becomes Reactionary

Just as the Egyptian Islamist movement was affected by left-wing categories of analysis, following 1967 the writings of Islamist intellectuals like Qaradawi, as well as the religious pronouncements of the regime, led many leftist intellectuals to islamicise their own discourse. Arab revolutionary thought was, Sadiq al-Azm lamented in 1968, becoming reactionary. As al-Azm noted, some ‘so-called leftists’, including writers for the Egyptian Marxist journal *al-Tali'a*, expounded upon elaborate new political formulae like *al-Ishtirakiya al-Arabiya al-Ilmiya al-Islamiya al-Mu'mina*, or ‘Arab-Scientific-Islamic-Believing-Socialism’.¹⁰⁵ An example of this as applied to Israel is perhaps that of William Sulayman, who in the July 1967 issue of *al-Tali'a* argued that although Judaism was not the same as Zionism, Israel was nothing more than a base for imperialism since during the Second World War the Zionists ‘conquered the United States’.¹⁰⁶

Leftist exponents of ‘third ways’ between socialism and capitalism, between modernity and tradition, would help pave the way for the widespread acceptance of not only the Islamist prognosis for domestic social and political change, but also for an interpretation of regional identity that eliminated socialist revolution as a feature of the political landscape and emphasised, instead, ‘authentic’ cultural and religious factors. The general political and intellectual retrenchment that took place after 1967 also contributed to the greater prominence given to religion in Egyptian political discourse, with liberal frameworks of analysis also contributing to this. In the intellectuals who followed Zurayq, in Heikal’s analysis and the establishment of the al-Ahram Centre under Boutros-Ghali, and in the Islamic nationalism of Qaradawi and Kishk, the claim to study the world *as it was*, contributed to the substantiation of an Arab Islamic authenticity in counterposition to an Israeli or Western reality. As Sayyid Yasin, a prominent liberal/leftist academic and former head of the al-Ahram Centre wrote in reference to the relative merits of the Marxist and Islamist intellectual currents:

If we may use the terms ‘the authentic’ and ‘the modern’, which have become popular in Arabic literature in the last years, we would say that the aim of the Muslim Brotherhood to create an Islamic state constituted a search for authenticity without sufficient attention to modernity. In contrast, the Marxist aim of establishing a socialist state signified a search for the modern without sufficient attention to the authentic.¹⁰⁷

Chapter 8 discusses the way in which the culture-clash and anti-imperialism paradigms combined in the 1970s, partly as a result of the marriage between Marxism and Islamism on the part of some thinkers.

Conclusion

The culture-clash paradigm was perhaps the one that best reflected the need for the regime to resonate in domestic and regional, as opposed to international, settings. It was largely the conception of Israel as a religious and cultural implant in an Arab or Muslim region that distinguished the Egyptian view from that of its major international backer, the Soviet Union. The culturalist analysis blended well with that of the Ba'th regionally, as well as the main Palestinian groups. More broadly, and historically, the cultural analysis of Israel found its reflection in the Germanic-style nationalisms that emerged in the Middle East in the 1930s and which continued to form a component of radical Arab nationalism in the 1950s and 1960s. The Nazi/fascist link should not, however, be overstated. If pre-revolutionary groups like Young Egypt and the Muslim Brotherhood were inspired by certain aspects of Nazism, the continuing salience of religion in Egyptian society throughout the period under study in this thesis facilitated the perpetuation of conceptions of relations with Israel, and the 'West' broadly defined, in terms of a culture-clash. Islamist writers who elaborated on this issue after the 1967 War, reiterating positions developed in the years prior to it and not significantly developing the thesis of Sayyid Qutb from the 1940s, recognised the fact that Nasser's socialism, like the liberal nationalism of the *ancien régime*, had not fundamentally altered the conceptual framework of the majority of Egyptians. After 1967, the decline in Egypt's relations with the Soviet Union and Saudi Arabia's success in translating its economic into political and ideological power, provided a regional, though not global, context for the increased reliance on the culture-clash paradigm—an element of the regime's analysis of Israel that had generally been minimised, rather than renounced, in the heyday of Nasserism.

For all the condemnations of Qutb, Qaradawi and Kishk, the parallels with Marxist thought are striking. Israel was supported by Western crusaders, Arab regimes were propped up by imperialists, the goal of the Jews (like the imperialists) was to fragment the *umma* (or Arab Nation) and unity and revolution were the only antidotes. But although these thinkers often seemed to share an anti-imperialist conceptualisation of Israel with the left, albeit using different vocabulary, the position of the Muslim Brotherhood and thinkers sympathetic to it cannot be reduced to a simple restatement of Marxist-Leninist categories, packaged for mass consumption. The key difference, and indeed ambiguity, in the Islamist paradigm is the conceptualisation of Jews. According to Kepel's reading of Brotherhood thought in the 1970s, Islamist thinkers identified four primary enemies to the Islamic *umma*: Jewry, crusaders, communism and secularism, with the interrelationship between these categories often obscure. In the reading most faithful to the categories of the left, World Jewry centred

around Israel is the servant of Christian crusaders (imperialism) in the region, whereas the, perhaps more common, interpretation entails a reversal of this conception to see the long arms of Jewish conspiracy pulling the strings of the West. There are also clear parallels between the work of Qaradawi and Kishk and that of Constantine Zurayq, particularly in terms of their acceptance that the 'Jews' constitute a national community in the same way as do 'Arabs' or 'Muslims.' This synergy would become evident in some of the intellectual developments following 1973, as the next chapter discusses.

¹ Krämer, *The Jews in Modern Egypt, 1914-1952* 144.

² Ibid.

³ Taji-Farouki, "Thinking on the Jews," 324.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid., 325.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Mitchell, *The Society of the Muslim Brothers* 268.

⁸ Krämer, *The Jews in Modern Egypt, 1914-1952* 145.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Lia, *The Society of the Muslim Brothers in Egypt : The Rise of an Islamic Mass Movement 1928-1942* 235. (emphasis added)

¹¹ Abdelnasser, *The Islamic Movement in Egypt : Perceptions of International Relations, 1967-81* 41.

¹² Ibid. 42.

¹³ Talhami, *Palestine and Egyptian National Identity* 14.

¹⁴ Abdel-Malek, *Egypt: Military Society : The Army Regime, the Left, and Social Change under Nasser* 35.

¹⁵ Lia, *The Society of the Muslim Brothers in Egypt : The Rise of an Islamic Mass Movement 1928-1942* 244.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Taji-Farouki, "Thinking on the Jews," 329.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Nettler, *Past Trials and Present Tribulations : A Muslim Fundamentalist's View of the Jews* 49.

²⁰ Abdelnasser, *The Islamic Movement in Egypt : Perceptions of International Relations, 1967-81* 53.

²¹ Ibid. 47.

²² El Awaisi, "The Conceptual Approach of the Egyptian Muslim Brothers Towards the Palestine Question, 1928-1949," 234.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.: 228.

²⁶ Ibid.: 229.

²⁷ Ibid.: 231.

²⁸ el Kosheri Mahfouz, *Socialisme Et Pouvoir En Égypte [Socialism and Power in Egypt]* 50.

²⁹ Ibid. 59.

³⁰ Lia, *The Society of the Muslim Brothers in Egypt : The Rise of an Islamic Mass Movement 1928-1942* 252.

³¹ el Kosheri Mahfouz, *Socialisme Et Pouvoir En Égypte [Socialism and Power in Egypt]* 88.

³² Dawisha, *Egypt in the Arab World : The Elements of Foreign Policy* 35.

³³ Kepel, *The Prophet and Pharaoh : Muslim Extremism in Contemporary Egypt* 41.

³⁴ Mustafa, *Al-Nizam Al-Siyasi Wa-Al-Mu'aradah Al-Islamiyah Fi Misr [the Political System and the Islamic Opposition in Egypt]* 132.

³⁵ Beinin, *Was the Red Flag Flying There?: Marxist Politics and the Arab-Israeli Conflict in Egypt and Israel, 1948-1965* 14.

³⁶ Haykal, *Sphinx and Commissar : The Rise and Fall of Soviet Influence in the Arab World* 52.

³⁷ Gamal Abdel Nasser, Speech 29 April 1954 (Nasser Institute and Bibliotheca Alexandrina, [cited 10 October 2007]); available from http://nasser.bibalex.org/Data/GR09_1/Speeches/1954/540429_1.htm.

³⁸ Hasan Hanafi, *Al-Din Wa-Al-Thawrah Fi Misr, 1952-1981 [Religion and Revolution in Egypt: 1952-1981]* (al-Qahirah: Maktabat Madbali, 1989).

³⁹ James, *Nasser at War : Arab Images of the Enemy* 15.

⁴⁰ el Kosheri Mahfouz, *Socialisme Et Pouvoir En Égypte [Socialism and Power in Egypt]* 60.

⁴¹ As'ad AbuKhalil, "George Habash and the Movement of Arab Nationalists: Neither Unity nor Liberation," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 28, no. 4 (1999).

⁴² Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for State : The Palestinian National Movement, 1949-1993* 72.

⁴³ Ibid. 73.

⁴⁴ Ibrahim M. Abu-Rabi, *Contemporary Arab Thought : Studies in Post-1967 Arab Intellectual History* (London: Pluto, 2004).

⁴⁵ Abdel-Malek, *Egypt: Military Society : The Army Regime, the Left, and Social Change under Nasser* 257.

⁴⁶ Ibid. 262.

⁴⁷ Aflaq, *Choice of Texts from the Ba'th Party Founder's Thought* 99.

⁴⁸ Seale, *The Struggle for Syria: A Study of Post-War Arab Politics, 1945-1958* 153.

⁴⁹ Ibid. 154.

⁵⁰ Ibid. 156.

⁵¹ Aflaq, *Choice of Texts from the Ba'th Party Founder's Thought* 99.

⁵² Seale, *The Struggle for Syria: A Study of Post-War Arab Politics, 1945-1958* 436.

⁵³ Aflaq, *Choice of Texts from the Ba'th Party Founder's Thought* 108.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Hanafi, *Al-Din Wa-Al-Thawrah Fi Misr, 1952-1981 [Religion and Revolution in Egypt: 1952-1981]* 104.

⁵⁶ Ashmawi, *Al-Tarikh Al-Sirri Li-Jama`at Al-Ikhwan Al-Muslimin : Mudhakkirat 'Ali 'Ashmawi Akhir Qadat Al-Tan.Zim Al-Sirri [the Secret History of the Muslim Brotherhood: Recollections of Ali Ashmawi, the Last Leader of the Secret Organisation]* 80.

⁵⁷ Ibid. 85.

⁵⁸ Ibid. 87.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid. 89.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid. 93.

⁶⁶ Sayyid Qutb, *Li-Madha A'damuni? [Why Did They Execute Me?]* (Jiddah: al-Sharikat al-Saudiyah lil-Abhath wa al-Taswiq, 198-?) 17.

⁶⁷ Ibid. 18.

⁶⁸ Ibid. 28.

⁶⁹ Nettler, *Past Trials and Present Tribulations : A Muslim Fundamentalist's View of the Jews* 70.

⁷⁰ Mustafa Sa'dani, *Adwa 'Ala Al-Siyuniyah [Focus on Zionism]* (al-Qahirah: al-Majlis al-A'la lil-Shu'un al-Islamiyah, 1969).

⁷¹ Anwar el Sadat, *Speech, January 8, 1971* (Anwar Sadat Chair for Peace and Development, [cited 15 November 2007]); available from <http://www.bsos.umd.edu/SADAT/archives/speeches.htm>.

⁷² Mustafa, *Al-Nizam Al-Siyasi Wa-Al-Mu'aradah Al-Islamiyah Fi Misr [the Political System and the Islamic Opposition in Egypt]* 153.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid. 154.

⁷⁵ Ibid.(emphasis added)

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Quandt, *Saudi Arabia in the 1980s : Foreign Policy, Security, and Oil* 17.

⁷⁸ Ibid. 31.

⁷⁹ Ibid. 30.

⁸⁰ Ibid. 31.

⁸¹ Haykal, *Kharif Al-Ghadab : Qissat Bidayat Wa-Nihayat 'Asr Anwar Al-Sadat [Autumn of Fury: The Story of the Beginning and End of the Era of Anwar Sadat]* 110.

⁸² Ajami, *The Arab Predicament : Arab Political Thought and Practice since 1967* 52.

⁸³ Ibid. 57.

⁸⁴ Muhammad Jalal Kishk, *Al-Marksiyah Wa-Al-Ghazw Al-Fikri [Marxism and the Intellectual Invasion]*, *Mafahim Islamiyah* (al-Qahirah: al-Dar al-Qawmiyah lil-Taba'ah wa-al-Nashr, 1966) 6.

⁸⁵ Ibid. 7.

⁸⁶ Ibid. 8.

⁸⁷ Ibid. 16.

⁸⁸ Ibid. 10.

⁸⁹ Ibid. 50.

⁹⁰ Ibid. 99.

⁹¹ Ibid. 166.

⁹² Ibid. 164.

⁹³ Ibid. 172.

⁹⁴ Ibid. 197.

⁹⁵ Ibid. 215.

⁹⁶ Ibid. 220.

⁹⁷ Ibid. 221.

⁹⁸ Ibid. 161.

⁹⁹ Ibid. 223.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid. 230.

¹⁰¹ Yusuf Qaradawi, *Al-Hall Al-Islami Faridah Wa-Darurah [the Islamic Solution: Obligation and Necessity]*, 12th ed. (Bayrut: Mu'assasat al-Risalah, 1988) 32.

¹⁰² Ibid. 33.

¹⁰³ Ibid. 36-43.

¹⁰⁴ Tibi, *Arab Nationalism : Between Islam and the Nation-State* 219.

¹⁰⁵ Azm, *Al-Naqd Al-Dhati Ba'da Al-Hazima [Self Criticism after the Defeat]*.

¹⁰⁶ William Sulayman, *al-Tali'a*, July 1967.

¹⁰⁷ Baker, *Sadat and After : Struggles for Egypt's Political Soul* 194.

**Chapter 8: Conceptions of Israel in Egyptian Political Thought:
1973-1981**

The previous three chapters examined conceptions of Israel in Egyptian political thought in terms of three paradigms over the period from 1952 until 1973. Following the October 1973 War and the series of initiatives that led to the Camp David Accords in 1979 the anti-imperialism paradigm fell out of favour in regime, and much intellectual, discourse on Israel. It was replaced at the regime level primarily by the nation-state paradigm, in parallel with the changing nature of Egyptian nationalism away from Arabism and closer to the 'Egypt-first' conception that prevailed before the revolution; and in much intellectual discourse by a combination of the nation-state and culture-clash paradigms. To the extent Israel continued to pose a threat to Egypt and the Arabs that threat was perceived to emanate not ultimately from imperialism, but from Zionism as an ideology. But whereas this shift had begun after 1967, with the threat contained primarily in the 'expansionist' nature of Zionism, after 1973 Zionism was increasingly portrayed as constituting above all a form of racial discrimination or fascism directed against the Palestinians and an intellectual or cultural threat to Arab society as a whole. Belligerence toward Israel, which remained a mainstream position until 1977, was expressed in these terms rather than in those of anti-imperialism. As Sadat's foreign policy toward Israel evolved from the Sinai Agreements through his visit to Jerusalem to the Camp David Accords, conceptions of Israel within the anti-imperialism paradigm became increasingly 'counter-hegemonic', as intellectuals concluded that the Egyptian regime too must belong to the imperialist camp. From 1977, despite the tacit support Sadat had given the Muslim Brotherhood, the idea of Israel as representing an implacable Jewish threat, and the conflict a clash of cultures, also became difficult to reconcile with Sadat's foreign policy trajectory, and this too became 'counter-hegemonic' as Sadat was seen to be acting on behalf of the historic enemies of Islam.

The paradigms in which Israel was conceptualised implied different 'universalisations' of foreign policy choices, meaning the extent to which Egyptian foreign policy was portrayed as serving something beyond narrowly defined national interests. Thus, anti-imperialism tended to be couched in terms of the role Egypt's confrontation with Israel played in the broader global revolutionary or anti-colonial movement. The culture-clash viewed the conflict as one between incompatible cultures and universalised Egypt's role in safeguarding the interests of a broader Arab or Islamic community. The nation-state paradigm

universalised Egyptian policy toward Israel in terms of its service to modernity, international legality and humanity as a whole. This involved the juxtaposition of a moderate, civilised Egypt with an anachronistic, racist Israel. It is in this context that the frequent equation of Zionism with fascism should be understood.

The domestic, regional and international developments that were discussed in Chapter 4 combined to support the above. Domestically, perhaps the most significant factor was Sadat's desire to prevail over Nasserist opposition at both the regime and societal levels and his mobilisation of Islamists and 'Egypt-first' liberal nationalists to this end. Since Nasserists, and 'Nasserised' communists, took Israel's broader significance as a 'tool' of imperialism as a given, Sadat's conclusion that this paradigm was no longer appropriate deprived them of a key mobilising issue in society and point of intersection with regime foreign policy. Internationally, the increased reluctance of the Soviet Union to challenge the United States within the framework of détente, as well as the People's Republic of China's rapprochement with the West in 1973 and the related de-radicalisation of the Non-Aligned Movement, diminished the resonance of a discourse of anti-imperialism. On the regional level, the growing prestige and economic influence of Saudi Arabia and other Gulf States not only encouraged the diminution of the anti-imperialism paradigm—in which the shifting position of the PLO vis-à-vis Israel's existence and the possibility of creating a Palestinian state alongside Israel also played a role¹—but it also lent more credibility to conceptions of Israel framed in terms of a culture-clash.

This chapter examines these shifts through a review of a range of key intellectual interventions on the subject of Israel during the period from 1973 until the death of Sadat in 1981. It notes the shift in regime thinking by examining some of Sadat's speeches and the first major post-war policy statement, the October Paper of 1974. It then examines the perseverance of anti-imperialism as a counter-hegemonic discourse by looking at some Nasserist and Marxist writings including those of Ghali Shukri and Lutfi al-Khuli, both of whom continued well into the 1970s to conceive of Israel as a tool in a much broader imperialist agenda in which Sadat was implicated. The chapter reviews the elaboration of ideas on regional relations organised around the concept of peaceful coexistence. Whereas for al-Khuli the principle of peaceful coexistence, as was the case during the 1960s, was extended only to the Arab states of the region and provided a rationale for cooperation with 'reactionaries' like Saudi Arabia and Jordan, another Marxist thinker, Muhammad Sid Ahmed, took this further to include Israel in a pattern of regional détente. The principle of peaceful coexistence with Israel intersected closely with parts of the broad campaign of anti-

Nasserism that the regime tacitly promoted after 1973. The chapter thus looks at some work that, in critiquing Nasser's 'adventurist' foreign policy also helped support the transition from viewing Israel as a tool of imperialism to seeing it as a nation-state, as well as the downgrading of Israel as an existential threat in comparison to domestic political and economic issues.

Also in the context of anti-Nasserism, the chapter discusses Islamist discourse on Israel primarily through a review of some contributions to the Muslim Brotherhood's *al-Da'wa* [*The Call*] newspaper from 1976, and also by looking at a work by the historian Aisha Abd al-Rahman (Bint al-Shati). It is in this discourse that the culture-clash paradigm emerges most strongly, combining a view of Israel primarily as a manifestation of an eternal Jewish threat to Islam and a conception of Marxism (code for Nasserism) as another manifestation of this threat. The next part of the chapter considers works that prioritise Zionism as the main *problematique* in Egyptian or Arab relations with Israel. In discussing some interventions by Sayyid Yasin, Mufid Shihab al-Din and Abdelwahhab Elmessiri, the chapter shows that the discourse on Zionism entailed a combination of elements of all three paradigms, but most particularly the nation-state and culture-clash. The universalisation of the conflict with Zionism as one between a resurgent Arab world and an anachronistic, racist Israel supported the view of Israel as a nation-state, and one that, absent its Zionist underpinnings, could exist. Discussion, particularly on the part of Elmessiri, of the threat Zionism posed to culture and identity in the region, as well as the role played by Zionists in conditioning Western policy—and culture—fed into the culture-clash paradigm. Elmessiri also, the chapter shows, explained the role of imperialism not so much in terms of its using Israel as a 'stooge' as its enabling or encouraging Israel to remain a Zionist state. The idea of a 'culture war' or 'war of ideas' waged in the United States to turn decision-makers and public opinion away from Israel was central to the analysis of Elmessiri and the long-time Sadat confident Ihsan Abd al-Quddus, whose ideas are discussed at the end of this chapter. Abd al-Quddus takes this intellectual journey back to the Sadat regime's foreign policy priorities. In seeking to 'take the battle to the United States' Sadat too had internalised a view of the conflict as a war of ideas.

Changes in Regime Thinking

The nation-state conceptualisation of Israel was apparent in Sadat's comments to parliament during the October War. Sadat was clear that he accepted the existence of Israel as a nation-state. 'We are not upholders of extermination, as [the Israelis] allege,' he told an extraordinary meeting of the People's Assembly. He also couched the war with Israel in

universalist terms quite different to the anti-imperialist rhetoric that had pervaded much of the Nasser period, as well as the first two years of Sadat's presidency:

In our war, we have not violated values and laws approved by the community of nations and stipulated in its Charter which was inscribed by the blood of free nations after their victory over Fascism and Nazism.

We could well say that our war is the continuation of the war of mankind against Fascism and Nazism, since Zionism with its racial doctrine and its logic of expansion through violence and brutality is but a feeble mimicry of Nazism and Fascism—a mimicry which provokes derision and not fear, depreciation and not hatred.²

Gently drawing a line between the October War and those waged by his predecessor, and anticipating much of the 'anti-Nasserist' discourse in the mid- to late-1970s, Sadat continued,

The whole world has testified to our rights and hailed our courage in defence of these rights. The world is now aware that we did not start the aggression, but initiated the duty of self-defence. We are not against the values and laws of the international community, we are for them. We are not adventurers in war—we are seekers of peace.³

In April 1974, the first statement of Sadat's new 'free-market' economic doctrine—*infitah*—appeared in the form of the October Paper, which also constitutes good evidence for Sadat's turn away from an anti-imperialist framework. This is evident in the tenor of the Paper's Arabism as well as its discussion of the changed international context, specifically détente. The threat that Israel posed was also explicitly linked to Zionism, rather than imperialism, and the Paper affirmed that the October War halted Zionism's 'expansionist tide'.^{*} The Paper is interesting not only as evidence of Sadat's thinking at the time, but also in that it foreshadowed many of the themes later taken up by intellectuals in their treatment of the Israel issue.

The foreign investment that was given the most discussion in the Paper was Arab investment, which was encouraged and acknowledged in the name of Arab nationalism. The

* It must be noted that despite these departures, and though written at the height of Sadat's prestige in the wake of the October War, the Paper remained true to much of the Nasserist legacy. It is particularly striking the delicacy with which the Paper repudiates elements of the Nasser experience, such as the failure to complement social with political freedom. Also, in introducing new policy directions, the Paper frequently insists that nothing new is being said, often referring to the UAR Charter of 1961 to justify *infitah*, including its key dimension of opening up to foreign investment. Significantly, the chair of the Paper's drafting committee was Isma'il Sabri Abdullah, a Marxist, and the committee also contained the veteran leader of the Egyptian Communist Party Fu'ad Mursi. (Beattie, *Egypt During the Sadat Years* 140.)

ultimate commitment to Arab unity was restated in the Paper, but the road to its achievement differed significantly to that prevalent even under the ‘Arab solidarity’ permutation of Nasserism. Unity, for Sadat, would occur by way of Arab economic integration, a process that would be facilitated and encouraged by the October War. Thus the Paper thanked the Arab Kings and Heads of State for their support, referring to the use for the first time of the ‘oil weapon’, and insisted that ‘perhaps one of the most important results of the October War is that Arab nationalism has transcended the confines of being a mere slogan to become a palpable, well-defined action.’⁴ It continued:

The idea of Arab nationalism has ... matured, emerging from the framework of enthusiastic slogans which gave rise to much controversy, to a trend towards possible practical measures despite disagreement over many other issues. Egypt being the heart of the Arab nation has to bear its responsibility in preserving, consolidating and promoting that constructive tendency, particularly in the field of economic co-operation.⁵

Despite efforts to portray the new policies as a continuation of, rather than departure from, the July Revolution, the Paper was a far cry from the UAR Charter. The word ‘imperialism’ was mentioned only a handful of times, and only in the context of the past, seemingly with the meaning of colonialism. The concept of ‘reaction’ was completely absent. Thus it referred to the success of the July revolution in ridding Egypt of feudalism and imperialism. It noted that in the 1960s ‘no more than a few imperialist pockets’ were remaining, again referring to those countries under direct colonial control. The Paper celebrated the fact that ‘imperialism with its old forms has withdrawn; doctrinal rigidity has been removed while human progress is moving ahead with unprecedented speed.’⁶

The analysis of the October Paper was couched in the spirit of détente. It described a reformed system of international relations, with the world community emergent from the Cold War. In this new system, a multiplicity of power blocs would exist, with global significance related to economic viability. Thus Japan had translated its economic successes into political influence, the countries of Western Europe were growing closer to political, as well as economic, unity, and the People’s Republic of China acceded to the United Nations. Most importantly, East and West Europe were drawing together (via Helsinki), and the Soviet Union was on friendly terms with the United States and opening up its economy. As such, Sadat concluded, ‘We have to locate and define our position within these new international realities.’⁷

The October War marked another global watershed, the Paper affirmed. But this time it was Egypt producing, not simply reacting to, global transformation. That change, specifically,

was the termination of the expansionist Zionist project. The war, the Paper claimed, 'has finally halted the expansionist Zionist tide which has been gaining more lands and victories almost once in every generation for nearly a century now, when the first waves of Zionist immigrants started to flow uninterrupted into Palestine.'⁸ Whereas before the war 'all the official programmes of the Israeli parties were based on gaining more forms of expansion, annexing new territories and building cities and settlements,' after Egypt's victory, 'a comprehensive process for self-revision has started in Israel itself, to revise the future of those springboards on which the Zionist belief and the then predominant image of the country's future—until the eve of the war—was built.'⁹ Egypt acted not just in its own interests, the Paper insisted, but to defend 'the entire Arab nation' which was threatened by Zionist invasion. Sadat also, echoing statements he made during the war, universalised Egypt's performance more broadly: 'I can even say that our struggle was for the sake of mankind which wants to live in peace based on justice, to put an end to the policy of expansion and annexation and to assert the right of peoples to self-determination. For this reason, we believe that the support we enjoyed during the battle will continue and gain further momentum as a mainstay in the stage of construction and reconstruction.'¹⁰ Thus the intellectual door to normalisation with a non-Zionist Israel was opened and linked to the 'peace dividend' Egypt could claim from the West.

Anti-Imperialism as a Counter-Hegemonic Discourse

Following the 1973 war, to be 'Nasserist' became increasingly associated with opposition, as did the Nasserist analysis that Israel was primarily a tool of imperialism. Heikal, as late as 1981, described Israel as a 'Western implant' in the Arab world aimed at 'preventing its unification and strength'.¹¹ Within the universities, although not with the same intensity that had characterised the movement of 1971-72, Nasserist groups in 1974-75 protested the Sinai Agreements and continued to oppose 'any agreement which implied an acceptance of Israel [and] began an intensive campaign with wall pamphlets and in [their] semi-legal student papers'.¹² As Sadat's peace initiatives accumulated through the decade, and the optimism of 1973 faded, Nasserist opposition grew stronger. For Baker, '[t]he Nasserist theme of a betrayal of the Arab victory in 1973 took hold. In the Nasserist view, Sadat's diplomacy had isolated Egypt from the Arabs and left Egyptians standing helpless as Israel accelerated the colonization of the West Bank, attacked the Iraqi nuclear reactor in 1981, and invaded Lebanon in the summer of 1982'.¹³

Other intellectuals faithful to the Nasserist heritage proceeded from the Israel-imperialism link to draw much broader, conspiratorial, conclusions about the true nature of Sadat's peace

initiative, in a way that, in stark contrast to the function of anti-imperialist discourse before 1973, was ‘counter-hegemonic’. First published in Arabic in 1979, Ghali Shukri’s work on Sadat’s Egypt is true to the classic anti-imperialism paradigm that prevailed during the Nasser years. An activist during the student movement of the early 1970s, Shukri’s work is representative of the Arabism of the Egyptian communists. Whereas Sadat portrayed Egypt as riding the wave of détente and technological innovation, Shukri accused Sadat of being the instrument of an international counter-revolution, with religious extremist dimensions. For Shukri, the Sinai Agreements, Zionism and the Lebanese Civil War were different dimensions of a single international strategy that united Muslim (Sadat), Christian (Maronites) and Jewish (Israel) ‘fascists’ against the Arab masses. He wrote:

In reality, the strategic plan of Tel Aviv and Washington ever since the tripartite aggression of 1956, consisted in finding a new formula for the Israeli-Western alliance, in such a way as to give the Hebrew State the chance of expansion in the Arab Mashreq, and to enable the Shah’s empire to extend to the Arab Gulf, and the new American colonialism to impose its hegemony over the entire region from the Maghreb to the Near East.¹⁴

For Shukri, the failure of this plan for Israeli expansion and US hegemony in the 1960s necessitated the Israeli attack of 1967, with UNSCR 242 and the Rogers Plan being fully planned extensions of the grand strategy.

Another Marxist, Lutfi al-Khuli, shared with Shukri the counter-hegemonic conviction that the Egyptian regime was part of a global counter-revolutionary trend. Al-Khuli had apparently concluded after Sinai II that Sadat was a CIA agent. *Al-Tali'a*, the Marxist journal edited by al-Khuli, set itself staunchly against the Sinai II Agreement, claiming that it was impossible for the United States to play the role of impartial mediator between the Arabs and Israel. For him the Arab right (in which he implicitly included the Egyptian regime), which claimed 1973 as their victory, was assisted by hidden ties with neo-colonialism.¹⁵ As with Shukri, al-Khuli saw that it was in this nexus, between the leaderships of the Arab states, Zionism and imperialism, that the extension of ethnic and religious conflict throughout the Arab world could be understood. Al-Khuli viewed the Egyptian-Saudi alliance as bad for the progressive programme and believed that working with the Arab oil powers in areas beyond the essential shared interests would be wrong due to their reactionary natures and because they were helping America sell itself as a new ‘friendly face’ in the region, one that would not openly side with Israel as it did in the 1950s and 1960s.¹⁶ The sectarian nature of the Israeli-Arab conflict, which used to be an exceptional condition in the region, was now spreading and acting to create a new system of

statelets with factional, religious characteristics.¹⁷ Ultimately, for al-Khuli, the social basis of the regime must change. The petit bourgeois role in the revolution was finished and a new class coalition must take over.¹⁸

Al-Khuli called on the Arab progressive movement to keep demanding progress in the cultural, social and economic spheres of society. But the movement, he observed, had known ebbs and flows and must be attentive to international changes. After the mid-1960s the progressive struggle witnessed an ebb (*mawjat jazar*). The 1973 War sparked a new 'flow' (*mawjat madd*) in the movement, and in the mid-1970s it oscillated between negative and positive impulses, negatively combating the oil hegemony of the conservative states and the related growth of a 'capitalist, parasitic comprador class' in most Arab countries, while positively fighting the American policy of step-by-step diplomacy and supporting the Palestinian revolution. Palestine had become the new focus for the Arab revolution, replacing Egypt as the 'nucleus state'. Supporting it was, for al-Khuli, the most constructive path since the Palestinian resistance mobilised the entire Arab movement,¹⁹ including progressive religious forces, represented in the Egyptian Tagammu' party and similar groupings in Lebanon, Algeria, Iraq, Syria and Yemen. It was important for him that this unified movement resist the attempts of big (US) and little (Israel) imperialisms to use religion against it. He saw an imperialist hand in the regeneration of *salafi* movements that distracted the population with mythical battles and excommunication campaigns (*hamalat takfir*).²⁰ A strong movement uniting progressive religious and secular forces could end this Zionist and imperialist manipulation of religious differences.^{21*}

Imperialism, for al-Khuli, hoped to transform states like Israel into technological-industrial economic bases for world capitalism to help inhibit the spread of socialism in their regions; to constitute loci of advancement and civilisation in their backward hinterlands, and as such guarantee the continuity of the Third World as a source of energy and raw materials for the capitalist West; and also to ensure the survival of these states that, as the Cold War ebbed, were on the decline. In the Arab world, global imperialism and its Israeli protégé were forced onto the defensive by the transformation in the balance of power wrought by the 1973 War. They thus used various nefarious strategies to regain the initiative, including the 'occupying of oil wells' by the International Energy Agency, fomenting internal divisions to spark inter-Arab conflicts (between the October allies, Egypt, Syria and the PLO), border

* More recently, the Egyptian economist Galal Amin used a similar argument to blame violent Islamism, including an attack on Nagib Mahfuz, in Egypt on Israeli meddling. Amin, *Al-Muthaqafun Al-Arab Wa-Isra'il [Arab Intellectuals and Israel]*.

disputes (between Egypt and Libya), separatist movements (such as the Western Saharans and the Iraqi Kurds) and civil wars (such as Lebanon).²² Al-Khuli predicted that in the years to come, they would try also to spread instability in Somalia, Southern Sudan and the Arabian Peninsula. Al-Khuli described the ‘Palestinisation’ of the Gulf, which had become ‘*Filstin al-Batruliya*’ (Oil Palestine), with the Shah’s Iran representing ‘*Isra’il al-Batruliya*’ (Oil Israel). The goal was to destroy the democratic national movement, particularly the Palestinian resistance—now the focus for the Arab revolution—and its progressive allies in Lebanon.²³

Anti-Imperialism and the Iranian Revolution

The view of Israel as part of a broader imperialist as well as ‘World Zionist’ design, rather than as a manifestation of Jewish enmity toward Islam, received an unlikely boost in the form of the Islamic Revolution in Iran in 1979. In part due to the presence of a relatively large Jewish minority in Iran*, as well as Khomeini’s desire to ‘universalise’ and export revolution globally, he was clearer than many Egyptian Islamists, as well as the Saudi King Faisal, to distinguish between Zionists and Jews, and instead link Israel and Zionism with imperialism. As early as 1964, Khomeini had conceptualised Israel as a wing of imperialism: ‘the economy of this country is in the hands of Israel and its agents, and all the factories, such as Arj, Pepsi-Cola, Iran Air, and also television are in Israeli hands. Today, even eggs are brought in from Israel. *We have to cut the root of imperialism by cutting this relationship with Israel.*’²⁴ In 1981, he linked both Egypt and Iraq with a global Zionist plot:

Today Israel and its close friend Egypt are thinking up ways of creating a united front to destroy the Muslims and their lofty ideals. Recently Iraq, along with some of the heads of the other regional countries, approved of this plan. For nearly twenty years now, I have been informing people of the danger of international Zionism. Today, I feel the danger for all the freedom-bestowing revolutions of the world, including the recent Islamic revolution in Iran, is no less than it was in the past, for at the present time these world-devouring bloodsuckers using various techniques to defeat the oppressed and weak of the earth have risen up and are active. Our nation and the free nations of the world should bravely and vigilantly resist these dangerous plots.²⁵

Khomeini defended arrested Muslim Brotherhood members in 1981, linking Sadat with Israel and America in a way that resonated with the anti-imperialism paradigm, but placing it in more Islamic terms:

* This factor would make a comparison between Iranian and Egyptian conceptions of Israel a fruitful area of research.

Today, with the widespread arrests of the Muslim Brothers in Egypt, Sadat has completed his service to Israel. His alliance with America and Israel has shamed the Arab people. [He has formed] an alliance with an Israel which at this time, in addition to the crimes it carries out in the region, has committed another great crime, that is excavation work at the site of the al-Aqsa mosque, the first qibla of the Muslims; and with the weakening of the foundations of this mosque, the first qibla of the Muslims will, God forbid, be destroyed and Israel will achieve its vile wish.²⁶

In 1979, Khomeini revealed an analysis similar to that used by the PLO (discussed in Chapter 5) in explaining its goal of establishing a democratic state for Arabs and Jews in all of Palestine in its distinction between Jews and Zionists in Israel, as the following exchange with a journalist reveals.

Question: Amongst your demands is the annihilation of the state of Israel; if this leads to Israel's destruction and victory for the Palestinians, what will be the fate of the Jews?

Answer: The issue of the Jews is quite separate from that of the Zionists. If the Muslims are victorious over the Zionists, the latter will meet the same fate as the deposed Shah, however, the Muslims will do nothing to the Jews, for they are a nation like other nations, they will carry on with their lives and they will not suffer dispossession.²⁷

Khomeini's demand that Zionism be uprooted from Palestine was praised, according to Abdelnasser, by 'all Islamic actors in Egypt,' in contrast to 'the increasing trend among Arab states to limit their goal to Israeli withdrawal from the territories occupied in June 1967 and granting the Palestinian people their national rights.'²⁸ Some sections of the radical *al-Jihad* group, to which Sadat's assassins belonged, 'hoped Iran would defeat Iraq in the 1980 war and would thereafter move to seize Jordan and proceed to liberate Palestine.'²⁹ Some members of the so-called 'Islamic left', such as Hasan al-Hanafi, praised the revolution as 'a reinvigoration of the Nasserite ideals of anti-Zionism and a progressive anti-imperialist revolution,'³⁰ and celebrated the fact that 'Islam is capable of serving as an umbrella for all political trends in [Egypt]: liberation, Marxism, and Arab nationalism. The Iranian revolution did it and succeeded.'³¹ Hanafi's appraisal was supported by Abd al-Sattar al-Tawilah, who in October 1979 wrote in the leftist *Ruz al-Yusuf*, '[w]e support every struggle against colonialism...we supported the Iranian revolution because one of its affirmed objectives was to remove Iran from the American ascendancy.'³² Irrespective of whether Khomeini's anti-imperialism and focus on the United States' role in supporting Israel contributed to a waning of the culture-clash paradigm for conceptualising Israel in Egypt, the example of an anti-imperialist, anti-Zionist and Islamic revolution in the region was one from which counter-hegemonic movements of both leftist and Islamist orientations could draw strength.

From Anti-Imperialism to the Nation-State: A Middle Eastern ‘Détente’

Despite expressing distinctly counter-hegemonic ideas linking Israel to Arab, including Egyptian, ‘reaction’ from within the anti-imperialism paradigm, al-Khuli shared with Sadat, and the Soviet Union, a view of the Middle East as a global flashpoint that threatened the peace and stability of the world in an era of superpower détente. The ‘principal contradiction’ facing the Egyptian progressive movement was not that with Sadat, in other words, but between the Arabs and Israel. In this, al-Khuli’s intervention also reflected the Soviet rationale that calming the Cold War was in the interests of the entire world, and a universalisation of the Arab-Israeli conflict to portray it as threatening global peace and security. In the era of détente (*al-infiraj al-dawali*), the Middle East remained a centre of ‘Hot War’ because of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Al-Khuli considered two main possible trajectories for the Middle East. The first, the one he considered most likely, was that the region would explode into violence due to the fact that the parties to the Cold War—particularly the US—ignored the locus of instability that was the Palestine issue, as well as the fact that the Americans had the monopoly over deciding the type of peace realised, in concert with Israel. The less likely, but preferable, path was that of détente, in which the independence and sovereignty of the states in the region would be respected, along with the rights and freedoms of its people, including the Palestinians’ right to build their own state.³³

Al-Khuli drew a distinction between the United States, as the embodiment of world imperialism, and Israel, its partner and ‘little imperialism’ in the region. Only by weakening the control of both powers over the destiny of the region could a just, stable peace be achieved. He saw the solution in the strengthening of ties between Arab states in order to achieve the primary goal of liberating the land. Restating ideas he, and others such as Heikal, had developed during Nasser’s experiment with Arab ‘summitry’ (see Chapter 6), al-Khuli argued for ‘national coexistence’ (*ta’ayush qawmi*) with conservative states but stressed that it should be limited to those areas that directly served essential shared interests, such as creating an independent Palestinian state, while the social struggle continued throughout the entire Middle East region. The historical situation, al-Khuli averred, was right in that there were shared Arab interests in a ‘unified national economic entity,’ which would transform Arab ‘quantity’, or population, into Arab ‘quality’, or economic and technical capability, while respecting the rights of all systems and classes in the Arab world.³⁴

Al-Khuli, like Sadat, recognised that in this era of détente, new power blocs had emerged in the world: China, Japan, Europe and, following the October War, the Arab world as the

‘sixth world power’. The OPEC decision to raise oil prices after the War marked the first time the developing world had by its own initiative influenced the world capitalist economy, thus giving the Arab world significant weight in the Third World. Al-Khuli argued that the Arabs should build on this by strengthening ties between the Arab and African countries on one hand and Europe on the other to counterbalance the United States. By joining with Europe in the spirit of Helsinki—that is, while retaining their independence—the Arabs could break the ‘American and Israeli monopolies’ and bring the Middle East out of the Cold War and into the world of détente. In such a world, for al-Khuli, ‘racist-colonialist entities’, such as South Africa, Rhodesia and Israel, would lose their significance.

Although arguing for a Palestinian state, ascribing some autonomy to Israel as representing ‘little imperialism’ and arguing for a Middle Eastern détente, al-Khuli’s focus was on peaceful coexistence among the *Arab* states of the region, with Israel as the unifying ‘other’, and as such represents a direct continuation of the Nasserist Unity of Action doctrine that he and others helped elaborate in the early to mid-1960s. A more radical intellectual development, that moved beyond Unity of Action, was spearheaded by another Marxist in the 1970s. Although the work of Muhammad Sid Ahmed could be construed to provide ideological support for Sadat’s moves toward peace with Israel, he did not simply mimic Sadat, and continued to view the conflict on a regional level in terms of imperialism in a way that differed from the regime’s conception since 1967. The main feature that distinguished his intervention from the anti-imperialism paradigm was his suggestion that the links binding the United States and Israel could be broken and a peaceful resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict possible absent defeating imperialism as a whole. Thus, the principal contradiction had become between the Arabs and Israel, on the one hand, and US imperialism, on the other.

Sid Ahmed had been active in the communist movement in the 1940s, a member of Iskra and henceforth the group MISHMISH that had adopted a position that argued strongly for Israeli self-determination (see Chapter 6). Sid Ahmed, along with many communists, had come to terms with Nasser’s regime after 1955. He joined Heikal on the *al-Ahram* newspaper and was, from the late 1960s, a regular contributor and editor of *al-Tali'a*. The 1974 book, *After the Guns Fall Silent*, was, as its Forward explains, the result of discussions within the al-Ahram Centre for Political and Strategic Studies in the wake of the October 1973 War. In it, he suggested that a peaceful resolution to the Arab-Israeli conflict was not only a possible, but the only plausible, outcome if the interests of both Arabs and Israelis were to be secured. In 1974, before Sadat’s trip to Jerusalem and the diplomatic *volt-face*

that it embodied, this position, essentially that of Hakim and Mahfuz two years earlier, remained extremely provocative, particularly in the Arab world as a whole, but also inside Egypt. At the time, Sid Ahmed was part of a genuine vanguard of Egyptian intellectuals that moved away from bellicosity and, in many ways, closer to the traditional position of the Egyptian communist movement, and that of the USSR, that saw two legitimate communities in historic Palestine, Arabs and Jews.

The solution identified in the 1940s was to unite Jewish and Arab workers in the struggle against global imperialism and capitalist exploitation. This position had been invalidated by Pan-Arabism, which the Egyptian communist movement as a whole embraced through the 1950s and 1960s. In *After the Guns Fall Silent*, Muhammad Sid Ahmed did not talk of Arab and Jewish workers as equally oppressed in a global capitalist system, but stressed that two national communities existed, the Arab and the Israeli, and that both had rights that should be safeguarded, both for moral reasons and for the pragmatic reason that the Arabs would never achieve their goals unless they joined the rest of the world, including the socialist countries, in recognising the rights of Israelis.³⁵

Like the October Paper, Sid Ahmed's book established that the world of the 1970s had changed. The era of détente, symbolised by the 1974 SALT agreement, imposed new constraints and opportunities on the parties to what, after 1967, became known as the Middle East crisis.³⁶ He insisted that the conflict between Israel and the Arabs was the single most dangerous issue in international relations, and that détente between the superpowers would stand or fall based on the outcome of the conflict. Another resort to war by the parties would, he predicted, shake the foundations of détente and lead to nuclear war. One of the more 'dangerous' factors for Sid Ahmed was that of the Palestinians, whose prestige had grown after the October War, the UN Resolution on Zionism and Arafat's appearance before the General Assembly, such that 'The Palestinians' struggle is now an inspiration for the revolt of the dispossessed against the affluent, not only in ends, but also in means.' The resistance, for him, had become the banner of the 'Sixth International.'³⁷ The parties thus had a responsibility to resolve the conflict peacefully. What was needed was a Middle Eastern détente in which the strengths and interests of Arabs and Israelis would be recognised and respected, and, unlike in al-Khuli's conception, would include Israel. In line with peaceful coexistence, grander objectives (such as ending the Zionist project and establishing a secular multi-ethnic state in Palestine) could be postponed in favour of establishing a stable status quo and more immediate goals, such as the establishment of a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Sid Ahmed was under no illusions that

this was a simple matter, but maintained that this should be the first order of business and that the 1973 War opened up opportunities for the Arabs to move in this direction.

The War, for Sid Ahmed, exploded the myth of Israeli invincibility and, while not the resounding victory that some Egyptian journalists saw, was not an Israeli victory either.³⁸ In some ways, Sid Ahmed's analysis of the war reinforced the anti-imperialism paradigm, in his argument that the US arms airlift exposed Israel's inability to act without American assistance.³⁹ But he was also undermining it. The Arabs' major achievement in the war was to introduce a degree of strategic parity to the conflict that would encourage Israel to seek a negotiated settlement to the conflict. And for the first time, the Arab aim of a just peace could be realisable. This would necessitate, for Sid Ahmed, marginalising 'rejectionists' on both sides. For him, the 'dissident movement emerging from the Palestinian resistance illustrates the fact that in the Arab world there are still many who persist in rejecting adamantly any solution.'⁴⁰ On the Israeli side, the anti-Zionist forces—Rakah, Matzpen and the Communist Party—had no effect on official policy. In light of this, the best hope for the Arabs would be to engage the Zionist doves who believe that coexistence sooner or later is inevitable, rather than the hawks who would settle for nothing less than overwhelming military superiority. The fact of dealing with Zionists should not deter Arabs since just as in the context of superpower détente, contradictions can be 'frozen' enabling the USSR to deal with 'imperialist' America, so too can Arabs and Israelis reach an accommodation without necessarily abandoning their ultimate goals.⁴¹

A key element in Sid Ahmed's rationale was his distinction between vertical and horizontal contradictions in the Middle East. Vertical contradictions, those between states, were likely to provoke intense conflict, while horizontal contradictions, within Jewish and Arab society as a whole, would remain independent of whether individual states are reconciled. Thus, accepting a settlement with Israel, like rapprochement with the conservative Arab states, need not be a 'reactionary' solution, since the social (horizontal) struggle can continue regardless.⁴² Even if Israel was a 'tool' of imperialism, this should not deter the left from supporting a settlement with it. The solution for the progressive Arab movement would involve two distinct steps. First, in order to stand up to Western economic imperialism, the Arabs would have to reinvigorate indigenous capitalism. Then, having separated the Arab nation from the world imperialist system, it could break with capitalism altogether. As for Israel, released from its imperialist tethers it could, much like the crusader states of the Levant, fade into the Arab landscape to become a focus for Jewish culture in the region 'freed from manipulation and exploitation.'⁴³

Sid Ahmed did not downplay the scale of the threat Israel presented to Arab aspirations. Although he warned against viewing Israel in purely colonial or racial terms, as he saw the prevalent Arab view, he insisted that Zionism was organically linked to colonialism and imperialism, quoting Herzl: ‘We shall be a rampart against Asia, an outpost for civilisation against the barbarians.’⁴⁴ But he cautioned against equating it with traditional settler colonialism as its inhabitants arrived from a variety of different countries to escape persecution. Thus, despite its roots, Israel could not accurately be described as a ‘bridgehead’ for colonialism. World imperialism sought to use Israel in this way, but that was not to say that the ‘bridgehead’ could not be detached. Sid Ahmed’s work provided a Marxist rationale for both peaceful negotiated settlement with Israel and unity of Arab states irrespective of social system. It represented a shift in Egyptian Marxist thought back to the traditional communist, and longstanding Soviet, view of Israel, and a rejection of the simple equation of Israel with imperialism. Although he identified problems in Israeli society, such as a racist hierarchy among Jews that would render unlikely any rights being given to Palestinians, he viewed these problems as analogous to the social inequalities within Arab states. The confrontation with Israel was thus no longer to come out of a general anti-imperialist struggle, but could be averted altogether via détente. The ultimate victory over imperialism, rather than being a prerequisite for neutralising Israel, would follow an Arab-Israeli rapprochement.

Anti-Nasserism

If Marxist intellectuals like Muhammad Sid Ahmed departed from the anti-imperialist conception of Israel, subtly reverting to a pre-Nasser analysis, many other intellectuals explicitly criticised Nasser and both his foreign and domestic policies. The anti-Nasserism that characterised much intellectual work had begun prior to October 1973, probably with Tawfiq al-Hakim’s *Return of Consciousness* in 1972, but after the war had enabled Sadat to consolidate his own position domestically, attacks on Nasser became both more explicit, widespread and permissible. For secular critics, this tended to involve a critique of Nasser’s ‘adventurism’ overseas. Nasser, in the UAR Charter and elsewhere, had criticised the beneficiaries of the 1919 revolution for failing to recognise the ‘Arab’ dimension that revolution would need to acquire. Many of those that attacked Nasser in the 1970s argued in favour of re-evaluating the pre-1952 period in a way that encouraged a reversion to a more ‘Egypt-first’ posture and, inevitably, conception of the region as a whole in terms of nation-states.

For Louis Awad and others, the Egyptian revolution, which began in 1919, was incomplete. The Nasser years may have advanced it incrementally, but Egypt's democratic and social transformation was yet to occur. As such, Nasser was wrong to try to export an incomplete revolution.⁴⁵ For Nagib Mahfuz, writing in the mid-1970s, the way to export revolution was to set an example, rather than intervene militarily or defame 'reactionary' leaders via the media.⁴⁶ Whether intentional or not, the critical discourse on Nasser served not only Sadat's purpose of stepping out of Nasser's shadow, but also the regime's desire to focus on internal economic development rather than Egyptian leadership in the Arab revolutionary movement, and consequently the perception of Israel as a manifestation of imperialist domination over the Middle East. By the end of the 1970s, some beneficiaries of Sadat's economic initiative, *infitah*, went so far as to argue in favour of strengthening Egypt's ties with Israel as an economic partner and gateway to the West. Perhaps the most audacious was the construction magnate and close Sadat ally Osman Ahmed Osman, who 'consistently opposed efforts to focus on Israel's expulsion of the Arabs of Palestine and its potential threat to Egypt' in favour of building economic links with 'an economically and technologically superior country that could aid Egypt'.⁴⁷ Uthman also charged, according to Baker, that 'Nasserist foreign policy...exaggerated Israel's role as an expansionist state that threatened the Arab world; instead of seeking accommodation, Egypt was dragged unnecessarily into the devastating wars with Israel'.⁴⁸

On 3 March 1978 Tawfiq al-Hakim published an article entitled '*al-Hiyad*' (neutralism) in *al-Ahram*. The article argued that Egypt as a state should follow the Swiss model of neutrality. Hakim couched his argument in favour of neutralism in terms of Egypt's significance as a museum of the world—Pharaonic, Greek, Roman, Christian and Islamic—which would be threatened if Egypt continued to shoulder military risks. On the other hand though, he stressed that Egypt was the cultural centre of the Arab world and that the Arab states should do more to preserve this culture by assuming some of the military and political burden. In a subsequent article, Hakim questioned the existence of an Arab nation with a single cause, but conceded that 'only when profits from the oil wealth were distributed equally among all Arabs would the Arab states begin to enjoy the commonality of a single cause.' As such, neutralism represented strategically the best option for Egypt. In another intervention, Hakim bitterly resented the wars Egypt had fought on behalf of the Arabs, while leadership had fallen to those with wealth, including intellectual leadership through the financial enticement of Egyptians to the Arab states. Hakim's argument, further developed by the editor of *al-Ahram*, Ali Hamdi al-Jammal, also contributed to a growing current of resentment in official circles toward the PLO specifically. The attack on the PLO

was significant since it was seen as the model of the secular revolutionary current in Arab politics at that time. Although the Islamist current had long used Palestine as a mobilising issue in Egyptian politics, the left argued in favour of solidarity with the PLO in its revolutionary course.⁴⁹

The Persistence of the Culture-Clash

Islamists too participated in the anti-Nasser campaign and the move away from the anti-imperialist framework, also prioritising the domestic over foreign policy elements of Egyptian politics. But whereas liberal and leftist critics of the Nasserist experience encouraged a development of conceptions of Israel in the direction of the nation-state paradigm, writers using Islam as an organising framework stressed the culture-clash. The Islamist discourse on Nasserism was encouraged by Sadat's deliberate conflation of Nasserism and communism, made concrete by the establishment of the 'left' *minbar* and subsequent formation of the Tagammu' Party, which lumped together Nasserists and communists as a single political force (see Chapter 4). As such, Islamist condemnations of communism, including equating it with Zionism, should be seen in the context of their own campaign against Nasser and Nasserists as their main political rivals in Egyptian society. Such writings reiterated axioms of Islamist, and much general, discourse on Israel whose pedigree went back to the 1940s. Thus, the ultimate Israeli goal of establishing a Greater Israel 'from the Nile to the Euphrates' was emphasised and traced back through Ben Gurion to Herzl. The Jews were blamed for the collapse of the Caliphate and the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* invoked as an historical source on the nature of the Jews. Behind Israel and Zionism, as well as communism, lay Judaism and Jews as the central problem.

The culture-clash paradigm was reflected by one of Egypt's most popular female authors, Aisha Abd al-Rahman, more commonly known as Bint al-Shati. One of the first Egyptian women to receive a university education⁵⁰ and known for her work on the wives of the Prophet and occasionally described as having some feminist characteristics⁵¹, Bint al-Shati was from a peasant background and much of her work dealt with Egyptian rural issues. As the title of her 1975 work, *al-Isra'iliyat fi-al-Ghazw al-Fikri*, [The Isra'iliyat in the Intellectual Invasion] suggests, Bint al-Shati adopted the same conceptual framework regarding Jews and Islam as that employed by Qutb, Kishk and other Islamist thinkers. In her introduction she wrote that the impetus for this book came from her attempts, in the wake of the 1967 defeat, to understand what went wrong.⁵² Like Qaradawi, Kishk and others, she saw the reason not so much in the strength of the Israeli adversary, Soviet inaction, or US support for Israel, but primarily in problems within the Arab socio-political

formations, in the 'intellectual invasion.' In seeking to understand the problems, she wrote, the road sometimes seemed to lead to imperialism, or to crusadersim, or to atheism. 'It all becomes increasingly complicated,' wrote Bint al-Shati, until one eventually realised that 'all roads [of enquiry] arrive at Tel Aviv.'⁵³ In analysis that mirrored in its essentials that of Sayyid Qutb in his *Ma'arakatuna ma' al-Yahud*, [*Our Struggle with the Jews*] some 30 years earlier, Bint al-Shati linked early Jewish infiltration of Islam, via the '*Isra'iliyat*', to the Jewish hand behind the fall of the Caliphate; to the 'Jewish orientalists' that study and hence distort Islam; to the activities of Western imperialism, which is in the service of the Jews; and finally to the cultural, social, religious and political effacement that is occurring in the Arab-Islamic countries as a result of the ongoing machinations of *Banu Isra'il* (the Jews) and which explain the Arabs' defeat in 1967 and inability to effectively retaliate.

Such themes were expanded upon in the pages of the Muslim Brotherhood paper *al-Da'wa*, which began publishing in 1976 and, for Baker, 'offered Egypt's most vigorous and widely disseminated public criticism of the Sadat orientation.'⁵⁴ In line with the Islamist movement's generally domestic orientation at this time, priority was given to discussions of correct Islamic practice, the need to Islamicise education and the characteristics of an Islamic state, including the necessity for and elements of *shari'a* law and the features of an Islamic economic system. Each issue had a section on events in the Islamic world in general, and it was within this context that Palestine was addressed, most notably through the detailed recording of Israeli settlement practices and other activities in the Occupied Territories. The articles dealt only obliquely with Egyptian policy toward Israel, but had clear foreign policy import, particularly in the frequent condemnations and ridiculing of the Arab and Egyptian left, who supposed that the Soviet Union could play a role in securing Arab interests or called for a negotiated solution to the conflict with Israel. The main themes in the *al-Da'wa* articles reviewed below are the control of the world's superpowers by Jews, the ongoing danger of Zionist expansionism, and the confluence of Jewish and Western interests in the destruction of Islam.

The Jews and the Superpowers

The *al-Da'wa* writers saw a Jewish hand behind the foreign policies of both the United States and the Soviet Union. Abd al-Mun'im Salim, for example, pointed out the Jewish domination of the American economy, media and political system (as well as indicating that many British MPs were Jews), in addition to the unwavering support of the Soviet Union for the Jews. But like Muhammad Jalal Kishk before them (see Chapter 7), this fact was not given so much attention as Jewish influence over the Soviet Union, a factor related perhaps

primarily to the support that Egyptian ‘communists’ (i.e. Nasserists) lent to the USSR, as well as on the assumption that ‘everybody knew’ Jews controlled the United States. According to one *al-Da’wa* writer, communist Russia gave Israel manpower and intellectuals, while the United States gave it military and technical power.⁵⁵

In April 1977, another contributor, Fu’ad Kuhlah penned an article entitled ‘Marxism and Zionism and Their Shared Roots’. He noted that Marx’s grandfather was a Rabbi, and that Lenin, Trotsky and other prominent communists were Jews. Both Zionism and Marxism were solutions to the Jewish problem. But he also showed how, doctrinally, Zionism and communism were two sides of the same coin. Each ideology was, he averred, a cover for the conviction that the Jews were ‘God’s chosen people.’ In Marxism, the concept of the ‘vanguard’ was equivalent to the Zionist grouping of Jews in the ‘promised land’. In each, the goal was to enable the Jews to dominate the world. A third group of Jews was not strictly speaking Zionist, though due to their social position they were also opposed to Marxism. It was this category of ‘rich Jews’ in Europe and the Americas that acted as financiers for Zionism. As such, the Marxist Jews suffered from a lack of funds and this explains the relative success of Zionism as compared to Marxism in the Middle East.* Kuhlah is keen to stress that Zionists and Marxists were in competition for this Jewish funding, rather than in any kind of ideological conflict, since they were both based on the same idea of the primacy of the Jews as God’s chosen people.⁵⁶

Zionist Expansionism

Rejecting Sadat’s suggestion that expansionist Zionism had run its course, Abd al-Mun’im Salim cited continued Israeli expansion into the West Bank and Gaza via settlements from 1967 as confirmation that the project was alive and well. In his first *al-Da’wa* intervention, Salim criticised those who, after 1967 and again after 1973, called for peace with Israelis—‘those who slaughtered us yesterday and try to finish us off [*ijhaz*] today and want to extend their settlements from the Nile to the Euphrates tomorrow—or even from the ocean to the ocean.’⁵⁷ Israeli expansionism remained a living threat, supported by ‘all Jewish [Israeli] parties’, with the left no less expansionist than the Likud, as well as the United States, regardless of who happened to be in the White House. Salim quoted Begin as saying there will be ‘no peace for the Israeli people and not for the land of Israel or for the Arabs as long as we do not liberate all of our homeland, even if we sign the peace treaty.’⁵⁸ Israeli

* Although for Kuhlah some of this third group did finance communist activities in the region such as the ‘French *mutamassir* [Egyptianised] Jew’ Henri Curiel, who bankrolled Egyptian communist activities.

expansion was to be implemented incrementally. The first stage was to consolidate Jewish control of lands occupied between 1948 and 1967. Stage two was to expand into the land conquered in 1967 and stage three will involve the further expansion to fill the land between the Nile and the Euphrates. The language of UNSCR 242, particularly the reference to ‘secure borders’ was, for Salim, code for further Israeli expansion. The correct Muslim position should be to reject the taking of any Muslim lands or the surrender of any part of it. This applied as much to land taken in 1948 as in 1967, since one ‘cannot solve the new at the expense of the old.’

Destruction of Islam

The effectiveness of Jewish domination in Palestine was guaranteed, for Salim, first and foremost by ‘world Zionism’. Westerners that helped Zionists ‘did so not out of love for them, as nobody could love them, the question was only imperialist interests and connivance against Islam.’ In support of this contention, he cited the US vice president Nelson Rockefeller’s statement that God sent the Jews to the East to help revive it, and that the Arabs would benefit from Israeli knowledge and civilisation. He went on to explain that the unity between Israel and the United States was encapsulated in their joint interests in ‘developing’ (*tatwir*) Arab society. Development, for Salim, was code for erasing Islamic identity, destroying customs and stamping out values and traditions. Salim observed that this goal was well known to all Jews and the capitalist and communist West, but ignored by many Arabs and Muslims.⁵⁹ The only way to stop it was by turning more resolutely to Islam, a conviction for which Salim finds unlikely support in the words of Shimon Peres, who warned a group of Jewish youth that Islam was the main impediment to achieving peace in the region.⁶⁰

On this issue as with others, Salim implicated Arab communists. Palestinian communists were complicit in the Israeli project to erase the Arab identity of those living in 1948 Israel. Communism in the region was introduced, according to Salim, by Jews in Palestine and spread from there throughout the Arab world. Zionism and communism were virtually identical in their goals ‘despite what the ‘treacherous trumpeters’ [*al-abwaq al-jawfa*] in the Arab world do to hide [that fact]’⁶¹ The Egyptian left, too, in denying the responsibility of Israeli workers and calling for a policy toward Israel based on an alliance of working forces, were guilty of aiding the plan of Muslim intellectual ‘cleansing’ (*tasfiya*) and ‘dissolution’ (*tadhwib*), a project that was no less dangerous than physical annihilation.⁶² In the section of *al-Da’wa* given over to the activities of the student *Gama’at* in January 1977, a letter appeared that, echoing Qutb, described contemporary debates on the role of women in

Islamic society as an issue ‘created by Jews’,⁶³ mirroring Qutb’s earlier contention that the Jews aimed to culturally debase Islamic societies through their women (see Chapter 7). The goal of cultural and religious liquidation in the region was also furthered, Salim argued, by projects for a ‘Middle Eastern group’, as voiced by then Israeli foreign minister Abba Eban and president of the World Jewish Congress Nahum Goldmann after 1967. In such ‘federalist’ formulations the states of the region could be united through a peace settlement around an Israeli civilisational mission that would ‘wipe out’ the original identities of the Arab world.⁶⁴ Particularly regrettable for Salim was that since 1967 Israel had been considered as a fact, with the idea of destroying it essentially unthinkable. Salim also echoed the common Marxist and Nasserist fear that peace would expose the Arab world to Israeli economic exploitation.⁶⁵

From April 1977 *al-Da’wa* also began to devote more space to articles about Jerusalem, specifically in the context of Israeli plans to rebuild Solomon’s Temple on the Temple Mount, which would threaten the al-Aqsa mosque. The issue of Jerusalem effectively integrated the themes of Israeli expansionism and Jewish enmity toward Islam. Salih Ashmawi, *al-Da’wa*’s editor, wrote an article warning the Arab leaders that they would face dire consequences if they did not keep Jerusalem and al-Aqsa safe.⁶⁶ In August, Ala’ Zaydan alerted *al-Da’wa*’s readers to the construction work that was taking place around the mosque, using the immediate issue to discuss the ‘religious roots of the Jews’ war against the Arabs.’ Rebuilding the temple was, for the Jews, a symbol of victory, whereas its destruction had signified defeat. The destruction of al-Aqsa was to be interpreted as a step along the road to destroying Islam and establishing a Jewish state from the Nile to the Euphrates. After al-Aqsa, the Israelis would move to Medina. ‘When’, Zaydan implored in conclusion, tying the issue again to a domestic issue, ‘will the Muslim *ulema* [legal scholars] move?’ ‘When will the silence end?’⁶⁷

Sadat’s visit to Jerusalem in 1977 severely tested the rapprochement that had developed between the regime and the Brotherhood, with the latter and its campus fellow travellers, the *Gama’at*, being unable to ideologically support the foreign policy shift embodied in the trip. Although Sadat had been moving in the direction of a separate peace since the October War, the Brotherhood had been able to avoid criticising this policy. The Jerusalem trip made this impossible. For Ronald Nettler, the Brotherhood saw that ‘[t]his “fallacious peace” vindicated the fundamentalist thesis of an alien ideological invasion; it proved that decades of Muslim backsliding had culminated in a near-total collapse. The leaders of the worldwide

anti-Islamic forces, now stripped of all disguises, had brazenly entered a sovereign Muslim state for their final thrust.⁶⁸

Muslim Brotherhood leader Umar Talimisany criticised normalisation vehemently, warning of the dangers it posed to Islamic culture in Egypt, as well as the threat to the economy. Israel continued to be perceived as a manifestation of a much broader Jewish-led anti-Islamic threat. But it was in fact Islamic rulers that should be criticised: ‘The greatest blame is to be laid on the rulers of the Islamic countries who know all this and do not condemn it, but rather encourage it...’.⁶⁹

He went further:

Consider to what extent there may be a connection between [our] real enemies and [our] rulers; the latter whom we would always have considered the strength of the Muslims—and once they were—but who [now] defend the Muslims’ enemies. Our rulers have become as poisoned arrows in the very hearts of the Muslims...

The Muslim rulers love their enemies—the enemies of their religion. This is something their subjects cannot accept.⁷⁰

Faced with rising criticism of Sadat’s policy after the Jerusalem visit, the regime promulgated two laws that ‘explicitly forbade public criticism of the peace treaty with Israel’.⁷¹ To support the policy, it was glorified in a statement by the Sheikh of al-Azhar in 1979, which was published on the front page of *al-Ahram*.⁷² *Al-Da’wa*, and the Brotherhood’s other paper *al-I’tisam*, were seized in the month following the treaty, which had a ‘temporary “calming effect” on *al-Da’wa*’s editorial staff’.⁷³ Nevertheless, even as the regime drew the ire of the Brotherhood and censored its publications, it helped sustain the religious ideological approach to Israel that the Brotherhood had made its own.

Zionism in the Crosshairs

Whereas the analyses of Sid Ahmed and al-Khuli promoted the nation-state paradigm by modifying the Nasserist view of Israel as part of Western imperialism, and, in Sid Ahmed’s case, calling for peaceful coexistence with Zionist Israel, and the *al-Da’wa* writers saw a culture-clash, from the mid-1970s some intellectuals were highlighting the problems posed by Israel’s Zionist underpinnings. In the work reviewed below, Israel was not described as a military threat to Egypt and, in line with Sadat’s assessment, Zionism was considered in its domestic dimensions, rather than as a primarily expansionist project linked to imperialism threatening the broader Arab world. Also in keeping with the regime’s position, which was to portray Egypt’s role as serving universal civilisation, this work portrayed Zionism as its antithesis. Internationally, this perspective was supported by the UN General Assembly

resolution in 1975 designating Zionism as a form of racism. Although not treating the Arab-Israeli conflict as a ‘culture-clash’ after the fashion of Islamist intellectuals, the prioritisation of the specific ideological—and to an extent cultural—content of Zionism, over Israel’s imperialist links, meant that there were certain synergies between the nation-state perspective promoted in this work and the more essentialist writings of the Muslim Brotherhood, particularly in the conclusion that if Zionism as racism is illegitimate, and Israel as a state is inseparable from Zionism, then Israel itself is illegitimate. The two approaches also shared a focus on Israeli ‘culture’, typically juxtaposed to a correspondingly essentialised Egyptian, Arab or Islamic culture. In an article in the liberal journal *al-Musawwar* shortly after the 1973 war, Raja al-Naqqash observed that Israeli scholars were studying Nagib Mahfuz and Tawfiq al-Hakim, in order to ‘know thy enemy.’ Naqqash argued that this was part of an Israeli ‘culture war’ against the Arabs and that the Arabs should, for their part, respond in the same way, by learning about Israeli culture and literature.* The idea of a culture war became more salient as Egypt renounced the war option in its relations with Israel, and the works discussed below positioned themselves largely in these terms.

Sayyid Yasin and Mufid Shihab al-Din

In 1975 Sayyid Yasin and Mufid Shihab al-Din published a short book entitled *Zionism and Racism*, addressing the UN resolution mentioned above. The Preface noted that despite a large volume of work on the Palestine cause, there was very little on the issue of Zionism. Shihab al-Din noted that Zionism constituted one of three solutions to the Jewish problem, with the others being liberal and socialist revolutions. Zionism, he argued, stemmed directly from European colonialism and the desire to exploit economically the non-European world. He went so far as to assert, following Baha al-Din’s argument a decade earlier, that Zionism was in fact a variant of Fascism, constituting as it did a form of nationalism based on racism. Under the influence of Zionism, Shihab al-Din suggested, Judaism itself underwent a transformation in the twentieth century, from being a universalist religion to a racist form of national solidarity in which Jews were elevated to the status of ‘God’s chosen people’.⁷⁴ In 1948, Israeli racial discrimination (*al-tamyiz al-unsuri al-Isra’ili*) became the other side and expression of Zionist discrimination (*al-tamyiz al-sihyuni*), since Zionism was the intellectual and ideological underpinning of ‘Israeli discriminatory practice’.⁷⁵

* In particular, Naqqash focussed on Abba Eban’s 1947 translation of Tawfiq al-Hakim’s *Yawmiyat Na’ib fi al-Aryaf* (*Maze of Justice*) and Sasson Somech’s study of Nagib Mahfuz. Raja al-Naqqash, *al-Musawwar*, 28 December 1973.

Shihab al-Din divided the development of the State of Israel into three distinct periods. The years from 1948 to 1967 were, for him, the period of Israeli consolidation around Zionism and imperialism. The next period, from 1967 until 1973 represented the consolidation of Zionism around the state of Israel, and the post-1973 era the stage of return to Israeli consolidation around Zionism.⁷⁶ In other words, while the period from 1967 until 1973 were characterised by Israeli expansionism, the current period was defined by Zionism's turning inward as racism. Shihab al-Din pointed out that whether talking about Israeli or Zionist racism, it is the same story. He illustrated three effects of this linkage. 1) The expulsion of the Palestinian Arabs by force from their land and the creation of the state of Israel which prevented their return, despite UN resolutions, 2) the passage of land laws in 1948 enabling Israel to acquire as much land as it wanted and 3) the crushing of the revolution of the Arab people in the Occupied Territories after 1967 and the violation of the Geneva conventions in its practice there.

Shihab al-Din went on to outline various UN positions on racism, and those dealing with the question of Zionism in particular. He noted that although the UN was behind the creation of Israel, via the partition plan of 1947, it did not confer any legitimacy on the 'racist discriminatory policy of the Hebrew state.' Indeed the Partition Plan itself stipulated that certain rights and responsibilities be observed, particularly with regard to the Holy Places, as well as proscribing discrimination based on ethnicity, religion, language or nationality.⁷⁷

Shihab al-Din's analysis was couched in the language of international law. He described Zionism and Israel as being out of step with the international community. Shihab al-Din saw the General Assembly resolution on Zionism as representing the fruits of non-alignment in general, and of the October War in particular. The resolution represented the culmination of efforts by the oil-producing, Non-Aligned and Third World states in the wake of the October War. The Arab world's struggle against Zionism was a dimension of the broader global struggle for a 'new economic order, built on justice and economic liberation, and the global call to expand the Non-Aligned bloc.'⁷⁸ In this regard, Shihab al-Din's analysis reflected the changing emphasis of the Non-Aligned Movement as a whole, from anti-imperialism to economic independence. In concluding, Shihab al-Din pointed out that in light of the interconnectedness of Zionism and Israel, the resolution not only constituted a condemnation of Zionism, but also called into question the legitimacy of Israel as a state—of the presence, and not just the practices, of Israel. It calls into question the Partition Plan and Israel's membership in the United Nations. For Shihab al-Din, this should form the foundation of an intellectual effort to expose the racist essence of Zionism—and, by

extension, Israel. In this way, not only Arab, but also world, public opinion can be convinced of Israel's true nature, and prepare the ground for 'the Arab liberation movement to enter into the fateful struggle against Zionism'.⁷⁹

Abdelwahhab Elmessiri

Work by Abdelwahhab Elmessiri*, like that of Yasin and Shihab al-Din examined the questions of Israel and Zionism using western social science frameworks and in terms of a war of ideas. Working from the al-Ahram Centre for Political and Strategic Studies, Elmessiri wrote a series of works on Zionism from 1973, most prominently his 1975 *Encyclopaedia on Zionism*, as well as the 1973 *Nihayat al-tarikh: muqaddama li-dirasat baniya al-fikr al-sihyuni* [*The End of History: Introduction to the Foundation of Zionist Thought*] and the 1977 *Land of Promise: a Critique of Political Zionism*, published in English. Like Sa'd Eddine Ibrahim, Elmessiri was a student in the United States during the Six-Day War and was active there in left-wing politics. The fact that Elmessiri published in English as well as Arabic is significant in that it reveals his conviction that the Arab-Israeli conflict was reproduced as a war of ideas not only in the Middle East but in the West as well, and that it behoves the Arabs to not only present their case as right and just, but to portray that of Israel as bogus, 'ideological' and running counter to the stream of modern civilisation, with a view to weakening Western support for Israel.

Elmessiri's work is a good example of the integration of all three paradigms examined in this thesis. Israel, for Elmessiri was organically linked to imperialism, but this factor was most important in that imperialism allowed, or encouraged, the persistence of 'fascist' Zionist ideology. The features and function of Zionism, in turn, could not be explained without reference to Judaism, and he saw the threat of Zionism to Egypt and the broader Arab world was primarily cultural. At the same time, Elmessiri allowed that were Israel able to 'de-Zionise' it could exist as a legitimate nation-state.⁸⁰ Elmessiri pointed out in the introduction to his encyclopaedia that all previous such compendia published since the outbreak of the Arab-Israeli conflict had been written by Zionist Jews, and that the result of this was that Arabs had to refer to Zionist sources in order to find out about Judaism and 'the enemy'.⁸¹ Elmessiri's encyclopaedia purports to include all concepts related to Zionism and the Arab-Israeli conflict and seeks to uncover the ideological nature of terms like 'the Jewish

* Elmessiri is currently the leader of the Kifaya opposition movement in Egypt. His politics have evolved from the secular far left to what he himself described as a 'radical' Islamist position. In a discussion with the author, he suggested that one of his main contributions to Islamist discourse had been to introduce a more nuanced, scientific, perspective on Israel and Jews, due to his own background in the left. (Cairo, August 2006)

people' and 'Jewish history'.⁸² Elmessiri argued that Jewish parties and organisations were named so as to disguise their true purpose: settlement and colonisation, and that it was the Arabs' task to expose this disguise.⁸³

Like Sa'd Eddine Ibrahim (see Chapter 5), Elmessiri noted that there had been two main conceptions of Israel prevalent in Arab political thought: what he termed traditional (*taglidiya*) or conspiracy theories (*ta'amuriya*) and scientific (*ilmiya*) theories. The former viewed Israel and Zionism as part of an ancient Jewish conspiracy going back to the time of Moses, and encompassing the *Isra'iliyat*.⁸⁴ The conspiratorial view also took seriously the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* and implicated social and political movements, such as freemasonry and communism, in the grand conspiracy. 'Zionism,' in this conception, 'is nothing but the latest round in this continuous conspiracy.' Elmessiri pointed out that, 'unfortunately,' most Arab writings about Zionism had until recently fallen under this framework. Under the scientific approach, on the other hand, Zionism was inseparable from imperialism and was primarily the result of economic factors in European imperialist societies at the end of the 19th century. This approach saw no relation between the Jewish religion and other parts of Jewish civilisation and the Zionist project, but instead posited that Zionism and imperialism used the Jewish religion to hide the truth of their plans from the 'oppressed Jewish masses' (*al-jamahir al-yahudiya al-makhdu'a*).

For Elmessiri, both approaches to Israel were useful in some ways but wanting in others. As far as the traditional interpretation is concerned, some conspiracies were real: the goal of a Greater Israel from 'The Nile to the Euphrates', for example, was not an anti-Semitic accusation, for Elmessiri, but a real statement made by Herzl, Jabotinsky and Begin. The traditional explanation also shed light on the precise form that Zionism took. The problem of 'who are the Jews', Elmessiri argued, occupied Israelis from the beginning and was not part of an imperialist design that could be explained by looking at economics in Europe in the nineteenth century. 'As such, the traditional (conspiratorial) conceptions can give as some explanations for this phenomenon that the scientific accounts obscure because these accounts focus on the superstructure and on Zionist myths and their assumptions about themselves.'⁸⁵ The traditional approach failed in other ways, however. It could not explain the timing of Zionism at the end of the nineteenth century. It also failed to explain why Zionism never really became convincing until the Balfour Declaration, and why Zionism's headquarters moved from Istanbul to Paris, to London and to Washington. Only the scientific view could answer such questions, such as how Zionism gained ground in 1917 because of the Bolshevik revolution and the Arab revolt and Britain's desire to stop the

revolt and prevent Jews from joining communist parties.⁸⁶ There were problems with the scientific approach as well, for Elmessiri. It could not explain why social and economic problems of the Jews became the ‘Jewish question’, or why only Jews emigrated to Palestine and not Christians as well, as was the case in Algeria and Rhodesia. It did not explain why Zionism became ‘settler colonialism’ in particular, and why it was different from traditional settler colonialism in that it relied also on transfer of the indigenous population.

The nub of the issue for Elmessiri was that the traditional approach looked at the Talmudic ‘superstructure’ separately from the European ‘base’, which the scientific approach considered. Both approaches neglected the interrelationship of the superstructure and the base and the relationship between form and substance, ideas and reality. The ideational superstructure (*al-bina al-fikri*) had many contradictions and some things lay dormant and not realised. But the key was that when the superstructure was in balance with the base, its cycle was broken and it was ‘activated.’^{*} Anti-Semitism constituted an example of such an activation, as did the Zionist solution itself.⁸⁷ Elmessiri argued that in Israel—‘like all fascist structures’—the superstructure predominated (even though ultimately it was the base that determined reality) because the fascist person was the victim of his own manufactured false consciousness, separate from all reality. Imperialist countries kept Israelis in this state of false consciousness, imprisoned in Talmudic myths, through their economic, military and moral support. It was this disconnect between base and superstructure that explained the socialist form, but fascist practices, of the kibbutzim.

The *Encyclopaedia* of Elmessiri represented a manifestation of the Arab-Israeli conflict as a war of ideas, perceptions, and ultimately culture. Influenced as he was by Mannheim and the sociology of knowledge, Elmessiri denied that Zionist mythology was recognised as such by Israelis, or that myths were used in an insidious or devious way: that ideology constituted, in other words, ‘lies’. Rather, Israelis subscribed willingly to these ideas as a result of the fusion between Judaism and the Zionist national project to form Israeli culture. The danger for the Arabs was two-fold. The first was that Zionist ideology would in turn permeate Arab consciousness and culture. As evidence of this process in action, he lamented the fact that Hebrew phrases and names of groups were transliterated directly into Arabic resulting in ‘ugly’ syntactic formulations. The second was that Zionism also infused Western culture and thus posed an indirect threat. The *Encyclopaedia* itself thus represented an act of resistance against the perceived intellectual threat of Zionism to the Arab consciousness.

* Here ElMessiri reveals his debt to Mannheim and the sociology of knowledge.

Elmessiri's discussion of the different conceptions of the Palestine cause held by sympathisers in the region as well as the West, and his advocacy of a conception that combined these varied perspectives, indicated his conviction that groups within the West could and should be mobilised against Zionism. Also, since he argued that Zionism itself persisted as a result of imperialist support for Israel, he also believed that without this support Israeli culture could change, and 'de-Zionise'. This presentation of the issue, although couched in historical materialist terms, differed sharply from that of Sadiq al-Azm (see Chapter 5) and other Marxists who argued that it was not Zionism or Jews that drove US policy in the region, but capitalism. Elmessiri's combining of the anti-imperialist and culture-clash models in a 'scientific' way was novel, as was, for the Islamist camp, toward which Elmessiri intellectually 'migrated', his differentiation between Zionists and Jews and his criticism of the use of dubious Western anti-Semitic sources, such as the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*.

Taking the Battle to America

The veteran journalist and novelist Ihsan Abd al-Quddus also represents a good example of a synthesis of the various elements of the intellectual and official discourse on Israel as it evolved under Sadat, and is an appropriate figure on whom to conclude. Abd al-Quddus, a long-time personal friend of Sadat was chairman of the board of *al-Akhbar* in the early 1970s and of *al-Ahram* from 1976, when, following the second Sinai Agreement, Sadat reshuffled editorships and press publishers to encourage more sympathetic coverage (see Chapter 4). Abd al-Quddus wrote a series of articles in 1978 commenting on Egypt's dramatic foreign policy shift. His perspective reflects the nation-state paradigm in its prioritisation of Israeli interests over those of 'imperialism', as well as his support for Sadat's strategy of 'taking the battle to the United States' by trying to weaken Israel's supporters there. But it also merges with the culture-clash paradigm in that he frequently asserts that 'the Jews' are in control of United States policy.

For Abd al-Quddus, America's number one interest in the region was oil, and he argued that the Arabs should use this to their advantage in moving the conflict to the United States. But he acknowledged that there were 'complications' caused by 'Jewish dominance over the main US centres: production, financial services, and over US public opinion.' Jewish dominance in America was too strong and governed all that state's behaviour toward Israel.⁸⁸ He exclaimed that 'America does not govern in Israel, but Israel governs in America.'⁸⁹

Abd al-Quddus noted in August 1978 that Israel preferred the continuation of the Cold War, since the ‘Zionist centres’ in the United States and Russia depended on crises to sustain US support for Israel and sought to transform the Cold War into a ‘Hot War’ in Africa and Asia. He cited such issues as the question of Jewish rights in Russia as one aimed at stirring up American public animosity toward Russia. The problem was that the Arabs were split between supporters of the United States and those that backed the USSR, and he argued that they should instead unite around confronting Israel and pressuring each superpower to support them in this endeavour.⁹⁰ For Abd al-Quddus, Sadat’s stance toward the United States should provide the model for this. Before the Camp David Accords, he expressed his confidence that Sadat would never abandon the Sinai, the West Bank or the Golan. Israel, he did not doubt, was inherently expansionist, and Begin represented not an extremist, but the mainstream Israeli will.⁹¹ The only way to curb Israeli expansionism was to leverage the power of the United States, a task that Egypt was now well-equipped to carry out due to the ‘global power’ that Sadat achieved through his visit to Jerusalem. The trip to Jerusalem was not, as Sadat and others argued at the time, to break the ‘psychological complex’* that existed between Israel and the Arabs, but to score a political victory over Israel in the United States.⁹²

Abd al-Quddus hoped that Sadat would reject Israeli proposals at Camp David, thus inducing the United States to apply more pressure on Israel to offer more.⁹³ He shared with Sadat and the Islamists an anti-Soviet posture and celebrated the fact that Camp David was more powerful than any of the other summits because the USSR was absent, and it was to Sadat’s great credit that he was able to get the United States to hold a conference.⁹⁴ The United States was the only power able to influence Israel and the Soviet Union would not be able to scotch the deal. Even if an agreement was reached, Abd al-Quddus, warned, the threat of Israeli economic expansionism (its real reason for wanting peace) would remain. The region would, he predicted, drift once more into war, unless US force was brought to bear to prevent it.⁹⁵ Although firmly within the nation-state paradigm, viewing Israel, rather than Western imperialism, as the salient factor in the Arab-Israeli conflict, and optimistic about the potential for a positive US role in the conflict, Abd al-Quddus viewed Israel itself as imperialist and expansionist, mirroring al-Khuli’s distinction between ‘big’ and ‘little’ imperialisms in the region. He wrote that ‘I am accustomed to viewing Israel as an

* In his speech before the Knesset in November 1977, Sadat spoke of the psychological barrier constituting ‘seventy percent of the problem.’ Anwar el Sadat and Egypt State Information Service, *Speech by President Anwar El Sadat to the Knesset, 20th November 1977* (Cairo: State Information Service, 1977) 15.

imperialist power and to comparing the events that happen between us and Israel with those between Egypt and Britain during the age of English imperialism.⁹⁶ Thus, the Camp David Accords were a perfectly valid way of tackling an imperialist threat. Nasser, he pointed out, had accepted the Suez agreement in 1954, even with the right of automatic troop return, but had two years later liberated Egypt from the conditions of that agreement. Similarly Camp David should be viewed as such a first step, as a truce (*hudna*).⁹⁷

This perspective was in accordance with Abd al-Quddus' theory of historical change. A national movement, he argued, required both moderate and extremist tendencies. The moderates enabled incremental gains to be consolidated, while the extremists moved the process of national liberation forward. Egypt had, in the 1970s, succeeded in combining the two tendencies, much as it did in the early twentieth century. Abd al-Quddus also compared Egypt's policy toward Israel with the revolution of 1919 and the long Wafd-led process that led to Egyptian independence under Nasser. The October 1973 War was, for him, an example of Egyptian extremism, while the advances made then were consolidated through the moderation of Camp David. Abd al-Quddus argued that the moderates dealt in interests, the extremists in ideals. Sadat, in realising that Israel 'lived in America' took the 'moderate' step of taking the battle there and focusing on American interests toward Israel and Egypt. Israel too was driven by moderate and extremist impulses toward expansion, Abd al-Quddus argued.⁹⁸ The dream of a Greater Israel from the Nile to the Euphrates was, he argued, one that nobody in Israel denied. Although this remained a dream, some dreams had become reality, such as the Jordan River as a border or Jerusalem as Israel's capital. These have become, for Abd al-Quddus, reality from which Israel is not going to back down easily. America, then, holds the key to forcing Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank and Gaza.⁹⁹

Conclusion

This chapter has shown that the three paradigms for conceptualising Israel that were elaborated prior to October 1973 could be used in ways that either supported or opposed Sadat's foreign policy shift. At the regime level, the key conceptual change after 1973 was to approach Israel more from within the nation-state, rather than anti-imperialism, paradigm. The international context of détente was critical in encouraging some on the Marxist and Nasserist left, such as Muhammad Sid Ahmed, to apply the principle of peaceful coexistence to the Middle East in a way that prioritised the strengths and interests of *states*. The shift was also directly related to a domestic context which encouraged a liberal nationalist discourse against Nasser and his foreign 'adventures' and in favour of 'Egypt-first', rather than an Arab Nation. The shift from an anti-imperialist conception of Israel was also

supported by an Islamist discourse that was strongly anti-Soviet and anti-Nasserist. The Islamist equation of communism and Zionism supported Sadat's battle with the left domestically, as well as his desire to distance Egypt from its erstwhile Soviet patron. It also encouraged the discursive shift to viewing Zionism, rather than imperialism, as the main external challenge for Egypt. For some, like Elmessiri, imperialism remained the issue to the extent that it allowed, or encouraged, Israel to remain Zionist. The idea of Israel as a 'nation-state' with which Egypt could make peace, thus existed in uneasy symbiosis with a conception that viewed Israel as the manifestation of a Jewish conspiracy against Islam and the conflict as a culture-clash. The two paradigms shared the conviction that it was Israeli, or Jewish, influence in the United States, rather than its role as a 'tool' of imperialism, that constituted the main problem for the Arabs. Both the writers of *al-Da'wa* and Sadat's supporter Ihsan Abd al-Quddus stressed that Jewish control of the American political, economic and information systems constituted a significant 'complication' in securing Arab interests. Such ideas were completely in accordance with Sadat's strategy of 'taking the battle to America.'

Whereas after 1967 the threat of imperialism had contracted to the threat of Zionism, after 1973 Sadat signalled that the threat of expansionist Zionism had diminished. In the context of Egypt's having proven its military prowess in 1973, and then renounced the 'war option' in the Sinai Agreements, Zionism remained an issue primarily as 'racism' directed at the Palestinians and a cultural or intellectual threat to Egyptian and Arab societies in general. As the Arab-Israeli conflict took on the contours of a war of ideas, interventions such as those of Sayyid Yasin and Abdel Wahhab Elmessiri focussed more closely on the ideological underpinnings of the Israeli state and Zionism's regressive, anachronistic, nature. Such work revealed the convergence of the nation-state and culture-clash paradigms: on the one hand implying that a 'non-Zionist' Israel would be a state with which the Arabs could coexist, while on the other providing sociological analyses of Zionism and its relationship to Judaism and the State of Israel that often blurred the distinctions between these categories. Elmessiri and others, in writing of the 'culture war' that the Arabs would have to wage against Zionism not only in their own societies, but in the West as well, were close to common ground with the Muslim Brotherhood thinkers and others like Bint al-Shati who saw Jewish influence spreading undetected as *Isra'iliyat* throughout the world.

For some on the left after the Sinai Agreements, and for the Muslim Brotherhood after Sadat's visit to Jerusalem in 1977, analysis of Israel within the paradigms most closely associated with these groups—anti-imperialism and the culture-clash, respectively—became

‘counter-hegemonic’. In the writings of Lutfi al-Khuli and Ghali Shukri, the ‘principal contradiction’ shifted from being between Egypt and other progressive Arab forces, on the one hand; and Israel, imperialism and Arab ‘reaction’ on the other; to the Palestinian revolution and its supporters in the progressive camp, on the one hand; and the Egyptian and other ‘reactionary’ Arab regimes, Israel and imperialism on the other. Similarly, for the Muslim Brotherhood, Sadat’s visit to Jerusalem produced a similar dichotomy, this time between Muslim societies, on the one hand; and Muslim leaders, Israel and the crusading West (and atheist East) on the other. As counter-hegemonic discourses, they shared a focus on Palestine as the Arab cause par excellence, a convergence supported by the Islamic Revolution in Iran. It is worth noting, in conclusion, that radical ‘jihadi’ groups in Egypt in the late 1970s followed Qutb in viewing not just ‘so-called’ Islamic regimes as illegitimate, but also *jahili* societies. As such, the principal contradiction became that between authentic Muslims on the one hand, and *jahili* Muslims, inauthentic regimes, Israel and the West on the other, with the first priority not being to re-educate society, or confront Israel and the West, but rather to overthrow the inauthentic regimes that prevented the Islamicisation of society, which was itself required in order to defeat Israel.

¹ Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for State : The Palestinian National Movement, 1949-1993* 322, 43.

² Anwar el Sadat, "Speech at the Extraordinary Session of the People's Assembly, October 16, 1973," in *President Sadat on Peace* ([s.l.: s.n., 1977]), 6.

³ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁴ Anwar el Sadat, *The October Working Paper* (Cairo: State Information Service, 1974) 10.

⁵ *Ibid.* 43.

⁶ *Ibid.* 52.

⁷ *Ibid.* 47.

⁸ *Ibid.* 23.

⁹ *Ibid.* 24.

¹⁰ *Ibid.* 54.

¹¹ Baker, *Sadat and After : Struggles for Egypt's Political Soul* 96.

¹² Erlich, *Students and University in 20th Century Egyptian Politics* 213.

¹³ Baker, *Sadat and After : Struggles for Egypt's Political Soul* 98.

¹⁴ Shukri, *Egypt : Portrait of a President, 1971-1981 ; the Counter-Revolution in Egypt : Sadat's Road to Jerusalem* 390.

¹⁵ Beattie, *Egypt During the Sadat Years*.

¹⁶ Lutfi al-Khuli, *Awraq Min Al-Milaff Al-'Arabi : Mustaqbal Al-Sira' Al-'Arabi Al-Isra'ili 'Am 2000* [Papers from the Arab File: The Future of the Arab-Israeli Conflict in the Year 2000], 1 ed. (al-Qahirah: Dar al-Fikr, 1986) 91.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ *Ibid.* 92.

¹⁹ Lutfi Al-Khuli, *Awraq Min Al-Milaff Al-'Arabi : Mustaqbal Al-Sira' Al-'Arabi Al-Isra'ili 'Am 2000* [Papers from the Arab File: The Future of the Arab Israeli Conflict in the Year 2000], 1 ed. (al-Qahirah: Dar al-Fikr, 1986) 67,75.

²⁰ *Ibid.* 78.

²¹ *Ibid.* 79.

²² al-Khuli, *Awraq Min Al-Milaff Al-'Arabi : Mustaqbal Al-Sira' Al-'Arabi Al-Isra'ili 'Am 2000 [Papers from the Arab File: The Future of the Arab-Israeli Conflict in the Year 2000]* 75.

²³ Ibid. 60-62.

²⁴ Behrouz Souresrafil, *Khomeini and Israel*, 2nd ed. (England: I Researchers Inc, 1989) 29. Emphasis added.

²⁵ Ruhollah Khomeini, "Imam's Message" *Sahifa-yi Nur*, 11 February 1981. Accessed at <http://www.globalsecurity.org/wmd/library/news/iran/1990/1.htm> (25 November 2007).

²⁶ Ruhollah Khomeini, "Imam Khomeini's Message to the Pilgrims to the House of God in Mecca" *Sahifa-yi Nur*, 6 September 1981. Accessed at <http://www.globalsecurity.org/wmd/library/news/iran/1990/1.htm> (25 November 2007).

²⁷ Ruhollah Khomeini, "Imam's Interview with the West German Radio-Television Network" *Sahifa-yi Nur*, 8 November 1979. <http://www.globalsecurity.org/wmd/library/news/iran/1990/3.htm>

²⁸ Abdelnasser, "Islamic Organizations in Egypt and the Iranian Revolution of 1979: The Experience of the First Few Years."

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Akhavi, "The Impact of the Iranian Revolution on Egypt," 149.

³² Ibid., 150.

³³ al-Khuli, *Awraq Min Al-Milaff Al-'Arabi : Mustaqbal Al-Sira' Al-'Arabi Al-Isra'ili 'Am 2000 [Papers from the Arab File: The Future of the Arab-Israeli Conflict in the Year 2000]* 33.

³⁴ Ibid. 64.

³⁵ Sayyid Ahmad, *After the Guns Fall Silent : Peace or Armageddon in the Middle-East*.

³⁶ Ibid. 9.

³⁷ Ibid. 10.

³⁸ Ibid. 16.

³⁹ Ibid. 33.

⁴⁰ Ibid. 25.

⁴¹ Ibid. 43.

⁴² Ibid. 73.

⁴³ Ibid. 122.

⁴⁴ Ibid. 118.

⁴⁵ Talhami, *Palestine and Egyptian National Identity*.

⁴⁶ Fu'ad Zakariya, 'Abd Al-Nasir Wa-Al-Yasar Al-Misri [Abdel Nasser and the Egyptian Left] (al-Qahirah: Ruz al-Yusuf, 1977).

⁴⁷ Baker, *Sadat and After : Struggles for Egypt's Political Soul* 31.

⁴⁸ Ibid. 94.

⁴⁹ Talhami, *Palestine and Egyptian National Identity* 146.

⁵⁰ Ibid. 148.

⁵¹ Ruth Roded, "Bint Al-Shati's Wives of the Prophet: Feminist or Feminine," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 33, no. 1 (2006).

⁵² 'A'ishah 'Abd al-Rahman Bint al-Shati', *Al-Isra'iliyat Fi Al-Ghazw Al-Fikri [the Isra'iliyat in the Intellectual Invasion]* (1975) 7.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Baker, *Sadat and After : Struggles for Egypt's Political Soul* 254.

⁵⁵ Ali Jarisha, "Al-Ghazw Al-Fikri [the Intellectual Invasion]," *al-Da'wa*, November 1976, 28.

⁵⁶ Fu'ad Kuhlah, "Al-Marksiya Wa-Al-Sihuniya Wa-Wahdat Al-Judhur [Marxism and Zionism and the Unity of Roots]," *al-Da'wa*, April 1977.

⁵⁷ Abd al-Mun'im Salim, "Isra'il Al-Hadir Wa-Al-Mustaqlal: [Israel: Present and Future]," *al-Da'wa*, November 1976, 44.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 44.

⁶⁰ Abd al-Mun'im Salim, "Isra'il Al-Hadir Wa-Al-Mustaqlal: Al-Salam an Al-Tariqah Al-Amrikiya--Al-Yahudiya [Israel Present and Future: Peace the American-Jewish Way]," *al-Da'wa*, January 1977, 57.

⁶¹ Abd al-Mun'im Salim, "Isra'il Al-Hadir Wa-Al-Mustaqlal: Sihat Al-Salam Min Hirtzil Ila Ishaq Rabin [Israel Present and Future: Calls for Peace from Herzl to Yitzak Rabin]," *al-Da'wa*, March 1977.

⁶² Salim, "Isra'il Al-Hadir Wa-Al-Mustaqlbal: [Israel: Present and Future]," 52.

⁶³ *al-Da'wa*, January 1977.

⁶⁴ Salim, "Isra'il Al-Hadir Wa-Al-Mustaqlbal: Sihat Al-Salam Min Hirtzil Illa Ishaq Rabin [Israel Present and Future: Calls for Peace from Herzl to Yitzak Rabin]."

⁶⁵ Salim, "Isra'il Al-Hadir Wa-Al-Mustaqlbal: Al-Salam an Al-Tariqah Al-Amrikiya--Al-Yahudiya [Israel Present and Future: Peace the American-Jewish Way]," 57.

⁶⁶ Salih Ashmawi, *al-Da'wa*, April 1977.

⁶⁷ Ala' Zaydan, "Qadiyat Al-Masjid Al-Aqsa Tazdat Khuturatan [the Issue of the Aqsa Mosque Gets More Dangerous]," *al-Da'wa*, August 1977.

⁶⁸ Ronald L. Nettler, "Islam Vs. Israel," *Commentary* 78, no. 6 (1984): 27.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*: 28.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷¹ Baker, *Sadat and After : Struggles for Egypt's Political Soul* 61.

⁷² *Ibid.* 258.

⁷³ Beattie, *Egypt During the Sadat Years* 245.

⁷⁴ Mufid Shihab al-Din, al-Sayyid Yasin, and Yunan Labib Rizq, *Al-Sihyuniyah Wa Al-'Unsuriyah Al-Sihyuniyah Ka-Namti Min Anmat Al-Tafriqah Al-'Unsuriyah* [Zionism and Zionist Racism as a Form of Racial Discrimination] (al-Qahirah: Ma'had al-Buhuth wa al-Dirasat al-'Arabiyyah, 1977) 13.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.* 15.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.* 16.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.* 20.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.* 23.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.* 24.

⁸⁰ Abdelwahab M. Elmessiri, *The Land of Promise : A Critique of Political Zionism* (New Brunswick: North American, 1977).

⁸¹ Abdelwahab M. Elmessiri, *Mawsu'at Al-Mafahim Wa-Al-Mustalahat Al-Sihyuniyah: Ru'yah Naqdiyah* [Encyclopedia of Zionist Concepts and Terms: A Critical View] (al-Qahirah: Markaz al-Dirasat al-Siyasiyah wa-al-Istirajiyah bi-al-Ahram, 1975) 13.

⁸² *Ibid.* 18.

⁸³ *Ibid.* 20.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ *Ibid.* 21.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸⁷ *Ibid.* 22.

⁸⁸ Ihsan Abd al-Quddus, *Khawatir Siyasiyah* [Political Dangers], 1 ed. (al-Qahirah: Muntasir, 1979) 32-34.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.* 57.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.* 43.

⁹¹ *Ibid.* 55-57.

⁹² Abd al-Quddus, *Khawatir Siyasiyah* [Political Dangers] 85.

⁹³ *Ibid.* 57.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.* 57,84.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.* 134.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.* 86.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.* 152.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.* 126-28.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.* 133-35.

Chapter 9: Conclusion

It is clear that in clarifying the development of ideas about Israel in Egypt domestic, regional and international factors must be considered together. The main theoretical contribution of this thesis has been that viewing ideas in terms of paradigms, rather than 'identity' or 'ideology' yields significant insights. Viewing ideas simply as ideological masks for self-interested foreign policy is incomplete as multiple intellectual strategies are available to 'universalise' or justify that policy. The ways in which these justifications have changed over time reveals more about domestic political struggles and foreign policy priorities than changing 'identities.' This concluding chapter revisits the main empirical findings of the thesis in light of the theoretical framework elaborated in Chapter 2, reviews the elaboration of the three paradigms and briefly addresses the syntheses that occurred during the Mubarak era. It ends by suggesting the implications the thesis has for International Relations and Foreign Policy Analysis.

The principal political ideologies elaborated by Egyptian intellectuals at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century were chiefly variants of liberal nationalism, Islamism, and latterly Marxism. It was from within these political ideologies that categories for understanding Israel within three main paradigms were drawn. There were, as Chapter 3 discussed, important socio-political factors contributing to the way these ideologies evolved which, in their own way, contributed to understandings of Israel. Within liberal nationalism, a set of ideas that evolved from the Islamic reformism of Muhammad Abduh and the more secular focus of Ahmed Lutfi al-Sayyid and later the bourgeois intellectuals associated with the Wafd, the primacy of the national interest crystallised. This national interest was considered to adhere to Egypt as a territorial state and, due largely to the relationship of the Egyptian bourgeoisie to the European imperialist system and the capitalist world market generally assumed a view of Egypt's role in the world as being Mediterranean and oriented toward the West. The Islamism of Rashid Rida shifted this Western focus and stressed Egypt's belonging to a broader Islamic (initially Ottoman, later Arab) world, prioritising Egypt's Islamic character and emphasising the need to rejuvenate Islam in Egypt, with reference to modernity, rather than vice versa. The primary contribution of the communist movement that arose in the 1920s and gathered momentum after the Second World War was to introduce a social and political economy element to the national movement, and in particular the introduction of the Leninist theory of imperialism. It was mainly from within these discourses: liberal nationalism, Islamism and Marxism that the paradigms of the nation-state, culture-clash and anti-imperialism stemmed.

Although the revolution of 1952 changed the Egyptian polity, and its international orientation, dramatically, the continuities between the Nasser and Sadat years and those prior to the revolution are no less striking, and had important implications for the evolution of conceptions of Israel. For one, the fear of mass upheaval combined with a commitment to political independence that arguably underpinned the development of liberal nationalism and Islamic reformism continued to influence the Nasser and Sadat regimes' *politique des intellectuels*, as the modest scope of the first two mass parties created by Nasser, and Sadat's courting of the rural middle class revealed. As such, the conservative ideological orientation of the Egyptian countryside, which the position of the *umdash* as a Gramscian 'rural intellectual' continued to sustain, limited the mass impact of Nasser's socialism, as it had the liberal nationalism of the Wafd. Also, the progressive narrowing of conceptions of Egyptian citizenship after the First World War to exclude *mutamassirun*, as well as the 'Arabisation' of elite intellectual discourse in response to a rising petite bourgeoisie continued under Nasser, accelerating with the exodus of Jews and Europeans in the 1950s. This petite bourgeoisie, which expanded dramatically under Nasser and Sadat due to educational reforms, continued to exert an ideological pull on the regime, as reflected in the continuing salience of Islam in public discourse and the central place of socialist-oriented anti-imperialism therein after the suppression of Islamist and liberal ideological forces. It was not only lower middle class intellectuals that had benefited from the revolution, but those 'traditional intellectuals' of the *ancien régime*, like Taha Hussein and Tawfiq al-Hakim, that were swept along by it.

For E.H. Carr, ideas on foreign policy and the international flow from a state's actual foreign policy interests and goals, whether as accurate depictions thereof, in the form of realism, or as a cover or more universalist justification, in the form of utopianism. The Egyptian case, and the example of thought on Israel within that, suggests that universalisation of foreign policy has been attempted at various levels, with each purporting to serve something beyond Egypt in different ways. The main forms this universalisation has taken correspond with the paradigms underlying this thesis. The role of the various 'international societies' toward which the Egyptian regimes of Nasser and Sadat oriented themselves has, this thesis has shown, been significant. It is important to note that international societies have not been discrete entities, with the question of Israel revealing some of the overlaps and shared norms between both Cold War camps; as well as between them and within the 'Non-Aligned bloc'; and the specificities of a contested regional 'international society'. The anti-imperialism paradigm resonated within socialist and Third World international societies and a radical 'Arab' regional system. The nation-state paradigm, on the other hand, resonated within a

more Western, but also potentially Soviet-sponsored international society, as well as within a ‘Middle Eastern’ regional society prioritising states. The culture-clash paradigm resonated strongly in the regional setting, whether conceived of as ‘Arab’ or ‘Middle Eastern.’

The universalisation of foreign policy also served a domestic function, and consideration of the domestic context in Egypt also helps explain the ‘paradigmatic diversity’ toward Israel. As discussed in Chapter 2, Carr’s conception of intellectuals and their role in developing ideas on foreign policy and international relations arguably stems from the sociology of knowledge pioneered by Karl Mannheim and assumes that consensus on the part of the intellectuals reflects a degree of consensus nationally. It is this assumption, embedded in much IR theory in general, that allows him and his successors to conceptualise ideology, or ‘national identity’ as an *a priori* formed factor to be considered in analysing a state’s foreign policy, and the corresponding treatment of states as functionally like units. In this sense, Carr’s approach, and that of constructivist scholars, is useful for understanding the role of interests and the international environment in the formation of foreign policy. Gramsci’s more variegated theory of the state, in which elite intellectuals are bound to class and may not reflect the real-world concerns of the population, is more useful in understanding the domestic dimensions of idea production in the Egyptian case. Gramsci’s concept of the traditional intellectual, when applied to the Egyptian case with the caveat that intellectuals be linked with the *regime* rather than necessarily with a ruling class, provides some important insights about the changing ways in which different paradigms were foregrounded to understand Israel. Although not constituting a totalitarian system, with a rigidly applied ideology, the wielding of state power, either as inducement or censure, to dictate which intellectuals, and which ideas, were permissible in the public sphere, was crucial. These domestic political machinations intersected closely with foreign policy goals to shape the way the regime conceptualised Israel.

For Gramsci, the role of the traditional intellectuals, roughly comparable to Mannheim’s ‘free intelligentsia’, must be considered in light of the existence of ‘organic’ intellectuals linking civil with political society. In Egypt, sources of organic intellectuals included those involved in mass political parties, syndicates, journalists, and, perhaps above all, students. This thesis has argued that the failure of either liberal nationalists or the left to mobilise a significant following in society via such organic intellectuals provides an important explanation for the failure of the paradigms primarily associated with these movements (the nation-state and anti-imperialism) to penetrate society far beyond the intelligentsia, and the comparative resilience of the culture-clash paradigm. The ‘masses’ of the Muslim

Brotherhood were never really won over by the Nasser regime and, when the Brotherhood and its offshoots were tacitly allowed to organise again in the 1970s, they found a ready support base for their world-view. As such, the culture-clash paradigm not only proved to be resilient in terms of understanding Israel despite the regime's policy of reconciliation, but also had powerful effects on the regime's own discourse, whether in the form of Pan-Arabism and Pan-Islamism in general, or regarding the regime's ready association of communism (and latterly Nasserism) with Zionism.

Anti-Imperialism

Under the rubric of anti-imperialism, the conflict with Israel was treated as part of a broader global struggle against imperialism. Since both Israel and 'reactionary' Arab regimes were 'stooges' of world imperialism, tackling Israel did not take priority over the broader conflict. In Marxist terms, the 'principal contradiction' in the Middle East was that between progressive forces on the one hand and reactionary Arabs, Israel and imperialism on the other. The anti-imperialism paradigm perhaps reached its apogee in the form of the 1961 Charter of the United Arab Republic and the Unity of Objective regional policy doctrine. If we accept that one of the central aims of Egyptian foreign policy in the region after 1952 was, as it had been since the end of the Second World War, to establish itself as the paramount Arab power, it made sense that in the face of perceived threats to this goal, such as the Baghdad Pact, the combination of Israeli raids on Egyptian-controlled territory and US foot-dragging on aid provision, and, crucially, the Tripartite Invasion in 1956, then portraying Israel as a part of a broader imperialist nexus after 1955 acquired a certain parsimony within 'radical' Pan-Arabism. Carr's work suggests that examining the ways in which ideas are 'universalised' for external consumption should question the extent to which that universalisation is supported by 'national power.' Thus Egyptian anti-imperialism could be seen to depend on the power of the USSR, China and other members of the Afro-Asian community (including Egypt itself) as sponsors of this ideational framework. Within the Third World, it was China, rather than Russia, that propounded a view of Israel as part of imperialism that matched most closely that expressed by both the Nasser regime and Egyptian communists in the late 1950s and 1960s, even though Egyptians were generally sceptical about the material benefit China could lend them, and the Egyptian communists were overwhelmingly pro-Soviet. On the regional level, the radical socialism of the Ba'th, ANM and other groups encouraged the Egyptian regime, in seeking to organise hegemony around Egyptian leadership in the region, and represent the Arabs internationally, to couch the conflict with Israel in terms of anti-imperialism, but it was the 'Arab' component of

radical Arabism that arguably distinguished the Egyptian conception of Israel from that of the Soviet Bloc from 1955 until 1973.

The anti-imperialism paradigm for understanding Israel was, this thesis has shown, developed primarily within the Egyptian communist movement and involved the transposition of ideas on Zionism as an imperialist force to the actually existing State of Israel from 1955. This development in itself reflected the influence of Arabism on the Egyptian left. From 1955, a ‘socialist intelligentsia’ coalesced in Egypt, including many Marxist thinkers. This intelligentsia was more uniformly ‘Arabist’ in outlook. The combination of Marxist and Arabist tenets encouraged the anti-imperialism paradigm. The socialist intelligentsia that would come to define the Nasser period emerged, positively, as a result of decisions made at the regime level vis-à-vis international orientation and preferred development path, and, negatively, because of Nasser’s assault on the Wafd and other liberal nationalist parties of the *ancien régime*, as well as the Islamist Muslim Brotherhood. Also crucial in making the intelligentsia overwhelmingly Arabist as well as socialist was the exodus of the Egyptian Jewry, beginning in 1948, and the dramatic Arabisation of Egyptian urban society after 1956. Nasser’s ‘socialist intelligentsia’ did not, belated attempts by the regime to change this notwithstanding, enjoy any kind of ‘organicity’ with the masses. As such, while Marxist ideas, like liberal ones before them, achieved wide resonance among intellectuals, they did not penetrate far beyond the intelligentsia and it was relatively easy for the regime to use their ideas selectively, muzzle them, or, as Sadat later showed, remove them from the public sphere and stem the few channels of influence they could use in society. Thus, Nasser encouraged Marxism in the context of removing the *ancien régime* from political power, as well as in confronting the Muslim Brotherhood, while retaining the discretion to deradicalise the public sphere, as he did in 1958. Sadat, in tackling the Nasserist left, first encouraged Marxism, then Islamism, as well as rehabilitating liberal nationalism as a counterbalance to both, but ultimately turning on its main champions, the neo-Wafd, as well.

Marxist intellectuals during the 1950s and 1960s, while equating Israel with imperialism, tended to stress the threat of the latter over the former, with Israel treated as essentially epiphenomenal, or even a red herring to distract the Arabs from the true battle. Thus writers in *al-Tali'a* after 1967 could argue that the Six Day War had not resulted in an Arab defeat because the imperialist plan to extinguish the Arab revolution and topple its leaders had failed. Sa'd Eddine Ibrahim could argue that a strike against imperialism anywhere in the world would further the Palestine cause. The Egyptian communists and students supported

the PLO after 1970 not so much because of that organisation's confrontation with Israel *qua* Israel, but from the fact that Palestine had replaced Egypt as the locus of the Arab revolution, and could provide the spark for a 'people's war' of liberation in Egypt and other Arab countries. After 1973, the anti-imperialism paradigm became distinctly counter-hegemonic, with thinkers like Lutfi al-Khuli and Ghali Shukri concluding that Sadat, in unpicking the Nasserite revolution, was bringing Egypt into the imperialist camp as part of a regional 'counter-revolution.' Crucially, this counter-hegemonic position related not only to Sadat's foreign policy, but also to his assault on Nasser's support base at home. The Iranian Revolution of 1979 encouraged the anti-imperialism paradigm to the extent that Khomeini encouraged the view of Israel as part of imperialism. But despite the fact that, home to a large Jewish minority, Iran was clear to delineate Zionists from Jews, the fact that this domestic consideration was absent in Egypt meant that the revolutionary potential of Islam was affirmed, but in a way that left the culture-clash paradigm in Egypt intact.

The Nation-State

The nation-state paradigm largely separated Israel from world imperialism, according to its own motivations, and universalised the conflict, and the peace, in terms of Egypt's contribution to modernity and humanity as a whole. Prior to the Baghdad Pact, and the Suez War, there seemed no reason why Egypt's relations with the West could not develop in the context of mutual trust and respect. As such, there was little to be gained and much to lose in expounding too loudly the idea that Israel and imperialism constituted one and the same mortal enemy. Indeed, up until Israel's raid on Gaza in 1955, it seemed that the Egyptian regime was open to the idea of some form of reconciliation with Israel. Similarly, after 1967, the idea that tackling Israel was part of a broader anti-imperialist struggle was incompatible with the Nasser, and subsequently Sadat, regime's desire to build relations with—and attract economic aid from—conservative monarchies in the region. After 1973, with the 'myth of Israeli invincibility' exploded, Sadat's foreign policy goal of securing a peace agreement with Israel and attracting US support in turn encouraged the regime to portray Israel as a nation-state, with which Egypt as a state could make peace. The nation-state paradigm was supported internationally not only by the United States and the West, but by the USSR as well, despite the latter's promotion of anti-imperialism generally. Particularly in the context of détente in the 1970s, the Egyptian regime recognised the limits of conceptualising Israel as nothing but a 'bridgehead' for imperialism. With Chinese foreign policy also deradicalising from the early 1970s, more attention was paid to issues of rights, international law, economic independence and morality in order to tie Egyptian foreign policy toward Israel to more 'liberal', post-imperialism, concerns. The Zionism-

Fascism link is best understood in these terms. The nation-state paradigm was supported regionally by conceptions of Arabism throughout the Nasser period that prioritised looser federal or solidarity arrangements over ‘organic’ unity, as well as the shift in Palestinian strategy toward establishing an independent state of Palestine on any liberated land after 1967. The primacy of the nation-state as the ultimate expression of political identity inexorably led to a more heterogeneous conception of the region that could include an Israeli state in some form, and not just a binary region comprising forces of imperialism and reaction, on the one hand, and those of progress on the other.

In the first two to three years of the revolution, roughly from 1952 until 1954 or 1955, there was a significant degree of intellectual diversity which tended if anything toward an ‘Egypt-first’ perspective and corresponding conception of Egypt, and Israel, as nation-states. The diversity of the first stage of the revolution owed more to factional struggles at the regime level, and the corresponding uncertainty about Egypt’s international orientation, than to principled commitment to freedom of speech. At this time also, as had been the case since 1947, the Egyptian communist movement continued to conceptualise Israel as a nation-state with a right to exist. From 1955, the regime promoted Arabism over Egyptian nationalism, but nevertheless tended to emphasise, in generally left-wing terms, the need for Arab states to remain defined within any unity arrangements. It was during the period of Arab summity in the mid-1960s, in which the principles of non-intervention and state sovereignty were most explicitly championed, that Ahmad Baha al-Din stressed Israel’s ‘stateness’, and the specific threat of Zionism over a more generalised imperialism. It was also at this time that Egypt and other Arab states called for Israel’s ‘liquidation.’ Baha al-Din revisited this argument shortly after the Six Day War in 1967 in calling for a Palestinian state in order to face Israel on equal terms and play the game of ‘modern’ international politics. Sadat applied himself after 1971 to the systematic deconstruction of Nasser’s regime and support structures. This ‘de-Nasserisation’ was partially achieved via the empowerment of liberal nationalist intellectuals throughout the decade. De-Nasserisation on the liberal side involved the critique of Nasser’s ‘adventurist’ foreign policy and the principle of exporting revolution prematurely. For Nagib Mahfuz and Tawfiq al-Hakim in 1972, this meant accepting the desirability of peace with Israel. Following 1973, Muhammad Sid Ahmad, working under the auspices of the state-controlled al-Ahram Centre, argued in Marxist terms for seeking a negotiated settlement with Israel as a legitimate nation-state, in many ways marking a return to the traditional Egyptian communist position. Sadat argued that expansionist Zionism was dead, and many intellectuals, even in criticising Israel, focussed on its internal characteristics

and policies toward the Palestinians rather than its ultimate objective of establishing a state from the Nile to the Euphrates.

The Culture-Clash

The culture-clash paradigm arguably emerged in the context of the Nasser regime's adoption of Pan-Arabism as a central part of its ideological makeup and stemmed from the same desire for regional dominance. Tackling Israel could be portrayed as serving the Arab, or Muslim, worlds in the face of an eternal Jewish threat. The paradigm foregrounded Israel's 'foreignness' and the primarily cultural and religious threat it posed, as well as the role of Jews in influencing US and Soviet policy toward the Middle East. Importantly, the culture-clash paradigm, in which Israel was conceptualised as a culturally alien implant, was one that tended to be accentuated as the radical socialist components of Pan-Arabism diminished. Thus, in 1958, in the context of denigrating the staunchly anti-imperialist Qasim, Nasser turned to the Muslim Brotherhood's argument that communism and Zionism were identical and that Qasim, in depending on Iraqi communists and resisting integration into the UAR, was a Zionist. The period from 1964 until 1966 of maximum inter-Arab cooperation coincided with Israel's designation as a 'cancer' that could be excised, as well as the contention that the United States, absent Jewish manipulation of its political and economic systems, could be a force for good in the region. After 1967, with the deradicalisation of the Arab world and the ascent of Saudi Arabia and the oil states, in part as a result of Egypt's need to attract economic aid from these states, a context was created for the more consistent interpretation of Israel within the culture-clash paradigm, at least until 1973. The universalisation of relations with Israel within the culture-clash paradigm operated on a primarily regional (or to some extent Pan-Islamic) level, although the role of Germany as an inspiration in the 1930s and 1940s was significant for groups like the Ba'th, ANM and Muslim Brotherhood that were formed at this time, and thus in the evolution of 'Arab nationalism'. After World War II, 'international society' on a global level for expressions of anti-Zionist feeling as 'anti-Jewish' no longer existed, but conceptions of regional identity that prioritised ethnicity or religion over social and economic systems were upheld by conservative monarchies and reinforced by Arab nationalism. During the Nasser years, then, the 'Arab' component of radical Pan-Arabism distinguished Israel from 'reactionary' Arab regimes as servants of imperialism. After 1967, the role of the conservative monarchies, particularly Saudi Arabia, in promoting the culture-clash paradigm became more significant due to the widespread discrediting of socialism as a component of the 'Arab' international society, and the corresponding elevation of Islam as the defining characteristic of Arabism.

Domestically, the culture-clash paradigm for understanding Israel was developed by the Muslim Brotherhood, an organisation that the Nasser regime crushed, but the loyalty of whose ‘masses’ it sought to ensure. In seeking to sustain the domestic support that Nasser enjoyed after Suez, the regime did not explicitly challenge the Brotherhood’s ideology, including the culture-clash perception of Israel. The culture-clash view was also promoted by Sadat and Islamist frameworks in general accompanied the rehabilitation of the Muslim Brotherhood in the 1970s. During the 1970s, the culture-clash, like the anti-imperialism, paradigm became inexorably counter-hegemonic. The Muslim Brotherhood and its more radical offshoots conceptualised Israel, following earlier thinkers like Sayyid Qutb, as the result and tool of a longstanding Jewish conspiracy to dominate the world in general, and destroy Islam in particular. Although Sadat himself had, in the early 1970s, described Israel in similar terms, following his visit to Jerusalem in 1977, the Brotherhood reapplied Qutb’s earlier indictment against Nasser (that he was a Jewish agent) to Sadat in their officially tolerated newspaper.

Paradigmatic Synthesis and the Mubarak Era

The fact that the USSR, as Egypt’s most consistent supporter until the second half of the 1970s, was unable to change Egyptian conceptions of Israel and the Arab-Israeli conflict reveals the limits of ‘international society’ conceived globally as an explanatory factor in the evolution of ideas. Egyptian intellectuals and statesmen did come around to the Soviet position on Israel, which was close to that of the United States in the 1970s, but only as the bilateral relationship with Russia was collapsing. Conversely, China, which was the world power that most closely defended the Egyptian and Arab view of the conflict, was, despite growing links, comparatively insignificant as an international sponsor and not likely to be able to match the USA or USSR as an arms supplier. The regional context during the Nasser and Sadat years facilitated the Egyptian promotion of all three paradigms, but ultimately acted in favour of the culture-clash. Nasser was instrumental in integrating the anti-imperialism of an Afro-Asian and socialist international society with the Arabism that had been evolving in a radical direction since the end of the Second World War. During the Nasser period, Arabism and anti-imperialism were thus inextricably linked and, as such, the culture-clash and anti-imperialism paradigms were to a great extent intertwined. Theoretically, this connection was made possible by conceiving of the State of Israel, rather than just Zionism, as a manifestation of imperialism that would be overcome not by revolution within the Jewish state, but by the external force of a revolutionary Arab nation. It is this conjunction between Arabism and anti-imperialism that Heikal implies when he describes the history of the region after World War II in terms of a struggle between two

‘systems.’ The first, the ‘Arab system’, was championed by Nasser and the ANM and prioritised Arab independence, with Israel being the main threat to that. The second, the ‘Middle East system’, which was promoted by Western powers, identified the Soviet Union and communism as the main threat, and could encompass non-Arab states such as Pakistan, Turkey, Iran and Israel. Sadat, for Heikal, shifted Egypt’s allegiance from the Arab to the Middle East system, which not only mobilised regional resources against the USSR, but also destroyed Arab ‘specificity’ (*khususiya*) and facilitated Israeli integration.¹ But although Heikal associates ‘Arab specificity’ with the Arab system and anti-imperialism, states like Saudi Arabia that championed the anti-Soviet ‘Middle East system’ emphasised the role of Islam in regional solidarity, and correspondingly the Jewish specificity of Israel over Israel’s link with imperialism, and thus also reinforced the culture-clash paradigm. The triumph of the Middle East over the Arab system after 1973, while replacing the anti-imperialist conception of a region divided between ‘reactionaries’ and ‘progressives’ with a conception that highlighted the supremacy of nation-states, nonetheless sustained an ‘international society’ for viewing Israel in culturalist terms. The Iranian Revolution of 1979 rejuvenated the anti-imperialism paradigm for understanding Israel but, in lending credence to the revolutionary potential of Islam, also strengthened the culture-clash paradigm on a regional level.

Culture of War?

This thesis began by noting Tarek Heggy’s observation that a policy of peace in Egypt has, since the 1970s, diverged sharply from a prevailing ‘culture of war.’ Although some intellectuals, such as Tawfiq al-Hakim, approved of Sadat’s policy of peace toward Israel and others, like Sa’d Eddine Ibrahim, later revised their critical stance toward the policy, there has remained staunch opposition to normalisation across a broad political spectrum, with criticism of the policy from some quarters becoming ‘counter-hegemonic’, contending that the regime itself is part of a conspiracy against Egypt or the Arab and Islamic worlds. The thesis has argued that due to the fact that Islamist political actors, particularly the Muslim Brotherhood, have enjoyed far greater support and ‘organicity’ with the Egyptian public, counter-hegemonic ideas from the Islamist camp have proven far more resilient and resonant than Marxist or liberal nationalist analyses of Israel, despite changes in Egypt’s international orientation. The Sadat regime, including al-Azhar, couched policy toward Israel in religious terms. Even though the Brotherhood, after Camp David, was persuaded to be more muted in its criticism of the regime, Sadat’s successor, Hosni Mubarak, allowed more overt criticism of Israel in order to decompress the public sphere.

Sadat, in moving Egypt firmly into the Western orbit, universalised its foreign policy not only as serving Arab interests, as had his predecessor, but also as furthering the interests of civilisation and modernity. He argued in 1974 that expansionist Zionism was finished and that Egypt had a duty to make peace in order to further domestic economic and political development. Some, like Osman Ahmed Osman, went so far as to argue that building economic links with Israel as a ‘gateway’ to the West would further this goal, while others focussed on Israeli policies and the nature of Zionism to critique the state within a liberal discourse of international law and morality. But throughout the second half of the decade the Muslim Brotherhood and other actors were drawing attention to ongoing Israeli settlement in the Occupied Territories, which, compounded by the election of Menachem Begin in 1977, the bombing of the Iraqi nuclear reactor in 1981 and the invasion of Lebanon in 1982, flew in the face of Sadat’s assertion that Egypt was succeeding in drawing off American support for Israel or quelling Zionist expansionism. Carr’s caution that propaganda must have some relation to ‘fact’ is instructive here. Just as it had proven impossible for the rehabilitated Brotherhood to ‘explain away’ Sadat’s visit to Jerusalem in 1977, so too was it impossible for the regime to pretend, in either liberal or Islamic terms, that Sadat’s diplomacy was having a positive effect on Israeli policy. Leftist commentators continue to associate Israel with neo-imperialism, warning in similar terms to those of Lutfi al-Khuli (who later, along with his contemporary Mohamed Sid Ahmed, became much more optimistic about normalisation) of the dangers Israel posed to Arab economies, societies and politics. Galal Amin, for example, saw an Israeli hand behind the growth of Islamist extremism in Egypt in the 1980s and 1990s.² With the Iranian Revolution in 1979, the scope for explaining Israel (Khomeini’s distinction between Zionists and Jews notwithstanding) in Islamic over Marxist terms increased markedly (a trend also furthered by the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in that year), and the ‘culture-clash’ paradigm—in which Israel represented not only an ‘outlaw’ state, but also a threat to the cultural authenticity of Egypt and the Arab world, become reflexive for observers across the political spectrum.

From the death of Sadat in 1981 until the present, many important domestic, regional and international dynamics impacted Egyptian conceptions of Israel. To describe them in detail would require considerably more space than is available here, but it will be helpful to indicate some key developments that would have affected the interplay between conceptions of Israel and Egyptian foreign policy. Internationally, the collapse of the USSR and end of the Cold War were obviously significant, both in terms of the increased marginalisation of the left domestically and of the rise of ‘culturalist’ political discourse internationally and the perceived elevation of Islam as a threat to the west, replacing communism. The attacks of

11 September 2001 and the rise of ‘neo-conservatism’ in the United States were also important, for many, in increasing the sense of polarisation between East and West and a ‘clash of civilisations’ world-view in which Israel was seen to be deeply implicated. On the regional plane, the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982, the outbreak of the Intifada in 1987 and the rise of Hamas; Egypt’s inexorable return to the ‘Arab fold’ in the context of the Iran-Iraq war; the Gulf War of 1990-1991; the initiation and collapse of the Madrid and then Oslo ‘peace processes’; the al-Aqsa intifada; and the US invasion of Iraq all provided contexts and opportunities for revisiting the question of Israel. Domestically, the hardening of Mubarak’s stance toward Israel relative to that of Sadat, particularly on the cultural level; Egypt’s new role as bridge between the Arabs and Israel; the rise of militant Islamism and the related increase in the Muslim Brotherhood’s importance as a semi-legitimate political actor; combined with tactical and also intellectual alliances between the secular left and some Islamist forces to facilitate ‘paradigmatic syntheses’ with respect to Israel.

Although there is no space to examine intellectual responses to these developments in detail, or address the differences in emphasis or perspective between authors, it is possible to provide the following schematic of the main trajectories. As argued in the previous chapter, following 1973 the Sadat regime, and many intellectuals, articulated analyses of Israel that synthesised the three paradigms discussed throughout this thesis. In the period following the death of Sadat, two main approaches crystallised, with the main axis of tension being the extent to which Israel was perceived as a regional threat to ‘Arabs’ in cultural, political and economic terms, as opposed to representing a more limited local threat to Palestinians, but potential opportunity for Egypt and the region as a whole. The 1980s and 1990s saw a number of important intellectual migrations from the left, some already foreshadowed in the 1970s. Some, like Sa’d Eddine Ibrahim, Mohamed Sid Ahmed and Lutfi al-Khuli evolved in a ‘liberal’ direction; while others, such as Tariq al-Bishri, Adel Hussein and Abdel-Wahhab Elmessiri came to embrace forms of Islamism. To this second group we may add the economist Galal Amin, who while remaining broadly true to Nasserist roots nonetheless recognised the desireability, as had Lutfi al-Khuli in the 1970s, of engaging with ‘progressive’ religious forces in Egypt and incorporated some Islamist axioms into his own thought.*

For the former, more liberal, school, Israel emerged most clearly as a legitimate ‘nation-state’ with an undeniable *de facto* and *de jure* right to exist and pursue ‘normal’ relations

* Nazih Ayubi has defined Galal Amin, Tariq al-Bishri and Adel Hussein as ‘cultural Islamists.’ Ayubi, *Overstating the Arab State*, 185

with its neighbours. Criticism of the state was limited to its treatment of the Palestinians and articulated largely using the vocabulary of democracy and international human rights and humanitarian law. Thinkers like Sa'd Eddine Ibrahim, Tarek Heggy or Abd al-Mun'im Sa'id of the al-Ahram Centre for Political and Strategic Studies, rejected the idea that Israel represented an imperialist or cultural threat to the Arab world, in the context of embracing Western liberal values and advocating the deeper integration of Egypt and the region as a whole into the global economy. The idea that Zionism threatened Egyptian-Arab values, culture and identity was also discounted in favour of further embracing Western civilisation. The barrier to increased normalisation was, in large part, seen to exist in problems with the 'Arab mindset' or psychological or mental 'blocks' about accepting Israel as well as Palestinian blunders and miscalculations.³ Within this trend we may also include erstwhile Marxists, such as the late Lutfi al-Khuli and Mohamed Sid Ahmed, and it is perhaps best embodied in the so-called 'Copenhagen Group' which formed in the mid-1990s under al-Khuli's leadership with the goal of building a 'popular Arab-Israeli peace movement'.⁴

Considerably more successful in claiming to embody a popular movement, however, was the second school, which may be seen to synthesise elements of the anti-imperialism, nation-state and culture clash paradigms. One of its most authoratative, and arguably pioneering, voices is Abdel Wahhab Elmessiri, whose 1970s contributions were discussed in the previous chapter. Elmessiri is currently the leader of the broad-based 'Kefaya' opposition movement. The thinkers associated with this trend replicate the cultural, and to an extent conspiratorial, focus of the Muslim Brotherhood and culture-clash paradigm, as well as the attention to political economy and the threat of Zionist economic imperialism associated with the Marxist intellectual milieu from which these thinkers emerged. They have also addressed the precise nature of the US-Israel link and the role of the Zionist lobby in the US in influencing American foreign policy.

In line with the anti-imperialism paradigm, in this school of thought Israel represents a part of a broader Western imperialist project to subjugate the Arab world and replace it with a 'Middle East' system along the lines suggested by Heikal above.* Particularly in the wake of the Oslo peace process in the 1990s, thinkers like Adel Hussein and Galal Amin criticised the proponents, and beneficiaries, of an emerging ideology of '*Sharq Awsatiya*' or 'Middle Easternism' that sought to legitimise and further facilitate Israeli economic and cultural

* For Galal Amin, Israel is not just a state but a 'project' aimed at the Arab world as a whole. The plans for a 'Middle East Market' in the 1990s were, for him, in reality a cover for this project. Adel Hussein wrote of the 'Arab-Iranian front' against the 'American-Zionist alliance.'

integration into the region. For the thinkers of this emergent school of thought, Israel does not so much represent the embodiment of an age-old Jewish conspiracy for world domination, as was the thesis of Qutb and others, as it does the spearhead of a broader Western agenda to subjugate the Arab world by, among other things, subverting its Arab-Islamic values and identity. Israeli actions in Palestine are thus just one part of the Zionist threat to the Arab and Muslim worlds. Elmessiri in particular emphasises the importance of Jewish culture in shaping Zionism as a threat. At the same time, this school takes seriously the idea that the United States supports Israel because of successful Jewish, or Zionist, lobbying and linked to the prescription, previously put forward by Constantine Zurayq, that the internal reasons for the Arabs' failure to match the Jews in prosecuting their case in the US are lack of democracy, irrational thinking, internal divisions and low education and development. They also share a focus on popular activism across the region as the Arabs' best weapon in support of Palestine and against Zionism.⁵

Implications for IR and FPA

As many Egypt observers talk of a quiet revolution occurring in Egypt, through the progressive Islamicisation of civil society, which the regime encourages so long as its own legitimacy is not challenged, the question of how ideas about foreign policy are formed in society becomes an important one for FPA, and one that approaches that focus only on ideas as 'road maps' for existing foreign policy makers largely neglects. If such a revolution is indeed occurring, a key question is whether, as Carr's realism would suggest, Egyptian foreign policy makers can successfully universalise normalisation with Israel in Islamic terms or, as more idealist theories may indicate, the foreign policy orientation of Egypt will change *à la* Iran. The former will depend on the extent to which regime propaganda can achieve some congruence with 'fact', which in turn may depend on a resolution of the Israel-Palestine conflict. A third possibility, which may be the most likely, but which IR theory has most trouble accepting, is that the disconnect between foreign policy and ideas in Egypt will simply continue, as Egypt remains a 'non-hegemonic' state.

This reading of the Egyptian case has important implications for the study of the role of ideas in IR and FPA. As was discussed in Chapter 1, both realist and constructivist schools of IR assume the existence of a unified state-society complex, a reality which, for the latter, can be captured—even if only fleetingly—in terms of 'identity'. This assumption of an *a priori* national identity allows constructivist IR theorists to prioritise the interaction of states in explaining the spread of international norms, the definition of interests and the construction of foreign policy goals ('Arabism constituted Arab states with Arab national interests'). In the Egyptian 'non-hegemonic' case, I have suggested, no such unified state-

society complex can be assumed and, as such, no coherent national identity becomes ‘momentarily fixed.’ Carr’s observation about British anti-German feeling stemming from British foreign policy may have chimed with Egyptian views of Israel under Nasser, but the same cannot be said for those under Sadat and Mubarak.

Constructivism, while useful in highlighting the importance of regional and international interactions in the construction of political discourses, would benefit from more closely incorporating the variable of ‘nature of state’, a core concern of the historical sociological school in IR which, for its part, largely neglects the role of ideas.⁶ The discussion here about the limits of international society, related to the non-hegemonic character of the Egyptian state, reveals the extent to which constructivist theorising, and empirical study, could benefit from such incorporation. Ayubi’s landmark study of the Arab state (discussed in Chapter 2) represents an important resource for students of Middle East international, as well as domestic, politics, with his Gramscian historical sociological account of the ‘articulation’ of modes of production in the Arab world offering a powerful explanation for not only the non-hegemonic character of Arab states, but also the multiplicity of world-views, and views on international relations, in existence. The thesis has shown how this lack of hegemony helps explain the persistence of the culture-clash paradigm for understanding Israel, despite Egypt’s international and regional links. A Gramscian ‘accurate reconnaissance’ of individual states helps avoid the perhaps Eurocentric assumption that ‘world-view’ and foreign policy will necessarily converge, or at least suggest the caveat that such convergence will be related to processes of state formation.

Although it has not been the purpose of this thesis to draw explicit links between thought and action, but rather to trace and elucidate the interplay of ideas and foreign policy, it is appropriate in closing to suggest some ways in which ideas could be linked more explicitly to foreign policy-making in the Egyptian case. Following the assassination of Anwar Sadat and Mubarak’s accession, Egypt settled into what is often termed a ‘cold peace’ with Israel: while commercial and political interactions developed, the ‘coldness’ of the peace was felt most strongly on the cultural level. Although some explanation for the scaling back of ‘normalisation’ can be found in the differing political styles and personalities of the two presidents, it seems that the abiding cultural rejection of Israel within Egypt played a key role in circumscribing the extent to which Egyptian regime has been prepared to advance the cultural aspects of the bilateral relationship.

It is perhaps no coincidence that the sphere of culture and society has been the one in which the Mubarak regime has been prepared to cede substantial control to the Muslim

Brotherhood. Although this is often interpreted in terms of the Brotherhood's influence in Egypt being 'limited' to cultural issues, from the perspective of the Brotherhood itself, and intellectuals sympathetic to it, the cultural and social planes are, more than the political, the central battleground in the war against Zionist and Western cultural and intellectual encroachment. In this counter-hegemonic discourse, Israel is likewise conceived of in primarily culturalist terms. Far more than political and economic cooperation, then, the deepening of cultural relations with Israel would encroach on the terrain of the Muslim Brotherhood, and the regime's reluctance to do this—itself a foreign policy choice—should be understood in terms of the non-hegemonic nature of the Egyptian state. The 'paradigmatic syntheses' that have occurred since the 1980s—explicable largely in terms of the opposition political alliances forged since then, of which Kefaya represents the most recent—have combined the Brotherhood's culturalist focus with the political economy of the Marxist left and more liberal rights-based language. This has had the effect of extending the counter-hegemony into the economic and political planes and rendering it ever more difficult for the regime, if it so wished, to construct an intellectual rationale, not only for deepening Egypt's relationship with Israel and consequently from pursuing foreign policies in furtherance of that goal, but also for maintaining its current policy of Egyptian-Israeli political and economic cooperation.

¹ Haykal, *Kharif Al-Ghadab : Qissat Bidayat Wa-Nihayat 'Asr Anwar Al-Sadat* [Autumn of Fury: The Story of the Beginning and End of the Era of Anwar Sadat] 155-58.

² Amin, *Al-Muthaqafun Al-Arab Wa-Isra'il* [Arab Intellectuals and Israel] 142.

³ See e.g Tarek Heggy, 'The Arab Mind & the Denial Phenomenon', October 4, 2005, available at <http://www.windsofchange.net/archives/the_arab_mind_the_denial_phenomenon.php#more>

⁴ See <<http://www.pforp.net/>> for details on the history and current activities of the Copenhagen Group.

⁵ Galal Amin, *Al-Muthaqafun Al-Arab Wa-Isra'il* [Arab Intellectuals and Israel], 222 – 225. See also e.g. Adel Hussein, *al-Jabha al-Arabiya al-Iraniya did al-Hilf al-Amriki al-Sihyuni* [The Arab-Iranian Front against the American-Zionist Alliance], 1998 (Summary available at www.kotobarabia.com); Tariq al-Bishri, *al-Arab fi muwajahat al-'udwan* [The Arabs Confronting Aggression], (Cairo: Dar al-Shuruq, 2002) Abdel Wahhab Elmessiri, articles available in Arabic at www.elmessiri.com.

⁶ See e.g. John M. Hobson, *The State in International Relations*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000)

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