COPTS AND MUSLIMS IN EGYPT

A Study on Harmony and Hostility

SOHIRIN MOHAMMAD SOLIHIN

The Islamic Foundation

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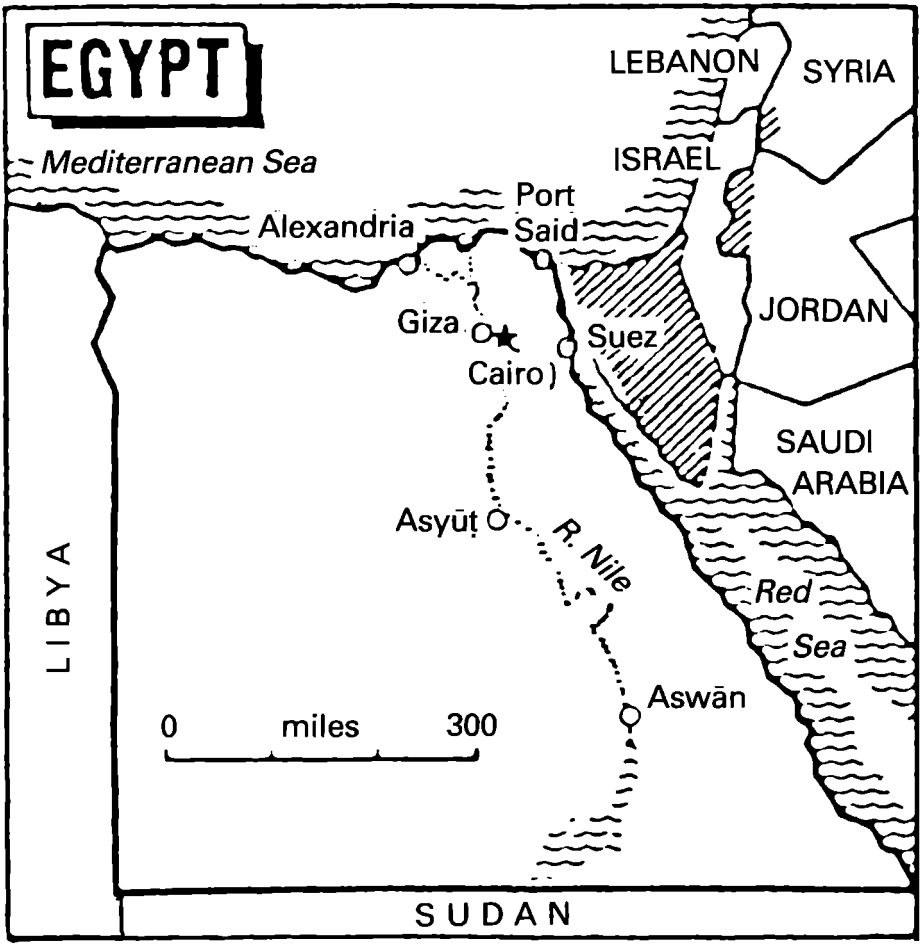
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Introduction

The term 'Copt' is used to refer to the indigenous Christian of Egypt. After the Muslim conquest at the hands of 'Amr bin al-'Āṣ, in 639, under the command of the second caliph, 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, Copts, by and large, having experienced the cruelty of the Roman empire which opposed Christianity and massacred hundreds of thousands of the followers of St. Mark, founder of the Coptic faith, turned to Islam. Cyrus, the archbishop of Alexandria, following the fall of Babylon described Muslims in these words: 'We have witnessed a people to each and everyone of whom death is preferable to life, and humility to prominence, and to one of whom this world has the least attraction. They sit not except on the ground, and eat not but on their knees. Their leader *(amīr)* is like unto one of them: the low cannot be distinguished from the high, nor the master from the slave. And when the time of prayer comes none of them absents himself, all wash their extremities and humbly observe their prayers.' In view of the position of Egypt, as the home of the Copts long before he reached Egypt, the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) had clearly warned his Companions: 'If God bestows His grace on you to conquer the country (Egypt), take mutual advice from its inhabitants as I have marital kinship with them.' As Islam guarantees free choice of religion, a number of Egyptians retained their indigenous Coptic belief.

The long, peaceful co-existence between the two communities, particularly prior to independence, deserves special attention. They jointly struggled to liberate Egypt from foreign domination. In taking the liberation campaign to the masses, priests and Muslim Shaikhs used both religious platforms – church and mosque – in an endeavour to bring to an end the British occupation. Surprisingly, the Copts

resented the entry of Western Christian mission into Egypt. The efforts of Western Christian mission to bring the Copts, before an approach was made to the Muslims, into their faith was not successful. Relations between the two communities ebbed and flowed. *Copts and Muslims in Egypt* discusses the past fraternity, the privileged position, and their joint struggle in defence of the country and seeks to discover the roots of the almost constant conflict between the Copts and Muslims.

The objective of this study is to bring out the reluctance of the non-Muslims in Egypt over the issue of constitutional Islamization in that Copts are opposed to such a move. The Copts' fear of the gradual process of constitutional Islamization does not stem only from the parliamentary establishment. The various Muslim youth organizations, which are inseparable from Muslim Brethren influence, and who in most cases were involved in the clashes, exacerbated the Copts' apprehension. In view of the clashes, which occurred time and again, the Copts accused the Sadat regime of being too lenient to Muslims, while the Mubarak regime is seen as adopting a soft policy towards the demands of the Muslim leaders.

CHAPTER 1

The Copts' Language and Social Status

Definition of 'Copt'

There is no consensus about the meaning of the word 'Copt' or about its derivation. The general view is that 'Copt' and 'Egyptian' are identical in meaning and are both derived from the Greek *'Aigyptos'*, the word by which the Hellenes designated both Egypt and the Nile.[1] The word is also said to be phonetically changed from the ancient Egyptian Ha-ka-ptah, for Memphis meaning the house or temple of the spirit of Ptah, one of the highest deities in Egyptian mythology.

According to Arabic and Semitic sources, the word is derived from 'Kuftain', son of Mizraim, a grandchild of Noah who settled in the Nile valley and gave his name to the old town of 'Quft' or 'Guft' in the neighbourhood of Thebes, the ancient capital of Egypt. Christian sources say that, 'The Arabs called Egypt *"Dār al-Qibṭ"*, home of the Copts, the originally Christian land, and that the words "Coptic" and "Christian" were interchangeable in the Arab mind.' The term 'Coptic' is thus seen to derive from the Arabic 'Qibṭ' itself abbreviated from the Greek *Aigyptos*. The term 'Coptic Churches' is linked with the church established, according to tradition, by St. Mark. It is generally acknowledged that St. Mark was one of the twelve disciples who began missionary work in Alexandria and was martyred on 25 April, 63.[2] There is tentative agreement that St. Mark arrived in Alexandria in the first or third year of the reign of Claudius, that is AD 41–42 or 43–44.[3] The history of the propagation of Coptic Christianity was inseparable from the Roman

rulers' cruelty toward the Christians. However, by the middle of the second century, the historians note, most Egyptians had been successfully brought to Christianity.[4] The native Egyptians proved difficult to convert. The only patriarch who directly advocated converting the Egyptian-speaking populace in their language was Dionysius, and during his reign (AD 247–264) Christianity began to spread and flourish throughout the whole of Egypt. Licinius' control over the Eastern Empire (from AD 313), permitted freedom of belief and worship, without fear of persecution, and the Egyptians began to turn to Christianity and the Christian faith grew rapidly in the fourth century. The emphasis on preaching the Gospel in the native language (a policy initiated by Dionysius in the middle of the previous century), as well as the determined efforts on the part of missionaries, were major factors.[5]

Other sources have noted that the word 'Copt' is taken from 'Coptes', the name of a city now known as Kuft, in Upper Egypt some thirty miles north of Thebes and 420 miles south of Cairo. Though now comparatively unknown, it was once a large town of considerable political and commercial importance. Whatever the derivation of 'Copt', it should be remembered that its original connotation was not religious: the 'Coptic' Church therefore means the church of the Copts and does not denote any sect or denomination.[6]

Coptic history is also linked to pre-Christian Egyptian history. The customs and rituals of the Coptic Church reflect a particular continuity with Pharaonic times. The discovery of Pharaonic Egypt during the late nineteenth century had a tremendous effect on the Copts. European Egyptologists identified the Copts with the ancient Egyptians, and in an interview published in a Coptic journal in 1907, the celebrated Egyptologist Gaston Maspero stated positively that the present Copts were the descendants of the Pharaohs.[7] So, today's Coptic people see themselves as having preserved their beliefs and traditions since the beginning of the first century, proud that Egypt was the first country to be evangelized by the Christian faith.

The Egyptians may in part have welcomed the new religion

because their acquaintance with the Pharaonic trinity, Osiris, Isis, Horus, perhaps prepared them for acceptance of the Christian one. They were able to synthesize the new Christian creed and remains of the Pharaonic faith. Christian teaching in Egypt achieved a considerable philosophical precision. Alexandria became the centre for Christian thought and a place of faithful dialogue up to the time of the Nicea Council in 325. Egyptian Copts always maintained the idea of oneness of trinity and because of their firm commitment they are, to the present day, called Orthodox.[8]

Coptic Language

Some Copts still retain the Coptic language in their church liturgy and zealots demand its revival as the common language for the Coptic community.[9] Apparently, Coptic represents the last stage in the evolution of the language of Ancient Egypt. The earlier languages are represented in hieroglyphic,[10] heiratic,[11] and demotic scripts.[12] The first was the sacred form used on temple walls, in tombs and on papyri with representations from the Book of the Dead. The second was less formal in nature, had a relatively simplified script used by the Coptic priests, and was later reserved almost solely for their liturgies. As time passed, book forms proved too complicated and the common people could not recognize them as the words they spoke. Thus, the language evolved to its last stage, a much less pietographic form than its two predecessors, but still too complex to meet the growing needs of daily life. With the emergence of Western Christianity in Egypt, demotic was found inadequate for the reproduction of the Christian scriptures. Egyptian schools have adopted a transliteration system of purely Egyptian texts in the Greek alphabet.[13] The Coptic language reflects the old local Egyptian dialects. It was spoken in at least a half-dozen different dialectical forms during the early centuries of Christianity. In the second century the Sahidic dialect had become the standard literary language of the country. The only other Coptic dialect to become standardized was Bohairic, which became dominant after the eleventh century and is still used today in the Coptic liturgy. The other dialects in use during

the early Christian centuries, such as Akhmimic, Subakhmimic, Middle Egyptian and Fayyumic, were never standardized.[14] Up to the seventh century Coptic language was still officially used in state affairs and office administration by the Coptic workers employed by the Muslim rulers. In 706, 'Abdullāh ibn 'Abd al-Malik issued a decree substituting Arabic for Coptic in all state affairs. Apart from the use of the Coptic language in church ritual, there are certain villages in Upper Egypt which maintain a family tradition of speaking Coptic. Currently, Sunday school classes are conducted in Coptic, as a way to familiarize the Coptic youth with liturgical terminology and all manner of rituals derived from the Copts. The Coptic leaders have preserved this heritage from their forefathers to the extent that any religious service conducted without the Coptic language is unlawful. However, the Catholics in Egypt used both Coptic and Arabic as their liturgical language, while the Protestants, from the very beginning of their presence in the nineteenth century in Egypt, used Arabic.[15]

Communities and Social Status

The number of Copts in Egypt is still a controversial issue. The Copts themselves have repeatedly complained to the state about numbers. The censuses conducted under British supervision in 1917 and 1927, regarded as inaccurate, estimated the Copts at seven per cent of the population, whereas the Copts claimed to comprise fifteen to twenty per cent.[16] The actual number of Copts is still a subject of dispute between the Copts and the Egyptian government. They say that although they are numerically a minority, they play a significant role in Egyptian society, in which, they argue, the government does not want them to appear too numerous. Some Coptic leaders claim that they number eight million, basing the figure on President Carter's statement, at the time of Pope Shenouda's visit to the White House, in 1977, in the presence of the Egyptian Ambassador Ashrāf Ghurbāl. More moderate Copts estimate their number at about five million. The 1976 government census holds that the Coptic community in the nine provinces did not exceed 2.3 million

out of a total population of sixteen million. This figure brought strong protests from the Coptic communities. After the official public announcement the Orthodox Coptic leaders decided to conduct a door-to-door census to determine the true number of the Copts, but for some reason this programme proved unworkable and the number remains unknown.[17].

In 1985, the Copts claimed to number about ten million out of a total population of about forty-seven million.[18] Today Egypt has three to three and a half million Christians who hold, by and large, to their ancient Monophysite belief, and the rest are foreigners – Europeans, Greeks and Levantines and a small number of local United Coptic Catholic churches and Protestant communities, the result of nineteenth-century American and British missions. The 1960 census, the first conducted since the 1952 revolution, showed 1,705,182 Christians out of a total population of twenty-six million. The figure had dropped from 8.1 per cent of the total population in 1940 to 7.3 per cent. Many wealthier Copts and thousands of European Christian communities fled the country in the early stages of Gamal Abdel Nasser's regime. They claimed that unfair access to opportunities in government, the public sector or university positions, resulted in the emigration of thousands of middle-class Copts to the USA, Canada and Australia. Their flight to the West reached its peak in the 1950s and 1960s, and is said to be continuing: in 1980 Coptic sources estimated that there were 90,000 Copts in North America, and 20,000 in Australia, as well as smaller communities in Western Europe.[19]

The 1,823,448 Christians listed in the 1960 census were native Egyptians of either the Monophysite Coptic, Coptic Catholic or Protestant communities. According to the 1960 census, their percentage of the population had risen slightly from 6.26 per cent in 1900 to 7.06 per cent. However, the Copts, with support from foreign observers, rejected the census figure. A few claim that the Copts constituted four out of five Egyptians. They argue that the government was unwilling to admit this higher percentage as it would impair the image of Egypt as leader of the Arab world. Further, the Copts themselves, particularly those living in the Muslim

areas, showed an unwillingness to take part in the census. The census indicated that fifty-two per cent of Christians inhabit Upper Egypt, stretching from Maghagha southward to Luxor. Provinces like al-Minyā, Asyūṭ, Sūhaj and Qinā are regarded as the Coptic heartland with a total population of nearly six million, of which 943,000 or sixteen per cent are Christians. There is also a large concentration of Copts in Cairo and Alexandria. In Cairo, the Copts are scattered in different quarters and districts, particularly the districts of Shubrā, Rawḍ al-Farāj, al-Ẓāhir and Heliopolis (*Miṣr al-Jadīdah*) which together held sixty per cent of the city's Christians, ranging from seventeen per cent (in Sāḥil) to twenty per cent (in Heliopolis) of the total population in these areas. Some of the Copts are also concentrated in the less densely Christian provinces of al-Jīza, Banī Suwaif, al-Fayyūm, Aswān and three other cities of the Suez Canal districts.[20] According to the latest, 1976, government census, in provinces like Dumyāṭ, Sharqiyyah, Kufr al-Shaikh, al-Munūfiā and Buhairah, the Coptic population is less than two per cent. The Copts dispute this figure; they claim that their numbers in those areas are relatively high particularly in the cities (see Appendix 3).[21]

In the urban areas Copts are to be found at all income levels. At the very bottom of the social scale for example, they form the majority of the Jabalīn, Cairo's free enterprise rubbish cleaners. Copts are particularly numerous in the private sector, both as owners of businesses and as employees, and in the professions: perhaps eighty per cent of pharmacists are Copts; thirty to forty per cent of doctors (the proportion was probably higher in the past); and a high proportion of lawyers and engineers.[22] Throughout history, finance and commercial and banking activities, especially in the countryside, have been largely in the hands of the Copts.[23]

A statistical study on wealth distribution in Egypt showed that in the nineteenth century, the Copts possessed one fifth of all farms and housing in addition to their financial investments. Although they only comprised six per cent of the total population they constituted sixteen per cent of farm tax-payers, which indicates that they enjoyed a higher social status than the rest of the people in Egypt. During the French

occupation at the end of the eighteenth century the Copts possessed huge properties. Many of them became heads of commercial offices due to their skills in financial administration. There were two main sources of finance for the Copts. Firstly, they enjoyed good salaries in the Mamluk administration which had given them privileged positions: Girgius al-Jawharī for instance, was Minister of Finance, and Ya'qūb Ḥannā, known as General Ya'qūb, was finance director for Sulaimān Bek. Secondly, throughout the history of Egypt, with their wide-ranging business interests, the Copts have dominated the commercial and trade establishments.[24] Since the early days of the Muslim conquest, it is typically the Copts who had been assigned the task of administrating financial affairs. They were given the authority to make tax assessments on land and agricultural products. The Mamluks had full confidence in the Copts, and as a result of their trustworthiness, a number of middle-class officers were promoted to first rank: Mu'allim Rizq became state finance minister, while at the same time he was security and finance adviser.[25]

After the Muslim conquest under 'Amr bin al-'Āṣ, there were two main communities in the country, Muslim and Coptic, while Western Christians and Jews were small minorities. The Muslim rulers' policy toward the Copts was uncertain. The Fatimid rulers, for instance, gave ministerial positions to the Copts even up to the rank of Prime Minister. The Copts themselves admitted the Muslims' tolerance in this respect. However, such privileges offered in the Fatimid period were not found in the Mamluks' reign. It is said that the internal situation deteriorated and Copts were confined to being tax collectors and financial administrators. Only in the days of Muḥammad 'Alī, did equality between religious adherents again become the hallmark of the administration. A great number of qualified non-Muslims, especially Copts, served in administrative posts (regardless of religious distinction and nationality). Muḥammad 'Alī appointed Mu'allim Ghālī, a Christian, as his financial adviser.[26] The Copts and Western Christians were given better chances to develop their skills in business. Although they remained a minority, their position began to improve early in the nineteenth

century under the stability and tolerance of Muḥammad 'Alī's administration and permission to become involved in politics dated from the middle of that century when their occupational position was not confined to administrative work.[27]

In 1855, in the days of Said Pasha, the *jizyah* was lifted and the Copts were no longer exempted from military service. In many areas, the Copts were placed on the same level as the Muslims.[28] They served on Egypt's appointed and elected representative bodies from the time the first consultative council was established in 1866, and they frequently reached high office[29], and since then, Muslims and Copts have co-existed as equals. As a result of the social changes introduced by Muḥammad 'Alī's modernization, the Coptic Church felt the need to reform its old church system. But the main impetus to the reform movement within the Coptic Church was most likely the influence of Roman and Catholic activities.[30] Cyril IV was regarded as one of the chief reformers. His major reforms were introduced to re-educate Coptic priests: he introduced a fixed salary system, established modern Coptic schools and readjusted *waqf* property to finance the reformation. He modernized the traditional Coptic school system which had been located largely in the rural areas, pioneering many reforms including a proper syllabus. These reformed schools were to play a very important role in the Coptic society and produce a number of influential figures, such as Butros Ghālī who later became Prime Minister of Egypt.[31]

In the late nineteenth century Butros Ghālī furthered the reforms and was successful in weakening the system of *Majālis al-Millī* (Community Councils). The efforts of Makarios III from 1942–46 and Yūsab II (1946–56) were hampered by the conservative higher clergy. In the 1930s and 40s a reform movement gained massive support from the urban lower-middle-class youth. They directed their reforms at Sunday schools and aimed to raise education standards. They were very critical of the priests, accusing them of being uneducated and incompetent even in religious matters. The energy behind such reform movement may have been a response to the new Islamic commitment

exemplified by the Muslim Brethren. Subsequent developments witnessed the founding in 1952 by Ibrāhim Hilāl of *al-Ummah al-Qibṭiyyah* (organization of the Coptic Community). As part of its campaign for the recovery of Coptic culture, this organization encouraged use of the Coptic language among the young and, to this end, demanded a radio station. Its members numbered about 92,000 before it was banned in 1954. In July 1954, four months after dissolution, the members of *al-Ummah al-Qibṭiyyah* kidnapped the Patriarch Ambā' Yūsab II and, though he was soon released, the scandal of church mismanagement had received too much publicity. *Majālis al-Millī* and the Holy Synod (the council of bishops) asked the government to intervene and later the Patriarch was deprived of his authority.[32]

In its early period, British occupation (from 1822 to 1922) was very beneficial to the Copts. Their members in government offices surpassed those of the Muslim majority. The latter felt that Islam in Egypt faced serious obstacles due to the growing privileges enjoyed by the Copts. In 1901, Sir J. Eldon Gorst, British representative in Egypt, in a report to his government said: 'Although the total Coptic population is less than 10 per cent, they hold 45–52 per cent of the government posts whereas the Muslim majority hold 44 per cent.'[33] In 1919, the British in their own interests, nominated Yūsuf Wahbah to serve as Prime Minister. This aroused strong opposition from both Muslim and Coptic communities when understood as a policy aimed at dividing the two religious communities.[34] By contrast, some Copts took pride in the selection of Butros Ghālī as proposed by the British. Throughout its modern history, in the Egyptian cabinet there has been at least one Coptic Minister representing their communities, and ever since 1952, the tradition has been well maintained.[35] Sa'd Zaghlūl appointed two Copts to his cabinet out of ten ministers, Wāṣif Ghālī as Foreign Minister and Marqūs Ḥannā as Minister of Public Works.[36]

Under the British occupation, many Coptic officials were expelled following the identification of their support for the movement to liberate Egypt from foreign domination. Thereafter, it was British policy to discourage the Copts and Muslims gained even more posts. A delegate was sent to

England by the Coptic community to demand equal rights with Muslim compatriots. The British were shocked by the Copts' attitude, and J.E. Gorst, the British Consul, investigated their grievances but found that there was no legitimate cause for complaint.[37]

As mentioned earlier, the Copts most probably did not resent the British occupation. However, when the British changed their policies and began appointing Muslim senior officials, they began to actively participate in the nationalist movement.[38] In 1911 the Coptic leaders convened their first conference, known as the Asyūṭ Congress. They issued a resolution, which was sent to the Khedive government, consisting of four principal demands: holiday on Sundays for the Copts; equal distribution of governmental positions; regulations on provincial councils, which would guarantee the Copts private education; and all Egyptians should be represented in Parliament regardless of tribe and religious distinction. [39]

Apparently, the Congress was the cause of a controversy among the Copts themselves. The Patriarch of Egypt had clearly warned that it would be an unsuitable way to achieve their objectives and he and other patriarchs were against the idea of holding the Congress.[40] A few days after the Congress many violent demonstrations against the Copts took place. In response to the Coptic Congress, Muslims held a meeting in Heliopolis rejecting the Copts' demands. They accused them of initiating a separatist movement.[41]

However, the Coptic leaders who attended the Asyūṭ Congress unanimously agreed to maintain friendly relations between the Copts and Muslims. They argued that the conference had to be held because of the injustice of the British policy which sought to isolate the Coptic role in Egyptian society. During the conference, most speakers' addresses were directed toward the idea of preserving the oneness of community and solidarity among the people. Mikhail Fanous strongly urged for strengthening the brotherhood between Muslims and Copts.[42]

As the Patriarch had warned, the motives of the Copts and the Congress were not universally appreciated among Muslims. In a political speech, Tawfīq Dūs severely con-

demned the British policy and emphasized the danger to the state. He divided the history of Egypt into two episodes – prior to and after the beginning of British occupation. Before the British presence, senior state positions were offered to the most competent people irrespective of religious background. He referred to the notable Copts who were assigned as judges in the state courts in the days of Muḥammad 'Alī and Ismā'īl Khedive. It had been known that the Muslim media favourably hailed the Coptic demand for equal distribution of government posts. The *al-Liwā'* magazine reported: 'We, as Muslims, wholeheartedly wish that any government posts should be offered to the most capable Egyptian candidate regardless of religious motive.' While the *al-Jarīdah* daily newspaper pointed out: 'Every Egyptian enjoys equal rights, and the British must shoulder responsibility for the current tension between Muslims and Copts.'[43]

The Asyūṭ Congress took place when Muṣṭafā Kāmil, a leader of *al-Ḥizb al-Waṭanī* (the National Party), was strongly supporting the pan-Islam movement. His Islamic leanings caused anger among the Coptic community. A series of attacks were reported in the *Liwā'* magazine. They claimed it was an odd thing, that as a great son of the nation who loved Egypt, Muṣṭafā Kāmil never chose the Copts in the build-up of the Egyptian nation.[44] By 1911, deteriorating Copt-Muslim relations brought the worst tension ever witnessed in the history of Egypt. The Copts were reluctant to join Muṣṭafā Kāmil's National Party, because it still relied greatly on Ottoman hegemony. Two Coptic leaders who did join the National Party were Wīṣā Wāṣif and Yūsuf Ḥannā. Wāṣif became a member of the party executive committee which comprised thirty people. His successor, Muḥammad Farīd, did not get the Copts' support after Muṣṭafā Kāmil's death. On 6 August, 1908, Wīṣā Wāṣif resigned from the party executive because of his sharp differences with the leader. Aḥmad Luṭfī vehemently criticized Muṣṭafā Kāmil's national orientation in which he attacked the British occupation, but still regarded the country as inseparable from the Ottoman Caliphate. Luṭfī's attempts to liberate Egypt from foreign domination can be seen as paving the way for the 1919

revolution. His common platform was 'Religion is for Allah and the homeland is for all.'[45]

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9. Ibid., p.50.

10. A system of stylized pictorial writing, particularly that form used on ancient Egyptian monuments. Hieroglyphic symbols represent the objects they depict but usually stand for particular sounds or groups of sounds. The text articles deal primarily with Egyptian hieroglyphics including the history and development of Egyptian hieroglyphics, the characteristics of hieroglyphic writing, hieratic and demotic scripts, and deciphering of hieroglyphic writing. See *Encyclopaedia Britannica,* Micropaedia, Vol.5, 1975, p.35.

11. Egyptian hieroglyphic writing of stylized cursive form, used in handwriting from the 1st dynasty (C.3100–C.2890 BC) until about 200 BC. Derived from the earlier, pictorial hieroglyphic writing used in carved or painted inscriptions, hieratic was generally written in ink with a reed pen or papyrus; its cursive form was more suited to such a medium than were the formal hieroglyphs. It was originally written vertically and later horizontally from right to left. After about 650 BC demotic script replaced

hieratic in most secular uses, but hieratic continued to be written by priests in the transcription of religious texts for several more centuries. See *Encyclopaedia Britannica,* Vol.5, 1975, p.32.

12. Egyptian hieroglyphic writing of cursive form, in use in handwritten texts from the early seventh century BC until the fifth century AD. Derived from the earlier pietographic hieroglyphic inscriptions and the cursive hieratic script, it began to replace hieratic writing during the reign of Psamtik I (663–609 BC). By the fifth century BC, demotic script was used everywhere in Egypt for business and literary purposes, although hieratic remained in use for religious texts. The demotic scripts began to be replaced by Greek during the Ptolemaic period (305–30 BC), but graffiti left by the priests of Isis as Philae date as late as AD 452. See *Encyclopaedia Britannica,* Micropaedia, Vol.3, 1975, p.463.

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CHAPTER 2

The Copts' Political Role Prior to Independence

Struggle for Equal Rights

The Copts felt that the British attitude was against their interests. The reduced number of important positions had given rise to anti-British feeling among them and led them to jointly participate with the Muslims in their struggle to end foreign occupation. Under the slogan 'Egypt for Egyptians', in 1919, Sa'd Zaghlūl publicly proclaimed the formation of Wafd, with a membership of Muslims and Copts to resist the British. He was very successful in convincing the Coptic leaders to join the new party on an equal basis.[1]

The Copt-Muslim alliance under the banner of Wafd deeply impressed the people. Local newspapers reported an unprecedented growth of fraternization between the two religious communities. However, *al-Waṭan,* the Coptic newspaper, clearly warned that unity could only be maintained on the basis of equality, otherwise it would be like building a house on sand.[2] Despite the fact that in the pre-war period Copt-Muslim relations had been marked by tension and animosity, the Wafd-inspired national struggle against the British was a key factor in bringing about collaboration for the sake of independence, which in turn would build a new Egyptian nation. Some Coptic leaders were suspicious that the Wafd stood for or admitted too much ideological diversity. Marqus Simaika for instance feared that the injustice of the Muslim majority might be worse than that of the British rulers.[3] Sa'd assured them that the 1919 revolution was neither religious in nature nor called for pan-Islamism.

George Khayyāṭ asked Sa'd when he joined the Wafd about the fate of the Copts after independence. Sa'd replied that all would be accorded equal rights irrespective of religious or other origins. This statement was an indication that the Wafd would be a secular party and this encouraged the Copts to become members. In addition, Wafd activities and appointment to posts would not represent particular groups. The executive committee, formed in accordance with Article 26 of the Wafd constitution of April 1919, was chaired by Mahmoud Sulaimān and Ibrāhīm Sa'd was the treasurer. Its members included Marqus Ḥannā and Tawfīq Dūs. In view of this, other Copts such as Kāmil Butros and Ḥabīb Khayyāṭ joined the Wafd.[4]

Within the Wafd the Copts enjoyed a privileged position, particularly in the days of its founder Sa'd Zaghlūl. His successor, Muṣṭafā al-Naḥās, even chose Makram 'Ubaid as secretary general of the party. After nearly sixty years since its re-emergence, the Wafd in the 1970s still clung to its national unity principles. When Ibrāhīm Faraj, a Copt, was the secretary of the party, the Muslim Brotherhood made an alliance with the Wafd.[5] In an interview with British and American journalists he emphasized: 'They accused our movement of being motivated by religious tendencies, but as they have witnessed both the Copts and Muslims are unshakeably unified. The Christians were in the forefront of demonstrations even in 1919 and some of them became martyrs against the British troops. Today you could see five Christians among those welcoming you in this reception. The Coptic priests made speeches in the mosques calling for national liberation while the Muslim Shaikhs did the same in their churches.'[6]

On the eve of independence the Coptic leaders spoke of unity for Egypt. Their slogan was that the homeland was for God and the worship of it was partly worshipping of God, and that for the sake of Egypt they must leave aside their Coptic identity, as Egypt did not identify itself exclusively with either particular community, Muslims or Copts. Egypt only recognized them as sons of Egypt and it required them to stand firm against the British occupation. In order to perpetuate occupation, the British tried to destroy Copt-

Muslim unity by introducing a policy of divide and rule. On 14 February, 1919, for instance, they publicly declared that they were sending the Milner Commission to Egypt with the special task of preparing a constitutional system which would regulate the selected Sultans, Ministers and Egyptian representatives who would, with the guidance of Great Britain, be involved in running Egyptian affairs.[7]

On hearing this news the Prime Minister, Muḥammad Sa'īd, resigned the next day, 15 November, 1919. The Milner Commission arrived in Egypt on 17 November, and on 21 November Yūsuf Wahbah formed a cabinet, to enable his government to collaborate with the Milner Commission. However, it was generally understood that the selection of Yūsuf Wahbah, a Copt, was primarily intended to suppress the national liberation movement, which, under the Wafd banner had achieved a very high degree of unity between the Copts and Muslims. On the same day, 21 November, 1919, nearly two thousand Copts assembled in St. Mark Orthodox Church protesting at the appointment of Wahbah as the new Prime Minister. A declaration was issued which strongly condemned his acceptance, and others signed a document stating that the British were trying to divide the Copt-Muslim unity. Any Copt approved by the British for a ministerial post was regarded as an imperialist agent and it was stated that the selection of Yūsuf Wahbah as Prime Minister did not represent the wishes of the Copts.[8] The statement that Wahbah had been selected as Prime Minister in the absence of any other suitable candidate was not accepted. The nationalist movement hoped to keep the position vacant in order to deprive the British government of someone to negotiate with.[9] On 15 December, 1919, an unsuccessful attempt to assassinate Wahbah was made by planting a bomb on the route he was due to take.[10] 'Iryān Yūsuf, a Copt, offered to undertake the assassination of Wahbah at the behest of 'Abd al-Raḥmān Fahmī, an influential leader of the underground network. Fahmī was aware that if a Muslim assassinated the Prime Minister, it could result in inter-communal strife.[11] The underground agents sought to intimidate only the British and those citizens sympathetic to their occupation.[12]

Father Serjius, through the tribune of al-Azhar mosque, vehemently criticized the British policy excuse of protecting the interests of the minority. He said that if the British attempted to sustain this pretence, he could assure them that the Copts were ready to become martyrs for the sake of the Muslims.[13] The Jewish historian, Hans Kahan, has commented on the history of nationalism in the East. He has pointed out 'that the historical event of the 1919 revolution deserved serious attention, in particular the unprecedented unity between the Muslims and the Copts against the British to create the new nation. The Wafdist Copts were among the first victims of the March 1919 revolt.' The British declaration, on 28 February, 1922, Kahan noted, to give protection to the Copts, was negatively received on the ground that since the First World War the Copts had been on the most peaceful terms with their Muslim brothers.[14]

Statements issued by the Coptic leaders within the Wafd never directly or indirectly represented their communities. Only once did Sinūṭ Ḥannā speak on behalf of the Coptic community when he attacked the selection of Yūsuf Wahbah as Prime Minister. The British rulers, having witnessed the fraternization between the two religious communities, decided to use harsh measures against the Wafd, and on 22 December, 1922, sent a severe warning to the Coptic leaders. Sa'd Zaghlūl, Fatḥullāh Barakāt, 'Aṭīf Barakāt, Muṣṭafā al-Naḥās, Ṣādiq Ḥunain, Makram 'Ubaid, Ja'far Fakhrī and Sinūṭ Ḥannā were ordered to live in remote areas or expect exile from Egypt. Sa'd, al-Naḥās, Fatḥullāh, 'Aṭīf, Sinūṭ and Makram ignored the warning and were exiled; Ṣādiq Ḥunain, 'Izz al-'Arab and Ja'far Fakhrī obeyed the order and abandoned the struggle. The remaining members were Wāṣif Butros Ghālī, Wiṣā Wāṣif and 'Alī Māhir. The first two, on behalf of the Wafd, issued a statement directing the people of Egypt to continue the struggle. Some of the new members were 'Alī Shams, 'Ulwī al-Ja'far, Murād al-Sīrārī, Marqus Ḥannā and 'Abdul Qādir Jamāl. They became party members in January and February, 1922. They also issued a statement asking the people not to co-operate with the British.[15]

According to Coptic chronicles, Sinūṭ Ḥannā, Marqus

Ḥannā and Wiṣā Waṣīf were among the most influential leaders of the Wafd from the early days of the 1919 revolution. Sinūṭ was a friend of Muṣṭafā Kāmil and he made contact with Sa'd Zaghlūl in the legislative assembly when he supported the right of vice-president elect of the assembly to act as president in the president's absence. Sinūṭ was appointed to occupy that position although he was not the elected vice-chairman. He was an accomplished writer who criticized both the British rulers and the Milner Commission. Marqus was another close friend of Muṣṭafā Kāmil and had campaigned for brotherly relations between the Copts and Muslims in 1908. He was a member of the Executive Committee of the Egyptian League, and was given the title 'Bey' in 1912 in recognition of his outstanding services to the government. In 1914, he was elected vice-president of the Egyptian Bar Association and later served as its President for four yearly periods.[16] Indeed the Copts played a most important part in the Egyptian Bar Association which was controlled by the Wafd. Marqus Ḥannā, the first Copt to serve as the organization's president, was elected five times. Makram, Kāmil Ṣiqdī, and another Wafdist Copt, Kāmil Yūsuf Sāḥib, also served as Bar Association presidents.[17]

Struggle of the Wafdist Copts

On 22 December, 1921, Sa'd Zaghlūl and his colleagues were sentenced to exile in Ceylon and the following day Sa'd was jailed. The Wafd issued a statement protesting about their detention signed by Wāṣif Butros Ghālī, Sinūṭ Ḥannā, Muṣṭafā al-Naḥās, Wiṣā Wāṣif and Makram 'Ubaid. The British authorities then arrested Muṣṭafā al-Naḥās, Sinūṭ Ḥannā, Makram 'Ubaid, Fatḥullāh Barakāt and 'Āṭif Barakāt and the decision was taken to exile Sa'd and his colleagues to the Seychelles. On 29 December, 1921, they were deported from Suez. Amīn al-Rāfi', the untouched member of Wafd, called upon the people to be united in face of the harsh measures being taken by the authorities against Sa'd and his compatriots. He was successful in drawing back members who had left the Wafd such as Butros Ghālī, Wiṣā Wāṣif and 'Alī Māhir. At a meeting on 18

December, 1921, they issued a statement proclaiming their unity in their struggle for independence.[18] However, their return was overshadowed by their attempts to dominate the party, due to their greater numbers. When Ṣādiq Ḥunain, Amīn 'Izz al-'Arab, and Ja'far Fakhrī were arrested this left only Wāṣif Ghālī, Wiṣā Wāṣif and 'Alī Māhir. In January and February, 1922, they tried to consolidate the party by including 'Alī Shams, 'Ulwī al-Ja'far, Murād al-Shāfi'ī, Marqus Ḥannā and 'Abd al-Qādir Jamāl. After the election of Wāṣif Ghālī as secretary-general of the party, the splinter groups within it lost their influence and took no part in decision making.[19] In January, 1922, the party issued a statement signed by Aḥmad al-Bāsil, Wiṣā Wāṣif, 'Alī Māhir, George Khayyāṭ, Marqus Ḥannā, 'Ulwī al-Ja'far and Murād al-Shāfi'ī asking the people to boycott British commodities. Unfortunately, these men were arrested the following day and imprisoned for the third time. The executive committee was now composed of al-Maṣrī al-Sa'd, Sayyid Ḥusain al-Qabsī, Shaikh Muṣṭafā al-Qayyāṭī, Salamah Mikhā'īl, Fakhrī 'Abd al-Nūr and Muḥammad Najīb al-Gharbālī. They addressed a plea to the *Ummah* to continue their struggle against the British. Fortunately the British, worried about repercussions from the detention of the signatories, freed them the next day along with the 27 January detainees. The released members immediately associated with the new members. In 1923, the new Wafd party executive committee consisted of eight Muslims and six Copts; the latter were Sinūṭ Ḥannā, George Khayyāṭ, Wāṣif Ghālī, Wiṣā Wāṣif, Makram 'Ubaid and Marqus Ḥannā. A second group of eleven Muslims and three Copts, Salamah Mikhā'īl, Fakhrī 'Abd al-Nūr and Rāghib Iskandar, were named to join the first group in the plenary sessions.[20]

During the rule of the Tharwat cabinet, begun in late July, 1922, the military rulers took the decision to imprison Aḥmad al-Bāsil, Wiṣā Wāṣif, Marqus Ḥannā, Wāṣif Butros Ghālī, 'Ulwī al-Ja'fār, George Khayyāṭ and Murād al-Shāfi'ī. They charged them with producing circulars aimed at humiliating the royal government. The judicial proceedings, held on 22 August, 1922, ended with them receiving the death sentence. The British judges referred the tribunal

appeal to Lord Allenby, British High Commissioner for his approval, and the matter was put to the British Foreign Ministry for endorsement of the death sentence. The British cabinet held a series of meetings at which they unanimously agreed to commute the death sentence to seven years' imprisonment. However, the seven Wafd leaders were released on 14 May, 1923, during the rule of the Sa'd Zaghlūl Cabinet.[21] On 25 July, 1922, following the arrest of the Wafd leaders, the party executive committee consisted of Muḥammad Najīb al-Gharbālī, Sayyid Ḥusain al-Qabsī, Fakhrī 'Abd al-Nūr, Najīb Iskandar, Shaikh Muṣṭafā al-Qayyātī and Rāghib Iskandar. Political unrest, social instability and demonstrations continued in most of the provinces. When two unidentified men shot two soldiers, on 14 August, the authorities imprisoned 'Abd al-Raḥmān Fahmī, Maḥmūd Thābit, Najīb Iskandar, Fakhrī 'Abd al-Nūr, Maḥmūd Maqrashī, Muṣṭafā al-Kayyāṭī, Ḥasan Yāsīn and 'Abd al-Sattār al-Yāsīn. They were kept for a while in the British military prison before being transferred to the Qaṣr al-Nīl jail.[22]

Another new Wafd party executive committee now emerged which consisted of al-Maṣrī al-Sa'd, Ḥusain al-Qabsī, Muḥammad Najīb al-Gharbālī, Maḥmūd Ḥilmī Ismā'īl, Rāghib Iskandar, Salamah Mikhā'īl and 'Abd al-Ḥalīm al-Biyālī. On 14 August, in the face of continuous unrest, the British authorities announced that they had removed Sa'd Zaghlūl from exile in the Seychelles and imprisoned him on Gibraltar. This aggravated the situation and led to more tension, attempted assassinations and other incidents. On 5 and 6 March, 1923, the authorities arrested al-Maṣrī al-Sa'd, Ḥusain al-Qabsī, Fakhrī Abd al-Nūr, Maḥmūd Ḥilmī Ismā'īl, Muḥammad al-Gharbālī and Rāghib Iskandar following two explosions on 27 February and 4 March, 1923. Ṣādiq Ḥunain and 'Abd al-Qādir Ḥamzah, from the Editorial Board of *al-Balāgh,* the Wafd newspaper, were detained and the paper was banned. The party executive committee during this time was in the hands of Ḥasan Ḥabīb, 'Alī Shams, Ḥusain Hilāl, Muṣṭafā Bakr, Ibrāhīm Rātib, 'Āṭif 'Afīfī and 'Abd al-Ḥalīm al-Biyālī. As usual they issued a statement calling upon the people to continue their struggle. On 31 March, 1923, Sa'd and his colleagues were

released, and they returned to Egypt on 17 September, 1923. They were warmly welcomed by the people and the Wafd once again began to re-organize itself and to prepare for the election.[23]

Notes and References (Chapter 2)

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CHAPTER 3

Western Missionary Activities

Catholic Mission

The Western missionaries in Egypt cannot be compared with missionaries to any other Muslim countries. They were at odds not only with the Muslims (who were the missionary target), but also with the indigenous Christian Copts who opposed them. Their efforts to convert the Muslims ended with only minor gains. They mapped out a plan to centralize their Evangelical Mission in Egypt, regarded as crucial because it was well-known as the heartland of intellectual Muslims trained by the prestigious al-Azhar University. The Westerners viewed Egypt as the training centre of Muslim preachers all over the world. In view of that it is understandable that Cairo was chosen as a suitable place for holding the first International Conference which was to set out an agenda for missionary strategies to disseminate the Gospel teaching in the Muslim world. The 1906 Conference, which took place in the house of 'Arabī Pasha and was attended by 62 missionaries representing 29 societies, was primarily intended for setting up a Central Literature Committee with the emphasis on a training programme to recruit the assigned missionaries in Cairo as well as restructuring a syllabus for the new Christian converts.[1]

The arrival of Western missionaries in Egypt was closely linked with colonial occupation in the Middle East. Numerous bodies representing both Roman Catholic and Protestant missionary organizations tried restlessly to reach the people and introduce the Biblical teaching. Between 1830 and 1914 most of the Mediterranean shore west of Egypt was under the colonial Western European powers. From the early days of

their occupation, the colonial governments facilitated both Roman Catholic and Protestant missionary penetration into Egypt which was solely aimed at addressing the Biblical message to Muslims and Jews alike. During the seventeenth century the Capuchins and Jesuits initiated Catholic missionary work, and soon afterwards built United Catholic churches. To this day the Catholic communities of Egypt remain fragmented in seven communities, each of which conducts its separate and distinct rites and serves its ethnic group interests. Each has its own strategies and runs its own educational institutions.[2]

Some Orthodox Copts converted to Western Catholicism during the seventeenth century. Before that, Catholic settlers, largely Westerners, had tried to tempt the Copts' orthodox orientations toward Catholicism but without much success. By the end of the sixteenth century England and France had opened Consulates in Cairo. Monsieur Mieh, a diplomat assigned to Political Affairs wrote a book on the Egyptian situation, and by the end of the seventeenth century, an English historian repeatedly stated his views on the strength of the Copts' commitment to their orthodox belief and the difficulties of bringing them to Catholicism. He further stated: 'It is extremely difficult to find out in this world such obstinate Coptic societies who preserved the ancient religious tradition. Even the most experienced Catholic missionary worker, who settled a number of years in their communities were unable to influence their spiritual orthodox orientation.'[3]

The Catholic communities of Egypt are comprised of Coptic Catholics, Greek Catholic Malachites, Maronites, Syrian Catholics and Latin-rite Catholics. The Coptic Catholics constitute the biggest number, with their communal base in Fajjālah, a quarter of Cairo, the suburbs of Heliopolis, the cities of Minyā, Taula and Luxor in Upper Egypt. They run a sizeable number of schools in the south and in Cairo as well as seminaries in Jīza and Ma'ādī district. The Greek Catholic Malachites are a small community and came originally from three distinct ethnic backgrounds: Syrian, Lebanese and Palestinian. They too operate several schools and colleges in Cairo, Heliopolis and Alexandria. The

Maronites have churches in Shubrā, Dāhir and Heliopolis. The Syrian Catholics have churches and schools in Dāhir and Heliopolis. Lastly, come the Latin-rite Catholics who are mostly Italians. Although they only have a few parishes, their missionary activities are centred on education, social research study and medical services.[4]

Though the Roman Catholics entered Egypt in the seventeenth century, since the beginning of the nineteenth century their numbers were in continuous decline.[5] The evidence indicates that in the eighteenth century the Franciscan missionaries did succeed in bringing some Copts to Catholicism. It is probable that many of them were converted during the brief period when the Catholic Mu'allim Ghālī became the chief secretary of Muḥammad 'Alī. Despite that the Franciscan missionaries were inspired by an accord between the Egyptian and Austrio-Hungarian governments which gave the latter the right to extend religious protection on condition that this would not make Coptic Catholics foreign nationals. The Coptic Catholics were also given limited protection and support from France. However, until the nineteenth century, the Orthodox Copts were successful in stopping a plan to establish a Coptic Catholic clerical hierarchy. In 1895, the Vatican named the first Catholic patriarch, by which their communities obtained independence from Rome, and patriarchs were thereafter appointed by the local Synod of Bishops, under the auspices of both the Egyptian Government and the Pope. In 1910, the Egyptian government recognized the personal status courts which had been proposed in 1908.[6]

As usual, the Western missionaries spent huge amounts of money to attract the poor among the Copts to their beliefs. However, their expenditure proved largely in vain. None of the Egyptians responded to their mission except the children of the most impoverished who had been nurtured on their creeds. Without such methods of conversion, none of the Copts would have turned to Catholicism. Even this method of conversion ended in ultimate failure. The youths dispatched to Rome for a couple of years study, upon their return to Egypt reverted to the Coptic orthodox beliefs. Apparently, the Catholic mission arrived in Egypt shortly

after the French troops landed under the command of Napoleon, but many of the priests remained after the expulsion of the French Army in 1801. The Roman Catholic Bishops resided in Alexandria and their largest communal organization was stationed in Cairo. A relatively small number of Roman Catholic communities also settled in Upper Egypt. Their church at Helwān was used as the Missionaries de l'Afrique Central. Their missionary influence was very limited and their work was confined to the European residents. Their plan to bring the Copts into the Catholic Church under the direction of Rome created suspicion among the Bishops of the National Church, which complicated the efforts of the Roman priests to obtain success through the channel of missionary education among the Copts.[7]

It is likely that the Roman Catholics were the first Western mission to enter Egypt after the early seventeenth century, followed by the Capuchins and the Franciscans. Their missions were unsuccessful in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In 1840, for instance, their churches were to be found only in Cairo and Alexandria, and only in the middle of the nineteenth century were they able gradually to expand their mission. The Jesuits also reappeared in 1879, and the Franciscan mission continued after being temporarily suspended. In 1839 the Franciscans opened up their missionary activities by giving donations to the poor of Muslim families. In 1895 the Patriarchate of Alexandria was established and two bishoprics were assigned to undertake missionary expansion. Eventually, their efforts yielded satisfactory gains, and by 1904 the Catholic church members reached 22,000, mostly from the lowest strata of society. Despite the zealots who motivated their work, the success of their mission relied heavily on massive financial support from Emperor Francis Joseph of Austria. In addition to other elements which boosted the success of missionary propaganda, the Catholics were also backed by thousands of Latin-rite adherents mainly from Italians, French Austrians, Hungarians and Spaniards.[8]

Muḥammad 'Alī's policy on the question of missions was deeply influenced by the Franciscan missionary leaders. In

trying to meet their wishes, he was on the verge of using forceful means to change the Copts' belief into Catholicism. On the eve of the nineteenth century the Pope of Rome ordained Ambā Cyril Macaire the first patriarch of Egypt. Progress was also seen in that century in that the 13th Pope of Lyon decreed the establishment of two dioceses, al-Minyā, centred in Minyā and Tibia, based in Ṭanṭā. Since then, the Catholic Church has comprised of three parishes. The parishes of the Patriarch taught the message in Cairo while the al-Minyā priesthood was mainly concerned with it in the middle towns of Egypt up to the end of the Minyā district. The third parish was responsible for the cities in the southern area of al-Minyā district. Realizing that their missionary work was not running smoothly due to the stubbornness of the Coptic faithful, they next resorted to initiating an educational service which was mainly intended for both Muslims and Copts. Their degree of success in the field of education will be discussed in the next chapter. Apart from the Copts' rigid adherence to their faith (viewed as their main obstacle) the Catholic churches had also to contend with the rivalry of Protestant mission in the country. The Protestants' plan was to evangelize the people of Egypt as a whole, because Egypt was recognized as the greatest seat of Muslim learning, particularly the al-Azhar University, viewed as the training centre for Muslim preachers. The Moravians were the second missionary group to try to approach the Coptic community. They arrived in Egypt in the eighteenth century, but later withdrew.[9] The Church Missionary Society (CMS) also made efforts to convert the Copts but to no avail. They arrived in Egypt in 1818 but they also did not remain for long. Chaired by William Jowett, their arrival coincided with the arrival of the London Jewish Society.[10]

Anglican Mission

The entry of the Anglican Mission in Egypt is intimately linked with the establishment in 1841 of the Anglican Bishopric at Jerusalem. The Bishopric's formation was partially due to a special Act of Parliament, passed on 5

October, 1884, in which it is clearly stated that the jurisdiction of the Bishop included the whole of Egypt, the Sudan and Abyssinia. In 1887, Dr. Popham Blyth was consecrated as Bishop of the Church of England in Jerusalem and the East as well, and his office was later extended throughout Egypt and the Sudan. On his brief sojourn in Egypt he visited the Coptic and Greek patriarchs in an effort to strengthen brotherly relations and remove those sentiments of suspicion which had arisen due to the proselytizing efforts of the Western Christians.[11] The British occupation after 1882 also played a very significant role in boosting the Anglican mission in the country.[12]

As Egypt was flooded annually by Western tourists, the Anglicans arranged a seasonal chaplain for those who visited Helwān, Mena House, Ramleh, Asyūṭ and Luxor to enable them to attend Sunday and holiday services. The CMS was the effective instrument of the Anglican mission. The first journey of mission was pioneered by the Rev. Jowett in 1815, to assess contact possibilities and to give the necessary support to the native Christians. For this missionary exploration he travelled three times to Egypt, in 1819, 1820 and 1823. This led the CMS to delegate five missionaries to the region – Gobat (afterwards elevated as Bishop of Jerusalem), Lieder, Miller, Kruse and Kugler. Gobat and Kugler chose Abyssinia as their missionary base, while the others travelled to Egypt to visit the Coptic schools and distributed the scriptures. Subsequently, they opened a school in Cairo including a Coptic Seminary whose objective was to educate Coptic youth and train them for the priesthood of their church.[13]

However, this planned missionary educational service encountered some problems and was temporarily suspended. For about twenty years, the CMS was not in a position to disseminate the spiritual message in Egypt. Their mission was resumed in 1882 after they had realized their failure in approaching the Copts. After that, they confined their mission to Muslims. They centred their mission on education and medical services. In Old Cairo a medical mission was set up and a primary and secondary school for boys and three other schools in the province of Manoufia. The CMS also

established the School of Oriental Studies, designed to equip missionaries more thoroughly for their task.[14] The Rev. F.A. Klein of the CMS in Palestine was delegated to Egypt to supervise the work plan and the medical mission in Old Cairo, known as Miṣr al-Qadīmah, became a Missionary Propagation Centre.[15]

In Cairo the missionary staff comprised the clergymen, two doctors, three nurses, one lady evangelist, a lady educationalist, a native catechist, six native Christians, school teachers, a native doctor and two native dispensers. They succeeded in converting two Muslim adults and four school students, while from among the Copts six native Christians were converted. Having witnessed the progress of mission they stated: 'One of the special aims of CMS in Egypt is to gain an influence, with a view to their conversion, over the students of the great university of al-Azhar, and to bring the youth in general under the power of the Gospel.'[16]

Protestant Mission

The Protestant evangelical work in Egypt was initiated by a group of United Presbyterians and directed through their Centre in Philadelphia. They started their work in 1854, which continued for nearly half a century,[17] as an expansion of their activities in Damascus. The Missionary Programme for Egypt relied upon recruiting former missionary workers. Two veterans of Damascus, James Barnett and Gulian Lansing (recruited by Thomas McCague), began work in 1854. In the early stages their Biblical propagation was confined to the minority religious groups, such as the Jewish communities and Western residents. Later, they gave more missionary emphasis to the Copts and based their centre in Asyūṭ, the stronghold of the Copts. After a relatively short period, they started an educational service attended by Jews, Coptic youth and a small number of Muslims, which was later to face strong opposition from the leaders of the Coptic churches. A. Watson, a Presbyterian, admitted the difficulties of bringing Muslims to the Gospel. In twenty years they were only able to convert seventy-two Muslims who mostly came from the lowest strata of society.[18]

Beside the Presbyterians, a small British Protestant Agency also addressed their mission to the Jewish community. Their main growth took place around 1875, by which time they already had stations from Alexandria to Asyūṭ and their church members had reached six hundred. This number rapidly increased and in 1895 was 4,555, mostly made up of people of a Coptic background.[19] The Presbyterian missionary character was slightly different; in that period the Presbyterians worked mainly to attract the sympathy of the lay people by encouraging them to form the Evangelical Congregation whenever the priests and monks felt the need. They also offered recruitment to the native clergy.[20]

By 1881 the Presbyterians were able to bring only twenty-six Muslims to the Gospel, and during the next two years another twenty-two declared their faith. In 1895 they formed a Presbyterial organization for the native church and four years later a Synod of the Nile in which four Presbyteries were established.[21] V. Werff Lyle, in his survey of Presbyterian missionary work in Egypt, noted that by 1895 the American Mission had baptized nearly 100 converts from a Muslim background. They renewed their strategy of approaching the Muslims by establishing four missionary bases: Ṭanṭā (1893), Banhā (1894), Zaqāziq and along the Red Sea coast (1895). In 1903, the Evangelical Church of Britain and the American Mission agreed to work jointly in Egypt. They requested America to dispatch 280 additional missionary workers to assist them in reaching the non-Christian community. Their well-planned work, carried out by skilful missionary workers, yielded a handful of converts. Between 1870 and 1897 were the most productive years of their missionary endeavours in Egypt. During that period, a presbytery comprising 21 indigenous Arab Ministers was formed, supported by 42 other Presbyterian workers, 29 organized churches and 197 stations, 5,355 communicants, 127 Sunday schools with nearly 7,000 scholars, 34 colporteurs working from seven depots, plus all the missions' personnel and projects.[22]

The most rapid growth of the Presbyterian mission in Egypt occurred after the work of the British Evangelical Mission and the Scotland Mission, who confined their Biblical

propagation to the Orthodox Copts and Jewish community, came to an end. In 1855, the first American missionary school for boys was opened, followed five years later by a school for girls in Ambaba district. Their school mission flourished, and, according to an educational survey conducted by Girgius Salāmah, in 1896 there were 168 schools and 11,014 registered students.[23] Andrew Watson of the American Mission observed that the Presbyterians established 190 schools which accommodated 17,000 students, 4,000 of whom were Muslims.[24]

The rise of nationalism at the turn of the century proved antagonistic to both foreign occupation and Christian enterprise, and the revival of Islam under the banner of the Muslim Brethren added to the missionaries' problems. In response they held the first International Missionary Conference in Cairo, in 1906, aimed solely to re-shape new strategies for converting Muslims. The conference was attended by a large number of Western missionary representatives. Samuel Zwemer and W.H. Temple Gairdner played very important roles in re-designing the future plan for missionary activities in Egypt and the rest of the Muslim world. The development of the Cairo School of Oriental Studies, the Nile Mission Press, the Inter-Mission Council (1920), the Near East Christian Council and the Fellowship Unity were partly inspired by that conference.[25]

There are no statistics on the percentage of conversions. The result of a survey during the 1900s up to the time of the first Israeli invasion revealed how Western missionary tactics to reach non-Christian communities had changed, putting more emphasis on education and medical services. With the Middle East-Israeli conflict and the first outbreak of war in 1956, the Western missionaries, particularly the British, suffered the greatest setback, which even led to their expulsion. The Americans continued to reside in Egypt, but not for long. Their departure from Egypt compelled the indigenous Christians of Evangelical churches to work independently and not be dependent on Western missionaries.[26]

Three Arab-Israeli wars severely affected the Western mission in Egypt. Most Western missionary organizations pulled out their missionary workers and some were transfer-

red to other parts of the Arab world. The Egypt General Mission, for instance, ordered their personnel to work in Lebanon and later on in Eritrea, under the new name of Middle East General Mission. The Nile Mission was stationed in Beirut, and was later known as the Arabic Literature Mission.[27] In 1965, following the Israeli invasion in June, only twenty-three American Presbyterians remained in Egypt, working mostly in the field of education, medical services and in the Evangelical Theological Seminary in Cairo.[28]

Educational Services

Apparently, the Copts were objects of missionary concern before the Muslims. The missionaries expended their greatest efforts on bringing the Copts into the fold of Western Christianity. In the history of Western Christian mission, education and medical services went hand in hand. Both Catholics and Protestants established a number of educational institutions as well as hospitals, which in fact did have a cultural influence, although their degree of success in converting the people was very limited. Western Church leaders envisaged that their successful mission in Egypt could pave the way for subjugating the rest of the Muslim world. Because of this, several International Missionary Conferences took place, one of which was held at Helwān on the outskirts of Cairo, from 17 to 19 October, 1921, and was attended by many world Church leaders. The Helwān conference was regarded as the impetus for subsequent conferences held in different Middle Eastern countries. In 1924, for instance, a number of international conferences took place in Jerusalem, Istanbul, Beirut and Baghdad. Some assessments were made, particularly regarding the minutes of the conference held in Edinburgh in 1910, as points of departure for future missionary plans. They focused on two important points pertaining to tactics among Muslims. They admitted that they had failed in the beginning by criticizing and revealing the weakest points of Islam. What was needed was peaceful work and to demonstrate Christian competence and avoid attacking Islam. Secondly, they put

more missionary emphasis on children and youth education, due to the fact that faith was inculcated among Muslims in very early childhood. Evangelical activities directed among Muslims would be by the assigned missionary workers in association with the indigenous Christians who followed the Western Christian churches.[29]

Miss Mary Louisa Whately of the Anglican Church, daughter of the Anglican Archbishop of Dublin, started a Missionary School in 1856. Self-supporting to begin with, the school was later financially backed by the Christian Missionary Societies. The CMS established a school and hospital which aimed solely to reach the Muslim community. Its hospital in Old Cairo (*Miṣr al-Qadīmah*), became the centre of evangelistic activities as well as of medical work. Miss Whately's school had a Syrian matron, and Manṣūr and Joseph Shakūr, Protestants trained by the American Mission in Syria. The boys' school at that time enrolled about 300 students and the girls' school 200, including Muslims. Apart from these educational services, these four workers were also heavily involved in Scripture distribution, home visiting, coffee-house evangelism and light medical work.[30]

The Council of Holy Faith Propagation requested the Chairman of the Franciscan Evangelists of Egypt in 1723 to nominate two Coptic youths for study in Rome. Ruf'ail al-Ṭūkhī and Ṣāliḥ al-Marāghī were the first to be nominated, followed later by some others. However, the Rome-graduated students were too few to fill the Church's need for Catholic priests. In 1879, Syrian Jesuit priests established a school for clerical training in Moskī district for the purpose of educating Coptic Catholics, with graduates from the school being required to undertake further study on theological philosophy in Beirut. However, due to the communal strife which resulted from the 'Urābī revolution *(Thawrah al-'Urābiyyah),* the Jesuit leaders and other foreign residents were obliged to leave the country. Ten years later, the Jesuits re-established a secondary school in the Fajjālah district of Cairo. Four Catholic priests requested the Pope of Lyon's consent to establish a Coptic Catholic clerical school in Ṭanṭā. The Pope agreed on condition that Arabic be used as the teaching medium. At the beginning of the twentieth

century, Franciscan church leaders established the Institute of Eastern Franciscan Clerics in a district of Giza and this was mainly concerned with theological study for the Franciscan priests of Egypt and Italy. The Institute was mostly attended by Catholic Coptic students.[31]

In 1825, three CMS missionaries initiated educational missionary works, after they had conducted an intensive survey on indigenous Coptic schools while carrying out Bible distribution among the people. Their schools were centred in Cairo, a 'Coptic Seminary' which aimed to train the Coptic youth to serve in the priesthood in their own churches. However, these schools of mission were not able to carry on their work, and in 1862 their seminary education was suspended. In response to Miss Whately's appeal, however, the school was re-activated in 1882. The Rev. F.A. Klein organized CMS strategies in Egypt. The work of the Society was divided between Cairo and Old Cairo. In Cairo separate schools for boys and girls were opened. In the boys' school, located in Shāri' Muḥammad 'Alī, attendance was one-third Copts, one-third Muslims and one-third Syrians, Jews and Armenians. The girls' school was opened in the Bāb-el-Louk district. The teaching staff consisted of four foreign lady educationalists and eight native Christian schoolteachers. In Old Cairo there were two schools. The boys' school had eighty-nine pupils and the girls' school sixty-two pupils. These schools were staffed by a Western lady educationalist and an evangelist, assisted by six native Christian schoolteachers.[32]

The Presbyterian mission commenced their educational services in 1866, opening a boarding school for girls at Cairo and, in 1874, a teacher-training college was established in Asyūṭ. This latter institute was developed as a theological seminary. In 1899 these schools enrolled 15,000 students, only slightly less than all government schools. They were successful in attracting Muslim youth. Of the 16,771 students in, for instance, 1908, 3,644 were Protestants, 3,495 Muslims, and 8,547 Copts. Today, the theological seminary in Cairo concentrates on a training course which also teaches Islamic subjects. Because of the need to produce dedicated Christian workers, in 1896 the Asyūṭ Training College was established

for training an Egyptian Christian workforce.[33]

The rapid growth of Presbyterian schools in Egypt continued. Andrew Watson of the American Mission reported that by the end of the nineteenth century 190 schools were established which enrolled 17,000 students among whom were 4,000 Muslims.[34] The educational services were centred mainly in the big cities. Business and Commercial Colleges were established in Alexandria, the American and British episcopate schools in al-Qubah district, and the American University in Cairo College for girls in Ramses in Cairo. In other provinces, the Presbyterians opened the Asyūṭ American College, and two American Colleges for girls were also established in Asyūṭ and Luxor.[35]

The Asyūṭ American College, founded in 1865, opened an Agricultural Department which for the first time introduced 'Cattle Breeding'. The Rev. Charles Watson established the American University in Cairo, of which nowadays seventy-five per cent of its students are from the social elite, particularly from the families of bureaucrats and high-ranking government officials. In fact, the University was a conversion of the American College in Cairo, located in the capital especially to rival al-Azhar as the most prestigious Islamic University.[36] The Cairo-based Evangelical Theological Seminary trains pastors who are assigned to different parts of the Arab world. Nowadays they have several ministries in the Sudan, one in Bahrain, one in Kuwait, four in Syria and four in Iraq.[37]

There are also several institutions which, though not openly declared as Missionary Educational Institutes, play very significant roles in influencing missionary thought. These institutions are: Dominican Eastern Institute, which is centred in Maṣna' al-Ṭarābīsh Street; *Nadwah al-Kitāb* (Council of the Holy Book) in Sulaimān Pasha Street; Dār al-Salām Institute in *Miṣr al-Qadīmah* (Old Cairo) and the French Cultural Centre in al-Munīrah district. These institutions are run by Catholics under French auspices. Most of the Egyptians who assist their projects are French university graduates who were initially assigned to study Oriental literature and Islamic culture.[38]

The census conducted by the government in 1921–1922

indicated that there were 30,181 students attending Christian schools in Egypt.[39] Due to the alien cultural influence which stemmed from those schools' activities, such schools were inevitably linked with a conspiracy to denationalize the pupils and were even regarded by many as having a dangerous influence on Muslim children. The founders of Christian educational institutes hope that their schools will operate as in Turkey where traditional links with the past were broken and a national system of education adopted, to which all schools including foreign schools have to conform. The March 1948 educational reforms requiring private schools to conform to the governmental syllabus were regarded as an obstacle by the Christian missionaries. Article No. 12 clearly stated: 'that no school may teach its pupils, boys or girls, a religion other than their own, even with the consent of the parents'. A year later, in August 1949, the government, in this case the Ministry of Education, issued another decree which required that the Qur'ān and other Islamic subjects should be made an obligatory condition for promotional examinations in the state schools. The Church leaders opposed the decree and made an appeal to the government requesting obligatory teaching of Christianity for Christian students. The Ministry of Education agreed that Christian students should be taught their religion without imposing examinations on them.[40]

The period from the Second World War to the 1960s may be seen as a transitional stage during which the government sought to put in place a proper syllabus on various religious subjects within the state schools and private educational institutions. The rulers of Egypt were well aware of the Western Christian missionaries who always channelled their mission through education. As a result of the impact on Muslims of Christian educational institutes, the government feared that many of the young who were overwhelmingly Muslim might become alienated from their faith in Islam. For this reason, the Ministry of Education issued several decrees regulating the ethical teaching of religion to students according to their religious background. Christian missionary leaders were disillusioned by these policies, which they regarded as obstacles to their missionary work. In 1956, for

instance, a Bill was passed requiring all schools in Egypt to teach Islamic religion to their Muslim students and to provide a prayer room for them. It was clearly stated in the Bill that the schools had to obey the law or face confiscation. The Christian schools largely opposed the Bill. Foreign missionaries felt that they had been edged out and were even unable to continue their work under the new regulations. They perceived that the new law compelled them to teach Islamic religion to their Muslim students. A further development, in 1958, required all foreign schools to appoint Egyptian teachers to teach national subjects, especially history and geography which should, moreover, be taught in Arabic. The following year, by an act of 1911, the universities were brought into the government national syllabus, and in 1961, by Act 103, the government unified national systems of education for all schools, of which al-Azhar and the traditional educational institutions became a part.[41] Christians suffered a severe blow as a result of the nationalized school programme which cast a shadow on their plan to bring the Christian faith to the young. In 1961–62 alone, 91,728 students were enrolled in the Christian schools, administrated by foreign community groups.

Despite Coptic denominational schools, the Roman Catholics have the largest number of schools in Egypt. The Catholic-sponsored American University in Cairo (AUC), founded in 1919, plays a prominent role in the evangelical project. The rapid growth of that university is mainly due to financial support from the Ford Foundation. In addition to the huge material support by the Foundation, this internationally affiliated Christian body donates specific grants to finance research work as well as the development of educational programmes. Apart from academic activities, the University runs sports and recreational events and even organizes discos, all to encourage the male and female students to participate regardless of the moral norms of Islam. In sum, the Christians continually complain about their schools having to include religious courses which are largely controlled by the government. They complain that they have no powers to direct the planned courses. In re-evaluating the Church's responsibility for education, the

head of the Coptic Sunday schools of Egypt pointed out: 'Nowadays, we have to channel our Christian faith through the Sunday schools, which are the only hopeful means for giving our children a real Christian education in times when the Church has lost its religious message in the day school.'[42]

Medical Mission

It is likely that medical mission began with the arrival of D.R. Johnston in 1868 who directed his medical services to Muslims and Copts in Asyūṭ. The two Presbyterian hospitals in Asyūṭ and Ṭanṭā, equipped with modern facilities, provided a good opportunity to reach the Muslim community. It was recorded that before 1914, those two hospitals were used by some 35,000 patients every year. So, the Presbyterian Medical Mission, in collaboration with the indigenous General Mission hospital at Shebi'n district, and also the Manoufia-based Christian Missionary Society hospitals, were intended 'to convey the spirit of Christ through medical health services and a social welfare programme.'[43] In order to achieve their goals, they have expanded health care activities with modern facilities. The Presbyterians own and run three hospitals, two of them located in Asyūṭ and the third in Shubrā.[44]

The reason for channelling Bible propagation through health services is clearly stated by the Evangelical Mission Organization. When they began operating medical care in Egypt, it opened up ways of introducing to people the claims and teachings of Christianity: 'the preaching of the Gospel is done in close connection with the healing activities. A sick person is, in most cases, open for an encouraging word. Language and thought of the Orientals are still filled with religious expressions and thoughts, so that it is not difficult to give him a support from the word of God. There is hardly any need to overcome a gap between secular vocabulary and religious language. It is unfortunate that in most cases, the conversation always ends up in some futile exchanges. It is a gift from the Holy Spirit when an intensive discussion about the deeper issues of belief comes about. Due to its hectic character, the polyclinic is not very suitable for such ex-

changes. Nevertheless, a number of situations can take place when Bible stories can be told and briefly related to the situation of the listeners. By the patient's bed most fruitful discussions arise. The facts indicate that more than 90 per cent of the patients are Muslims, and they can hear the Word of God from the wards.'[45]

Obstacles Facing Missionary Work

As we have seen, both Catholic and Protestant missionary propagation, mainly aimed at Muslims, faced very serious problems. According to the missionary strategy, before starting their mission to Muslims, the Western Christian thought had first to be introduced to the Coptic Orthodox churches. It was hoped that the Copts would be the missionaries' allies in subduing Egypt which is an overwhelmingly Muslim country. However, this ambitious plan was hampered by the Coptic leaders' attitude toward them. The missionaries also faced bitter opposition from Muslims, as a consequence of unethical preaching of the Bible. The Coptic churches themselves proved unshakeable in their belief, strongly resisting both the Presbyterian and CMS mission. The Presbyterians had only an handful of converts among the Copts. There is evidence which indicates that several uprisings took place against their missions. The Coptic leaders always argued that their antagonism dated back to the legacies of their past, that they were a unique people with a special history. It was said that the salient element of their faithful commitment was the Pharaonic discovery which highlighted the splendour of the Egyptian cultural heritage in maintaining the oneness of Egypt.[46]

In 1859 Coptic leaders were against the ordination of Girgius Macaire as a Catholic priest. They appealed to the public that their communities were facing a dangerous threat.[47] Both Franciscan Catholic and American Protestant missions had very limited success in their efforts to convert the Coptic and Muslim communities, although they were heavily involved in social welfare activities such as orphanages, educational and medical centres. Another factor in the Copts' commitment is linked with a belief that Christianity

reached them in the time of Mark, one of the disciples of Jesus. St. Mark wrote one of the Four Gospels in the New Testament and therefore the Coptic creed was viewed as the original teaching of Jesus before Christianity entered most parts of Europe.[48]

Muslims' Response to Mission

A series of unethical missionary deeds occurred in Egypt and caused great anger among Muslims who openly resisted mission. It is obvious that prior to their direct missionary involvement in the country, the work and plans of the International Missionary Congress, which held a closed session in Jerusalem in April 1928, was reported as an attack on Islam, and this led to an unprecedented uprising. Numerous telegrams were sent to Egypt, representing public opinion, denouncing the Missionary Congress. The telegrams, sent by the Muslim Youth Organization in Haifa and the Islamic Supreme Council, emphasized the Muslim discontent which arose from the missionaries' treacherous action which abused the spirit of religious tolerance, as also from their plan to make Palestine the centre of their missionary propagation. Because of this, the Executive Committee of the Muslim Congress, the Muslim Youth Organization in Nablus and the Grand Muftī of Haifa, sent a telegram to the Centre of Muslim Youth Organizations in Egypt about the missionaries' attack on Islam and the activities of J. Mott, President of the International Christian Youth Organization who chaired the Jerusalem Missionary Congress, before travelling from Egypt to Istanbul to chair another missionary conference.

Another incident which provoked public demonstrations in Egypt involved Samuel Zwemer, a priest and missionary leader. He was in charge of missionary work in Egypt, Syria and Palestine and was also editor-in-chief of the *Muslim World.* He attacked Islam in most of his articles. He headed all the International Missionary Conferences after 1910. Zwemer had obtained permission from the Ministry of Endowment to enter mosques to study the Muslim heritage. Under the pretext of being an Orientalist, in 1926 he entered

al-Azhar where he distributed missionary propaganda. This behaviour forced the director of the mosques' department to withdraw the permission. However, on 17 April, 1928, accompanied by three colleagues, Zwemer re-entered al-Azhar where he immediately joined the Qur'ānic study circle on *Sūrah al-Baqarah.* Afterwards, he secretly circulated missionary propaganda among the students, which it was said, contained interpretations of *Āyat al-Kursī* and *al-Asmā' al-Ḥusnā,* from a Christian point of view. Nearly 3,000 students protested against his activities and tore up the circulars. Many Muslim scholars from al-Azhar appealed to the Parliament and requested that prompt measures should be taken against Zwemer's missionary work in the country. This incident left a bad impression among the Muslim population. It should be noted that the Copts took a leading part in the campaign against non-Coptic Christian missions.[49]

In October 1928, most newspapers covered a speech delivered by a missionary worker, on the occasion of the annual missionary conference held in Belfast. She pointed out the advantages of Muslim youth educated in the missionary schools and their sympathy for Christianity. Because of this the Vice Chancellor of al-Azhar issued a statement demanding that Muslim communities withdraw their children from the missionary schools. *Al-Fatḥ* magazine attacked the *al-Fraere* School, because it was reported that a number of priests in that school constantly attacked and distorted the teachings of Islam and discouraged students from fasting during the month of Ramaḍān.[50]

Another disgraceful incident was when the headmistress of Dār al-Salām School in Port Said, converted to Christianity nine boarding female students and eight non-boarding male students. The government expelled her from Egypt and the students were transferred to other schools and orphanages in Cairo. The government promised to establish many schools and orphanages to prevent children from falling easy prey to the Western missionary activities. Several other incidents took place during the following years. It was discovered that the headmaster of a school for the blind located near al-Azhar, was a priest who maintained strong relations with Mr. Moires, an American missionary worker.[51]

Main Challenges

The emergence of two Muslim organizations proved the biggest obstacles to Western mission in Egypt. The Muslim Youth Organization, *Jam'iyyat al-Shubbān al-Muslimīn,* was formed in 1927, and the Muslim Brethren, or *al-Ikhwān al-Muslimīn,* in 1928. These communal organizations became very effective in countering the spiritual threat to the Muslims of Egypt. In April 1928, the Muslim Youth Organization held a conference in Jaffa to discuss the constitution of an organization on the same lines as the parent body in Egypt. In addition, they warned the Muslim communities of the danger of missionary schools and encouraged them to establish their own private schools. In May, 1930, the MYO held a meeting in Alexandria at which they issued a resolution attacking a series of lectures against Islam sponsored by the American University in Cairo. Thereafter they appealed to the Interior Minister and the Chancellor of al-Azhar University requesting them to resist Christian missionary attack.[52] Numerous articles by the Muslim Brethren's founder, Ḥasan al-Bannā', appeared in *al-Fatḥ.* He told of his meeting with colleagues who had played important roles in the formation of the MYO, when he was a student at Dār al-'Ulūm. The activities of the missionaries were among the vital factors which encouraged him and his colleagues to embark on Islamic *Da'wah* and social activities. He sowed the seeds for Islamic propagation when Egypt was at its greatest moment of jeopardy. The British colonial administration paved the way for the Christian mission and evangelists, who scattered to most parts of the country. At the direction of the central authorities, the provincial government facilitated their entry and means of access to the local people. Thereafter, they were able to establish their missions without hindrance. It has been shown that they kidnapped children and women and even threatened with force those who tried to constrain their movement. Obviously, simple conversion was not their immediate objective. They seized on the poverty and needs of the poor and looked to get momentum for conversion from that need. They believed this was the moment to bring the deprived people a different way of life without any hindrance. As for those who were well-off, they offered

numerous temptations to distract them from Islam. But the evidence shows that the evangelists were not able to convert Muslims in any significant numbers. They concentrated their mission in Upper Egypt, and quite a large number of Muslims inclined to their beliefs because poverty and illiteracy were worse in that region. Aware of the ceaseless missionary activities, Muslims were critical and complaining but unable to respond positively. Ḥasan al-Bannā', a student of Dār al-'Ulūm, approached the prominent Muslim scholars of al-Azhar. They agreed about the dangerous threat posed by Western missionary activities but could see no solution. Al-Bannā' then thought to discuss the problem with Aḥmad Taimūr Pasha, an influential man who had close links with King Fu'ād. Accompanied by a delegation of Muslim scholars, he was warmly received. His arguments deeply impressed Aḥmad Taimūr Pasha and his attendants. In the last session, they reached an agreement to publish *al-Fatḥ* magazine, which was primarily aimed at countering Western missionary work in the country.[53] Since his youth al-Bannā' had been immersed in *al-Ḥaṣfiyyah* spiritual activities in his village, a movement founded by 'Abd al-Wahhāb al-Ḥaṣafī. He warned his disciples to resist atheistic thought and Christian missionary propaganda. Later, the *al-Fatḥ* Charity Organization was formed under the Chairmanship of Aḥmad al-Sukrī, with al-Bannā' as secretary. The organization was mainly concerned with two essential areas: to propagate Islamic moral values by enjoining good and forbidding evil *(al-amr bil-ma'rūf wal-nahī 'an al-munkar)* and, secondly, to resist the threat of evangelical activities disguised as medical services, teaching embroidery, the care and custody of orphans, etc. The organization played a very important role in countering missionary activities, until its work was taken over by the Muslim Brethren. This group was formed in 1928 in the Ismailiyyah district, and grew within five years to establish nearly fifteen branches in strategic places where Christian missionary activity was most intense. Inevitably some clashes took place between the two contradicting religious activities, with the Brethren continuously and vigorously campaigning on the dangers of Western Christian activities.[54]

Between 1933 and 1952, Muslim Brethren newspapers

continuously monitored Christian missionary activities. In al-Mahmūdiyyah district, for instance, nine missionary workers were found to be working under the pretext of giving embroidery and knitting lessons to girls. They were about to convert an orphan girl but, due to the timely intervention of the Brethren, she got to a safe haven in the house of Aḥmad al-Sukrī. In another case, in Ismailiyyah, a stronghold of the Brethren, two schools were also established with the intention of proselytizing among doubtful Muslims. However, the Brethren countered with lectures and by setting up 'Hirā Educational Institution' for boys and establishing schools for Muslim mothers. Again, in Abu Suwair district, the Muslim Brethren were successful in disrupting a plan to establish a missionary propagation centre within the British elementary schools. In Suez district, the Muslims came to know of another missionary centre, and were able to rescue the people from being Christianized. In short, during these years, the Brethren were mainly concerned in the defence of Islam, with investigating the missionaries' networks, who always accused them of inflaming communal strife. In the *Shūrā* meeting of 1933, they unanimously agreed to set up a branch committee to warn the people against being seduced by missionary propaganda. Indeed, since the 1940s the Muslim Brethren has been the only organization to really help the Muslims of Egypt withstand Western Christian mission.[55]

Notes and References (Chapter 3)

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CHAPTER 4

Copt-Muslim Relations

Peaceful Co-Existence

This historical survey is confined to the religious relations between the Christian Copts and Muslims. In this part, the activities of Western Christians are not discussed, as they were never directly involved in either the religious or political uprising against the local authorities. Religious tension did occur between Copts and Muslims, particularly on the issue of the *Sharī'ah* Bill. On that issue, Christians from the West settling in the country fully supported the Copts, their main concern being to channel their Biblical propagation through social and medical services, with the intention of eventually changing the faith of the people.

In the past, the Muslims and Copts had enjoyed a cordial relationship. The Copts admitted that though some ideological differences which sometimes led to communal tension did occur, the problem initially stemmed from outside intervention. There was ample evidence of peaceful neighbourly co-operation between the two communities as they worked together to defend the country and for the sake of unity. Girgius al-Jawharī, an influential Coptic mayor in the early days of Muḥammad 'Alī, always took part in the Muslim celebrations to mark the approaching month of Ramaḍān. He was known for his generosity, always distributing essential food-stuffs at the beginning of Ramaḍān. During the French occupation, both Copts and Muslims fought Napoleon's soldiers and a number of Copts were imprisoned in the notorious al-Qal'ah jail. Another example of their friendly relations was that in 1223 AH Egypt was

affected by drought and the Nile nearly dried up. The people desperately needed water and the Council of the *'ulamā'* decided to hold *Istisqā'* prayer in 'Amr ibn al-'Āṣ Mosque: some Copts also took part in the service.[1] Lucie Duff Gordon, a lady traveller who stayed seven years in Luxor was deeply impressed by the tolerance of the two communities. According to her, 'the village of Bibbeh (near Beni Suef) had a large Muslim population and only thirteen Coptic families, yet the elected headman was a Copt'. In her letter she said: 'I wonder when Europe will drop the absurd delusion about Christians being persecuted by Muslims. It is absolutely the other way here at all events. The Christians know that they will always get backed by some Consul or other, and it is the Muslims who go to the wall invariably.'[2] During Muḥammad 'Alī's administration, British delegates appointed to assess the situation in Egypt admitted that the two religious communities enjoyed unprecedented peaceful co-existence. Another thing worthy of note was the religious attitude of Shaikh al-Bajūrī, the Shaikh of al-Azhar, during the rule of 'Abbās I who was known to be very hostile toward Christians, when a number of Christian workers were sacked and their communities faced injustices. A ruling was issued to force Christians to migrate to the Sudan. The Shaikh immediately approached 'Abbās I who was studying at al-Azhar, and persuaded him to make provisional amendments to avoid communal clashes.[3]

There is ample evidence of the cordial relationship between the Muslim and Coptic communities. As we have seen, the formation of the Wafd party after World War I under the leadership of Sa'd Zaghlūl, which aimed to liberate Egypt from foreign domination, brought Copts and Muslims under the one banner. The Wafd aimed at unity and equality for all Egyptians. Sinūt Ḥannā, a leading Copt, declared at the height of the troubles of 1919 that 'nationalism is our religion', while Father Serjius, a Coptic priest and prominent nationalist orator, delivering a sermon at the al-Azhar mosque, said: 'If the British justified remaining in Egypt on the grounds of Copts' minority protection, let the Copts die and Muslims live as freemen.'[4]

After the 1919 revolution the Copts were given the right to participate in political life. Their presence within the Wafd

was the hallmark of a peaceful alliance to maintain national unity. Since Egypt adopted multi-party politics, the emergence of their leadership was viewed as a natural phenomenon in political life. Rivalries always reflected the party's orientation regardless of religious inclination. As a result, the Copts' parliamentary representatives always expressed the views of Egyptians as a whole.[5]

However, the formation in 1952 of a secret organization in the Egyptian Army, known as the Free Officers Organization, deterred the Copts from active participation in politics. The organization was comprised of affluent middle-class families of landowners, clerks and other officials, none of whom came directly from the poor Egyptians and Christians who never occupied principal positions.[6] This political void became more obvious following several parliamentary elections, in the socialist union and the local provincial people's assembly. In the 1957 parliamentary election, for instance, Gamal Abdel Nasser rejected the Copts' candidates in the electoral districts. However, his government softened its policy by appointing some Copts to the National Assembly.[7]

Muslims Save the Copts from Atrocities

Thirty years prior to the birth of Jesus, Egypt fell under the rule of the Roman Empire. In the first century Christianity was introduced to the Egyptians, according to tradition, by St. Mark. He preached that the local people should worship only the one God, and he did not face any opposition as there was a similarity with indigenous religious thought. His considerable success in propagating the Christian faith there frightened the Romans, who interpreted it as a danger to their Empire. They took the harshest measures against Mark and his disciples. Massacres reached a climax in the reign of Emperor Diocletian who insisted on total eradication of the Coptic community.[8] During the third century Egypt suffered severe persecution at the hands of the Byzantine emperors and a hundred thousand were martyred because of their faith. At that time it was the world's greatest human tragedy; because of that genocide, to this day the Coptic community retain AD 284, the year of the tyrant's rise to

power, as the first day of their calendar.[9]

The theological rift between Rome and the Copts who resisted the tyranny of the Emperor widened and, suffering increasing persecution, the Coptic disciples of Patriarch Benjamin sought refuge in the Western Desert of Egypt. In the midst of this fear and confusion, this persecuted people gradually learnt about the adherents of the new religion born in the heart of the Arab land and the Arabs' victorious penetration into Iraq, Syria and Palestine, and of their promises to liberate the native inhabitants of Egypt from attack and terror, and to permit them the freedom of belief and worship that had been denied them. Consequently, the Egyptians welcomed the Muslim soldiers to end the tyranny in their country and lead them to a peaceful life. Coptic writers also admitted that the entry of Muslim soldiers saved the Egyptian people as a whole from the massacres undertaken on the orders of Emperor Heraclius. Samīrah Baḥr explicitly noted that the prolonged and bloody conflict between the Copts and the Byzantine Empire paved the way for the Arabs' penetration into Egypt. The Arabs were warmly received by the Copts who were offered peace and relief from the atrocities at the hands of Patriarch Cyrus, which had forced Patriarch Benjamin of Alexandria to migrate to Qūs. In commemorating these tragic events, the Coptic churches have always maintained the liturgical service to remember their martyrs.[10]

Although the Roman Empire now officially recognized Christianity as a state religion, theological conflict was unavoidable as the Roman Emperors followed the Melchite creed which regards Jesus as having two natures while the Copts maintained monasticism. Shenouda III (the present Coptic Pope) proudly claims that the Coptic Orthodox had kept the traditions of the past until now without any change.[11] As the Copts adhered strongly to the Orthodox faith, they were against Arianism. In the Nicea Council in AD 325, Deacon Athanasius had been successful in influencing the assembled Bishops to refuse the Arian heresy and to formulate the Nicean creed. In the subsequent development at the Council of Chalcedon in AD 451, the Egyptian Patriarch Dioscorus was confronted by opposition from two groups:

the Bishop of Rome and the Byzantine Emperors. The Egyptian patriarchs were persecuted and replaced by Greek (Melkite) patriarchs who were also appointed as governors of the provinces of Egypt. The Copts refused their authority and preferred to support the Egyptian patriarchs who continued to provide spiritual guidance from their monasteries.[12]

Some non-Muslim scholars are of the opinion that at the outset of Muslim rule, the Copts were treated fairly with freedom of worship guaranteed. They complained that in later years, this tolerant policy was gradually changed and between 689 and 722, the Muslims set certain rules ordering the exterior of churches to be modified – measures, presumably, intended to prevent offence to Muslim sensitivities which might have led to hostility.[13]

A number of writers have even portrayed the Coptic communities under the rule of Muslim dynasties as living under constant pressure, accused those rulers of injustices and claimed that the people were not given liberty and forced to abandon their original language. David Aziz, a Coptic priest, in his book *Copts Between Past and Present Day,* claims that *Jizyah* was made compulsory for non-Muslims, and they were given only two alternatives: to be Muslim or be killed. It is said that in the early days of their penetration millions of Copts were reduced to a few hundred thousand due to severe persecution. Aziz said that because of such cruelty they accepted Islam and a number of them were martyred in defence of their belief. However, he failed to produce any evidence in support of his statement and did not mention a single person who was unable to pay the *Jizyah* – a tax of only two *dīnārs* annually – which exempted women, the old, disabled, and children (for their security and protection they were even freed from conscription to defend the country). Yet, he claims, they preferred martyrdom rather than accepting Islam. It is quite incredible that within the Coptic tradition that if such atrocities did take place under Muslim rule, they went unrecorded whereas the cruelty of the Roman Empire, and the Copts' heroic resistance on behalf of their creed and rites, are fully recorded.[14]

It is not our concern to investigate the atrocities of a few Muslim rulers against the Copts. However, such prejudicial

accounts by some Coptic writers are possibly intended to distance them from the current efforts to implement the *Sharī'ah*. This simply focuses on negative conditions during some periods of Muslim sovereignty and does not mention the glorious days such as during the era of the Fāṭimids when a Copt named 'Isā ibn Nasṭūrūs served as the chief minister for the Caliph Al-'Azīz Billāh ibn al-Mu'izz. It traces briefly the Turkish and Mamluk periods, which are viewed as dark ages because of their fanatical conduct. Zāhir Riyāḍ, a prominent Coptic writer, in his *Al-Masīḥīyūn wa al-Qawmiyyah al-Miṣriyyah* (The Christians and Egyptian Nationalism) in a spirit of objectivity admitted that the Copts were the nearest allies of 'Alī Bek, the great ruler of Egypt, and, during the third quarter of the eighteenth century, Mu'allim Rizq (regarded as his right hand) was appointed state administrator of finance for the whole of Egypt and Syria. Indeed, because of his clarity of mind, he was promoted to the rank of personal counsellor in designing state policy, so that he enjoyed unprecedented influence within the country. Because of that influence he was able to install a great number of Copts in senior positions. Another figure who wielded great influence was Girgius al-Jawharī, a man known for his humility and generosity. He gave huge financial donations to finance the building of the Grand Church of Mark which was located in the street of Clot Bek. Regarding his relations with Turkish rulers who returned to Egypt following the evacuation of French troops from the country, it was said that the Turks made reconciliatory moves to unify the fragmented factions in an attempt to strengthen their front in preparation to resist the Mamluk regime. The Turkish rulers had been instructed not to collaborate with the Copts. However, when they faced severe economic problems al-Jawharī was approached and, thus regained his influence. Soon afterwards he was awarded the title 'Effendi' because of his great financial contribution. It is worth mentioning that he had previously co-operated with the French during their colonial occupation and been afforded generous hospitality.[15]

According to Zāhir Riyāḍ, General Jacob of the Copts approached General Kleber when he learned that the French

soldiers were about to leave the country. He assured him that the best policy was to form a Coptic Army backed militarily by France. Subsequently, the newly formed Coptic Army comprised of 3,000 Coptic young men from Upper Egypt. Even so, he still felt uneasy about the formation of a sectarian Coptic Army; he was adamant that when the French soldiers left they would be able to return to Egypt. As Jacob died while on his trip the Coptic force never came into effect.[16] Al-Jawharī took over his role up to the day of Muḥammad 'Alī's accession to power, when he was appointed as his financial adviser. A large number of Copts occupied key positions during 'Alī's rule in Egypt, such as judges, chief accountants, administrators as well as treasury secretary. In his book *al-Aqbāṭ fī al-Qarn al-'Ishrīn* (Copts in the 20th Century) Riyāḍ has elaborated on how the Copts enjoyed full liberty to administer their own affairs without government intervention, and legal rights which, during the Turkish rule, had been ignored. 'Alī's government restored to them the right to build churches as well as unrestricted permission to renovate the old ones. As mentioned earlier, 'Alī's administration was a period of light for the Coptic community. They dominated administrative and managerial activities as well as agriculture and, in the long run, were able to play a political role equal to that of the Muslim citizens. One of 'Alī's successors, Ismā'īl Khedive, also took similar steps to ensure religious tolerance, and appointed a large number of Copts as provincial judges to a level as high as chief administration officer.[17]

From the time of the formation of the first National Assembly in 1879, it was agreed to elect a Coptic representative in every district, that government-sponsored educational institutes should be set up for the young regardless of religious distinction, and that conditions on the religious background for the post of judges should no longer be valid. It is obvious that during the Khedive period, de-Islamization took place and local indigenous secular courts were introduced for the first time, replacing the religious courts tribunal which was confined to Muslims.[18]

In view of the cordial relationship and the hospitality shown to them throughout the history of Muslim rule, and

despite the key positions they occupied in the Muslim rulers' cabinet, why have some Copts accused the Muslim authorities of injustice and claimed that non-Muslims were denied the right to work? The well-known classical Muslim thinker al-Māwardī, in his book *al-Aḥkām al-Sulṭāniyyah* (the Law of Sovereignty), rightly pointed out that non-Muslims are allowed to serve in an Executive Ministry. There is ample evidence that the Christians were given opportunities to occupy ministerial positions. Such instances were Naṣr ibn Hārūn in 369 H, 'Isā ibn Nasṭūrūs in 380 H and, prior to that, the private secretary of Mu'āwiyah ibn Abī Sufyān was also a Christian. But, because of the great tolerance shown to the non-Muslims, Muslims sometimes complained about the Jewish and Christian domination. It is noteworthy that in late Ottoman times, overseas diplomatic posts up to the rank of ambassador were given to non-Muslims. Gustav Labonne a French historian, mentioned in his book *The History of Arab Civilisation* the verse of the Qur'ān which enjoins freedom of belief and forbids forced conversion. He emphasizes: 'The tolerance of Muḥammad to the Jews and Christians was unmatched with any other religion that emerged before Islam.' Within the Jewish and Christian sources and authorities, he further points out, the kind of hospitality offered in the Islamic law to non-Muslims is never specifically mentioned. The Prophet's successors, known as *Ṣaḥābah* or Caliphs followed his example.[19]

Sectarian Issues Between 1919 and 1952

Western colonial penetration into Egypt was closely linked with Christian efforts to draw the Copts toward their own doctrinal confessions, while well aware that the Copts, not least on account of their commitment and belief in monotheism, would resist. Both Roman and Byzantine Churches had, in fulfilment of the wish of the emperor of the time, and in the hope of lasting domination, tried to expand their influence over the other in the region. Muslim historical sources note that during the Ayyūbid period and the beginning of the Mamluk regime the Copts were seen to be in decline. Six centuries after the Muslim conquest,

most of the Egyptian population had changed their faith to Islam. That long period also saw the gradual replacement of the Coptic language by Arabic.[20]

When the Crusaders tried to invade Egypt, they were seen as Westerners waging war on the Muslim world in general and Egypt in particular in the name of religion. The Copts refused to collaborate with the Crusaders against the Muslim rulers, and in consequence were labelled by the Crusaders as unbelievers. But the Coptic community never associated in battle against their Muslim rulers; rather they took joint action with the Muslims to defend the country when it was realized that the Crusaders were seeking to jeopardize national unity.[21] The British during their colonial rule exploited the issue of employment to undermine Copt-Muslim relations. Firstly, they reduced drastically the number of Copts who occupied senior positions, transferring them mostly to Syrian and Christian residents. Subsequently, the Copts were further edged out of employment in favour of Muslims. As they felt they were being treated unjustly they sought protection. For a time, the British were able to pretend to a hypocritical zeal on behalf of the Copts, to safeguard their communities from Muslim domination. A remarkably successful British ploy was to decide that employment opportunities should be distributed according to percentage of population. The Copts lamented that the right of work should be based on ability irrespective of religious belief. Certain daily newspapers took advantage of the communal tensions that arose and the issue enjoyed wide coverage. Mutual recriminations and allegations occurred: the Copts set up the well-known Asyūṭ Congress of 1911, which was followed two days later by the Muslim Congress.[22]

Minority rights became a platform for the British and secretly the newly-established constitutional legal body on public opinion proposed the formation of the National Representative Council. However, this body only came into being after the First World War and the beginning of the 1919 Revolution. As mentioned above, the alliance between the two religious communities under the banner of the Wafd party was eventually to achieve independence from foreign occupation. On 31 March, 1923, Sa'd Zaghlūl, the leader of

Wafd, was released. Soon afterwards, the state constitution was prepared with the minority issue being seriously discussed prior to its incorporation in legal clauses. In the articles pertaining to the recognition of National Independence, minority affairs were clearly at issue. The Committee for preparation of the constitution disputed the propriety of minority parliamentary representation. Even among the Copts themselves, there were sharp differences over the question. The Wafd Coptic members held an urgent meeting in which they attacked the idea of parliamentary representation on the basis of religion. The Cairo-based Egyptian Bar Association, backed by a large number of Copt groups, issued a petition calling for rejection of parliamentary minority representation. When the issue was forwarded for approval by the Committee for preparation of the constitution, there was unanimous rejection of the obligatory minority representation in parliament; rather it was stipulated that all Egyptians are equal under the law. On the minorities issue, it should be noted that the collapse of the Ottoman Empire led to the Saefer and Lausanne treaties of 1923, when most of the Arab world was parcelled out into foreign mandates created by the big powers in pursuit of continued domination. The minorities, such as the Druze in Lebanon and Syria, the Kurds in Iraq, as well as the Copts in Egypt, were seen as an effective means to prevent unity in these regions and so justify the continuance of colonial administration under which the minorities would be protected.[23]

Due to the volatile situation, the British regarded this as the right time to offer the minorities protection on a global level, with Egypt in mind. Though the 'Adli-Curzon agreement referred to the rights of the minority in Egypt, it ended in failure due to increasing unrest. Lord Allenby realized that it was impossible to destroy the spirit of resistance and that there could be no guarantee of continuing British occupation unless the British gave up their pretentious minority policy and recognized the call for independence. However, this idea was almost totally rejected and indeed almost led to Allenby's dismissal. Fortunately, Allenby did succeed in influencing and developing new political strategies based on the premise that British sovereignty over Egypt

would consist of indirect intervention in national policy and administration, a situation which, in the long term, might achieve total political domination. With that goal in mind, on 28 February, 1922, the British government recognized Egypt's independence, and declared the four well-known constitutional clauses covering foreign interests and minority protection.[24] In April 1922, a Constitutional Committee was formed. At the same time, rumours spread through the country that 'Abd al-Khāliq Tharwat's cabinet had endorsed the British proposal to apportion employment opportunities on the basis of one Copt to twelve Muslims. When asked to confirm the rumour, he made no response.[25]

Debate Over the Issue of Minority

The declaration of Egypt's independence on 28 February was achieved through an agreement between Tharwat's cabinet, which enjoyed the support of a splinter group of Wafd, and Lord Allenby. Sa'd Zaghlūl, the Wafd party leader, strongly opposed the statement which he regarded as a calamity for the country. Of the proposed four constitutional clauses, the first two, covering national defence, were seen as effectively allowing the British to intervene in internal state administration. Thus, the Constitutional Committee with seventy-three members, was boycotted by both the Wafd and National parties. They demanded that its members be elected instead of appointed by the government under Martial Law.[26]

The Committee held a series of meetings. The first discussed the technical work regulations. The next meeting took place after the formation of a sub-committee which was made responsible for preparing a draft on general electoral principles. In the second meeting, Aḥmad Rushdī raised the issue of minority protection and demanded that it should be specifically mentioned in a constitutional clause. In the ninth Sub-committee meeting, the Court of Family Law was seriously debated in an effort to achieve some degree of uniformity on the question of administration of the property of the incompetent. It was fully realized that unifying the varied court procedures might involve the sensitive sectarian

issue. The Committee accepted the suggestion put forward by 'Abd al-Ḥamīd Badawī, that then was not the time for constitutional changes on this matter, and that any amendments might be dealt with at some future date, for which separate religious clauses could be prepared for discussion. However, at the General Committee meeting on 25 August, 1922, the issue of unifying the Court on Family Law was again raised. 'Abd al-'Azīz Fahmī, Tawfīq Dūs and Kullīnī Fahmī fully supported the idea, while Yūsuf Pasha and Anba' Yu'annas were against it. Finally, it was decided that it should not be incorporated in the constitution. In the thirteenth Sub-committee meeting, Ḥusayn Rushdī, for the first time, demanded that the minority be granted political rights, as laid down by the British in the Curzon Plan, ensuring equal civil liberty as well as exercising their religious rights. This was finally agreed. But, when the clauses concerning equal rights for the minority were discussed, Miqbāṭī said that it should be accorded constitutional status. The chairman immediately intervened in the voting system without prior consultation and Miqbāṭī's effort failed. Later, Tawfīq Dūs raised the controversial issue of minority parliamentary representation. But again, after a number of meetings, efforts to attain minority parliamentary representation were also unsuccessful.[27]

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CHAPTER 5

The Rise of Communal Tension

The Islamic Movement and Anxiety of the Copts

Since the 1970s, Egypt has witnessed an increasing religious consciousness on a wide scale. This has been due to the efforts of Muslim leaders who perceived that the secular modern society had alienated the people from spiritual and cultural tradition. Their demand, that the present state constitution be replaced, was raised within as well as outside parliament. Gradually they mobilized the people, and the rapid growth of mass support made the authorities uncomfortable. In 1971, for instance, President Sadat altered the second article of the constitution and made *Sharī'ah* a principal source of legislation.[1] Although this constitutional alteration was understood to have been aimed at appeasing the growing Muslim demand for overall constitutional changes, it did not, however, succeed in dampening the people's religious spirit, and Sadat's adamant insistence on a status quo policy eventually resulted in his assassination.[2] The government was to some extent forced to meet Muslim demands by giving a few prominent Muslim activists important posts within government institutions. In the universities, the Muslim activist students dominated the seats of student unions. From 1976, as a part of the appeasement policy primarily intended to reduce religious fervour, Shaikh Muḥammad al-Ghazālī, a leading Muslim intellectual, was appointed a Deputy Minister of the Endowment Ministry, while Mūsā Shāhīn Lāshin, an expert on the *Ḥadīth* whose writings were very critical of the establishment, was promoted to the second highest position within the hierarchy of al-Azhar.[3]

The phenomenon of Islamic resurgence in Egypt frightened the Coptic communities and their already friendly relations with the government became more actively so in response to it. The birth of the Muslim Brethren in Egypt was in part at least a reaction to the growing tide of secularism which sought to limit the role of religion to individual, personal life. The Muslim Brethren regarded the 1919 Revolution, which brought the country's independence and the formation of the 1923 state constitution, as secular in orientation and intended to separate religion from the state. The July 1952 Revolution, devoted mainly to restructuring economic and political development, also battled for years to impose secularism. That proved impossible to realize under the country's liberal constitution. Indeed, the nationalistic tide was pushed back following the resurgence of Islamic awareness. That resurgence is generally understood as a reversal of the secularist orientation initiated under the rule of Muḥammad 'Alī in the early nineteenth century.[4]

Apart from attempts to establish a religiously oriented state, which became the prime objective, the resurgence of religious awareness (which involved Christians as well as Muslims) had also to do with spiralling inflation and near total breakdown of social values.[5] It was the rapid growth of the Islamic movement that aroused fears among the Copts.[6] Apparently, government failure to bring about a viable Socialist society on the Communist or Capitalist model was the main impulse which turned Egyptians to Islam as a social remedy. The increasing support for the groups calling for the restoration of Islamic values came overwhelmingly from among the youth who, according to statistics, made up half of the total population.

The Muslim youth set up a number of so-called Islamic societies within seventeen universities. One of their aims was to help poor students obtain the necessary text books, as well as to provide Islamic dress for those who wished to wear it. These activities attracted many students to join. In 1977, for instance, they dominated the Student Unions in every university.[7] Because of their intense activism (always regarded as a threat by the government-sponsored National

Student Union), the authorities reacted by dissolving that body and cutting off the funds that had been used to finance the Muslim students' activities, such as religious camps and the publishing of low-priced books on Islam.[8]

The movement of large numbers of people toward the practice of Islamic moral values, the sight of more and more women wearing Islamic dress, the major breakthrough by Muslim organizations into many areas of governmental institutions, including the armed forces, have been seen by non-Muslims as steps leading to the formation of an Islamic state. Coptic leaders began to think that the Muslim activists, as the country was gradually Islamized, would sooner or later announce the status of the Copts as second-class citizens known as *ahl-Dhimmah,* who, according to them, would not be regarded as full partners in the nation.[9] From 1984 onward, proponents of secularism, in their campaign against the implementation of *Sharī'ah* urged the Copts to resist the proposed *Sharī'ah* bill which they alleged would do away with equal rights within the society. This kind of accusation was intended to defeat the Islamization process. The growing demand from the Muslim activists to amend the semi-secular constitution clearly posed the greatest single challenge to the state. The effective tool to counter it was to stir up the Coptic minority to resist the Muslim activists under the pretext of safeguarding minority rights.[10]

Changed Policy of the Coptic Church

The Orthodox Coptic Church witnessed fundamental changes following the ordination of Shenouda III as the new Patriarch after the death of Patriarch Kyrillos VI.[11] Shenouda was regarded as the 117th successor to St. Mark. On the day of the election, 14 November, 1971, he delivered an address in which he mentioned the urgent need to renew the social orientation, as well as expand religious colleges and return the Orthodox Church of Alexandria to international status.[12] It is known that Kyrillos enjoyed friendly relations with Gamal Abdel Nasser and had not been politically oriented. He had concerned himself primarily with the promotion of religious culture compatible with the indigenous tradition of

the Egyptian Church, and was firm on separation between Church and State, in line with Nasser's policy of keeping religious activists away from the political scene. The accession of Pope Shenouda III, a few months after Sadat came to power, marked a major shift in the nature of the relationship of the Church with the State. Wide-ranging Christian activities were undertaken within the field of religious and social services. Many Coptic social organizations were formed in cities and villages throughout the country. The Muslim community had never before witnessed this level of activity on the part of the Church. The secret conversion of a number of social organizations' halls into churches in addition to missionary activities worsened Copt-Muslim relations and led to several incidents between the two communities.[13]

Currently, thirty bishops and metropolitans and six general bishops are serving in dioceses in Egypt, the Sudan, Jerusalem, Kenya and France. It is estimated that approximately 2,000 priests in 1,200 churches conduct regular worship and, assisted by lay leaders, run Sunday schools for youth and adult groups. Since the 1980s, in collaboration with the WCC Office of Family Ministries, the Coptic Church has run a programme of education on family life. Leaflets have been freely distributed in order to reach people with, in particular, the message about the increasing birth-rate.[14]

Pope Shenouda, as well as using his spiritual influence, put increasing emphasis on political affairs. With a view to gaining political objectives he used the churches as a means to put pressure on the authorities. He held conferences not confined to Coptic religious activities, but for groups of experts such as medical doctors, lawyers, university chancellors, engineers and administrators with the result that the churches were seen as having an independent sovereignty from which the Coptic community conducted relations with constitutional institutions of the government administration. Consequently, Sadat openly attacked Pope Shenouda for his political manoeuvering with the authority of the Church which threatened to set up a state within the state. He also accused him of being behind the plan to establish a separate religious state for the Coptic community. Soon after he was

elected, Shenouda visited the Vatican to assess possible ecumenical collaboration with the Church of Rome. In the field of education he established six theological seminaries and several institutions (for music, Biblical studies, pastoral training) and also the Institute of Missionary Work in Africa. Since his accession, numerous associations (such as hospitals, kindergartens and several centres for social services) have re-organized.[15] He also undertook political visits, as for example in 1977, when he visited President Jimmy Carter in the USA. It was never disclosed what was discussed at that meeting. However, Shenouda's ambitious plan was to revive the Coptic heritage, lost since the Muslim conquest, such as use of the Coptic language. His efforts to proselytize and to develop new churches, schools, and socio-political organizations, were initiatives that will have received at least moral support from the United States.[16] One day, in the presence of the Egyptian ambassador to the USA, Jimmy Carter remarked on the impossibility of ignoring the religious feelings of eight million Copts.[17]

In a series of political manoeuvres, Shenouda visited other Western countries including Canada and Australia, in order to get support from the Copts residing in those countries.[18] These manoeuvres angered President Sadat. But they encouraged the Copts living in America and Canada to hold a Congress attacking Egyptian government policy which they saw as definitely inclined towards Muslim demands. When parliament agreed to make Islam the main source of legislation, Shenouda requested the Coptic communities to participate in a general fast to bring down the bill.[19]

In 1975, a government census had reckoned the Coptic population at 2,300,000 throughout the country. At about the same time, al-Azhar in fulfilment of the government wish, presented a Bill to the People's Assembly on the regulation of religious communities. In fact, the government had wanted to demonstrate that its attitudes were not those of the so-called extremist Muslim groups. As the Bill was presented by al-Azhar, not by the Muslim Brethren, the Christian protest did not come from the Coptic national group or from the Sunday schools but from priests, bishops, patriarchs and from Pope Shenouda himself. The result of

the national census and the bill presented by al-Azhar had evidently shaken the Coptic communities. Their refusal to accept the national census and the bill on the regulation of religious communities was adjudged by many to be intentionally provocative, and could possibly bring about the type of conflict as was then taking place in Lebanon. The bill was regarded as a step to the adoption of the Saudi infrastructure as a model. The declaration by the Chairman of the Supreme Court of Appeal stated: 'That the senior committee for drafting of laws had completed its study of the bill and it is now the responsibility of the Ministry of Justice to apply them to Egyptians and non-Egyptians, to Muslims and non-Muslims.' The laws were revised into a more legally appropriate form but (the textual alterations aside) the basic proposals of the bill were retained. The law on the 'abjuration' of the faith, for instance, was changed to the law on the 'abandonment' of Muslim religion. Clauses indicated that an apostate be allowed thirty days in which to change his mind and repent. If it was proved that the person concerned had not returned to Islam and persisted in his apostasy, he would be condemned to death. Although the decree on apostasy was initially intended to combat leftists, the Copts felt vulnerable and saw it as a restriction of their freedom to evangelize. Soon afterwards, on 17 January, 1977, a Coptic Congress was held at which they urged the government to act on the fundamental issues of freedom of belief and religious worship, protection of married Copts and their families, equal opportunities, and parliamentary representation for Copts. They also urged a disciplined response in the face of extremist tendencies. They strongly opposed the bill on apostasy and the idea of applying *Sharī'ah* to non-Muslims. The Ottoman law on the prohibition of building new churches needed to be annulled, and further, they required the elimination of religious conditions on employment. The petition, which deliberately used phrases such as 'the Coptic people and the pure Coptic race', was forwarded to the highest level of the state hierarchy.[20]

Pope Shenouda's personal statements on a number of critical issues also deserve serious attention. In response to a question on family planning, which response then appeared

in a number of journals, Shenouda admitted that the Coptic churches fully supported the national programme on family planning. He further said: 'The Coptic Church has a birth-control department which collaborates with an international organization to give some advice or counselling to the public pertaining to this matter.' This statement raised a number of questions. Was the counselling for the sake of family planning and to whom was such advice given? To Muslims, on the ground that their strong religious argument against family planning was not supported by the government? Or was the Coptic Church outwardly supporting the government's plan in order to encourage Muslim families to adopt it, while indirectly discouraging the Copts from doing so? It is well-known that the Catholic Church of Rome as well as the African Council of Churches, of which the Copts of Egypt constitute a large number, have always opposed the idea of family planning. Shenouda's public support for the national programme on family planning was therefore very strange and invited scepticism. Muslims are not concerned whether the Copts support or oppose the family planning programme. The Muslims' rejection was merely because of their Islamic belief. Shenouda's statement on the question of family planning was very unusual as he had never before issued any statement reversing the Christian attitude. In answering the question about seeking to set up a Coptic State in Asyūṭ, Shenouda said: 'It is simply provocative issues thought up by Muslim fundamentalists.' However, one prominent Egyptian nationalist leader argued that an authentic report and the American mass media indicated that there was such a plan. The nationalist leader did not explicitly state that the Coptic community was trying to set up an independent state, rather he accused Israel and America of trying to divide Egypt into racial Coptic and Muslim states. Pope Shenouda's denial of the accusation and his emphasis on peaceful co-existence deserve respect and appreciation. The argument he put forward when rejecting the creation of a Coptic state did not reflect total rejection of such a state. On one occasion he said: 'It is quite impossible for the Copts to abandon all heritage in other parts of the country like Monastery desert, or Wādī al-Naṭrūn.' The source said that the plan to establish

a Coptic state was not confined to Asyūṭ province. It covered other parts of the country from al-Fayyūm to Cairo, up to the Monastery desert itself and to Alexandria, the proposed capital, and seat of the Orthodox Coptic Church. On the plan for applying *Sharī'ah* in the country, Shenouda observed: 'that the issue is being disputed among Muslims themselves, and we are awaiting the result of the dispute.' If what Shenouda meant by the term 'dispute' is 'controversial', the idea is baseless; only the secular forces who collaborate with the enemies of Islam rejected the *Sharī'ah* bill and did so on behalf of the Coptic communities. Shenouda further said: 'The Christians should be calm and not panic: their status could not be changed into that of second-class citizens.' Apparently, if a Copt needs to understand the issues involved, he should inquire from or initiate a dialogue with Muslim leaders.[21]

In view of the similarities between the two religions, Shenouda suggested that a book for students be jointly prepared from the two religious perspectives, pertaining to faith or *Īmān,* the day of judgement, reward and punishment, and miracles and virtues. However, such a book in reality would only promote secular thought. It is precisely what is being imposed in some Muslim countries ruled by secularists, like Indonesia, to abolish the religious teaching and its practice in schools and replace it with a vague subject which proves ineffective, such as 'moral subject' or something similar. The idea of writing a joint book goes against what he used to say: 'that the philosophy behind establishing Sunday schools was aimed at strengthening Coptic orientation away from the Western Christian thought.' If he wishes to safeguard the Coptic youth from alien influences, he should be consistent; the Muslims are also concerned about their youth regarding similar challenges. He might be aware that for a number of years Jews and Bahais have been trying to unify their religions, and that what might have inspired President Sadat to build a mosque, church and synagogue in Sinai was in fact an attempt to divert the attention of Muslim activists away from the issue of *Sharī'ah* implementation. Pope Shenouda also held several press conferences and a number of interviews with Western media. It was

reported in the BBC Radio Arabic section that he had been working seriously to alter constitutional clause, Article No. 2, which made Islam a primary source of the constitution. Although this statement caused anxiety among the masses, there was no effort to deny the BBC report either on the part of Shenouda or the government.[22]

The Pope also held a series of talks on political issues and a number of foreign journalists and visitors were invited. It is likely that he has also established a new department on communication and public relations within his Church administration. It was reported in the *Roz al-Yousef* magazine that a press conference held in Monastery desert, Wādī al-Naṭrūn, was attended by nearly 100 journalists. The *Ṣabāḥ al-Khair* magazine revealed that in response to the view that Egypt might become a second Lebanon, Shenouda assured them that he did not think such a religious community conflict could happen in Egypt, where there were no militia groups such as the Lebanon factions, no foreign intervention and, lastly, where no group had a political mouthpiece. However, the three elements Shenouda mentioned are present in the country. The militia, for instance, could be easily formed at any time under his command as he himself was previously a high-ranking military officer. A journalist who visited Monastery desert described it as a '. . . fortified site constructed in the shape of a huge citadel' – similar in fact to the other monasteries located in the Eastern and Western deserts. Foreign radio and the Western media also revealed, following the outbreak of communal strife during Sadat's time, the discovery of a massive arsenal of weapons in the monastery. Regarding foreign forces in the country, this could eventually come about as America is a close ally of Egypt and views with concern the implementation of *Sharī'ah,* while on the political front, Shenouda is among the best of orators and the priests he has appointed to his Council Papacy are competent to become 'a political mouthpiece'. America has been said to have a plan to disseminate Jewish influence. In short, all the factors for 'Lebanonization' are available and, more importantly, the general political atmosphere in Egypt is conducive to it.[23]

Efforts for Constitutional Islamization

The 1970s were marked by the emergence of various Muslim youth organizations under different names, such as the *Jamā'at al-Islāmiyyah, Shabāb Muḥammad* (Youth Muhammad), etc. The *Jamā'at* was mostly comprised of youth in their twenties of a lower-middle-class rural background, highly educated and highly motivated. According to Sa'ad Eddin Ibrahim, an Egyptian scholar who teaches at the American University in Cairo, two-thirds of members' fathers were middle ranking civil service employees, while one-third were mostly professional workers or businessmen. They formed a number of Islamic societies within universities, and in 1977 they won the majority of Student Union posts – pushing back the Nasserites who were most powerful in the mid-seventies – to a marginal position.[24] Under continuous pressure from the proponents of *Sharī'ah* implementation, President Sadat at that time approved alteration of the second article of the constitution and made *Sharī'ah* a principal source of civil law. Sadat's move was partly aimed at curbing the leftist elements in the country and partly an attempt to create a pious image of himself which would gain him popularity among the Muslims of Egypt.[25]

By putting pressure on the government, religious leaders made some headway toward gradually bringing the constitution into conformity with *Sharī'ah*. The Copts believed that such 'constitutional' Islamization was against their interests, probably affecting their right of citizenship. Among other changes in 1977, Sadat's government decreed the introduction of certain *Sharī'ah* principles, such as the death penalty for apostasy and flogging of drunks, which caused concern among the Copts.[26] When the bill (1977) was introduced in parliament on the death penalty for those who abandoned their Islamic faith, and also the bill on divorce which prohibited Copts who had converted to Islam from, after a divorce, returning to Christianity, Pope Shenouda himself led the public protests.[27] Many Copts married to Muslims in the past had been permitted, following divorce or death of the spouse, to revert to their previous religion. They com-

plained that under the new law with the death penalty for apostasy, this practice became a capital crime.[28]

In view of Sadat's reluctance to permit the formation of an Islamic party along the lines of the Muslim Brethren because it might frighten the Copts,[29] in 1983 the Brethren modified their orientation and, in an effort to gain admission to the Egyptian establishment, made an alliance with the Wafd party. In 1984, the Muslim Brethren under the umbrella of Wafd won ten seats in the National People's Assembly. According to *Ikhwān* MPs, the issues which they were able to raise underlined their belief that the People's Assembly was a 'legitimate channel through which we can put into practice the *Sharī'ah* programme advocated by *Ikhwān*'.[30]

In the 1987 election, the Brethren won thirty-seven parliamentary seats. Currently, their presence in the political establishment reflects a legitimate channel for the views of various Muslim organizations who desire full application of the *Sharī'ah*.[31] Apart from the demand for *Sharī'ah,* which must be channelled through parliament, there are an increasing number of private mosques and uncompromising preachers who have enhanced the cause. Of the 46,000 mosques in Egypt, for instance, only 6,000 are under the control of the Ministry of Endowment. Numerous Islamic societies have been established up and down the country, not only by university students. Some of them operate openly and, according to one source, twenty-nine clandestine Islamic organizations have been active in recent years.[32] Such groups significantly stimulate the Muslims as a community. Shaikh Ḥāfiẓ Salāmah, for instance, in 1984 emerged as leader of several thousand committed pro-*Sharī'ah* supporters, demanding the total implementation of *Sharī'ah* in public life. In the summer of 1985, to put pressure on the regime, Salāmah organized a procession, which was banned by the government, to the presidential palace, and this led to the confiscation of al-Nūr Mosque followed by Salāmah's arrest and imprisonment.[33]

The campaign for constitutional Islamization, which emerged both from the legitimate political establishment and activists among the Muslim masses, has grown. While a

nuisance to the secular forces, it has been ignored by the indigenous Christian minority. But to counter the gradual Islamization of the state constitution, Coptic hard-liners endeavoured to deter the process. When the amendment was under preparation, in which it was obvious that *Sharī'ah* would be adopted as a principal source of the constitution, the Coptic leaders appealed to their communities to adhere firmly to their religious freedoms, to express the view that implementation of *Sharī'ah* was incompatible with the freedom of belief and worship guaranteed by the current constitution, and to encourage Muslims and Christians to be more tolerant towards each other.[34]

It would seem, by and large, that only those deeply influenced by Western Christian thought are reluctant about, or have tried to prevent, the plan for gradual changes in the current constitution. It is inevitable that implementation of *Sharī'ah* should become the wish of the Muslim majority. According to a Coptic community leader, there are two fundamental issues pertaining to the *Sharī'ah* implementation plan which affect their rights as citizens to defend their constitutional rights and indeed their future. He urges that the distinction between unchangeable Islamic jurisprudence, based on the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah,* and classical independent judgements subject to alteration according to historical context, be always remembered. Making the distinction is an area of thought in which every citizen should be involved, so that Egyptians as a whole may evolve a constitution which conforms to their heritage, and guarantees equal rights to all. Two other essential things need pointing out: (1) All citizens are equal in rights and none may claim special privileges. With regard to administration of law, economic and political policy, these should be regarded as common causes among the citizens. (2) The demand for putting Islamic law into practice was a reaction from within the society. The Copts of Egypt, also their Church and beliefs, suffered from the same kind of process as did their Muslim countrymen. Indeed, only those Copts objected to the Islamic constitutional system who were admirers of the Western constitution. It is recorded in Egyptian history that the Copts were not socially left out on account of weaknesses

in Islam. Weaknesses of the recent past and the present are due to the Western cultural impact, which both Muslims and Copts opposed.[35]

Despite the fact that the issue of *Sharī'ah* has become the core of dispute, prominent Coptic scholars have responded differently. In a statement issued by the Minister of Court Justice, which announced that the special committee to amend and develop the constitution in conformity with *Sharī'ah* was on the verge of completing its work, it was reported that the ban on intoxicating drink, and the *ḥadd* of amputation of the hand, for instance, would only be applicable to Muslims while Christians would remain subject to the European man-made constitution. Sam David, a prominent Coptic scholar, is against this proposed dichotomy in the constitution, arguing that the notion that there should be a dual constitution for a single nation was most bizarre.[36] Other analysts have noted that major obstacles confronting the trend of the Islamic movement are attributable to the fact that the Islamic concept of social organization had not been put forward comprehensively and had therefore been unacceptable to the public in general. They refute the accusation that the Copts reject moves toward constitutional Islamization, and give assurances to the effect that the Copts would accept *Sharī'ah* if it was compatible with humanity and nationalism for all. Shenouda proudly stated that supremacy of Islamic civilization had shaped an important part of their cultural character and their feeling of nationhood. He also said that the quest for implementation of *Sharī'ah* had been presented vaguely and so caused apprehension and doubt not only among Christians but among Muslims also.[37]

Sālim al-'Aww, a prominent Egyptian scholar, wrote in the daily *al-Sha'b,* that the issue hinges on the lack of dialogue between those who demanded application of *Sharī'ah* and the Copts and other non-Muslim groups. He went on to ask that a common starting point be sought which could make healthy dialogue possible. He insisted that dialogue between Muslims and Copts (and other non-Muslim communities) must be based on an assumption that these Eastern peoples had contributed most to the development, emergence, and history of civilization in Egypt. Above all,

those people enjoyed a glorious civilization in past centuries in which the ruling system was based on the Islamic constitution as a guiding light in their day-to-day lives. He admitted that the ruling system is Egypt's historical legacy and that they (the Copts) incline toward it. It was also a constitution which treated Muslims, Christians and Jews very much alike. A significant aspect of the cultural features which have characterized Egypt's constitutional system date back to their adherence to *Sharī'ah* which envisaged no distinction in practice among the citizens and hardly any in its teachings. He hoped that today's plan for operating *Sharī'ah* in the country would avoid religious distinction. So, the desired dialogue he said (addressing the Copts), should be on the basis that 'they' are not against 'us' when demanding the *Sharī'ah*; rather it is the legacy of all and we should stick to it.[38]

Crucial Relations Between the Two Communities

When Sadat became President, relations between the two communities worsened. For the first time in the historical relationship between the Copts and the government, the latter openly accused the Copts of forming, through the Church, a separate authority within the state. In the past, conflict had been confined to the extreme elements of the two religious communities, with the government in most cases only acting as watch-dog or intervening to issue regulations mainly intended to maintain national unity and avoid communal clashes. In the Sadat era, a number of clashes took place between the two communities which culminated in the burning of *al-Khankā* church in November 1972. Soon afterwards, a parliamentary fact-finding committee was formed to investigate the roots of communal tension. Even so, relations remained sensitive in some areas and tension was high in places such as the Asyūṭ region, al-Minya and some universities.

Surprisingly, the authorities took a long time to discover the plan for setting up an independent Coptic state based in the Asyūṭ region. In the words of President Sadat, 'that plan was initially designed in the 1960s, backed by the West, to

topple Nasser's regime'. Because of this, Sadat confronted Pope Shenouda and accused him of using the Church as a spiritual sovereignty within the state and of attempting, in collaboration with other Christian sects in Egypt, to turn the Copts' status into that of privileges.

Copts living in the United States and other Western countries also played an important role in adding fuel to the fire of religious tension. To attain their objectives they held demonstrations on the occasion of President Sadat's visits to the United States. In addition, they appealed to the White House demanding human rights for Copts. Provocative circulars were distributed lamenting the continuous persecution, churches destroyed, priests, students, labourers killed and females kidnapped by the Muslims. In reaction to this, Sadat declared basic religious principles, that there is no religion in politics and no politics in religion which, according to him, was applicable to both Muslims and Christians and he instructed the Minister of Home Affairs to suspend the activities of all organizations which disseminated sectarian fanaticism and extremism. Subsequently, he accused the Coptic leaders of continually trying to constrain the constitutional amendment to make *Sharī'ah* a principal source of the constitution and of discouraging their communities from confirming the proposed constitutional changes. It was said that the central leadership of the Coptic churches had drafted a new constitutional form particularly with regard to religious freedom.

The Burning of *al-Khankā* Church

In 1970 in Alexandria, two Muslim youths, under certain circumstances, converted to Christianity. The news quickly spread among the masses and was the subject of severe condemnation from Shaikhs and Muslim leaders. The deputy Minister of Endowment and Islamic Affairs prepared a report denouncing Christian activities which put the youths in such danger. Banned at first, over the next two years the report was secretly printed and widely circulated. Subsequently, in their sermons, Muslim preachers criticized the Copts which led to suspicion between the two religious communities. In

March, 1972, news of another circular, said to be from the authorities, emerged on the minutes of a meeting chaired by Pope Shenouda. The report said that, 'the Copts endeavoured to match the percentage of Muslim population and they wished in the long run to regain the country from the Muslim conquerors, as occurred in Spain after nearly eight centuries under the Muslim rule'. Although these circulars provoked the Muslims' anger, the authorities did not take any decisive measures. The situation proved most advantageous to a group of zealous Muslim militants who exploited it to fan Muslim anger against the Copts. The Coptic leaders responded by holding a two-day conference in Alexandria. They issued resolutions which were subsequently addressed to the government and the People's Assembly. The government was asked to protect the Copts' rights as citizens as well as protecting their Christian beliefs. If the government failed to grant these fundamental rights, the resolution said, 'we are opting for martyrdom rather than life with continuous humiliations.'

On 24 July, 1972, in an effort to contain the increasing worsening relations between the two communities, President Sadat asked the National Socialist Union to hold an emergency meeting and present an agenda on National Unity. The President pointed out during the meeting 'that an endeavour to destroy national unity was partly steered by the Copts settling in the United States.' This was followed, a few days later in August, by a parliamentary session which produced a constitutional clause on National Unity protection. In spite of that, another incident took place when the orthodox association's office in Buhairah district was attacked. Later still, an unknown group of people distributed circulars in a provocative campaign which escalated into the *Khankā* church-burning incident. According to a survey conducted by the security forces, on Monday, 6 November, 1972, which coincided with *'Īd al-Fiṭr,* an unknown person set fire to the house of the Holy Book Association which had been illegally converted into a church. A week after the incident, on Sunday, 12 November, 1972, a large number of Coptic priests accompanied by members of the Coptic communities, in a procession of vehicles, visited the damaged building to offer prayers. In the evening of the same day,

Muslim communities held a similar procession which started from the mosque of Sulṭān al-Ashraf. Eventually, it was said, a Copt fired shots in the air. In response to this, Muslim protesters opened fire on the house of that man and other Copts' houses as well, but without inflicting casualties. The next day, a fact-finding parliamentary committee was formed and, soon afterward, the committee members visited the place of the incident accompanied by the deputy Home Minister for Public Affairs, where they inspected the damage caused by the fire. In a series of investigation activities they held meetings with Pope Shenouda, the Grand Shaikh of al-Azhar, the Minister of Endowment and Islamic Affairs and a number of Copt and Muslim leaders. The committee received numerous complaints from local citizens lamenting the behaviour of those concerned in the incidents which had so damaged freedom of religion.

It emerged that the activities of the Holy Book Association began in *al-Khankā* district in 1946. The association was properly registered as a religious body with the Ministry of Social Affairs. In 1971, a lawyer named Aḥmad 'Azmī sold a piece of land near his house to someone who at a later stage sold it to the patriarch Maximus of Qalyūbiyah. At first, the building constructed there was simply intended as the office of the Association. However, since 1972, the Copts had held regular Friday prayer services there guided by a priest, Marcos Farag. Converting the office into a church without legal permission brought protests from Muslim neighbours. Since the Association had not got permission to convert the building into a church, the Association's executive board warned the Chairman, Shākir Ghabūr, about misusing the building unless permission was obtained. It was reported by the public safety officers who visited the site the morning after the burning incident, that only the wooden roof was affected by the fire while the walls remained untouched. It was regretted that the man who had set fire to the building had not been arrested. The gateman who spent that night there admitted seeing a few people throw petrol-bombs at the building. The fire service in collaboration with the local Muslim inhabitants and Copts were able to put out the fire and confine damage to the roof.

Having undertaken a thorough investigation of the event, the committee reported as follows:

(1) The inhabitants of *al-Khankā* district were living in harmony. Their unity and collaboration were demonstrated when in 1970 a factory in the area was hit by an Israeli attack which killed seventy workers and injured sixty-nine. Both condemned the Israelis as the casualties and damage had been suffered by both communities.

(2) A Copt served as mayor of the city for nearly twelve years, and the Muslims did not feel any resentment. When his tenure ended and he was replaced by a Muslim the Holy Book Association welcomed his appointment

(3) A large number of Copts occupied key positions, particularly in the field of health.

(4) The Association building affected by fire was located in a densely-populated Muslim area, and there was no permit for its use as a church, the site being quite inappropriate. Because of the illegal conversion of the building into a semi-church, Muslims had collected donations for the erection of a mosque close to it.

(5) Reports of the burning incident reaching Pope Shenouda had been greatly exaggerated: he was told that the building had been completely destroyed and that the conspirators intentionally delayed the fire service from undertaking its task. Further, Pope Shenouda was told there were doubts about the impartiality of the investigation into the incident. The incident was even reported as a church burning despite the fact that the place itself was illegally so used. The parliamentary fact-finding committee pointed out that on Sunday some tourist buses, taxis and private cars took nearly 400 people to the place of the incident. It was estimated that around 100 of these were wearing priestly garments. The authorities, after learning that they were offering prayers in that place, tried to prevent them entering the city but to no avail. They walked to the place uttering Biblical verses, headed by priests with microphones. They strongly condemned the attackers and attributed the incident to unprecedented sectarian enmity, and accused the government of failing to take immediate measures. That afternoon,

the Muslim youth, on their return from universities, factories and offices, on hearing what was going on, regarded it as a provocation. They flocked to the *Sulṭān al-Ashraf* Mosque and, led by the Imām of the mosque, they approached a police headquarters shouting *Allāhu Akbar*. The police asked them to disperse; some of them did so willingly while others were adamant about reaching the office of the Socialist Union. When they passed a shop belonging to a Copt, shooting was heard which was directed at the shop itself. It was assumed the shop owner had opened fire when the procession was passing by. As a result, the crowd looted properties and burned other places belonging to the Copts. When the protesters arrived at the place where the priests were offering prayers they set fire to a room adjacent to it. Three people were slightly injured in the incident. A few people were arrested on charges of looting and public security and the police took the precautionary measure of detaining more people suspected of inducing religious conflict.[39]

Myth of a Coptic Party

In September 1989, a rumour began to circulate that unknown leaders of the Copts had forwarded an appeal to the Chairman, Committee of Political Affairs in Egypt to form a political party to be called *al-Ḥizb al-Salām al-Ijtimā'ī wa Siyāsah al-Waḥdah al-Waṭanīyah* (Social Peaceful Party for National Unity) as a platform for Coptic political activities. The issue got wide coverage in local newspapers and magazines, some newsmen collecting very different comments. Pope Shenouda and prominent Coptic scholars were interviewed. Jamal As'ad, a Coptic Labour Party MP (Member of Parliament), said that the Orthodox Church does not intervene in politics, in conformity with the Christian position on total separation of religion and politics, and that the political interests of Egyptian Copts must be accommodated through the existing political parties which he viewed as conforming to their aspirations. Pope Shenouda was very critical about the rumoured founding of a Coptic Party, and said: 'Such a party would be totally isolated and

politically it would gain nothing.' Ironically, he added: 'Those who wished to form such a party political platform had no contact with the Church.'

Having witnessed such issues that have emerged time and again in recent years and which have sometimes brought about physical clashes between the two communities, such as the *Zāwiyah al-Ḥamrā'* incident in Cairo, is it possible to say who has added most fuel to factionalism in Egypt? Obviously, those behind the leaflet campaign during Sadat's years which recounted the Copts' intention to recapture the country as the Spaniards had recaptured Spain from Muslim rule, were playing the same hand as those who played the 'Coptic Minority Card', or those who played the Southerners of the Sudan against the *Sharī'ah* bill there, or those who divided Lebanon into the antagonistic factions of East and West Beirut.

In 1908, Akhnous Fanous demanded the formation of *Ḥizb Miṣr* (Egyptian Party) for Copts and the establishment of a People's Assembly which could accommodate different racial and religious groups. The idea was totally rejected; only the colonial government supported such a plan. Recently, the issue has re-emerged and, according to *al-Ahrām,* fifty-five Copts were pseudonymously associated with the plan. It was revealed that Akhnous' concept of an Egyptian Party in the past had initially been a response to the call for pan-Islamism. The re-emergence of the issue in 1989 is thus viewed as a response to the Muslim Brethren's attempt to legitimize their political interests within parliament. The question is: If at the beginning of the twentieth century, the party dreamed of by Akhnous was the creation of colonial government, who is behind the similar recent move – given that Pope Shenouda himself and prominent Coptic politicians have publicly rejected the idea?[40]

Patriarch Shenouda's Overseas Mission

As well as factional sedition which threatens Copt-Muslim fraternity, there have been the semi-political visits of Pope Shenouda to Western countries following his release from confinement in 1985. Between 12 August and 11 November

1989, Shenouda for the first time visited four Western countries, namely Britain, Canada, United States and Australia. In America, Canada and Australia he was warmly received by heads of state as well as by Church leaders. Mr. Bush received him in the White House, and he also paid a visit to former President J. Carter in Atlanta. In Australia he met premiers of federal states, ministers and some members of parliament. A number of issues were discussed concerning Copt-Muslim relations, as well as political conditions in Egypt under Mubarak's administration. He also gave lectures in universities and press conferences in different places. During his meeting with Mr. Bush, he brought up his talks on the peace process in the Middle East. He said: 'That peace process itself needs a push from Mr. Bush.' In reply to journalists after the meeting, he stated: 'Our visit here is a mission of pastoral care for our migrated people as our Church is very concerned for all aspects of their welfare. We wish them to be good and pious citizens in their societies as it is a message of the Church to promote peace and love on earth.' He repeatedly expressed his appreciation and gratitude to the American government as hosts to 'our people' for allowing them to keep dual nationality.[41]

In Australia, on the first-ever visit there of a Patriarch in the Orthodox Church, he became the state guest as well as the guest of the Australian Council of Churches. In a televised press conference in Sydney, he called for lasting peace in the Middle East, for the end of the painful tragedy in Lebanon, and for the Palestinians to be given legitimate rights to retain their homeland. For the sake of co-operation between the Orthodox Church and other denominations he also visited Rome where, according to *al-Ahrām,* he held important meetings, since the Orthodox Church plays important roles in the World Council of Churches, the Council of Churches in the Middle East and the Council of Churches in Africa.

The Patriarch's visit to the West and his reception by heads of state and at press conferences indicate that Western leaders are very concerned about the Coptic communities especially in view of the entry of 'Islamists' into parliament, which is regarded as the main challenge to the secular forces.

The anxiety of the Western leaders about the issue of *Sharī'ah* implementation (demanded by the Islamists) is not so much that this may accord to the Coptic minority the status of second-class citizens in Egypt, rather that Egypt which is the birthplace of the Muslim Brethren as well as a major centre of Islamic learning, should not fall into the hands of Islamists – for it is such an occurrence (as they see it) that threatens their interests in the region in the long term.

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CHANGES IN THE CHARACTER OF THE MISSIONARY PROBLEM

IN MOHAMMEDAN LANDS

By The Rev. W. H. T. Gairdner, Cairo

Address delivered in the Assembly Hall on Saturday Evening, 18th June [1910]

Mr. Chairman, Fathers and Brethren, – The question is not so much, where do we find evidences of the modern movement in Islam to-day? as, where do we not find such evidences?

We are, of course, familiar with the modernist movement which is affecting the middle Moslem realms of Turkey, Egypt, Persia, and India, – all of them countries into which European ideas have found their way, and have produced political and intellectual fermenting, both of which in turn are reacting on religion. But these are not the only countries in Islam that are being modified in some new way by events which directly or indirectly, have had their origin in the West. In Russia the promulgation of religious liberty on the 17th April 1905 has resulted, as I am informed by a Russian lady who has made a special study of the subject, in the return to Islam of 50,000 forced conformists to the Greek Church; and they have been accompanied or followed by not a few who embraced Islam for the first time. There is no doubt that events like these will stimulate the Mohammedans in Russia in Europe, the Volga districts, Russian Central Asia, and perhaps Siberia itself. For ideas are like electricity; they move fast, especially when the metals of a railway line conduct them. So that no doubt the Trans-Caspian railway, which will in time be continued from Russian Turkestan into Chinese Turkestan, will carry ideas with it, and so the historic trade-routes that cross the middle of the heart of the Asiatic

continent into China, may soon become nerves organising Moslem Central Asia into a much closer organism than it has been before. Or turn to China; if there is one country in the world the Mohammedans of which might be confidently supposed not to be sensitive to impressions from the outside world, that country is China, for the Chinese Moslems have been the standing example of the most stagnant and unintelligent possible form of Islamism. Yet we hear of the dispatch of a Turk to be the first resident Moslem missionary in China, and more striking still, of thirty Chinese Mohammedan students drinking in Western ideas at a Japanese University, and editing a quarterly magazine for distribution to their fellow-religionists throughout China with the significant title "Moslems, Awake!" Or turn to Malaysia; the modifying influence here is the steamship, which is enabling an ever-increasing number of Javanese, Sumatrans, and other East Indian Moslems to make their pilgrimage to Mecca, with the natural result of welding Islam into a much more compact and unyielding whole throughout Malaysia. Or turn to Arabia itself; the tomb of the Prophet at El Medina resounds to-day to the whistle of a railway train. From Arabia indirectly came the great – you cannot call it modernist – but the great modern or recent movement of El Senussi, the influence of which is being felt right away through the Sudan to Lake Chad and the heathen tribes on the extreme north of the Congo basin. Otherwise the Moslem movement, so fearfully extensive through Africa, is essentially a reaction consequent on the action of European Governments, for the establishment of settled governments all the way from the Nile to the Zambesi has weakened or broken down tribal exclusiveness, and opened up a hundred thoroughfares for the peaceful penetration of Islam; which being so, we shall probably before long see Islam assuming the attitude of the heaven-sent uniter and vindicator of the African race, reaping most of the harvest sown by the Ethiopianism of to-day.

This rapid preliminary survey assures us, then, that even from the view-point of a modern movement, the Mohammedan problem is practically co-extensive with the whole world of Islam. And may I not, in this great Conference, make yet

one more preliminary remark. This problem of Islam is one which we simply cannot overlook – not even in the face of the indescribably urgent situations facing us in the Far East. And this, first, because Islam is at our doors; from the far-flung North African coast it fronts Europe, actually touching it, so to speak, at either end of the Mediterranean, – at the Pillars of Hercules and at Constantinople. And secondly, because it is a central problem also. Think of that enormous central block of solid Mohammedanism from Northern Africa into Western and Central Asia! Like an immovable wedge, it keeps the Christian West from the pagan or heathen East; and I would have you recollect, Fathers and Brethren, that even were our Japanese, our Korean and Manchurian, our Chinese, our Indian problems solved, their present crises happily met and surmounted, and a Christian Far East added to the Catholic Church, that great central unsympathetic, alien, and hostile wedge would cut Eastern and Western Christendom absolutely in half, keeping the twain apart, insulating them from each other, and exhibiting to God and man not merely a seam, but a rent, from top to bottom, in the seamless robe of the great Catholic Church, – of a humanity wholly, but for Islam, won for Christ. Truly, then, we cannot postpone the problem of Islam. It is a problem of to-day, as we have seen. Let the same "to-day," then, be the day of solution and salvation.

My task and privilege then this evening is to seek to unfold to you, representatives of the Church militant in all the earth, the situation as it is to-day, in view of the modern or modernist movements within Islam; our object being unitedly to take measures, to the utmost extent of the resources at our disposal, by which the situation thus realised may be met. And this last sentence reminds us that "the resources at our disposal" is a phrase capable of two interpretations, and that in our consultation this evening both must be kept in our minds. In the narrow sense, those resources are utterly insufficient to meet the situation to-day, though they could doubtless be more wisely disposed, more economically distributed, more richly used. But at our disposal also are the resources of the living God, and this thought will keep us reminded during this session also of the root lesson of

this Conference, that only a new realisation of the meaning of a living God will avail us to accomplish or even continue our superhuman task.

There is not time to indicate more than the foci where the particular crises of to-day are centred. Fathers and brethren, our motto must be *Verbum Sapientibus!* In this hall, and on this subject, I must and may emphasize each of these two words.

Beginning, then, with the Ottoman Empire, we find a movement which can broadly be described as one towards freedom, political first and then intellectual. Ultimately a double movement of this nature must react on religion slowly but surely. The inner attitude of the young Turks themselves to religious toleration is probably an advanced one. The very fact that Christianity and Christians have been to such a large extent at the bottom of their movement must produce far-reaching and important consequences. Already in many parts of the Turkish Empire, notably Syria, the liberty of the press is making very great advances. Already some leaders of Islamic thought are disposed to query the whole elaborate fabric of Islam as historically evolved and elaborated, and to go back to the Koran, into which some of them read as much Christianity as they are able. Are not these facts a call to the Societies at work in the Ottoman Empire to stand by and to strengthen their work so as to be ready to take advantage of the expanding situation? May not the day for reaping the fruit of the marvellous endurance of the Armenian martyrs be nigh? It must come, as sure as there is a just God in Heaven!

The following steps, then, seem incumbent: first, to strengthen the already splendidly successful work done for and amongst the several Eastern Churches in the Ottoman Empire, whether Anglican or non-Anglican. Secondly, to occupy the unoccupied districts through the Societies contiguous to them – these districts are mentioned in the Report of Commission I. Thirdly, to place literary work on a stronger and surer footing. (I will return to this point in a moment.) Fourthly, to put wise, continuous, and courageous pressure upon the Government to make full religious equality and liberty an actual fact in the Empire. Fifthly, to make a wise

and courageous advance in direct work for Moslems. In an informal conference lately held in Beyrout, which I had the privilege of attending, one heard witness after witness dwelling on the extent to which such direct work is already being done, and the far greater extent to which, in the opinion of all, it might be now done. At the end of the day that informal conference expressed its opinion, with this Edinburgh Conference specially in view, as follows:–

"(1) That direct evangelistic work among Moslems, which has been going on quietly for several decades in Syria and Palestine, is more than ever possible to-day, whether by means of visiting, conversation, the production and careful distribution of Christian literature, Bible circulation, medical missions, and boys' and girls' schools. (2) That the promulgation of the Constitution has already, in the more enlightened centres, made this direct evangelistic work easier, and will, we trust, as the constitutional principle of religious equality becomes better understood by the people, make it increasingly so. And, on the other hand, we are face to face with a Mohammedan educational and religious revival which makes necessary this missionary advance if the prestige gained in the past is to be preserved and increased. (3) For which reasons it is certain that the time has come for a wisely planned and carefully conducted and intensely earnest forward move in work among Moslems in Syria and Palestine, and the attention of all the societies already working in the field is to be directed towards immediately making that forward move."

Fathers and brethren, *Verbum Sapientibus!*

Passing to Egypt, where the larger measure of civil freedom makes the possibilities of direct Moslem work practically unlimited, we find that Cairo is still to-day the intellectual centre of Islam. It has been so ever since the decay of Baghdad under the Abbasids. It is therefore at this point that it is proper to emphasise another critically necessary line of advance which the Christian Church must make without delay. I mean an advance in the quality and quantity of the scholarship of those who work among Moslems all over the world, and especially in those parts where the enlightenment is going on. There are two main lines along which this increased study must be directed, and Moslem Cairo stands for both: the first is the old traditional theology and philosophy, represented by the University of El Azhar; and the second is the modernist movement, which more or

less touches every young Moslem who receives an education after the Western model, and which consists, as I have said, in an attempt to get behind the actual historical evolution of Islamism, and to re-think out a new policy, a new theology, a new philosophy, and a new society, upon the basis of the Koran, unsupplemented by all tradition whatever. This movement, which is strongly represented in India, has also a firm footing in Cairo, where the well-known Sheikh Mohammad Abdu lectured and gained disciples. One of these disciples, the editor of the Cairo review, *El Manar,* is the man who at this moment is busying himself about founding a missionary college for Turks in Constantinople, the graduates of which shall go forth to teach the principles of this new Islam, specially in the further East! Whereby you may see that this new Islam aims at spreading and propagating. Now both these lines of intellectual activity imply a force of scholar missionaries, more numerous and many degrees more learned than at present exists. For even though the learning of traditional Islam be supposed to be on the decline – and the supposition remains to be proved, though it is hardly questionable that El Azhar is a decaying institution, and its influence abroad a mere shadow of what it was – yet that traditional learning is still the learning that underlies the life of the enormous masses of Mohammedans all over the world, masses whose very *vis inertiae* will always be a formidable and potent thing. That traditional learning, then, demands students as much as ever it did, and those same students must add to their programme the task of watching, studying, and meeting this Neo-Islam with its several almost contradictory aspects. I do not know where that study can be fully carried on, except somewhere in the Arabic-speaking world; and that somewhere, beyond all dispute, can only be Cairo. Therefore it seems to many of us that a school of Arabic study must be quietly founded and carried on there – a school which shall be at the service of missionaries from every part of the Moslem world. I say this without prejudice to schemes of Oriental Colleges and courses in the home lands, schemes which will certainly have their place, but will not, I believe, be more than supplementary or complementary to what I am indicating. At Cairo, then, this school can

only be started and maintained, Gentlemen, by your Societies taking thought – if not anxious thought, still thought – and that immediately. *Verbum Sapientibus!*

Moving East from Egypt, we come to Arabia, the Cradle of Islam. Besieged as it is by Moslem countries where modernist actions and re-actions are taking place, ought it not to be more effectively besieged by us? I would call your attention first, to the recommendations of Commission I., that ten important points along the coast should be occupied with medical missions, like so many encircling light-centres; secondly, to the reminder recently given by Mr. Garland, the Jewish missionary, that Islam may yet be reached by the Jews of greater Arabia, if we remember "to the Jews first"; thirdly, to the following words of Dr. Young of Aden:–

"I think the Church should seize the present opportunity of entering the open door of Arabia, and specially should it try to start a large united mission in Mecca or Medina. It may seem Utopian even to dream of starting a mission in Mecca or Medina, but until an effort has been made no one can tell whether or not it will be successful. At any rate an attempt should be made to begin work in Jidda (the port of Mecca) and a properly equipped hospital established there would do much to teach the pilgrims the meaning of Christian love." Dr. Zwemer told me yesterday that he considered Jidda even more important – it is certainly more practicable – than Mecca.

Turning to Mesopotamia, may I remind the Conference of the enormous importance that region is going to have in the future when the Baghdad railway scheme and Sir William Willcock's irrigation scheme have been worked out? Is it not vital that the Church should initiate work there on a totally different scale than exists at present?

After Mesopotamia, Persia. The ferment in that country is not a call to retreat or stand still, but to go forward (a thing which is everywhere true where the minds of men are at last feeling the need of something they have not got). The Bakhtiari Chiefs who carried through the recent *coup d'état* and became the *de facto* governors of Teheran, were, before they came into this startling prominence, the firm friends of the C.M.S. missionaries. Does not this one fact make it

crucially important to strengthen and reinforce those working for the gospel in that land, the importance of which as dividing Sunni Islam is so great? The opportunity was greater a few years ago than it is to-day. Is it to slip entirely?

In India we have the same phenomena noted in Egypt, constituting the same call. We have the same enormous mass of popular Sunni Islam, and to a still greater extent a modernist movement, which has never yet been adequately dealt with. In addition to all this we have the serious intelligence of some millions of outcastes in Bengal or the Punjab, who before very long must be claimed by either Islam or Hinduism if the Christian Church does not gather them to herself. Is not the latter fact a call to the Church immediately to do this vital work of taking preservative measures? In this case, by how many thousand times is prevention better and easier than cure! For the rest the Report of Commission I. registers the impression that in India Moslem Missions have been sadly neglected. Hardly any men are set apart for this work in S. India, and nowhere I believe, in India as elsewhere, is the proper training being given to men who are to engage in modern work, and who have now not only to study traditional Islam but the modernist movement and literature that have their source and spring at Aligarh.

In the East Indies we have already mentioned the new activity consequent on increased facilities for travel and inter-communication. Our Dutch and German brethren are doing a magnificent work here both in winning Moslems and in preventing the Islamising of non-Moslems. All this great Conference can do is to encourage them to make even greater exertions in the name of the Lord! In particular, may we not pray that they and we may be enabled to strengthen our hold on Borneo, that great island in which but little is being done, and which, I am informed by the Rev. G. Allan, S.P.G. missionary there, is full of fanatical and very influential Malaysian Moslems. It is a marvel that the Dyaks and other aborigines have not been Islamised, such being the circumstances. It seems that we owe their present escape to their unparalleled relish for pork! But that is not a satisfactory thing for us to rely on, and with this Malaysian environment

the danger is imminent. Even in the case of the enormous island of New Guinea, hitherto as far as I know unaffected by Islam, we may well let fall the appeal in passing to hasten its evangelisation, lest, if we tarry, it too become as Java and as Sumatra.

In China until recently the problem of Islam has hardly been even studied, much less worked at. We have read in the Report the significant message of young Chinese Moslems studying at Tokio, "Moslems, awake!" Is not the translation of this simply, "Christians, awake?" It is, in fact, a sharp admonition to us that the *laissez faire* attitude of the past must now cease. The Report advises the focusing of Christian effort on certain known strategic centres and the setting apart of men for the purpose. It adds: "Such workers would need a knowledge of both Chinese and Arabic." This is only one more indication of the necessity of having an Arabic Seminary at some centre like Cairo.

From China through to Central Asia, Turkestan, and Russia is an historic route. From what I learn from three first-rate informants, the thing of paramount importance to pray for is the revival of the Greek Church, and the according to other forms of Christianity a more complete freedom to be and to work. The Greek Church has the means and the men had she the vision and the passion, yet I am informed of two small Greek Church missions among the 189,000 Moslems of Siberia in the Tomsk and Obolsk districts, and of the conversion of three Moslems in Siberia in 1908. A small harvest, truly, yet it shows that the task is no impossibility. We know of the great evangelistic work done by the Greek Church in Japan. Why should not the word of the Lord yet come to that Church to do a similar work whenever Moslems are found in the Russian Empire? May it be that, at the next Decennial Conference, Greek Church delegates and Roman Church delegates will be found sitting here with us and rehearsing to us the mighty acts of the Holy Spirit at their hands in Asiatic Islam?

Lastly, Africa. I need not say one word to you, fathers and brethren, to tell you of the crisis in which practically all Africa is involved between the religions of Christ and Mohammed. The thing is notorious, and this Conference at least is well aware of its seriousness. The two main causes

are, first, the influence of the Senussi movement, which has radiated from the North-East Sahara, and is felt, I believe, wherever Islam is advancing between the 10th and 5th degrees of latitude North; and secondly, the influence of traders, who, taking advantage of the security given by the various British, French, or German occupations, carry Islam everywhere. This applies generally to East Africa and the Central and Western parts of the Sudan.

How can these things be dealt with?

In regard to the first, Dr. Kumm in his recent journey across Africa and along the Moslem fringe, everywhere found tribes on the Shari River and North Congo streams up to the 5th parallel in process of being Islamised; and he found that the impetus was coming from the Senussi movement. The Senussi monasteries and not El Azhar are the true fountain head of North African Mohammedan extension, and Senussism, though utterly anti-modernist, is nevertheless not orthodox. No Senussite could study at El Azhar, that home of an unmilitant orthodoxy. The only contribution El Azhar makes to Central or West African Islam is the vague prestige of its name, and a certain amount of consolidating influence exerted by the few Azharite graduates who find their way back to Hausaland and other parts of the Western Sudan. As Pastor Würz writes, the blow at the heart of the extensionist movement in the Central region would be a work carried on in the Senussi centres of the Sahara. This seems impossible. He adds: "What can we do in this matter but pray and wait?" This then is what it is the duty of the Church to do. And then there is that advancing fringe – from the Shari River to the Bahr-el-Arab. A Christian traveller has now been across that fringe. Is not that fact a challenge to your Churches and Societies, fathers and brethren, to advance along the path thus indicated, eastward from the Cameroons and Nigeria, westward from the missions on the Upper Nile? And before leaving this aspect of the subject let me point out the importance of playing down the French opposition to non-Roman effort in all its vast African Islamic Empire.

Turning from the Central Sudan to the Western, I should like to quote some words of Pastor Würz of Basel, who has

devoted so much attention to the subject. "For the moment," he says, "North Nigeria seems to me the most important point. The countries round Lake Chad, on the British or German side, may be second. If French territory were open to the Gospel some great centre further west might be of the same importance." So far Pastor Würz; and here I wish I could quote to you the whole of an important letter, written last New Year's Day by Mr. T. E. Alvarez, Secretary of the C.M.S. North Nigerian mission. You would see how completely it endorses the words, "For the moment North Nigeria seems the most important point." He points out the enormous work that might be done there to-day, both preventive and direct; how essential it is that it should be done at once in view of the rapidly approaching linking up of the Lower Niger, Hausaland, and Calabar by railways. May I remind you also yet once more of Dr. Miller's appeal for forty educationists or evangelists for Hausaland, that the Hausa nation may lead the way in stopping the Mohammedan rush? Fathers and brethren, I fall back earnestly upon my motto, *verbum sapientibus!*

I return to Pastor Würz: "There is almost no unity in African missions. Look at the west coast. A score of separate starts from a score of separate points on the west. No attempt at unity as far as I am aware. I wish for this reason that all West African missions might make a vigorous attempt to work among Moslems. This would give them an obviously common task at least. Islam might link us together; this done it would be time to try to settle on an intelligent common plan of operations. But we are far from that yet."

Are these closing words not indeed a challenge? In this hall are representatives of the Churches or Societies working in West Africa. Were it not glorious if one result of this Conference should be that that which seemed to that writer to be so far should suddenly, at this time, take place and come about? Here is a work for the International Board for promoting local co-operation, which we all so earnestly hope will be born from this Conference.

And last, East Africa from British East Africa right down to the Zambesi. The clear call, is, first, to hasten on with the evangelisation of the tribes threatened by Islam, and

specially the most influential of them. Thank God for churches like those in Uganda and Livingstonia. It is sometimes said that such churches will be as islands in a sea of Islam, as lodges in a garden of cucumbers. But let us not be enslaved by dreary metaphors. Let us rather say that such churches will be centres of life, and heat, and light, serving and saving the Islamic peoples round them, if Islam is really to fill up the spaces round them. But is Islam to do this? "Christians, awake!"

So much for prevention. But the direct work should not for a moment be neglected, and that for five excellent and weighty reasons advanced by Pastor Würz, which I would there were time to quote. And there is much to encourage the prosecution of this type of work. For example, I have it on the very best authority, that "according to the observation of a senior missionary who has been on the spot thirty-four years, the actual power of the Moslems in German East Africa has decreased. In slaving days the power of strong individuals was exercised over all the coast tribes. This is almost entirely broken, very much through the influence of missions." I hear, moreover, that the German Government is alive to the danger that the triumph of Islam would infallibly mean, and wishes to keep Islam out and encourage missions. Would that British administrators in Nigeria and elsewhere saw this point equally clearly! Mr. Chairman, is this Conference to pass without an official representation being made to the British Government as to its Moslem policy in East and West Africa? We have in our President one who has stood before kings, and even prime ministers, and not been ashamed. Might we not ask that he should voice us before a Secretary for Foreign Affairs?

Can then we sum up the appeal to the Church and to this Conference which the situation in East Africa constitutes? It is done for us in a weighty communication that has reached me from Bishop Peel, one of God's responsible chief-ministers in that part. Here are his four points –

(1) "That a Christian Government should never let the Christian religion be regarded as one of many, but as the one religion it can recognise as paramount. While showing no partiality in courts or administration, a Christian Government should make all the people feel its values most for

rule and office in all branches the persons who have the spiritual education of the Christian religion, and will use such in preference where it can. The Germans are doing this."

Are not these words a challenge to this great Conference to bring this point of view in some earnest, definite way before the three Governments interested in East African administration?

(2) "To occupy strongly every strategic base or centre (in the Islamised part of East Africa) in order to hold it in check."

This requires in the east coast the same consistent co-operation which we have been desiderating in the west.

(3) "To offer sound education from lowest to highest in chosen places, with Bible teaching open to all, but not compulsory. Only thus can the sons of many a Mohammedan be kept in touch with Christian teachers and under evangelistic influences. The alternative is looking on while rival Moslem schools spring up, draw away the few Moslem pupils from the Mission schools, and educate powerful antagonists to all that is Christian."

Friends, our survey is over. We have only been talking about work of immediate critical and strategic importance and lo, even this has appeared (has it not?) to involve impossibilities, to involve making calls upon the Church for which we know perfectly well she has no present resources. But once more this word brings us up sharp. Is not the primary, nay, the entire object of this Conference to make us believe and feel and know that the resources of the Church are not what she is ready to produce at this moment, but what she has in God and in the Spirit of His Christ? And now, therefore, Lord, what wait we for? Our Hope is in Thee! So we pray: while in our ears ring that question and that answer which come antiphonally in perhaps the greatest of the Epistles of the great St. Paul –

"Who is sufficient for these things?"

And the antiphone –

"Our sufficiency is of God."

Source: The World Missionary Conference Missions and Governments, Edinburgh, June 1910.

THE ORIENTAL ORTHODOX CHURCHES

The following Churches: Armenian, Coptic and Syrian Orthodox are the non-Chalcedonian group. They were given the orthodox names due to the theological rift that occurred in 451 at the Council of Chalcedon on the nature of the relationship between the divine and human nature in the person of Christ. These Orthodox Churches are described as 'Monophysite' – i.e., one nature only, the divine absorbing the human.

1. Armenian Orthodox

This Church is centred in Antelias, Beirut and headed by Patriarch Catholicos Karaken II. They fled from Turkey during the bloody conflict of 1915–20. Its community numbers 150,000 with four members of parliament in addition to one for the Armenian Catholics and another for the Protestants. They are considerably advanced in the field of industry, commerce and liberal professions. Their social and cultural activities include education, health services and housing projects. Their school of theology, founded in 1930 in Bikfaya, plays a very effective role in training priests to be assigned to Cyprus, Syria, Iraq, Iran, USA, Lebanon, Greece and Canada.

In Syria the Armenians represent the third largest Christian community after the Greek Orthodox and Greek Catholic with 100,000 members. They run 20 schools and various cultural services.

In Iran the Armenians have three dioceses: the diocese of Tehran has 150,000 members, 10 churches, 14 schools and various cultural associations; the diocese of Southern Iran has 40,000 members and its activities are centred in a suburb of Isfahan. Isfahan is the Armenians' stronghold with 17 churches. They run six primary schools as well as cultural

associations. In Northern Iran the Armenians have about 10,000 members, with 15 churches, 2 schools, a big library and a cultural association.

In Cyprus the Armenian Church has 3,500 members who fled from Turkey after World War I. It has a cathedral in Nicosia and operates two schools.

In Kuwait the Armenian Church has 10,000 members. It is affiliated with the Catholicossate of Cilicia, and runs a school. In Qatar and other Emirates, the Armenians are expatriates and are related to the vicariate of Kuwait. Armenians entered Saudi Arabia as workers and number about 2,000. They have no institutions.

In Turkey there are about 35 Patriarchate Parishes which number 80,000 and are dependent on the Catholicossate of Echmiadzin. They operate 40 schools and 2 orphanages. In Egypt the Armenian Orthodox are administratively related to the Catholicossate of Echmiadzin, and has 20,000 members. In Iraq it has 15,000 members.

In Palestine it has one church led by the Patriarchate of Jerusalem with 1,500 members. In Amman (Jordan) the Armenian Church has 1,500 members and operates one parish school which also runs a charitable service. The vicariate of Amman is related to the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem.

2. The Syrian Orthodox (Jacobite) Church

This Church's community members are mainly Lebanese, Syrians and Iraqis, totalling 175,000. In 1957, Ignatius III Ya'qub was elected the first Patriarch and the Church's activities were centred in Damascus with emphasis on the Jacobites of Lebanon. Currently the Syrian Orthodox community is headed by Patriarch Ignatius IV Zakka. Jacobites settled mainly in Damascus, Homs, Allepo, Jazira, Baghdad and the villages near Mosul. They are also found in some Western countries such as the United States, Canada and Brazil and number approximately 35,000.

3. The Assyrian Church of the East

Also referred to as 'Nestorians', this is repudiated by members of the Assyrian Church of the East as they want to avoid any suggestion that Nestorius was their spiritual father. They argue that their Christian consciousness was manifested a long time before Nestorius was born. The Assyrian Church believe in the two natures of Christ with a slight distinction from the Catholic. In their view, Mary is not the 'mother of God' (Christ's divine nature) but the mother of his human nature only. Today, most members live in the East. In Iraq itself there are around 50,000 and approximately 100,000 in Iran. In Syria there are 25–30,000. In the liturgical service, Jacobites and Syrian Catholics are very close to the Assyrian.

Source: WSCF Journal, Special Issue, May 1986.

TABLES OF CONFESSIONAL DISTRIBUTION AND CLASSIFICATION OF POPULATION

Table 1

Egypt – Confessional Distribution of the Total Population as reported by the Official Census of 1976.

Muḥafaẓa	Muslim	Christian	Other Rel.	Total	% Copt.
Cairo	4,567,467	415,990	2,006	5,084,463	9.11
Alexandria	2,161,916	156,366	370	2,318,655	6.7
Port Said	251,332	11,141	147	262,620	4.2
Suez	185,334	8,470	197	194,001	4.3
Total	7,166,049	591,967	2,720	7,859,739	8.8

Continuation from Table 1.

Muḥafaẓa	Muslim	Christian	Other Rel.	Total	% Copt.
Al-Jīza	2,326,477	92,617	153	2,419,247	3.8
Banī Suwaif	1,046,080	62,535	–	1,108,615	5.7
Al-Fayyūm	1,097,238	43,007	–	1,140,240	3.8
Al-Minyā	1,657,379	398,360	–	2,055,739	19.4
Asyūṭ	1,356,412	338,966	–	1,695,378	20.0
Sūhaj	1,652,411	272,549	–	1,924,960	14.2
Qinā	1,575,624	129,468	502	1,705,594	7.6
Aswān	585,788	34,140	–	619,933	5.5
Total Governorates	11,297,409	1,371,642	655	12,669,706	10.6
Desert Governorates	3,31,645[?]	4,113	–	235,758	1.7
Tot. on the Night of Census	34,337,074	2,315,560	3,546	36,656,180	6.31

Source: Statistics Centre of Egypt, 1976.

Table 2

Classification of Population According to Religions in Rural, Urban and other Areas.

Clasfd Areas	Muslim	Christian	Other Rel.	Total	% Copt.
BUHAIRAH					
Rural	1,847,253	16,579	2	1,863,834	0.9
Urban	633,649	19,801	8	653,458	3.0
Total	2,480,902	36,380	10	2,517,292	1.4
SHARQIYYAH					
Rural	2,074,512	16,340	2	2,090,854	0.8
Urban	510,453	19,901	–	530,345	3.8
Total	2,584,965	36,241	2	2,621,199	1.4
Minya al-Qamah	31,628	1,951	–	33,579	5.8
Minya al-Qamah Rural Centre	263,258	3,579	1	266,838	1.3
Awal Zaqaziq Department	99,169	8,161	–	107,330	7.6
Zaqaziq Rural Centre	331,405	2,777	–	334,182	0.8
Medina Rashid	42,942	38	–	42,962	0.09
Rashid Rural Centre	72,381	18	–	72,399	0.02
AL-ISKANDARIYAH					
Hay al-Jumruk	142,367	439	–	142,806	3.1
Hay Mahram Bek	300,414	35,784	30	336,228	10.7
Hay al-Muntaza	290,631	19,413	10	310,054	6.3
ASYŪṬ GOVERNORATE					
Urban	354,910	115,127	–	470,032	24.5
Rural	1,001,507	223,839	–	1,225,346	18.2
Total	1,356,417	338,966	–	1,695,378	20.0
Asyūṭ City	152,616	61,367	–	213,983	28.6
Rural Asyūṭ	163,828	26,510	–	190,338	14.0
MARKAZ ABNUB					
Urban	28,903	10,440	–	39,343	26.0
Rural	182,103	34,012	–	216,115	15.7

Source: Statistics Centre of Egypt, 1976.

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COPTS AND MUSLIMS IN EGYPT: A STUDY ON HARMONY AND HOSTILITY looks at the past experience and the peaceful co-existence of the two communities. It highlights the Copts' position under the Muslim rulers and how Muslims and Copts view the situation differently. Though the Muslims claim that they were given equal rights, the Copts dispute this and refuse to regard them as full partners within the state. The book also discusses the struggle of the two communities against Western imperialism where, surprisingly, the Coptic and Muslim leaders, under the banner of Wafd, used the religious slogan in pursuit of independence.

The factional conflict which took place in the early stages of post-Independence is also discussed. The issue remains unresolved and frequent incidents occur. Also discussed is the Copts' disillusionment with today's regime, mainly on the census of their population, unequal distribution of work opportunities with Muslims and, more importantly, the government's cool response to the growing demand of Islamists to replace the state constitution with *Sharī'ah*. Such issues sometimes become sensitive and government mishandling of the problem has brought about tension.

THE ISLAMIC FOUNDATION is an educational and research organization devoted to making Islam a living reality in our age. For this purpose, it aims to improve human communication and develop a better understanding of Islam among all people of the world, Muslim and non-Muslim, so as to galvanize man to the message and ideal of One God and the unity of mankind, as brought by all the Prophets of God throughout the ages, last of whom was the Prophet Muhammad (blessings of Allah and peace be on him). The Foundation has research units in Islamic Economics, Christian-Muslim Relations, Muslim Central Asia and Literature for Children. Its regular publications include *Muslim World Book Review* (quarterly), *Index of Islamic Literature* (quarterly), *Soviet Muslims Brief* (two-monthly) and *FOCUS on Christian-Muslim Relations* (monthly).

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