

Egypt of Nasser and pan-Arabism

30.10.2009

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Egypt: state-building by revolution

- Egypt is declared a protectorate in 1914
- The protectorate is not lifted after the end of the war-> 1919 Revolution
- Unilateral declaration of independence, with 4 reserved points:
 - The question of the Sudan
 - The integrity of British communications (Suez Canal)
 - Control of Egyptian defence
 - The Capitulations
- Coming to power of the Wafd (the Delegation) with Saad Zaghlul

Sa'ad Zaghlul, leader of the Wafd Party



Zaghlul comes to power in 1924 after a popular election where he is the uncontested winner

His government falls in 1924 after the assassination of Lee Stack

Keeps the leadership of the Wafd, but dies in 1927

Egypt after Zaghlul

- Stalemate of Egyptian life:
 - The constitution awards extensive power to the King, who becomes a way for the British to influence politics directly
 - The whole political life revolves around the 4 reserved points and is blind to the necessities of the people and to social reforms
 - Huge gap between the political leadership and the common people, both politically and ideologically
 - The 'attack upon tradition'
 - See the feminist movement of Huda Sharawi started in 1923
- => Spread corruption of the Wafd, which becomes a 'moderate' party
- => Rise of the Muslim Brother (Ikhwan) founded by Hassan al-Banna in Ismailiyya in 1923

The Ikhwan

- The regeneration of the society passes through a regeneration of Islam
- Islam should reassess its place in society
- An Islamic order of society will assure peace and stability
- Social work among people: labour unions, medical clinics, schools etc: social justice is not a matter of legislation – it is a matter of Islam

The Free Officers



The 1952 Free Officer coup

- Social background of the Free Officers: low and middle class, officers, and young
- Strong sense of being agents of change
 - 1962 Charter for National Action
 - destruction of imperialism and its stooges among Egyptian traitors
 - ending of feudalism
 - ending monopoly and the domination of capital over the government
 - establishment of social justice
 - building of a powerful national army
 - establishment of a sound democratic system

- *“The problem was to get Egypt out of the Middle Ages, to turn it from a semi-feudal country into a modern, ordered, viable State, while at the same time respecting the customs of the people. On this last point, respecting the customs of the people does not mean chaining them down to a dead past, it means respecting the essential and invisible continuities in a nation’s life. We would conserve everything that did not impede the real progress of the community” Sadat*
- *(Revolt on the Nile, Allan Wingate, 1957, p. 53)*

Soul-searching of Nasserism



Gamal Abdel Nasser

- From parliamentarism to one-party system
- From landed-class support to populism and middle class
- From liberalism to socialism
- From Egyptian Nationalism to Pan-Arabism

The Suez Crisis, 1956

- Nasser needs weapons, but US would not sell it to him; Nasser does not support the Baghdad Pact (which includes Pakistan, Iraq, Turkey and Great Britain, Iran) and convince Syria and Lebanon not to take part in it
- Nasser buys weapons from the URSS block -> US does not finance anymore the Aswan Dam
- Nasser nationalizes the Suez Canal, symbol of western exploitation
- British, French and Israeli troops attack Egypt, but without US consent, and against URSS
- UN Ceasefire follows soon after => Suez is nationalized, UN corps patrols the Sinai
- **POLITICAL TRIUMPH FOR NASSER**, who becomes the hero of the Middle East, and champion of Pan-Arabism (and not Egyptian nationalism)

The rising tide of Pan-Arabism: the union with Syria

- Syria post 1948: Coup of the Colonel Husmi al-Za'im, followed immediately by Colonel Adib Shishakli (1948-54)
 - Authoritarianism, non-alignment, pan-Arabism
- Periods of instability and chaos 1954-58, in which Baathism emerges as a political force, and approaches Nasser
- Creation of the UAR (1958-61), which fails because of the imbalance of the two partners
- Syria after 1961: unstable rule of the Baathist until the coming to power of Hafez al-Asad in 1970-2000 (and now, his son Bashar al-Asad is in power)

Hafiz al-Asad



Arab socialism

- 1962, Charter for National Act and creation of the Arab Socialist Union, the one party, with 5 millions members in the late '60s
- 1952: Agrarian Reform Law
- Between the 50s and the 60s, the state concentrates in its hands most of the country's enterprises + welfare : banks, insurances, transports, construction, textiles, foreign trade...
- Labour protection measures: plafond for salaries, pensions, minimum wages, and sick leaves...
- Expansion of education, abolition of university fees...
- Women have more rights – And no discrimination based on race and religion

Anwar Sadat 1970-80

- Infitah – the opening up
- Failed attempts to reduce the welfare state
- Strengthening of Islamist movements, in particular after the peace treaty with Israel, following the Camp David negotiations in 1978

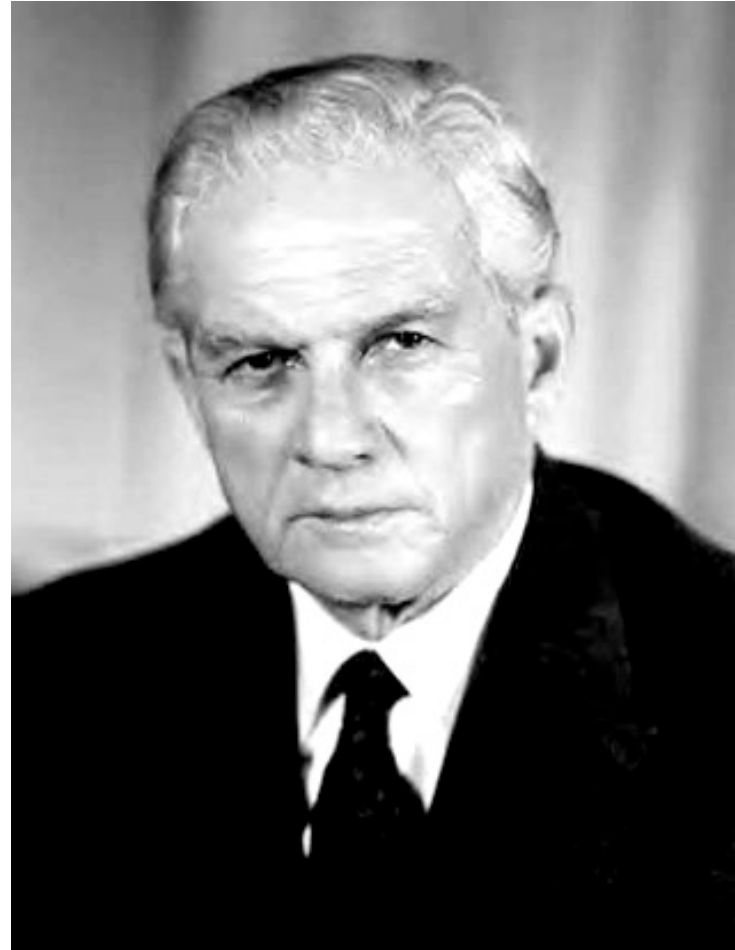


Lebanon...

- Lebanon after the WW2: the Switzerland of the Middle East, and Beirut the most glamorous city
- The za'im system
- The presidency of Bishara al-Khoury and of Camille Chamoun (1943-58)
- The president Fuad Shihab, 1958-1964



Fouad Shihab



Camille Chamoun