

The World View of Pan-Arab Oppositionists in Mubarak's Egypt

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As leader of Egypt from 1952-1970 Gamal Abd al-Nasser conducted pan-Arab and pan-Africanist challenges to Western colonial powers in the Arab world and Africa. Nasser's pinkish state capitalism and industrialization drive fostered the growth of an Egyptian working class. In his last decade Nasser was groping for an "Arab socialism", encouraging Egyptian workers to manifest an assertiveness that disturbed the Egyptian bourgeois strata. From 1971 to 1981, Anwar al-Sadat made peace with Israel, fostered isolationist Egyptianism at expense of pan-Arabism, allied Egypt to the United States, and under the "open door" economic policy incorporated Egypt in the West's economy, downgrading Nasser's public sector. Sadat was dogged by opposition from Muslim fundamentalists but also from a cluster of Marxoid and pan-Arab left Nasserite opposition groups. The left-Nasserite opposition to Sadat was voiced by the monthly al-Mawqif al-Arabi (The Arab Position) edited by 'Abd al-Azim Manaf. After Sadat's assassination, his successor Husni Mubarak allowed the Nasserites and left oppositionists in general more freedom of printed expression while obstructing them from organizing political structures. 'Abd al-Azim Manaf emerged steeled from Sadat's prison and the suppressed al-Mawqif al-'Arabi came out again in more vocal form. With financial aid and development expertise from the U.S.A., Japan and the E.E.C. countries, new manufacturing enterprises and industries are getting off the ground in Egypt. Egypt's development, however, has not yet offered enough decently-salaried jobs to secular-educated Muslim Egyptian youth. They and most secular-educated state officials in Egypt's cities are desperately poor and often alienated from the Mubarak regime, which has maintained Sadat's peace with Israel and the alliance with America. These disaffected, educated strata provide readers and contributors for al-Mawqif al-'Arabi. This magazine, however, is intergenerational, also drawing contributions from such now middle-aged "Arab socialist" theoreticians from Nasser's heyday as Dr. 'Ismat Sayf al-Dawlah and even from the aged Fathi Ridwan, a "Young Egypt" youth activist prior to World War 2.

Muslim Fundamentalism vs. Pan-Arabism

The theocratic-revivalist Muslim Brothers tried in 1954 and 1965 to assassinate the secularist-modernizing Nasser who crushed them each time. Both the Nasserites and the Muslim Brothers are in opposition to the Mubarak regime and the Camp David accords today. Beneath superficial courtesies, conflicts over principles and power between the Nasserites and Islamist revivalists remain explosive. al-Mawqif al-'Arabi in 1985 approvingly highlighted the semi-secret "vanguard of socialists" that Nasser set up apart from the official Arab Socialist Union. The magazine specifically recognized the role of Marxists in Nasser's "vanguard of the socialists" and endorsed the vanguard's exposure of the plot by the "Muslim Brothers" against Nasser in 1965.¹ In August 1985, al-Mawqif al-'Arabi published a special "file" of

¹Reminiscences of Sha'rawi Jum'ah, former intelligence figure and Secretary-General of the semi-secret Socialist Vanguard after Nasser founded it in 1964. Jum'ah stressed Nasser's qualified approval of some Egyptian communists as "good people" who found no other path to fight for Egypt's independence before the 1952 revolution: after dissolving their organizations it was therefore right to bring these communists into the Socialist Vanguard, Nasser had instructed. Jum'ah did, however, note that a few ex-Muslim Brothers, such as 'Abd al-Hadi Nāsif joined the SV. "Sha'rawi Jum'ah Yarwi Tafasil al-Qissat al-Kamilah li-Hizb 'Abd al-Nasir al-Sirri" (Sha'rawi Jum'ah Tells All Details of the Complete Story of 'Abd al-Nasir's Secret Party), al-Mawqif al-'Arabi September 1985 pp. 56-57, 61.

articles by Egyptian Arabists that critically or unconventionally discussed the role of Islamic law in Egyptian society. This discussion was meant to block the drive by the Muslim fundamentalists to impose a comprehensive, extended Islamic law in wide areas of Egyptian life, in turn serving their thrust to seize political power. In his article "In Defence of Secularism" Muhammad 'Awdah defined "the religious state" as one in which the men of religion "have charge of political authority and legislation. There are three states in the contemporary world to which this definition may apply: Iran, Israel and the Vatican. These are scarcely model states. Their practices far from please God"². Already, one may foresee the lines of political polarization in a post-American Egypt. A cluster of fundamentalist Muslim factions around the Muslim Brethren party would be pitted against an alliance of Nasserite secular pan-Arabs, the Marxism-tintured National Progressive Unionist Party (Tajammu') led by Khalid Muhyiddin, and the smaller Socialist Labour Party with which the left Nasserites are currently friendly³.

Both the Muslim fundamentalists and the Nasserite pan-Arabs explosively reject the ongoing separate peace with Israel as the negation of Egyptians' self. However each defines the imperilled Egyptian essence very differently. For the Nasserites, Egypt's withdrawal from the struggle against "the Zionist entity" set Israel free to hit and shed the Palestinians and the Lebanese - violating the unitary linguistic nationality Egyptians share with both. The various Muslim fundamentalist factions, however, more selectively see Islam as the common bond between Egyptians and Palestinians and other West Asian Arab groups, stress the liberation of Islamic shrines under Israeli rule and characterize "the Jews" religiously as the enemies of Islam. The fundamentalists and Nasserites have incompatible visions for internal Egyptian society. The Muslim fundamentalists want to make Egypt's society conform to their perceptions about a holistic religious system established in Arabia by the Prophet Muhammad. The Nasserites want to resume the transformation of Egypt into a "socialist" society with a strong public sector, developed industries, and a large working class where secular Western ideologies as well as Arab-Islamic heritage contribute guidelines.

² Muhammad 'Awdah, "Difa'an 'an al-'Almaniyyah" (In Defence of Secularism), al-Mawqif al-'Arabi August 1985 p. 64.

³ al-Mawqif al-'Arabi regularly advertises al-Sha'b, weekly mouthpiece of the Socialist Labour Party (e.g. al-Mawqif al-'Arabi September 1985 p. 81). "The Socialist Labour Party is a continuation of [Ahmad Husayn's pre-1952 Young Egypt Party] Misr al-Fatat, being headed by the engineer Ibrahim Shukri, who ... participated in the parliaments before [the revolution of] 23 July 1952". "al-Nizam al-Misri Yada'u Nafsahu fi Mawqifin Harij" (The Egyptian Regime is Placing Itself in A Critical Position), al-Da'wah (Vienna) April 1984 p. 16. Misr al-Fatat started in 1933 as a secular particularist nationalist movement of acculturated tertiary students; it metamorphosed into the pan-Arab "National Islamic Party" in 1940 and after World War 2 veered towards socialism and support for Communist China and Communist Korea, along with a more unitary pan-Arabism.

Heightened Pan-Arabism

Sadat's separate peace with Israel, ^{finally} signed at Camp David on 26 March 1979, was a crisis for Egyptian pan-Arabism that heightened it to a new level. Sadat mobilized all communications media of his government in an unprecedented racist campaign to convince Egyptians that the Palestinians were privileged, exploitative aliens responsible for the war-losses and economic suffering of Egyptians. Egyptians had no bond with the Palestinians or other West Asian Arabs. Egypt should make peace with Israel for her own interests even if, as Egyptian pan-Arabs warned, that set Israel free to pound, shred and break the Palestinians and other Arabs. Sadat's frenzied particularist campaign did make a minority of ordinary Egyptians spiritually repudiate the Palestinians and the Arab national identification. Most Egyptians suspended judgement on the new relationship with Israel and its mentor America, waiting if it would bring the prosperity Sadat promised. Both repudiation of the other Arabs and neutral wait-and-see traumatized the left Egyptian Arabists around al-Mawqif al-'Arabi with a real question if pan-Arabism was not finished as the belief-system of most Egyptians. After Camp David removed any possibility of counter-intervention from the Egyptian army, Israel bombed 'Iraq's nuclear reactor, invaded Lebanon, tried to deal a mortal blow to the P.L.O. there in order to rule out the Palestinian-Israel negotiations Camp David was supposed to usher in, engaged in a brutal trial of wills with Southern Lebanon's Shi'ite Muslims, and bombed P.L.O. headquarters in Tunis. These Israeli assaults upon other Arabs created revulsion against Camp David among many Egyptians: pan-Arab oppositionists released from Sadat's jails found more and more mass support at the grass-roots.

The new pan-Arabism that had solidified in Egypt by the mid-1980s is unitary and holistic far beyond Nasser's more plural, ambivalent Arabism. Reflecting the unprecedented centrality Sadat gave Palestine in the Egyptian psyche, al-Mawqif al-'Arabi equates and fuses the interests and joint "struggle" of Palestinian and Egyptian Arabs. Explaining away Nasser's initial preparedness in the earlier 1950s to hold discussions with Israelis, al-Mawqif al-'Arabi continues to voice support for the most militant Palestinian factions in their war against Israel, denouncing Yasir Arafat as a traitor who sold out to America, a Palestinian Sadat. But al-Mawqif al-'Arabi's call for fusing the Egyptian, Palestinian and other Arab struggles, the elimination of all iqlimiyyah (provincialism) dividing the one Arab nation, also vent a pan-Arab unease about the organizational separateness and discrete particularist nationality that Palestinians in general built up after 1967⁴.

⁴Calling for a united revolution by the whole "Arab Nation" against "the Zionist, Imperialist enemy", Talal al-Khalidi denounced the Palestinian resistance, right and left, as constructed around "provincialism" (al-iqlimiyyah)" from the start of the 1970s. In this self-defeating iqlimiyyah the Palestinian forces paralleled the defeatist dictatorial Arab regimes that submitted to imperialist hegemony. Talal al-Khalidi (Palestinian?), "Masa'il fil-Istiratijyyat al-Qawmiyyah" (Problems in the National Strategy) al-Mawqif al-'Arabi September 1985 pp. 99-100, 102.

Israel

Under Sadat and Mubarak alike, al-Mawqif al-'Arabi served as a forum for all the secularoid Egyptian forces which energetically aborted most programmes for "normalization" between Egypt and Israel. The magazine's Egyptian contributors over the years notably failed to develop and project original detailed analyses of Israeli society proper, on their own account. The quasi-secular Egyptian Arabist intellectuals' original denunciations of Israel blur the structures of its society, politics, and Hebrew high culture. Curiously, because of these intellectuals' passive bilingualism in English, they see Israel and Jews much more sharply from the U.S.A. than from the Middle East. Mahmud Qasim's "Overview of the Jewish Novel in the USA" was data-packed if distorted by crude anti-Semitism⁵. al-Mawqif al-'Arab has often published translated analyses of Israel by Marxoid American leftist ideologues and academics. Such views of Israel from America reinforce the Egyptian pan-Arabs' association of the U.S.A. and Israel as interpenetrating and inseparable entities. U.S. pro-Palestinian editor Steve Goldfield in al-Mawqif al-'Arabi stressed Israel's massive production and export of arms, with financial and technological help from the U.S.A., to keep unpopular pro-U.S. regimes in power in Black Africa and Latin America. Marxoid Goldfield exaggerated Israel's military contribution to South Africa, allegedly made on behalf of a U.S.A. determined to protect South Africa as a strategic bastion, but discreetly through Israel. al-Mawqif al-'Arabi printed Goldfield's claims that South Africa and Israel exploded a jointly-developed nuclear bomb off Africa's coast on 22 September 1979, and that Israel built Pretoria an electrified fence to bar Swapo guerillas from entering Namibia from Angola⁶.

Egypt's pan-Arabs have a healthy respect for Israel as a nuclear-armed power with global links and roles, which include a well-tried counter-insurgency prowess. However, the Egyptian Arabists hope a united pan-Arab "war of attrition" will wear Israel down, at great cost to the Arabs, but ending for good Israel's attacks and perceived expansionism.

⁵ Mahmud Qasim, "al-Malamih al-'Ammah lil-Riwayat al-Yahudiyyah fil-Wilayat al-Muttihada al-Amrikiyyah" al-Mawqif al-'Arabi November 1985 pp. 121-123.

⁶ Steve Goldfield, "al-Salam ma' al-Tinnin" (Making Peace with A Dragon), al-Mawqif al-'Arabi December 1985 pp. 89-95. Israeli spokesmen respond to charges of Israeli-South African military and economic collaboration that Saudi Arabia and some Persian Gulf states sell oil to South Africa. Arye Oded, "The Arab-South African Connection" Australia-Israel Review, 18 January 1986 pp. 4, 5.

Hostility to America

Over almost four decades since Israel's birth, the United States has consistently given it devastating weapons and strong financial and political support against the Palestinians and a range of Arab States. The price America has paid has been hostility from Palestinians and other Arab populations, pervasive throughout the Arab world by the mid-1980s. Egypt's pan-Arabs equate America with its "lucky" ('amil) Israel as inveterate, inherent enemies of Egypt and the Arabs in general.

Egyptian pan-Arab hatred of America has been so strong and durable since 1971 because multiple mutually-reinforcing elements have sustained it in tandem. External and parochial domestic motifs blend potently in pan-Arab oppositionist anti-Americanism. The Egyptian Arabists perceive the U.S.A. as an imperialist power that seeks comprehensive control over not just the foreign policies of Arab states but over their economics, societies, and cultures as well. These secular pan-Arabs extrapolate that ideological pressure from American administrations was crucial in Anwar al-Sadat's drive to shrink the public sector and foster private enterprise. Since the pan-Arabs view the International Monetary Fund and World Bank as economic arms of American domination in the world, they see America's hand in diffident attempts by Presidents Sadat and Mubarak to remove state subsidies on food-stuffs and other essentials, which spark recurrent urban riots. The pan-Arab oppositionists smear America as responsible for such economic rationalization and for the rise of a "corrupt", "parasitical" private enterprise "contractors" class since Nasser's death. The pan-Arabs skilfully fuse America's actions against various Arabs outside Egypt with the parochial economic and social torments urban educated Egyptians have suffered in the past fifteen years. Following Israel's perceived U.S.-assisted bombardment of the P.L.O. in Tunis, Achille Lauro and U.S. interception of the Misrair plane, President Mubarak told U.S. television reporters that the U.S. now should act in a conciliatory way so as to "heal the wound" inflicted on the friendly feelings Egyptians normally had for Americans. "Our people", pan-Arab 'Abd al-Halim Qindil retorted "have never seen in America anything else than its chief enemy". In part, Qindil here reacted to the salience America and its myriad experts and advisors had built up in Egypt's internal society and politics by 1985: "today, wherever we turn our glance, we see nothing in Egypt but the ugly face of America: in the Camp David accords, in [military] facilities and manouvres, in debts, in bread and weapons — not to mention our dear ruling party!" Qindil, however, traced America's and Egypt's relationship as enemies back to the later Egyptian monarchy: America took Britain's side in 1947 when the Wafdist government of al-Nuqrashi Pasha first raised the evacuation of British troops at the U.N. After Nasser's Revolution the U.S.A. refused to arm Egypt so that it could contain Israel in Sinai, suddenly withdrew its offer to finance the High Dam in order to bring down Nasser. Qindil interpreted Nasser's pan-Arab activities beyond Egypt in the 1950s and 1960s as "huge triumphs against America and her allies the imperialists, the Zionists and the Arab reactionaries". America struck back by organizing the 1967 aggression with its proxy Israel, or as the means to end the Egyptian people's revolution and

hopes⁷.

al-Mawqif al-'Arabi editor 'Abd al-'Azim Manaf, more ominously than all others, has brought together (a) vivid evocations of current, coordinated U.S. and Israeli violence in other Arab countries, (b) a continuum in which America figures as Egypt's and the Arabs' great historical or "traditional" enemy, with (c) the enmity that poverty-stricken urban students and state officials feel towards private sector businessmen and entrepreneurs and the ruling National Patriotic Party that fosters them. Manaf's furious 12-page November 1985 leader "The Nasserites, the Settlement and America" depicted the U.S.A. as the enslaver of Egypt, with its "switch-blade Israel" one of a range of control instruments that America applied on any signs of resistance from Egyptians or other Arabs. Manaf declared Egypt at "war" with "the American-Israeli enemy" from the instant of the American airforce's high-jacking of the Egyptian air-liner. The crisis in Egyptian-American relations gave Manaf the chance to call for the appropriation of the privator sector middlemen, businessmen, price-rigging merchants, contractors and associated commission-raking politicians who had regulated Egypt's economic relations with the outside world since Sadat downgraded Nasser's public sector. America and Israel wanted to take all Egypt's resources. Egyptians had to resist them, "costly" though the Nasserites knew the war would be. The corrupt ruling politicians and businessmen insisted that friendship with America had to continue because Egypt needed foreign capital for its development: but they only wanted American loans to siphon them off to their consultancy offices and "parasitical contractors". Confiscated, the millions of such compradors could start a fighting fund to resist America. Egypt should freeze debt repayments to Western creditor-nations, the course Cuba urged. Egypt had to "change policy — and change the politicians" (taghyir al-Siyasah wal-Sasah).

Manaf suggested that Egypt take the path of iron-willed Vietnam, which drove out 545,000 American troops after twenty years of devastating fighting. Another model was the suicide car-bombers who dislodged American forces from Lebanon, despite the New Jersey cruising off-shore, when Reagan briefly tried to impose American hegemony there. At the head of his article, Manaf printed the assessment of the Israeli soldier and "dove" Matti Peled that Nasser's "war of attrition" against Israeli troops occupying Sinai in 1969 and 1970 inflicted the heaviest losses on Israel since its foundation. All Manaf's readers knew that Israeli artillery and planes in retaliation destroyed Egypt's canal cities and made their million-odd civilian inhabitants refugees. Manaf thus called on the Egyptians to unite with the other Arabs and smash the Americans and their proxy Israel through "costly" (mukallif) war to wrest back sovereignty⁸.

Acculturation. Not only most contributors to al-Mawqif al-'Arabi but to a lesser degree many of its readers have at least a passive reading knowledge of English. Linguistic access to America offers them much of the

⁷ 'Abd al-Halim Qindil, "al-Jurh ... al-Milh" (Salt in Our Wound), al-Mawqif al-'Arabi November 1985 p. 145.

⁸ Manaf, "al-Nasiriyyuna wal-Taswiyah wa Amrika" (The Nasserites, Settlement [with Israel] and America), al-Mawqif al-'Arabi November 1985 pp. 4-15.

data for their perceptions of harm by America to Arab and Egyptian interests. Moreover, in itself the limited bilingualism further inflames and deepens these Egyptian pan-Arabs' dislike of Americans. At the end of the leader "The Nasserites, The Settlement and America" al-Mawqif al-'Arabi reproduced a photo of Mubarak's Foreign Affairs adviser Usamah al-Baz from an English-language newspaper carrying in English his statement: "Egypt will never reverse her position on a comprehensive peace"⁹. Manaf clearly expected that most of his magazine's readers, heavily drawn from Muslim secular-stream students, professionals and state employees, would understand the English sentence without need of any translation from him. Associating the commitment of Mubarak's government to peace with Israel with the English language and the Anglo-Saxon world would further damn the regime as a puppet of America, among al-Mawqif al-'Arabi's West-tinted but anti-Western bourgeois readers. Muhammad 'Abd al-Salam al-Zayyat similarly excerpted straight English passages from Rosalynn Carter's autobiography First Lady from Plains, to show that U.S. President Carter imposed a paternalistic dominance over Sadat, bullying him into a sell-out of the Egyptians and Arabs at Camp David¹⁰. al-Mawqif al-'Arabi's recurring use of English sentences and phrases helps annihilate the geographical and cultural remoteness of the Americans, building up the sense of degrading direct or intimate interactions with them. The stifling intimacy detonates the enraged resolve of Egyptians to eliminate the supposedly lethal aliens from Egypt and the whole wide Arab homeland.

America's close relationship with Israel has, then, made enemies of precisely those modernist Muslim Egyptians who culturally have most in common with the U.S.A. Nonetheless, even macabre travesties of intimacy suggest that a return to more even-handed policies by America conceivably could reconcile at least some of the bilingualized English-speaking Muslim Egyptian professionals who at present voice militantly anti-American Nasserism.

Attitudes to the Soviet Union

During his 18-year rule, Nasser relied heavily on Soviet funding, experts and equipment for his industrialization drive. Russian help left a good image of the USSR among the resultant Egyptian working class and among the secular middle-classes, although Soviet atheism has always enraged fundamentalist Muslims. By Nasser's death in 1970, impatience had built up in Egypt at the Soviet Union's refusal to give Egypt the offensive arms needed to dislodge the occupying Israeli forces from Sinai, one-fifth of Egypt's national territory. Hence, many Egyptians welcomed Sadat's expulsion of Soviet military advisers in July 1972. Sadat then brought the Americans in as allies. However, the economic suffering that coincided with the influx of American expertise and capital, and America's recurrent support for Israeli actions against the Palestinians and other Arabs, have made the Soviet image shine again in comparison among middle-class and working-class Egyptians.

⁹Ibid p. 15.

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Muhammad 'Abd al-Salam al-Zayyat, "Rosalynn Carter wa Safaqt Camp David" (Rosalynn Carter and the Deal at Camp David), al-Mawqif al-'Arabi December 1985 p.70.

President Husni Mubarak, concerned at Egypt's dependence on the U.S.A., from 1983 restored diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union, signed trade and cultural agreements with the U.S.S.R. and other Communist-bloc countries, and allowed back Russian technical experts, whom Sadat had expelled. This, however, is still far from the closely coordinated political and military alliance with the U.S.S.R. against America and Israel that many Egyptian Pan-Arab oppositionists demand. Egypt's Nasserites are pressing for a much fuller restoration of old Soviet roles in Egypt. The Soviet Union attracts them as an alternative power-centre that can help them dislodge the Americans from Egypt and from the larger Arab homeland. Some younger Egyptian pan-Arabs in reaction to the American ideological and cultural presence in Egypt reach out in a naive, lyrical way to the Soviet alternative. Muhammad Azzam left Cairo for the twelfth International Youth and Students' Festival in Moscow "carrying in my head all the Capitalist West's charges about the Socialist experiment in Soviet society ... — the dictatorship of the Party, the frowning faces of supposedly repressed, gagged, human beings, said to stand in never-ending queues waiting for rations of food or to sleep". But Moscow, and the ten million warmly friendly, happy, hard-working, purposeful Muscovites, soon convinced 'Azzam that the Soviet Union had achieved the just socialist "society freed from the ugliness of capitalist exploitation", of which Egyptians wistfully dreamed¹¹. Secular acculturated Egyptians have seen so many American films and read so many American magazines and books that American hostility to the U.S.S.R. in itself powerfully predisposes them to like it.

Maturer Nasserites, leaders, also voice warm feelings towards the Soviet Union but more ambivalently as they probe and calculate how far the Russians will themselves go in aiding the pan-Arab cause and its interests. In a trip of his own to Moscow, al-Mawqif al-'Arabi editor Manaf explored the attitudes of Soviet officials and academics. Manaf described the Russians as the long-standing "friends" whom Sadat rather logically repudiated at the very same time that he repudiated "the brothers" (al-ashiqqā'), the other Arabs. In emotional reflections at the Leningrad war cemetery, Manaf linked Egypt's "war of attrition" against Israeli forces occupying Sinai in 1969 and 1970 "and our Arab martyrs in all the wars [against Israel] since '48" with Leningrad's endurance against Hitler's armies in World War 2. Manaf saw the Aswan High Dam built under Nasir as "the symbol of Soviet-Arab friendship". Officials in various Soviet government departments in Moscow courted Manaf with finesse, through his magazine passing messages to the pan-Arab section of Egyptians but also to Mubarak's government and its officials. Adeptly fanning the resentment of Egyptian officials at the expense and ineffectiveness of American machinery and expertise, the Russian officials noted that Soviet engineers were again working in sectors of Egyptian heavy industry under Mubarak, such as aluminium, iron and steel. The Egyptian government could develop the economic and technical relationship from there to the extent that it wishes. Quoting Lenin, the Russian officials stressed that the Soviet Union would give its most favourable economic terms to those Afro-Asian states that adopted anti-imperialist stands, as Gamal 'Abd al-Nasser had. Manaf tried to pin one Soviet official down if the Soviet Union would match the scale of American aid. The official replied that if a given Egyptian government chose a commercial basis for its

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"Muhammad 'Azzam, "Mūsū Spassibo!" (Thank you Moscow!) al-Mawqif al-'Arabi September 1985 p. 160.

relationship with the Soviet Union, the U.S.S.R. would accordingly sell it, say, 10 million tons of surplus wheat at market prices. If "political cooperation" developed, the U.S.S.R. might gift the grain to Egypt. Manaf and the Soviets concurred that the Egyptians and other Arabs had to distinguish between the Americans, the "enemies" of the Palestinian and Arab cause and the Soviets, its friend. This political distinction should influence Egypt's and the Arabs' trading and developmental patterns¹².

For all their sympathetic noises about the Palestinians' right to a state of their own, the Soviet officials clearly were trying to nudge Manaf and Egyptian pan-Arabs towards a comprehensive political settlement recognizing Israel, but one that would offer the Soviet Union equal roles with the U.S.A. in the region. al-Mawqif al-'Arabi contributors sound resistant to Soviet pressures to negotiate with Israel, which they note 'Abd al-Nasir already rejected in the wake of the Indo-Pakistan war of 1965¹³. After a ten-year break, Egypt in 1985 was represented at the twelfth International Youth and Student Festival in Moscow by a delegation drawn from all left-secular opposition groups: the Nasserites, the Marxists, the Marxism-tinctured National Progressive Unionist Party (Tajammu') and the Socialist Labour Party. The Egyptian Nasserite component spearheaded the Arab delegations' "exposure" of Zionist "infiltrators" in various delegations from Western countries. They blocked any participation by the Rakah Israeli Communist Party on the grounds that acceptance of any Israeli delegation at all would grant recognition to "the state of the Zionist usurpation called Israel"¹⁴. Here, the Egyptian Nasserites definitely clashed with Soviet aims and procedures — not to mention PLO figures who respect Rakah's function as a sanctuary for nationalist intellectuals of Israel's repressed Arab minority.

After the hard years of repression and isolation in Egypt, the new hardline pan-Arab Egyptian militants relish their incipient participation in Soviet milieus. Although marginally open to Soviet ideology, the Egyptian pan-Arabs bend Soviet forums and resources so that they serve Arab nationalist aims, in particular "the central cause: Palestine is Arab"¹⁵. The Russians have already had headaches controlling their exuberantly anti-Zionist Egyptian Nasserite allies. Moreover, the more centrist Nasserite faction in a draft programme for the Nasserists, which argued that Nasirism had transcended the idealist-materialist dichotomy in Western thought, called for a future Arab nationalist Egypt to commercially

¹² 'Abd al-'Azim Manaf, "Ahadith fi Musku" (Conversations in Moscow) al-Mawqif al-'Arabi September 1985 pp. 4-15. Claudia Wright reported in March 1986 the Soviets were offering Mubarak's regime "more effective missile defence against Israeli attack than the Americans will allow. Moscow is also proposing much more generous terms on rescheduling of payments on Egypt's military debt than" the Reagan administration has offered. Claudia Wright, "Mubarak Fears US-Backed Coup" New Statesman 7 March 1986 p. 19.

¹³ Manaf, "al-Nasiriyyuna...wal-Taswiyatu wa Amrika" loc. cit. p. 13.

¹⁴ 'Abdallah al-Sinnawi, "Musku Tarqusu wa Tughanni... wa Tahlumu bi-'Alam Jadid" (Moscow Dances and Sings... and Dreams of a New World) al-Mawqif al-'Arabi September 1985 pp. 34-39.

¹⁵ Ibid. p. 36.

"balance the Eastern and Western blocs". One more Marxoid Nasserite queried if this aspect of the programme politically equated the U.S.A. and the Soviet Union as both predatory great powers : such neutralism would rule out Egypt's necessary alliance with the Soviet Union, the Arab's "friend", against the American enemy¹⁶.

Black Africa in al-Mawqif al-'Arabi

al-Mawqif al-'Arabi's substantial coverage of Black Africa is in an Egyptian tradition of journalistic and scholarly writing about sub-Saharan Africa that started quite early under British colonial rule (1881-1922). For example, Muhammad Farid (1867-1919) in 1899 and 1900 published in the magazine al-Mawsū'āt Arabic articles with such titles as "England and France in Africa", "The English in West Africa", "England in South Africa", "The British East Africa Company". Farid was to lead Egypt's pan-Islamic "Patriotic Party" (al-Hizb al-Watani) from 1908 to 1919. Prior to World War 1, al-Liwa and other Patriotic Party papers in Arabic kept Egyptians well informed about indigenous resistance or discontent against France and Britain in their black African colonies, and about current discrimination and violence by white racists against Negroes in the United States. Under Nasser (led 1952 - 1970) pan-Africanism was part of the Egyptian state's ideology and foreign policy; there appeared popularizing and scholarly magazines in Arabic specializing in black African affairs and a fair number of Arabic books about Black African nationalisms were published, original or translated from Western languages.

Although preoccupied with Palestine and the Zionist state of Israel, al-Mawqif al-'Arabi has maintained — but also modified and developed — the bygone Nasser regime's interests about sub-Saharan Africa. al-Mawqif al-'Arabi's focus has been Central and East Africa, the area of black Africa in which Nasser's Egypt got most involved, for instance in repeated moral and material support for anti-Western or anti-American forces in the Congo. Carrying this tradition forward, al-Mawqif al-'Arabi's publishing house brought out an Arabic translation of a book Struggle in the Congo: Birth of an African State by Thomas Kanza¹⁷. Kanza had served

¹⁶ Tala'at Ramih, "Tasā'ulat Hawla al-Barnamaj al-Nasiri" (Questions About the Nasserite Programme) al-Mawqif al-'Arabi September 1985 pp. 108-110. Reply by Sayyid Hassan, "Qitarunal-Falsafi" (Our Philosophical Caravan), al-Mawqif al-'Arabi November 1985 pp. 108-110. Hassan put off addressing whether the forthcoming Nasserite Party might equate the USA and the USSR as both "brigands" in international relations, as the dialectical materialist Ramih had extrapolated. Hassan made clear, however, that he and like-minded Egyptian Nasserites rejected Communist dialectical materialism as a passé, irrelevant "European" thought mode. Egyptians and Arabs should strive for an original Arab nationalist synthesis of idealist components in indigenous Arab-Islamic thought with ~~some~~ materialist concepts. Ibid.

¹⁷ Advertisement, al-Mawqif al-'Arabi September 1985 p. 111. C.f. Thomas R. Kanza, Conflict in the Congo: The Rise and Fall of Lumumba, tsd from French (Penguin 1972); expanded ed. London Collins 1978.

as Foreign Minister in the 1964-1965 Maoism-influenced Lumumbaist insurgency in the Congo that briefly established its capital in "Stanleyville" and came close to bringing down Moise Tshombe's U.S.-backed regime. Also reminiscent of the angry, triumphalist anti-imperialism that emanated from Nasser's Egypt in the 1950s and 1960s was al-Mawqif al-'Arabi's coverage of South Africa, where victory had appeared on the horizon for the long-subjugated Africans. In solidarity with the Azanian revolution, al-Mawqif al-'Arabi carried a tribute to the African National Congress' renowned black protest poet Benjamin Melloise, whom the South African government hanged on 18 October 1985. The Egyptian writer had a hostile fantasy of South Africa's "racist oafs" fleeing for their lives "like terrified vermin" down public roads before vengeful black masses fired by the hanged poet's verses of militant struggle, "the coming African fury"¹⁸. These Egyptian images of Southern Africa were sentimentalized and general and perhaps saw the Azanian freedom movement too much against underdeveloped rural settings, too little in terms of the struggles of working-class, urban black masses.

al-Mawqif al-'Arabi projected a bleaker vision of the current histories of some African states nearer home that shared the Nile Valley with Egypt. Its correspondent Bilal 'Abd al-Mawjud vividly conveyed violence and tribalist fragmentation in the Uganda of Amin and Obote. Nasser and Milton Obote in Uganda's first post-independence period had both voiced much the same mildly pinkish anti-imperialist, pan-African mood in the 1960s: both, for instance, aided or favoured the "Simba" insurgents in the Congo. Despite this past cordiality, 'Abd al-Mawjud unsparingly depicted the human rights abuses and bloodletting that increasingly disfigured Obote's second regime after he was restored to power in December 1980. The Egyptian writer showed real feeling at the grim economic battle for survival that faced most Ugandans: even high officials had to find additional part-time jobs, sometimes in crime, just to cover the basic needs of their families. In another time-warp to Nasser's hey-day, 'Abd al-Mawjud in 1985 blamed "Colonialism" for originating the economic underdevelopment, cultural, tribal and political fragmentation and thus the consequent coups and civil wars that wracked such sub-Saharan African states as Uganda after their independence¹⁹.

Conclusion

The U.S.A.'s strong support for Israel over the decades, and its perceived drive to direct even Egypt's internal development, have stimulated a determined anti-American pan-Arab opposition movement in Egypt. The Pan-Arab, secularist, Muslim Egyptian intellectuals are culturally remote from the urban masses. However, Egypt's urban working class is increasingly nostalgic for the Nasser era, and many former secret "Socialist Vanguard" members in the Nasser period have now risen to strategic positions in Egyptian trade unions. Especially if the regime permits them to form a legal political party, the Nasserites will be serious rivals of the Muslim fundamentalists as contenders for political power in Egypt. A neo-Nasserite regime in Egypt would follow a strong anti-Israel, pro-Palestinian, pan-Arab foreign policy and also become more active in sub-Saharan Africa than the Mubarak regime.

¹⁸ "Benjamin Melloise, al-Shi'r 'ala A'wad al-Mishnaqah" (Benjamin Melloise, Poetry at the Gallows), al-Mawqif al-'Arabi November 1985 p. 115.

¹⁹ Bilal 'Abd al-Mawjud, "Okello wal-Jumhuriyyat al-Rabi'ah fi Uganda (Okello and the Fourth Republic in Uganda) al-Mawqif al-'Arabi September 1985 pp. 44-48.

