

# **The British Community in Occupied Cairo, 1882-1922**

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*For Sarah and our parents*

### Abstract

Though officially ruled by the Ottoman Empire, Egypt was under British occupation between 1882 and 1922. Most studies about the British in Egypt during this time focus on the political and administrative activities of British officials based on government documents or their memoirs and biographies. This thesis focuses on various aspects of the British community in Cairo based on sources that have been previously overlooked such as census records, certain private papers, and business, newspaper, military and missionary archives.

At the outset, this discussion introduces demographic data on the British community to establish its size, residential location and context among other foreign communities and the wider Egyptian society. Then it deliberates on the occasional ambiguous boundaries that identified members of the community from non-members as well as the symbols and institutions that united the community. Ensuing chapters on the community's socio-occupational diversity and criminal activities suggest that the British community in Cairo was not homogeneous. The community consisted of not only law-abiding upper middle class officials but of an assortment of businessmen, missionaries, and working-class maids and labourers; some of whom were involved in crimes and misdemeanours. The analysis concludes by investigating the diversity of reactions of Cairo's Britons to the challenge of World War I and the subsequent revolutionary period of 1919-1922. Due to time and space constraints, the discussion concentrates on the British community in Cairo, since for the most part, more Britons resided in Cairo than Alexandria. However, where appropriate to the thesis' key themes, data on the British in Alexandria will be included.

### Acknowledgements

Many mentors, friends, family members, and staff of libraries and archives on three continents have assisted, advised and encouraged me in this project. I will attempt to acknowledge them here with the regretful realisation that there are others who have helped me on this journey that I will inevitably fail or forget to mention.

First, I want to acknowledge the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, for the opportunity to engage in this time of research and thesis writing. Foremost, I want to thank my thesis supervisor Dr. Ulrike Freitag for her insightful comments and direction and her graciousness in putting up with my weaknesses and pitfalls along the way. She not only scrutinised every chapter but also showed concern for me at every stage of the process. As well, I'm grateful to Dr. Ben Fortna, the late Professor R. Smith, and the late Dr. R.M. Burrell, all of whom were in my thesis committee, for their input and encouragement particularly in the earlier stages of the work. I also acknowledge the invaluable service of the staff at the SOAS Library. Special mention must also be given to Dr. Theo Balderston, of the University of Manchester's History Department. Due to his kindness and friendship with my wife's family, he offered to read my final draft during his family holiday and afterwards gave very helpful and perceptive comments.

In London, I wish to acknowledge the help of archivists and librarians at the London School of Economics, the British Library, the Newspaper Library, the Imperial War Museum, the National Army Museum, the Church Missionary Society Library and the Public Record Office. In other parts of Britain, I want to thank the staff at Barclays Group Archives in Wythenshawe, Manchester, the librarians at Manchester Central Library, Hove Central Library, Churchill College and King's College in Cambridge University and the Universities of Birmingham and Manchester. I also appreciated the caring and thoughtful assistance of Mrs. Clare Brown, former archivist at the Middle East Centre at St. Antony's College, Oxford University.

In Cairo, I want to acknowledge Father Matthew Rhodes, who allowed me access to the All Saints' Cathedral Archives that he had catalogued, and Mr. Raouf Zekry Makary, Diocese Accountant, for facilitating my research at All Saints. I also appreciated Rev.

David Grafton, who gave me entry to read the archives from St. Andrew's Church; and Mrs. Cathy Costain, former librarian of the British Council in Cairo, who pointed me to some helpful monographs written by Britons in occupied Egypt. I want to thank Dr. Michael Reimer, of the American University in Cairo, for his precious friendship and advice; and Dr. Amira Sonbol and Dr. Afaf Lufti al-Sayyid Marsot for their inspiration and encouragement during my M.A. years at AUC. The AUC library has also been useful with regards to census material, Arabic and other secondary sources. Further, I am grateful for Dr. Ghislaine Alleaume of the Centre d'étude et de documentation économique, juridique et sociale (CEDEJ) and one of her assistants, Mr. Nadi Abd al-Ghaffar, for their tips pertaining to demographic data. I am indebted to prolific writers, Max Rodenbeck and Samir Raafat for their interesting tips and perspectives; and to Egyptian historians, Professors Raouf Abbas, Yunan Labib Rizk, and Mursi Saad el Din for their helpful insights. In Alexandria, I was fortunate to receive the assistance of Mr. Colin Clement of the Centre d'étude Alexandrie, Professor Mohammed Awad and Dr. Sahar Hammouda.

In Toronto, I am thankful for the staff of the University of Toronto's government publication department and the inspiration of Professor James A. Reilly, my first tutor in Middle Eastern history at the University of Toronto many years ago.

Not least, I want to thank my wife Sarah who lovingly urged me to persevere when I was disheartened, sacrificially established our 'home' in different continents and took care of our children while I was writing. I also deeply appreciate my parents in Canada for their indispensable encouragement throughout my life and Sarah's parents in Britain for their unending support and practical help throughout this arduous process. Many friends in Egypt, Cambridge, Oxford, Birmingham, London and Manchester have also provided accommodation at crucial moments. Above all, I acknowledge God's goodness in providing me with the physical and emotional resources for this task.

### **Note on Arabic Transliteration**

The system of transliteration used follows that of the International Journal of Middle East Studies. For most place and personal names, and familiar terms such as Cairo, Alexandria, Zamalek, Khedive, the most common spellings have been adopted.

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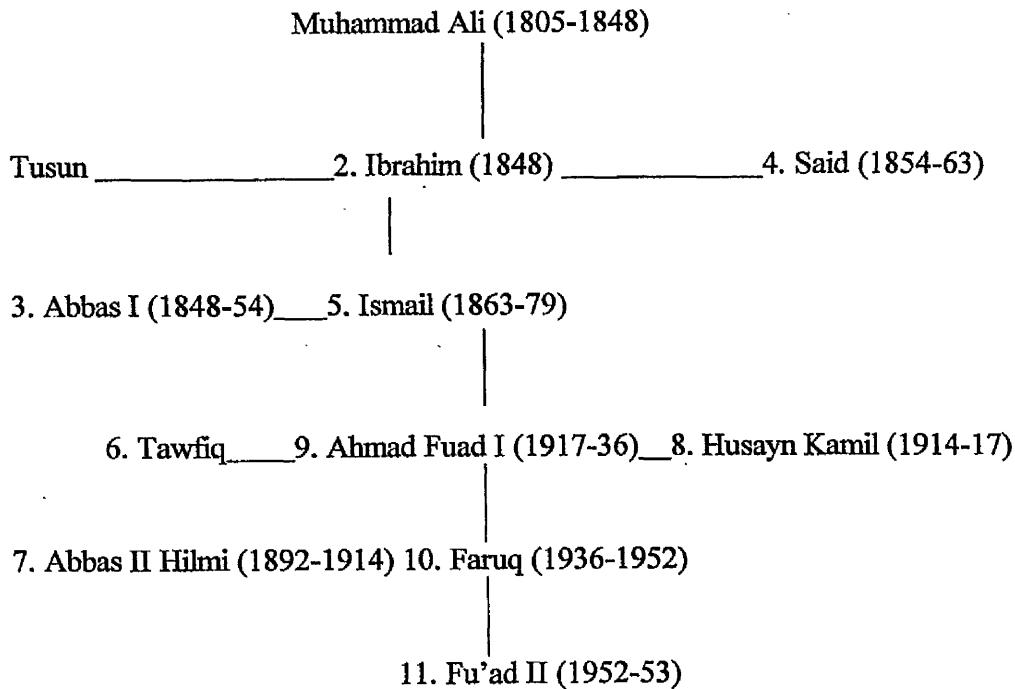
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### List of rulers in Egypt

*Muhammad Ali's line of rulers in Egypt,  
their years in power and their family relationships by generation*



*British Consul Generals (1879-1914) and High Commissioners (1914-1936)  
and their years of ascendancy to power*

1879: Sir Edward Malet  
 1883: Evelyn Baring (Lord Cromer)  
 1907: Sir Eldon Gorst  
 1911: Sir Herbert Kitchener  
 1914: Sir Henry MaMahon  
 1916: Sir Reginald Wingate  
 1919: Sir Edmund Allenby  
 1925: Lord George Lloyd  
 1929: Sir Percy Loraine  
 1933-36: Sir Miles Lampson (Lord Killearn)

(Based on Jere L. Bacharach, *The Middle East Studies Handbook*, (London, Cambridge University Press, 1984) p. 25)

## Introduction

### Aims of the thesis

This thesis examines the British community in Cairo during the forty years of the British occupation from 1882-1922. It forms part of a burgeoning academic interest in the British Empire.

“Editors of important scholarly journals in both British history and general world history report a great upswing in the popularity of imperial and colonial topics in articles submitted and accepted and as ongoing research areas. The flow of new monographs, biographies, general surveys and articles on the nations of the former British Empire has been unceasing. [Further,] there are strong signs of a revival of interests in imperial studies in new courses, postgraduate seminars, and on programme panels at scholarly conferences and symposia on imperialism and empire in the United Kingdom, Commonwealth countries, and...in North America.”<sup>1</sup>

This dissertation aims to present a series of studies on various aspects of the British community in occupied Cairo in view of the fact that “the study of expatriate communities [not least British communities] is still a relatively neglected field of research.”<sup>2</sup> First, by examining archival sources and demographic data available on the British community, the thesis seeks to contribute to the limited number of studies of expatriate communities and more particularly, to the studies on British expatriate communities abroad during the colonial era. On the other hand, it aspires to contribute to Egypt’s urban history by the study of one of Egypt’s foreign communities in Cairo. Secondly, this thesis sheds light on the composition of the British community by identifying Britons in Cairo who were not part of the upper middle class official or military elite. The study aspires to offer a broader understanding of Cairo’s British community by drawing attention to the lower middle and lower working class Britons as well as Britons guilty of crime or misconduct in occupied Cairo who have been largely overlooked by the historiography of Britons in Egypt thus far. Third, this thesis intends to chronicle the history of occupied Cairo’s British community during two very significant historical events – World War I and Egypt’s revolutionary period of 1919-1922.

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<sup>1</sup> Raymond E. Dumett, “Exploring Cain/Hopkins Paradigm: Issues for Debate; Critique and Topics of New Research,” Raymond E. Dumett, ed., *Gentlemanly Capitalism and British Imperialism: The New Debate on Empire*, (London: Longman, 1999), pp. 1 & 2.

<sup>2</sup> Damayanti Datta, *The Europeans of Calcutta, 1858-1883*, PhD Thesis (Cambridge: Churchill College, 1995), p. i.

To achieve these objectives, the chapters in this thesis are arranged as follows. The first chapter aims to document the demographic dimensions of the British community in occupied Cairo. Using census records, it seeks to present quantitative data on Cairo's British community in relation to other foreign communities and the general Egyptian population, as well as their location in the city, religious leanings, age and literacy rate. Chapter two attempts to identify the boundaries of the British community, defining who belonged to the community and who did not. The chapter reflects to some degree the ambiguity in the task of establishing British identity and community boundaries. The third chapter introduces the symbols and institutions that served as rallying points for the British community's identity, which were also aimed at emanating its position of power to both Britons and non-Britons in Cairo. Chapter four argues that though the majority of Cairo's Britons were upper middle class government officials and military officers, they also included those in a variety of occupations and even those who were from lower middle and lower working class backgrounds, such as maids and labourers. The fifth chapter further develops the theme of the community's diversity by examining the involvement in crime and misconduct of some of Cairo's Britons to challenge the perception that nearly all Britons were law-abiding upper middle class inhabitants. Chapter six details the diversity of roles, opinions and reactions of members of the British community in Cairo during the First World War while chapter seven deals with the community's diverse responses towards the challenge of the revolutionary period.

This thesis does not intend to support either side of the contemporary debate on the nature of British imperialism. In the study of the modern history of Egypt, there is evidence to support both Gallagher and Robinson's thesis of the 'informal empire'<sup>3</sup> and Cain and Hopkins's argument for 'gentlemanly capitalism'<sup>4</sup>. However, this dissertation is not concerned with the heart of this debate over the causes of Britain's imperial expansion; but rather it is concerned with the demography, identity, social composition, and challenges of a particular expatriate community of Britons in Cairo, *after* the establishment of imperial authority.

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<sup>3</sup> Ronald Robinson & John Gallagher, "The Imperialism of Free Trade", *Economic History Review*, (2<sup>nd</sup> series, VI, I, 1953), p. 1.

### Contributing to existing historiography and the utilisation of sources

By suggesting that this thesis adds to the historiography of expatriate communities in the colonial era and urban Egypt, it is important to mention some of the existing historical literature in this genre. A number of studies of British expatriate communities within the colonial era deal with the Indian context. Examples include the studies by S.C. Ghosh<sup>5</sup>, Veena Talwar Oldenburg<sup>6</sup>, Raymond K. Renford<sup>7</sup>, and Damayanti Datta<sup>8</sup>. Outside India, other monographs about British communities abroad during the colonial era include those by John G. Butcher<sup>9</sup> and Robert Bickers<sup>10</sup>. Beyond the colonial context are studies by John Paul Bailey<sup>11</sup> and Margaret Harvey<sup>12</sup>. As for foreign communities in Egypt, this thesis adds to existing scholarship such as those by Alexander Kitroeff<sup>13</sup>, P.M. Glavanis<sup>14</sup>, Sotirios Roussos<sup>15</sup>, and Thomas Philipp.<sup>16</sup> In terms of urban Egypt, prominent examples include works by James Aldridge<sup>17</sup>, Janet Abu-Lughod<sup>18</sup>, Samir Rifaat<sup>19</sup>, Michael Reimer<sup>20</sup>, the very detailed work by Robert Ilbert<sup>21</sup> and the recent narrative by Max Rodenbeck<sup>22</sup>.

<sup>4</sup> P.J. Cain & A.G. Hopkins, "Gentlemanly Capitalism and British Expansion Overseas II: New Imperialism, 1850-1945", *Economic History Review*, (2<sup>nd</sup> series, XL, I, 1987), p. 19.

<sup>5</sup> S.C. Ghosh, *The Social Condition of the British Community in Bengal, 1757-1800*, (Netherlands: E.J. Brill, Leiden, 1970).

<sup>6</sup> Veena Talwar Oldenburg, *The Making of Colonial Lucknow*, (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1989).

<sup>7</sup> Raymond K. Renford, *The Non-Official British in India to 1920*, (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1987).

<sup>8</sup> Datta, *op.cit.*

<sup>9</sup> John G. Butcher, *The British in Malaya, 1880-1941*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979).

<sup>10</sup> Robert Bickers, *Britain in China: Community, Culture and Colonialism*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999).

<sup>11</sup> John Paul Bailey, *The British Community in Argentina*, PhD Thesis, (University of Surrey, 1976).

<sup>12</sup> Margaret Harvey, *The English in Rome: 1362-1420: Portrait of an Expatriate Community*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

<sup>13</sup> Alexander Kitroeff, *The Greeks in Egypt, 1919-1937: Ethnicity and Class* (London: Ithaca Press, 1989).

<sup>14</sup> P.M. Glavanis, *Aspects of the Economic and Social History of the Greek Community in Alexandria during the 19<sup>th</sup> Century*, PhD Thesis, (Hull University, 1989).

<sup>15</sup> Sotirios Roussos, *Greece and the Arab Middle East: The Greek Orthodox Communities in Egypt, Palestine and Syria, 1919-1940*, PhD Thesis, (SOAS, University of London, 1995).

<sup>16</sup> Thomas Philipp, *The Syrians in Egypt, 1725-1975*, (Stuttgart: Steiner-Verlag-Wiesbaden-GmbH, 1985).

<sup>17</sup> James Aldridge, *Cairo*, (London: MacMillan, 1969).

<sup>18</sup> Janet Abu-Lughod, *Cairo: 1001 Years of the City Victorious*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971).

<sup>19</sup> Samir Rifaat, *Maadi: 1904-1962: Society & History in a Cairo Suburb*, (Cairo: Palm Press, 1994).

<sup>20</sup> Michael J. Reimer, *Colonial Bridgehead: Government and Society in Alexandria, 1807-1882*, (Cairo: AUC Press, 1997).

<sup>21</sup> Robert Ilbert, *Alexandrie, 1830-1930: Histoire d'une Communauté Citadine*, Vol. I & II, (Le Caire: Institut Francais d'Archéologie Orientale, 1996).

<sup>22</sup> Max Rodenbeck, *Cairo: The City Victorious*, (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 1999).

This thesis also contributes to the historical literature on the British in Egypt by focusing on the British community as a whole. Most of the existing literature deals primarily with the British political and economic involvement in Egypt as well as the lifestyles of the upper middle class British travellers or government administrators. Works by Peter Mansfield<sup>23</sup>, John Marlowe<sup>24</sup>, Afaf Lutfi al-Sayyid Marsot<sup>25</sup> and P.J. Vatikiotis<sup>26</sup> serve as notable studies on the political relationship between the British government, its power-base in Egypt and Egyptian politicians and nationalists. Important scholarship on Britain's economic administration of Egypt during this time include monographs by Roger Owen<sup>27</sup>, David Landes<sup>28</sup> and Robert Tignor<sup>29</sup>. Memoirs and biographies of British diplomats and travellers have also provided insight on the lifestyles of the upper middle class British official in Egypt. Notable examples of this kind of publication include those by Clara Boyle<sup>30</sup>, Lord Edward Cecil<sup>31</sup>, Bimbashi McPherson<sup>32</sup>, Lord Milner<sup>33</sup>, Sir Ronald Storrs<sup>34</sup>, Sir James Rennell Rodd<sup>35</sup>, Sir Thomas Russell<sup>36</sup>, Douglas Sladen<sup>37</sup> and William Willcocks<sup>38</sup>. More recent studies such as those by Anthony Sattin<sup>39</sup>, Derek Hopwood<sup>40</sup>, and William M. Welch Jr.<sup>41</sup> chronicle the lives and activities of British travellers, military officers and government administrators. Though there are a fair number of studies regarding the British authorities' political and economic involvement in Egypt and the activities of the upper middle class, there does not appear to be any previous systematic analysis of the lives of all Britons and their community during the British occupation.

<sup>23</sup> Peter Mansfield, *The British in Egypt*, (London: Wiedenfeld & Nicolson, 1971).

<sup>24</sup> John Marlowe, *Anglo-Egyptian Relations, 1800-1956*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., London: Frank Cass & Co., Ltd., 1965.

<sup>25</sup> Afaf Lutfi al-Sayyid Marsot, *A Short History of Modern Egypt*, (London: Cambridge University Press, 1985) and *Egypt and Cromer: A Study in Anglo-Egyptian Relations*, (New York: Praeger, 1969).

<sup>26</sup> P.J. Vatikiotis, *The History of Modern Egypt*, (London: Wiedenfeld & Nicolson, 1969).

<sup>27</sup> Roger Owen, *Cotton and the Egyptian Economy, 1820-1914*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969).

<sup>28</sup> David Landes, *Bankers and Pashas: International Finance and Economic Imperialism in Egypt*, (New York: Harper, 1958).

<sup>29</sup> Robert L. Tignor, *Modernisation and British Colonial Rule in Egypt, 1882-1914*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966).

<sup>30</sup> Clara Boyle, *A Servant of the Empire: A Memoir of Harry Boyle*, (London: Methuen & Co., 1938).

<sup>31</sup> Lord Edward Cecil, *The Leisure of an Egyptian Official*, (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1921).

<sup>32</sup> Bimbashi McPherson & Barry Carman, *A Life in Egypt*, (London: BBC, 1983).

<sup>33</sup> Alfred Milner, *England in Egypt*, 13<sup>th</sup> ed., (London: Edward Arnold, 1920).

<sup>34</sup> Sir Ronald Storrs, *Orientalism*, (London: Nicholson & Watson, 1937).

<sup>35</sup> Sir James Rennell Rodd, *Social and Diplomatic Memoirs, 1894-1901*, (London: Edward Arnold & Co., 1923).

<sup>36</sup> Sir Thomas Russell, *Egyptian Service, 1902-1946*, (London: John Murray, 1949).

<sup>37</sup> Douglas Sladen, *Egypt and the English*, (London: Hurst & Blackett, Ltd., 1908) and *Oriental Cairo: The City of the 'Arabic Nights'*, (London: Hurst & Blackett, Ltd., 1911).

<sup>38</sup> William Willcocks, *Sixty Years in the East*, (London: Blackwood & Sons, 1935).

<sup>39</sup> Anthony Sattin, *op.cit.*

<sup>40</sup> Derek Hopwood, *Tales of Empire: The British in the Middle East, 1880-1952*, (London: Tauris, 1989).

<sup>41</sup> William M. Welch Jr., *No Country for a Gentleman: British Rule in Egypt, 1883-1907*, (London: Greenwood Press, 1988).

Foreign office correspondence, parliamentary sessional papers and other governmental documents have supplied historians of modern Egypt with ample details of the British government's political, administrative and economic activities. The sources that this thesis is based on appear to have been largely overlooked. Although Hopwood has already utilised many of the private papers of British officials in Egypt at St. Antony's College for his *Tales of Empire*, archives from All Saints' Church and St. Andrew's Church in Cairo, the Imperial War Museum and National Army Museum in London, the Consular Court records in the Public Record Office, the Church Missionary Society archives at the University of Birmingham, the Anglo-Egyptian Bank correspondences from Barclays' Group Archives near Manchester, the Manchester Chamber of Commerce minutes, the Egyptian government census records and "the only English daily"<sup>42</sup> newspaper of the British community throughout most of this forty-year period – the *Egyptian Gazette* – have not been fully investigated heretofore in the writing of the history of the British in Egypt.

Since this thesis is essentially concerned with the activities, composition and diversity within the British community in Cairo, the bulk of the sources consulted were British in origin. Arabic sources that may refer to the British in Egypt during the time of the occupation tended to focus on the political aspects of British rule in Egypt from the point of view of educated upper class writers. Thus inclusion of these sources would have been beyond the scope of this thesis since it concentrates primarily on the social history of the Britons in Cairo.

### **Time and geographic constraints**

The forty-year occupation of the British authorities in Egypt from 1882-1922 establishes a suitable timeframe of this thesis because within this period, more Britons moved to Egypt than in any previous era. Further, due to the political and administrative occupation of Egypt, the forty years also mark a time when British upper middle class officials and officers were in positions of power and predominance in Egypt. This provides the background for the contrast laid out in this thesis by its examination of lower working class Britons in Egypt. At the end of the forty years, a critical drop in the

British population occurred. Besides the time restriction, the subject of this thesis is geographically confined to the city of Cairo even though, as the census records will later indicate, there was a notable number of Britons living in Alexandria, and a much smaller number in Port Said, Suez and other parts of Egypt. However, in spite of the focus on Cairo, this discussion does include limited data on the British in Alexandria when appropriate to the central themes of the thesis and as a source for comparison. Due to time and space limitations, systematic studies of the British community in Cairo before 1882 or after 1922 or of the British in other parts of Egypt will have to be the subject of other theses, as they are beyond the scope of this one.

### **Summary of historical context**

Before embarking on the study of the British community from 1882 to 1922, it may perhaps be useful to briefly summarise the story of the emergence of Egypt's British community before the British occupation and also to mention the community's political context during those forty years. Prior to 1882, there was already a small but budding British community in Egypt. Britons had started to visit Egypt, a territory of the Ottoman Empire, in the 1790s, as explorers, archaeologists and patients seeking recovery in a warmer climate. However, it was not until the 1840s, when the overland route to India was established, that Britons moved into Egypt in higher numbers. This route was an affordable and convenient way for Britons to travel from England to India via transportation on land in Egypt. The Route enlarged the British community in Egypt by spawning the arrival of British hotel staff and entrepreneurs, such as Samuel Shephard founder of Shephard's Hotel, railway engineers who built the railroad from Alexandria to Cairo to Suez, and travel agents such as John Mason Cook, son of Thomas Cook. Along with travellers<sup>43</sup>, British painters, writers and artists began to settle in Egypt for extensive periods by the middle of the nineteenth century. By 1859, construction of the Suez Canal was under way and though essentially a French enterprise, British engineers were involved as well. By the 1860s, Egypt had become increasingly integrated into the European economy as a key cotton producer so a growing number of British financiers, bankers and businessmen entered Egypt and

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<sup>42</sup> Sir Milne Cheetham, in letter to Sir Arthur Nicolson, 23/06/1911, in Cheetham's private papers at Middle East Centre, St. Antony's College, University of Oxford.

<sup>43</sup> Paul & Janet Starkey's, eds, *Travellers in Egypt*, (London: Tauris, 1998) and Anthony Sattin's *Lifting the Veil: British Society in Egypt, 1768-1956*, (London: Dent, 1988) are useful sources for understanding the variety of European travellers who went to Egypt during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries.

bolstered the population of the British community. By 1872, the Khedive, Egypt's ruler under official Ottoman suzerainty, had acquired such a massive debt, by trying to make Cairo look like an European city through erecting European-style streets, gardens and buildings, that he was forced to sell his shares in the Suez Canal to Britain. Thereafter, to regulate the Egyptian economy in order to appease British and French creditors, Britain and France instituted the system of Dual Control over much of Egypt's financial affairs, bringing in significant numbers of British and French civil servants to manage Egypt economically.

By 1882, in face of the 'Urabi Revolt – led by Colonel 'Urabi with substantial support from the Egyptian public to overturn European economic control in Egypt – another wave of British personnel, primarily military, arrived in Egypt. Not only did the British military presence crush the revolt, it quickly established a renewed stability under British authority whereby British financial interests would not be threatened. This form of British rule in Egypt became known as the 'Veiled Protectorate' whereby the Egyptian Khedive and his ministers were officially in control of government departments but in reality, the British Consul-General and his advisers were in charge. Lord Granville, the Foreign Secretary, even established the principle, known as the Granville Doctrine, whereby Egyptian ministers who were not obedient to British advisers were dismissed from their posts.<sup>44</sup> In effect, Egypt was not taken over as an official colony administered by the Colonial Office but was still under the control and influence of the Foreign Office. However, for all intents and purposes, Egypt was under the authority of the British Empire. In other words, under the 'Veiled Protectorate,'

“the Khedive was expected to name his own ministers, but the choice of them was to be privately dictated to him by the British Agent [or Consul-General]. The Government officials were to wear the Ottoman Fez, but the more important of them were to be English men. These were to give advice, not orders, but the advice was always to be obeyed. It was an ingenious plan, adopted from the Government of British India...[and supported by] the presence...of a sufficient armed force to give emphasis to [the Consul-General's] advice and enforce his will, the Army of Occupation.”<sup>45</sup>

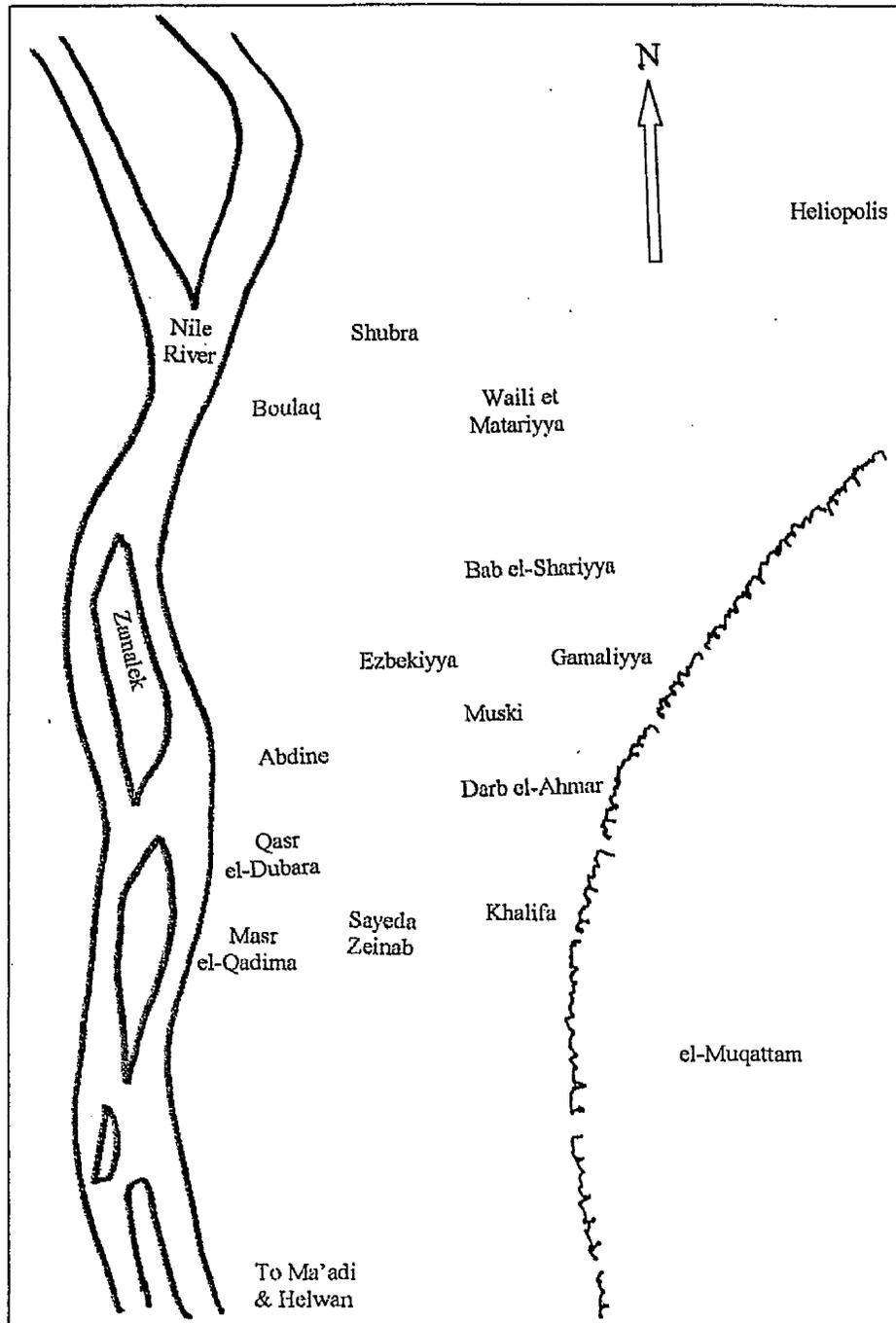
During the 40 years of the British occupation, the British authorities were by and large successful in absolving Egypt's debts and improving its irrigation and transportation facilities. Yet, by developing Egypt primarily as a cotton supplier to benefit the textile

<sup>44</sup> Letter from Granville to Sir Evelyn Baring, Consul-General, 04/01/1884, as quoted from Alfred Milner, *England in Egypt*, 13<sup>th</sup> ed., (London: Edward Arnold, 1920), p. 27.

<sup>45</sup> Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, *My Diaries: Being a Personal Narrative of Events, 1888-1914*, (London: Martin Secker, 1932), p. 84.

industry of Lancashire, the British administration underdeveloped Egypt's economic potential in other areas. Further, British rule in Egypt for the most part restricted Egyptian officials from gaining influence and power while allowing even inexperienced British officials more authority than experienced Egyptian ones. By 1922, after a period of intensive nationalist pressure on the part of Egyptians to secure autonomy, Britain ended the 'Veiled Protectorate' and at long last granted Egypt limited independence with specific issues still to be negotiated thereafter. Having briefly described the background and context of the British community in Cairo, this discussion now turns to the examination of Cairo's British community – starting with its demographic profile.

**Map of Greater Cairo and Names of Different Areas of Cairo**  
(Not to exact scale)



(Based on *Map of Cairo*, no. 64480 (4): Edward Stanford, 12, 13, 14, Long Acre W.C., 16 June: 1906, London and *General Map of Cairo*, no. 64480(6), Survey of Egypt 1920)

## 1. A Demographic Overview of Cairo's British Community, 1882-1922

### Introduction

At the outset of this discussion on the British community in Cairo during the British occupation, a glimpse at important demographic information on the British in Egypt may be useful in developing a preliminary quantitative understanding of the community in question. Essentially, the Egyptian census records between 1882 and 1922 provide this initial numerical glance with answers to questions such as: What was the population of the British community in Egypt and in Cairo? Does the population growth rate give further insight into the British community? How big or small was it – compared to other ethnic groups and the Egyptian populace? Where did the British in Egypt and in Cairo live? What were their religious leanings? How old were they? How literate were they? Their work and employment situations will be discussed in a subsequent chapter.

### Using the Egyptian Census records

Although the statistical information in this discussion is based on a variety of records, the vast majority of the figures come from the limited data collected by the Egyptian Censuses of 1882, 1897, 1907 and 1917. Though “often called the first ‘modern’ census, because it made use of European methods – in particular, the enumeration of the population in a single day,”<sup>1</sup> the census of May 1882 was most likely flawed. In that census, the Egyptian population may have been undercounted by at least 100,000,<sup>2</sup> since Egyptians were fearful of having their sons conscripted if they gave accurate information of how many children were in their families – especially during a time of military conflict such as the ‘Urabi Revolt. Further, rural Egyptians likely gave inaccurate data in the census since they “mistrusted both the census taker and the tax collector, whom they may well have confused.”<sup>3</sup> Fortunately for the purposes of this thesis, the figures for the European population in the 1882 census were probably accurate due to the fact that the Europeans would have made “every effort to be counted...as they were calling for European intervention to protect their privileged

<sup>1</sup> Kenneth M. Cuno & Michael J. Reimer, “The Census Registers of the Nineteenth-century Egypt: a New Source for Social Historians,” *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* (1997), 24 (2), p. 194.

<sup>2</sup> Roger Owen, *The Middle East in the World Economy, 1800-1914*, (London: Methuen, 1981), p. 216.

<sup>3</sup> Jeffrey G. Collins, *The Egyptian Elite under Cromer, 1882-1907*, (Berlin: Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 1984), p. 18.

status against nascent Egyptian nationalism.”<sup>4</sup> Notwithstanding its inadequacies, the 1882 census as with the 1897, 1907, and 1917 censuses are limited since they present only aggregate data. For example, though the 1917 census claimed to tabulate detailed information of Egyptian families, the actual records were destroyed once the data was aggregated in order to protect the privacy of individual families in the hope of soliciting greater co-operation from them. Therefore, although the existence of four censuses would suggest that there is an abundance of demographic data on the 40-year span of the British occupation and protectorate, much of the data appears to have been very limited, or destroyed. The censuses lack details such as the size and structure of households, age of marriage for both sexes, information on fertility and family finance, and how these factors may have been altered over time and between regions and classes.<sup>5</sup> Ironically, since data from earlier censuses were never aggregated, there exists in the Egyptian National Archives (Dar al-Watha’iq) more than 5300 census registers from the middle decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (1840s-1870s) – making these records far more useful to social historians of today. Nonetheless, the censuses between 1882 and 1922, though of limited usefulness, are still helpful insofar as data on population according to nationality and location of residents, information on occupations, religious affiliation, age and literacy.

### **Population of the British in Egypt**

The overall population of the British community in Egypt was remarkably small compared to the population of foreigners and Egyptians. Table 1.1 illustrates the population of the British in Egypt, over the course of the four censuses, and demonstrates the percentage of Britons as compared with other foreigners and Egyptians. At most, the British community in Egypt (of Britons from Britain) represented only 11.07% of the foreign population and only 0.13% of the entire (Egyptian) population. Remarkably, in spite of its size, the community is significant because it consisted of those who ruled and influenced Egypt politically, fiscally, administratively, commercially and militarily.

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<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> Cuno & Reimer, p.194 & 195.

Table 1.1: Population of the British (from British Isles) alongside that of British subjects, non-Egyptians & Egyptians, 1882-1917 and its percentage as compared with the non-Egyptian & Egyptian populations.

Year	British from British Isles	British subjects of Indian origin	British subjects of Maltese origin	Total number of British subjects	Total population of foreigners	% of British from British Isles compared with pop. of foreigners <sup>6</sup>	Total population of 'native' Egyptians	Total population of Egypt	% of British from British Isles compared with pop. of Egypt <sup>7</sup>
1882 <sup>8</sup>				6,118	90,886	6.73%	6,715,495	6,806,381	0.091%
1897 <sup>9</sup>	12,465	617	6,481	19,563	112,574	11.07%	9,621,831	9,734,405	0.13%
1907 <sup>10</sup>	14,361 <sup>11</sup>	Combined total: 6,292 (includes 'Colonial') <sup>12</sup>		20,653	151,414	9.48%	10,903,992	11,189,978	0.13%
1917 <sup>13</sup>	9,042	954	7,761	24,354	203,949	4.43%	12,512,306	12,716,255	0.071%

A few key observations and comments may be made from this data. First, the censuses, with the exception of the one in 1882, make a clear distinction between those who were British subjects from Britain (who made up the British community proper or the 'real' British community) and those who were British subjects by virtue of being from other colonial territories. The population of British subjects from the British Isles more accurately reflects the population of the British community in Egypt since other British subjects were of Indian, Maltese, and other ethnic groupings and were generally excluded from the day-to-day events and relationships among the Britons from Britain. The next chapter will attempt to outline more specifically some of the ambiguities in defining the ethnic boundaries of the British community since ethnic affiliation is in some cases determined by the eye of the beholder. For instance, certain Europeans and Australians may have perceived themselves or may have been perceived by other observers, to be members of the British community. Intermarriage also brought ambiguity. For example, a British woman married to a non-British husband, was technically no longer British since the 1870 Nationality Act decreed that British women

<sup>6</sup> The percentage calculations are my own based on the census data.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> Recensement Général de l'Égypte, 1882, Tome Deuxième, Le Caire: Impremière Nationale de Boulaq, 1884., p.xx, and xxi. (Centre d'étude et de documentation économique, juridique et sociale (CEDEJ), Cairo)

<sup>9</sup> Recensement Général de l'Égypte, 1897, Tome Premier (Le Caire: Imprimerie Nationale, 1898), p.xviii, and lii (University of Toronto, Robarts' Library Government Publications)

<sup>10</sup> Census of Egypt, 1907 (Cairo: National Printing Department), 1909, Table XVII, p. 148 (American University of Cairo)

<sup>11</sup> This figure includes those of English, Welsh, Scottish and Irish origin in Egypt. Technically, the Irish are not considered British, but because the data of Britons in the census of 1907 includes that of the Irish, I have little choice but to include the Irish in the British tallies in this chapter since the Irish population alone seems to have been minimal. I beg for forgiveness from any offended party.

<sup>12</sup> 'Colonial' refers to those, not originally from the British Isles, who have become British subjects due to colonial arrangements besides British subjects of Indian and Maltese origin.

<sup>13</sup> Census of Egypt, 1917, Vol. II, from Ministry of Finance, Statistical Department, (Cairo: Government Press, 1921), Table VIII, p.513. (American University in Cairo Reference Collection)

should adopt their husband's nationality. Indeed, the "British Consular Courts treated women who married Ottomans as Ottoman."<sup>14</sup> However, though legally and often socially excluded from the British community in Egypt, British women with non-British husbands were largely still ethnically and culturally British. But whatever the ambiguities mentioned in the next chapter, Table 1.1 does provide a basic, though not perfectly accurate, enumeration of Britons in Egypt during this 40 year-span.

### Growth rates

Table 1.2: Rates and percentage of growth of British subjects, 1882-1917.<sup>15</sup>

Year of Census	Population of British subjects	Absolute increase of British subjects since previous census	Percentage increase of British subjects since previous census
1882	6,118 <sup>16</sup>		
1897	19,563	13,445	+ 219.76%
1907	20,653	1,090	+ 5.57%
1917	24,354	3,701	+ 17.92%

Second, population growth rates of both the British subjects in Egypt (Table 1.2) and of Britons from the British Isles (Table 1.3) may be derived from Table 1.1. Table 1.2 suggests that there may have been a dramatic increase in the number of British subjects in Egypt during the years 1882 to 1897, whilst for the next 20 years, the growth rate in the population of British subjects increased steadily but far less dramatically.

Table 1.3: Rates and percentage of growth of British subjects from British Isles, 1882-1917.<sup>17</sup>

Year of Census	Population of British from British Isles	Absolute increase of British from British Isles since previous census	Percentage increase of British from British Isles since previous census
1882	6,118		
1897	12,465	6,347	+ 103.74%
1907	14,361	1,896	+ 15.21%
1917	9,042	- 5,319	- 37.04%

The growth rate of the 'real' British community in Table 1.3 suggests the same pattern of significant growth from 1882-1897 and then a slower growth rate from 1897 – 1907. The only variation may be that Table 1.3 points to a decline in the number of British

<sup>14</sup> Mark S.W. Hoyle, *The Mixed Courts of Egypt*, (London: Graham & Trotman, 1991), p. 74.

<sup>15</sup> Figures based on calculations from Table 1.1.

<sup>16</sup> There's uncertainty as to whether this figure (6,118) represents the number of British subjects in Egypt (would include British subjects of Maltese, Indian and other colonial territories) or the number of British subjects from Britain.

<sup>17</sup> Figures based on calculations from Table 1.1.

from the British Isles from 1907 – 1917 whilst Table 1.2 suggests that the population of British subjects in Egypt continued to rise, though moderately, from 1907 – 1917.

What may have caused the similarities between the initial growth rates of the population of British subjects and of the Britons from Britain in Egypt? And what may have caused the diverging developments between the two groups from 1907 – 1917? Perhaps, the initial growth spurt can be attributed to the establishment of the Army of Occupation that, as shall be made clear later, added around 5,000 British men to the already small British community in Egypt. Also, with the consolidation of British administrative power in Egypt under the occupation, Britons came to Egypt to take up new government positions in the judiciary, finance, public works, education, and diplomatic ministries. As a result of the confidence and socio-economic environment established by the new British administration in Egypt, many more British businessmen, missionaries, professionals and labourers came to work in Egypt as well as British government officials. Further, businessmen, tradesmen and workers from colonial territories such as Malta and India also came to Egypt in search of greater opportunities. However, the rates of growth both for British subjects and for the Britons from Britain decelerated from 1897 to 1907. This may have been due to the fact that the rate of accepting new recruits declined after 1897 because many of the government positions may have already been filled. Further, following the retirement of Lord Cromer, the British Consul-General in Egypt from 1883-1907, Sir Eldon Gorst (Consul-General, 1907 - 1911) began to discourage British recruits from entering government service in Egypt in order to bolster the number of Egyptian officials in government.<sup>18</sup> Whatever the reasons, the rate of growth for both categories declined significantly during the last 10 years of Cromer's tenure and the initial stages of Gorst's administration.

However, from 1907 to 1917, there appears to be a steady growth in the population of British subjects in Egypt whilst the population of the British community proper declined significantly. What may have accounted for this divergence? Table 1.4 provides a glimpse into the ethnic composition of those who were British subjects in Egypt in 1917. It appears that not only did the population of Maltese and Indian British subjects increase from 1907 and 1897 (Table 1.1), the population of British subjects from other colonial territories grew dramatically. In 1907, there were only 6,292 British subjects

who were from Malta, India and other colonial lands. But by 1917, there were 15,312 British subjects not originally from the British Isles – an increase of 243.36%. Perhaps one reason for this influx of British subjects from colonial territories may have been the need for military assistance in the case of Australians, Canadians and Indians – although the huge number of military personnel from the British Empire during World War I does not figure into this particular census. The significant movement of British subjects of Greek origin to Egypt provides another reason for this massive influx.

Table 1.4: British subjects by ethnic origin, 1917<sup>19</sup>.

British subjects by ethnic origin	British	Maltese	Greeks	Indians	Egyptians	Jews	Austr'lians	Canadians	South Africans	Others	Total: British subjects not from British Isles	Total no. of British subjects
Number of subjects	9,042	7,761	2,422	954	824	343	103	52	52	2,801	15,312 <sup>20</sup>	24,354

As for the decline of the population of Britons from Britain in Egypt during this time, the reason may be attributed to the personnel needs of the war. The onset of World War I meant that the British Army of Occupation moved to the European front while a substantial group of able-bodied British men, eligible for combat, joined the British war effort in Europe as well. It appears, from the data in Table 1.5, that the size of the British Army of Occupation grew to almost 5,000 in 1897 and continued to grow, albeit marginally, through the ten years leading up to 1907 and beyond. Arnold Wright, in his extensive work, *20<sup>th</sup> Century Impressions of Egypt*, stated in 1909 that the “army has varied in strength from time to time...In recent years it has had a total strength of nearly 6,000 men. The British Army Estimates for the financial year 1909-10 show that it will be kept at a strength of 6,015 of all ranks and arms...as compared with 5,719 in the previous financial year [1908-1909].”<sup>21</sup> Consisting of 5,000 to 6,000 well-trained and battle-ready men, nearly the entire British Army of Occupation was relocated to the European front at the start of the First World War. Consequently, the population of the ‘real’ British community fell by 5,319 (Table 1.3) - around the same number of British troops that were in Egypt before World War I.

<sup>18</sup> Roger Adelson, *London and the Invention of the Middle East*, London: Yale University Press, 1995., p.78.

<sup>19</sup> Census of Egypt, 1917, Table VIII, Population by nationality, p. 513.

<sup>20</sup> From my own calculations (Number of Total British subjects subtract number of British from British Isles)

Table 1.5, Size of British Army of Occupation compared with British civilian population, number of British from British Isles and total number of British subjects.

Year	Size of British Army of Occupation	British Civilian Population	Number of British from British Isles	No. of British subjects from colonial lands	Total number of British subjects
1882					6,118
1897	4,909 <sup>22</sup> (or 4,887) <sup>23</sup>	7,556 (or 7,578)	12,465	7,098	19,563
1907	6,835 <sup>24</sup>	7,526 <sup>25</sup>	14,361	6,292	20,653
1917	--	9,042	9,042	15,312	24,354

At this juncture, one might enquire about the mass influx of Britons who came to Egypt during the war. Were they not part of the British community? Why were they not counted in the census as British subjects or British from the British Isles? In the census of 1917, the list of occupations that the British in Egypt were involved in omitted any mention of Britons in the military.<sup>26</sup> This is probably due to the fact that British military personnel who had come to Egypt as a result of the war may have been too numerous or too transient to be counted in the 1917 census. Also, they may not have been considered part of the British community - unlike the men in the Army of Occupation who had slightly longer-term aspirations in Egypt. British soldiers in Egypt during World War I were perceived to be visitors in Egypt waiting to fight in Europe or convalescing until they were strong enough to go home. They did not desire to reside or work in Egypt unlike other members of the British community though they mixed with the British civilian residents in Cairo in churches, hotels and homes, where British families provided hospitality for the military.

One last observation may be noted with regards to the population of the 'real' British community. After the initial influx of Britons into Egypt from 1882 to 1897, their civilian population did not change significantly from 1897 to 1917. In fact, one may even conclude that their civilian population did not change significantly since 1882 if one considers that the 1897 figure (around 7,500) for British civilians in Egypt differed very little from the 6118 British subjects resident in Egypt in 1882. Compared to the

<sup>21</sup> Arnold Wright, ed., *Twentieth Century Impressions of Egypt: Its History, People, Commerce, Industries and Resources*, (London: Lloyd & Greater Britain Publishing Co., Ltd., 1909), p.401.

<sup>22</sup> Recensement Général de l'Égypte, 1897, Tome Premier, p. xviii.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, Table for Professions et Métiers, Sexe Masculin, p. lxxiii.

<sup>24</sup> Census of Egypt, 1907, Table XXI, Occupations, p. 170., based on figures for Land Army in Cairo and Alexandria, figure represents total number of those in Land Army, may include a small number of military personnel who are not British from the British Isles or British subjects. Therefore, it may be a slightly higher estimate than the actual number of British men in the Army of Occupation in 1907.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, based on the high estimate of 6,835 British men in the Army of Occupation in 1907.

Greek population in Egypt which grew by 65% between 1897 to 1907 (from 38,208 to 62,973) or the Italian population which grew by 43% between those same ten years (from 24,454 to 34,926)<sup>27</sup>, the British community was by and large stagnant. Why did the British population stagnate while the Greek and Italian communities multiplied? The difference lies in how the communities perceived Egypt.

“The large Greek and Italian populations are colonies of settlers, who, for long periods of years look upon Egypt as their home, whereas the British...regard Egypt as a foreign country in which, by force of circumstances, they are destined to spend a part of their lives, but do not, as a rule, look forward to the prospect of their children establishing themselves in the country.”<sup>28</sup>

Therefore, it was common for British diplomats or businessmen to return to Britain after finishing their terms of service or contracts in Egypt. Even if they decided to stay for a number of years, they continued to send their children to British schools and were likely to encourage their children to settle in Britain. Nearly all sought to retire in Britain. In other words, the population of the British community may have remained stagnant due to the constant influx of new British residents replacing ones that may have left due to completing their terms of service or contracts. Without the settler-mindset characteristic of the Greeks and the Italians, the community did not grow through reproduction because British families encouraged their children to pursue education and work in Britain. On the most part, the British were in Egypt “only for as long as their work required and their affectionate impulses were all directed towards Home, and the retreats in England to which they hoped ultimately to retire.”<sup>29</sup>

### *The British community of Egypt and Near Eastern communities*

Besides mentioning the population and growth rates of the British community in Egypt, its socio-cultural context should also be examined for a clearer understanding of the community. Table 1.1 has already indicated that British subjects in Egypt accounted for a minuscule percentage of the entire Egyptian population and were on the average, between 5%-11% of the entire foreign population. This foreign population consisted of both Europeans from Europe and those who were, as Cromer labelled, “Orientalised

<sup>26</sup> Census of 1917, Table VI, Groups of Occupations by nationalities, p.472.

<sup>27</sup> Census of Egypt, 1917, chapter VI, growth in population among certain nationalities and stagnation among other nationalities, pp.129-130.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>29</sup> Suzanne Brugger, *Australians and Egypt, 1914-1919*, Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1980., p. 48.

Europeans.”<sup>30</sup> ‘Orientalised Europeans’ consisted primarily of those with European nationalities but were from Eastern Mediterranean and Near Eastern backgrounds such as Syrians, Armenians and Jews. Syrians “refer to persons originating from the geographical area containing the modern states of Syria, Lebanon, Israel and Jordan.”<sup>31</sup> Otherwise known as Levantines, there were 35,000 Syrians in Egypt by World War I. The initial wave of Syrians immigrated to Egypt due to civil unrest in mid-19<sup>th</sup> century Syria. A second group came to Egypt when cheap East Asian imports of silk flooded into the French market at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century causing many Syrian silk spinners and weavers to find alternative pastures of work and survival. Further the importing “of cheap and better European industrial products initiated the destruction of a wide variety of traditional manufacturers and crafts. Among the immigrants to Egypt [were] former charcoal burners, gunpowder producers, miners [and] gunsmiths.”<sup>32</sup> During the 1860s and the early 1870s, Egypt experienced an economic boom based on cotton exports thereby attracting many disaffected Syrian immigrants. However, perhaps the greatest motivator for Syrians to migrate to Egypt was the opportunity of educated graduates to seek employment due to the “lack of career opportunities commensurate with [their] education and expertise”<sup>33</sup> in Syria. On the contrary, by the later part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, “Egypt offered a variety of positions and careers to the educated, professionally trained, and often multilingual Syrian youth.”<sup>34</sup> Many were employed in the Egyptian civil service as accountants, translators and medical doctors. Keen to fulfil their desire to improve in material terms, the large majority of Syrians reached a prosperous middle-class status in Egypt by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>35</sup> Most of them lived in Cairo, Alexandria or the Canal Zone where they worked as professionals or businessmen.<sup>36</sup> Besides Syrians, Armenians and Jews also represented significant non-European populations in Egypt. Many Armenians came to Egypt as refugees to escape the severe persecution from Turkey prior to and during the World War I. They were largely merchants and artisans,<sup>37</sup> and were particularly adept at the jewellery business.<sup>38</sup> As for

<sup>30</sup> Lord Cromer, *Modern Egypt*, Vol. II., (London: Macmillan, 1908), p. 246.

<sup>31</sup> Thomas Philipp, “Demographic Patterns of Syrian Immigration to Egypt in the Nineteenth Century: An Interpretation,” *Asian and African Studies*, 16 (1982), p. 171.

<sup>32</sup> Philipp, *The Syrians in Egypt*, p. 82.

<sup>33</sup> Philipp, “Demographic Patterns...”, p. 182.

<sup>34</sup> Philipp, *The Syrians in Egypt*, p. 84.

<sup>35</sup> Philipp, “Demographic Patterns...”, p. 195.

<sup>36</sup> Albert H. Hourani, *Minorities in the Arab World*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1947), p. 48.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 49.

<sup>38</sup> Hopwood, *Tales of Empire*, p. 11.

the Jews, there was as many as 60,000 of them in Egypt in 1919.<sup>39</sup> They played an important economic role in Egypt as financiers, merchants, clerks, artisans and professionals.<sup>40</sup> Wealthy Jewish entrepreneurs ran the big Cairo department stores such as Cicurel's, Sednaoui's and Orosdi-Back's.<sup>41</sup>

### *The British community in Egypt and other European communities*

Table 1.6: British population compared with other European populations in Egypt, 1882-1917.

	British from British Isles	British subjects	French	Greek	Italians	Germans	Austro-Hungarians	Russians
1882 <sup>42</sup>	unknown	6,118	15,716	37,301	18,665	948	8,022	533
1897 <sup>43</sup>	12,465	19,563	14,171	38,208	24,454	1,281	7,115	3,192
1907 <sup>44</sup>	14,357	20,653	14,591	62,973	34,926	1,847	7,704	2,410
1917 <sup>45</sup>	9,042	24,354	8,816	56,731	32,519	157	2,789	4,225

Next to the native Egyptians, the Syrians, Armenians and the Jews represented the most significant 'oriental' populations in Egypt. On the other hand, the most prominent European populations in Egypt during the British occupation (from the 1882 census to the 1917 tabulations) were the Greeks, Italians, French, British, Austro-Hungarians, Germans and the Russians as outlined in Table 1.6. For most cases, the numbers refer to individuals from the European communities proper and not colonial subjects of European powers. As for Greek emigration to Egypt, there were a variety of factors behind the phenomenon. The Egyptian cotton boom in the 1860s attracted Greek workers just as it attracted Syrians. Not a few Greek merchants from the Aegean islands followed the trade routes south to Egypt and settled largely in Alexandria. Others, from the mountainous Pelion area, moved to Egypt after the local artisan economy collapsed in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. Greeks from the Peloponnese region emigrated to Egypt as a result of overpopulation and lack of opportunities at home.<sup>46</sup> A significant proportion of Greeks in Egypt became grocers and money merchants.<sup>47</sup> Whatever the reason, the Greek migrants formed the single largest non-Egyptian community in Egypt. The

<sup>39</sup> Kitroeff, *op.cit.*, p. 23.

<sup>40</sup> Hourani, *Minorities*, p. 49.

<sup>41</sup> Hopwood, p. 11.

<sup>42</sup> Recensement Général de l'Égypte, 1882, 15 Gamad Akher, 1299; Tome II, (Le Caire: Boulaq, 1884), Ministry of Finance, Census Department, (Arabic version) p. 22 & 23.

<sup>43</sup> Recensement Général de l'Égypte, 1897, Tome I., Basse Égypte, pp. xvi & xvii.

<sup>44</sup> Census of Egypt, 1907, p. 129.

<sup>45</sup> Census of Egypt, 1917, p. 512-517.

<sup>46</sup> Kitroeff, pp. 11 & 12.

<sup>47</sup> Hopwood, p. 11.

second largest foreign community in Egypt consisted of the Italians. Many Italians had migrated to Egypt during the time of Muhammad Ali's regime in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. They served as army officers, professionals, technicians and staff in manufacturing projects. Muhammad Ali was even attended to by Italian physicians. By the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century,

"...merchants and workers, both skilled and unskilled, moved to Egypt to enlarge the Italian community there. By this time, many members of the original community had become closely associated with the royal family and held many senior administrative posts. They played an important part in the postal service, the health service and in the public works sector...Outside the civil service...the Italian presence remained strong, especially in the building industry which was noted for the large number of Italians employed in it at all levels, from bricklayers to civil engineers."<sup>48</sup>

After the Greeks and the Italians, the British and the French formed the next largest European communities in Egypt (Table 1.6). The British moved to Egypt to take up military, civil service, teaching, missionary, professional and business positions (though more will be discussed regarding British motives for emigration to Egypt in a subsequent chapter - particularly with regards to the British working class). The French relocated to Egypt largely for professional or business opportunities. The majority of Germans, Austrians and Russians came to Egypt to engage in trade or business although the number of Germans and Austrians declined dramatically (Table 1.6) at the outset the First World War when their properties were confiscated and assets frozen by the British military authorities. Whatever the case, European entrepreneurs "were attracted by expanding opportunities [in Egypt] which, thanks to the immunities granted them under the Capitulations, they were privileged to exploit."<sup>49</sup> Without a doubt, the Capitulations (explained in more detail in the subsequent chapter) served as a central factor facilitating the ongoing migration of Europeans to Egypt during this time.

### *The British and European Communities of Cairo*

Thus far this chapter has engaged in the discussion of the British population and growth rates in Egypt and the British community in the context of other European communities during the time of the occupation. More specifically, however, this discussion will now turn to an examination of reasons behind the growth of the European population in Cairo. The gradual integration of Egypt into the world market during the mid-19<sup>th</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 21.

<sup>49</sup> Abu-Lughod, *op.cit.*, p. 115.

century was accompanied by a large inflow of foreigners and foreign capital especially into the capital city of Cairo – financial, administrative and political heart of the country. Europeans came to Cairo to staff various public works projects which Khedive Said and Ismail endorsed. Certain Europeans in Cairo established banks to finance the increased trade with Europe, to provide Egypt's rulers with loans, and to lend money to various cultivation and irrigation schemes. Along with the cotton boom in the 1860s, "the flotation of government loans, allocation of bond issues, [and the] provision of short-term credit provided lucrative work for [an] increasing number of foreign banks."<sup>50</sup> During the period of 1882-1918, there was a virtual foreign monopoly over financial, banking and trade sectors and various joint-stock companies in Cairo. Further,

"Cairo acted as a magnet for foreigners [since] by the 1890s, it became clear that [British] withdrawal was not near and Europeans could feel secure living in the capital because of the large British garrison. The great majority of the net influx of foreigners was absorbed by Cairo...[and to a lesser degree,] Alexandria. [By] 1897, less than thirteen percent of the foreign community lived outside these two cities...[because] Europeans...were engaged almost exclusively in commerce (not agriculture)."<sup>51</sup>

Though the British military presence (to counter any threat from Egyptian nationalists) in Cairo provided the stability and confidence with which European businessmen prospered, the British economic policies and aspirations also encouraged European commerce. Primarily, the British authorities did not favour commercial Cairo falling into the hands of Egyptians. They preferred that the accumulation of capital should profit Europeans. Egypt, with its cheap labour at the time, was to be maintained as a cotton monoculture.<sup>52</sup> Therefore,

"it was vital for the sort of commercial investment [the British] were making in Egypt that Cairo at least should be thoroughly organized in a modern way by dependable non-Egyptians. Britain therefore encouraged into Cairo not only her own administrators but commercial inclined foreigners from all over Europe who flocked into the city and took over the Europeanized part of it...This was...a steady process rather than a sudden one."<sup>53</sup>

By 1907, 87% of the annual net increase of the European population took place in Cairo alone and the foreign population outside the governorates was minimal, accounting for

<sup>50</sup> Marius Deeb, "The Socioeconomic Role of the Local Foreign Minorities in Modern Egypt, 1805-1961," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 9 (1978), p. 16. pp. 11-22

<sup>51</sup> Jeffrey G. Collins, *The Egyptian Elite under Cromer, 1882-1907*, (Berlin: Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 1984), p. 22.

<sup>52</sup> Harold Toffelson, *Policing Islam: The British Occupation of Egypt and the Anglo-Egyptian Struggle over Control of the Police, 1882-1914*, (London: Greenwood Press, 1999), p. 184.

<sup>53</sup> James Aldridge, *op.cit.*, p. 211.

only 0.3% of the entire population of Lower Egypt.<sup>54</sup> Table 1.7 below demonstrates the growth of the European communities in Cairo from 1882 to 1907. It appears that from 1882 to 1907, the British, Greek, Italian, German and Russian populations in Cairo more than tripled while Austro-Hungarian community grew by 30% and the French community seemed to have been stagnant. However, between 1907 and 1917, most of the communities diminished in size (except for British subjects and Russians). This was due to Britons and Frenchmen departing to participate in the European war effort whilst as aforementioned, Germans and Austrians fled when they realised that they were in enemy territory and facing the requisition of their properties and prohibition from using their assets in Egypt. Greek and Italian populations in Egypt dwindled too due to increased risks in travel, movement and emigration during the war.

Table 1.7: British population compared with other European populations in Cairo, 1882-1917.

	British from British Isles	British subjects	French	Greek	Italians	Germans	Austro-Hungarians	Russians
1882 <sup>55</sup>	unknown	1,247	5,193	6,880	4,969	234	2,105	111
1897 <sup>56</sup>	unknown	6,727	5,124	9,869	8,670	487	2,262	561
1907 <sup>57</sup>	7,207	8,577	5,215	19,419	13,296	923	3,128	1,223
1917 <sup>58</sup>	3,202	9,254	3,275	15,250	12,114	31	1,004	1,242

### **Cairo: home of the largest proportion of Britons in Egypt**

After a glimpse at the motivation and extent of the European population in Egypt and in Cairo, attention will now be given specifically to the British population in Cairo as opposed to other parts of Egypt. Unfortunately, Egyptian censuses of 1882 and 1897 record only the number of British subjects residing in certain governorates and provinces but does not register the number of Britons from the British Isles – the ‘real’ British community. On the other hand, censuses of 1907 and 1917 account for the number of British from the British Isles, the number of British subjects and their locations of residence. This data is presented in Table 1.8.

<sup>54</sup> Collins, p. 22.

<sup>55</sup> Recensement Général de l’Egypte, 1882, 15 Gamad Akher, 1299; Tome II, pp. 22-23.

<sup>56</sup> Recensement Général de l’Egypte, 1897, Tome I: Basse Egypte, p. 36.

<sup>57</sup> Census of Egypt, 1907, pp. 132-134.

Table 1.8: Number of British subjects and Britons of British origin in various parts of Egypt, 1882-1917.

Location	No. of Brit. Subjects 1882 <sup>59</sup>	No. of Brit. Subjects 1897 <sup>60</sup>	No. of Brit. Subjects 1907	No. of English, Welsh, Scottish & Irish 1907 <sup>61</sup>	No. of Brit. Subjects 1917	No. of Brit. Subjects of British origin, 1917 <sup>62</sup>
Cairo Governorate	1,247	6,727	8,577	7,207	7,254	3,202
Alexandria Governorate	3,552	8,301	8,190	5,006	10,656	3,115
Port Said & Canal Governorate	791	2,754	1,584	641	2,539	778
Suez Governorate	280	641			933	404
Other Lower Egypt regions			47	35	11	5
Lower Egypt provinces (and Suez Governorate for 1907)	189	662	1,372	924	1,583	802
Upper Egypt provinces	27	445	505	434	983	638
Desert & oases					123	98
Total	6,118	19,563	20,653	14,357	24,352	9,042

Though it is unclear as to how many Britons from the British Isles were residing in different parts of Egypt in 1882, it is certain that British subjects (regardless of background) tended to congregate in the governorates of Cairo and Alexandria (Table 1.8). More specifically, about 79% of all British subjects in Egypt resided in Cairo or Alexandria. Overwhelmingly, 96% of all of British residents in Egypt lived in the governorates of Cairo, Alexandria, Port Said, Suez or the provinces of Lower Egypt. Interestingly, it seems that Alexandria, as a cosmopolitan business centre, hosted almost three times as many British subjects than Cairo in 1882.

Similar to the census of 1882, there is no record as to where Britons from Britain actually lived from the census of 1897 – only data on British subjects. However, a glimpse at the religious affiliation of British subjects in Cairo and Alexandria during this time (Table 1.12) suggests that there may have been substantially more Britons from Britain in Cairo than in Alexandria, since there were substantially more Protestants in Cairo than in Alexandria. This projection is based on the assumption that the majority of Britons from the British Isles in Egypt were Protestant. Whether this assumption is made or not, it appears that similar to the distribution of British subjects in 1882, almost 76.8% of British subjects in Egypt lived in the Cairo and Alexandria governorates while 94.3% lived in the governorates and provinces of Lower Egypt (Table 1.8). Alexandria still hosted more British subjects than Cairo but by nowhere near the same margin as

<sup>58</sup> Census of Egypt, 1917, pp. 482-487.

<sup>59</sup> Recensement Général de l'Égypte, 1882, Deuxième section, p.22.

<sup>60</sup> Recensement Général de l'Égypte, 1897, p.lii

<sup>61</sup> Census of Egypt, 1907, Table XVII, 'Nationality', p. 133.

1882. Further, the population of British subjects quadrupled from 1882 to 1897 unlike that of Alexandria, which merely doubled during this same time period. Clearly, Cairo had been established as the focal point for the British administration in Egypt by 1897 and was home to a rapidly increasing number of British subjects, among whom were Britons from the British Isles – the ‘real’ British community.

Similar to the censuses of 1882 and 1897, the census of 1907 (Table 1.8) suggests that most of the British subjects in Egypt lived in the governorates and provinces of Lower Egypt. A little more than 81% of British subjects resided in the Cairo and Alexandria governorates while 97.55% resided in the governorates and provinces of Lower Egypt. However, unlike the censuses of 1882 and 1897, the census of 1907 also detailed the actual numbers of Britons from Britain and where they lived in Egypt. According to the data, just over 85% of British residents from the British Isles lived in the Cairo and Alexandria governorates while almost 97% resided in the governorates and provinces of Lower Egypt. By 1907, there were clearly more Britons from the British Isles living in Cairo than in Alexandria. The British community proper of Cairo consisted of approximately 7,200 Britons while the British community proper of Alexandria included around 5,000 Britons.

The census of 1917 (Table 1.8) details the number of British subjects and those of British origin and their locations of residence as well. It appears that 74.66% of British subjects lived in the Cairo and Alexandria governorates while 95.46% lived in the governorates and provinces of Lower Egypt. Similarly, almost 70% of British subjects of British origin lived in governorates of Cairo and Alexandria while almost 92% resided in Lower Egypt’s governorates and provinces. By 1917, Cairo and Alexandria had almost equal numbers of British residents who were from the British Isles. The numbers had diminished since the census of 1907 because British men who were residing in Egypt had left to participate in the war effort in Europe.

Based on the demographic data, it is clear that the subject of this thesis, the British community of Cairo, comprised of a small group of people in relation to the total population of foreigners in Cairo and the entire population of Cairo (see Table 1.9). The size of Cairo’s British community was, at its peak, 19.01% of the entire foreign

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<sup>62</sup> Census of Egypt, 1917, Table VII, p. 482.

population of Cairo in 1897 while it was at the most 1.18% of the entire population of Cairo during that same year. Averaging the percentages over the 4 censuses (and over the four decades of the occupation), the size of Cairo's British community amounts to 11.6% of the foreign population and 0.78% of the entire population – seven times larger than the British population averaged out over all of Egypt during this same time period (0.11%)<sup>63</sup>.

Table 1.9: Population of British community in Cairo and its percentages compared with total foreign population of Cairo and total population of Cairo, 1882 – 1917.

	No. of Brit. Subjects from British Isles in Cairo	No. of British Subjects in Cairo	Total Foreign Population in Cairo	% of Britons <sup>64</sup> compared with Foreign Population in Cairo	% of Foreigners compared with Total Population	Total Population of Cairo	% of Britons <sup>65</sup> compared with Total Population of Cairo
1882 <sup>66</sup>	unknown	1,247	21,650	5.76%	7.88%	274,838	0.45%
1897 <sup>67</sup>	unknown	6,727	35,385	19.01%	6.21%	570,062	1.18%
1907 <sup>68</sup>	7,207	8,577	55,987	12.87%	8.55%	654,476	1.10%
1917 <sup>69</sup>	3,202	9,042	45,714	7.00%	5.78%	790,939	0.40%

However, though the British community of Cairo was relatively small, it represented the occupying power in Egypt exuding an aura of authority and influence that deeply affected the development of the city.

"It was this sort of super-English presence which began to change the outward appearance of Cairo simply by being there. The English not only took over the court and the politics and the banks, but they introduced the sort of modern city amenities that English colonial society found essential for its comfort and its commerce."<sup>70</sup>

### Distribution of population in Cairo: British locations of residence

As far as census records are concerned, the 1897 census offers the most detailed account of the numbers of British, foreign and Egyptian residents living in various districts in Cairo.

<sup>63</sup> Based on calculations from Table 1.1.

<sup>64</sup> Based on the number of British subjects where number of Britons from British Isles is unavailable.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>66</sup> Justin McCarthy, "Nineteenth Century Egyptian Population," *Middle East Studies*, v. 12, no. 3, October, 1976, p. 27 as quoted from Jeffrey Collins, *The Egyptian Elite*. These figures are based on McCarthy's figures after adjustments due to inaccuracies of the 1882 census.

<sup>67</sup> Recensement Général de l'Égypte, 1897, Tome I: Basse Égypte, p. 36.

<sup>68</sup> Census of Egypt, 1907, pp. 132-134.

<sup>69</sup> Census of Egypt, 1917, pp. 482-483.

Table 1.10: Number of British subjects, other foreign nationals & Egyptians and where they lived in Cairo, 1897.<sup>71</sup>

	Abdine	Bab el-Chariyya	Bulaq	Shubra	Darb el Ahmar	Ezbekiyya	Camaliyya	Khalifa	Masr el Qadima	Muski	Sayeda Zeinab	Waili et Matariyya	Helwan	Total
British men	1164	169	109	99	9	470	66	1049	1	239	21	1535	19	4950
British women	328	153	98	112	6	383	60	112	7	216	27	254	21	1777
British Total	1492	322	207	211	15	853	126	1161	8	455	48	1789	40	6427
Greeks	1103	718	229	447	1290	2221	601	72	112	2500	136	290	150	9869
Italians	1087	905	194	272	242	2132	721	8	5	2360	28	545	171	8670
French	600	217	133	278	458	1419	938	17	11	477	54	470	82	5154
German	108	11	6	50	6	161	6			87	2	32	18	487
Austrn	375	106	59	69	87	646	85	3	8	590	20	133	81	2262
Russns	59	11	11	26	13	78	58	100	5	134	23	32	11	561
Brits	1492	332	207	211	15	853	126	1161	8	445	48	1789	40	6727
Other	103	42	32	49	407	321	336	18	4	161	28	154	30	1685
Total For'gn	4927	2332	871	1402	2518	7831	2871	1379	153	6734	339	3445	583	35385
Egypt	44396	49268	75410	31377	66074	28239	55026	45817	31696	16504	53272	33301	4292	534677
Total	49323	51600	76281	32779	68592	36070	57897	47196	31819	23238	53611	36751	4875	570062

Table 1.10 only refers to the population of British subjects in certain districts of Cairo and not solely to the population of Cairo's British residents from the British Isles. Nonetheless, it gives an overview of where Cairo's British, foreign and Egyptian populations may have lived. It appears that the British subjects of Cairo resided primarily in Abdine, Ezbekiyya, Khalifa and Waili et Matariyya. Although British subjects amounted to a little over 3% of the population in Abdine and Ezbekiyya, these two areas were vital to the British and European communities of Cairo. The district of Abdine housed the British Consul-General at the Residency, the British general commanding the Army of Occupation, and the offices of the ministries of Public Works, Justice, Finance, Interior, and the War Office.<sup>72</sup> The area of Ezbekiyya hosted the European quarter. Among the buildings in Ezbekiyya were the head offices of the Suez Canal Company, the office of Thomas Cook and Son, Shepheard's Hotel, Hotel Continental, Savoy Hotel, Turf Club, British Consulate offices, All Saints' Church, St. Andrew's Church, and offices of the Eastern Telegraph Company. This was the "quarter

<sup>70</sup> Aldridge, p. 213.

<sup>71</sup> Recensement Général de l'Égypte, 1897, Population Classée selon la Nationalité, pp. 6, 8, 10, & 12

<sup>72</sup> Sladen, *Oriental Cairo*, p. 14.

of Cairo where most of the well-off foreigners live and move and do their shopping.”<sup>73</sup> In Khalifa and Muski, the percentage of British subjects compared with the rest of the population was only 2.5 to 2.75% while in Waili et Matariyya, the population of British subjects reached over 5%. Since the number of male British subjects in Abdine, Khalifa, and Waili et Matariyya far outweighed that of female British subjects, this disparity suggests that Abdine, Khalifa and Waili et Matariyya were hosts to the British military machine (by far the largest male-only occupational domain). Correspondingly, Abdine featured the Qasr el-Nil barracks whilst the Khalifa area hosted the barracks at the Citadel and Waili et Matariyya district featured the barracks at Abbassiyya.<sup>74</sup>

In addition to census records, there is evidence suggesting that different socio-economic groups among the British from the British Isles may have lived in different districts in Cairo. For example, it appears that a significant number of Britons living in Boulaq, “an unsavoury part of Cairo,”<sup>75</sup> were workers on the British railway projects. There were 232 British railway workers by the end of the occupation.<sup>76</sup> A donation was given in 1907 to the All Saints’ Church in Cairo for the “construction of a church at Boulak [sic], with a view more especially of providing for the spiritual wants of the Englishmen employed in [the] Railways Administration.”<sup>77</sup> The Egyptian Gazette records that there was a need for a church in Boulaq since there was only “a little mission-room down Boulak [sic] way where numbers of English workpeople live.”<sup>78</sup> Further, in order to meet the education needs of the children of these British railway workers, the Dean’s Building School (more on the school in the chapter on ‘symbols and institutions’), was established to cater for the poorer members of the British community in Cairo. It became a valuable resource for Boulaq’s British families. A missionary attached to All Saints’ Church, Sister Margaret Clare, did a survey in 1915 “collecting information as to the numbers and district of residence of parents with children likely to make use of the School.”<sup>79</sup> She found that there were a substantial number of poorer British families living in different parts of Cairo who were able to make use of the Dean’s School.

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<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13.

<sup>74</sup> Aldridge, p. 211.

<sup>75</sup> Sladen,, p. 37.

<sup>76</sup> FO141/494/14268: General Manager’s Office at Cairo Station to Ministry of Communications, Cairo, 15/09/1922.

<sup>77</sup> All Saints’ Church Archives, Minute Book 25, Cromer to Sir Eldon Gorst, in response to donation of £1000 by Mrs. McLean, 03/09/1907.

<sup>78</sup> Egyptian Gazette, 13/05/1915.

Table 1.11: Number of children, and locations of residence, who could make use of the Dean's Building School in 1915.<sup>80</sup>

Location	Boys	Girls	Total
Boulaq	34	32	66
Rod el Farag	8	2	10
Heliopolis	9	12	21
Mataria	6	4	10
Zeitoun	-	2	2
Cairo District	11	6	17
Total	68	58	126

Table 1.11 demonstrates that there may have been a reasonable number of British families in Boulaq that may have needed the assistance of the Dean's Building School for their children's education. There seem to have been poorer families in other parts of Cairo, which may have needed the services of the Dean's School as well.

Besides the districts outlined in the census of 1897, four other locations in the Cairo vicinity also hosted British residents during this 40-year span – Helwan, Maadi, Zamalek and Heliopolis. If Boulaq appears to be the place where poorer British workers lived, then Helwan appears to have been the place for sick Britons; “nearly all the visitors...at Helouan [sic]...[were] invalids, many of them with lung trouble.”<sup>81</sup> Fifteen miles south of Cairo, Helwan featured “an ancient sulphur spring...developed into a chic spa. Aside from healing baths and luxury accommodation, Helwan...was equipped with a Japanese garden...[and] the fresh air...made it an ideal place for pony rides and picnics.”<sup>82</sup> A small number of Britons from the British Isles lived in Helwan in order to seek the curing powers of the baths, the warmth and the fresh air not found in Britain. The resort town also “offered swimming, golf, shooting and racing...in addition to a multitude of treatments to which patients subjected themselves – the electric light bath, the Berthe vapour bath, and the Vichy bath and douches.”<sup>83</sup> By 1904, the number of Britons in Helwan grew to the point where they even established their own church building named St. Paul's.<sup>84</sup>

Maadi, between Helwan and Cairo, also became a place for British and other wealthy European residents during this time. Developed by the Egyptian Delta Light Railways

<sup>79</sup> All Saints' Church Archives, Minute Book 25, Sister Margaret Clare's report, 25/03/1915.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>81</sup> All Saints' Archives, Cairo, Minute Book 26, Dr. Page May to Cromer, responding to Germans' request to use St. Paul's Church, 24/12/1904.

<sup>82</sup> Rodenbeck,, *op.cit.*, p. 181.

<sup>83</sup> Hopwood, p. 13.

<sup>84</sup> All Saints' Archives, Cairo, Minute Book 26, St. Paul's church committee meeting, 30/12/1904.

Ltd. and the Egyptian Delta Land and Investment Company Ltd. which were jointly run by Britons and Jews<sup>85</sup>, Maadi featured thirty large villas connected to its power station by 1912.<sup>86</sup> An exclusive suburb, Maadi showcased alpine chalets and Raj-style bungalows close to a sporting club and a yacht club, accompanied by nicely landscaped lawns and streets.<sup>87</sup> Its British occupants “were former officers of His Britannic Majesty’s regiments who had joined the service of the expanding Egyptian government.”<sup>88</sup> They included Sir John Godfrey Rogers (Director of Sanitary Department in the Egyptian Ministry of the Interior), Col. George Gillette Hunter (Director General of Coastguard Administration), Crookshank Pasha (Director General of the Prisons Administration) and Alexander Adams and Major S. T. Lucey from the Indian service. Other Britons who lived in Maadi worked in trading houses like John Williamson and Percy Wyfold Stout (of Hogg and Stout Stockbrokers) or were lawyers like Robert Devonshire.<sup>89</sup> Unlike Helwan which had acquired a church building for its British residents by the early 1900s, there was not “even a chapel at a suburb like Maadi [in 1915], where there [were] many English residents.”<sup>90</sup>

Besides Maadi, Zamalek was also home to many British government officials and educated professionals. In F. T. Rowlatt’s private papers, there is a residential map of Gezira (or Zamalek), dated 1907, accompanied by a listing of its residents and their public functions<sup>91</sup>. In 1920, the Ministry of Finance published another map of Zamalek with list detailing similar information.<sup>92</sup> From both of these maps and lists, it appears that the British elite, both in government and business, had very strong representation in Zamalek. Lastly, beginning in 1906, the British government in Cairo authorised the Belgian Company – Cairo Electric Railways to develop a stretch of desert just north-east of Cairo known as Heliopolis.<sup>93</sup> Inspired primarily by the vision of Belgian industrialist Baron Edouard Empain, the ancient town of Heliopolis was converted into

<sup>85</sup> Certain Jews had European nationalities. Some Jews carried British nationalities. Though ‘Britons and Jews’ may not necessarily be two mutually exclusive groups, there appears to be only a small number of Britons with Jewish origins in Egypt.

<sup>86</sup> Raafat, *Maadi*, p. 33.

<sup>87</sup> Rodenbeck, p. 180.

<sup>88</sup> Raafat, p. 33.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 34 & 35.

<sup>90</sup> Egyptian Gazette, 13/05/1915.

<sup>91</sup> *Residential Map of Gezira*, published by the Survey of Egypt, 1907, in F.T. Rowlatt’s Hanging File in private papers, St. Antony’s College archives.

<sup>92</sup> *Residential Map of Zamalek* and “Liste des abonnées de Zamalek, 1920”, Ministry of Finance, Survey of Egypt, Cairo in Serge Weber, “Zamalek depuis la période anglaise, caractéristique socio-economique, fonctions”, Format 4, 1618, (Cairo: 1994).

<sup>93</sup> Aldridge, p. 218.

a modern residential suburb. Heliopolis featured an abundance of neo-Moorish villas and apartments, high-speed tram lines connecting it to Cairo, and 25,000 inhabitants by 1925, among whom were prominent Britons and other Europeans.<sup>94</sup>

### Religious commitment and affiliations of the British in Egypt

Data on the religious affiliations of Britons in Egypt are only available from the censuses of 1897 and 1917.

Table 1.12: British subjects in Egypt and their religious affiliations, 1897.<sup>95</sup>

Religion	Of British subjects in Cairo	Of British subjects in Alex.	Of British subjects in Egypt
Muslim	90	20	578
Coptic	1		
Orthodox	57	165	275
Catholics	1,966	4,923	8,611
Protestants	4,258	2,718	9,088
Total Christians	6,282	7,806	17,974
Jews	305	463	929
Others	50	12	82
Total	6,727	8,301	19,563

Since Britons from the British Isles were most likely Protestants, it appears that more Britons from Britain lived in Cairo than in Alexandria in 1897 (Table 1.12) even though Table 1.8 suggests that a smaller number of British subjects (6,727) lived in the Cairo governorate than in Alexandria (8,301). Also based on the data in Table 1.12, British subjects of Catholic backgrounds, like the Maltese, resided much more in Alexandria than in Cairo. Whatever the case, it appears that every British subject in Egypt had a religious affiliation and the vast majority (almost 92%) was from Christian backgrounds.

In 1917, a similar pattern can be observed where more British Protestants lived in Cairo than in Alexandria (Table 1.13) while more British subjects who were Catholics, like the Maltese, lived in Alexandria rather than Cairo. However, Table 1.11 makes clear that the number of Britons from Britain in Cairo was almost identical to the number of Britons of British origin in Alexandria. Whatever the case, similar to the data in 1897, a large proportion of British subjects was from Christian backgrounds. As for other non-

<sup>94</sup> Rodenbeck, p.180.

<sup>95</sup> Recensement Général de l'Égypte, 1897, on religious affiliations of British subjects in Cairo, p.38; in Alexandria, p. 74; and in Egypt, p. lviii.

Christian religious affiliations, mentioned in Tables 1.12 and 1.13, British subjects of Jewish origin may have included someone like Joseph Smouha who dealt with goods from Manchester and had business dealings in Manchester, Mesopotamia, Palestine and Persia but was based in Egypt.<sup>96</sup> British subjects of the Muslim faith may have referred to a small number of British women who converted to Islam after marrying Egyptian Muslim men. More likely, British subjects of Muslim backgrounds referred to those of Indian or Egyptian origin (Table 1.4) who may have acquired British subject status through being born in a British colony such as India. Moreover, British subjects of Orthodox backgrounds (both in 1897 and in 1917) referred primarily to Greeks, and perhaps some Egyptians, who had also acquired British subject status.

Table 1.13: British subjects in Egypt and their religious affiliations, 1917.<sup>97</sup>

Location	Muslims	Orthodox	Roman Catholics	Protestants	Other Chr. sects	Total Chr'tians	Jews	Others	Total
Cairo	306	1181	2783	2201	21	6186	925	107	7524
Alex	282	1602	5486	1613	236	8935	1252	185	10656
Canal	182	186	1506	398	2	2092	178	87	2539
Damietta	6	4		1		5			11
Suez	108	94	413	259	4	770		5	933
Desert	2	8	29	79		116		5	123
L. Egypt	231	341	171	488	32	1234	74	28	1595
U. Egypt	55	106	283	455	9	853	47	18	973
Total	1172	3522	10671	5494	304	20191	2476	435	24354

However, despite the fact that every British subject seemed to be affiliated with a particular religious denomination, there is evidence to suggest that a significant number of Britons from the British Isles were not serious or devout about their faith. This is no surprise since Britons of this era considered themselves Christians whether they went to church regularly or not; for almost all had been christened and many had been confirmed. In 1921, in the minutes of St. Andrew's Church of Scotland in Cairo, there is a reference to the many Britons in Egypt who were not religious and labelled 'un-churched'. They included British businessmen, government officials, British military personnel, and some professional women as well.<sup>98</sup> Rev. F.A. Klein of the Church Missionary Society also asserted that most Britons in Egypt were interested in concerts, races, balls and dances rather than helping with church functions.<sup>99</sup> By 1900, the British residents of Alexandria were lacking in biblical knowledge; as one missionary

<sup>96</sup> PRO: FO841/172, Joseph Smouha vs. Richard Warbrick, Depositions in Cairo, 02/11/1918.

<sup>97</sup> Table XI, British subjects by religion, Census of Egypt, 1917, p. 534.

<sup>98</sup> St. Andrew's Church of Scotland, Cairo, Archives, Minutes of session meetings, 23/12/1921.

<sup>99</sup> F.A. Klein, "Letters from Egypt", 22/01/1885, *The CMS Intelligencer*, Vol. X., Sept. 1885, p. 676.

commented, their “need...of simple teaching on fundamentals [was] only too apparent.”<sup>100</sup> Due to the perceived spiritual poverty of the British in Egypt, there was even a suggestion that a “missionary among...the English-speaking residents throughout Egypt...was very much needed...and there was very much work that needed doing.”<sup>101</sup> Obviously, this perspective, that many Britons in Egypt were not devout and were ‘unchurched’, seems to have derived from the lenses of a more theologically conservative branch of the church. Whatever the case, British subjects in Egypt during the time of the occupation were primarily from Christian backgrounds, though some were Muslims and Jews. Whether devout or not, the British community in Egypt consisted of Britons from the British Isles who may have been mostly Protestants since there appears to be only a few English-speaking congregations in Cairo and Alexandria at that time - namely of Anglican, Wesleyan or Church of Scotland persuasions.<sup>102</sup>

### Age structure of British in Egypt

Again, only the censuses of 1897 and 1917 record information on age groupings among the British subjects in Egypt. It appears that from Table 1.14, 67% of British subjects in Egypt in 1897 were adults (9,890+3,230 out of 19,563) and more than 75% of these adults were men. This outnumbering of male British subjects over female British subjects indicates that perhaps many single men came to Egypt to work in the traditionally male domains of business, banking, engineering, the civil service and the military.

Table 1.14: Age groupings and percentages of British subjects in Egypt, 1897.<sup>103</sup>

Nationality	Sex	Children		Youths		Adults		Seniors	
		10 yrs + <	%	11-20 yrs	%	21-60 yrs.	%	61 & >	%
Egyptian	Male	1,612,698	33.02%	841,898	17.24%	2,239,948	45.87%	189,057	3.87%
British		1,598	11.99%	1,624	12.90%	9,890	74.21%	215	1.61%
Egyptian	Female	1,585,826	33.47%	808,331	17.06%	2,151,958	45.41%	192,115	4.05%
British		1,570	25.18%	1,223	19.62%	3,230	51.79%	213	3.41%

Table 1.15 provides an even clearer picture of the age ranges of British subjects in Egypt in 1897. The data refers to age groupings among British subjects in Lower Egypt where 97.7% of them (19108 out of 19,563 – the total number of British subjects) lived in Egypt. From Table 1.14, it appears that there is almost five times as many male

<sup>100</sup> CMS papers, letter from Douglas Thornton from Cairo to Rev. Baylis in London, 01/07/1900.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, interview with Rev. D.M. Thornton, with Revs. H.E. Fox, B. Baring-Gould and F. Baylis, 17/06/1902.

<sup>102</sup> St. Andrew’s Church archives, minutes, 23/12/1921.

British subjects between the ages of 21 to 30 as there are females. This sizeable discrepancy may be due to the young single men from Britain who were recruited for military and diplomatic service in Egypt in the 1890s. Less significantly, there seems to be nearly twice as many male British subjects as there are female between the ages of 16 to 20 and 31 to 60. Similarly, the presence of a larger number of male British subjects may be attributed to their jobs in the technical, business, educational, governmental and military sectors.

Table 1.15: Age groupings of British subjects in Lower Egypt, 1897.<sup>104</sup>

	1 and under 1	2	3-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21-30	31-40	41-50	51-60	61-70	71-80	81-90	91-100	100 & above	Total
male	275	155	465	672	532	1083	6388	1745	921	508	156	45	8	1		12,954
Fem	259	178	444	669	562	647	1319	1032	553	280	144	48	18		1	6,154
Total	534	333	909	1341	1094	1730	7707	2777	1474	788	300	93	26	1	1	19,108

The census of 1917 clearly refers to the age groupings of not only British subjects in Egypt but more specifically of British residents from Britain (Table 1.16). It is important to remember that the census of 1917 disregarded any data on the huge number of British military personnel in Egypt in 1917. Thus there seems to be no substantial difference between the population of male Britons than that of females in any age range though overall, there appears to be more British men than women in 1917. Similar to the data of 1897, the majority of Britons in Egypt were between the ages of 20 to 50. Perhaps, as has been mentioned, this can be attributed to the fact that the British from the British Isles viewed Egypt as a temporary place of work. Therefore, many of them sent their children to Britain for secondary and post-secondary schooling while hardly any among them would contemplate retirement in Egypt instead of Britain.

Table 1.16: Age groupings of Britons from the British Isles and British subjects, 1917.<sup>105</sup>

Brits	< 1	1-4	5-9	10-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70-79	80-89	90>	Not stated	Total
male	91	339	395	485	941	1244	862	418	123	28	3	3	35	4947
fem	89	321	358	539	810	953	569	261	120	45	8	1	21	4095
Total	180	669	733	1024	1751	2197	1431	679	243	73	11	4	56	9042
Brit. subjs	456	1832	2284	3933	4262	4591	3134	1830	812	318	63	10	82	24354

<sup>103</sup> Recensement Général de l'Égypte, 1897, p. lxvii.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 670.

<sup>105</sup> Table VIII, Census of Egypt, 1917, p. 520.

### Literacy rates of British in Egypt

There was a significant rise in literacy in Britain during the last half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century that coincided with the development of publicly provided mass schooling. Six million pounds were spent on public education by the government and the Church of England compared to almost no funding for education at the beginning of the century. Laws such as the Education Act of 1870 gave local school boards authority to set minimum standards for school attendance making truancy illegal. Other “circumstances that...increased popular demand for education [were]...rapid urbanization, rising working-class living standards, and the development of publications aimed at the working-class market.”<sup>106</sup> As a result, there was a dramatic increase in the percentage of children enrolled in elementary schools and in the percentage of the population mastering basic literacy skills. Even most working-class English men and women were able to read and write by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Likewise, Britons in Egypt were a relatively literate group of people. The majority of British subjects in Egypt in 1897 were literate (Table 1.17). Compared with Egyptian males whose literacy rate was at 10.5%, male British subjects had a very high literacy rate – 96% in Cairo, 87% in Alexandria and almost 87% in all of Egypt. Around 70% of female British subjects in Egypt were also literate - a huge percentage considering that the literacy rate for Egyptian females during this time was 0.3%. Although the census of 1897 does not give specific information regarding the literacy rate of Britons from the British Isles, it is safe to assume that the high literacy rate among British subjects in Egypt reflects an equally high, if not higher, literacy rate among Britons from Britain. Their high literacy rate is reflected by their various occupations in the government and professional sectors.

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<sup>106</sup> David F. Mitch, *The Rise of Popular Literacy in Victorian England: The Influence of Private Choice and Public Policy*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1992), p. xvi.

Table 1.17: Literacy and illiteracy rates for British subjects, Foreigners and Egyptians over 7 years of age, 1897.<sup>107</sup>

	Total	Male				Female				Both Sexes	
		Literate		Illiterate		Literate		Illiterate		Lit.	Illit.
		number	%	number	%	numb.	%	number	%	%	%
Brits-Cairo	6,030	4,403	96.0	193	4.0	1,061	74.0	373	26.0	91.0	9.0
Brits-Alex	7,150	3,890	87.0	577	13.0	1,894	71.0	789	29.0	81.0	19.0
Brits	17,209	10,509	86.6	1,627	13.4	3,549	70.0	1,524	30.0	82.0	18.0
For.	96,684	46,786	83.3	9,385	16.7	24,930	61.6	15,583	38.4	74.0	26.0
Egy	7,341,325	389,407	10.5	3,306,401	89.5	10,269	00.3	3,635,248	99.7	5.5	94.5
Total	7,438,009	436,193	11.6	3,315,786	88.4	35,199	00.9	3,650,831	99.1	6.3	93.7

The census of 1917 specifies the literacy rate of not only British subjects but Britons from the British Isles (Table 1.18). It appears that more than 85% of British men and almost 80% of British women (from the British Isles) in Egypt were literate. However, there was still a significant number of British men (673) and women (1,648) from the British Isles who were illiterate. Hence, it may be fair to suggest that due to the notable number of Britons from Britain who were illiterate, there may be a reasonable number of them who may have come from the working-class and who may have been less well educated. Compared with the literacy rate of Egyptians (12.7% for men and 1.2% for women), Britons in Egypt were still highly literate and well educated. Surprisingly however, the literacy rates for both male and female British subjects declined significantly since 1897. By 1917, the literacy rate for male British subjects was only 71.5% compared with 86.6% in 1897 (Table 1.17) and the literacy for female British subjects was only 62.7% compared with 70% twenty years earlier. Perhaps similar to the lower literacy rate for Britons from Britain in the 1917 census, the lower literacy rate for British subjects may have been attributed to the arrival of a number of lower class British subjects into Egypt during this time. The literacy rate of French subjects is included in Table 1.18 as a benchmark to compare the literacy rate of Britons from Britain and British subjects with another group of Europeans (or European-educated) who were highly literate. It seems that British subjects were far less literate than French subjects while the literacy rate for Britons from Britain was similar to that of the French subjects in Egypt.

<sup>107</sup> Recensement Général de l'Égypte, 1897, Literacy for persons 7 years and above, p. lx; for literacy rates of British subjects in Cairo, p. 39; for literacy rates of British subjects in Alexandria, p. 75.

Table 1.18: Literacy rates and percentages (for those 5 years old and above) according to Nationality and gender, 1917.<sup>108</sup>

Nationality		Sex	Total Population	Literate	Percentage Literate
Local Egyptian subjects		Male	5,418,476	688,238	12.7%
		Female	5,358,619	66,335	1.2%
British subjects	British (origin: British Isles)	Male	4,517	3,844	85.1%
		Female	3,685	2,037	79.5%
	Maltese	Male	3,617	2,436	67.4%
		Female	3,310	1,794	54.2%
	Other races	Male	3,724	2,204	59.2%
		Female	3,193	1,660	52%
Total British Subjects		Male	11,858	8,484	71.5%
		Female	10,188	6,391	62.7%
French subjects		Male	3,384	2,728	80.6%
		Female	4,780	3,798	79.3%

### Conclusion

Suffice it to say, this preliminary demographic survey of the British in Cairo based primarily on the Egyptian census records provides certain elementary answers to the questions regarding the population of the British in Egypt, their locations of residence, their religious leanings, their ages and their rate of literacy. Essentially, the British community was very small in comparison with the foreign population of Cairo and the overall population of Cairo. The Britons of Cairo tended to live in the districts of Abdine, el-Ezbekiyya, Khalifa and Waili et Matariyya. Though the bulk of them were Protestants, they were not overly committed to religion according to evidence presented in missionary archives. As for age specifications, there were more single young men among the British in Cairo than any other age group – likely because of the British military representation in the city. As for literacy, the vast majority was able to read and write paralleling the literacy rates in Britain. Though the lack of differentiation between British subjects and Britons from the British Isles (the ‘real’ British community) in some of the records made it difficult to formulate precise quantitative answers to the questions above, the figures on Cairo’s British subjects generally provided a sufficient impression of the important demographic issues in question. Whatever the case, the census data, though inadequate, undoubtedly increases our understanding of the British community in Egypt during the time of the British occupation.

<sup>108</sup> Table IX, Nationality and Literacy, Census of Egypt, 1917, p. 530.

## 2. Identifying Boundaries: Defining the Community

### Introduction

In this attempt to understand the British community in occupied Egypt, it may be helpful to devote some time to the question of the identity of the British community. Who belonged in the community and who did not? This chapter aims to investigate the boundaries that separated the British from other ethnic constituencies in Egypt during the occupation. However, though it may appear that distinguishing Britons from other ethnic groups is a straightforward exercise, I will argue that this attempt at determining British identity is somewhat more complicated than one may expect. The task is laden with a few major 'grey areas' since ethnic classification is not purely based on colour and race but may also depend on changing historical circumstances and divergent perspectives. In this discussion, we shall look briefly at the boundaries that clearly delineated between those who belonged in the British 'camp' and those who did not. Yet, the study will primarily focus on the more ambiguous areas of ethnic distinction - namely to what extent were white-skinned Europeans of non-British origin ever identified as British? Were Australians and Maltese, by and large subjects of the British Empire, ever included in the British community? In light of the demise of the Capitulations, what determined the nationality of British offspring in Egypt? And over the question of intermarriage, what were the prospects of British nationals, especially women, marrying Egyptian men? And how did this affect their 'British' identities? Lastly, there was some ambiguity as to whether British missionaries were included as part of the British community or not - due not to their ethnicity but primarily to their unique priorities and values which shaped their self-perception as to whether they belonged to the community or not. However, before launching into the actual discussion of these issues, a short outline of the study of ethnic theory will help to articulate the central theoretical viewpoint of this chapter - that ethnic identity is often ambiguous and dependent on the consciousness and interpretation of the perceiver.

### *Primordial and Situational Theories of Ethnicity*

Although Max Weber briefly utilised the term 'ethnicity' in his work before his death in 1920 and was the only classical sociologist to do so,<sup>1</sup> the word 'ethnicity' did not enter the disciplines of sociology and anthropology until the 1960s and early 1970s.<sup>2</sup> Before the 1960s, ethnic diversity was examined in social science under the category of race.<sup>3</sup> However, due to the 'racist' and discriminatory undertones associated with the word 'race', ethnicity emerged as the new label through which scholars explored the variations of colour, origin, and culture among human beings. In the 1960s, during the initial years of 'ethnic' studies, the word 'ethnicity' was understood to imply the nature of regimentally classified and rigidly conceptualised racial groupings in separate communities. The Functionalist Theory which permeated sociology of the 1950s and part of the 1960s, defined ethnicity as something primordial, sacred and sustained by parochial ties. Ethnic communities were clearly isolated and segregated units characterised by cultural distinctiveness.<sup>4</sup> Inherent in this notion of primordial ethnic ties was that all members of the group shared the same unitary identity.<sup>5</sup>

However, by 1969, Norwegian sociologist Fredrik Barth's groundbreaking work - *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries* established a new paradigm for understanding ethnicity. Barth was a key proponent of situationalism, arguing that ethnicity was essentially not fixed or primordial but shaped by the circumstances. Since ethnicity is dependent on situation, Barth argued that what was important were the boundaries that determined the parameters of each ethnic community. Far more crucial to the notion of ethnicity was the

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<sup>1</sup>Max Weber, *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretative Sociology*, eds. by Guenther Roth and Claus Dittich (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968), p. 389.

<sup>2</sup>Nathan Glazer & Daniel Patrick Moynihan, "Introduction" in Glazer & Moynihan, eds. *Ethnicity: Theory and Experience* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1975), p.1.

<sup>3</sup>Stephen Cornell & Douglas Hartmann, *Ethnicity & Race: Making Identities in a Changing World* (London: Pine Forge Press, 1998), p.69.

<sup>4</sup>Edward Shils, "Primordial, personal, sacred and civil ties" *British Journal of Sociology*: 1957: 8: pp. 130-145.

<sup>5</sup>Cora Govers & Hans Vermeulen "From Political Mobilisation to the Politics of Consciousness" in Govers and Vermeulen, eds. *The Politics of Ethnic Consciousness*, (London: MacMillan Press, 1997), p.15.

external form of organising social life rather than the inborn 'cultural stuff'.<sup>6</sup> In other words, the critical focus of investigation was no longer the aboriginal characteristics and culture of the ethnic group, but the boundaries that distinguished the group from other groups; and these boundaries were produced and affected by particular historical, economic and political interaction and circumstances. They were highly situational, not primordial.<sup>7</sup> By extracting the notion of ethnicity from that of a fixed primordial culture and presenting it as a fluid and malleable form of social organisation,<sup>8</sup> Barth was responsible for the historic shift from a static to an interactional approach in the study of ethnicity. Therefore, Barth's circumstantialism, situationalism or instrumentalism (as it was also called) introduced an approach to the study of ethnicity and ethnic communities which focused on boundaries and was defined in a constantly changing historical, social and cultural context.

Even though Barth's work was groundbreaking, he was not without critics. Eickelman argues that "as logically elegant as Barth's approach to ethnicity is,...it is limited in understanding ethnicity because it lacks an adequate notion of how social processes are related to the production of the cultural conceptions with which people distinguish themselves from 'other' categories and with which they account for, evaluate and weigh the importance of these distinctions."<sup>9</sup> Eickelman suggests that missing from Barth's work is an explanation of how conceptions of distinctiveness within an ethnic group are formulated by social processes. The solution to Eickelman's misgivings about Barth's dearth of conceptual formulation of ethnic distinctiveness is aptly found in the contemporary sociological notion of constructionism.

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<sup>6</sup>Katherine Verdery, "Ethnicity, Nationalism and State-Making: Ethnic Groups and Boundaries Past and Future" in Cora Govers and Hans Vermeulen, eds. *The Anthropology of Ethnicity Beyond 'Ethnic Groups and Boundaries'* (Amsterdam: Het Spinhuis, 1994), p.54.

<sup>7</sup>Fredrik Barth, "Enduring and emerging issues in the analysis of ethnicity" in Govers & Vermeulen, 1994, p.12.

<sup>8</sup>Cora Govers & Hans Vermeulen, "Introduction" in Govers & Vermeulen, 1994, p.2.

<sup>9</sup>Dale Eickelman, *The Middle East: An Anthropological Approach*, 2nd ed. (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, Prentice-Hall, 1989), p.210.



### *The Constructionist Theory of Ethnicity*

The "constructionist turn implies a shift of relative emphasis from ethnicity as an aspect of social organisation to ethnicity as consciousness, ideology or imagination."<sup>10</sup> Constructionism ascertains that the individual consciousness and perception are pivotal to the realisation and continuation of ethnic boundaries and identification. What is paramount to the understanding and formulation of ethnic boundaries is what goes on in the imagination of the individual.<sup>11</sup> Rather than focusing on the broad ethnic classifications of the collective, boundaries created and perceived in one's own consciousness are more accurate in portraying the reality of ethnic categorisation and identification. Urging other social scientists to study individual consciousness, Cohen articulates this position by suggesting:

"Anthropology has been preoccupied with the boundaries between cultures. It has preferred to avoid the boundaries between minds, between consciousness, because ironically enough...these are seen as being too difficult to cross....We have shied away from, have even denied any interest in, the boundedness of the mind, the limits of consciousness which separate one self from another. We have excused ourselves from such an enquiry on the grounds that it would be too difficult, and that our concept of culture enables us to invent people as being similar to each other. Instead of dealing with the individual, we have restrained our ambition and addressed ourselves instead to whole societies or to substantial parts of them. Yet, looking at individuals' boundary transformation may alert us to the qualitative nature of collective boundaries....[and] looking at the boundaries of selfhood must sensitise us to the qualities of bounded collectivities..."<sup>12</sup>

Since individual consciousness and self-perception determine ethnic boundaries and identities, one individual's boundaries may be very different from another's. Thus "ethnicity has a definite appearance, but rather indefinite substance...indefinite means just that, rather than 'insubstantial'. It is simultaneously indefinite and substantial because it is informed by self experience and self consciousness."<sup>13</sup> As individual consciousness becomes the starting point to this constructionist approach to ethnicity, ethnic and racial

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<sup>10</sup>Govers & Vermeulen, 1997, p.4.

<sup>11</sup>This is consistent with Benedict Anderson's view that ethnic distinctions and nationalistic loyalties derive from one's imagination (from Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, revised & extended ed. (London: Verso, 1991))

<sup>12</sup>Anthony Cohen, "Boundaries of Consciousness, Consciousness of Boundaries: Critical Questions for Anthropology" in Govers and Vermeulen, 1994, p.64 & 66.

<sup>13</sup>*Ibid.*, p.62.

identities can be assumed to differ across space and change across time. Consciousness combined with societal conditions, social change, and the varying circumstances that groups encounter, underpin a dynamic, not static, ethnicity. Identities are in constant construction and reconstruction. Boundaries and meanings are continually being negotiated in the mind.<sup>14</sup>

Inevitably in constructionist thought, variability, discontinuity and an acute sense of fuzziness problematise the notion of firm boundaries.<sup>15</sup> Fixed boundaries give way to boundaries that are malleable and penetrable. Notions of ethnic identities are less rigidly defined and exclusively pure. Hybrid, mixed and ambiguous identities emerge to form what Papastergiadis defines as the 'third space':

"Concepts of purity and exclusivity have been central to a racialised theory of identity...[But] In the last decade there has been barely a debate on cultural theory or postmodern subjectivity that has not acknowledged the productive side of hybridity, and described identity as being in some form of hybrid state....The positive feature of hybridity is that it invariably acknowledges that identity is constructed through a negotiation of difference, and that the presence of fissures, gaps and contradictions is not necessarily a sign of failure. In its most radical form, the concept...stresses that identity...[is] an energy field of different forces. ...Its 'unity' is not found in the sum of its parts, but emerges from the process [as]...a *third space* within which other elements encounter and transform each other."<sup>16</sup>

### ***Ethnic Theory and the British Community in Occupied Cairo***

In this glimpse of the British community in occupied Cairo, I will attempt to outline certain definite boundaries where the distinction between British and non-British was clear. Yet drawing on constructionist theory, my main aim is to suggest that the task of defining the ethnic constituency of the British in Cairo is less straightforward than what one may have thought previously since its boundaries were ambiguous and perceived by varying individual consciousnesses. Assuming that, according to Stoler, "colonisers...were neither by nature unified... [and] their boundaries - always marked by whom those in power considered legitimate progeny and whom they did not - were never

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<sup>14</sup>Cornell & Hartmann, p.101.

<sup>15</sup>Govers and Vermeulen, 1997, p.2.

<sup>16</sup>Nikos Papastergiadis, "Tracing Hybridity in Theory" in Pnina Werbner & Modood Tariq, eds., *Debating Cultural Hybridity: Multi-Cultural Identities and the Politics of Anti-Racism* (London: Zed Books, 1997), pp.257-258 (emphasis mine).

clear,"<sup>17</sup> how were the ethnic boundaries separating British nationals from the rest of the population blurred or ambiguous? Where were fixed boundaries? How did their interaction with the changing historical circumstances challenge their definition of who belonged to the British community and who did not? Is there a 'third space' constituting a hybridity that emanates from determining British ethnic identity out of unclear boundaries?

Before discussing these questions however, one key reservation needs to be addressed. Kitroeff, in his study of the Greeks in Egypt, asks that since ethnicity as a concept is used differently by cultural anthropologists, historians, political scientists and sociologists, how is it possible to apply all of these varying uses to one study?<sup>18</sup> Here, I respond by offering a restricted definition of ethnicity for the purposes of our discussion based again on constructionism. Ethnicity, as used in this chapter, is the sense of or belief in belonging to a social group according to a perceived common ancestry.

### **Clear Ethnic Boundaries**

Even though the bulk of this discussion attempts to raise points regarding the ambiguity of the boundaries that separated the British from other European as well as "Oriental" identities during Britain's occupation of Egypt, there is ample evidence to suggest that these boundaries were rather fixed and clearly defined. In other words, within their 'consciousness', the British in Egypt knew unambiguously who belonged in their 'camp' and who did not. For instance, British officers were exclusive, insular and seldom mixed with the local or non-British populations. Lord Cromer recalled that "in Egypt [the English officer] mixes rarely in any society that is not purely English...[They] live their own insular exclusive lives; they neither know, nor care to know, anything about local politics."<sup>19</sup> Even during World War I, when the British military desperately needed volunteer nurses to help take care of wounded Imperial soldiers, non-British women were not accepted because the military officers "did not like people of foreign

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<sup>17</sup>Ann Laura Stoler, "Rethinking Colonial Categories: European Communities and the Boundaries of Rule" in *Comparative Study of Society and History* 31 (1989), p.137.

<sup>18</sup>Kitroeff, p.4.

<sup>19</sup>FO633/87, Cromer's papers, ch. 36, p. 832.

extraction...to be about [in their hospitals]."<sup>20</sup> Further, as will be discussed in more detail in the chapter on World War I, it was clear that as the possibility of conscription loomed larger, only Britons from Britain were considered eligible. In other words, British subjects of other ethnic backgrounds were exempt from the prospective draft that never materialised.<sup>21</sup>

Not only were British military personnel unwilling and disinterested in mixing with other cultures and ethnic groups in Egypt, British officials and teachers shared the same exclusive tendency. By the 1900s when a greater influx of British officials entered Egypt, they "formed a colony of their own, and did not need to mingle with the natives. [They] had little knowledge of the Egyptians and even less contact with them."<sup>22</sup> Likewise, British teachers, recruited from Britain to teach in Egyptian secondary schools "referred...to their pupils as 'walids' [and]...to their Egyptian colleagues as the 'effendis'. [British and Egyptian teachers] had separate common rooms."<sup>23</sup> They were told to "go about their business in a detached, clinical manner...which meant that [they] should avoid becoming too friendly with Egyptians."<sup>24</sup> The teachers were also to have

"little or no friendly intercourse...[with] their pupils; as soon as their work was over, the English masters escaped on their bicycles to the sporting club at Gezirah, there to indulge in their own games of golf or tennis or squash racquets, or to sit and gossip at the Turf Club over tea or a whiskey and soda with their English friends."<sup>25</sup>

In other words, "contacts between the British and Egyptians were usually limited to formal meetings between officials at various levels...Rarely were friendships formed beyond the call of duty."<sup>26</sup> Indeed a sharp boundary distinguished the British community from Egyptians and other non-British residents in occupied Cairo. But what were the factors that created this firm divide? First, there was a significant language gap between most of the members of the British community and other Europeans and Egyptians at this time. "Most...Englishmen ...could not speak the language [of Arabic] properly and

<sup>20</sup> Lady Rochdale, Diaries, Imperial War Museum, 19/03/1915.

<sup>21</sup> FO141/644/2476, letter from High Commissioner Sir Reginald Wingate to Judicial Adviser Amos, 22/06/1918.

<sup>22</sup> Humphrey Bowman, *Middle East Window* (London: Longmans Green, 1942), p.140.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p.39.

<sup>24</sup> Welch, *op.cit.*, p. 29.

<sup>25</sup> Bowman, p. 39.

<sup>26</sup> Hopwood, *Tales of Empire*, p. 56.

therefore felt divorced from Egyptians.”<sup>27</sup> Even though a fair number of British officials had some proficiency in French and Arabic (they had to pass Arabic exams early in their careers), the “ideal of creating and maintaining a corps of British officials fluent in the language of the country was never realized.”<sup>28</sup> The British military officer especially did not mix with “any society which is not English...because of his ignorance of any language but his own.”<sup>29</sup> Even British civil servants that were usually better linguists than military officers socialised in primarily English-speaking circles.<sup>30</sup> Some departments, like the Ministry of Education even opposed the hiring of British teachers who had a knowledge of Arabic for fear that they would “waste their time explaining what they taught to natives in Arabic rather than making them learn English.”<sup>31</sup> Second, cultural interests were by and large very different between the British and Egyptians and other non-British residents in Cairo. The Briton’s

“social habits differ widely from those of the cosmopolitan society of the Egyptian towns. What does the Levantine, Frenchman, or Italian [or Egyptian] care for horse-races, polo, cricket, golf, and all the other quasi-institutions which the English officer establishes where he goes?”<sup>32</sup>

In other words, “national tastes, interests and leisure habits differed to such a degree that the lack of common ground severely restricted conversation and hampered the development of greater intimacy [between Britons and Egyptians].”<sup>33</sup> Not only did recreational interests divide Egyptians and Britons but the clubs in which the activities were experienced entrenched the lines of segregation further (though they allowed to some degree non-British European participation). At the Gezira Club, “Egyptians were excluded in 1886 when it was first opened as a playground for the British.”<sup>34</sup> By “1900, club and sporting society had taken shape, institutionalizing the separation of Egyptian and European. Egyptians were [still] barred from entry.”<sup>35</sup> The Gezira and Turf clubs

<sup>27</sup> Welch, p. 25.

<sup>28</sup> Tignor, *op.cit.*, p. 189.

<sup>29</sup> Cromer, *Modern Egypt*, Vol. II, (London: Macmillan, 1908), p. 254.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 255.

<sup>31</sup> Welch, p. 29.

<sup>32</sup> FO633/87, Cromer, p. 832.

<sup>33</sup> Suzanne Brugger, *Australians and Egypt, 1914-1919*, (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1980), p. 48.

<sup>34</sup> Magda Abu-Fadil, “Gezira Club – Still the ‘in’ Place to be”, *The Middle East*, (Sept., 1990), p. 45.

<sup>35</sup> Welch, p. 43.

“were almost completely barred to the Egyptian population before the outbreak of the First World War. No Egyptian obtained membership in either of them in this period; additionally, it was regarded as being extremely bad taste for a British member to bring an Egyptian into the club as a guest.”<sup>36</sup>

Moreover, British residents in Cairo were concerned that close contact with the majority of Egyptians would expose them to illness. Since Britons were susceptible to all kinds of “seasonal colds, sore throats, bronchitis [and] a variety of gastric ailments, [and] cities were crowded, often dirty and unhygienic,”<sup>37</sup> they were careful to establish a ‘healthy’ physical distance from Egyptians, especially when it came to residential considerations. Particularly during cholera epidemics (in 1883, 1896 and 1906) when many Egyptians died, Britons in Egypt, like Oriental Secretary Harry Boyle, established stringent boundaries of quarantine, even on his own property, to prevent access or interaction with Egyptian domestic helpers.<sup>38</sup> Yet, another reason for the rigid boundary between Britons and Egyptians was the formula through which British officials utilised to maintain their power base in Egypt in light of the small number of Britons in Egypt.

“One method by which the British were able to control this population was that of extolling their own racial superiority, maintaining their isolation from the Egyptians, and treating the Egyptians as kindly, but inferior peoples. This attitude instilled fear and respect in the populace, so long used to having an alien minority rule by many of the same techniques. When supplemented with force or threat of it and coupled with genuine efforts to bring material and other benefits to the subject peoples, this technique enabled the British to maintain order with a minimum of drain on their military establishment.”<sup>39</sup>

To uphold this authoritative distance, “some senior officials even lectured young English recruits on the proper social conduct in Egypt...being that the English were not expected to associate with Egyptians outside of work.”<sup>40</sup> Further, “British society in Cairo had become so narrow under Cromer and so excessively introvert that his successor, Sir Eldon Gorst, was almost ostracized by the local English when he tried to invite Egyptians to the British Agency.”<sup>41</sup> By keeping a firm distance away from Egyptians, particularly during the years of Cromer’s ‘reign’, British officials in Cairo hoped to project and promote an image of respect, power and authority in front of their Egyptian ‘subjects’. Hence due to language and cultural divisions, the British community were

<sup>36</sup> Tignor, p. 193.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 25.

<sup>38</sup> Harry Boyle papers, St. Antony’s College, 23/07/1902 as quoted in Hopwood, *Tales of Empire*, p. 44.

<sup>39</sup> Tignor, p. 194.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 193.

<sup>41</sup> Aldridge, p. 213.

often isolated from non-British Europeans in Cairo as well as Egyptians. Health concerns and the desire to preserve power further segregated them from the average Egyptian.

Although their exclusiveness and aloofness may have buttressed the British officials' aura of superiority and authority, this approach also generated a backlash of anger and resentment among Egyptians culminating in eventual nationalist action against the British. Inevitably, the Gezira and Turf Clubs "became objects of envy and hatred for the Egyptian population."<sup>42</sup> Mustafa Kamel, a prolific Egyptian nationalist writer and leader during the occupation, commented that the cold and unattached style of British rule in Egypt under Cromer, was heavy-handed and "deprived the Egyptian [officials] of any influence or initiative."<sup>43</sup> Around the same time, Egyptian author Muhammad al-Muwaylihi, in his novel *Hadith 'Isa ibn Hisham*, concurred that the British control of Egypt which kept the Egyptians basically powerless would result in a greater desire for Egyptian self-rule – "to run our government with our own hands."<sup>44</sup> Muwaylihi echoed the sentiments of "many educated Egyptians at the time when *Hadith 'Isa ibn Hisham* was being written [who felt a]...sense of frustration and bitterness against the occupying power...and the...need for...reform."<sup>45</sup>

Besides describing Egyptian reaction to the aloofness of many members of the British community, it may be important to mention here that not all Britons followed this strict scheme of social apartheid. As aforementioned, some British officials were encouraged to learn Arabic and many were sent for long periods to the Egyptian countryside to work as inspectors for various government departments which meant that they had to mix frequently with Egyptians. Yet, when they returned and became part of the British community in Cairo (and no longer in a rural setting), they inevitably slipped back into their comfortable English-speaking huddle. Nevertheless, there are a few records of young British officials who deliberately sought the friendship of Egyptians – outside from the necessary obligations of work. A case in point was John de Vere Loder, a young upper-class lieutenant and Etonian, who, over a period of time, befriended the Wissa,

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 193..

<sup>43</sup> Mustafa Kamel, *al-Liwa*, 12/04/1907 as quoted in J.C.B. Richmond, *Egypt 1798-1952: Her Advance Towards a Modern Identity*, (London: Methuen & Co., 1977), p. 156.

<sup>44</sup> Muhammad al-Muwaylihi, *Hadith 'Isa ibn Hishām*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (1928), p. 245 as quoted in Roger Allen, *A Period of Time: A Study and Translation of Hadith 'Isa ibn Hishām by Muhammad al-Muwaylihi*, (Reading: Ithaca, 1992), p. 85.

Alexen and Khayat families, wealthy cotton merchant clans who lived in Alexandria but owned plantations in Assiut. He played tennis with the youths in the families and even went on a motor boat holiday in Assiut with them.<sup>46</sup> Although the Britons who seemed to have the most relational contact with Egyptians were missionaries (whose case will be discussed later) or very peculiar officers like de Vere Loder, it is fair to say that the majority of Britons in occupied Cairo rarely interacted socially with Egyptians and maintained a strong British identification and affiliation with the British community in Egypt. In other words, in most cases and for most of the time, there was a clear ethnic distinction and social boundary between Britons and non-British Europeans and Egyptians at the time of the occupation.

### ***British and Westernised Muslims***

Though there were definite boundaries separating the British from the Egyptians, were there factors, like a common European education or Christian faith (as in the case of the Copts) that may have united the British and the Egyptians? First, in the case of Europeanised Egyptians, Cromer points out that "most Europeanised Egyptians [were] Muslims."<sup>47</sup> These Muslim Egyptians were by and large from upper-class backgrounds and sought to imitate the lifestyles of Europeans "not only by adopting their technology...but also by internalizing their attitudes"<sup>48</sup> and "standards of desirability in dress, food, residence [and] etiquette."<sup>49</sup> As a result of this emulation for European objects, lifestyles and disposition, some Europeanised Egyptians began to acquire very positive opinions of Western secularism and individualism which consequently increased a certain apathy or lack of concern toward religion as whole.<sup>50</sup> This group of Egyptians, Cromer identified as "de-Moslemised Moslems and invertebrate Europeans."<sup>51</sup> He

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<sup>45</sup> Allen, *A Period of Time*, p. 93.

<sup>46</sup> John de Vere Loder, private papers at St. Antony's College, 25/06/1916 & 01/07/1916, as quoted in Derek Hopwood, *Tales of Empire*, p. 56.

<sup>47</sup> FO633/86: Vol.IV, Part IV, Chapter XXXV, Lord Cromer, "Europeanised Egyptians, 1884-1898", p.808.

<sup>48</sup> Soha Abdel Kader, *Egyptian Women in a Changing Society, 1899-1987*, (London: Lynne Reinner Publishers, 1987), p. 70.

<sup>49</sup> Magda Baraka, *The Egyptian Upper Class between Revolutions, 1919-1952*, (Reading: Ithaca, 1998), p. 141.

<sup>50</sup> Kader, p. 70.

<sup>51</sup> FO633/86, Cromer, p. 808.

identified them as Franco-Egyptians and not at all as hybrids - culturally British yet physically Egyptian. Each Europeanised Egyptian was seen as:

"...first...an agnostic...The term 'Europeanised' when applied to the Egyptian educated in Europe, though not a misnomer, is lacking in precision, for the great majority of Europeanised Egyptians are, in truth, Gallicised Egyptians with the stamp of...French training on them."<sup>52</sup>

Cromer further argues that French education and administrative training have been more detrimental than helpful for the Egyptians.

"[And] among the obstacles which have stood in the way of the English reformer in Egypt none are more noteworthy than that the Europeanised Egyptian is impregnated with French rather than with English habits of thought...French education has exercised a deteriorating effect on the Egyptians. The tendency of every Egyptian official is to shirk responsibility. He takes little real interest or pride in his work. He thinks less of what should be done than of acting in such a manner as that no personal blame can be attached to himself. This habit of thought makes the Egyptian official instinctively shrink from the English system of administration, for under that system a good deal is left to the discretion of the individual, who is, therefore, to think for himself. He naturally flies for refuge in the French system, and there he finds administrative procedures prescribed apparently made for everything, to the most minute detail, in a series of elaborate codes. Entrenched behind these codes, the Gallicised Egyptians is, to his joy, relieved in a great degree from the necessity of thinking for himself. The Gallicised Egyptian does not recognise emergencies and he spurns common sense."<sup>53</sup>

In Cromer's 'consciousness', even the Europeanised Egyptians were quite distinct from the British even though they aspired to Western lifestyles and to some degree, secularism. No doubt, underlying Cromer's attitude was the colonial rivalry between the French and the British at this time. As a result of their Gallicisation (or French education, administrative passivity and incompetence), Cromer characterised Europeanised Egyptians as a lesser race. However, according to one British resident in Cairo, "Egyptians of all classes and shades of opinion...and the fallaheen in particular, [were weak and in need] of a strong mastermind [the British], without the influence of which they [were to] lose their bearings."<sup>54</sup> Needless to say, a clear wall existed between the ruling British and the subservient Egyptians (of all classes and religious backgrounds – even those who adopted European lifestyles and secularism).

### *The British and the Copts*

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<sup>52</sup>*Ibid.*, p.813.

<sup>53</sup>*Ibid.*, p.815.

Was the position of the Copts any different than the Europeanised Muslim Egyptians? Did a common Christian heritage fudge the lines of ethnic distinctiveness? Perhaps, not so surprisingly, the answer is no. Even though Copts shared similar religious convictions with the British (though Coptic Orthodoxy is admittedly very distinct from the various denominations represented in Britain, the traditions stem from Christian roots), there was little opportunity for sharing ethnic identities. Though one may argue on the contrary that Protestants may have despised the Orthodox more than even followers of other religions, this was clearly not the case in Egypt since "the idea that the English, being a Christian race, should show a preference for native Christians was a fixed one and no amount of arguments could shake it (if a Christian could not help a Christian, what was the value of Christianity?)."<sup>55</sup> Nonetheless, there was little doubt that the Copts were Egyptians first and that the ethnic boundary was clear between British and Egyptians. This was further confirmed when in 1919 much to the dismay and disappointment of the British, the "Copts [whom the British had assisted immensely] joined Moslems in the mosques and exhorted excited crowds to unite in driving the British from Egypt"<sup>56</sup> Even though the Copts may have received more assistance from the British and shared some common Christian beliefs with them, they were without question Egyptians first, in their own eyes and consciousness as well as that of the British. Even Westernised Oxford-educated Copts were Egyptians to the core:

"But in the higher walks of life, the Coptic lady is both emancipated and enlightened. She blends intellectuality with education, being often highly cultured and possessed of literary gifts of no mean order. She, or her daughter, has been to an English public school and perhaps to an Oxford college besides - contacts from which she has learned to admire liberty and fair play, if from a somewhat one-sided viewpoint. The stirrings of patriotism have thrilled her with a long-dormant sense of inheritance; she is Egyptian to the core, and full of aspirations towards her country's resurrection and aggrandizement. She has its history at her fingertips and dreams of a Pharonic restoration."<sup>57</sup>

### *The British, the Turks and the Levantines*

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<sup>54</sup>FO141/581/9132: November 1919, From G.R. Beasley, Land Expert, in report by Non-Official British Community.

<sup>55</sup>FO141/581/9132: General Memorandum: 05/07/1919: A.H. Hooker in report of Non-Official British Community, p.28.

<sup>56</sup>*Ibid.*, p.29. The first time in history, Copts and Moslems threw off centuries of religious and racial prejudices, and presented a united front to the world that they were serious about expelling the British from Egypt.

<sup>57</sup>Mabel Caillard, *A Lifetime in Egypt: 1876-1935* (London: Grant Richards, 1935), p.238.

Ethnic boundaries between the British and the Turks in Egypt may have been just as pronounced as the boundary between the British and the Egyptians. Even though members of the Turkish Court may have shared some semblance of power and wealth with the British, they were clearly identified as primarily Turkish. Perhaps, most poignantly, Rodd describes Ghazi Moukhtar Pasha, Turkish High Commissioner in Egypt<sup>58</sup>, as "a sympathetic and dignified example of the *old-fashioned immutable Turk*,"<sup>59</sup> even though he spoke fluent French, was a brilliant military commander, lived in "sumptuous quarters in Cairo...[with another] residence near the sea"<sup>60</sup> and was honoured at dinner parties hosted by the European diplomatic elite.<sup>61</sup> Even the powerful, wealthy and honoured Moukhtar Pasha was unmistakably labelled a Turk. There was indeed clear boundary separating the British and the Turks.

Meanwhile, Greeks, Syrians, Armenians and other Levantine ethnic groups (those from the Eastern part of the Mediterranean), though perhaps wealthier than the Egyptians (like the Turks), were also clearly on the other side of the ethnic divide vis-à-vis the British. The most glaring example of this clear boundary was the reason behind the lack of attendance of British students in the Victoria College for boys in Alexandria.

"The school is not and never has been popular with the members of the British community here. The English themselves dislike the idea of having their boys educated with Levantines, and hence they think that the school never will be used by the better class of English boys. The argument that the school undoubtedly is and will be more and more of great use in increasing British influence here, unfortunately does not appeal to the average Englishman."<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>58</sup>Sir James Rennell Rodd, *Social and Diplomatic Memoirs, 1894-1901*, p.9: Moukhtar Pasha was originally appointed joint commissioner with Sir Henry Drummond-Wolff in 1885 by the Sultan Abdul-Hamid of the Ottoman Empire. The Sultan, however, refused to ratify the Drummond-Wolff Convention of 1887 nullifying Moukhtar Pasha's role. Yet, the Sultan kept Moukhtar Pasha in Egypt and allowed him the unofficial title of High Commissioner because the Sultan believed that Moukhtar had an 'evil eye'. The Sultan "insisted on the maintenance of an honourable sinecure for this fine old soldier at a respectable distance from the Bosphorus." Moukhtar Pasha had no official status in Egypt. H.F. Wood in *Egypt Under the British* (London: Chapman-Hall, 1896), p.62, further describes the dubious role of the Pasha in Egypt: "The Ottoman High Commissioner has no intelligible attributes in Egypt. He is not an ambassador - for a sovereign cannot send an ambassador to a portion of his own dominions - and the Khedive himself is the representative of the Sultan of Egypt. Neither has Mukhtar any part or lot in the administration of the country...He is an anomaly...a nucleus...[for] Moslem fanaticism, or the intrigues of the old Turkish party. His presence is thus a perpetual nuisance."

<sup>59</sup>Rodd, p.9 (emphasis mine)

<sup>60</sup>ibid.

<sup>61</sup>Thomas Skelton Harrison, *The Homely Diary of a Diplomat in the East, 1897-1899* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1917), p.163.

<sup>62</sup>FO141/512/608: 20/05/1911: Letter to Lord Cromer from President's office (of the Sanitary Maritime & Quarantine Council of Egypt).

The British of Egypt, most of whom were from the upper middle classes, did not want their children educated with other ethnic groups, especially from the Levant, out of fear that their children's educational standards would be threatened by the participation of what was seen as inferior 'Oriental' races. Their unwillingness may also have been due to the function of public schools – to form beneficial networking for future careers. This touches upon the British attitude that they did not see their children having careers in Egypt, so the networking at a school, albeit full of wealthy Levantines and Egyptians, was far less advantageous than in a British public school. Therefore, Britons in Egypt with the means sent their children to school in Britain. The interracial boarding house, proposed by Baring, never materialised.

Ironically, in spite of his preference for the segregation of Britons from other ethnic groups, Sir Evelyn Baring (later Lord Cromer), earlier in his administration, put forth the idea of a boarding house where British and Egyptians boys could freely mix.

"It is most desirable that the young Egyptians could not be too much separated from the English boys...The main object...in encouraging this scheme is not so much to teach the Egyptian boys such knowledge as can be learnt from books and by tuition - though that is also very important - as to afford them every opportunity of acquiring the healthy moral tone which exists amongst English schoolboys. This, of course, can only be acquired if they mix freely with the English boys."<sup>63</sup>

Why did Baring advocate an interracial environment at Victoria College and yet at the same time support a policy of aloofness for British officials? The reason was that in order to combat 'Frenchness' in Egyptian education, Baring sought to establish 'Britishness' among the children of wealthy Levantines and Egyptians through this boarding school (much more will be discussed in reference to Victoria College's symbolic significance in the next chapter).

### **The Ambiguous Ethnic Identity of Britons in Occupied Cairo**

After briefly examining the boundary that existed between the British and Coptic, Europeanised and ordinary Egyptians, as well as Turks and Levantines in occupied Egypt, our attention now turns to determining the areas of ethnic ambiguity in the British

semi-colonial<sup>64</sup> experience in Egypt. This discussion will argue that though the British were clearly segregated from the non-British during this time, as previously observed, there were situations where the ethnic boundary was unclear. In other words, while the boundaries were supposedly fixed, certain situations may have loosened or blurred the boundaries, resulting in the ambiguity of ethnic boundaries according to individual consciousness. These ambiguities are borne out in the attempt to determine the ethnic identities of 'white-skinned' Europeans and Australian soldiers during World War I, British subjects of Maltese origin, Egyptian-born children of British subjects upon the demise of the Capitulations, and the British women who married Egyptian Muslim men. The identity of British missionaries as members of the British community was also ambiguous due not to their ethnicity but to their values and perspective.

### *White-Skinned Europeans and Australians*

Even though "British officers, administrators and businessmen [in occupied Egypt] kept aloof from the other Europeans and as Lord Cromer...had to admit, 'there is little social sympathy between the English, and any class of Europeans in Egypt.'"<sup>65</sup> The white skin colour shared by Britons and other Europeans allowed for the possible cross-over of certain individuals into another 'white' ethnic group in certain instances. White skin colour, during the colonial era, usually meant superiority.

"Being a 'white man' was not, according to the colonial literature, just a question of pigmentation. It was a moral condition. Belief in one's innate superiority was only half-belief. It had to be demonstrated. Superiority lay in deeds: it lay not just in power but in the way power was exercised. A white skin was held to be an asset because it was associated with qualities...or order [and respect]."<sup>66</sup>

White skin colour generally united all white skinned people into a single category of power. But though the British were meeting white Europeans regularly, they were usually quite clear as to who was British and who was not. For instance, British diplomat

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<sup>63</sup> FO633/5, Cromer's papers, 05/05/1889: Letter from Baring to Mr. Gerrard in reference to conversation with Yacoub Pasha regarding the educational system.

<sup>64</sup>Kitroeff, p.4. Semi-colonial may a useful term to describe the political state of Egypt during the British occupation, still under the suzerainty of the Ottoman Porte, yet 'ruled' by Lord Cromer, the British Consul-General and other British officials who were in key Egyptian government posts.

<sup>65</sup>*Ibid.*, p.24

<sup>66</sup>A.J. Stockwell, "The White Man's Burden and Brown Humanity: Colonialism, Ethnicity in British Malaya", *The Southeast Asian Journal of Social Sciences* (Vol.10, No.1, 1982), p.46.

Sir James Rennell Rodd records that although "the Fencing Club was indeed a happy point of contact with the French colony,"<sup>67</sup> there was never any doubt as to who was French and who was British - particularly because the French were imperial rivals of a very different linguistic and cultural background. Similarly, at dinner parties and hotel balls, the literature of the time rarely accounts for any ambiguity between Britons and Europeans of non-British origin. Yet, Rodd recalls one incident which illustrated this ambiguity. He notes that "the Austro-Hungarian Consul-General, Baron Heidler von Egeregg, whom I had known in Berlin, had in Egypt become an enthusiastic amateur of golf, and as British as any of us."<sup>68</sup> Here, we see that it was possible for an European of a similar skin colour to be labelled British due to his affinity to and passion for a British sport. This incident is an example of the flexibility of ethnic classification and boundaries. This Austro-Hungarian aristocrat, described as 'British' in this very limited and specific context of enjoying golf, would never have been identified as such under most usual circumstances.

Similarly, the Australians, who shared a common skin colour, language and heritage (Australia had only obtained political autonomy from Britain in 1901 but was still closely bound to Britain by economic ties and mutual needs of defence<sup>69</sup>) with the British, were not surprisingly classified as British during the First World War. When one lone Australian soldier was warned by British officers not to be out on his own, the rationale given him was that he needed to be disciplined and astute as a member of the British armed forces<sup>70</sup> - even though the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.) was a distinct unit on its own right. What frustrated the British in Egypt was the lack of discipline observed among the Australian troops even though they were stationed in Egypt to protect British interests alongside very disciplined British troops.<sup>71</sup> One British observer despaired of the Australian soldiers by perceiving that they were clearly different -

"not due to their predominating numbers nor to their slouch hats. It was rather a matter of personality. Military discipline seems to run off an Australian like water off a duck's back. He will not only answer a question, but will favour you with all his views on that and allied topics, expressed in vigorous and

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<sup>67</sup>Rodd, p.41.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, p.67.

<sup>69</sup> Brugger, p.7.

<sup>70</sup>Caillard, p.221.

<sup>71</sup>Brugger, p.17.

unconventional language, as man to man. His well-known non-saluting pose in early days was only typical of his attitude towards the minutiae of military discipline in general."<sup>72</sup>

Though the Australians were thought to be rude and undisciplined, they were still considered part of the British Empire's forces. (More will be written about the Australians in the chapter on the British community and World War I.) Thus individuals with white skin, and in particular non-British Europeans and Australian troops, could be labelled with the ethnic identity of another white skinned group - the British. This certainly happened in certain situations in occupied Cairo.

### *The Maltese*

The ambivalence of the Maltese identity also questioned the homogeneity of the British community in Cairo. The Maltese were made British subjects as a result of the British occupation of Malta, Gozo and the Ionian Islands in 1814 (Malta remained a British dependency until 1968). Malta represented an important naval base for the British fleet to secure an accessible and profitable Mediterranean trade route and influence in the region. The Maltese formed the largest contingent of British subjects in Egypt during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. At its peak, the Maltese population in Egypt may have reached as many as 25,000 during this time.<sup>73</sup> Many were loyal, honest and industrious artisans.<sup>74</sup> They had a strong sense of community exemplified by the work of the Maltese Benevolent Society of Alexandria. Established in 1889, the Society's main object was "to render moral and material help to Maltese British subjects residing in Alexandria and to assist the poor of the...community."<sup>75</sup> Although the Maltese were not particularly rich, the Benevolent Society distributed £E 28,000 worth of aid to the most urgent and deserving cases and an average of £E700 per year to the Alexandrian Municipality during the years 1890 to 1919. Nearly all the funds came from the initiative of private donors or members of the committee. In those 30 years, the Benevolent

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<sup>72</sup>Martin Briggs, *Through Egypt in War-Time* (London: Unwin, 1918), p.26

<sup>73</sup>FO141/684/9445: 01/03/1920: Letter from Conte Mario de Villa-Clary, President of the Maltese Benevolent Society, to Viscount Milner, on his Special Mission on Egypt. The 25,000 Maltese were more numerous than the British community proper (including the military).

<sup>74</sup>Ibid.

<sup>75</sup>Ibid.

Society also created a band, a club, two artistic and dramatic societies and the Mutual Help Society for Artisans.<sup>76</sup>

Even though there was a strong nationalist movement in Malta who protested against British occupation in favour of Maltese independence,<sup>77</sup> certain members of the Maltese community in Egypt believed in the importance of defining themselves (and all the Maltese in Egypt) as loyal British subjects. Such a pro-British enthusiast was Conte Mario de Villa-Clary - president of the Benevolent Society for almost 25 years (1895-1919) and later chairman of the Committee of the Maltese Colony of Alexandria. He was from an upper class background, married to an English lady and had a son studying in Britain. He frequently referred to the pro-British aspirations of the Maltese community in his writings. Notably, he desired that the benevolence of the Maltese community would not only reflect the community's virtues but would honour the British Crown.

"I have always endeavoured to work in such a way as to make the society...a centre from which should shine all the best and most noble manifestations of our Community not only when our devotion to our Mother Island is concerned, but also as regards our loyalty towards the British Crown in the person of our most Gracious Emperor and King."<sup>78</sup>

According to de Villa-Clary, the Maltese were committed to the British Empire. They rejoiced when the Empire rejoiced and mourned when the Empire mourned. Along with British subjects everywhere, the Maltese in Egypt zealously celebrated Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee in 1897. The Committee of the Maltese Colony in Alexandria also sponsored a free English course for young Maltese boys.<sup>79</sup>

De Villa-Clary longed for the unity of the British community with the Maltese community. In his mind, the two communities needed to converge into one stronger entity for the sake and strength of the British Empire. He was encouraged by the words of Lord Milner who included the Maltese among the British subjects whose generosity he sought.

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<sup>76</sup>ibid.

<sup>77</sup>Mohammad al-Roumi, *Kuwait and Malta: British Imperial Policy, 1899-1939* (University of Malta: 1980) M.A. Dissertation, p.111.

<sup>78</sup>FO141/684/9445: Letter from Conte de Villa-Clary

<sup>79</sup>ibid.

"I think...a better understood and more intimate relationship, more fraternal feelings evidenced by true open-hearted mutual help between English and Maltese in Egypt, and a deeper acknowledgement of all the sincere efforts the latter are making to that purpose, would certainly give a stronger appoint to the British Community both in Egypt and in the East."<sup>80</sup>

In response to Milner's speech, de Villa-Clary wrote:

"Your Lordship's masterly speech after the dinner held at Victoria College...and especially your generous appeal to unity, solidarity and to mutual help among *all* British subjects living in Egypt has delighted me, because your words, my Lord, are in perfect agreement with the excellent feelings and the dearest wish of our Maltese Colony. I am absolutely convinced that if Your Excellency's wise advices and generous appeal are put into practice by all British subjects in Egypt, the English and Maltese Colonies in Egypt will father together and *form a solid and strong Colonial group of active and loyal British subjects* whose importance and interests could counterbalance those of any other foreign colony established in Egypt...we shall prove once more...to the other Foreign powers and to the whole world that it is necessary for the British Empire to maintain and strengthen its prevailing position in Egypt not only to preserve its colonial interests through the Suez Canal and the Cape routes, but also to protect the *numerous British subjects established in Egypt...of whom the Maltese form the strongest contingent.*"<sup>81</sup>

However much de Villa-Clary, in his own consciousness, saw the Maltese as the largest group of British subjects in Egypt, the British, who were born and bred in Britain or had British parents themselves, were not as ready to accept the Maltese as British subjects. For example, Lord Cromer, when describing the British colony in Egypt spoke of "the bona-fide English; not the Maltese and others who swell the list of British subjects in the census returns."<sup>82</sup> Similarly, de Villa-Clary also wrote of the Maltese community's general exclusion from the British community while suggesting that perhaps many more Maltese in Egypt, besides himself, were disappointed that they were not treated as British subjects - and would definitely wished they were.

"*Most of my compatriots* complain of the fact that although they are British subjects,...they are very often, if not generally, treated by the English Community *as if they were foreigners*. It is scarcely if in the great are tolerated, whereas they are never forgotten whenever it is a question of appealing to their generosity in the numerous subscriptions of British national interest of philanthropic works, to which we have always endeavoured to do our utmost according to our means."<sup>83</sup>

The Maltese community also represents another ambiguity in our attempt to understand and define the British ethnic identity in occupied Egypt. In their consciousness, some of the Maltese, like Conte de Villa-Clary, saw themselves as British subjects while the

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<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.* (emphasis mine)

<sup>82</sup> FO633/87; Cromer's papers, p.831.

<sup>83</sup> FO141/684/9445: 01/03/1920; letter from de Villa Clary to Viscount Milner (emphasis mine).

British community proper<sup>84</sup> by and large perceived them as outsiders. Yet Lord Milner, when attempting to raise funds at a dinner for Victoria College, appealed to *all* British subjects in Egypt - and undoubtedly included the Maltese among them. Similarly, de Villa-Clary noted that when it came to philanthropy (due to the Maltese community's vast generosity and experience in benevolence), the Maltese were not forgotten as fellow donors responsible for the fulfilment of the needs and the glory of the British Empire. Did the Maltese occupy the 'third space'? In the minds someone like de Villa-Clary, they were unquestionably British subjects. (But in the minds of some of the Maltese who may have sided with the nationalists in Malta, they were not British subjects.) In the consciousness of the British community proper, they were British subjects insofar as they could financially assist them but were not ethnically recognised as part of the British community. Herein lies the ambiguity that may define the 'third space'. Ethnic identity, therefore, was negotiable according to the economic needs and circumstances of the time. The boundaries were different according to whoever was the perceiver. As Cohen so aptly argues:

"...Not all boundaries, and not all the components of any boundary are so...apparent. They may be thought of, rather, as existing in the minds of their beholders. This being so, the boundary may be perceived in rather different terms, not only by people on opposite sides of it, but also by people on the same side."<sup>85</sup>

### **British Nationality and the Demise of the Capitulations**

The mutability of the British ethnic identity in occupied Egypt was also evident in the formulation of British nationality law when the Capitulations were under threat. The Capitulations refer to the system which granted extraterritorial rights to foreign residents in Egypt. Originally, the Capitulations aimed to protect European traders from the arbitrariness of Oriental 'despots' and from local opposition to their activities. But the system evolved into an elaborate set of rules detailing the extraterritorial rights and privileges of foreign residents and governing their status in Egypt. For example, foreigners were exempt from taxation and had virtual immunity from domiciliary search because many consuls were reluctant to be present when the Egyptian authorities

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<sup>84</sup>British community 'proper' refers to those British residents of Egypt who were born to British fathers.

<sup>85</sup>Anthony Cohen, *The Symbolic Construction of Community* (London: Routledge, 1993), p.12.

requested.<sup>86</sup> Most notably, Europeans in Egypt were outside local jurisdiction. In civil cases, they were subject to the Mixed Tribunals and in criminal cases, to the Consular Courts of their own country of origin. This system was open to much abuse and resulted in many instances where law-breakers went unpunished.<sup>87</sup> The status and nationality of foreigners rested on the negotiated treaties between the Egyptian government and each individual country. So Greeks, Italians, and Britons in Egypt though quite distinct as separate communities, acquired common civil rights and privileges defined and enforced on the basis of their nationality. Due to the Capitulations, children born to British subjects, regardless of where their parents were born, were also British subjects.<sup>88</sup> By 1919, the emergence of the Egyptian nationalist movement combined with the British willingness to restore some form of independence to Egyptian authorities by the early 1920s had placed the Capitulations and the status of the British Protectorate of Egypt in jeopardy.

"So long as the capitulations continue to exist in Egypt it is evident that the position of the 2nd and later generations of British subjects who are born in Egypt is covered by....Clause I (1) of the British Nationality and Status of Aliens Act 1914, but assuming that the time comes when these capitulations are abolished and that His Majesty no longer exercises jurisdiction over British subjects in Egypt, the position at once changes."<sup>89</sup>

Under the cover of the Capitulations and Protectorate, children born to British fathers (who themselves were born in Egypt) were automatically made British subjects as well. An "Englishman born in an English protectorate should no less than an Englishman born in an English Colony preserve his birthright as an Englishman."<sup>90</sup> Yet, "if the capitulations [were] abolished and nothing intervenes to alter the strict operation of the [British Nationality and Status of Aliens] Act, the position would be that the son born in Egypt of an Englishman, who had himself been born in Egypt, would be *relegated to the status of a local Egyptian subject*."<sup>91</sup> Here, it is clear that ethnic distinctions were also determined by the 'consciousness' of the law and by political circumstances.

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<sup>86</sup> Mark Hoyle, *The Mixed Courts of Egypt*, (London: Graham & Trotman, 1991), p. 3.

<sup>87</sup> Brugger, p. 5.

<sup>88</sup> Kitroeff, p. 3.

<sup>89</sup> FO141/431/7838: 04/11/1921: Victor Naggiar, President of British Chamber of Commerce of Egypt to Under Secretary of State of Foreign Office.

<sup>90</sup> FO141/431/7838: Arthur S. Preston, Legal Advisor: 11/05/1917 - Note for the Committee of the British Chamber of Commerce.

"If or when the abandonment of British consular jurisdiction in Egypt becomes imminent,...*children of British fathers* born in Egypt will no longer be able to rely upon the proviso to section (I) of the British Nationality Act of 1914, and claim to be regarded as having been born within His Majesty's allegiance. *They will be regarded as being born abroad.*"<sup>92</sup>

In other words, according to the Nationality and Status of Aliens Act, a child of British parents, raised with British customs, manners, aspirations and the English language, was liable to be labelled, not only 'born abroad', but a 'local Egyptian subject' once the Capitulations came to an end.

To ensure that the children of British subjects, who themselves were born in Egypt, would continue their status as British subjects, there was a series of discussions and correspondence between the President of the British Chamber of Commerce in Egypt, Victor Naggiar, and the Foreign Secretary Earl Curzon. Naggiar, on behalf of the British community in Egypt, strongly urged the Foreign Office to amend the Nationality and Status of Aliens Act to guarantee that the children born to British fathers in Egypt would be made British subjects even after the demise of the Capitulations. What followed in the summer and autumn of 1921 were key recommendations from Naggiar and the British Chamber of Commerce to Curzon. First, to ensure that British subjects would be given the option of retaining their official British identity rather than having its termination imposed on them, Naggiar suggested that "provisions should be made...in the terms of the British Nationality and Status of Aliens Act (of 1914)...for British subjects until they arrive at the age of 21 years, when each shall declare whether he or she desires to retain British nationality or not."<sup>93</sup>

Secondly, Naggiar recommended that children born into the same family (i.e., to the same British father), should all be identified as British subjects regardless of when the Capitulations would come to an end. This was to avoid the scenario whereby a child born in Egypt before the termination of the Capitulations (or the end of the Protectorate) would be considered a British subject while his or her sibling, in the same family, born after the end of the Capitulations, would not be considered British but an Egyptian

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<sup>91</sup>*Ibid.* (emphasis mine)

<sup>92</sup>FO141/431/7838: 22/09/1921 - Amos, Acting High Commissioner to Lord Curzon. (emphasis mine)

<sup>93</sup>FO141/431/7838: 28/07/1921, President of the British Chamber of Commerce (in meetings with Committees of Alexandria and Cairo)...2 resolutions to Earl Curzon, Foreign Secretary.

subject. The solution, according to Naggiar, was to guarantee that all children, born to British marriages prior to 1st January 1915, would be considered British subjects by law.

"That in view of the hardship inflicted by the Act upon families by which the children are divided into different nationalities...the Act should be altered so as to include as British subjects the whole family of a British father of his marriage celebrated before the 1st January 1915, where a child of the marriage born before that date would have been a British subject by the law then in force."<sup>94</sup>

This recommendation would at least ensure that a generation of children born to British parents, whose marriages would most likely have taken place before 1915, would remain British subjects in spite of the end of the Capitulations.

Naggiar's campaign was successful. By the summer of 1922, the British Nationality and Status of Aliens Act underwent a process of amendments. Its new provisions included the following:

"A British subject was any person born out of His Majesty's dominions whose father was, at the time of that person's birth, a British subject...

- i) This person must register within one year after birth or in special circumstances, with the consent of secretary of state, allow for two years.
- ii) This person must register within one year after reaching the age of 21 though there was some flexibility for special cases."<sup>95</sup>

Thus to prevent any child born to British fathers from losing his or her status as a British subject in light of the Capitulations, the British Nationality and Status of Aliens Act was amended. Each child was guaranteed the identity as a British subject so long as the child's father was a British subject, and his or her birth was registered with the British Consulate in the first year (or some cases, two years) of birth - regardless of the date of birth.

From this legal process of maintaining the identity of those born in Egypt (to British fathers) as British subjects, the mutability or negotiability of ethnic identity becomes evident. Ethnic identity is, at certain times, dependent not on primordial or fixed distinctives, but on the 'consciousness' of law determined by political circumstances. One may argue, however, that precisely because British identity was primordial and so

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<sup>94</sup>FO141/431/7838: 28/07/1921, President of British Chamber of Commerce with (Alexandria and Cairo Committees) two resolutions for Earl Curzon, Foreign Secretary.

<sup>95</sup>FO141/431/7838: The Amendment to the British Nationality and Status of Aliens Act 1922.

strong, laws had to be changed to protect British children from being 'disgracefully' labelled as Egyptian subjects and being denied British citizenship for the rest of their lives. Yet I argue that the threat of British children losing their ethnic identity as British subjects was real in light of the imminent demise of the Capitulations and of British control in Egypt. British ethnicity, no matter how entrenched in the identities of children of British subjects, was not strong enough to withstand the withdrawal of legal protection in Egypt. There was the recognition and awareness that British ethnic identity was potentially ambiguous and changeable among future generations (of children born to the British) that would live in Egypt.

### **Intermarriage: a threat to identity**

Perhaps, no issue exposed the ethnic boundary between Europeans and Egyptians as much as intermarriage. The "typical European view of mixed marriages was that they were unspeakably abhorrent to Europeans and non-Europeans alike."<sup>96</sup> For Europeans, this disdain for mixed marriages stemmed from the fears of producing genetically corrupted offspring, of surrendering European women to the alleged sexual appetites of non-European 'native' men, and of upsetting the sexist and racist ideologies of the time.

The fear of corrupting European offspring with non-white blood was based on the Social Darwinist assumptions of the time. From the 1880s until the 1920s, when sociology was just beginning to establish itself as a scholarly discipline and colonialism was at its height, Social Darwinism biologically classified human beings according to racial characteristics similar to the classification of plants and animals in the growing fields of botany and zoology. As Ernst explains:

"Nineteenth-century racial science attempted to...pigeonhole different indigenous groups of people (Bengali, Parsi, Sikh, and so forth)...in imitation of the schemes of botany and biology...Just as scientists and collectors pinned various sorts of butterflies and beetles on to their collection boards."<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>96</sup>Stockwell, p.45.

<sup>97</sup>Waltraud Ernst, "Idioms of Madness and Colonial Boundaries: The Case of the European and 'Native' Mentally Ill in Early Nineteenth-Century British India", *Comparative Study of Society and History* (Cambridge: 1997) Vol.39, No.1, p.162.

These evolutionist assumptions, with the doctrine of the 'survival of the fittest', established the natural hierarchy of human beings with the white man on top. Other non-white races were understood to be less evolved and were thereby 'child' races that were dependent on the more civilised race for social and intellectual development. Thus the thought of producing offspring with biologically inferior genes were abhorrent to most Europeans, especially at a time when the eugenics movement which aimed to genetically reproduce the highest calibre of offspring through biological engineering had gathered momentum in European social thought. In other words,

"Social Darwinism...and Eugenics added fuel to the prevalent fear of racial mixing, since it warned against the dilution of 'pure racial stocks' and the decline of white civilisation...The horror of miscegenation...or 'race fusion'...or racial degeneration...was held to sap the fibre of white civilisation at its most vulnerable point."<sup>98</sup>

Consequently, intermarriage was discouraged in the colonies. In Malaysia, Stockwell points out that British men who took Asian wives were marked as unconventional and thus failed to reach the highest levels of Malaysian civil service.<sup>99</sup>

Intermarriage was not only despised by Europeans, due to its genetic contamination of offspring, it was also loathed because indigenous men were thought to be uncontrollable sexual predators. "European women's presence," according to Strobel, "it [was] thought, aroused sexual appetites of indigenous men, and women had then to be protected from the latter...The presence of supposedly vulnerable women provided a reason to fear the alleged sexual appetites of indigenous men."<sup>100</sup> Due to the European perception of the sexual predatorial prowess of indigenous men, intermarriage between indigenous men and European women was condemned as harmful to Western women and threatening to the Western male sexual ego. There was, of course, a double standard whereby Western men, in certain colonies particularly in Southeast Asia, had indigenous mistresses or concubines. However, in Egypt and in most predominantly Muslim contexts, "women

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<sup>98</sup>Saul Dubow, "Race, Civilisation and Culture: The Elaboration of Segregationist Discourse in the Inter-War Years" in Shula Marks & Stanley Trapido, eds. *The Politics of Race, Class and Nationalism in Twentieth Century South Africa* (London: Longman, 1987), p.76.

<sup>99</sup>Stockwell, p.45.

<sup>100</sup>Margaret Strobel, *European Women and the Second British Empire* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), pp.1 & 6.

[were] never allowed to form friendships of this kind"<sup>101</sup> with Europeans, and "Moslem women, as is well known, [were] never supposed to see any men except their husbands and immediate relations, and [were] kept strictly to their own apartments, or harem...[and even] Christian women...[were by and large] not supposed to speak to visitors."<sup>102</sup> Due to the fear of indigenous men combined with the general seclusion of indigenous women, Europeans seldom had friendships with Egyptians of the opposite gender - let alone the opportunity to pursue marriage. Generally, there was a clear boundary separating the interracial interaction between the sexes.

In addition to the fears of spoilt progeny and indigenous male sexual appetite, intermarriage between indigenous men and European women was abhorrent to Europeans because it threw into question the very foundation of the interracial and sexual hierarchical beliefs of the time. "Sexual liaisons between white women and indigenous men confounded the fundamental belief that women should be subordinate to men,"<sup>103</sup> since the white race was considered superior to the indigenous race. Intermarriage between white women and indigenous men challenged the imperial and sexist ideologies of the day. Protection of white women from indigenous men fit nicely into the racist and chauvinistic framework of the time.

Not only did Europeans fear the consequences of intermarriage for European women with indigenous men, some indigenous voices also discouraged intermarriage of indigenous men with European women. Although "marriages between Mussulmen and Christian women are looked on with favour...as it is understood that the Prophet encouraged the habit, which evidently tended to the increase of the number of true believers,"<sup>104</sup> certain Egyptian women like middle-class teacher and author, Malak Hifni Nasif, persuaded middle and upper-class Egyptian men to marry educated Egyptian women. She viewed that marrying European women, particularly of the lower-class, was "a national danger that [produced] children with divided cultural loyalties"<sup>105</sup> and diluted

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<sup>101</sup>E.A. Wallis Budge, *Cook's Handbook for Egypt and the Sudan* (London: Thomas Cook and Son, 1906), p.33.

<sup>102</sup>Edith Louisa Butcher, *Things Seen in Egypt* (London: Seeley and Co, Ltd, 1910), p.41.

<sup>103</sup>Strobel, p.6.

<sup>104</sup>FO633/12; Cromer's papers, 02/12/1909; p. 222, letter from Sir Cecil Spring Rice.

<sup>105</sup>Malak Hifni Nasif, *Al-Nisa'iyat* (Cairo: al-Jarida, 1910), pp.10-11 as quoted in Mervat Hatem, "Through Each Other's Eyes: The Impact on the Colonial Encounter of the Images of Egyptian,

intelligence. Hopwood mentions just such an example of a lower-class British woman married to an Egyptian man. He recalls Vice-Consul Thomas Rapp's encounter with the women, who in his view, had an ugly Oxford accent, and was a former assistant hairdresser from St. Giles, Oxford. She was living in Egypt after marrying one of the elite Egyptian graduates of Oxford University – who had been a frequent customer to the hairstylists that she was working for.<sup>106</sup> To educated Egyptian women, this kind of marriage corrupted the genes of bright Egyptian men by mixing them with unintelligent foreign women. Further, Nabawiya Musa, teacher and inspector in the Ministry of Education, also discouraged Egyptian men from marrying European women because "a man who marries a Westerner becomes with his children [a] Westerner....An Egyptian woman, who marries a foreigner...is capable of giving Egypt new Egyptians."<sup>107</sup> Clearly, the argument used against intermarriage by certain Egyptian women writers is that offspring from marriages of Egyptian men and European women would produce disloyal Egyptians who would reduce the nationalist commitment of the next generation. Further, intermarriage between Egyptian men and particular working-class European women was "threatening since they robbed [educated] Egyptian women of bright men."<sup>108</sup> Egyptian nationalism combined with the fear of losing educated Egyptian men to foreign women (who may be of the lower class, thereby also 'contaminating' the offspring of educated Egyptian men) established the boundary separating Egyptian men from European women, in the consciousness of certain Egyptian women observers and thinkers. Remarkably, both Europeans and Egyptians were afraid of intermarriage because it would contaminate their offspring. The loathing and restricting of intermarriage was a mutual concern and priority on both sides.

***The Case of Egypt: Protecting European Women from Polygamous Men, Invalid Divorces and Ill-Treatment***

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Levantine-Egyptian, and European Women, 1862-1920," in Nupur Chaudhuri and Margaret Strobel, eds, *Western Women and Imperialism: Complicity and Resistance* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press), p.41.

<sup>106</sup> Hopwood, p. 70.

<sup>107</sup> Nabawiya Musa, "al-Muhadarat al-Nisaya fi al-Jami'at al-Miṣriyāt" in *al-Ahram*, ed. Shuḥūd al-'Aṣr (Cairo: Al-Ahram, 1986), p.40-41 as quoted in Hatem, p.42.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*

Having observed some key reasons held by Europeans and Egyptians for the opposition and condemnation of mixed marriages between European women and Egyptian men, we now turn to a few incidences of such marriages in Egypt. On the basis of the general fears and attitudes against intermarriage of the time, intermarriage between Egyptian Muslim men and British women were most firmly discouraged due to the polygamous practices of Muslim men, the uncertainty of divorce, and their ill-treatment and abuse of their wives.

Intermarriage between British women and Egyptian Christian men was not as loathed by the British as marriage with Muslim men. Though not looked upon as an ideal arrangement, a Copt could marry an Englishwomen by obtaining the signed permission of his patriarch, followed by two religious marriages (one in the Coptic church and one in the Anglican Church).<sup>109</sup> Girgis Soliman, an Egyptian Copt, was given permission to marry an English girl from Newcastle while studying there, by the British authorities in Egypt. The marriage was legal, both in the eyes of the Coptic Church and the British government, provided that the bride's parents agreed (if the bride was under 21 years of age) and that the couple sign a declaration of adherence to the Coptic church upon their arrival in Egypt.<sup>110</sup> Generally, marriage between a Coptic man and a British woman was tolerated, though not warmly embraced.

However, intermarriages between British women and Egyptian Muslim men were despised categorically by the British community. Mixed marriages were denounced to "protect" British women from marrying polygamous Muslim men. The Foreign Marriages Act of 1892 and the Foreign Marriages Order in Council of 1913 outlined that:

"The marriage of a woman of British nationality professing the Christian faith with a...Mohammedan, even...when it is valid in all respects in this country, is not necessarily so when the husband returns to...his own Mohammeden country...The marriage [may not] necessarily imply...the voluntary union for life of one man and woman to the exclusion of all others...and under Mohammedan law *the Mohammedan husband may, if he desires, take other wives in addition to the first, without consulting his first wife (whether Christian or otherwise)*. Even if the Mohammedan husband had entered into a covenant with his Christian wife not to take any other wife, such a covenant could not prevent him from

<sup>109</sup>Butcher, *Egypt As We Knew It* (London: Mills & Boon, Ltd., 1911), p.170.

<sup>110</sup>FO141/686/8747: 06/03/1919: W. Hayter responding to letters from Girgis Soliman in Newcastle-on-Tyne (26/01/1919) and from the Rev. Alfred Boote, Vicar at St. George's Vicarage at Newcastle-on-Tyne (25/01/1919).

taking another wife...in a Mohammedan society if so desired...The forms observed at a marriage under English law before a Registrar are not necessarily recognised by Mohammedan law...and afford no protection to the wife in a country where Mohammedan law is observed....A Mohammedan husband may...divorce his wife at will...while should he return to his own country leaving his Christian wife here, the fact of their being thus locally separated might be equivalent to divorce under Mohammedan law; in either case such divorce, while not dissolving the marriage in England under English law, would be operative in the Mohammedan country."<sup>111</sup>

Due to the polygamous nature of some Muslim marriages, one of the most prominent concerns for British women who married Egyptian Muslim men was that English law could not protect their marriages in a Muslim country. They would be unable even to eventually obtain divorces since their marriages, instituted under English law, were not valid under Muslim law in the first place. This would place them in not only a confusing but pitiful situation where their marriages would be recognised and protected under English law but would have no power to influence the will of a Muslim husband who may wish to take another wife or pursue a divorce. And their divorces would not be recognised under Muslim law because according to Muslim law, they were never married. In other words, according to Mrs. Edith Louisa Butcher, wife of Dean Butcher who for many years during the British Occupation was Chaplain of All Saints Church in Cairo:

"Even if such marriages [between a Muslim man and an Englishwoman] are now recognised by English law, that does not make them binding on the Moslem. He can still, by his own law, marry three other women in addition to the first, or divorce his English wife at any time and on any pretext. I remember one poor Englishwoman who had gone through the ceremony of marriage with a Moslem Egyptian...After some years, unable to bear the misery of her position, she applied for a divorce by English law. She could easily have got one as far as her case against the man went. But taking legal advice it had to be explained to the poor thing that as she was not legally married, she could not be legally divorced."<sup>112</sup>

Similarly, Besley, Acting Judicial Adviser to the High Commissioner of Egypt warned:

"Article 120 of the Code du Statut Personnel recognises the validity of a marriage between a Mohammedan and a Christian women, provided that there are two Christian witnesses to the wedding. But, although these witnesses can bind the Christian woman, their testimony is valueless against the Mohammedan man. It seems to follow from this, that, in a case such...where the Mohammedan man denies the validity of the marriage, there will be no witnesses to prove it, and therefore...it will be null and void, as being a marriage contracted without witnesses...If there was no marriage in the eyes of Mohammedan law, there can obviously be no divorce."<sup>113</sup>

<sup>111</sup>FO141/463/1229: Marriages abroad and in the UK based on the Foreign Marriages Act 1892 and the Foreign Marriages Order in Council, 1913. (emphasis mine)

<sup>112</sup>Butcher, *Egypt As We Knew It*, p.170.

<sup>113</sup>FO141/686/8747: 31/08/1927: E.F.W. Besley, Acting Judicial Adviser to the High Commissioner of Egypt to Residency.

Even in spite of these clear warnings, some British women still chose to marry Muslim men. In 1911, Francis Cownie, a British woman, married A.D. Allam, an Egyptian Muslim. In response to Miss Cownie's decision, a British gentleman G.E. Jeffes wrote a letter to Arthus D. Alan of the British Consulate warning against the ill-treatment that Muslim men could lay on their British wives. He declared that Muslim husbands could not only marry up to four wives, but inflict corporal punishment on their wives, divorce their wives at any time, seclude their wives indoors and mandatorily enforce an Islamic upbringing on their children.<sup>114</sup> Jeffes' letter goes on to say that "however much a native may be civilised, he is not, and cannot be, received in English society in Egypt,"<sup>115</sup> and that only "unpleasantness...occured [when] native gentlemen [were] allowed to associate with English ladies".<sup>116</sup> He cautioned that an English woman would be "cut off from the society of her fellow countrymen in Egypt and find herself obliged to associate with women of a far lower standard both morally and intellectually."<sup>117</sup> Remarkably, Jeffes would rather "see an Englishwoman [live] with a Mohammedan in open sin as his mistress than as his wife."<sup>118</sup>

Similarly, J.W.A. Young, a British official on one of his tax-inspections, was appalled by the ill-treatment of an English woman who was married to an Egyptian in the village of Galiubia in 1914. The house where she lived was poor with unbaked brick and a flat roof. Apparently, she had married the village leader's son when he was studying engineering in England. She was the daughter of his landlady in Britain. Young records:

"After I had waited for a little while, a young English woman and a small English boy walked in [who was her younger brother]. The woman appeared to be about twenty and the small English boy about eight years old...She said, 'My father-in-law [the 'Umdeh]...will be with you in a few minutes. How is the war going? They tell me that Germany is winning but I never see an English newspaper.'"<sup>119</sup>

Young then began to speak to the 'Umdeh who confirmed to Young that his son had beaten his new bride of only two months. "Of course he beats her," said the 'Umdeh, "I

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<sup>114</sup>FO287/2: 13/06/1911: Letter from G.E. Jeffes to Arthus D. Alan, HBM consul.

<sup>115</sup>Ibid.

<sup>116</sup>Ibid.

<sup>117</sup>Ibid.

<sup>118</sup>Ibid.

<sup>119</sup>J.W.A. Young, unpublished papers, Vol. 1, ch.8, p.7 (St. Antony's College, Oxford).

love my wife but I frequently beat her."<sup>120</sup> Young was horrified by this young English woman and her brother's plight. He wanted to free them immediately from their desperate predicament.

"It seemed to me a most extraordinary case. Here was this young English woman captivated by the charms of an Egyptian Moslem of no class, who had probably given her an utterly false description of his rank in life and of her future home and she had now found herself in the mud hovel of her father-in-law in a remote village of the Egyptian Delta leading the life of a peasant and would, if she remained there, be in a few years a wrinkled hag, for fellaheen women are old before they are thirty. I picture her as time went on trudging down to the river every morning, afternoon and evening, with the other village women to scoop up water for washing and drinking, an empty petroleum tin balanced on her head and her long black garment trailing behind in the dust. And her young brother! What a life for him! He was to be brought up with the other village boys and to be educated in the Kuttab where no language was taught but Arabic. Later when I returned to Cairo I reported the case to the British Consulate and also to the British Agency, *when it was discovered that her marriage papers were not in order and she and her brother were sent back to England.*"<sup>121</sup>

Young's attitude was typical of the British in Egypt. He was concerned that the Muslim man would beat up his British wife. He was convinced that the British woman who had married the Muslim man must have been deeply misguided and now thoroughly regretted the marriage. The only hope for her was to escape the situation. There was little ambiguity when it came to how the British felt about mixed marriages. The perceived Egyptian treatment of women generally separated the British from the Egyptians as well. "English women who have lived in the East almost always attribute the Oriental conception of women as the reason for their shrinking from contact with natives, even from those who are intellectually cultivated....Englishmen also frequently give this as reason for disliking that their wives and daughters should meet natives in society."<sup>122</sup>

### *Intermarriage and nationality*

Little ambiguity existed in the British consciousness when it came to intermarriage between Britons (and by and large, all Europeans) and Egyptians in the British community of occupied Egypt. European men were almost entirely secluded from Egyptian women - Copt or Muslim. For British women, marrying a Copt was tolerable but marrying a Muslim was detestable. Yet, there were ambiguities when it came to the nationality of British women who decided to marry indigenous men. For example,

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<sup>120</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>121</sup>*Ibid.*, p.8. (emphasis mine)

the Irish-Australian woman, who married the Turkish Prince Said Tusun, was considered English by the Cairo society. The Princess was a widow when she married the Prince. Both were not on the best of terms with their families. The Princess "was not recognised by the Cromers and other leading English families, although she was accepted by most of the Continental element. The Prince accordingly was super-sensitive about her and accepted no attention to himself unless also offered to his wife."<sup>123</sup> So considered 'English' by Europeans of the Continent, and not accepted as 'English' by the English, and probably not considered 'English' by herself either, the Princess represented the ambiguity that came from conflicting ethnic labels created from varying 'consciousnesses' of differing groups.

Besides the Princess' ambivalent identity, the greater ambiguity of identity was rooted in the fact that every British women, who looked British, had British parents, and a British upbringing, were being denied British nationality once they married Muslim men. The Foreign Marriages Act stipulated that:

*"...a woman of British nationality, professing the Christian faith who marries a Mohammedan who is not a British subject, but is a subject or citizen of a Mohammedan state...loses her British nationality on her marriage, and when the husband and wife land in any Mohammedan country (not being in the Dominion or under the Protectorate of His Britannic Majesty) they both become subject to the Mohammedan law. Further, the wife having lost her British nationality, would appear to have become disentitled to the protection of assistance of any British authority - consular or otherwise."<sup>124</sup>*

The fluidity of ethnicity was visibly illustrated here. A British woman could suddenly become a mere foreigner immediately upon marrying a Muslim. Ethnicity here, instead of being fixed and primordial, was both situational and changeable. Ethnic identity was dependent once again on the consciousness of the beholder.

### **British Prisoners**

One final contrast can be brought to light. While British women were being stripped of their British nationality upon their marriage to Muslim men, British criminals in Egyptian jails were being 'honoured' as Englishmen and protected from having to share the same

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<sup>122</sup>FO633/12: 10/11/1919: E.R. Burn to Cromer, p.208.

<sup>123</sup>Harrison, p.128.

<sup>124</sup>FO141/463/1229: Foreign Marriages Act...(emphasis mine)

conditions as other Egyptian prisoners. British prisoners were originally "made to consort with the lowest of native prisoners."<sup>125</sup> At the Manshiyya Prison in Cairo, there were on the average 1200 prisoners and 3 to 5 British subjects imprisoned each year. In no case did their term of imprisonment exceed three months.<sup>126</sup> Yet, even though their term was short, there was considerable pressure to separate the British convicts from the other Egyptian prisoners. T.C. Rapp, the British Vice-Consul of Cairo complained:

"Europeans are obliged to associate with natives and the taps from which washing and drinking water is drawn are directly opposite, and within two yards, of the latrine seats without any dividing partition. *It is degrading for an Englishman, no matter to what depths he has sunk, to be obliged to come into such intimate contact with the dregs of the native populace.* This, to my mind, is the matter which most requires radical alteration."<sup>127</sup>

For the British officials responsible for prisons, the crucial reason behind separating the British prisoner from the Egyptian prisoners was not the poor conditions of Egyptian jails (though the jails were full of bugs, without hot water, and the Egyptian warders could only speak Arabic to the British prisoners) but simply that it was "particularly undesirable that British subjects should be herded together with natives of criminal classes...The arrangement of other accommodation for Consular [British] prisoners [was] a matter of pressing necessity."<sup>128</sup> Hence, British criminals in Egypt were maintained and respected as British subjects. They were not to be sharing prison space with native Egyptians. Arranging separate accommodation for them was made an urgent priority by the British authorities. Yet, upright British women who happened to marry Egyptian Muslim men were torn from their British nationality, denied the rights and privileges of British citizenry, and 'relegated' to a lifetime of being ethnically and legally Egyptian. This demonstrated an appalling double standard whereby women who were perfectly law-abiding but had 'subordinated' themselves to the alleged ill-treatment of polygamous Egyptian husbands were seen to be committing a greater 'crime' than British male criminals. The women's 'just' punishment was their loss of British nationality and ostracism from the British community while the male prisoners were favoured because they were British.

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<sup>125</sup>FO141/470/1677: 05/12/1922: Rabino, British Consul in Cairo to First Secretary at the Residency...complaints from Europeans in Manshiyya Prison.

<sup>126</sup>Ibid.

<sup>127</sup>FO141/470/677: 01/12/1922: Vice-Consul of Cairo to First Secretary of Agency, reporting on complaints by British prisoner in Manshiyya prison.

<sup>128</sup>Ibid.

### Were missionaries included in the British community?

There is little ambiguity regarding the ethnic identities of British missionaries. In their own consciousness, they saw themselves as British. In the eyes of outside observers, they were seen as British as well. What was ambiguous was their inclusion in the British community of Egypt. Not surprisingly, the Britons who mixed most with Egyptians were missionaries. The inter-personal boundary between British missionaries and their Egyptian friends and disciples was immaterial compared to the rigid social divide segregating the majority of Britons in Egypt from the average Egyptian. The Church Missionary Society, a missionary arm of the Church of England, deployed representatives involved in founding clinics, hospitals and dispensaries, starting up schools for Egyptian boys and girls and leading evangelistic efforts to convert Muslims to Christian faith. Many of them were encouraged to live within Egyptian neighbourhoods (unlike the majority of Britons who lived in the European quarters) of Cairo or were very closely associated with Egyptians day-to-day. For example, Miss Eliza Bywater, leader of the C.M.S. Girls' School in Bab-el-Luk in Cairo recorded how important it was to be living "right among the Moslems...where we have very good hopes from these houses new scholars [pupils], as well as keeping on many of the old ones."<sup>129</sup> Miss Cay and Miss Jackson, who were also missionary teachers, lived in Old Cairo among lower class Egyptians.<sup>130</sup> A male missionary was also urgently sought after to live in Old Cairo because he would "have far more influence [than the missionary doctors who visited occasionally thus far], and could follow up...by inviting enquirers to his house."<sup>131</sup> Missionaries like J.G.B. Hollins filled this need of living close to Egyptian Muslims by taking "a flat in another quarter [of Cairo], so as to be nearer Mohammedans."<sup>132</sup> Indeed, "the most effective method of cultivating the Moslem field has been to locate in the midst of distinctly Mohammedan communities. This [was]...done very successfully in Cairo."<sup>133</sup> In the inaugural years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century,

<sup>129</sup> CMS papers: incoming letters from Egypt Missions, letter from Eliza B. Bywater to Rev. Baylis, in London, 29/06/1894. (University of Birmingham Special Collections).

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*, letter from Rev. F. Adeney, secretary of CMS Egypt Mission to Rev. Baylis, CMS leader in London, 02/06/1894.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*, letter from Adeney to Baylis, 26/02/1894.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, letter no. 65, report on J.G.B. Hollins in Cairo, 18/09/1897.

<sup>133</sup> Charles R. Watson, *In the Valley of the Nile: A Survey of the Missionary Movement in Egypt*, London: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1908, p. 193.

two of the most prominent CMS missionaries in Cairo, Douglas Thornton and Temple Gairdner, gathered large numbers of educated Muslims to open dialogues, debates and lectures on topics of general interest that would lead to discussions on Christian themes. They also opened up a bookstore that attracted many Muslims to personal conversations about the Christian faith and published and disseminated a weekly English-Arabic magazine entitled 'The Orient and the Occident' that dealt with contemporary issues from a Christian viewpoint. Pioneered in 1905, it quickly acquired a wide readership of about 3000 Egyptians.<sup>134</sup> Outside Cairo, other missionaries worked among the rural villagers (fellaheen) bringing with them medical relief and the Gospel message to adults and children.<sup>135</sup>

Due to their commitment to Christian ministry and their close contact with Egyptians (both in where they lived and what they did), there is some ambiguity as to whether British missionaries were included in the wider British community or not. On one hand, British missionaries were not part of the British community in terms of its frivolity, materialism and 'night' life. British missionaries were recruited on the basis of whether they were "able to resist the terribly deadening influence of the worldly English society in Cairo."<sup>136</sup> The evidence from the C.M.S. archives suggests that their recruitment was in this sense successful, since not one missionary appeared to have fallen away and joined the 'worldliness' of Cairo's British society during the British occupation. In this respect, British missionaries perceived themselves as outside the 'carnal' membership of the British community in Cairo. Yet on the other hand, when the mission was seeking a leader in Cairo, it sought a candidate that would have impeccable credentials and a place of social standing in the very British community that its recruits were ordered to shun.

"It was seen to be very desirable that a leader in the mission should be able to take, in Cairo, a place of influence in the eyes of Europeans. Therefore, there is needed a strong able man, of good social position, and if possible with a wife able to take a clear stand and a decided... worker but at the same time holding a place that would be recognized in the social life of Cairo."<sup>137</sup>

Several years later, this kind of socially respectable leader within the British community of Cairo emerged in the person of Temple Gairdner, who during World War I had a

<sup>134</sup> Lyle Vander Werff, *Christian Mission to Muslims – The Record: Anglican and Reformed Approaches in India and the Near East*, (Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1977), p. 168.

<sup>135</sup> CMS papers: incoming letters from Egypt Missions, letter from Bywater to Baylis, 09/07/1894.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*, Adeney to Baylis, 23/04/1897.

significant role in not only providing spiritual and moral leadership but in staging musical and theatrical productions to entertain the troops.<sup>137</sup> Gairdner, without question, was a leading and valuable member of the British community in Cairo. Hence the inclusion of British missionaries' in the wider British community in Cairo was ambiguous because although they were encouraged to resist the community's worldly affiliations, they looked to leaders with a high social standing who also served the community when needs arose. Perhaps the British missionaries occupied the 'third space' in terms of its place in the British community in Cairo. Depending on the circumstances, they were not fully part of the community's social scene but aspired to respectability and service within the community.

### Conclusion

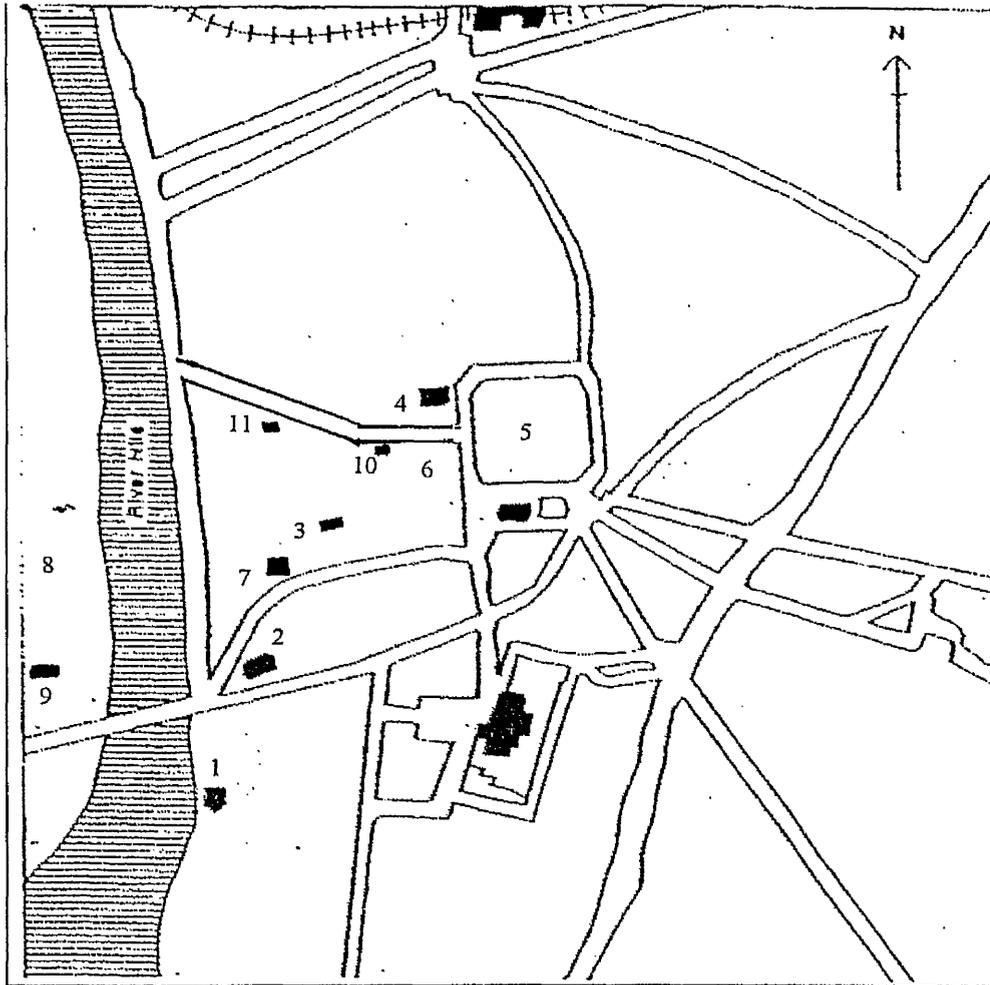
After briefly outlining the key paradigms leading up to the recent study of ethnicity, this discussion has attempted to demonstrate that even though there were some clear boundaries between the British community and Egyptians, Turks, and Levantines in occupied Egypt, there were other blurred or ambiguous areas of delineation. Arguing from the Constructionist Theory that ethnic boundaries are unclear and result from changing circumstances and individual consciousness, and with the sensitivity to the possibility of a 'third space' (not of one identity or another but different), I examined the ambiguous ethnic identities of those with 'white' skin - with particular reference to Europeans and Australians, the Maltese in Egypt, children of British subjects under the threat of the collapse of the Capitulations and British women married to Muslim men. The ambiguity of the identification of British missionaries as part of the British community was discussed as well. However, understanding the boundaries that shape, define or confine a community is just one approach to analysing an ethnic group within a given community, another key direction is examining what unifying symbols and institutions define the community and galvanise its members together. And it is to the study of symbols and institutions within the community that this thesis now turns.

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<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*, Recommendation by Sub-Committee in Egypt, received 24/06/1895.

<sup>138</sup> Egyptian Gazette, 12/01/1916.

**Map of Central Cairo with Locations of  
Important Areas & Buildings for the British Community**  
(Map not to scale, only main streets indicated)



1. British Residency
2. Qasr el-Nil Barraks
3. Turf Club
4. Shepherd's Hotel
5. Ezbekiyya Gardens
6. European Quarter
7. Savoy Hotel
8. Gezira Club
9. Anglo-American Hospital
10. All Saints' Church
11. St. Andrew's Church

(Based on *Map of Cairo*, no. 64480 (4): Edward Stanford, 12, 13, 14, Long Acre W.C., 16 June: 1906, London and *General Map of Cairo*, no. 64480(6), Survey of Egypt 1920)

### 3. Symbols and Institutions of the Community

#### Introduction: The roles of symbols in community

Every community of people is defined by certain features and commonalities that distinguish it from other communities. Since members of a certain community may not necessarily know other members of their community, there need to be common mental concepts that each member of the community shares with other members. These imagined distinctives give the community meaning and identity. Benedict Anderson, in *Imagined Communities*, asserts that the bonds of community are articulated in the mind - very similar to the individual 'consciousness' described in the previous chapter.

"...All communities larger than primordial villages of face-to-face contact (and perhaps even these) are imagined...because the members of even the smallest [community] will never know most of their fellow members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion."<sup>1</sup>

Even though members of each community would actually meet only a small minority of their fellow members, they usually have "complete confidence in their steady, anonymous, simultaneous activity."<sup>2</sup>

This confidence in the reality and vitality of the community comes from certain constructs shared in the imagination of each member of the community. These constructs are what we call symbols.

"Symbols of community are mental constructs. They provide people with the means to make meaning. In so doing, they also provide them with the means to express the particular meanings which the community has for them."<sup>3</sup>

This discussion centres on identifying and examining the symbols that underscored British identity and community in occupied Cairo. Here, the word 'symbol' refers to three aspects of representation. First, "ethnic identity is expressed symbolically...it is possible for...internal diversity to be preserved, even while it is masked by common symbolic

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<sup>1</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, rev. ed. (London, Verso, 1994), p.6.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p.26.

forms."<sup>4</sup> Symbols express ethnic identity. They serve as emblems to "differentiate [one ethnic group] from other groups."<sup>5</sup> They "reinforce...the specialness...the exclusiveness...[and] even chosen-ness, of the group."<sup>6</sup> They not only define and give shape to the identity of the community but act as the glue that keeps it together. They represent, create and facilitate commonality within a community, heighten and affirm the awareness of the community while, at the same time, they mask diversity.

Secondly, symbols represent a common memory, heritage or ancestry in a given community. Patterson refers to the inner concourse of ethnic identity as one which begins with the "consciousness of shared crisis, one symbolically validated...with a common memory."<sup>7</sup> The crisis is normally one that creates a sense of isolation that is experienced collectively, not individually. Further, symbols validate myths.

"This is the myth of blood, the deeply held belief that the entire group has a common ancestry, common history, and sometimes a common fate. It is this myth - often having little or no basis in fact - that the specially ethnic group event ritualises. The ethnic group...is not so much a moral community as is a religious group - a community of memory."<sup>8</sup>

French sociologist Barthes' articulates this usage of myth in *Mythologies*:

"Myth is not defined by the object of its message, but by the way in which it utters this message ...[Myths are created when an]...object in the world [passes] from a closed, silent existence to an oral state, open to appropriation by society."<sup>9</sup>

Barthes states that objects can pass from a closed state to an oral state. It is in the 'speech' of objects that myths and messages emerge. Objects, monuments, buildings and rituals all tell a story within every community. Inanimate objects that point to and remind members of the group of a common history and shared crises, then, are the symbols

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<sup>3</sup> Anthony Cohen, *The Symbolic Construction of Community* (London: Routledge, 1993), p.19.

<sup>4</sup> Anthony Cohen, "Boundaries of Consciousness, Consciousness of Boundaries: Critical Questions for Anthropology," in Cora Govers and Hans Vermeulen, eds. *The Anthropology of Ethnicity Beyond 'Ethnic Groups and Boundaries'* (Amsterdam: Het Spinhuis, 1994), p.62.

<sup>5</sup> Cora Govers and Hans Vermeulen, "Introduction", in Govers and Vermeulen, 1994, p. 4.

<sup>6</sup> Orlando Patterson, "The Nature, Causes, and Implications of Ethnic Identification" in Charles Fried, ed. *Minorities, Community and Identity* (New York: Springer-Verlag, 1983), p.31.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p.25.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p.31.

<sup>9</sup> Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, trans. by Annette Lavers (London: Granada, 1973), p. 109 (my emphasis).

which communicate a message or 'myth'. They construct the shared concepts and memories that identify and nurture commonality within an 'imagined' community.

Third, besides acting as the enforcer of common identity and curator of common memories, symbols elaborate, enhance, manipulate and perpetuate the culture, ideas, aspirations and significant heroes of an ethnic group in front of other groups.<sup>10</sup> Symbols not only galvanise and unify the group from within but also radiate the group's identity (in the case of the British in Egypt - power, prestige and influence) to other groups.

The following analysis attempts to identify, describe and examine the symbols within the British community in occupied Cairo which acted as rallying points for community distinctiveness and commonality, reflected a common history, and perpetuated the group's position and identity to outsiders. We will investigate the symbolic value and roles of the British flag, the English language, expatriate geographic locations, clubs and sports, military structures and activities, hotels, schools, hospitals, churches and key occasions.

### **The British flag**

Although the flag usually acts as a clear symbol of a nation's presence and power in occupied territory, surprisingly, there seems to be little evidence to suggest that the British flag was a significant symbol in Egypt. H.F. Wood, British traveller during the 1890s, was the only observer, according the sources used in this study, who mentioned the presence (or the lack) of British flags in Alexandria and Cairo. He recalls:

"It might be inferred that above the [sign] "Headquarters British Garrison", if nowhere else, the British ensign is to be seen at Alexandria. [But] I did not see the British ensign either there or anywhere else until reaching Cairo, and then only at the premises of private tradesmen and at the masthead of Nile excursion or pleasure-boats...The stars and stripes floated from the summit of the American Consulate adjacent to the English Church [in]...Alexandria; but neither upon ordinary business structures, nor upon private or official residences, nor upon the quarters of the British commander at Alexandria, nor at the headquarters of the garrison itself, was any British flag to be perceived."<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p.32.

<sup>11</sup> H.F. Wood, *Egypt Under the British* (London: Chapman-Hall, 1896), p.51.

According to Wood, the British flag was not only absent on official buildings in Alexandria and Cairo, it was non-existent in informal events and occasions as well.

"I supposed that, as the cities of the Continent where the British colonies form their clubs for outdoor recreation, the Union jack might have harmlessly adorned the ground of the local cricket, football and lawn-tennis club. It was not so, however....[In one particular]...football match between the Alexandria Club and a crew of the gunboat Fearless...nothing of the colours [of the club jerseys and]...nothing in any of the usual decorations to a club-house or marquee suggested the British flag."<sup>12</sup>

From the evidence of the 1890s, it appears that the British flag was rarely seen. Therefore, one may conclude that the flag, as a basic symbol of presence and predominance, was not utilised by the British in occupied Cairo most likely due to the British role as reluctant occupiers of a land that was still officially Ottoman territory.

### **The English language**

English was not the most widely used language among the legal and business circles during the British occupation of Egypt, though certain Britons wanted to make English the official language of Egypt's mixed courts which would symbolise Britain's hold on power. The mixed courts tried civil cases for foreign residents while criminal cases were tried in the consular courts of their country of origin. To the chagrin of some in Cairo's British community,

"French was the language that most people in Egypt had in common. Although the foreign communities were cosmopolitan, and the educated Egyptians often had more than two languages to choose from, the easiest way for a foreigner, whether he was Italian, Belgian, Swiss or Russian, to converse with a local, whether he was Turkish or Egyptian, was through the medium of French. This was also the case if the foreigners wished to do business amongst themselves, and often between Turk and Egyptian also. Added to France's cultural influence through legal writings and philosophy, and the French education that many Egyptians had enjoyed, this led to an easy assumption of the French language as a *lingua franca*."<sup>13</sup>

Not only was French the primary language of education (next to Arabic) and interaction between Europeans and Egyptians, it was the main language for the mixed tribunals, government newspapers and notices, official legal documents such as tenders, railway time tables, decrees issued by the Sultan of Egypt, and cab-stand notices.<sup>14</sup> Since French

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p.52-53.

<sup>13</sup> Hoyle, p. 17.

<sup>14</sup> Minutes of Manchester Chamber of Commerce, Middle East & North Africa section (1916-1926), report after J.P. Foster's address, 12/11/1917 (Manchester Central Library, Archives Department).

was the medium for the mixed courts in Egypt, the legal system was based on French codes. However,

“while using the vast amount of French legal thought as an aid where necessary, judges were clearly able to interpret the Codes in an Egyptian context, free from enactments not suitable to the Orient... Thus any influence of French law that may have transposed itself into the Codes was soon influenced itself by Egyptian surroundings.”<sup>15</sup>

By 1917, the Capitulations Commission was appointed to deal with the abolition of the capitulations and to formulate the judicial reforms necessary to achieve this. Much to the displeasure of British lawyers, the minutes to the meetings of the Commission were written in French and the leading British judge in Egypt, Justice Grain, was not invited to participate in its proceedings; even though Egypt was firmly under Britain’s political authority. Therefore, J.P. Foster, a British solicitor practising in Egypt, along with nine other British lawyers, strongly recommended to the Commission that

“English should be made, without delay, the judicial language of Egypt [and] that English criminal procedure and law be adopted. Justice Grain or someone familiar with English law and procedure...should [be] appointed [and] the minutes of the commission should be kept in English, and the voluminous minutes which have been hitherto kept in French should be translated into English...*English should no longer be relegated to a back seat.*”<sup>16</sup>

To Foster and his legal colleagues, English as the official language of the mixed courts combined with English judicial procedure symbolised the rightful place of British dominance in Egypt. How could a country under British control not utilise English as its main language in the courts? And how appropriate was French, as the primary language of the courts in a British protectorate? Disappointingly for Foster and his cohorts, the Foreign Office, though sympathetic, was dismissive of his recommendations. The Minutes of the Capitulations Commission and the Advisory Committee on Egyptian legislation continued to be recorded in French.<sup>17</sup> Most likely, the Foreign Office felt that the symbolic installing of English as the language of the mixed courts was not worth the risk of upsetting its European allies in Egypt during the war or destabilising Egypt in any way.

<sup>15</sup> Hoyle, p. 19.

<sup>16</sup> Speech by J.P. Foster to the Manchester Chamber of Commerce, 12/11/1917, recorded in Minutes of Manchester Chamber of Commerce, Middle East & North Africa section (1916-1926). (Emphasis mine)

<sup>17</sup> Minutes of Manchester Chamber of Commerce, 12/11/1917.

Even so, in 1918, William Brunyate the Judicial Adviser continued the campaign to implement English as the everyday language in the mixed courts. However, his recommendations were met with opposition, not least from French judges and lawyers and those who had been accustomed to French as the legal language of Egypt. After more than 100 meetings with leaders of the mixed tribunals to discuss the introduction of English as the language of the mixed courts, Brunyate's plans were rejected.<sup>18</sup> No doubt, the other Continent European players in the mixed tribunals were reluctant to give way for the imposition of English as the language of the courts because they already felt threatened by the establishment of Egypt as a formal protectorate of Great Britain. Though certain members of the British legal community in Cairo undertook to formalise English as the official language of the mixed courts due to its symbolic significance as the language of the occupiers of Egypt, the effort was unsuccessful during the time of the occupation.

### **The symbolic significance of location**

Comparative studies show that spatial separation in colonial cities emerged, underlining and cementing social separation. Ross and Telkamp's work in comparing colonial cities reveals that,

"...in Algiers...Saigon...and Dakar, there was from the beginning a spatial distinction between the 'white' town and the area inhabited by the local population, whether Algerian, Vietnamese or Sengalese; [and] the same phenomenon [occurred] not just in the French Empire, [but] in English cities [as well]...This encoded and determined social stratification and categorisation."<sup>19</sup>

Similarly, new residential neighbourhoods apart from the native quarters were established for the British community in Bengal. S.C. Ghosh writes:

"With the growth both of wealth and a new sense of security...new housing sprang up along the existing roads, the Avenue, Pilgrim Road, and row Bazer and by passing the native quarters of Dinga and Colinga."<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Hoyle, p. 116.

<sup>19</sup> Robert Ross & Gerard J. Telkamp, eds., *Colonial Cities: Essays on Urbanism in a Colonial Context* (Lancaster: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1985), p.5-6.

<sup>20</sup> S.C. Ghosh, *op.cit.*, p.96.

Jürgen Osterhammel observes that the "basic organizing principle [for colonial cities] was a segregation of residential quarters along racial lines. This segregation was partly the result of deliberate policies and partly of unplanned developments."<sup>21</sup> He mentions that eighteenth century Calcutta was divided between 'white town' and 'black town'. The British also laid out separate residential districts in Delhi, Kingston in Jamaica, Dakar, Nairobi and Singapore. The European districts were almost always more spacious, with villas and bungalows on large lots and equipped with an elaborate sewage system. Indigenous quarters were usually cramped and lacked the sanitary structures and conditions of the European quarters.<sup>22</sup>

The same segregation was evident in occupied Cairo. Mitchell points out that tight and cramped quarters along the narrow streets and poor lighting of pre-colonial Cairo were considered chief causes for disease and crime.<sup>23</sup> Motivated by his desire to create the Paris of the Middle East, Khedive Ismail implemented a wide-ranging construction scheme during the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century with the help of European engineering expertise. Wider streets and more open areas were built in order to curb disease and to allow police to monitor 'dark' areas of crime more readily. Open spaces were created for new shops and entertainment. Cleanliness on the streets was encouraged.<sup>24</sup> As a result, these wider spaces became areas where Europeans were more likely to frequent, away from what they considered to be the less developed, unsanitary and unsafe areas where mostly native Egyptians dwelled. Construction of European buildings and institutions in Cairo, during the time of the British Occupation, by and large remained in areas that the Khedive had already developed as European.

An analysis of the maps of Cairo during from the 1900s testifies to this segregation. According to Edward Stanford's map of 1906<sup>25</sup>, the residential map of Gezira in 1907<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Jürgen Osterhammel, *Colonialism: A Theoretical Overview* (Princeton, Markus Wiener Publishers, 1997), p.88.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> Timothy Mitchell, *Colonising Egypt* (New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1988), p.65.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 67.

<sup>25</sup> British Map Library, no. 64480 (4): Edward Stanford, 12, 13, 14, Long Acre W.C., 16 June: 1906 (London); acquired by British Museum, 4 Oct. 1906.

<sup>26</sup> *Residential Map of Gezira*, published by the Survey of Egypt, 1907, in F.T. Rowlatt's Hanging File, (Middle East Centre, St. Antony's College, Oxford University).

and another map published by the Survey of Egypt in 1920<sup>27</sup>, most districts in Cairo were chiefly Egyptian while some areas vividly showcased European architecture. More specifically, within these predominantly European quarters, British buildings and institutions were situated on 3 main sites. The Gezira Island (which in 1906 was called Gezirat Bulak) featured a large residential quarter for British residents, the Gezira Palace Hotel and Gezira Sporting club. On the club's grounds were the racecourse and the Anglo-American Hospital. The Qasr el-Dubara quarter, just southeast of Gezira and east of the Nile River, hosted the British Consulate-General, the Semiramis and Savoy hotels and was also a leading residential neighbourhood for British residents of Cairo. Finally, the Ezbekiyya area, just northeast of the Qasr el-Dubara quarter, contained the often frequented Shepherd's Hotel, Continental Hotel, Hotel Victoria, the Anglo-Egyptian Bank nearby in 'Ataba and the All Saint's and St. Andrew's churches were also in the same vicinity. Although facilitated by earlier aforementioned Khedival policies, the pattern of segregation between the foreign rulers and native Egyptians emerged primarily during the British Occupation when more and more Britons settled in Cairo. British residents in Cairo chose to live, work, and relax in Gezira, Qasr el-Dubara/Garden City and the Ezbekiyya area; while Egyptians inhabited regions like Boulaq, Shobra, and Old Cairo. On the outskirts of Cairo, Britons also resided in Zamalek, Heliopolis, Maadi, and Helwan. Abu-Lughod articulates this divide between the European quarter and the Egyptian parts of Cairo:

"By the end of the nineteenth century Cairo consisted of two distinct physical communities...The city's physical duality was but a manifestation of the cultural cleavage...The native city [was] still essentially pre-industrial in technology, social structure, and way of life, [with] the labyrinth street pattern of yet unpaved [streets];...the 'colonial' city [featured] its steam-powered techniques, its faster pace and wheeled traffic, and its European identification...[with] broad straight streets...flanked by wide walks and setbacks, militantly crossing one another at rigid right angles...[The native city] was dependent upon itinerant water peddlers [while the residents of the 'colonial' city]...had their water delivered through a convenient network of conduits connected with the steam pumping station near the river. [The native city was] plunged into darkness at nightfall while gaslights illuminated the thoroughfares [of the 'colonial' city along with] formal gardens, strips of decorative flowers beds, or artificially shaped trees. One entered the old city by caravan and traversed it on foot or animal-back; one entered the new by railroad and proceeded via horse-drawn [carriages]. In short...the two cities...were miles apart socially and centuries apart technologically."<sup>28</sup>

It appears that the symbolic value of the geographic location of European, and more particularly, British institutions, buildings and residential neighbourhoods lay in their

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<sup>27</sup> British Map Library, no. 64480(6): *General Map of Cairo*, published by Survey of Egypt 1920.

separateness from the native Egyptian quarters. Not only did this separation merely affirm the glaring ethnic and cultural difference between Britons and Egyptians, they also provided the British residents of Egypt with reminders of unity and commonality - in a shared heritage and tradition. One pertinent example was the Gezira Island. It represented for the British community a place that reminded them of a common heritage in Britain and gave them a 'home' away from home as one astute British observer so poignantly comments:

"...the little English colony seems very self-contained, with the inevitable golf course, tennis-club, and Anglican church. Cairo has an English quarter in the island of Gezireh inhabited by the more fortunate of our officials, and it is surprisingly English in its appearance. Some of the roads, with their neat tree-lined pavements, their wooden garden-gates and "tradesmen's entrance", might be in Wimbledon or Beckenham or some other prosperous London suburb."<sup>29</sup>

However, not only did segregated areas indicate a clear and separate ethnic and cultural distinctiveness from the Egyptians and also a common history with fellow Britons, segregation represented for the British in Egypt power and aloofness. The sheer size, magnitude and novelty of certain displays of foreign architecture like villas, hotels and churches undoubtedly would have symbolised Western power and affluence to the average Egyptian. However, symbolism aside, the segregation of Britons in Egypt can also be attributed to the fact that most Britons in Egypt at the time were from the upper middle class and were accustomed to a higher standard of living than most Egyptians. They simply preferred larger homes, wider streets, manicured gardens and better infrastructure such as water and electricity supply, and had the means to pay for them.

Whatever the case, it is important to clarify that the actual buildings in Cairo may not have reflected a specific 'British' predominance in Egypt. Though

"the inspiration for the Ma'adi district (built from 1906 by the Delta Company) came from the British style of sloping roofs and flower gardens [and that]...Garden City was also a British-style district following the same pattern as Ma'adi with its villas and gardens,"<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Janet Abu-Lughod, *Cairo: 1001 Years of the City Victorious*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971), p. 98.

<sup>29</sup> Martin Briggs S. *Through Egypt in War-Time* (London: Unwin, 1918), p.36.

<sup>30</sup> Magda Baraka, *The Egyptian Upper Class between Revolutions: 1919-1952*, (Reading: Ithaca, 1998), p. 106.

Mark Crinson, in his work on architectural styles in Egypt, ascertains that larger more significant buildings and architectural landmarks were rarely representative of British design, labour or pre-eminence.

"In Cairo, as in Alexandria, building materials were often imported. Most building work was in the hands of Italian architects and contractors, and British involvement was unusual."<sup>31</sup>

Of significant buildings in Egypt in the late nineteenth century, Crinson pinpoints that only St. Mark's church in Alexandria, the New Hotel in el-Ezbekiyya Gardens, the Post Office and the Hospital in Suez were constructed by British architects who stayed true to a distinct British style of design which featured pyramidal roofs and convex mansard roofs. Some British architects such as Robert Stephenson and Owen Jones were hired by the Egyptian authorities to design buildings which showcased neo-Islamic domes and pavilions.<sup>32</sup> Though European architecture in Egypt may have affirmed to Europeans and Egyptians alike that Europe ruled Egypt; the buildings themselves rarely communicated a particular British pre-eminence. Most likely, the segregated British quarters acted more as a rallying point for their community solidarity and common heritage than the actual design of the buildings themselves. Yet, surely the splendour and size of European architecture in specific areas of Cairo and Alexandria indicated to Egyptians a formidable foreign presence and power in their country. Whatever the case, far more crucial to this study than geographic location and the external design of buildings are the organisations, societies and institutions which meet and function within these buildings. And it is to these that this discussion now turns.

## Clubs

Clubs were very important to the cohesion and expansion of the British Empire. In cities in Britain, clubs since the seventeenth century "performed a vital social and cultural role... They promoted social integration... [and] generated a renewed consciousness and

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<sup>31</sup> Mark Crinson, *Empire Building: Orientalism and Victorian Architecture* (London: Routledge, 1996), p.171-172.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

pride in urban community."<sup>33</sup> Clubs enforced British culture and imperial prowess within Britain and throughout the Empire.

"There was a parallel expansion in membership of...public schools, the gentlemen's clubs, and the Empire. Clubs in London such as the Oriental, the East India, the Calcutta, the Madras, and the Bombay reflected in their very names the Imperial expansiveness. They helped to sustain its social structure."<sup>34</sup>

Moreover, clubs were established in nearly every major colonial centre, which affirmed and propagated the same imperial clamour and ideals.

"The Empire depended on rulers who cleaved to others to constitute a fraternity who, belonging to the same club, wore the same mask, had the same manners, the same heavy volition."<sup>35</sup>

For instance, the Mombasa Club nurtured a hidden code of conduct that accentuated British culture.

"Club behaviour is, or should be, inbred; such passes from father to son; the rules are not written but the penalties for breaking discipline are usually understood by everyone....A woman's name was not to be mentioned in any derogatory sense; a wager was a debt of honour; a promise made was a matter of honour; swearing or over-drinking was a matter for the committee; to cheat at cards meant expulsion; blasphemy was a serious matter; derogatory remarks in respect of other members, slander of any kind, notoriety in personal behaviour; all to be deplored. These and so many other matters not only within the Club limits; but often within the community could not be included in printed rules. It was expected that members knew the drill and kept to the unwritten tenets of Club membership and behaviour."<sup>36</sup>

Thus, clubs in the colonial era served as symbols of a common culture, mannerism and conduct. They acted as reminders of imperialism and perpetuated the exclusiveness and supremacy of the Empire to both club members and outsiders.

In Egypt, the Inspector-General of Prisons Coles Pasha created the Alexandria Sporting Club in 1890 which featured cricket, course-racing and other forms of amusement for Alexandria's British community.<sup>37</sup> It was "a symbol of privilege and power with the British community at the heart of the club's establishment...and representation on

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<sup>33</sup> Peter Clark, *Sociability and Urbanity: Clubs and Societies in the Eighteenth Century City* (Leicester: Victorian Studies Centre, University of Leicester, 1986), p. 22.

<sup>34</sup> Paul J. Rich, *Chains of Empire* (London: Regency Press, 1991) p.145.

<sup>35</sup> J.H. Grainger, *Patriotisms: Britain 1900-1939*, (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1986), p.137 as quoted from Rich, p. 145.

<sup>36</sup> Edward Rodwell, *The Mombasa Club* (Mombasa: Mombasa Club, 1988), p.24-25.

<sup>37</sup> Coles Pasha, *Recollections and Reflections*, (London: The Saint Catherine Press, 1918), p. 40 & 158.

various committees.”<sup>38</sup> However, by far the most prominent club in Egypt was the Gezira Sporting Club in Zamalek – the island just west of Cairo’s city centre. The club was opened in 1886 for the purpose of providing recreation for the officers of the British military. British civilians were allowed to be members of the club ‘by courtesy’ of the military.<sup>39</sup> The club’s property consisted of 150 feddans (close to 150 acres)<sup>40</sup>. Its frequent activities and spaciousness fostered the prestige, exclusiveness and camaraderie felt among British military officers, as Briggs points out: “...the favourite [of] ...out-of-door resorts for officers is the Gezireh Sporting Club...while 'other ranks' mainly patronise the Ezbekiyeh Gardens, with their fine trees, restaurants, banks and YMCA.”<sup>41</sup> The club also acted as a place of refuge for other British professionals – businessmen, government officials, teachers and etc. By 1909, there were 750 civilian members of the club; most of whom paid the one-time life-long members’ fee of £E50. Undoubtedly, some Britons wanted to escape from Egyptians at the club and wanted to be freed from the presence of native Egyptians. Bimbashi McPherson describes this sentiment best when he comments on the daily routine of his fellow British teachers:

“little or no friendly intercourse [existed] between them and their pupils, [since] as soon as their work as over, [they] escaped on their bicycles to the Sporting Club at Gezirah, there to indulge in their own games of golf or tennis or squash racquets.”<sup>42</sup>

Indisputably, the club was synonymous with the exclusivity of the British community. Very few non-Britons were allowed in. Egyptians were excluded when the club first opened in 1886,<sup>43</sup> but a limited number of wealthy Egyptians who socialised with Europeans were eventually permitted to enter.<sup>44</sup>

Moreover, the Gezira Club represented for members of the British community in Cairo a place of recreation, rest and relaxation in the way that British people were accustomed

<sup>38</sup> J-M. R. Oppenheim, “Le Sporting Club: Symbole et Enjeu Social” in Robert Ilbert, ed., *Alexandrie: Entre Deux Mondes*, ROMM (La Revue de L’Occident Musulman et de la Mediterreaneé), 46,( Aix-en-Provence, 1987), p. 168.

<sup>39</sup> Sarah Seawright, *The British in the Middle East*, (London: East & West Publications, 1979), p. 126.

<sup>40</sup> Samir Raafat, “Gezira Sporting Club Milestones”, *Egyptian Mail*, 10-17/02/1996 from Samir Raafat’s website: egypt.com.

<sup>41</sup> Briggs, p. 26.

<sup>42</sup> McPherson, *op.cit.*, p. 29.

<sup>43</sup> Magda Abu-Fadil, “Gezira Club – Still the ‘in’ place to be”, *The Middle East*, (Sept, 1990), p. 45.

<sup>44</sup> Seawright, p. 126.

that the Turf Club was not as powerful a symbol as the Gezira Club. Unlike the Gezira Club, the Turf Club lacked the British heritage cultivated by British sporting activities and the unique physical presence of a vast property featuring British landscaping. Yet, it did affirm the British ethnic distinctiveness and community identity that the Gezira Club underscored. Perhaps that was why a British officer described the Turf Club as both “the only place...which has any feeling of home about it...[yet] reminds one very slightly of a British club.”<sup>53</sup> Primarily, the Turf Club was a key place for British residents in Cairo to interact socially and politically. “Almost every Englishman in [Egyptian] society [belonged] to it.”<sup>54</sup>

Socially, the Turf Club was the centre for exchanging gossip and discussing business. According to Sir Richard Vaux, it was “great centre of mutual admiration...gossip and good fellowship.”<sup>55</sup> Similarly, Lord Edward Cecil recalls that though,

"[the English] talked scandal at the club...discussed games, made future arrangements and plans...argued about politics and...a little useful business at times... more harm is done in the hall of the Turf Club [due to gossip] than in the other rooms occupied by Englishmen in Cairo.”<sup>56</sup>

On other occasions, the Turf Club was a forum for serious political decision making within the British community.

"In overseas clubs, as at home, the affairs of the Empire were often decided. In Cairo, the turf club occupied the old building of the British Agency, and it has been suggested that the kind of business transacted had not changed with the change in ownership.”<sup>57</sup>

The Turf Club became the hub of administrative discussions for many British officials. “Over the ritual ablutions of drinks, men relaxed among familiar faces, talking shop...The Turf [Club] was important, for much of what passed as leisure was actually work.”<sup>58</sup> It might thus appear as no accident that one of the most significant political speeches of the British occupation was delivered at the Turf Club. Sir Eldon Gorst, British Consul-General of Egypt from 1907-1911, made his influential ‘Egypt for the

<sup>53</sup> William A. Douglas, *Letters and Memorials*, (Edinburgh: Andrew Brown, 1920), p. 36, in the Imperial War Museum. Douglas was a captain in the Royal Scots’ 6<sup>th</sup> Battalion.

<sup>54</sup> Sladen, *Egypt*, p. 504.

<sup>55</sup> Sir Richard Vaux, private papers at Middle East Centre, St. Antony’s College, Oxford University, p. 32.

<sup>56</sup> Lord Edward Cecil, *op.cit.*, p. 118-119.

<sup>57</sup> Rich, p.169.

Egyptians' speech at the Turf Club. He emphasised that the British government would eventually withdraw its political domination over Egypt. He suggested that Egyptians were ultimately going to fill the government positions that the British held. This direction created resentment and loss of sympathy for Gorst among the British officials of Egypt since Gorst was implying that their positions and careers were to be eventually replaced by Egyptians. No British official who heard the speech was happy to be told that his career prospects were in jeopardy.<sup>59</sup>

Indeed, Young was accurate when he described that the activities and conversations in the Turf Club were both 'official' and social. For the initial years of the British occupation, conversations were primarily 'official' dealing with government projects, promotions, appointments and salaries. Later, when members of the Turf Club came from the commercial or archaeological professions, chats in the Turf Club became anything but official.<sup>60</sup> Though not as symbolically significant as the Gezira Club, the Turf Club served as a rallying point for Britons in Egypt and symbolised British camaraderie in Egypt through the social and political discourse that took place in it.

Another popular club was the Jockey Club. It served as a place for the British, especially the military, to congregate and compete and it brought a thread of British heritage through the sport of horse-racing. The American diplomat Thomas Skelton Harrison reminisces: "I forgot to say that yesterday afternoon were held the races...I hear that 'all the world and his wife' were there, especially the English."<sup>61</sup> The Jockey Club was so important that it, at times, demanded the attention of the most senior officials in the British administration in Egypt. For instance, when Brigadier General Sir George Macaulay recommended to the British High Commissioner of Egypt, Sir Reginald Wingate, in 1918 that the Jockey Club of Egypt assume overall authority for all racing matters in Alexandria, Gezira and Heliopolis, Wingate responded by not only agreeing to

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<sup>58</sup> Welch, p. 33.

<sup>59</sup> Peter Mellini, *Sir Eldon Gorst: The Overshadowed Proconsul* (Stanford: Hoover Institute Press, 1971), p.157.

<sup>60</sup> Young, p.3.

<sup>61</sup> Thomas Skelton Harrison, *The Homely Diary of a Diplomat in the East 1897-1899* (New York: Houghton, Mifflin Co., 1917), p. 90.

this plan but by affirming the "great interest taken by the Military in Racing."<sup>62</sup> Macaulay then replied to Wingate by saying that "there is so much money in racing now that a...much stronger control is needed over many things connected with it".<sup>63</sup> Hence the Jockey Club was not only an important rallying point of enjoyment for the British in Egypt but it even captivated the financial and administrative attention of British officials in Egypt. It was a symbol for British culture and social interaction.

Needless to say, clubs became indispensable in the imperial landscape. They became

"...[oases]...more than...recreational [centres]; the [club] was an emblem of exclusiveness [and acted] as a sanctuary providing temporary refuge from an alien world. For a dispersed and close-knit society ...the corporate identity of the overseas Europeans was institutionalized, and ritualized...[in the club]."<sup>64</sup>

As for clubs for lower working class Britons in Egypt, there appears to be very few. One club, the Railway Institute Club, had tennis facilities. Though primarily for the use of lower working class railway workers, it seemed to also have allowed others like office clerks onto its premises.<sup>65</sup> The dearth in the literature regarding lower class clubs most probably point to the fact that there were few of these clubs since the majority of Britons in Egypt were from the upper middle class. Perhaps another factor may be that upper class Britons in Egypt were the ones who wrote memoirs and autobiographies and therefore they omitted mention of lower class clubs since they did not visit them nor deem them worthy of mention.

## Sports

Besides the sporting activities of the Gezira Club and the Jockey Club, other sporting events also acted symbolically as key reminders of British culture at home for the British residents in Cairo as well as heightening their awareness as a community. Every spring, the Amateur Athletic Sports Day took place at Gabbari on the old race-course. British

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<sup>62</sup> FO141/786/7553; letter from Sir Reginald Wingate to Brigadier General Sir George Macauley, 15/08/1918.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, letter from Macauley to Wingate, 16/08/1918.

<sup>64</sup> A.J. Stockwell, "The White Man's Burden and Brown Humanity: Colonialism, Ethnicity in British Malaya", *The Southeast Asian Journal of Social Sciences*, Vol.10. No.1, 1982, p.48.

<sup>65</sup> FO841/102: Guy Osborne Lion vs. James Francis Waterlow, Civil Jurisdiction, Waterlow's deposition, 23/06/1908.

families usually picnicked and spent the day there.<sup>66</sup> Also, lawn tennis, popularised in Britain, naturally brought the British community together.

"Lawn tennis, from a mere pastime, had become part of the serious business of life. Courts were laid down of the right dimensions and with due attention to foundations and drainage and the right way of the sun....Everybody played. Hostesses availed themselves of a popular form of entertainment by holding their 'at homes' in the form of tennis days...The crowd at these gatherings was often so great that a good game was out of the question; but on off days, we made up for hard practice and in time developed some admirable players."<sup>67</sup>

Lastly, even fox hunting was attempted in Egypt in the 1880s. Few events or pastimes surpass fox hunting as symbolic of British culture and lifestyle. The significant rural resistance to recent government proposals to abolish it underscores the importance of fox hunting to British culture. Unfortunately, during the 1880s in Egypt, the hounds couldn't survive the Egyptian heat.

"Foxes having been sighted in the neighbourhood, the idea of getting up a hunt was started by some sporting members of the garrison. A pack of hounds was brought out from England and some meets were arranged [though not much was caught]...Unfortunately the hounds did not acclimatize and their summer in Cyprus, where they were sent to recuperate, failed to restore them to health. They died, and the hunting came to an end."<sup>68</sup>

However, fox-hunting did resume in Cairo as evidenced by the 1901 dispute between a few British officers and four servants of Wilfrid Blunt - a prominent British resident of Cairo. During a hunt, British officers were following their hounds in pursuit of foxes and inadvertently entered Blunt's property. Blunt's servants immediately assaulted the officers for trespassing. The servants were subsequently given one to two month jail sentences.<sup>69</sup> However fraught with misfortune fox-hunting appeared to conjure up in Cairo, sporting events such as athletics, lawn tennis and fox-hunting were symbols that consolidated a common memory and heritage of British culture and recreation.

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<sup>66</sup> Caillard, p.33.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, p.47.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 49-50.

<sup>69</sup> Command Papers relating to 'Assault on British Officers Near Cairo', in Command Papers, 706, in Accounts and Papers, State Papers, no. 76. Vol. CXXX, 1902, Egypt, No. 3, 23/07/1901.

## Hotels

Hotels served as symbols for the British community in Cairo in several ways. Like the clubs, hotels acted as one of the main sites for social interaction and enjoyment; particularly the hotel balls.

"The hotel balls are...the leading feature of our society. There are now very few big European houses where entertainments are given, and the increased size of our social world has rendered the small dances and parties of ten years ago impossible. The result is that nowadays nine-tenths of the entertaining is done at the hotels, and usually on ball nights...All the principal hotels give a ball once a week throughout the season; but the smart ones...are the Savoy and the Semiramis. Next, in order of merit, come the Gezira, Shepherd's, and Heliopolis, and last of all, the Continental....As each hotel gives its weekly ball on a different day of the week, it is possible to go to a dance six nights out of seven for the five months of the season; and I really believe there are some people who do this and survive."<sup>70</sup>

Although the hotel balls catered to the entire foreign community during the British occupation of Egypt, the fact that the hotels offered social activity and enjoyment for many British residents of Cairo was never in doubt. The Gezira Palace Hotel showcased a casino which regularly assembled at 5 o'clock in the afternoon, "three hundred to four hundred people....mostly of the English contingent."<sup>71</sup>

Not only were the hotels symbolic in their accommodation of British social activity and fostering the distinctiveness of foreign identity in Egypt, some of them were physically symbolic of British culture and lifestyle. The luxurious Mena House Hotel by the edge of the Pyramids symbolised for British residents in Cairo - British heritage, tradition and cultivated a common nostalgic memory and longing of the homeland. Due to the 'Orientalising' influence of decorative style from India, the Mena House Hotel featured mashrabiyya windows, brass-embossed doors, blue tiles, and mosaics of coloured marbles. Nonetheless, a pleasant English country-house atmosphere boasting English breakfasts, great log fires, cheerfully furnished rooms, quiet and unobtrusive service, and an air of repose, permeated the hotel.<sup>72</sup> The Mena House Hotel symbolised the best of British comforts with 'Oriental' decor and a view of the Pyramids.

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<sup>70</sup> Cecil, p.145.

<sup>71</sup> Harrison, p.56.

<sup>72</sup> Caillard, p. 112.

Not surprisingly, cafés were not symbolically significant to the British as the clubs and hotels were, due to the fact that the British do not appear to have a strong 'café' culture as other Europeans from predominantly warmer Mediterranean climates. The cafés in Egypt rarely cultivated or represented a common memory or tie with Britain and structurally and architecturally, they were not necessarily representative of the British presence in Egypt. More precisely, the exclusivity of British company was not maintained in the cafés. For example, although "apart from the hotels, the chief military resort in Cairo is Groppi's, a large café, with a garden, in the centre of the city...the company...is much less exclusive. In Groppi's, colonels...sergeants and privates, and nursing sisters and other people's wives, and civilians and effendis [likely of Turkish origin], all jostle together at the little tables in friendly confusion."<sup>73</sup> Therefore, cafés were not symbols that represented commonality and ethnic identity to the British residents in Egypt nor did they reflect British heritage and prowess to outsiders.

### **Military Structures and Activities**

Although clubs and hotels primarily symbolised commonality, British culture and tradition, and in some cases, British identity to non-British observers in Egypt, military structures and activities clearly symbolised British prowess, prestige and authority to British, European and Egyptian residents in Egypt. Perhaps the most obvious symbol of British rule during the occupation was the establishment of military barracks. For Egyptians, the barracks symbolised British domination; for British residents, they represented assurances of order and protection. The barracks at Qasr-el-Nil just on the banks of the Nile were geographically prominent near the town centre of Cairo. Even more significant perhaps were the barracks in Abbassiyya. They were:

"...the chief home of the British garrison in Cairo. The buildings near the main road - Red Barracks on the left, Zafaran Barracks on the right and the Talbot Block beyond - are somewhat antiquated, and not as desirable in many respects as one could wish. But the magnificent new barracks beyond them are probably the finest structures of their kind in existence anywhere. They are characteristic of the British Army in their solid qualities, their effect of permanent stability, their absolute insistence on good materials and their fitness of the job in hand. *The new buildings at Abbasiya suggest that Britain has sat down very deliberately and heavily in Cairo, without any intention of moving during the next few hundred years*"<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> Briggs, p.26.

Clearly, the new barracks at Abbassiyya, built in the years leading up to the First World War, symbolically trumpeted British domination over Egypt to Egyptians and Europeans alike. Similarly, three British warships stationed in the harbour of Alexandria, the *Monarch*, the *Invincible*, and the *Helicon* (the admiral's flagship) provided a substantive and very visible representation of British prowess and naval capability and availability in Alexandria.<sup>75</sup> Unquestionably, in the height of imperial rivalry, the warships reminded Egyptians and other European powers of British pre-eminence in Egypt after the bombardment of Alexandria in 1882.

Besides military architecture and hardware, certain military activities also served as symbols of British power in face of British, European and Egyptian observers.

"The role of ritual in impressing foreign political powers is also much in evidence in colonial administration where great emphasis was placed on ritual display as a means of communicating the authority and power of rulers. This typically took the form of local ritual display of colonial superiority."<sup>76</sup>

No doubt, British military marches represented the kind of ritual that clearly displayed British dominance and presence:

"No picture of Cairo that does not include the soldier can be considered complete, for the military aspect [provides the most] aggressive evidence....By company or regiment, soldiers are so frequently marched through the streets that the visitor might believe Cairo to be a vast military camp. Martial music is the adjunct of every function, and every anniversary, religious and festive...It is part of the scheme of administration to keep the soldier in evidence, *impressing the simple native with the importance of the army.*"<sup>77</sup>

Likewise, on ceremonial occasions like the Queen's birthday, the British military were put on display at full strength and reviewed by leading members of the British and Egyptian communities. Lord Cromer was "a master psychologist of this imperial relationship, striking fear and at the same time instilling respect in the subject peoples...by establishing the image of the superiority - both military and moral - of the British and by punishing all efforts to challenge this position."<sup>78</sup> If these marches and

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<sup>74</sup> Briggs, p.28 (emphasis mine).

<sup>75</sup> Caillard, p.50.

<sup>76</sup> David Kertzer, *Ritual, Politics and Power* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988) p.33.

<sup>77</sup> Frederick C. Penfield, *Present-Day Egypt* (New York: The Century Co., 1903), pp.52-53 (my emphasis).

<sup>78</sup> Tignor, p. 195.

processions symbolised to the native population that the British were in control, the drills of the Local Defence Corps during World War I symbolised for all sectors of the British community the opportunity and importance of uniting to fight Britain's enemies. Young recalls:

"British subjects were drilled by the Military Authorities at Kasr el Nil Barracks parade ground, and on a few occasions on which I was in Cairo and attended the drill it was an amazing sight to see school masters, judges and highly placed officials forming fours under the sharp word of command of a British sergeant."<sup>79</sup>

Undoubtedly, British military structures and activities were "the outward and visible sign[s] of the predominance of British influence."<sup>80</sup> These symbols of power were directed at both British residents in Egypt and the European and Egyptian populations as well.

### Hospitals

British hospitals in Egypt were supposed to represent and symbolise British medical prestige. However, the Anglo-American Hospital failed to be a symbol of British medical success while the British Hospital experienced trouble in its initiation. Perhaps only the Kitchener Memorial Hospital had any symbolic success - as a memorial tribute to the life and work of Lord Kitchener.

Built in 1903, the Anglo-American Hospital was intended to serve as a symbol of British medical prestige in light of the success of the German Hospital. Founded in 1883, the German Hospital was the best hospital in Egypt by the turn of the century. It had an international standing and reputation. Its International Committee of Management consisted of 2 Germans, 2 Britons, 2 Swiss, and 2 Americans. Its matron and nursing staff were mostly German and there were some Italians.<sup>81</sup> The

"British community with customary laissez-faire was content to remain the only important European community in Cairo without a national hospital and upon the occasion of Queen Victoria's Diamond

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<sup>79</sup> Young, p.1.

<sup>80</sup> Lord Milner, *op.cit.*, p.29. Milner was at the time Under-Secretary of Finance in Egypt.

<sup>81</sup> FO141/680/4069; Letter from British High Commissioner McMahon to Lord Balfour, Foreign Secretary, 22/12/1916.

Jubilee (1901) subscribed a considerable sum which was handed over to the German Hospital for the building of additional accommodation."<sup>82</sup>

However, the turn of the century was also an intense time of imperial rivalry. In "January 1896...Kaiser Wilhelm II officially proclaimed Germany's pursuit of *Weltpolitik*..[which was] a renewed and enlarged interest in imperialism."<sup>83</sup> Increasing German economic competitiveness, military and particularly, naval prowess and colonial involvement were priorities of this policy. Needless to say, "German *Weltpolitik* was...a cause of friction and much bad feeling with the British."<sup>84</sup> Most likely in this charged atmosphere of imperial rivalry, Lord Cromer, British Consul-General of Egypt, became disappointed by the lack of a British Hospital. In March 1901, he invited subscriptions and donations for a joint Anglo-American Hospital. Cromer and the Consul-General of the United States in Egypt enthusiastically endorsed the project. King Edward, Queen Alexandra and President McKinley of the United States all agreed to become patrons of the hospital. Funds for the hospital came in easily; more than £E 6,300 were raised in 2 years. By 1903, the hospital received its first patient and featured 22 beds. It contained special, private and general wards costing respectively 100, 30 and 15 piastres per day. Two of the beds were available for the disabled or who were unable to pay.<sup>85</sup>

Despite its encouraging start, the hospital encountered significantly hardship after it was built. The Anglo-American Hospital was accused by some of Cairo's British residents of exploiting wealthy American tourists while not being able to exemplify the quality of a 'British' institution (since an *Anglo-American* institution can never be purely British in character and 'excellence'). Even more damaging to its success was its location on Gezira Island, meaning that only a small proportion of the British population, who happened to live on the island, could frequent the hospital easily. The majority of British residents lived in other parts of the city and found it inconvenient and burdensome to travel to the hospital due to the overcrowded route connecting the island to the mainland.<sup>86</sup> For these reasons, the hospital "lacked the whole-hearted support of the Anglo-American

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<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

<sup>83</sup> C.J. Bartlett, *The Global Conflict: The International Rivalry of the Great Powers, 1890-1990* (2nd Ed., London: Longman, 1994), p.25.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

<sup>85</sup> Raafat, "The Anglo-American Hospital Approaches its Centennial", *Egyptian Mail*, 13/01/1996 & *Cairo Times*, 28/05/1998, as quoted from Raafat's website: egypt.com.

<sup>86</sup> FO141/680/4069; Letter from British High Commissioner McMahon to Lord Balfour, 22/12/1916.

community resident in Egypt [and had even] evoked considerable hostile feeling."<sup>87</sup> Though the hospital is still currently functioning under capable Egyptian physicians, the Anglo-American Hospital can be seen as a rare example of British administrative failure and lack of foresight during the time of the occupation.

By the outbreak of World War I, there were hospitals under Austrian, French, German, Greek, and Italian auspices. To address the problems of the Anglo-American Hospital and the need for an independent British Hospital, High Commissioner McMahon supported the idea of building the British Hospital as a symbol of prestige (in light of so many countries with their own national hospitals):

"The time has now come, and indeed is long overdue, when the resentments and jealousies of the past should be mutually forgotten and the question of eliminating German influence and combining to establish a truly British Hospital should be taken up afresh in a new spirit."<sup>88</sup>

However, even until the early 1920s, the British Hospital was only an idea in the minds of those in the British community in Egypt. The cost for the hospital - land, architectural plans, price of building combined with the difficult financial circumstances of many in the British community in Egypt, was simply too high.

Another hospital, with ambitious aspirations, was the Kitchener memorial hospital. When Kitchener died in 1916, McMahon wrote to the Foreign Office suggesting that some lasting memorial of permanent benefit to the land of Egypt be instituted. The Egyptian National Fund in Memory of the Late Lord Kitchener was established. It recommended that "the best memorial was one which would perform the dual function of meeting the public need...of perpetuating [his] memory and that a monument erected from Egyptian funds should be of utility to Egypt and the Egyptians. [It] advised therefore that memorial would be a hospital for women and a school of Gynaecology."<sup>89</sup> By 1922, £E 90,000 were collected to meet the £E 250 000 target to build the hospital. Six Egyptian girls were sent to England to study gynaecology for the purpose of returning to teach at Kitchener's memorial hospital. The ex-Austrian Hospital was purchased in 1923 to

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<sup>87</sup> Letter to Executive Committee of Anglo-American Hospital, summer 1911, All Saints' Church archives, Bundle 67B.

<sup>88</sup> FO141/680/4069: Letter from High Commissioner McMahon to Lord Balfour, 22/12/1916.

<sup>89</sup> FO141/607/3693: Letter from High Commissioner to Foreign Office, Nov., 1916.

accommodate the 50 beds that the hospital needed to start with.<sup>90</sup> By 1929, the School of Medicine for Women, the Training School for Nurses, and the Kitchener Hospital for Women and Children - established to serve the poor of Cairo, were firmly part of Egypt's medical heritage.

The Anglo-American Hospital and the ill-fated British Hospital were unsuccessful efforts on the part of the British community in Cairo to demonstrate British expertise and commitment to the health needs of its own community. Only the Kitchener Memorial Hospital as a lasting monument to Lord Kitchener successfully symbolised the British commitment to the medical betterment of Egypt during the occupation.

### Schools

British education in Egypt symbolised British culture, tradition and identity by providing a medium whereby young people would grow to be aware of their British heritage. Even if they were not from a British background, students were meant to understand and grow in sympathy and loyalty to the British political hegemony and culture in Egypt. Across the Empire, British parents and well-to-do native families saw the benefits of a British education and in particular, the rewards of the English public school system.

"Along with the effects of the hidden curriculum with its introduction to the rituals of success, there were obvious benefits from better facilities, better teachers and smaller classes. It was taken for granted that the public school was the best school, and that there would be one wherever there was an elite to be educated....In England or overseas, of British stock or native, aspiring families impressed upon their children the importance of public schooling. An ambitious native establishment wanted an educational system on public school lines."<sup>91</sup>

Besides schools which were dependent on religious associations like the Church Missionary Society schools which accepted mostly Egyptian pupils, there were three other non-church based English schools in Egypt during the British occupation: Victoria College in Alexandria (already mentioned in the previous chapter), the New English School and Dean's Building School in Cairo. Before the establishment of these schools, Egyptian students from wealthier families and residents of European origin were

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<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, Fathy Pasha's, President of the Kitchener Memorial Committee, report to High Commissioner Allenby, 13 July 1923.

<sup>91</sup> Rich, p.111.

instructed primarily in French and taught in a French curriculum resulting in the cultivation of French sympathies and interests among the pupils. Thus it was imperative for the British to establish their own schools especially in light of the fact that it was Britain that occupied Egypt at this time.

"It seems a very pressing need that in view of the political situation in Egypt, British influence should be made predominant in the education of boys either belonging to the class roughly described as Levantine - Syrian, Greek, Maltese, Cypriot and Israelite or of the Egyptian nationality, who form the great mass of private scholars."<sup>92</sup>

Victoria College, opened in 1902, was established in memory of Queen Victoria. Though this thesis deals primarily with the British community in Cairo, Victoria College affected Britons in Cairo because they were encouraged to send their sons there and indeed, some of them did. Well-to-do boys in Alexandria and other parts of Egypt from every ethnic background were also encouraged to attend the school where they would receive an English public school education. "The object of the College is to afford Egyptians and residents in Egypt the opportunity of giving their sons a liberal education in accordance with the principles of the English Public Schools."<sup>93</sup> Hence, cricket and football were played and the Certificate Exams came from the Oxford and Cambridge Joint Board.<sup>94</sup> Moreover,

"English is the medium of instruction, the Headmaster and most of the staff are English and the whole system and curriculum, the atmosphere and the moral tone of the School are in accord with the traditions of English public schools....[The school aims to] foster liking for British institutions among its foreign pupils and succeeds admirably in cultivating good-will in the relations between the boys (many of whom are local subjects if not of Egyptian birth) and the representatives of the Protecting Power, after they leave school."<sup>95</sup>

Victoria College and other public schools in the Empire instilled in every student, British or native, British traditions, administrative prowess, and a cultural uniformity to an old boys' network that undergirded not only loyalty and commitment to the British Empire but the exercise of its power.

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<sup>92</sup> FO141/680/4069: Letter from Douglas Dunlop, Educational Advisor to High Commissioner McMahon, entitled: *Note on the Desirability of Encouraging British Educational Institutions in Egypt*, 26/10/1916.

<sup>93</sup> FO141/512/608: Articles of the Constitution of Victoria College, approved by the General Meeting of Founders and Promoters; 28/03/1912.

<sup>94</sup> FO141/680/4069: Letter from McMahon to Balfour, 22/12/1916.

"The public schools indirectly helped to provide the pattern for Imperial organisation... The dissemination of the public school was not only through British enthusiasts but by 'natives' fuelled by a desire for the knowledge of how to manipulate Imperial symbols and thus acquire power, an acknowledgement by the ruled that an expertise in ritualism conferred political status."<sup>96</sup>

The "public school spirit became the spirit of British society and the Empire."<sup>97</sup>

Although Victoria College aspired to become a symbol and "centre of British culture...in the Near East"<sup>98</sup> and "a very valuable stronghold of British culture in Egypt,"<sup>99</sup> the school was in serious financial trouble by 1911. Lord Cromer, who had ironically advocated the original establishment of the school, had refused to contribute to the school financially out of fear that the education of 'natives' would lead to equipping them for self-governance. Further, as previously mentioned, many upper middle class British parents disliked the idea of sending their boys to a school filled with Syrians, Greeks, as well as other Europeans and were sending their boys to public schools in Britain.<sup>100</sup> To make matters worse, only one British financier - Mr. Alderson, was backing the school and with the threat of the school closing, parents were even more reluctant to send their children there.<sup>101</sup> Miraculously, enough money was collected within the British community to keep the school afloat, but by 1920, it faced a rather severe financial shortfall once again. Thus High Commissioner Wingate gave a fund-raising speech to the British business community in 1920. In his speech, Wingate stresses that although the college faced financial crises, "Victoria College stands as one of the few unofficial monuments of British work in Egypt....[advancing] British interests in this country."<sup>102</sup> The school survived and became the spawning ground for a generation of "Etonians of the Middle East, amongst them many of Egypt's prospective businessmen and notabilities were brought up and educated."<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, Letter from Dunlop to McMahon, 26/10/1916.

<sup>96</sup> Rich, p.59, 61.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, p.36.

<sup>98</sup> FO141/512/608: Speech by Sir Reginald Wingate, High Commissioner, at meeting of Victoria College Endowment Fund, 21/07/1920.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, Letter from Minister of Education in Egypt to Lord Allenby, 19/04/1922.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, Letter to Lord Cromer from Ruffer, 27/06/1911.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, Memo to High Commissioner, 1911.

<sup>103</sup> Baraka, p. 157.

As Victoria College symbolised British interests and culture, to some in the British community but especially to the non-British European and Levantine communities of Egypt, the New English School and the Dean's Building School were established primarily for the British community and not for any other Europeans. The New English School was

"...intended exclusively for children of British (English, Scottish, Irish)...and American birth. It has been thought necessary to make this rule absolute in order to keep out the Levantine element....[It was] started to provide education for the children of two distinct classes: those already referred to, whose parents cannot afford to send them to be educated in England; [and] those who require preparation for an English Public School. "<sup>104</sup>

Essentially, the New English School, established in 1916, provided education for children of British parents who were not wealthy, but not poor enough to send their children to the Dean's Building School. The Dean's School, opened in 1903, was named after Dean Butcher, Chaplain of All Saints' Church in Cairo for many years. The school served the needs of the poorest members of the British community. Fees were minimal and the school depended on gifts from other British residents. Unlike the New English School, the Dean's School accepted children who had one British parent - so that British influence on their lives could be secured and even amplified.<sup>105</sup> The Dean's School closed in 1917 since by then, "the large majority of children were neither English, nor the children of [British] railway workers, [and] it was difficult to continue...to appeal for a continuance of subscriptions."<sup>106</sup> Even though Victoria College, New English School and the Dean's Building School all faced problems and financial difficulties, they were nonetheless key symbols for British heritage, influence and cohesion not only for the British residents of Egypt but for those of European and Egyptian backgrounds.

### **The Cairo Cathedral**

"If a building is to express its function, a church must be expressive of Christian worship. The function of a church having been defined in terms of an elaborate ritual, the building becomes a symbol of that ritual...The function of a church then becomes not just to provide for worship but overtly to express specific doctrine...religious symbolism comes to be justified."<sup>107</sup>

<sup>104</sup> FO141/680/4069: Letter from McMahon to Balfour, 22/12/1916.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>106</sup> All Saints' Church Archives, Minute book 25, 06/09/1917.

<sup>107</sup> Chris Brooks, *Signs for the Times: Symbolic Realism in the Mid-Victorian World* London: George Allen & Unwin, 1984), p.162.

There were two main British churches in Cairo during the time of the occupation. The Scottish Presbyterian Church named St. Andrew's and the Anglican Church named All Saints. St. Andrew's was a symbol of home and spiritual familiarity particularly for the Scottish soldiers during World War I. A church report recorded:

"Always they come – the soldiers, mostly Scottish, in the morning a sprinkling but at night a great crowd from far and near, sometimes filling the church to the very front of the Nave. Their spirited singing of the old familiar hymns is a thing to be remembered. Were it only as the spiritual rallying-place of our Scottish soldiers...far from home, St. Andrew's more than justifies its existence."<sup>108</sup>

One officer commented that worship at St. Andrew's reminded him of "a real old-fashioned Scotch service...[with a] sort of 'Day at Home' touch about it!"<sup>109</sup>

However no other institution, site or building provided a better glimpse of the British community's thirst for symbolic representation of their heritage and power than the quest to build the Cairo Cathedral from 1916 to the early 1920s. In 1876, All Saints' Church was opened as the first Anglican Church in Cairo. Though originally just a small parish church, it became the main centre of worship for many British residents in Cairo and in the surrounding areas. Evidence for its symbolic significance can be found on its interior walls, which displayed plaques recording the deeds of the British military and memorials inscribing the names of British soldiers and officers who had died for the Empire.<sup>110</sup> Unfortunately, the church faced many repairs at high costs over the next decades due to its ageing building. As the British community grew, the church proved more and more inadequate and enlargements were carried out in 1891, 1892, and 1899. By the 1900s, the structure of the building was beyond satisfactory repair and the noise from the main street became more and more unbearable affecting worship and devotion in service.<sup>111</sup> Moreover, the building could no longer accommodate the congregation:

"...hundreds have been turned away every Sunday, for want even of standing rooms, and the evening services have had to be held twice over to make room for all who wish to be present. Even in normal times it is evident that the accommodation of our present church will be quite insufficient."<sup>112</sup>

<sup>108</sup> St. Andrew's Church archives, May 1917 report.

<sup>109</sup> Douglas, p. 60, letter on 15/10/1915.

<sup>110</sup> Aldred Brown, "All Saints' Church" in Arnold Wright, ed., *20<sup>th</sup> Century Impressions of Egypt*, p. 202.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, Letter from McMahon to Balfour, 22/12/1916.

<sup>112</sup> FO141/679/4117: Appeal for funds for Cathedral, 1919.

As Egypt became officially a British Protectorate in 1914, "it became clear that something more was required than the mere rebuilding of a parish church."<sup>113</sup> By 1915, the Bishop of Jerusalem, McInnis, suggested that "the time had come for the construction in Cairo of a church worthy of our religion and our name."<sup>114</sup> The argument he used was that the Egyptians might find it strange that there was not a bigger church for those who were Anglicans.

"To people who think so much of their religion as they do, it conveys the sense that we think very little of ours. It diminishes our prestige in their eyes, especially when our big memorial services, such as those after the death of King Edward and Lord Kitchener, have to be held in the open air, for lack of any church in which to hold them. Many hundreds of the leading natives in Egypt attend these services, and they cannot understand our taking no steps to remedy this state of affairs."<sup>115</sup>

The British community needed their own church where they could commemorate important occasions together. At the same time, a cathedral, by its mere physical presence, could be expected to symbolise both British prestige and the importance of their faith. This was accentuated by the fact that Cairo, being the biggest city in Africa, hosted large Coptic, Greek Orthodox, Roman Catholic and Armenian churches but not a British one. Bishop McInnis most passionately argued the need for this symbol in his letter to the Times on 29 June 1916:

"Such a church would be as much a witness and a symbol of our Christian faith to the people of Egypt as is the Cathedral of Khartoum to those of the Sudan. To ourselves it would not only be a symbol, but the outward expression of our inward faith, the centre of our religious life, and a new and perpetual incentive to worship."<sup>116</sup>

However, the Cathedral would not only symbolise British religious commitment and grandeur to Europeans and Egyptians and act as a Mother Church for other smaller Anglican congregations in Egypt, it would also serve as a memorial to the dead who have served the British empire faithfully and sacrificially. McInnis states that the Cathedral was to be dedicated to those who died for the Empire and to General Kitchener:

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<sup>113</sup> FO141/680/4069: Letter from McMahon to Balfour, 22/12/1916.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid.

"...we had already decided that our Cathedral should enshrine the immortal memory of our brave dead...[we] call for a Cathedral in memory of Kitchener, in Cairo...to all in Egypt not merely the Secretary of State for War and hero of a hundred fights, but the man everyone of us - British or Egyptian - relied upon and loved as a friend."<sup>117</sup>

After World War I, the need for the establishment of the Cathedral as a symbol for commemorating Britain's war-dead became even more crucial. One appeal for funding of the Cathedral read:

"We appeal for funds for the erection of a Cathedral Church in Cairo. We make this appeal not only to the British and American Communities in Egypt, but also to the English-speaking peoples throughout the world. This Church is to be a Memorial to Lord Cromer, Lord Kitchener and all other men of our race who have devoted their lives to the service of Egypt; to all British residents in Egypt who have fallen in the war; and not least to those thousands of brave men from Great Britain, New Zealand, and other parts of the Empire who at Gallipoli, in the Western Desert, in Sinai and in Palestine have given their lives in the defence of Egypt."<sup>118</sup>

Other appeals included the efforts of the church parish council itself. The council's plan in 1921 was to "increase the number of subscribers to All Saints' Church by means of personal canvass,...[with] the...Treasurer and Church wardens [allotting] spheres of action to individual members."<sup>119</sup>

Although by 1917 the Khedive had given the site of the old Ismailiyya Palace at Qasr el-Nil to the British community, the site was deemed inappropriate for the building of the Cathedral. By 1922, the land was returned to the Egyptian government;<sup>120</sup> and a new plan was established to erect the Cathedral on a strip of land north of the German Hospital.<sup>121</sup> Raising money to build the Cathedral continued to be a problem.

However, the Cathedral was finally erected in 1938 on the east bank of the Nile just north of the Qasr el-Nil Barracks after the church was able to obtain £E 70,000 from the sale of the old All Saint's Church site in el-Ezbekiyya in 1925 (the congregation met for 12 years, from 1925-1937 in St. Mary's Church in Garden City) and from generous gifts

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<sup>116</sup> FO141/679/4117: Bishop's letter to the Times & other English papers, 29/06/1916.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, Appeal for funding for the Cathedral, 1919.

<sup>119</sup> All Saints' Church archives, Cairo, minute book, 22, 16/11/1921.

<sup>120</sup> FO141/679/4117: Letter from British Residency to the Egyptian Government, 18/07/1922.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, Letter from Financial Advisor, G. Vereker to Residency, 02/12/1922.

to the Cathedral Building fund.<sup>122</sup> The Cathedral undoubtedly and unashamedly proclaimed the presence and impact of Western Christianity in the heart of Cairo's city centre. By 1963, under Nasser's pro-Arab regime, the Cathedral was given its first notice of demolition in favour of the construction of a much needed fly-over bridge connecting Gezira to Ramses in order to cope with Cairo's increasing traffic congestion.<sup>123</sup> With the Cathedral finally destroyed in 1978 and its new replacement tucked out of sight behind a fly-over in Zamalek, the Cairo skyline was no longer 'tainted' by any glaring symbol of imperial Christianity.

The British community in Egypt struggled to establish the main institutions of hospital, schools, and church during the occupation. The fact that other nationalities like the French, Germans, Italians or Greeks in Egypt had their own hospitals, schools and churches meant a sorry state of affairs for the British community. The British Hospital in Cairo could not get off the ground. Using the Anglo-American Hospital was inconvenient for many in the British community. Victoria College, New English School and the Dean's Building School all faced financial struggles. Victoria College, intended for English public school boys, was shunned by most of their well-to-do parents. The Cathedral, so grandiose and symbolic in the mind, was not erected until after the British occupation. Although the institutions aspired to lofty symbolic ideals of British prestige and community cohesion, they were also signs of failure. Sir Henry McMahon, in his frustration, writes:

"...no attempt appears to have been made to meet the needs of the British community in a manner befitting the extent and importance of British interests in this country. In the important centres of Egypt, one sees large and imposing churches, hospitals, and schools belonging to other nationalities, but with two solitary exceptions. British institutions of a similar character are either non-existent, or where they do exist are of very unimportant or inadequate nature. That such a state of affairs should have been allowed to continue for so long does not, I venture to think, [add] to our national credit in Egypt, even in the past when our position in the country was not so defined as it now is."<sup>124</sup>

Nonetheless, McMahon understood the reason for the lack of strong and viable British hospitals, schools and church buildings in Egypt:

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<sup>122</sup> Arthur Burrell, *Cathedral on the Nile: A History of the All Saints Cathedral* (Cairo, Oxford, Amate Press, 1984), p.19.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*, p.78.

<sup>124</sup> FO141/680/4069: McMahon to Balfour, 25/12/1916.

"The contrast, so unfavourable to ourselves, is entirely due to one cause: namely that while all British institutions have to depend solely in private effort and generosity, those of other nationalities have been set up and maintained largely, if not entirely, by the financial assistance of their respective governments."<sup>125</sup>

So the question begs to be asked: why did the British government refuse to fund the establishment of British institutions in Egypt though ironically, for all intents and purposes, it ruled Egypt politically (albeit under an Ottoman veil) and administratively. Perhaps Whitehead sheds some light in our quest for the answer. He suggests the reason for the lack of colonial educational policy and funding.

"Prior to the First World War, the British Government took only a fitful interest in the development of schooling in its overseas dependencies, largely because education was considered a matter for local initiative and voluntary effort. Even within the colonies, local administrations were content, for the most part, to confine their educational activities to the routine and largely unimaginative disbursement of local revenues to voluntary agencies."<sup>126</sup>

Since education within British colonies, and to some extent, in Britain as well, were considered a local matter and did not warrant sizeable funding from the British government, Egypt, being a British occupied Ottoman territory and then a protectorate, may have received even less attention, let alone funding. Moreover, British commitment to educated Egyptians was stifled by their fear of created an educated class that wanted independence. So Douglas Dunlop, Education Adviser, engineered Egyptian education solely as a factory to produce submissive government clerks obedient to British authority.<sup>127</sup> In terms of the Empire as a whole, Whitehead asserts that it was only in 1923, past the scope of this thesis, did the Colonial Office establish the Advisory Committee on Native Education in British Tropical Africa.<sup>128</sup> This brought new vision and finances to meet Africa's educational needs. The pragmatic nature of British colonial administration relied heavily on the judgement of local officials in preference to formal policy statements issued from the Colonial Office.

Moreover, according to Whitehead, British Empire-building was more improvised and reactionary than intentional or pre-conceived. In his view, the Empire grew out of

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<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, McMahon to Balfour, 22/12/1916.

<sup>126</sup> Clive Whitehead, "British Colonial Education Policy: A Synonym for Cultural Imperialism?" in J.A. Mangan, ed., *Benefits Bestowed: Education and British Imperialism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988), p. 216.

<sup>127</sup> Baraka, p. 136.

complex sets of circumstances and reflexes. Certainly, this was true in Egypt. Egypt became an occupied territory in 1882 almost 'accidentally' because Britain needed to restore order to a country that featured the Suez Canal - the vital transportation and communicational link to India. Whitehead suggests that before the First World War, many British politicians and administrators were unsure as to 'whether' they wanted to acquire an empire. Only after the war, did they face the question of how Britain might best govern the Empire and in whose interest.<sup>129</sup>

Perhaps this understanding of British colonial sentiment helps to explain why the British government during the occupation did not readily fund British institutions such as hospitals, schools and churches in Egypt. British policy favoured local initiatives such as in the approach to building schools. Perhaps even more significantly, the fact that Egypt was never a full-fledged colony may have made it even less likely to receive fiscal and long-term administrative attention from the British government. In other words, since British tenure in Egypt was always in doubt, long-term financial investment in British institutions in Egypt would have seemed less attractive to the British government and British financiers. Perhaps the difficulty in financing British public-service institutions is also symbolic of the British 'identity' that gloried in leaving much to self-help as opposed to supporting bureaucratic initiatives that stifled personal responsibility. Thus ironically, the poor financing of British institutions both expressed British 'identity' and yet limited the public assertion of it.

### **Dinner parties and home theatre**

Dinner parties and home theatre were symbols of British culture transplanted and cultivated to facilitate and enliven the British community in Cairo. Occasions such as dinner parties in homes not only brought together the British residents of Cairo but also re-affirmed their British identity and even power in Egypt. "Victorian and Edwardian dining at times had less to do with eating than with the display of power...with a bias

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<sup>128</sup> Ibid.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid.

towards quantity rather than quality." <sup>130</sup> Lots of food meant, to put it bluntly, lots of power.

Although he was American, Harrison writes extensively about the extravagant multiple-course dinner parties of the British. On 08 August, 1897, Mr. Money, the Chief of the Department of Public Debt in the late 1890s, hosted Lord and Lady Cromer, General Sir Francis Grenfell and Lady Grenfell, and General Money of the Scotch Highlanders and his wife, for dinner. Two days later, Sir Elwin Palmer, Financial Adviser of Egypt, invited the Cromers, Sir Herbert Kitchener, Major and Mrs. Kennedy and Colonel and Mrs. Gordon for a meal featuring English pheasant. The next day, Mr. Dawkins, second to Sir Palmer in the Finance Department, invited other British notables for dinner.<sup>131</sup> Undoubtedly, these occasions fostered a sense of sharing in a common identity and even power for the British governmental and military officials. Further, Margaret Strobel suggests that dressing for a dinner party, particularly for women, in corsets and stockings symbolised 'civilised' behaviour and status. She asserts that "British rituals functioned to elaborate the ideology of imperial rule. A regal and commanding style necessarily accompanied and aided political domination: pomp and ceremony portrayed the power of the colonial rulers."<sup>132</sup>

On some occasions, private theatricals were held in restaurants and in homes. Harrison records a performance to which he was invited and which was sponsored by one of the most important British diplomats - Rennell Rodd, for many years the First Secretary of the British Agency in Cairo. The programme consisted of one short sketch called 'Breaking the Ice' performed by Miss Baring, Lord Cromer's niece, and Mr. Rodd himself; then a longer play entitled 'A School for Coquettes' featured Mr. and Mrs. Rodd, Lord Granville and Captain Peel. <sup>133</sup> These private theatricals combined with dinner parties undergirded British culture, enjoyment and sense of camaraderie and fellowship.

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<sup>130</sup> Rich, p.109.

<sup>131</sup> Harrison, p.77-83.

<sup>132</sup> Margaret Strobel, *European Women and the Second British Empire* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), p.10.

<sup>133</sup> Harrison, p.153.

## Empire Day and Christmas Day

Empire Day, on the 24<sup>th</sup> of May and Queen Victoria's birthday, was an annual symbol of British imperial greatness. The "primary object of the gathering [was] to bring Britishers together and help them to feel that they [were] part of a great brotherhood, the greatest and, as this war has proved, the strongest the world has ever known."<sup>134</sup> Entertainment within the celebration was designed to promote British patriotism. For example, during Empire Day in Alexandria in 1916, after musical recitals by well known members of the British community, seven tableaux, representing important events in British History were performed followed by a speech from Mr. D.A. Cameron, British-Consul in Alexandria. The event was particularly important during World War I to raise the morale of all Britons in the Empire.

Besides Empire Day, Christmas Day symbolised British cultural and religious heritage more than any other occasion. Christmas Day served as a focal point of gathering British residents together in different parts of the Empire. In Malaya, Stockwell mentions that the British Pahang District Officers travelled days and sometimes for two weeks on foot or by houseboat to meet each other on Christmas Day in 1895.<sup>135</sup> Similarly, Christmas Day was a key opportunity for the British residents of Cairo to experience and cultivate their sense of togetherness and shared heritage as they met with and called on each other.

"It seems that when [the foreign residents of Cairo] first came here, the [European] society of Cairo was much concerned to find that they had no day for all going round calling on each other, as Continentals do on New Year's Day, Levantine Christians on their New Year's Day, twelve days later, and Mussulmans at Bairam. On consideration, the society of Cairo, decided that British ought to have such an anniversary, and fixed on Christmas Day as the most suitable. The British had to bear it, and with time it has grown to an institution. So the the ladies sit at home all the afternoon dealing out tea, and the gentlemen go round, calling on everybody else, and [even] Egyptian friends call on everybody after the same manner, so that the whole British colony, with native auxiliaries, rotates in a body round itself all Christmas afternoon."<sup>136</sup>

<sup>134</sup> Egyptian Gazette, 23/05/1916.

<sup>135</sup> Stockwell, p. 44.

<sup>136</sup> Steevens, p.73.

Not only was it customary for the British to visit each other on Christmas Day, but the other Europeans followed suit by calling on the British on Christmas Day.<sup>137</sup> Usually, many of the British residents attended Church on Christmas morning. Some Britons in Egypt even travelled a hundred miles down the Nile River in order to take communion at All Saints' Church on Christmas Day.<sup>138</sup> Thereafter, some of them would take short excursions such as trips to 'Old Cairo' or to the Pyramids. In the evening, many would join other Europeans at the Shepherd's Hotel for a Christmas feast and celebration.<sup>139</sup> Besides Empire Day and Christmas Day, the colonial calendar featured other days of celebration for Britons such as the feasts of the saints (George, Andrew, Patrick and David).<sup>140</sup> Similarly, the British community in Bengal celebrated and reunited for Christmas, the monarch's birthday and British victories in wars.<sup>141</sup> Special occasions ritualised with regularity "reassured those who had doubts about their rule [and identity]."<sup>142</sup>

### Conclusion

After suggesting that the British flag emanated little symbolic significance and that the English language failed to become a symbol of British authority in the mixed courts, this discussion turned to address the symbolic importance of the geographic location of British sites and institutions in Cairo. Then it examined the symbolic significance of these events and institutions such as clubs, hotels, military structures and activities, hospitals, schools, churches and special occasions. Many of these institutions or occasions symbolised not only the common identity of the British community in Cairo but heightened the awareness of a common heritage and history. Some symbols reflected British presence and power to those outside the British community like Egyptians, Europeans and Levantines. Nonetheless, as much as symbols were important to the identity and understanding of the British community in Cairo, we now turn to another equally important aspect - the social and occupational structure of the community.

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<sup>137</sup> Harrison, p.110.

<sup>138</sup> Brown, "All Saints' Church", p. 202.

<sup>139</sup> Nina Nelson,, *Shepherd's Hotel*, (London: Barrie & Rockcliff, 1960), p. 25.

<sup>140</sup> Stockwell, p.48.

<sup>141</sup> Ghosh, p. 133.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid

#### **4. The Social and Occupational Diversity within the Community**

##### **Introduction**

After examining the demography, boundaries and symbols of the British community in Cairo, this thesis now turns to a discussion of the diversity within the community. As aforementioned, many of the studies done regarding the British in Egypt, and indeed in Cairo, during the time of the occupation tend to focus on the activities of British officials or diplomats. The assumption is made that “the English Colony at that time was composed almost entirely of the Army of Occupation, and the civil servants, married and unmarried, attached in some capacity or other to the various ministries – Finance, Education, Public Works, Interior and Justice.”<sup>1</sup> In other words, the understanding is that the British community in Cairo at that time was made up solely of government officials and military personnel. In terms of class, British government officials in Cairo were predominantly from upper middle class upbringings since they were mostly graduates of British public schools and prestigious universities like Oxford or Cambridge. The British officers, who participated in the social activities of the British community unlike the lower class rank and file, were from upper middle class backgrounds as well. Be that as it may, the following two chapters attempt to challenge the notion that the British in Cairo were solely represented by upper middle class government officials or military personnel, and that their activities, responses and identities were predictably similar. This chapter aims to demonstrate that members of the British community held more jobs than just military and governmental positions and that they represented a variety of socio-economic backgrounds including those who were from poor working-class backgrounds. The subsequent chapter will deal with the Britons in Cairo who committed crimes or misdemeanours also as a means to illustrate that the British community in Cairo was more than just a group of law-abiding residents from upper middle class backgrounds.

In order to clearly detail the occupational and class structure of the British community in Cairo, this chapter seeks to give a brief account of the employment and salary arrangements of the British civil and military personnel in Cairo. Then the bulk of the discussion will be centred on Britons who did not work for the civil or military services.

After examining census records for occupations of British subjects in Cairo, the chapter will focus on upper and middle class Britons who worked in other occupations besides the civil and military services, poor working class Britons and the snobbery and class distinctions inherent within the British community in Cairo. Paramount to this analysis is an understanding of the varying salary levels for Britons in Britain during the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>2</sup> Upper class salaries were over £1000 per year. Middle class salaries were between £300 - £1000 per year while lower middle class salaries were from £100 to £300 per year. The majority of the population was of the lower working class with salaries between £30 - £100 per annum. Consequently, the average income per capita in 1881 was £31; in 1891, £40; in 1901, £47; and in 1911, £49.<sup>3</sup> The difference of salaries between the upper class and the lower class was phenomenal. In the 1880s, 17 landowners in Britain enjoyed an annual income from their landed rentals of £100,000 (equivalent to 5 million today).<sup>4</sup> Still within the upper class, "the most successful barristers in Britain like Sir Edward Carson, Rufus Isaacs, F.E. Smith and Marshall Hall...earned...about £10,000 per year [equivalent to £500,000 today],"<sup>5</sup> in 1901. At the same time, the "best-paid English adult male workers...earned between £80 and £100 per year,"<sup>6</sup> policemen and postmen earned £52 per year, and agricultural labourers earned only around £25 per year.

### **The British civil and military personnel**

Though the bulk of this chapter attempts to highlight Britons in other occupations, it is still paramount, in a thesis on the British community in Cairo, to include a brief discussion of the significant body of Britons in Egypt who worked in the civil and military services. Numerically, there were probably several hundred British officials in Cairo at any given time throughout the 40-year span of the occupation. In 1883, there

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<sup>1</sup> Sir Richard Vaux, unpublished memoirs in private papers at the Middle East Centre, St. Antony's College, University of Oxford, 1902, p. 32.

<sup>2</sup> Undoubtedly, salary levels changed over the course of the 40-year span that this discussion is concerned with. It appears that inflation accelerated rapidly towards the end of First World War and even more so after the War. However, the relatively low level of inflation during the 15 years before the War provide a fairly consistent basis of comparing general salary figures over this time period.

<sup>3</sup> V.T.J. Arkell, *Britain Transformed: The Development of British Society since the Mid-Eighteenth Century*, (London: Penguin Education, 1973), p. 181.

<sup>4</sup> W.O. Rubenstein, *Britain's Century: A Political and Social History, 1815-1905*, (London: Arnold, 1998), p. 281.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 286.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 294.

were 272 British officials in Egypt<sup>7</sup>; a large majority was probably based in Cairo – being the political and administrative heart of Egypt. By 1896, there were 690 European officials in the civil service and by 1906, there were 1,252.<sup>8</sup> Though it is unclear how many officials from this number were actually Britons from Britain<sup>9</sup>; it is safe to assume that British civil servants represented the large majority of the European officials in Cairo since it was Britain that was the occupying force and power of the land. Under the British occupation, Egypt was, for all intents and purposes, ruled by the Consul-General of the British Residency (or diplomatic corps) under the guise of a Khedive and Egyptian ministers in different government ministries. In reality, British advisers to Egyptian ministers in each government ministry were the ones who held the real power in each ministry and every adviser was responsible to the Consul-General. Besides senior British officials acting as advisers to the Egyptian ministries, there was also a growing contingent of young Britons who were recruited into Egypt to serve as under-secretaries and inspectors in each ministry. This system of employing British officials in all levels of government was designed to provide ample modelling and inspiration to Egyptian civil servants as to the practice and conduct of government officials in a stable and competent administration. The hope was that Egyptians would eventually be able to govern themselves. But Sir Evelyn Baring, afterwards Lord Cromer, Consul-General for the first 25 years of the occupation, believed that Egyptians were far from ready to govern themselves. In order to acquire the most competent and exemplary officials, Cromer recruited educated upper class young men from select public schools and universities in Britain.

The young Britons recruited into the Egyptian civil service were highly qualified. Graduate engineers, medics, lawyers and teachers were recruited into the ministries of Public Works, Health, Justice and Education. The ministries of the Interior and Finance welcomed outstanding graduates with less technical degrees such as history and geography. They were expected to reach a certain level of proficiency in Arabic before they arrived in Egypt and were required to continue with more Arabic acquisition in their first years of work in Egypt. In the Interior Ministry, for example, new candidates were given the post of Assistant Inspector with a salary beginning at £E 240 per year (the British pound was almost equivalent to the Egyptian pound during the

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<sup>7</sup> Welch, p. 21.

<sup>8</sup> Lord Cromer, *Modern Egypt, Vol. II*, (London: Macmillan, 1908), p. 299.

occupation<sup>10</sup>) and generous travelling allowances. The candidate was expected to travel 20 days of each month to other provinces to overlook the work of native officials, to examine registers, collect information and report to the ministry in Cairo. They were to give advice to Egyptian District Governors and Provincial Governors, guided by instructions from the Ministry of the Interior. The first year of work was a probation year and the candidate was discharged if he was not likely to succeed. He would be automatically dismissed if found to be excessively ill or engaged in misconduct. With the exception of the first year, leave was given for two months every year on full pay. A third month of furlough was allowed on half pay. Leave could be accumulated though it was not permitted to last more than 3 and half months. Salaries were reduced by 5% for a pension fund. Pensions were given to those who had served 25 years, were appointed before the age of 35, and were 55 years old or older. Those who served more than 15 years were entitled to a pension if forced to retire due to ill health. Those having served less than 15 years did not qualify for a pension.<sup>11</sup> A similar arrangement for salaries, dismissals, promotions, furloughs and pensions existed in the other government ministries as well. After a significant length of service and experience, a British civil servant in Egypt could expect a monthly salary of around £60 per month or £720 per year.<sup>12</sup> Salary increases were always welcomed especially for officials with families because the initial £E 300 per annum was inadequate for supporting a family with an expatriate middle class lifestyle in Cairo. By the turn of the century, 103 British officials were earning between £E 360 and £840 per year while 47 senior officials were drawing above £E 840 per year. Although significantly above the average salary in Britain, some officials like Lord Edward Cecil, whose family refused to come to Egypt and thus had to be supported in Britain, suffered financially even with an income of about £E 800 per year.<sup>13</sup>

Regardless of salary level, the British official in Egypt usually enjoyed a comfortable and well-rested lifestyle. In 1901, Sir Cecil Spring Rice, British Commissioner of Public Debt in Egypt, describes his days in Cairo:

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<sup>9</sup> Rodenbeck, p. 176, estimates that there were 2000 British officials in Egypt during the time of the occupation. The identity of his source for this estimate is unclear.

<sup>10</sup> One Egyptian pound was equal to one sterling and six pence; in Roger Owen, *The Middle East in the World Economy, 1800-1914*, (London: Methuen, 1981), p. xiii.

<sup>11</sup> Mellini, p. 242.

<sup>12</sup> PRO: FO841/151: Estate of Thomas Basil Etherington-Smith, Probate Jurisdiction, 27/10/1915.

<sup>13</sup> Welch, p. 36.

"I am enjoying the heat here – it isn't bad but tends to almost uncontrollable laziness: I get a long book...and every afternoon lie down to read til I sleep. Then play golf – then dine and even afterwards go to bed and get up at six for a ride."<sup>14</sup>

Similarly, Hopwood suggests that the financial and recreational benefits for the British official in Egypt may have outweighed any disadvantages they experienced whilst living in Egypt.

"For the British [official], life in Egypt was on the whole good...As in India, men served in Egypt with devotion and dedication, seeing it their duty to educate the Egyptian into British ways and standards, inured to the heat, the squalor and the flies, and looking with a fairly good humoured tolerance upon the 'natives'. The compensations were often a higher standard of living and higher positions than could have been expected in England. Life was eased by numerous servants, by polo, tennis and gossip at European clubs. Social life centred around the British residency and the honour of being invited to dine was much coveted."<sup>15</sup>

Another important contingent of Britons in Egypt was the British military personnel. The 5,000 strong British military (in the Army of Occupation or officers in the Egyptian Army – discussed further in the chapter on World War I) included the upper-class officer corps who enjoyed many of the social and recreational activities offered to them at the Gezira Club. Those who were not officers were not welcome onto the grounds of the Gezira Club or upper class parties and dances but were instead, welcomed into places like the Soldiers' Club where the lower-class rank and file relaxed, gossiped and shared drinks together. The average annual salary for a soldier was £41<sup>16</sup>. Officers largely received middle to upper class salaries. Further, the military provided for every soldier's costs in terms of lodging, medical care, clothing, education and cash allowances.<sup>17</sup> Although not the central focus of this chapter or thesis, British civil and military officials deserve notable mention in any study of the British community in Egypt due to their significant numbers and influence.

### **Census Records of British occupations in Cairo**

Although it is clear that a fair proportion of the Britons in Cairo worked in the civil or military services, what is less clear, from census records alone, is the exact number of

<sup>14</sup> Sir Cecil Spring Rice, private correspondences, Church College Archives, Cambridge University, letter from Rice to Sir Valentine Chirol, 13/08/1901.

<sup>15</sup> Derek Hopwood, *Egypt: Politics and Society 1945-1984. 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1987), p. 19.

<sup>16</sup> Arnold Wright, ed., *Twentieth Impressions of Egypt: Its History, People, Commerce, Industries and Resources* (London: Lloyd's Greater Britain Publishing Co, Ltd., 1909), p. 401. (total salary: £249,827 divided by 6000 in the military).

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

Britons from Britain in other occupations. The reasons are twofold. First, only two of the four censuses (1897 and 1917) record the different occupations that British residents in Egypt had. Second, these records refer to British subjects in Egypt only - without any further specification for Britons from the British Isles. Be that as it may, the census records, however limited, still provide a general impression of the kinds of vocations that the British in Egypt were engaged in.

Table 4.1: Number of male British subjects in Egypt according to occupations, 1897.<sup>18</sup>

Occupation translation from French)	(English original)	No. of British subjects in occupation	Occupation (English translation from original French)	No. of British subjects in occupation
Agriculture		13	Various occupations	107
Food Trade		324	Machines/skilled worker	180
Textiles		78	Employee	992
Woodworker		573	Teacher	542
Building trade		161	Clergy	35
Iron-metal		607	Freelance workers	473
Leather/hide		51	Military	4,887
Tabacconist		16	Domestic work	82
Merchant/banker		494	Total working men	11,312
Shopkeeper		93	Without work	417
Transport		16	Total population under 10	1,598
Navigation		1,583	Total male population	13,327

Table 4.2: Percentage of male British subjects in occupational categories, 1897.<sup>19</sup>

Occupational categories	Percentage of male British subjects in occupation
Agriculture	1%
Industry & Commerce	35%
Machine/skilled worker	1.5%
Employee/civil servant	8.5%
Religion and Instruction	4.9%
Military	41.7%
Domestic	1.9%
Total	94.4%
Without declared profession	3.6%

It appears from Tables 4.1 and 4.2 that a large percentage (41.7% or 4,887) of male British subjects in Egypt were in the British military. According to census data (Table 4.1), other key professions for male British subjects were navigation, government civil service, iron-metal trade, woodworking and teaching. Table 4.2 suggests that male British subjects were also strongly represented in industry and commerce. Although not directly pointing to the Britons in Cairo, the general impression deducted from the census records is that there were most likely Britons in a variety of occupations. As Aldridge articulates, there were "English' booksellers, cigar importers,...sanitary engineers, confectioners,...drapers, dressmakers, florists, glovers, gunsmiths, hairdressers, hatters, livery stables, milliners, outfitters, photographers, saddlers,

<sup>18</sup> Recensement Général de l'Egypte, 1897, Table for Professions et Métiers, Sexe Masculin, p. lxxiii.

solicitors, tourist [agents] and tailors.<sup>19</sup> As for British subjects who were women, most of them did not have an occupation. From Table 4.3, it appears that more than 85% of female British subjects over the age of 10 were not involved in any occupation. It may seem reasonable to project from this significant percentage that the majority of British females from the British Isles in Egypt were also not engaged in formal employment, though it appears that some would have worked as teachers, missionaries, maids or in the textile industry.

Table 4.3: Number of female British subjects in occupations, 1897<sup>21</sup>

Occupation	No. involved in occupation	Occupation	No. involved in occupation
Food Trade	16	Religious nun/worker	26
Textiles	128	Total working women:	549
Other professions	33	Domestic	135
Skilled worker	1	Total with domestic	684
Employee/civil servant	16	Without occupation over 10 years of age	3,982
Commerce	51	Total including those without occupation	4,666
Profession – free lance	34	Children under 10 years	1,570
Teacher	244	Total:	6,236

After obtaining a general impression of occupations of British subjects in Egypt through the census of 1897, this discussion now turns to census data that recorded British occupations in Cairo. Occupational information regarding British subjects in Alexandria is included to give a comparative perspective.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xxiv.

<sup>20</sup> Aldridge, p. 214.

<sup>21</sup> Recensement Général de l’Egypte, 1897, p. xxvii.

Table 4.4: Number of male British subjects in Cairo and Alexandria categorised by occupations, 1897.<sup>22</sup>

Occupation (English translation from original French)	No. of male British subjects		Occupation (English translation from original French)	No. of male British subjects	
	In Cairo	In Alex		In Cairo	In Alex
Gunsmith	2		Mason, marble layer		11
Lawyer, barrister	4	6	Shopkeeper	6	61
Barber	4		Magazine seller	1	24
Butcher	3	33	Blacksmith	1	
Baker	3	28	Sailor	1	221
Café-owner	10	22	Mechanic	17	151
Carriage driver	2	4	Doctor, surgeon, dentist	24	13
Stone-cutter		2	Carpenter, cabinet-maker	102	340
Candle-maker	1		Miller		1
Coal-worker		6	Military	3,385	1,223
Polisher		1	Musician, singer	3	7
Coachman	8	8	Merchant, banker	136	41
Shoe-mender/cobbler	14		Silversmith, goldsmith		5
Broker	5	29	Skilled worker	11	137
Cook	6	48	Confectioner, pastry cook	3	4
Hardware/merchant	2		Haberdasher, curtain-maker	10	
Clergyman	10	12	Painter/decorator	30	79
	9	2	Pharmacist	5	7
Greengrocer	2	24	Door-to-door seller		7
Student	129	242	Professor, religious teacher	33	21
Tin-maker	4	10	Ironmonger, hardware dealer	7	5
	2		Ironer	2	2
Civil servant	259	376	Seller	6	8
	4	4	Locksmith	20	23
Blacksmith	20	108	Tobacconist	5	8
Fruit-seller		5	Tailor	18	31
Guard/doorman	2	3	Tanner	1	1
Hotel/restaurant owner	2	4	Upholsterer	3	8
Printer	17	29	Turner/technician	3	9
Engineer, architect, designer	86	129	Veterinarian	6	1
Bursar	6	68	Male workforce	4,475	3,878
Interpreter	9	2	Domestic worker	23	37
Gardener	2	3	Farmer	1	1
Milkman		1	With domestic workers/farmers	4,499	3,916
Bookseller	4	2	No profession declared	451	1,127
Builder/bricklayer	1	7	Male population	4,950	5,043

Several observations can be made regarding the occupations of male British subjects from the data in Table 4.4. First, similar to data from Table 4.1, more male British subjects in Cairo and Alexandria were engaged in the military than any other occupation. The British military personnel in Cairo seem to have outnumbered that of Alexandria by three times indicating that the bulk of Britain's military apparatus in Egypt was based in Cairo. Second, next to the military, male British subjects in Cairo seemed to be in the civil service and in merchant banking more than other occupations during this time. Three times as many male British subjects were merchant bankers in Cairo than in Alexandria. Surprisingly, it appears that more male British subjects were involved in the civil service in Alexandria than in Cairo even though Cairo was the

nucleus of the British residency and key government ministries. Perhaps, there was a sizeable contingent of male British subjects working for the government ministries in Alexandria who were not Britons from Britain. Perhaps, the civil service in Alexandria was large due to the government moving there during the summers. Third, data in Table 4.4 also suggests that a fair number of male British subjects in Cairo and Alexandria were also carpenters, cabinet-makers, students, sailors, mechanics, engineers, skilled workers and blacksmiths. However, the number of students, blacksmiths, sailors, mechanics, carpenters, cabinet-makers and skilled workers in Alexandria far outweighed that of Cairo. Moreover, there were more male British subjects in food-related trades such as butcher, baker, café-owner, cook, greengrocer, and shopkeeper in Alexandria than there were in Cairo. Though there were slightly more male British subjects in Alexandria than there were in Cairo; the actual number of Britons from Britain is unclear since there was a large number of Maltese and Greeks in Alexandria who were also British subjects. What is clear is the diversity of occupations that British subjects had in Cairo and in Alexandria. As a result, the likelihood was that Britons from the British Isles, which formed the British community proper, were also engaged to some extent in a variety of occupations. As for female British subjects in Cairo and Alexandria in 1897, a large percentage did not have occupations outside of the home. From the data of Table 4.5, it appears that 90% of female British subjects in Cairo and 88% in Alexandria were without gainful occupations. Though again this data refers to British subjects in general and not to Britons from Britain in particular, the huge percentage of female British subjects who were without occupations most probably indicates that most British women from the British Isles in Egypt were also not employed outside their homes in 1897. Similar to the general statistical information regarding the occupation female British subjects in Egypt (Table 4.3) in 1897, it appears that some British women (from Britain) may have worked in shops, in dressmaking and in domestic service.

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<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, for Cairo, p. 46, for Alexandria, p. 82.

Table 4.5: Number of female British subjects in Cairo and Alexandria categorised by occupation, 1897.<sup>23</sup>

Occupation (English translation from original French)	No. of female British subjects		Occupation (English translation from original French)	No. of female British subjects	
	In Cairo	In Alex		In Cairo	In Alex
Bath Attendant		1	Milkwoman	1	
Launderess	6	19	Wine & spirits merchant	1	3
Singer, dancer		2	Doctor	2	1
Shopkeeper	24	25	Nun	14	9
Cook	4	3	Midwife	12	15
Dressmaker	25	97	British women with occupations	142	311
Greengrocer		1	Domestic jobs	34	85
Trainee	31	111	Total w/ occupation	176	396
Other employment	5	7	No occupation declared	1,601	2,362
Teacher	17	14	Total pop. British women	1,777	3,258

The census records of 1917 also highlighted the occupations that British subjects were engaged in. However, in its record of the occupations of British subjects (Table 4.6), the military, a significant body of Britons from Britain in Egypt, was excluded due to the huge influx of soldiers during World War I. Understandably, in recording those with occupations, children and women without occupations were also omitted. Though Table 4.6 seems to refer to only 5,732 male and female British subjects in employment out of the total population of 24,354 British subjects, it still provides a basis from which to observe the occupational patterns of the Britons in Egypt. It appears that a large number of male British subjects (not necessarily Britons from Britain) in Egypt were engaged in the marine transport industry. Male British subjects were also significantly involved with trading (of textiles and food products), the communications industry (post, telegraphs and telephones), the hospitality industry (hotels, restaurants and bars), the dress industry and financial services (banking and insurance). Female British subjects, with occupations, seemed to be most involved with the dress industry though similar to the situation in 1897, female British subjects, and in most cases, British women from Britain, were by and large not working outside of their homes.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, female British subjects in Cairo, p. 50., in Alexandria, p. 86.

Table 4.6: Male and female British subjects in Egypt and their occupations, 1917.<sup>24</sup>

Occupation	Male	Female	Total	Occupation	Male	Female	Total
Agricultural Works	86	31	117	River & Canal transport	4		4
Fishing & Hunting	17	1	18	Transport (roads and bridges)	124		124
Nomads	1	0	1	Transport by rail	261	2	263
Living on private means	108	111	219	Post, telegraphs, telephones	397	40	437
Mining	37	1	38	Bank, exchange, credit, insurance	259	5	264
Salines	30		30	Brokerage, commission, exports/imports	179	5	184
Textiles	41	7	48	Trade in textiles	189	1	190
Leather, skins	1		1	Trade in dress	32	2	34
Woodworkers	15	4	19	Trade in leathers, skins and furs	3		3
Metallurgy	180	1	181	Trade in wood	8		8
Ceramics	3		3	Trade in metals	16		16
Chemical products	18	2	20	Trade in ceramics	1		1
Food products	228	6	234	Trade in chemical products, drugs, paints and dyes	8	1	9
Dress industry	278	291	569	Hotels, coffee houses, restaurants, bars and drinks	372	49	421
Furniture making	252	2	254	Trade in alimentary products	294	12	306
Building industries	171		171	Trading in furniture	43	2	45
Construction of vehicles	19		19	Trading in property	7		7
Production & transmission of power	221	2	223	Trading in fuel	69	1	70
Literature & art	135	5	140	Trading in means of transport	11		11
Other industries	9		9	Total with occupations	5,148	584	5,732
Transport by sea	1,021		1,021				

Since the census data on occupations only refer to British subjects and not specifically to Britons from the British Isles, they offer only a limited perspective on the employment situation of the British community in Egypt during 1882 to 1922. However, the general impression from the demographic evidence points to the understanding that Britons from Britain worked in vocations outside the civil and military services (though a large percentage of the British community in Egypt did work in these areas). Further, female British subjects and in most cases, female Britons from Britain, were not involved with formal occupations. The rest of this chapter, using evidence from sources other than quantitative demographic data, develops this theme of Britons working outside the upper middle class military and diplomatic network.

### **Educated upper middle class Britons in Egypt**

Besides the civil service and the officer corps of the military, educated Britons, most likely of the upper middle classes (earnings of usually more than £300 per year), were

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, Table IV, Groups of Occupations by Nationalities, Census of 1917, p. 472 & 473.

lawyers, doctors, engineers and teachers as well. There were 11 members of the English bar in Egypt. Ten of whom were J. Moss, A.S. Preston, and C. Halford, based in Alexandria, while R. Silley, J.P Foster, C. Perrott, Gottlieb, Devonshire, G.E. Jeffes and Hershell, were based in Cairo.<sup>25</sup> By 1920, one month's wage for an experienced barrister was £62.8.9 sterling<sup>26</sup>, nearly £750 per year (comparable to a senior government official but much less than the highest paid lawyers of London); and partners of law firms had a significant stake in the firm's assets and profits. Upper class doctors like Marc Ruffer possessed a sizeable estate of over £21,000 at his death.<sup>27</sup> Further, engineers like Charles Orr Campbell, of the Egyptian State Railways (ESR), earned £55 per month or £660 per year<sup>28</sup>; and after World War I, Herbert Bunnell May, assistant auditor, also of the ESR, earned almost £67 per month, which amounted to about £800 per year.<sup>29</sup> Chief Draughtsman of the E.S.R., William Gledhill, whose monthly salary was £46.4.4 per month or around £550 per year can also be included in the upper middle class salary bracket.<sup>30</sup> As for teachers, their average salary was around £300 per year; the minimum salary for upper middle class distinction. An example of a British teacher in Cairo was Charles Sherrard, who taught at the Coptic School in Cairo and earned £25.9.9. per month or just over £300 per year.<sup>31</sup>

Besides law, medicine, engineering and teaching, educated upper middle class Britons were also working in the banking profession. In 1916, Sir Bertram Hornsby, who was fourth in command in the National Bank of Egypt, drew a lofty salary of £1900 per year,<sup>32</sup> whereas Anglo-Egyptian Bank staff were paid significantly less. W.R. Carruthers, manager of the Anglo-Egyptian Bank in Alexandria in 1916 complained that he was paid significantly less than Hornsby of the National Bank.<sup>33</sup> During the same year, A. Jessop, a cotton trade expert in the Anglo-Egyptian Bank in Alexandria, pleaded for a salary that would increase to £700 per year. Like Lord Edward Cecil who, as previously mentioned, found it difficult to raise a family with £E 800 per year, Jessop

<sup>25</sup> Cheetham Papers, private papers, Middle East Centre, St. Antony's College Archive, Oxford University, letter from Cheetham to W. G. Tyrell, 20/06/1911.

<sup>26</sup> PRO: FO841/188: Estate of John Porter Foster, Barrister-at-Law, 26/02/1920.

<sup>27</sup> FO847/67: Probate Jurisdiction: Estate of Dr. Marc Armand Ruffer, 15/04/1917.

<sup>28</sup> FO841/154: Probate: Estate of Charles Orr Campbell, 10/07/1915.

<sup>29</sup> FO841/190: Estate of Herbert Bunnell May, 09/02/1921.

<sup>30</sup> FO841/193: Probate: William Gledhill, 30/08/1920.

<sup>31</sup> FO841/188: Probate Jurisdiction, Charles Sherrard, 13/06/1906.

<sup>32</sup> Letter from W.R. Carruthers, Manager of Anglo-Egyptian Bank in Alexandria, to H.A. Richardson, chairman (1907-18) of AEB in London, 27/01/1916, letters from Anglo-Egyptian Bank staff, Barclays Group Archives.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*

maintained that £700 per year was not sufficient as well. It was “really the minimum on which a married man [could] live and keep up the position incumbent on him by his status in the Bank, especially [since] the costs of living [were] so high, and... expenses of leave to England every three years for [the] family”<sup>34</sup> were considerable. Of course, governors of banks had finances of a different league. Sir Edwin Milford Palmer, one-time governor of the National Bank of Egypt and former Financial Adviser to the Government of Egypt, died in 1906, as the Chairman of the Delta Light Railways Company,<sup>35</sup> with an estate worth more than £144, 037.<sup>36</sup>

Upper middle class Britons were established as businessmen in Egypt as well. For example, Robert Lang Anderson, son of a leading Scottish lawyer, and educated in agricultural studies at the universities of Glasgow and Edinburgh, worked in the agricultural, estate management and engineering industries in Scotland before his arrival in Egypt in 1887. He eventually became Managing Director of the Aboukir Co., which was responsible for reclaiming 300,000 acres of Lake Abu Qir, east of Alexandria, and by 1910, the property was worth around £300,000.<sup>37</sup> Educated in private schools in the north of England, Robert Johnson Moss was another successful upper class British businessman, who was based primarily in Alexandria for over 50 years. After arriving in Egypt in 1860, he built up R.J. Moss and Co, which exported cotton, sold steam cotton presses to the Egyptian market, imported agricultural machinery, and established an engineering repair centre that fixed imported ploughs, portable engines, pumps, cotton gins, corn mills, and corn shellers. After being educated in private schools in London, George Alexander Alderson, director of Allen, Alderson and Co., helped to establish his business as the largest importer of machines into Egypt whose irrigation pumps were found all over the country.<sup>38</sup> Yet, to illustrate the diversity of Britons represented in Egypt, there were successful businessmen who did not appear to be highly educated from exclusive private schools at all. For example, G.H. Stephenson, founder of the first and highly successful English pharmacy in Cairo (which dispensed drugs to the British military and the Citadel Hospital), started his apprenticeship after completing his education at Beverley Grammar School in Yorkshire.<sup>39</sup> Another

<sup>34</sup> Letter from A. Jessop, Representative of the Anglo-Egyptian Bank at Minet-el-Bassal, to Carruthers, 08/09/1916, Barclays Group Archives.

<sup>35</sup> Raafat, p. 15.

<sup>36</sup> FO841/87: Probate Jurisdiction, Sir Edwin Milford Palmer, 12/02/1906.

<sup>37</sup> Wright, p. 326.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 326 & 458.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 372.

respected British businessman in Egypt, Victor F. Naggiar, did not attend exclusive private schools but was educated at Chorlton High School near Manchester and immediately thereafter started working for Brooks' (later became Lloyd's) Bank. He eventually became the founder of the import firm Borsali, Naggiar and Co., and, during the last years of the British occupation, was the President of the British Chamber of Commerce in Egypt.<sup>40</sup> Similarly, John Mason Cook, the most successful businessman in Egypt of his generation, did not have an exclusive upper class and private school background. Cook, who inherited his tour business from his father, came from an ordinary suburb in Upper Norwood and did not move from that home until the 1890s. However, his business empire was remarkable. He saw himself "as curator...to the world's largest outdoor museum...[and thus] subsidised restorations and excavations."<sup>41</sup> He owned the largest fleet of cruisers in Egypt including three fast mail boats, older towing steamers, specially built steel-hulled dahabiyyas, sailing crafts and barges and the biggest steamer ever to have sailed the Nile at that time. By 1891, Cook had 24 steamers (of various classes) and a practical monopoly in shipping on the Nile. The steamers served more than 6000 visitors to Egypt each winter, among whom 1500 went up the Nile for 3 week voyages at £50 per head, 2 week trips for £25 per head, and 11 days for £20 each.<sup>42</sup> By 1900, Cook's annual net profit soared to £82,000 prompting an American journal, the *US Excursionist*, to proclaim: "Cook simply owns Egypt".<sup>43</sup> Many Egyptians who lived on the Nile in Upper Egypt found that their livelihood depended on Cook. Their donkeys were subsidised by Cook. Their lettuce were grown for Cook's steamers. Their chickens were raised for Cook's tourists. And all of their boats were built by Cook's money.<sup>44</sup> So powerful had Cook become that *Vanity Fair* magazine in 1889 described Cook as:

"the chief person in Cairo...The nominal ruler [of Egypt] is Tewfik; but Tewfik takes his orders from Baring [later Lord Cromer]; and Baring, I suspect, has to take his orders from Cook. The latter Sovereign becomes more and more potent as we get further up the Nile and here at Luxor, where a special hotel has arisen under the light of his countenance, he figures quite as a modern Ammon-Ra."<sup>45</sup>

Since it was Cromer who had a stranglehold on power in every government ministry in Egypt, *Vanity Fair* was unquestionably exaggerating. Nonetheless, Cook's extensive

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 327.

<sup>41</sup> Piers Brendan, *Thomas Cook: 150 Years of Popular Tourism* (London: Serber & Warburg, 1992), p. 232.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 223 - 230.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 230, quoting *US Excursionist*, August, 1897.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 271.

business empire illustrates the influence of a particular Briton in Cairo who was not in the civil or military service and who did not necessarily come from an exclusive public school background.

Often overlooked, one occupational group in Egypt, whose members were from predominantly educated upper middle class backgrounds in Britain, consisted of clergymen and missionaries. Chaplains to the church most frequented by the British establishment, All Saints' Church in Cairo, Rev. Charles Henry Butcher (chaplain from 1880 to 1907) and his successor, Rev. J.H. Molesworth, were both highly educated men with post-graduate degrees.<sup>46</sup> In 1909, the Chaplain of the Anglican St. Mary's Mission in Cairo, Rev. T.A. Branthwaite, even had two doctoral degrees.<sup>47</sup> Financially, the rector of All Saint's Church was adequately provided for. With housing provided, he was paid at least £350 (the rate that Molesworth was promised as Butcher's successor) per year; and Dean Butcher, as he was called, even acquired a generous £100 pension per year.<sup>48</sup> The total value of Butcher's estate was almost £3000.<sup>49</sup> Besides church ministers, missionaries also tended to be highly educated. Rev. F.A. Klein, the first missionary sent to Egypt during the Occupation, was a brilliant Arabic scholar.<sup>50</sup> Other British missionaries with the Church Missionary Society (CMS) were engaged in teaching, nursing, medical work and evangelistic activities. Two of the most educated, Rev. Douglas Thornton and Rev. Temple Gairdner were both brilliant graduates from Cambridge University and developed a high proficiency in Arabic.<sup>51</sup> Together they created the magazine 'Orient and Occident' which was published weekly in Arabic and in English.<sup>52</sup> The magazine was designed as an initiator of discussion featuring articles that provoked Egyptian intellectuals and students to consider perspectives and themes from a Christian angle.<sup>53</sup> As a result, Thornton and Gairdner were able to invite Egyptian scholars and students to various lectures and discussions related to the themes covered in the magazine.<sup>54</sup> Though highly educated, their salaries were most probably minimal since they were working for their faith and not for their bank accounts. For

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<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 232, quoting Vanity Fair (23/02/1889 and 09/03/1889).

<sup>46</sup> Wright, p. 201.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>48</sup> Lord Cromer's letter to Dean Butcher, All Saints' Church archives, minute book 32, 2/11/1895.

<sup>49</sup> FO841/91: Probate of Rev. Charles Henry Butcher, 06/02/1907.

<sup>50</sup> "Our Frontispiece", *CMS Intelligencer*, Vol. XXVI, 1901, p. 282.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. XXX, 1905, p. 151.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. XXIX, 1904, p. 364.

example, one missionary Mrs. Eliza Bywater left an estate of only £33<sup>55</sup>; while another missionary doctor, Dr. Ernest Maynard Pain, an Australian with the CMS, may have received a monthly salary of a little less than £14.<sup>56</sup> Therefore, in an effort to demonstrate that the British community in occupied Cairo was diverse in its vocational representation, this discussion has added lawyers, doctors, engineers, teachers, bankers, businessmen, clergymen and missionaries to the list of British occupations in Egypt which doubtlessly includes the government and military services. It also suggests that educated and upper class Britons in Britain were not necessarily highly paid such as in the case of missionaries; and that those who may not have been from exclusive upper class backgrounds and private schools could still become successful businessmen like Stephenson, Naggiar and Cook. However, Cairo's British community was even more diverse in composition because there were lower class Britons in Cairo at the time; and it is to this group that this discussion's attention now turns.

#### **Poor Britons in Cairo: The lower working class**

A superficial glimpse of Egypt's British community during the 40-year occupation may conclude that the community was unitary and monolithic especially in its class representation. The upper middle class balls at the Shepherd's Hotel and lavish dinner receptions at the Consul-General's residence frequented by British civil servants and military officers are well-known to observers of this period. The top of Cairo's British society (and for that matter, Egyptian society) included the Consul-General; the General leading the Army of Occupation; the five advisers of the Ministries of Finance, the Interior, the Judiciary, Public works and Education; the Chaplain of All Saints' Church; the heads of the British medical and law professions; and a few prominent bankers and financiers.<sup>57</sup> Rodenbeck's heralded narrative, *Cairo: The City Victorious*, illustrates the social order of Egyptian society during the time of the occupation.

"Down near the bottom – but still several notches above [Egyptian] day labourers – were the Maltese, south-Italian and Greek artisans: master masons, plasterers and ironmongers, and also the waiters, petty criminals and petty prostitutes whose trade flourished under consular protection...Next up the social scale came a clerical class of francophone effendis, Armenian tram conductors, Bosnian salesgirls and Bulgarian secretaries. Cairo's pharmacists and physicians, its engineers and its caterers and fancy

<sup>55</sup> FO841/188: Estate of Mrs. Eliza Bannerman Knight or Bywater, 1920.

<sup>56</sup> FO841/146: Estate of Ernest Maynard Pain. Probate Jurisdiction, 23/01/1914.

<sup>57</sup> Letter from Sir Milne Cheetham to Sir W. Tyrell of the Foreign Office, private papers, Middle East Centre, St. Antony's College archives, Oxford University. Cheetham invites the most distinguished Britons in Cairo to discuss the proceedings of the Coronation celebration of George V., 22/02/1911.

jewellers came from further north. The best photographers were German, the swankiest bespoke tailors English, the finest confectioners Swiss-Italian. The French and their speech dominated intellectual life. Jews from throughout the Diaspora took prominence in finance; Syro-Lebanese in trade. Behind the foil of the khedive and his cabinetfuls of landowning pashas, 2,000 British and several hundred French bureaucrats managed affairs of state. The foreigners' salaries were so comfortable that when one Italian judicial adviser returned to his former post in Italy he found he was learning less than his secretary in Cairo.<sup>58</sup>

Although Rodenbeck seems to recognise that there were some Britons, like the tailors, who may not have been at the top of the social order, he assumes that the noteworthy Britons in Egypt were government officials - members of the upper middle classes of society, both in Britain and in Egypt. Though the upper middle class Britons in the civil service, military, financial and professional sectors formed the most politically influential and numerically significant contingent within the British community in Cairo, there were Britons in Egypt of the poor lower classes as well, in a variety of different occupations and situations. This group consisted of those of the lower middle class and the lower working class. The lower middle class "traditionally includes smaller tradesmen and shopkeepers, especially in individual and family-owned firms, clerks and minor civil servants, and certain self-employed artisans and craftsmen of the traditional type."<sup>59</sup> The lower working class refers to those who were primarily manual labourers and domestic servants. While the upper middle class officials and professionals usually migrated to Cairo for better pay and work opportunities, the lower classes did as well. By the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, according to Tranter, emigration grew in popularity among British working-class men and women, encouraged by the "fears of overpopulation, rural poverty, unemployment, urban squalor and overcrowding"<sup>60</sup> in Britain and by the promise of higher earnings and improved standards of living abroad. Therefore, in the 1880s, Hunt calculates that more than 150,000 working class Britons were moving abroad each year.<sup>61</sup> By

"the early years of the twentieth century, the enthusiasm for emigration among the labouring populations had reached unprecedented levels...Despite the greater willingness of the charitable public to provide funds for emigration, almost without exception the various emigration societies received many more applications for assistance than they had funds to support."<sup>62</sup>

<sup>58</sup> Rodenbeck, p. 176.

<sup>59</sup> Rubenstein, pp. 290-291.

<sup>60</sup> N.L. Tranter, *Population and Society, 1750-1940: Contrasts in Population Growth*, (London: Longman, 1985), p. 132.

<sup>61</sup> E.H. Hunt, *British Labour History, 1815-1914*, (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1981), p. 147.

<sup>62</sup> Tranter, pp. 132-133.

However, it needs to be said that the destination of British emigrants that Tranter and Hunt refer to was largely that of the United States and British dominions such as Canada, Australia and New Zealand, where Britons settled permanently. The case for emigration to Egypt was primarily due to short-term job opportunities. Few Britons stayed in Egypt indefinitely. Motives aside, this discussion now turns to the actual challenges and issues that lower middle class and lower working class Britons faced in Cairo.

Certain members of the lower middle class worked as foremen carpenters. A court case for wrongful dismissal, *Chubb vs. Lovatt*, documents how poor they may have been. Sidney Chubb who worked for Henry Lovatt Co. in London accepted an offer to work for Lovatt in Cairo as a foreman carpenter for the construction of the new military barracks in Abbasiyya. Chubb agreed to work for £10 per month initially in January 1910. By March, his salary was increased to £14 per month; by July, it rose to £16; and by October, it inflated to £18. Compared to the salaries of lawyers and civil servants, at £60 to £70 per month, Chubb's income was very low. Yet, he was also required to pay for his passage out to Egypt which cost £13.11.0. He also had to pay for his wife's journey to Egypt, which amounted to £24.10.9, including excess baggage.<sup>63</sup> Even though Chubb's salary increased rapidly since his appointment in January 1910, he was dismissed on 10<sup>th</sup> November 1910. Richard Woodley, the manager of Henry Lovatt Co, fired Chubb because he was at times late for work. Further, according to Woodley's deposition, Chubb fought with one of the engineers on 17<sup>th</sup> October and on the same day, allowed certain masonry to be erected wrongly. By early November, Chubb took a break from work without permission one afternoon - leaving about 40 Egyptian men without supervision.<sup>64</sup> Woodley dismissed Chubb not long afterwards. Consequently, Chubb sued Henry Lovatt Co. for wrongful dismissal. Chubb was so poor that he was "not worth £25 and [was] not able to pay...court fees of and incidental to [any] action in this Court."<sup>65</sup>

Lower middle class Britons worked as office clerks as well. Guy Osborne Lion, aged 17, was hired to work in the office of James Francis Waterlow, an agent for the Remington Typewrite Company. Lion's job was to type Waterlow's letters from

<sup>63</sup> FO841/115: Sidney Chubb vs. Henry Lovatt Co., letter from Chubb to Barrister R. Silley, 22/11/1910.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, Woodley's deposition, 05/12/1910.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, Chubb's statement, 23/11/1910.

dictation or written drafts, make invoices, bookkeeping, copying documents and answering enquiries that came personally or by telephone.<sup>66</sup> Lion, whose previous salary was only £2 per month, started working on April 1<sup>st</sup> 1908, for Waterlow on a trial basis at £10 per month. Soon thereafter, Waterlow found Lion's performance very unsatisfactory. Although Lion told Waterlow that he was familiar with the Remington typewriter, Waterlow found that Lion had no knowledge whatsoever of the machine. His "typewriting was unpunctuated and the letters were all wrong...It was full of mistakes...[Waterlow] never saw anything so disgraceful in typing."<sup>67</sup> Waterlow had to find someone else to finish the typing and apologised profusely to his customers for the mistakes. By the end of May, Lion had also been absent for six working days due to illness. On the 30<sup>th</sup> of May, Lion was off work but according to Waterlow, Lion could not produce any kind of evidence to satisfy him that he was ill. Instead, he went to the Railway Institute Club to play tennis (as mentioned previously, one of the few clubs for lower working class members of the British community mentioned in the sources). As a result, Waterlow dismissed Lion on June 2<sup>nd</sup>. Since Waterlow did not pay Lion for his work in May, Lion sued Waterlow for the £10 and claimed damages for wrongful dismissal. Lion was so poor that he was unable to pay court charges. Lion argued that on the 31<sup>st</sup> of May, he had seen Dr. Beddoe who told him to rest at home. However, Waterlow wanted a certificate from Dr. Beddoe for 30<sup>th</sup> May, which Lion could not produce.<sup>68</sup> Eventually, the Court ruled that Waterlow was to pay Lion £10 for his salary in May and a further £40 in damages.<sup>69</sup> Upon Waterlow's appeal, however, the Court determined that the damages were excessive considering Lion's conduct and reduced the damages to £30.<sup>70</sup>

Besides carpenters and clerks, impoverished lower middle class Britons included tailors, as Rodenbeck previously mentioned.<sup>71</sup> James Henry Jones "came out from England in December [1912] as Master Tailor to Messrs. Papdakis in Zagazig."<sup>72</sup> Two months later, he died of a severe attack of bronchitis. The British Consulate arranged the funeral and discovered that the cost of his hospital, funeral and cemetery expenses were adequately covered by the small amount of cash that was found on him and by the sale

<sup>66</sup> FO841/102: Guy Osborne Lion vs. James Francis Waterlow, Civil Jurisdiction, 05/06/1908.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, Waterlow's deposition, 23/06/1908.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, Lion's deposition, 22/06/1908.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, Court judgement, 24/06/1908.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, Appeal, 30/06/1908 & 30/11/1908.

<sup>71</sup> Rodenbeck, p. 176.

<sup>72</sup> FO841/133: Probate Jurisdiction, James Henry Jones, 24/02/1913.

of Jones' small revolver and two watches. The Consulate wrote to his widow saying that Jones' had other possessions but that the sale of these items were "not worth the amount of the freight as they [were] in a very bad condition."<sup>73</sup> Therefore, it appears that there were poor Britons in Cairo who were from the lower middle classes by virtue of their work as carpenters, office clerks and tailors. Perhaps policemen could be added to this category since Peter John Teskow of the Cairo Police earned about £10 per month at the time of his death in 1913.<sup>74</sup>

A class below the lower middle class was the lower working class. During the time of the British occupation, many of the lower working class Britons in Cairo lived in Boulaq and worked as labourers in the Railway Administration, as opposed to the aforementioned upper middle class engineers of the railway companies. Inaugurated in December 1900, the Boulaq shops were responsible for the building of rail carriages and nearly all the repair and maintenance work of the trains as well.<sup>75</sup> The labourers included drivers, firemen, cleaners, mechanics and other maintenance staff.<sup>76</sup> Many of them received very low wages. For instance, James Campbell, a mechanic in the service of the Egyptian State Railways, most likely had a monthly salary of just under £5 (or £60 per year) in 1910.<sup>77</sup> So poor were the railway workers that they were objects of charitable donations and legacies of wills. In 1898, Mrs. Edith Hector McClean, donated £1000 of her will for a church to be built for the poor Britons in Boulaq who were working on the railways.<sup>78</sup> Since by 1898, tramways had provided convenient transportation for the railway workers to travel to All Saints' Church in Ezbekiyya, there was no longer a need to build a separate church for English workers in Boulaq. It was decided that Mrs. McClean's donation be used to enlarge the existing church and that a separate portion of pews would be dedicated for the usage of the workers from Boulaq. To commemorate Mrs. McClean's gift, a brass plate with the following inscription was created: "This chapel was set apart for the use of the residents at Boulak [sic] in fulfilment of the wishes of the late Edith Hector McClean who laboured for their

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, letter to Mrs. Jones from the British Consulate, 20/03/1913.

<sup>74</sup> FO841/143: Probate Jurisdiction, Peter John Teskow, 26/09/1913.

<sup>75</sup> *Egyptian State Railways and Port of Alexandria, Report of the Board of Administration, 1900*, (Cairo: Egyptian Railways Printing Office, 1901), p. 16 & *Report on the Egyptian State Railways and Telegraphs and Light Railways of Egypt, 1913*, (Cairo: Printing Office of the Administration, 1914), p. 18.

<sup>76</sup> *Egyptian State Railways and Port of Alexandria, Report, 1900*, p. 17.

<sup>77</sup> FO841/110: Probate Jurisdiction, James Campbell, 02/03/1910.

<sup>78</sup> All Saints' Church Archives, Cairo, Minute book 32, 11/09/1898.

spiritual welfare during her life and did not forget them in her death.”<sup>79</sup> Similarly, other funds were designated to the British poor in Cairo such as the Antoun Yousif Charity Fund of £E 1000 in 1892<sup>80</sup> and £E 30 from the St. Andrew’s Church jumble sale in 1915.<sup>81</sup>

Besides railway labourers, poor working class Britons in Cairo, particularly women, worked as maids. In Britain, “domestic service was...a main source of work for women.”<sup>82</sup> More than 42% of employed women were working as housemaids.<sup>83</sup> By the end of 19<sup>th</sup> century Britain, “one girl in every three between the ages of fifteen and twenty was a domestic servant. Altogether there were over one and a half million.”<sup>84</sup> In Egypt and in Cairo, a smaller proportion of women worked as maids. From Table 4.3, about 19.7% of employed female British subjects were maids in Egypt. More specifically, from Table 4.5, 21.5% of employed female British subjects were maids in Cairo. Most likely, they were desperately poor. For instance, Elizabeth Chadwick worked as a maid for 20 years for Caroline de Willbois. At the time of Chadwick’s death in 1906, de Willbois wrote to Mr. Alban, Consul to the Ministry of Finance in Cairo, to inquire as to the time of the funeral.

“My poor maid’s name was Elizabeth Chadwick but I do not know her age. I presume it must be about 60 years as she was for more than 20 years with me and was not young when I took her...I think it best that the funeral be a 3<sup>rd</sup> class one; but I would like to know what hour tomorrow it will be, because the girls and I will go to the cemetery...I will give over her two boxes to the Consulate, whenever you wish and the wages that are due to her. She has no money whatever, because she used to send every farthing home to her sister.”<sup>85</sup>

Chadwick’s monthly salary from Madam de Willbois was £3.11.3<sup>86</sup> (just over £40 per year) - significantly less than the monthly salaries of lawyers and civil servants that were about £65 per month (£780 per year). Chadwick was even poorer because even the little she earned, she sent it back to England to her sister. Poor British women also worked as nannies for wealthy Egyptian families.<sup>87</sup> Yet, still others arrived in Cairo

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 27/10/1899.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 20/03/1892 & 19/10/1894.

<sup>81</sup> St. Andrew’s Church Archives, Cairo, minutes, 23/03/1915.

<sup>82</sup> Norman McCord, *British History 1815-1916*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), p. 453.

<sup>83</sup> Rubenstein, p. 320.

<sup>84</sup> Arkell, p. 198.

<sup>85</sup> FO841/89: Probate Elizabeth Chadwick, letter from Caroline de Willbois to Mr. Alban, 25/12/1906.

<sup>86</sup> The amount of British currency at the time is delineated by 3 categories: pound, shillings (20 in 1 pound) and pence (12 in 1 shilling).

<sup>87</sup> Juan Ricardo Cole, “Feminism, Class, and Islam in Turn-of-the-Century Egypt”, *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 13 (1981), p. 394 (of pp. 387-407)

destitute. "One woman was actually sent out by some Board of Guardians in England with four penniless little girls under twelve."<sup>88</sup> As for prostitution, though there were as many as 100,000 prostitutes in London alone during the mid-Victorian era,<sup>89</sup> the records of occupied Egypt point to a very limited number of prostitutes who were British. Out of 280 police raids on 175 brothels in 1914, not one British prostitute was found. Similarly, out of the 931 women minors in the white slave trade who were arrested at disembarkation in the same year, only seven were British.<sup>90</sup>

### **Class inequality, snobbery and conflict?**

It appears that in a discussion that includes class, it may be useful to conclude by suggesting that the British class structure was not only a system of wage brackets and occupational compartmentalisation. The notions of inequality and deference were deeply entrenched in the psyches of British men and women. Two examples from the British community in occupied Cairo demonstrate this psychological fixation. First, during a Sunday service at All Saints' Church in 1891, Lord Dunmore and his family arrived at "church ten minutes before the bell stopped ringing but could not get into the seat usually occupied by them and had in consequence to be dispersed [to different seats in]...the church."<sup>91</sup> Although it was customary for residents to have their regular seats at church, it was understood that "such allotted seats [would]...only [be]...reserved until the beginning of the [reading of the] Psalms."<sup>92</sup> In this case, the church warden declared that Lord Dunmore and his family did not regularly occupy any seats and Lord Dunmore even had to be asked to be removed from a seat that one Miss McCarthy had occupied for the past year and a half.<sup>93</sup> Consequently, Lord Dunmore complained to Sir Baring, the Consul-General, with regards to his ill-treatment by the church warden. In response, Mr. Crewe, the church warden, resigned though he was recognised by the church council for "his long and devoted [service] to the church."<sup>94</sup> Needless to say, this incident illustrates the deeply ingrained snobbery and deference inherent in the British class culture. Not only was being denied one's desired seating arrangement inexcusable

<sup>88</sup> E.L. Butcher, *Egypt As We Knew It*, (London: Mills & Boon, 1911), p. 151.

<sup>89</sup> Rubenstein, p. 325.

<sup>90</sup> FO141/466/1429: Prostitution and Bureau des Moeurs, report 1914.

<sup>91</sup> All Saints' Church Archives, Cairo, Minute book 31, Cairo Church Committee minutes, 1870-1890, 10/04/1891.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, 28/10/1887.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, 10/04/1891.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*

but to be turned out of a seat belonging to a 'lesser' being of a lower class, even if only slightly lower, was unacceptable to someone of the upper class. No church committee member dared defend the church warden's actions or speak against his resignation.

The second example concerns the attitudes of British privates in the military with regards to their upper class superiors. One lower class soldier wrote an article published by the Egyptian Gazette as to how deeply enamoured he was with the rightful superiority of his officers:

"The officer's uniform, his education and social gifts, his exemption from physical toil, the law that forbids a private to approach him without the intermediary of a N.C.O. and even the officer's better food – all these conspire to make the ordinary private regard him as a kind of superior being. The normal soldier is ripe for hero-worship: his nature demands some one whom he can admire and be proud of. If he is given a typical Public School boy or university man as an officer, his happiness as a soldier is complete...Officers are officers; men are men."<sup>95</sup>

With this commitment to honour the class system from soldiers, officers, and church leaders alike, the British undoubtedly constructed a social framework whereby Britons in Egypt were classified according to wealth, education, occupation and background. Examples of lack of deference and class conflict are difficult to find. There appears to be only one incident of a working class Briton being involved in, and even leading, a strike against the authorities, not directly against the government of British upper class officials in Cairo but the Egyptian-run municipal government of Alexandria. In February 1906, as part of wider Egyptian protests against Alexandria's municipal government, coachmen went on strike. They petitioned for the stop to a new taxation scheme on vehicles and horses, change of fares and regulations concerning stables, and a more accurate way to confirm the sickness of a horse before it was required to be hospitalised.<sup>96</sup> The strikes outside the office of the municipal government eventually turned violent. Interestingly, "the leadership [of the strike]...was predominantly foreign, with a British subject...named Edward Fabry...arrested as the ringleader of the militants."<sup>97</sup> Though it is unclear whether Fabry was a working class coachman from Britain, this is nonetheless a noteworthy account of a British subject dissenting against the established authorities of the time and even leading other Europeans and Egyptians to do the same.

<sup>95</sup> Egyptian Gazette, 04/06/1918.

<sup>96</sup> Michael J. Reimer, "Urban Government and Administration in Egypt, 1805-1914", *Die Welt Des Islams*, Band 39, 3, 1999, p. 301 (of 289-318)

<sup>97</sup> Helmi Ahmed Shalabi, *al-Ḥukm al-Maḥallī wa-l-majālis al-baladiyya fī Miṣr mundhu nash'atihā ḥattā 'amm 1882*, (Cairo: GEBO, 1987), p. 132.

## Conclusion

The diversity of the British community in occupied Cairo could be illustrated by the variety of occupations and classes that Britons were identified with during the time of the occupation. This discussion argues that beyond the obvious upper middle class group of officers and officials, Britons in Cairo engaged in many other occupations and professions and some were even from the uneducated lower classes. Besides the military and civil services, upper middle class Britons worked as lawyers, doctors, engineers, teachers, bankers, businessmen and missionaries, whilst lower middle class and lower working class Britons, were employed as carpenters, office clerks, tailors, railway workers and maids. Similar to the observations from the chapter on the demographic overview of the community, women tended to stay home and were not usually engaged in employment outside their homes. Snobbery and deference were the ground rules regulating the hierarchical framework of the community. To further develop the theme of the diversity and heterogeneity of the British community in occupied Cairo, this discussion now turns to the examination of criminals and felons within the community.

## 5. The Unsung 'Villains': Crime and Misconduct in the Community

### Introduction

References to the British in Egypt have tended to concentrate on the main political, diplomatic and financial players of the time. Many of them were influential, educated, from middle and upper class backgrounds and were by and large socially upright law-abiding citizens. However, a wealth of information found primarily in the records of the Cairo Consular Courts, and to a lesser extent in the Alexandria Consular Courts, suggests that Britons in Egypt, of various classes and backgrounds, were engaged in criminal activity or misconduct of some form. As part of the attempt to illustrate the diversity of the British community in occupied Cairo, this discussion now turns to the community's criminals, thieves and sex offenders - usually ignored by political histories of the time.

As stated in the chapter on 'Identifying Boundaries: Defining the Community', due to the Capitulations, foreigners in Egypt were given special privileges and rights. One key privilege was their exemption from local Egyptian jurisdiction. Civil cases for the foreign residents were usually tried in the Mixed Tribunals and criminal cases in the Consular Courts of their country of origin (though some civil cases received attention in the Consular Courts as well). In Egypt, the British Consular Courts were in Cairo, Alexandria and Port Said. Appeals were made to the Supreme Consular Court in Cairo with the final authority resting on the Supreme Consular Court of the Sublime Ottoman Porte in Constantinople. For the Briton in Egypt, the Consular Courts offered important judicial protection from 'native' laws and provided the security of familiar British legal proceedings in the English language.

"In the British Consular Courts the Englishman in Egypt has a solid guarantee of security and efficiency. If he be accused of a crime he is tried under English law and according to the notions of fairness that animate English Criminal Procedure. In civil cases between British subjects, the parties' rights are determined by British law. In either case the proceedings come before a British judge and are conducted in English."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Egyptian Gazette, Article on "Draft Laws for the Reconstitution of the Mixed Courts", 12/06/1920.

It is hoped that by reviewing the cases in the British Consular Courts of Cairo (and to a lesser extent in Alexandria) from 1882 to 1922, a clearer profile of British criminals and their crimes as well as further insights on British society in Egypt may emerge. Perhaps, answers to the following questions may be found. What were the causes and effects of certain crimes and their penalties on British families, children and society in Egypt? Were there particular situations or common problems that may have encouraged more crime than at other times and/or contexts?

One question that may be addressed here is - what was the impact of crime on the British community's reputation in Egypt among Egyptians (especially in a predominantly Islamic environment) and other expatriates? Without question, Egyptians were not impressed with the crime and misconduct committed by Britons in Egypt. For example, the British troops' unruly behaviour during the war "added to [the] indignation and accelerated [the] alienation...[of] the native town-dwellers...from the protecting power."<sup>2</sup> No doubt, British criminal activity fanned the flame of the Egyptian nationalist movement, represented by writers such as Mustafa Kamil who lost "no opportunity throughout [his] work to vent his distrust, even hatred, of the British."<sup>3</sup> Though the Egyptians despised British and foreign criminals and illegal activities, what may have angered them even more was the system that protected the culprits. The Capitulations were

"consistently abused by certain foreigners in connection with drug-smuggling, the drink trade, prostitution, and gambling houses. Virtual immunity from domiciliary search and the leniency of many consular courts meant that these...activities could often be carried on by foreigners with comparative immunity and at considerable profit."<sup>4</sup>

Therefore, the foreigners' criminal activities and their frequent escape from justice combined with the harsh punishment that Egyptians received at the hands of the authorities, as demonstrated in the Denshawai incident<sup>5</sup>, unequivocally added to the momentum of the Egyptian nationalist movement.

<sup>2</sup> J. de Vere Loder, letter to his father, 27/02/1916, private papers from St. Antony's College, Oxford as quoted in F. Lissauer, *British Policy Towards Egypt, 1914-1922*, PhD Thesis, University of London, London School of Economics, 1975.

<sup>3</sup> Jack A. Crabb Jr., *The Writing of History in Nineteenth-Century Egypt: A Study of National Transformation*, (Cairo: AUC Press, 1984), p. 158.

<sup>4</sup> John Marlowe, *A History of Modern Egypt and Anglo-Egyptian Relations*, (London: Cresnet, 1954), p. 135 as quoted from Roger Allen, *A Period of Time: A Study and Translation of Hadith 'Isa ibn Hishām by Muḥammad al-Muwaylīhi*, (Reading: Ithaca, 1992), p. 74.

<sup>5</sup> Well-known in modern Egyptian history, the Denshawai incident refers to the severe miscarriage of justice after a British officer was killed by sunstroke while escaping from villagers who were attacking

Before launching into the bulk of this discussion, certain parameters may assist the reader in navigating through it. First, although British subjects who were of Maltese, Greek or other origins were also tried in the British Consular Court, the focus of this chapter is on the illegal actions of those from the British community proper whose ethnic origin is of the British Isles. Some court cases point out very clearly that the plaintiff or the defendant is of 'British' origin, while others do not record the plaintiff or defendant's nationalities. In the latter cases, they are most likely to be British in origin because there were very few residents in Egypt who had English last names and were tried in the British courts but were not from the British Isles. There were relatively few Irish (though they were included in the same tallies as the English, Scottish and Welch in the 1907 census) and Canadians in Egypt at the time. The small number of Americans had their own tribunal. Australians and New Zealanders primarily arrived in Egypt after 1914 during the war effort and their crimes tended to be restricted to rioting and prostitution. (More will be said towards the end of this chapter and in the chapter on World War I.) Second, British tourists, who committed crime or engaged in misconduct, were also tried in the British Consular courts but were not usually part of the British community in Egypt. These temporary residents have not been included in this chapter. The relevant players that are referred to in this discussion by and large have a distinct role, profession or employment which meant that they were more than visitors to Egypt and were distinctly part of the British community in Egypt. Third, this chapter, as with the entire thesis, focuses primarily on the British community in Cairo though certain cases in Alexandria will be referred to for the sake of clarity since particular criminals operated in both cities. For the purpose of enhancing a point, some cases in Alexandria and one incident from the British community of Port Said are mentioned. Fourth, though the majority of the narrative refers to criminal activities within the British community during this 40 year span, a proportion of the work includes misconduct as well. 'Misconduct' implies actions that are not necessarily criminal, but are nonetheless interpreted by the British authorities to be harmful and illegal in the British, or wider, community at large. Fifth, although nearly all the primary source work in this chapter is

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him and his colleagues after the Britons were caught shooting at pigeons for sport. The pigeons happened to provide the livelihood of some of the inhabitants of Denshawai. The villagers were blamed for the British officer's death and after a show trial in which the leading judge was an Egyptian but was closely associated with the British administration, extremely harsh sentences were given. Four villagers were sentenced to death, 2 received life sentences while 6 others emerged with 7 years imprisonment. Others were sentenced to lashing and the whole village, including women and children were forced to watch the executions and the floggings.

based on the aforementioned Consular Court records of Cairo and Alexandria, there are a few cases based on other primary source documents. Lastly, for organisational expediency, this chapter is divided into certain areas of crime and misconduct: personal/domestic crimes (domestic abuse, abortion, and suicide), social crimes (assault and libel), professional misconduct and negligence, financial crimes (fraud, embezzlement, theft and extortion) and sexual crimes (rape, bigamy and prostitution).

## **Personal/Domestic crimes**

### *Domestic abuse*

Brutality and assault at home was not uncommon in Britain during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. British “newspapers...frequently [recorded] cases of inhuman cruelty to wives and children.”<sup>6</sup> For example, in 1889, there were 8075 cases of assault on women in Britain and Ireland. Penalties were often lenient, since only 43 of these cases resulted in the offenders receiving two or more years’ imprisonment.<sup>7</sup> Similarly, among the relatively small number of Britons in Cairo during the occupation, there were a significant number of court cases dealing with domestic violence within British households. Only a few are highlighted here. In nearly every case, men were found guilty of beating their wives. Almost always, the remedy sought by the Courts for domestic violence was legal separation, eventual divorce and alimony depending on the needs of each family and the earnings of the father. For example, in 1904, “Thomas Lane of Cairo, [a] Fitter [possibly a turner/technician], is...convicted before this Court...that he on the 8<sup>th</sup> day of October...at Cairo, did assault and strike Adelaide his wife and threaten to kill her.”<sup>8</sup> The Court asked Thomas Lane to pay a fine of £2.0.0.<sup>9</sup> or otherwise be imprisoned for one month and ordered that Adelaide Lane “be no longer bound to cohabit with [her husband] and that he shall pay her £2.10.0. per month.”<sup>10</sup> Six years later, Olga Campbell took her British husband William Campbell to court for judicial separation. After eight years of married life primarily in Alexandria and Cairo,

<sup>6</sup> P.E. Moulder, “The Lives of Working Women – By One of Them,” *Good Words*, Vol. XXXIX, 1898, p. 638.

<sup>7</sup> Matilda M. Blake, “Are Women Protected?,” *The Westminster Review*, Vol. CXXXVII, 1892, p. 47.

<sup>8</sup> FO841/81, His Britannic Majesty’s Consular Court at Cairo (hereafter referred to as CCC), court order in Adelaide Lane vs. Thomas Lane, 17/10/1904.

<sup>9</sup> The amount of British currency at the time is delineated by 3 categories: pound, shillings (20 in 1 pound) and pence (12 in 1 shilling). 1 Egyptian pound (£E) is worth about the same as £1. And there are 100 piastres in an Egyptian pound.

she accused her husband of violent and drunken behaviour and also of neglecting to provide for the family. One particular incident prompted her to seek the legal and financial help of the British Consul in Cairo:

"On the 14<sup>th</sup> day of July 1908, [he] threatened to cut the throats of myself and of our children. [Even though he] was continually absent for long periods from the house...[he] would return from time to time...and take my earnings [as a dressmaker]...and spend them in drink leaving me and our children destitute."<sup>11</sup>

Later in 1910, Alice Stephens sued her husband Frederick Bowring Stephens for assault and "causing her bodily harm...[She] further request[ed] that an order for separation be made and that...[he]...pay her an allowance for maintenance."<sup>12</sup> That same year, Suzanne Bailey took her husband William Henry Bailey to court after 17 years of married life in Egypt. Mrs. Bailey had trained as a nurse and by 1910 was employed in Cairo. Mr. Bailey, an engineer, first worked for the British government in Egypt, then toiled for the Delta Light Railways, but thereafter, kept getting dismissed from employer after employer.<sup>13</sup> Even as early as their first year of marriage, Mr. Bailey had already started beating Mrs. Bailey. In April 1899, she was beaten so badly that she went into hospital for treatment. Mr. Bailey also began to leave Mrs. Bailey and their children (they had four by 1901) for days without food or money. In 1902, according to Mrs. Bailey, Mr. Bailey wilfully gave her a venereal disease. Thereafter, she denied him sexual intercourse whenever he managed to return home to visit his family. After being severely beaten in September 1907 by Mr. Bailey, Mrs. Bailey sought the protection of the law. Even after being convicted, Mr. Bailey continued to ask Mrs. Bailey for money and started to send obscene letters to her. By 1910, Mrs. Bailey sought a judicial separation, custody of their children, and her husband's payment for the costs of the court case. The Court obliged and granted Mrs. Bailey each of her requests.<sup>14</sup>

Six years later, Robert Steven Leslie, an engineer of the Egyptian State Railways was charged with aggravated assault after "striking and beating [his wife, Emilie Leslie], with his fists and knocking her down."<sup>15</sup> Mrs. Leslie was no longer obliged to live with

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> FO841/64, CCC, Olga Campbell vs. William Campbell, 12/03/1910.

<sup>12</sup> FO841/113, CCC, Alice Stephens vs. Frederick Bowring Stephens, Criminal Jurisdiction, 25/07/1910.

<sup>13</sup> FO841/117, CCC, Suzanne Bailey vs. William Henry Bailey, 02/11/10.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., Court Order, 06/12/1910.

<sup>15</sup> FO841/156, CCC, Criminal Jurisdiction on Robert Steven Leslie, 18/07/1916.

her husband and he was ordered to pay her £6.13.0. per month.<sup>16</sup> As a result, the Egyptian Expeditionary Force cancelled the appointment of Robert Leslie to the Egyptian Labour Corps.<sup>17</sup> In the same year, Walter Quinn, a dentist with practices in Cairo and Alexandria, got off extremely lightly for violently assaulting his French wife, Therèse. For “causing her serious bodily harm”<sup>18</sup>, Dr. Quinn was ordered to pay only £2 and Court fees or otherwise face one month’s imprisonment.<sup>19</sup> However, since they lived in Alexandria, another court ruling two years later in Alexandria, dealt with Dr. Quinn much more severely. He was accused of frequently abusing his wife physically and mentally. He called her “bloody prostitute, bloody French woman...[and said] he would kill [her].”<sup>20</sup> In May 1917, Mrs. Quinn testified:

“In the course of a violent scene my husband seized me, struck me on the body, tore my dress, broke various articles in the house and generally cruelly ill treated and insulted me. [He] struck me with a knotted towel on the body and threatened to strike me with an Indian dagger...[I] took refuge in the Windsor Hotel [and sought] medical help.”<sup>21</sup>

Finally, by 1919, after already living apart, the Court ordered Dr. Quinn to pay certain sums to his wife to maintain the rent on her home and to allow her to take all the furniture that was worth £150 altogether. Further, he was ordered to pay Mrs. Quinn’s court fees, six instalments of £E 25 per month as well as monthly payments of £E30.<sup>22</sup>

The aforementioned cases of domestic violence were a few examples of a sizeable problem among British families in Egypt though some of the cases involved British men married to women from other European countries. Although there are neither uniform reasons nor excuses for domestic violence, it seems that in the case of the British men in Egypt, alcohol, unemployment, and the pressures of securing work in a foreign context may have played a part in stirring them to violence. What is clear is that domestic violence often led to the breaking down of marriages and families as the offended wife sought separation and alimony. Notwithstanding inflationary pressures, the above cases demonstrate the connection between earning potential and alimony payments. For example, Mr. Lane, a fitter, was ordered to pay £2.10.0 per month in 1904. Mr. Leslie,

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 29/07/1916.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, letter from Egyptian Expeditionary Force, Headquarters, Lieutenant H. Norman Hardin to Arthur David Alban, His Britannic Majesty’s Consul in Cairo, 25/07/1916.

<sup>18</sup> FO841/155, CCC, Therèse Quinn vs. Walter Quinn, His Britannic Majesty’s Provincial Court at Cairo, 18/04/1916.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 07/06/1916.

<sup>20</sup> FO847/64, Alexandria Consular Court (hereafter referred to as ACC), Quinn vs. Quinn, 26/08/1918.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

an engineer, was sentenced to pay £6.13.0 per month in 1916 while Dr. Quinn, a dentist had to pay £E25 to £E30 each month in 1919. Usually, domestic violence led to poorer fatherless families and fathers became less affluent due to the upkeep of children not in their custody. Though men were usually at fault when it came to violence, women were also, at times, responsible for creating domestic strife. In 1907, Alfred Griffith won custody of his daughter due to his wife's yearlong absence, negligence and abduction of their child.<sup>23</sup> In 1911, James Duncan, who worked in the Sewage and Water services and before that, served in the British military in Egypt since 1896, won custody of his daughter after his wife left him.<sup>24</sup> Mr. Duncan suspected that Mrs. Duncan might have been leading an improper and immoral life. Though usually painful and traumatic for the families involved, fortunately, a large majority of British families in occupied Egypt did not face domestic violence or strife that led to separation, divorce, alimony and custody battles.

### *Abortion*

During the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, abortion was "frequently referred to as the 'illegal operation' because it was the only operation specifically prohibited by statute law."<sup>25</sup> Enshrined in the 1861 Offences Against the Person Act, the penalty for an attempt to procure abortion in Britain was life imprisonment – the most severe in Europe. However, the law was impossible to enforce when more and more women in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century proceeded with abortions in order to limit family size. By the turn of the century, 2% of births ended in deaths through intentional terminations.<sup>26</sup> Moreover, self-induced abortions were often unsafe and the law became a means by which women were protected from dangerous life-threatening procedures.

Not surprisingly, abortion and its dangers and penalties were evident in the British community in Cairo as well. Sergeant Harry Canning, of the 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion Rifle Brigade, in 1911, was sentenced for 6 months' imprisonment for assisting his wife in an abortion procedure.<sup>27</sup> This abortion came to the attention of the authorities because Mrs. Canning

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 26/02/1919.

<sup>23</sup> FO841/92, CCC, Alfred William Griffith vs. Aline Griffith, Civil Jurisdiction, 04/05/1907.

<sup>24</sup> FO841/120, CCC, Charlotte Duncan vs. James Duncan, 13/09/1911.

<sup>25</sup> Barbara Brookes, *Abortion in England, 1900-1967*, London: Croom Helm, 1988, in 'Introduction'. In fact, abortion remained illegal in Britain until 1967.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 23.

<sup>27</sup> FO841/122, CCC, Rex vs. Sergeant Harry Canning, 17/07/1911.

died of septicaemia as a result of the procedure. Being new to the city (Mr. Canning had been in Cairo for 15 months, while Mrs. Canning only for 3 months) and overwhelmed with the work involved in taking care of two children, one of whom was a invalid, Mrs. Canning desperately did not want any more children. Moreover, Sergeant Canning was facing the prospect of being sent to Khartoum, leaving Mrs. Canning to take care of their children alone. A third child was most unwelcome. When the couple suspected that she might be pregnant, they sought the help of a Greek midwife named Helen Panajotopoulo. The belief at the time was that the abortion procedure would be relatively simple by applying a little water and cotton wool. After three visits to the midwife, on 11<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup>, and 13<sup>th</sup> of May 1911, Mrs. Canning became very ill. For 10 days, Mrs. Canning begged Mr. Canning not to call a doctor because they didn't want anyone to know about the abortion. But by 23<sup>rd</sup> May, her condition was so bad that there was no choice but to call Dr. Alexander Morrison,<sup>28</sup> a well-known doctor in the British community in Cairo.<sup>29</sup> Mrs. Canning was rushed to the Deaconesses' Hospital with a severe case of enteric fever, congestion of both lungs, enlarged spleen, a brown and dry tongue, rapid pulse, pain in her right groin, and drowsiness. In the next few days, she vomited most of her foods and medicines, developed severe pains in all her joints, acquired a very high fever and pulse, and became unconscious.<sup>30</sup> She died on the 29<sup>th</sup> of May of septicaemia, which is a form of blood poisoning.<sup>31</sup> Sergeant Canning and the Greek midwife were immediately charged with using "unlawful...instruments or other means with the intent to procure [a] miscarriage."<sup>32</sup> Since Sergeant Canning had an excellent service record over a long period of time in the military, the Judge imposed the most lenient sentence he could – six months' imprisonment without any hard labour. And since he was a Sergeant in the Army of Occupation, he was not confined in a prison with Egyptians but was sent to the Military Detention Barrack. As previously mentioned in the chapter on 'boundaries', British inmates were often not imprisoned

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, Sergeant Canning's deposition, June 1911.

<sup>29</sup> Dr. Morrison was a prominent member of the British community in Cairo. J.E. Marshall, a judge in the Egyptian Court of Appeal wrote in his book, *The Egyptian Enigma, 1890-1928* (London: John Murray, 1928), p. 11, that Dr. Morrison was "a man of great character,...a brilliant surgeon and a great public speaker in either French and English...He [spoke] Italian well, and [had] a very considerable working knowledge of Arabic."

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, Dr. Alexander Murison's deposition, 31/05/1911.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, Post-mortem exam of Mrs. May Canning, 29/05/1911.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, Criminal Jurisdiction, 31/05/1911.

with Egyptian prisoners. The British Judge Grain hoped that the sentence would not affect Sergeant Canning's future military service or his pension arrangements.<sup>33</sup>

Not only does this incident illustrate the illegality of abortion in the British community in Egypt, but also the dangerous methods involved in procuring abortions. In terms of the appropriate punishment for abortion, this case gives an example of the potential for tough penalties as well as the possibility of leniency depending on one's previous record. Perhaps it also alludes to the difficulty and loneliness experienced by certain British families in a foreign land away from their familiar social network of friends and relatives back in Britain.

### *Suicide*

The British community in Egypt witnessed its fair share of suicides. Nearly all of these suicides seemed to have been due to an 'unsound' mind —referring to a severe emotional, mental and psychological crisis. For example, in 1892, Frederick John Barlow, a long-time fitter in the Government Railway shops of Alexandria, shot himself after getting into "a fit of temporary insanity."<sup>34</sup> Ten years later, in the same city, Sergeant Martin Doyle of the Leicestershire Regiment, as a result of an unsound mind, threw "himself under a passing train, the wheels whereof passed over him and crushed him."<sup>35</sup> In 1905, Dora Blake, a 25 year old domestic servant based in Alexandria, "not being of sound mind...did kill herself by the administration...of a fatal dose of cocaine."<sup>36</sup> Jessie Brown, a 26 year-old stewardess of Nile ships, "being temporarily of an unsound mind...[killed] herself by taking...a dose of poison - carrosine sublimate."<sup>37</sup> In 1911, Thomas Brown, a Chemist in the Egyptian Salt and Soda Co. near Alexandria, committed suicide by shooting himself. His suicide note explained his intentions. "Between sickness and loneliness my nerves are destroyed and my mind turned... My life in the last few months has been most unhappy, and I can bear it no longer."<sup>38</sup> His

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, letter from British Consulate, Cairo, to General Officer Commanding British Headquarters in Cairo, 17/07/1911.

<sup>34</sup> FO847/32, ACC, Inquest into the death of Frederick John Barlow, 09/12/1892.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, ACC, Inquest into the death of Martin Doyle, 09/12/1902.

<sup>36</sup> FO847/35, ACC, Statement with regards to Dora Blake, 25/04/1905.

<sup>37</sup> FO847/36, ACC, report accompanying the account of the Estate of Jessie Brown

<sup>38</sup> FO847/46, ACC, Inquest into the death of Thomas Brown, suicide note, Thomas Brown to Mr. Paterson, Manager in Egyptian Salt and Soda Co., 15/05/1911.

depression was due to having a serious venereal disease.<sup>39</sup> That same year, Mrs. Eugenie Phillips, wife of Alfred William Phillip, an engineer in Alexandria, became psychologically unwell and developed delusions that her husband was being unfaithful to her. As a result, she violently attacked him one night and was eventually admitted to hospital for her illness.<sup>40</sup> Soon thereafter, she “committed suicide by throwing herself from the top (3<sup>rd</sup>) floor verandah [sic] of the [Deaconesses’] Hospital while in a state of unsound mind.”<sup>41</sup> Lastly, in Alexandria in 1918, an Anglo-Egyptian Bank employee named Martin, who was the founder of the Alexandria Swimming Club, took his own life because “his mind had for some...time [become] unhinged.”<sup>42</sup> Major Stowe, who was living with Martin before his death, noticed that Martin “complained [that] he was being watched and that he was drinking very heavily.”<sup>43</sup> Martin was fearful that he was going to get blamed for stealing £3000 that was despatched from his branch in Alexandria to Zagazig in 1917. This made no sense to Martin’s boss, Mr. Blunt, who would never have doubted Martin’s honesty in any way. Martin’s suicide was due to an unstable mental state characterised by paranoia and fear.

What do all of these suicides and domestic crises say about life in the British community in Egypt? They point to the sadness and depression that existed in the lives of British men and women in Egypt, mainly from the lower middle and lower working classes and from a variety of professions (fitter, sergeant, domestic servant, stewardess, chemist, wife of an engineer, bank official). Underneath the stereotype of being the comparatively prosperous and ruling constituency in Egypt, the British community also consisted of men and women who suffered physically (as in the case of domestic violence), mentally, emotionally and psychologically.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, Letter from D.A. Cameron, His Britannic Majesty’s Consul General in Alexandria to Judge of His Britannic Majesty’s Supreme in Constantinople, 22/05/1911.

<sup>40</sup> FO847/46, Alfred William Phillips’ statement to His Britannic Majesty’s Supreme Court for the Dominions of the Sublime Ottoman Porte, 02/09/1911.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, ACC, Inquest into the death of Mrs. Eugenie Phillips, Letter by D.A. Cameron, His Britannic Majesty’s Consul General, 12/04/1912.

<sup>42</sup> Arthur Blunt, Manager of Anglo-Egyptian Bank in Alexandria, to W.R. Carruthers, Manager in London, 05/09/1918, letters from Anglo-Egyptian Bank staff, Barclays Group Archives, Wythenshawe, Manchester.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*

## Social crimes

### *Assault*

Although Lord Cromer referred to the British mission in Egypt as a 'civilising' one, Britons in Egypt were not only guilty of domestic abuse but assaulting Egyptians and non-Egyptians as well. In 1885, John Alfred Brown, an English engineer, was accused of assaulting an Egyptian named Georgi Zakhoora. Severely beaten, Zakhoora needed five days in hospital thereafter.<sup>44</sup> Months later, Mr. Brown's doctor described him in this way:

"Mr. Brown is a man of a highly nervous excitable temperament and subject to violent fits of temper on the least provocation. These fits of temper amount sometimes to actual frenzy, during which he seems to lose control over himself...On one occasion, I found him...unmanageable in hospital -so violent and noisy that I was obliged to summarily dismiss him."<sup>45</sup>

Brown seemed always to have been drunk as well.<sup>46</sup> In 1901, Scottish professor of Firearms and Shooting, George Fowler, was accused of assaulting an American, Douglas Walcott in Cairo.<sup>47</sup> Five years later, the Cairo Police sued William Houghton (a journalist) and his wife Marguerite for beating an Egyptian Police Sergeant named Mohamed Ibrahim Saafan. They were each fined £5.<sup>48</sup> In 1910, Alfred Chubb was found guilty of assaulting Alfred Young, Superior of the Works Department.<sup>49</sup> Though the traditional image of the English 'gentleman' may have been intact in governmental, diplomatic and business circles, there were nonetheless examples of violent and abusive Britons in occupied Egypt.

<sup>44</sup> FO847,12, ACC, Letter from Governor of Alexandria to His Britanic Majesty's Consular Court., 26/11/1885.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, ACC, Doctor's report on Alfred Brown, 09/01/1886.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, H. de Coetlofou, Cairo Police, report, 31/01/1886.

<sup>47</sup> FO841/53, CCC, Douglas Walcott vs. George Fowler, 06/04/1901.

<sup>48</sup> FO841/87, CCC, Local Police vs. William and Marguerite Houghton, 26/01/1906.

<sup>49</sup> FO841/114, CCC, Alfred Young vs. Sydney Alfred Chubb, 19/10/1910.

## *Libel*

Valuing credibility in both the private and business spheres, British residents in Egypt fought bitterly against those who sought to damage their reputations. For example, in 1883 in Alexandria, Edwin Barber called Messrs. John Ross and Co., cheats and robbers in front of witnesses with regard to the conduct of Ross' firm. Charles Boyle, Ross' lawyer, directed a statement to Mr. Barber that demanded "an immediate apology [that] should contain a retraction of the statements made...at [his] expense in...the local papers as my clients may choose. Should no such apology be forthcoming, it will be my duty to advise my clients to take immediate legal proceedings against yourself."<sup>50</sup> Barber refused to admit his guilt, so Ross took him to court and won – "the jury having decided in favour of the Plaintiffs and awarded the sum of forty shillings as damages."<sup>51</sup>

In 1905, John William Congdon, a British merchant accused William Houghton, a journalist in Cairo of writing "a false, malicious, defamatory and libellous article...in the...*'Egyptian Graphic'* thereby holding [Congdon] up to public hatred, contempt and ridicule."<sup>52</sup> Houghton's article in the *Egyptian Graphic* asserted:

*"I desire to hold up to public hatred and contempt a person named Congdon, said to be Auctioneer to the Army of Occupation, agent for several British firms of manufacturers and, in short, fully provided with the means of earning an honest competence, and yet who has taken to building houses for mosquitos, or, at least [in] his advertisement in the 'Egyptian Gazette', - selling them. 'For sale'...this conscience-less Congdon...announces, a 'Mosquito house, apply Congdon, Cairo'...His Britannic Majesty's Consul should see whether or not he is a registered British subject and warn him that between such reprehensible ways of money-making and expulsion there is but a short step."<sup>53</sup>*

In the Supreme Consular Court in Cairo, the "Plaintiff claimed...for £500 damages for a malicious defamatory and libellous article written by the defendant."<sup>54</sup> However, the defendant successfully proved that the article entered into the newspaper by accident. According to Houghton, the article was removed from the 'deferred' file into the

<sup>50</sup> FO847/6, ACC, John Ross vs. Edwin Barber, letter from Charles Boyle, Ross' lawyer, to Barber, 23/10/1883.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, Judge Charles Alfred Cookson, conclusion of Ross vs. Barber, 30/11/1883.

<sup>52</sup> FO841/83, John William Congdon vs. William Houghton, Criminal Jurisdiction, 14/02/1905.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, Article in *Egyptian Graphic*, 15/01/1905 (italics refer to Congdon's libellous words)

<sup>54</sup> FO841/86, Congdon vs. Houghton at Supreme Consular Court, 08/03/1905.

'active' file without his knowledge so he had no control over its publication. Congdon duly withdrew the court action against Houghton.<sup>55</sup>

Six years later, Wallace Daniel Hawkes, a merchant and commission agent, sued Charles Coulston Porri, a Wesleyan Methodist Minister and a Chaplain of the British Army of Occupation in Egypt for libel. The Plaintiff argues that in 1911, the Defendant

"falsely, wickedly and maliciously spoke and published at Cairo to Herbert Stuart Wilson...his wife, and the wife of the Defendant the following words: He dresses up poor boys in expensive suits of clothes and gives them jewellery and takes them about with him on condition they occupy the same bedroom. [He] is guilty of the same crime as that of Oscar Wilde."<sup>56</sup>

In another letter, not only did Porri accuse Hawke of sodomy, he claimed that Hawkes was engaged in financial wrongdoing as well.

"Hawkes is running away from his creditors he is not a fit man to associate with, and his character is worst [than] I have ever known. [He] had been guilty of dishonesty in his business and that he had committed or endeavoured to commit sodomy."<sup>57</sup>

Porri continued to write in yet another letter that Hawkes "[was] in a state of insolvency. His creditors will prevent him leaving the country...[He is] guilty of fraudulent or dishonest dealings in relation to his business."<sup>58</sup> In response, Hawkes claimed that "his character and reputation [had] been brought into public hatred and contempt and [he had] also severely suffered in his trade." He sought £500 in damages. In the end, Rev. Porri, the Defendant, won. The Supreme Consular Court dismissed the case and no payment was made to Mr. Hawkes, the Plaintiff.<sup>59</sup> Although there were other libel cases tried by the Consular Courts in Alexandria and Cairo, these three cases give us a glimpse of the importance of reputation and credibility in the British community in occupied Egypt. Depending on one's perspective, particular libel cases may not have been 'criminal' in nature (since they may have been tried as civil cases) but were certainly representative of an area of misconduct. As for common causes behind libel actions, it appears that being accused of financial misdealing or sexual impropriety provided the most ammunition for taking an accuser to court for libel. It

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 08/05/1905.

<sup>56</sup> FO841/112, Wallace Daniel Hawkes vs. Charles Clouston Porri, Civil Jurisdiction, 02/06/1911.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, letter to S. Duke, March, 1911.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, letter to George Frederick Hodgskins, March, 1911.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, Civil Jurisdiction, His Britannic Majesty's Supreme Consular Court of the Sublime Ottoman Porte, 10/01/1912.

seems that, similar to today, financial and sexual scandals were most likely to damage a person's character and reputation in the British community in Egypt. .

### **Professional Misconduct and Negligence**

By and large, many Britons in Egypt were competent administrators and professionals. There were few incidences of professional misconduct during the period of the British occupation. However, there were exceptions where professional judgement was questionable leading to resignation or dismissal. One such situation occurred in 1910 at Port Said. Dr. E.H. Ross wanted to go on leave but just before his scheduled departure, two patients who came to him were misdiagnosed. Though they had cholera, Ross concluded that they did not. Thus Dr. Ross was suspected of intentionally ignoring these two cases of cholera so that he could go on leave. If there were any hint of a cholera plague, then his leave would have had to be cancelled.

"There appears to be a strong case against Dr. Ross for grave negligence with regard to plague complicated with the suspicion that he did not carry out the usual routine of examination in two particular cases because if proved to be plague, they would have prevented his taking leave."<sup>60</sup>

The British authorities in Egypt made clear that "if a charge of concealing plague could have been proved, [they would] have proceeded with it."<sup>61</sup> However,

"after careful consideration of the evidence against Dr. Ross and after hearing his defence it became clear that the serious charges could not be driven home by a Council of Discipline however unpleasant the impression which must be left by his conduct. If he could not be dismissed there remained no doubt that he was, a most undesirable type of official."<sup>62</sup>

Though he was not dismissed, Dr. Ross resigned from his post in Port Said and "received and accepted a severe official reprimand for negligence and disobedience to routine orders."<sup>63</sup>

Besides this incident in Port Said, negligence in medical services was also evident in Cairo. One report on the Anglo-American Hospital pointed out multiple shortcomings in the maintenance of hygiene and supplies. Regarding hygiene standards, the laundry

<sup>60</sup> Letter from Sir Milne Cheetham to Consul-General, Eldon Gorst, 31/07/1910, in Sir Milne Cheetham Papers, Middle East Centre, St. Antony's College, Oxford University.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, Cheetham to Gorst, 12/09/1910.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, Cheetham to Sir Louis Mallet, 18/09/1910.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*

was in deplorable condition. The stove required repairing. The gearing was broken. Taps were leaking. Urgent repairs were needed to drain the accumulated soakage. The special wash-house for the washing of the soiled linen from maternity cases were locked up and used as storage for mattresses. No precaution was taken to separate the washing of the soiled linen of typhoid patients from the rest of the patients. The dirty linen from maternity, typhoid and other cases were all thrown into one common room where Sudanese women who were both sceptical of the need for cleanliness and careless of infection did the work. The report urged the immediate re-opening of the maternity wash-house and strict procedures to separate the linen of typhoid patients from those of other patients. With regards to supplies, the report noted that the system in place to manage the household supplies of the Hospital tended to wastefulness and extravagance. Proper inventories of stock combined with a clear recording of accounts were not kept. Small quantities were being frequently ordered as required. Stationery was running low. The Hospital china and kitchen utensils were very low. Certain items were missing entirely. The depleting supply of Hospital linen did not have a system in place for its inspection or repair. There were not enough mosquito nets for the number of beds. A large number of the nets were full of holes and needed repairing. The report urged the Hospital to start re-stocking, ordering, inspecting and repairing all the necessary items.<sup>64</sup> Perhaps the negligence evident in the Anglo-American Hospital discouraged the Britons and others in Cairo from using the Hospital. Whatever the case, the Anglo-American Hospital was one exception to the stereotypical image of competence and reliability found in British administration and management.

Besides negligence found in medical services, the controversial case of Charles Robert Ashbee may have been perceived as professional misconduct to some and forward-thinking to other. Ashbee, an architect by trade, came from Britain to teach in the Sultaniyya Training College in Cairo during World War I. He was accepted by the Ministry of Education because male British teachers in Egypt were "being taken for military service"<sup>65</sup> and needed to be replaced desperately. Soon after Ashbee started working in Cairo, certain British officials began to severely criticise his teaching style. Sir Ronald Graham, of the Residency in Cairo, suggested that "Ashbee [was] a socialist without sense of discipline; and his theories and attitude in general [had] a deplorable

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<sup>64</sup> All Saints' Church Archives, Cairo, Bundle 67B, E.M. Dowson, Chairman, Executive Sub-Committee, "Notes of evidence of neglect in the recent administration of the hospital", summer, 1911.

effect on the boys he [was] called upon to teach.”<sup>66</sup> Major C.F. Ryder, Assistant Director of the Eastern Mediterranean Special Intelligence Bureau labelled Ashbee an “ultra-socialist...[who spoke] unfavourably of the Allies saying that they waged the present war...to satisfy their cupidity.”<sup>67</sup> He was also accused of passing the contents of anti-Governmental English newspapers to his Egyptian nationalist friends.<sup>68</sup> Further, a few years later, Commissioner for Egypt to the Foreign Office, Henderson, claimed that Ashbee’s

“methods were subversive of discipline. He openly ridiculed regulations and authority and his method of conducting examinations rendered the proceedings ridiculous...He was an advanced socialist and showed no discretion in airing his views, both in and out of college.”<sup>69</sup>

Therefore, with other British officials behind him, Douglas Dunlop, Education Adviser, planned to expel Ashbee.

However, actual proof of professional indiscretion or illegalities was hard to come by since Ashbee seemed to have only offered a perspective that was more sympathetic to Egyptian culture. Ashbee disliked the ordinary expatriate lifestyle of most of the Britons in Egypt. He loathed the “fancied officials and ‘schoolmasters-managers’ who think merely of getting through their work as quickly as possible so that they may go on with the usual English club life and amusements.”<sup>70</sup> Instead, he tried “to get at the oriental side of [things] and avoid the British ‘official’ side which is of course tediously familiar.”<sup>71</sup> He explains further:

“The oriental point of view is so different from ours and so valuable in fixing our judgement on the great issues of life - religious, aesthetic, [and] political that we ought to study it much more than we do. I study history and devote one whole day in the week to going through the mosques and native workshops... So where do you think I was last night? At a college of Dervishes listening to a Turkish Dervish - making music and singing. He was a wonderful musician.”<sup>72</sup>

In Ashbee’s thinking, the British education system was ‘false’ in that Egyptian boys

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<sup>65</sup> FO141/669/4394, Letter from Douglas Dunlop (Education Adviser) to E.H. Cecil (Finance Adviser), 06/02/1917.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, Private letter from Sir R. Graham to High Commissioner McMahon, 01/07/1917.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, Major C.F. Ryder, Assistant Director, Eastern Mediterranean Special Intelligence Bureau, reporting on what certain Egyptian friends of Ashbee say, 22/06/1917.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, Henderson, Commissioner for Egypt to Foreign Office to Sir. Austin Chamberlain, 26/07/1926.

<sup>70</sup> Private papers of Charles Robert Ashbee, King’s College Archives, Cambridge University, letters from Ashbee to his wife, Janet Elizabeth Ashbee, 13/04/1917 & 01/05/1917.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*

were being examined according to British standards, which was mainly clerical. But what Egyptian students needed was character training and not skills to memorise facts and then regurgitate them on a piece of paper. He was critical of the harshness of British teachers towards Egyptian students exemplified by a situation where a student was disqualified from taking his final exam because he was a few minutes late. As a result, the student lost his whole year's work and a chance of a government appointment.<sup>73</sup> He hoped that Egyptian students would "develop their own national capacity and ...not [to] assume that everything British is necessarily better than everything Egyptian. It is not."<sup>74</sup> Ashbee thus held views that appeared sympathetic to Egyptian nationalism.

Consequently, Dunlop was concerned that Ashbee's return to teaching in any school in Egypt for the autumn term of 1917 would increase his students' nationalist sentiments and turn them even more opposed to Britain's occupation of Egypt. So desperate was Dunlop to get rid of Ashbee that he tried to get the military authorities to stop Ashbee from entering Egypt after a summer in Britain. Further, he arranged an alternative post for Ashbee in England; and if he refused, Ashbee was to be given a full year's salary without employment.<sup>75</sup> In the end, Ashbee rejected the offer in Britain. He returned to Egypt denying that he was ever 'political' in the classroom. He asserted: "I wish it put on record that there is no foundation whatever for [believing that] I had been discussing questions of a political nature with my students."<sup>76</sup> However, he lost his post at the Sultaniyya Training College and tried unsuccessfully to acquire a post as a professor of English Literature. According to Dunlop and certain British officials, the story of Charles Robert Ashbee was one of professional misconduct. To others, notably Egyptian nationalists, Ashbee was a courageous anti-colonial liberal gadfly who was a long way ahead of his time.

In addition to the medical and teaching industries, professional misconduct was also evident among those who practised law in the British community of Egypt. In 1911, there was an official reception to celebrate the coronation of King George V. However, Sir Milne Cheetham, who was responsible for inviting members of the British community to the event, was warned against inviting three lawyers named Reginald Silley, J.P. Foster and Perrott.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 03/05/1917.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 04/05/1917.

<sup>75</sup> FO141/669/4394, Major C.F. Ryder, writing about Dunlop, 24/06/1917.

"I am told by His Majesty's consuls, the judges of the Courts where these men practise, that their conduct is a danger to the prestige of the British Courts in Egypt. On one occasion, Silley and Foster were only prevented by force from coming to blows in Court. Foster is known chiefly for his violent temper. Silley and Perrott will take business offered them however dubious. The former was recently rebuked in Court for proceedings which in England constitute a serious offence for which he must have been disbarred. Both Silley and Perrott have had to be of the British Court in Cairo more than once if my information is correct. Members of the English bar who are Egyptian Civil Servants...strongly disapprove of [Perrott's] conduct and considers that it ought not to have been allowed to pass unnoticed."<sup>77</sup>

Cheetham, having met Silley and Perrott, was warned by "several competent persons...to be very careful in dealing with them."<sup>78</sup> According to Cheetham, all three lawyers "could [never] be received at the Agency"<sup>79</sup> and they would have been removed if they came to the reception on their initiative.<sup>80</sup> Therefore, although the British in Egypt were usually professionally reliable, there were examples of negligence among medical, educational and legal professionals such as Dr. Ross, the British management of the Anglo-American Hospital, Ashbee and lawyers like Silley, Foster and Perrott.

### **Financial crimes**

The British community in Egypt possessed its fair share of con-artists, swindlers and thieves. Though by no means exhaustive, the following is a sampling of some significant criminals and incidences of fraud, embezzlement, theft and extortion among the Britons in Egypt during the time of the occupation. In light of the close relationship between these three crimes, clarification may be needed. Fraud involves deliberate deception or false pretence of some sort. Embezzlement may be a form of fraud, though it refers specifically to the taking of funds that one has been entrusted. The crime of theft includes embezzlement and may be committed fraudulently or deceptively. In this chapter, the term is used to refer particularly to acts of stealing goods in a manner that isn't fraudulent. Extortion, perhaps another form of theft, refers to the deliberate and coercive overcharging of customers and clients for goods or services.

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<sup>76</sup> Private papers of Charles Robert Ashbee, King's College Archives, letter to Dunlop, 10/10/1917.

<sup>77</sup> Private papers of Sir Milne Cheetham, Middle East Centre, St. Antony's College, letter from Cheetham to W.G. Tyrell, June, 1911.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, letter from Cheetham to Langley, June 1911.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, letter from Cheetham to Tyrell, June 1911.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*

### *Fraud*

According to Consular Court records in Cairo, Charles Helfield was perhaps one of the more daring crooks in the community due to the number of his attempts at fraud over a short period of time. In 1900, Helfield was charged with obtaining money by false pretences at the Grand Continental Hotel in Cairo. He introduced himself to Alfred Petry, the hotel receptionist, as Baron A. Calendu di Tavani and told Petry that he had tried to withdraw money from the bank but it was closed. So Helfield, alias the Baron, asked Petry if he could borrow £7 and return the money to him after dinner on that day. Petry obliged. When Helfield didn't return for dinner, Petry got suspicious and went to the train station to see if he could catch Helfield before the departure of the 11 p.m. train to Alexandria. When Petry reached the train station, Helfield saw him and walked to another platform. Petry caught up with Helfield and demanded the payment of the £7. Helfield gave Petry only £4 and insisted falsely that Petry had only lent him £5. Thereafter, Petry took Helfield to the stationmaster and unsuccessfully tried to get the police to arrest Helfield. The police declined since "there was no warrant and the accused had a ticket in his hand."<sup>81</sup> While they were waiting, Helfield pulled off 2 rings, threw them at Petry and said, 'Are you satisfied?' And immediately, as the train started to move, Helfield jumped into the last carriage and escaped.<sup>82</sup> Eventually, having been reprimanded later, Helfield received his sentence – "not exceeding twelve months imprisonment with hard labour."<sup>83</sup>

After his release from prison a year later, Helfield committed two more similar crimes of obtaining money under false pretences. In August 1901, while at Pension Villa Margherita in Ramleh, Alexandria, Abdul Rahim Khan, along with his cousin Mir Alim Khan, who was ill at the time, met Charles Helfield. Helfield introduced himself as Captain Charles Alexander Hartford of the Royal Army Medical Corps. Helfield, as Hartford, showed interest in Mir Alim's illness and offered to see him as a patient. After giving a brief examination and taking Mir Alim's temperature, Hartford suggested that Mir Alim should be sent to hospital. As the British military doctor at the German

<sup>81</sup> FO841/65, CCC, George Nungovich Hotels Company vs. Charles Helfield, Deposition of Mr. Milward, assistant station master in Cairo, 03/07/1900.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, Deposition of Alfred Petry, 30/06/1900.

Hospital in Alexandria, Helfield told Abdul Rahim Khan that he could easily secure a room for his cousin in the hospital. It was agreed that 'Dr. Hartford' would hire the room and Khan would pay him back. Hartford then went to 'hire' the room and came back to the Pension to tell Khan that the room cost four pounds and ten shillings for a fortnight and that he would return with an ambulance to transport his sick cousin in two days time. The patient, Mir Alim, paid the amount with a cheque and Hartford cashed the cheque at the Pension. Two days later, Hartford did not return and Abdul Rahim Khan went to the hospital to enquire. The hospital authorities told Khan that they did not know Hartford and that no room was booked or paid for. Hartford had also given Captain Vernon Jarvis of the Alexandria Police as reference, but when Khan asked Jarvis about Hartford, Jarvis said he knew nothing of Hartford. With his suspicions aroused, Jarvis sought the help of the Cairo Police and discovered that Dr. Hartford was indeed Charles Helfield, who had just completed a one-year sentence for obtaining money under false pretences.<sup>84</sup>

During that same month, Helfield was busy swindling another victim as well. By deceiving jeweller Angelo Cerfaglia into believing that he had clients and a new job in Aswan for £10 a month, Helfield was allowed to be Cerfaglia's middle-man in August 1901. In other words, as Cerfaglia explained in his deposition in court, "I gave [Helfield] the jewels as he told me [he] was going to sell them to people who asked him for them. If he had not promised me 'employment' I would have never trusted him such an amount."<sup>85</sup> The jewellery that Helfield received was worth £35 and included two gold watches, a pair of gold earrings, two lady's gold watches and a diamond ring.<sup>86</sup> Helfield fled with the goods but was eventually arrested and brought to trial. He was sentenced to prison and penal servitude in the Island of Malta for three years.<sup>87</sup>

Similarly, the unemployed John Arthur McLaughlin, a former clerk in the British War Office in Sudan,<sup>88</sup> tried to defraud Rachel Dentes, of probable Italian origin, under false pretences a decade later. In April of 1912, McLaughlin introduced himself to Rachel Dentes and her two sons Morris and Raphael, as someone who "was earning...£25 per

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, Supreme Consular Court, Constantinople, verdict, 13/07/1900.

<sup>84</sup> FO841/70, CCC, Abdul Rahim Khan vs. Charles Helfield, September, 1901.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, Angelo Cerfaglia vs. Charles Helfield, Cerfaglia's deposition, 09/09/1901.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, Criminal Jurisdiction, 02/11/1901.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*,

<sup>88</sup> FO841/127, CCC, Rachel Dentes vs. John Arthur McLaughlin, McLaughlin's deposition, 22/01/1913.

month,...had inherited considerable personal property from his father and mother,...had large savings placed in Credit Foncier Bonds, Panama Bonds and Ottoman Railway Bonds,...and was entirely free of debt.”<sup>89</sup> Consequently, he was able to maintain a wife and family and asked Rachel Dentes for her daughter’s hand in marriage. Mrs. Dentes, as a guarantee of the marriage, was required to give McLaughlin a sum of £500 in cash and two months later, gave McLaughlin an additional £E 570 in cheques drawn on the Banco di Roma. In reality, McLaughlin earned much less than £25 per month, did not possess any of the savings that he claimed to have, and was in debt to various people. Soon after, Dentes discovered McLaughlin’s fraudulent actions, took him to court and sought his immediate divorce from her daughter.<sup>90</sup>

John Hayes, a former British Army sergeant, who was discharged whilst with malaria, was by 1920 a penniless habitual drunk<sup>91</sup> and charged with the crime of obtaining under false pretences goods from Davies Bryan and Co. in Cairo to the value of £E146.14.<sup>92</sup> On the 26<sup>th</sup> November 1920, John Hayes entered Davies Bryan’s shop claiming that all his personal effects were stolen whilst he was returning from Khartoum and that he was about to stay for two months in Cairo.<sup>93</sup> He asked for an expensive valise worth £E 40, an expensive dressing gown, an overcoat, six neckties, three pairs of gloves, a dozen ‘Viella’ shirts and six pyjamas. Hayes then said that he would take all the items and asked someone from the shop to collect a cheque from him the following day at the Qasr el Nil Barracks. Since he purchased such a large amount, the shop manager thought it best that one of the shop’s employees, Simon Axelrod, accompany Hayes to the Qasr el Nil Barracks with the purchased items the following morning. Thereafter, the manager expressed his concern that if Hayes paid by cheque, Axelrod may not be able to discern whether Hayes’s cheque was false or not in the dark. Hayes, pretending to be insulted, said that he would pay by cash, so the manager allowed Axelrod to accompany Hayes that evening.<sup>94</sup> When Hayes and Axelrod, along with a farash (porter), arrived at the Barracks, Hayes went to the mess room for drinks and urged Axelrod to drink excessively since Hayes planned to flee with the goods once Axelrod became drunk. However, Axelrod refused to drink a lot; whereupon Hayes eventually

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, particulars of complaint filed, 19/12/1912.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, 20/11/1913.

<sup>91</sup> FO841/190, CCC, Edward Davies Bryan vs. John Hayes, letter from Sister Margaret Clare to Mr. Gout, 26/11/1920.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, Criminal Jurisdiction, 10/12/1920.

<sup>93</sup> Egyptian Gazette, 25/12/1920.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*

sneaked outside and told the farash that he had already paid (though he had not) Axelrod and drove off with the goods. After being arrested, Hayes was sentenced for larceny to six months with hard labour in prison.<sup>95</sup>

### *Embezzlement*

A significant number of Britons in Egypt embezzled money from their bosses through false entries of accounts or mishandling of their employers' finances. In 1906, Thomas Frazer Thomson, chief corresponding clerk to Superintending Engineer Thomas Knight Sibbald at the Engineering Department of Thomas Cook & Son Ltd. in Boulaq<sup>96</sup>, embezzled £E 267.95 from his employer. Thomson was responsible to seek a payment from Messrs. Cangos and Co. who were contractors to Thomas Cook and Son. After obtaining the cheque from Cangos and Co., he cashed it at the Anglo-Egyptian Bank for the amount of £E267.95.<sup>97</sup> Immediately thereafter, he fled to Port Said where he was arrested, taken to court and charged with embezzlement.<sup>98</sup>

Similarly, two years later, Rainey Munro Ross, a clerk in the Nile Cold Storage Co., embezzled money from his employer by making a series of false entries in the Butcher's Cash Sales Book. On 28<sup>th</sup> June, 1908, he entered "the amount of 62 okes of mutton meat and bones as having been sold for 60 piastres whereas in truth...[he only] sold...33 okes of meat and bones for 70 piastres."<sup>99</sup> On 19<sup>th</sup> August, Ross entered 90 okes of beef and bones that were sold for 140 piastres but in fact, he sold 72 okes for 155 piastres. Further on two occasions in 1908, Ross omitted the recording of certain sales of bones and cuttings. Once, on 13<sup>th</sup> June, he omitted the sale of 53 okes for 106 piastres; and on 25<sup>th</sup> July, he omitted the sale of 63 okes for 140 piastres. He was charged with unlawful and wilful intent to defraud.<sup>100</sup> A year later, James Nadrett Jays was also charged with cheating his employer, the Gezirah Club in Cairo, by stealing a cheque for £E39.40 and then by "forging an endorsement of the name of the payee,...converted the...amount to

<sup>95</sup> FO841/195, Rex vs. John Hayes, His Britannic Majesty's Supreme Court in Cairo, Judge Peter Grain - sentence, 19/01/1921.

<sup>96</sup> FO841/87, CCC, Thomas Cook & Son (Egypt) Ltd. vs. Thomas Frazer Thomson, deposition of Edward Aubrey Harrison, General Manager in Cairo, 13/01/1906.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, deposition of Thomas Knight Sibbald, Superintending Engineer, 13/01/1906.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, Criminal Jurisdiction, 09/01/1906.

<sup>99</sup> FO841/108, CCC, Rex vs. Rainey Munro Ross, Criminal Jurisdiction, 03/03/1909.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*

his own use.”<sup>101</sup>

In 1910, in Alexandria, the case of British Constable F. W. Wood was brought to Court. Wood, of the Alexandria City Police, was found to have been “systematically misappropriating small sums from...various funds...for a period of over three years. On comparing the Bank Balance Sheets with the [account] books, the total amount of his defalcations [amounted to] about £E800.”<sup>102</sup> Since Wood had destroyed old vouchers and documents, only a fraction of the actual misappropriations was traceable. The embezzled funds were found to have originated from: a cheque for £E 25 paid to the Police Funds by the Municipality of Alexandria; the salary of £E 9.480 paid to a police officer on leave, whose power of attorney was held by Wood; and £E 10 from Mr. Serelli for the entertainment of the Police Band at his establishment. When he sensed that he would be investigated, Wood arranged for a day’s leave of absence and promptly disappeared. It was reported that he may have fled to Italy to join an actress whom he had an affair with whilst she was in Egypt. He was never found in Italy or anywhere else.<sup>103</sup>

Three years later, William Henry Baisty Skaife, chief clerk in the Shipping and Forwarding Department of Thomas Cook and Son Ltd. in Cairo embezzled “£488 [from] the property of Thomas Cook and Son (Egypt) Ltd. [by making] false entries in the accounts and books of the...Firm.”<sup>104</sup> He was subsequently imprisoned for six months.<sup>105</sup> In 1915, John Henry Johnson, a British foreman in the Lighting Department in the Egyptian State Railways and Telegraphs, was charged with having “embezzled forty tins of petroleum belonging to the State Railways.”<sup>106</sup> He was given a fifty sterling fine.<sup>107</sup> In 1918, Richard Warbrick, son of a washerwoman at St. Anne’s northwest of Manchester and employed as a clerk in the Cairo office of Alexandria businessman

<sup>101</sup> FO841/103, CCC, Keith Henry Marsham, Secretary of the Khedivial Sporting Club of Cairo vs. James Nadrett Jays, 26/01/1909.

<sup>102</sup> FO847/45, CCC, Rex vs. Wood, notice from H. Hopkinson, Commandant of Alexandria City Police to Consul General in Alex, 30/08/1910.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>104</sup> FO841/132, CCC, Thomas Cook and Son, Ltd, vs. William Henry Baisty Skaife, Criminal Jurisdiction, 24/01/1913.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>106</sup> FO841/150, CCC, Egyptian State Railways vs. John Henry Johnson, from the General Manager’s Office, 16/07/1915.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, Criminal Jurisdiction, 27/07/1915.

Joseph Smouha<sup>108</sup>, was sued by his employer. Warbrick, brother of the governess for Smouha's children, was initially hired in 1915 to take care of the children as well. Later, he started working for Smouha's business at a very low salary of two and half piastres a week. Eventually, his salary went up to 10 piastres a week and he also lived in accommodation provided by the firm.<sup>109</sup> In September 1918, Smouha found Warbrick in possession of £50 in Bank of England notes and another draft for £10 drawn on the Imperial Ottoman Bank in London. Warbrick declined to tell Smouha how he acquired the funds; so Smouha suspected that Warbrick had taken some of the company's profits and may have even had more money hidden elsewhere.<sup>110</sup> Thus Smouha took Warbrick to court. As a result, the defendant was charged "with intent to defraud, omit or incur in omitting in or from certain accounts belonging to...Joseph Smouha...with particulars of profits derived from the exchange of gold and other coins, banknotes and other securities."<sup>111</sup>

### *Theft*

According to Consular Court records, it appears that Michael Ellis may have been one of the most active thieves in the British community of Cairo during the British occupation. Born in 1892<sup>112</sup>, and son of the owner of S. S. Ellis and Co, Merchants and Contractors,<sup>113</sup> he was taken to court for theft four times in the course of a six years. Each crime was committed against members of his immediate family. In 1916, he was found guilty of stealing the "jewellery of his mother Rebecca Ellis of the value of about £86."<sup>114</sup> Two years later, "he did steal, take and carry away from the house of Rebecca Ellis at Zeitoun several goods to the value of £34 on the 12<sup>th</sup> December 1918."<sup>115</sup> In February 1921, he forged his brother's signature twice in order to obtain £30 and £40. The first time he was successful; the second time he was refused.<sup>116</sup> In 1922, he was sentenced to three month's imprisonment for stealing two pieces of material used for women's clothing from his wife Esther and then claiming that he had acquired them

<sup>108</sup> FO841/172, CCC, Joseph Smouha vs. Richard Warbrick, notes in Smouha's deposition: He was a very influential Jewish merchant/trader based in Egypt with operations in Manchester, Mesopotamia, Palestine and Persia.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, Smouha's deposition, 02/11/1918.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, Criminal Jurisdiction, 08/10/1918.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>112</sup> FO841/198, CCC, letter from Rebecca Ellis, 13/07/1921, mentions ages of her children.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, letterhead from assets of Isidore Ellis after his death, 18/08/1921.

<sup>114</sup> FO841/155, CCC, Rebecca Ellis vs. Michael Ellis, Criminal Jurisdiction, 18/04/1916.

<sup>115</sup> FO841/173, CCC, Rebecca Ellis vs. Michael Ellis, Criminal Jurisdiction, 09/01/1919.

from a pawn broker so that his wife would give him 180 piastres for the items.<sup>117</sup> Besides theft, Michael Ellis was imprisoned for one month in 1919 (since he could not afford the £5 fine) for “wearing a British Military Uniform with [the] rank of 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieut., though he was not entitled to it.”<sup>118</sup> Further, he was guilty of assaulting his wife Esther and throwing her to the ground on 26 February 1920.<sup>119</sup> Characterised by theft, deception, and assault against members of his own immediate family, the story of Michael Ellis offers a glimpse into not only the criminal history of one person but the inner turmoil that occurred within the life of particular families in the British community in Cairo.

Military officers were not immune from committing the crime of theft. In 1916, Major Buckland and his wife stole money from the Garden Team account. The Garden Team was a charitable show established to raise money for the medical care of the Bucklands’ dying child. Since the Bucklands “had done a lot [in Alexandria] in the way of theatricals for the troops,”<sup>120</sup> Lady Carnarvon and others set up the Garden Team show to help them. The show failed to bring in substantial funds but its costs were underwritten by Lady Carnarvon for £50. Bewsher, an employee of the National Bank of Egypt, authorised the overdrawing of the Garden Team account by Mr. Buckland, who had promised that he only needed the money for a day or two and then would return it. Buckland fled to the French front and left the overdraft with the National Bank of Egypt. Although Lady Carnarvon sought to find Buckland in order to recover the money, Bewsher believed that the money was lost forever - especially since Major Buckland knew how to deceive through his years as a stage actor before joining the military.<sup>121</sup>

### *Extortion*

Miss James, the Matron of the Anglo-American Hospital in Cairo, was found to have committed the crime of extortion twice during the month of May, 1911. Miss Sturge entered the hospital as a second class patient at ten shillings a day. When it was time for

<sup>116</sup> FO841/197, CCC, Sydney Ellis vs. Michael Ellis, Criminal Jurisdiction, 11/05/1921.

<sup>117</sup> FO841/206, CCC, Esther Ellis vs. Michael Ellis, Criminal Jurisdiction, 10/04/1922.

<sup>118</sup> FO841/182, CCC, Provost Marshal vs. Michael Ellis, Provincial Jurisdiction, 21/08/1919.

<sup>119</sup> FO841/188, CCC, Provincial Jurisdiction, 27/02/1920.

<sup>120</sup> Letter from Carruthers to Coombs, Alexandria, 09/11/1916, Barclays’ Archives.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*

Miss Sturge to leave, Miss James tried to get her to pay twice the agreed amount - £1 per day. A compromise was reached at 15 shillings a day and Miss Sturge proceeded to pay Miss James in gold. Miss James promptly recorded in the hospital accounts that Miss Sturge had paid only ten shillings a day and kept five shillings to herself. Similarly, Miss Allen also entered the hospital as a second class patient at 10 shillings a day. When it was time for her to leave, Miss James asked her to pay £1 per day because Miss Allen had stayed in a first class room. Miss Allen protested and said that she should have been informed of this change of payment from the outset but agreed to pay the compromised rate of 15 shillings a day. (There was actually no such thing as first class rooms, the only difference between first and second class patients was the rates that patients pay). Miss Allen, however, paid by cheque, which made it impossible for Miss James to keep the balance. "The cheque was passed to the Secretary [of the Hospital] and the excess payment...of five shillings a day...was explained by the Matron...as a donation from Miss Allen for the Hospital."<sup>122</sup> Three months after committing these crimes, Miss James was suspended from nursing, but was still given six weeks of full pay. Though the British official may have been known for his astute handling of finances, the British community in Cairo and Alexandria also consisted of swindlers, embezzlers, thieves and extortionists.

## **Sexual Crimes**

### ***Rape***

Ironically, a British Christian missionary in Alexandria committed one of the few cases of rape within the British community in Egypt. In 1901, Job Gammage, a British subject of English birth, the manager of the Merchant Sailors' Home in Alexandria and Harbour Missionary of the Church of Scotland, was charged with raping Elisa Ann Cuff, his English maid in Alexandria.<sup>123</sup> Gammage was married with children. According to Cuff's testimony in court, Gammage gave her some cough medicine, which had a peculiar taste, just before she went to sleep on the evening of the 8<sup>th</sup> or 9<sup>th</sup> February, 1901. After having slept heavily, she was awoken by Gammage who was in bed with

<sup>122</sup> All Saints' Church Archives, Bundle 67B, E.M. Dowson, Chairman, Executive Sub-Committee, "Narrative of events connected with the resignation of the Late Matron of the Anglo-American Hospital", summer, 1911.

<sup>123</sup> FO847/31, ACC, report on case Rex vs. Gammage by E.B. Gould, sent to Judge of His Britannic Majesty's Supreme Consular Court in Constantinople, 13/08/1901.

her and in the act of intercourse. Cuff struggled and pushed Gammage off and threatened to tell Mrs. Gammage. Mr. Gammage persuaded Cuff not to do this and assured her that no harm was done. After Gammage left her, Cuff barricaded the bedroom door and went to sleep again. After sometime, she began to feel symptoms of pregnancy. Having been accused by Cuff for getting her pregnant, Gammage denied any responsibility and threatened her if she attempted to tell anyone. At the same time, Gammage promised to help Cuff if she did not tarnish his name and duly sent her to missionary friends in Jerusalem on his own expense. When her pregnancy became more advanced, Cuff went to Syria and there she told her story to missionaries in Syria and then to the British Consul. The latter sent her back to Alexandria and soon after arriving, Cuff presented herself to the Consular Court and made a sworn accusation against Gammage. Gammage avoided certain arrest by voluntarily presenting himself to the court. After the birth of Cuff's child on the 17<sup>th</sup> October and a trial in which Cuff's story appeared truthful and consistent amidst Gammage's denials, Edward B. Gould, Consul-General in Alexandria, ruled that Gammage was the father of Cuff's child. And as the father, he would have to pay five shillings per week for the child's maintenance and education until he or she reaches the age of 13. Gammage was also ordered to pay Cuff the sum of £2.2.0 for the expenses related to the birth of the child and the sum of £1.11.0 for legal costs incurred.<sup>124</sup>

In 1915, Edward James Harran, who worked in Delta Light Railways, was charged with "feloniously and unlawfully ravish[ing] and carnally know[ing] Sophie Sardani, 14 years old, against her will."<sup>125</sup> In March 1915, Sophie Sardani had been in the service of the Harran family in Helwan (town south of Cairo) for eight months. One night, while Mrs. Harran was out, Mr. Harran called Sophie into his bedroom and abused her. She wanted to flee but he would not let go of her. When Mrs. Harran returned, Sophie wanted to leave the house. She gathered her things together and left five days later after telling Mrs. Harran what had happened.<sup>126</sup> In her deposition in court, Sophie admitted that Mr. Harran had actually abused her twice but she did not leave the house since he threatened her with death if she left or told anyone what happened.<sup>127</sup> Though Mr. Harran denied any wrongdoing and Mrs. Harran testified that Mr. Harran was never

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, Edward B. Gould, British Consul-General of Alexandria, sentence, 28/11/1901.

<sup>125</sup> FO841/148, CCC, Victoria Ardani for her sister Sophie vs. Edward James Harran, Criminal Jurisdiction, 26/02/1915.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, Sophie's deposition, 01/13/1915.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*, 04/03/1915.

alone with Sophie because she "did not leave [her] husband alone in the house during that week,"<sup>128</sup> Edward Harran was nonetheless charged and convicted of raping a teenager.

### *Bigamy*

Bertram Ley Roberts, a British subject resident in Alexandria, was charged with bigamy in 1921. He had left his wife Edith in Victoria, British Columbia, Canada, with approximately £1000 in debt (which she was forced to pay), borrowed money from her relatives in England and refused to contribute to any support for his wife and children.<sup>129</sup> After investigating his whereabouts, Mrs. Roberts' suspicions were confirmed. Mr. Roberts was living with a Greek woman named Angele Venizelos. They were married in Cairo since 1918.<sup>130</sup> At the urging of Mrs. Robert's lawyer in Canada and the cooperation of the Acting Consul General in Alexandria, criminal proceedings were initiated against Mr. Roberts for bigamy<sup>131</sup> from which he received a sentence of six months' imprisonment with hard labour in Malta.<sup>132</sup>

### *Prostitution*

Prostitution in Cairo and Alexandria particularly during World War I posed a serious problem for the British community and the authorities. Although the actual number of British prostitutes and pimps was minimal, the adverse effects of prostitution on British neighbourhoods, soldiers and the authorities were extensive.

Actual figures on the number of British prostitutes in Egypt are sparse. In a 1914 statistic based on 280 raids on 175 brothels in Cairo, it appears that no British prostitute was found. Along with the 100 Egyptian prostitutes that were arrested, there were 31 Italians, 23 French, 12 Greeks, 4 Austrians, 3 Russians, 1 Rumanian and 1 Japanese.<sup>133</sup> But in another statistic based on a disembarkation of minors in the White Slave trade

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*, Mrs. Josephine Harran's deposition, 04/03/1915.

<sup>129</sup> FO847/74, ACC, Rex vs. Bertram Ley Roberts, letter from Alexander W. Staples, barrister-at-law in B.C., writes to Consular Agent, British Consulate in Alexandria, 12/07/1921.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*, G. Gordon Ingram, Acting Commandant, Alexandria City Police, to His Britannic Majesty's Consul General, Alexandria, 25/08/1921.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*, Acting Consul General, Alex, to Acting British Consul, Cairo, 30/08/1921.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, Judge Linton T. Thorp's sentence, 08/11/1921.

<sup>133</sup> FO141/466/1429, Prostitution and Bureau des Moeurs, 1914.

most likely during the same year, 931 girls were found. Though many of these were of 'local' origins like Greek Orthodox, Syrian Catholics, Maronites, Jews and Armenian Jews, among them were also 11 Italians, 8 French, 8 Americans, 16 Austrians, 6 Germans, 3 Maltese, 2 Russians, 2 Belgians, 1 Spanish and 7 British.<sup>134</sup> This seems to be one of the few pieces of evidence indicating the number of British prostitutes in Egypt.

Even though there may not have been many British prostitutes, there were Britons running brothels and living off the proceeds of prostitutes. Gordon Ainslie Ness, an ex-lieutenant of the Lancashire Fusiliers, was appointed a Constable in the Cairo City Police upon his demobilisation from the army. On 21<sup>st</sup> October 1921, the Cairo City Police charged him with living on the proceeds of a prostitute named Sophie Moltezaki from 15<sup>th</sup> March 1921 until 14<sup>th</sup> April 1921.<sup>135</sup> However, after a trial by jury, he was found not guilty and was deported under Martial Law.<sup>136</sup> Similarly, John Charles Shalders of Cairo, ex-sergeant of the military police, was charged with living on the proceeds of a registered prostitute named Rosa Lieben, a Jewish Russian subject, from 22<sup>nd</sup> August, 1920 until 28<sup>th</sup> October 1921.<sup>137</sup> Like Ness, Shalders was tried in 1922 before a jury, found not guilty and was subsequently deported. Although Ness and Shalders were both found not guilty in court, their deportation pointed to the method adopted by the courts to rid the British community of Cairo of those engaged in undesirable behaviour and practices. Another former officer, Charles Frederick Boardman, ex-captain of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Royal Munster Fusiliers, demobilised on 11<sup>th</sup> October 1920, was charged with assisting in the management of a brothel from sometime after his demobilisation until the summer of 1923. He was tried, sentenced to two months' imprisonment and later deported.<sup>138</sup>

Although limited in number as prostitutes and pimps, Britons in Egypt were, to a much greater degree, guilty of procuring prostitutes. Though there seems to be little evidence indicating the exact number of British civilian men who procured prostitutes during the time of the occupation, there is some evidence indicating the minimum number of

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<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>135</sup> FO841/199, CCC, Cairo Social Police vs. Gordon Ainslie Ness, Criminal Jurisdiction, 28/01/21.

<sup>136</sup> FO841/205, CCC, Rex vs. Shalders, memo. discussing those charged with living off the proceeds of prostitution, 17/11/1925.

<sup>137</sup> FO841/199, Cairo Social Police vs. John Charles Shalders, Criminal Jurisdiction, 28/01/1921.

<sup>138</sup> FO841/205, Rex vs. Shalders: memo, 17/11/1925.

British troops who procured prostitutes during World War I. The Cairo Purification Committee established to improve the welfare and health of British troops during this time published a report in 1916 detailing the number of British military personnel infected with venereal disease (VD). The following table gives a glimpse of the number of British troops in Egypt during the first five months of 1916 and the number which due to their involvement with prostitutes were admitted to hospital for VD during those months. The last column suggests the number of troops (out of a thousand) that would contract VD over the course of that year based on the ratio between the number of British troops and those with VD.

Table 5.1: Number and ratio of British troops infected with venereal disease in 1916.<sup>139</sup>

Month (1916)	Actual no. of admission	No. of British troops	Annual ratio/ 1000 troops
Jan	324	126,963	30.6
Feb	497	173,147	34.4
Mar	607	160,607	45.2
Apr	696	155,016	53.2
May	524	145,836	43.2

Based on the above table, it appears that in the first five months of 1916, the number of British servicemen infected with VD was 2,648, which suggests an average of 530 infections per month. Projected on to an entire year, there may be as many as 6,360 men infected with VD. Given that the average number of British troops from the first five months of 1916 is 152,314, the annual ratio per 1000 troops of infected servicemen is 41.8 or 4.18%. Therefore, the minimum number of British troops guilty of procuring prostitutes over the course of 1916 is around 6,360 (the number which contracted VD) which represents approximately 4.18% of the total number of British troops present in Egypt during that year. Of course, there may have been many more British troops who were involved with prostitutes but were fortunate not to have acquired VD. Figures from 1918 indicate that even more soldiers, 4,490 in six months, meaning perhaps 8,980 for the year, acquired VD.<sup>140</sup>

As for how prostitution affected the British community at large, the sheer volume of prostitutes diminished the tranquillity and liveability of certain neighbourhoods inhabited by Britons, Europeans and locals alike. There were approximately 3,000

<sup>139</sup> FO141/466/1429, CCC, 'Actual Infection rates on British troops' in Report of Cairo Purification Committee (Cairo: Government Press, 1916), Appendix, Table IV.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*, Arthur T. Upson, Nile Mission Press, Cairo, 16/07/1918.

registered prostitutes (and many unregistered) in Cairo's red light districts alone.<sup>141</sup> Native prostitutes populated the Waili and Sayeda Zeinab areas and the largest number was situated in the Wassa quarter, known in English as the 'fish market'. European prostitutes were in Wigh el Birka, Clot Bey and the Ezbekieh quarter.<sup>142</sup> Inevitably, certain British residents detested the influx of prostitutes in their neighbourhoods. Arthur T. Upson, of the Nile Mission Press, wrote to High Commissioner Allenby, complaining that "as a British resident, [he was] disgusted at the Military and Civil Police allowing demonstrations from balconies of both low-class and better-class places, to draw in the soldiers by means of 'suggestive' signs."<sup>143</sup> Upson pointed out that naked women were being displayed in the windows overlooking the Russell Soldiers' Home since 1908.<sup>144</sup> He also complained of obscene dancing and processions of prostitutes in front of the Soldiers' Home.<sup>145</sup> Though Upson's perspective comes most likely from his identity as a member of a mission society, other Britons such as G. Andrews, resident in the Kasr el Nil area, also expressed his frustration in a petition signed by five other Englishmen to the High Commissioner:

"In the above road [Rue Tashtumar], there are three or four other English families, who likewise endorse what I say below. The road until lately was a very quiet and respectable one and situated in one of the best quarters of the town. Now unfortunately I regret to say it is the reverse. In this road there are houses of ill-fame of the worst kind and the scenes and noises that daily and nightly occur are disgraceful – in fact it is gradually being turned into a second Ezbekieh and the police seem to turn a deaf ear to any complaint. Until the early hours of the morning shouting and singing and quarrelling continue and it is very difficult for the persons round to get proper rest. One house in particular, opposite Cecil House Pension, is a meeting house of the military and others, who come to drink, which I understand is supplied and...is something dreadful...Sometimes, even in daylight, these women, or creatures, display themselves on their balconies in a state of nudity! And being family men, it is not nice for our children to be subjected to such sights...What redress is there? One cannot be continually moving into another house, and considering the part of town, we the residents both English and others think something must be done."<sup>146</sup>

But depending on where one lived, the activities of prostitutes were not obviously visible from the street. For Mrs. Anne Moore Charlian, "she can look directly into certain rooms occupied by these women [prostitutes]...from her windows...but she admitted that from the street there was very little, if anything, to be seen that [was]

<sup>141</sup> Rodenbeck, p.182.

<sup>142</sup> FO141/466/1429: Annex 'B', of G.W. Harvey's (Commandant of the Cairo City Police) notes to the Cairo Purification Committee, 14/04/1916.

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*, Arthur T. Upson, of Nile Mission Press, to Allenby, 17/08/1918.

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*, Upson to Allenby, 31/08/1917.

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*, G. Andrews to High Commissioner, 24/06/1917.

objectionable.”<sup>147</sup> However, little seemed to have been done by the British authorities to expel prostitutes from these quarters because of the difficulty in acquiring Consular consent to do so.

Not only did British residents suffer due to prostitution, it was a major headache for the British authorities as well. First, as alluded to above, the British-led police forces in Cairo and Alexandria found it almost impossible to drive out prostitutes from their brothels.

“It was not possible to drive these women out of the houses they have selected as, owing to the Capitulations, the Police cannot act without the consent of the Consulates who invariably refuse their consent to their removal as there was no other quarter to which they could be sent.”<sup>148</sup>

Even if Consular consent were obtained, “judicial delays and inadequacy of penalties [would] hamper [police] action at every turn.”<sup>149</sup> Second, even if the police and medical inspectors were successful in organising weekly medical tests for licensed prostitutes (registered prostitutes who were discovered to be infected would be sent to hospital until cured)<sup>150</sup>, a large number of unlicensed prostitutes evaded these tests and thus were not necessarily treated for VD. This posed a very real danger to the health of the troops.<sup>151</sup> For example, during the month of January 1915, 660 of Cairo’s registered prostitutes were tested and 103 or 15.6% had gonorrhoea while 57 or 8.6% had syphilis. Out of 1,154 registered native prostitutes, 128 or 11% had gonorrhoea while 85 or 7.5% had syphilis. However, during a 14-month period, in 1915 and 1916, 537 unlicensed prostitutes were arrested in Cairo and 234 or 43.5% (a much higher percentage than the licensed prostitutes) was found to have some form of VD.<sup>152</sup> Hence, a significant number of British troops were most likely infected with VD through unlicensed brothels and prostitutes. Third, soldiers, sympathetic to the work of prostitutes and pimps, often interfered with police action. During police attempts to arrest prostitutes or order them into their houses, soldiers would immediately interfere and prevent the police from taking any action. Further, when pimps were arrested, they would appeal to passing

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*, Major Garvice, Commandant of Alexandria Police to High Commissioner, report on perspective of Mrs. Anne Moore Charlian, 22/08/1918.

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.*, Harvey to General Maxwell, 20/03/1916.

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid.*, Colonel H. Hopkinson, Commandant Alexandria City Police to Col. Beach, 21/09/1915.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*, Alex Granville, Municipality of Alex, to General Maxwell, Sept, 1915.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.*, Harvey, Commandant of Cairo City Police, to General Maxwell, report on Native Prostitutes, European Hospitals, Suppression of Pimps and Drink Traffic, 20/03/1916.

soldiers who would immediately force the police to free them.<sup>153</sup> Eventually, special constables and reinforcements were assigned to arrest pimps and to deal with them severely.<sup>154</sup> In spite of the obstacles, the British authorities fought valiantly and, to some extent, successfully against prostitution and the threat of VD through a strategy of registering prostitutes, regular medical tests of prostitutes and troops<sup>155</sup>, hospitalisation of VD carrying prostitutes and arresting pimps. Early evening closing of bars in hotels and clubs along with tight control on the quality of drinks were enforced as well.<sup>156</sup> Though British prostitutes and pimps were few in number, a large number of British troops procured prostitutes during World War I. As a result, the British community and authorities were locked in a serious battle against venereal disease, increasingly distasteful neighbourhoods and unruly soldiers in support of prostitution.

### Conclusion

Previous political histories tend to present the British in Egypt as a wealthy, law-abiding and responsible group of administrators and businessmen. One useful way to dispel this understanding of a uniform and monolithic upright community is to discuss those within the community who may have been shunned or shamed. Crime and misconduct among Britons in Cairo provide a glimpse into this other 'society' within the wider British community during the time of the occupation. In other words, apart from the hotel-hopping, party-going, ballroom-dancing, 'Gezira-clubbing' upper middle class dinner guests of the Consul-General, there were other, mostly poorer, Britons in Egypt struggling with domestic violence due to alcoholism and unemployment or who were so depressed that their only solution was to commit suicide. Apart from the honest, competent and gentlemanly stereotype of the British colonial, there were those who were charged with violent assault, seditious libel, professional negligence, fraud, embezzlement, theft, extortion, living off the proceeds of prostitutes and procuring prostitutes. Even a British missionary, sent to Egypt to live an exemplary life, was guilty of rape and subsequent deception in covering up his tracks. On one hand, there may be general trends whereby those who were unemployed and alcoholic tended to commit crimes of violence, those that were struggling financially tended to commit financial crimes, and British soldiers, away from the frontlines of battle, tended to

<sup>153</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>154</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.*, Cairo Purification Committee, minutes of 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting, 25/04/1916.

procure prostitutes. While on the other hand, almost every sector of society and profession had members who were guilty of crime and misconduct including factory workers, technicians, engineers, dentists, doctors, teachers, lawyers, bank officials, businessmen, missionaries and military personnel. The diversity of the British community in Egypt may yet be represented by the diverse array of crimes and criminals found within it. These activities accompanied by relatively minor punishments inevitably provoked the resentment and nationalist fervour of Egyptians.

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<sup>156</sup> *Ibid.*, Harvey to Maxwell, 20/03/1916.

## 6. The Community and World War I

### Introduction

Students of history know the story well. The lethal concoction of nationalism, militarism and colonial jostling plunged the European powers into World War I (known at the time as the Great War). Within six weeks after the assassination of the Austro-Hungarian Empire's heir to the throne Archduke Ferdinand on 28th June 1914, Germany and Austria declared war on Russia and France and invaded Luxembourg and Belgium, which consequently provoked Britain's entry into the war. By early November, Turkey was also drawn into combat against Britain, France and Russia. The War lasted four long years causing untold tragedy to millions and altering the political and socio-economic landscape of significant parts of Europe and the Middle East.

Although primarily fought on European soil, the sheer scale of the war inevitably engulfed other nations. Egypt was no exception due to the Suez Canal's vital role in the transport, trade and communications of Britain's empire. The security of the Canal was paramount for the smooth passage of British ships, supplies and troops from the Empire to the European front. Since the Ottoman Empire had allied itself with Germany and Egypt by 1914 was still officially Ottoman territory, the British Government moved quickly to dismantle Ottoman influence in Egypt and protect the Suez Canal. First, the British military in Egypt announced that it had assumed total military control of the country and implemented "martial law [which] empowered the General in command to issue proclamations with the force of law."<sup>1</sup> Second, Britain declared Egypt an official Protectorate on the 17th December 1914, formally terminating the Ottoman Empire's suzerainty over Egypt, though it did not annex Egypt outright due to fears of nationalist backlash.<sup>2</sup> The following day, the pro-Turkish Khedive Abbas II Hilmi was deposed by the British administration and Hussein Kamil Pasha, Khedive Ismail's pro-British son was appointed Sultan over Egypt. 'Sultan', rather than 'khedive', was the new title given to mark the new 'independence' of Egypt from the Ottoman Empire. Moreover, the supreme British representative in Egypt was upgraded from Consul-General (implying

<sup>1</sup> Hoyle, p. 88.

<sup>2</sup> John Darwin, *Britain, Egypt and the Middle East: Imperial policy in the aftermath of war, 1918-1922*, (London: MacMillan, 1981), p. 61.

only a mere agent of only one of many 'consulates') to High Commissioner.<sup>3</sup> Although the application of martial law and the establishment of the Protectorate both emanated from the Ottoman Empire's alliance with Germany, they served two different purposes. The Protectorate was a political manoeuvre, taken by the British to erase the ambiguity of Egypt's position as enemy property as well as British occupied territory. Martial law "was essentially a military measure which was administratively convenient in that new laws could [now] be promulgated without the consent of the Capitulatory Powers."<sup>4</sup> Third, to combat the threat of a Turkish invasion of the Suez Canal, troops were sent to Egypt and the Suez region to repel potential attacks. As it turns out, British troops faced only one direct threat to the Suez Canal in February 1915 and they successfully repelled the Ottoman aggression. Thereafter, Britain's strategic attention in Egypt turned to the dangers of enemy submarines in the Mediterranean and the eventual campaign to capture Ottoman territory in Palestine, Syria and Lebanon.<sup>5</sup>

As stated, the final objective of this thesis is to chronicle the history of Cairo's British community during two monumental events – World War I and Egypt's revolutionary period of 1919-1922. The changing circumstances and challenges of these times forced the community to react and adapt. This chapter details the diversity of roles, opinions and reactions of members of Cairo's British community during the First World War. The first part of this discussion centres on the differing responses and responsibilities of British men and women in Egypt during the war followed by a glimpse at the various activities that rallied the involvement of official committees within the community. The next section deals with the conflicting views that certain members of the British community had with official government policies at the time. Lastly, the various economic effects brought about by the war for Britons in Egypt will be discussed alongside a comparison with the economic struggles that many Egyptians faced as a result of the war.

Before launching into the crux of this account of the British in Cairo during World War I, it helps to mention the demographic challenge in defining the British community in

<sup>3</sup> Efraim Karsh & Inari Karsh, *Empires of the Sand: The Struggle for Mastery in the Middle East, 1789-1923*, (London: Harvard University Press, 1999), p. 200.

<sup>4</sup> Hoyle, p. 89.

<sup>5</sup> Keith Jeffrey, *The British Army and the Crisis of Empire, 1918-1922*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984), p. 111 & 121.

Egypt at this time. According to the 1917 census, there was about 3200 Britons from Britain in Cairo, a slightly smaller number in Alexandria and around 9000 in all of Egypt.<sup>6</sup> As mentioned in the chapter on 'demographic overview', military personnel were not accounted for in the 1917 census due most likely to their temporarily status and their enormous number in Egypt at the time. As one statistic suggests, there may have been as many as 400,000 imperial troops under Britain's Egyptian command by the end of the war, though not all were in Egypt at that time<sup>7</sup> and not all were ethnically British (many were from countries under Britain's colonial tutelage such as India). The problem in determining the exact number of Britons in Egypt's British community during the war is due to the fact that many of the newly arrived British troops and nurses became part of the community – adding significantly to the census number. (Nearly all the British military and support personnel were new to Egypt because the troops that were in Egypt prior to the war had almost all been sent to fight in the European front). Many soldiers regularly attended British churches in Cairo and Alexandria and a substantial number were frequent visitors to British homes. A large number of British officers participated in balls, dances and events with civilian members of the British community in Egypt. Certain officers even became prominent members of Egypt's British society. British nurses who came to Egypt to take care of wounded troops also became members of the British community. Perhaps, only the lower class rank and file were excluded from much of the social life of the British community due to class barriers but they did attend church meetings and were at times invited into homes of British residents. Whatever the case, the British community in Cairo during World War I included British civilians and newly arrived British military and support personnel. Thus simply narrowing the British population to a little more than 3000 in Cairo and 9000 in Egypt may be short-sighted. However, though it may not be possible to accurately determine the population of the British community at this time, it is possible, from private diaries and memoirs, newspaper archives and other records, to focus primarily on Britain's non-military community. This is crucial to this discussion because it is the British 'civilian' residents who make up the British community proper – the established core of Britons in Egypt and the subject of this thesis as a whole – not the thousands and thousands of British soldiers sent to Egypt temporarily. Having said that, British military personnel such as those of the pre-war Army of Occupation and the British officers of the Egyptian army

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<sup>6</sup> Census of Egypt, 1917, Table VII, p. 482.

are considered part of the British community proper because they were not part of the mass invasion of troops after the declaration of war in late 1914. Yet, inasmuch as this chapter concentrates mainly on the British civilian population, some references to the Britons who were in Egypt due to the war, and thus became part of the community, are unavoidable due to their huge numbers and influence during that time.

### **The different roles of British men**

Immediately after the proclamation of war, the men of the British community in Egypt, by and large, wanted to assist in the war effort in Europe. As aforementioned, the British Army of Occupation and the British officers of the Egyptian Army were all deployed in the European front in a matter of months. Many British civilians in Egypt volunteered for the war effort. Though some were not eligible, they still wanted to play a part in a special unit in Egypt called Pharaoh's Foot. Other British men were eligible and willing to join the war effort in Europe but could not pay their passage to Europe or were not released by their employers because of their indispensable jobs that were crucial to the functioning of a business or government department.

### ***Deployment of the British Army of Occupation and civilian volunteers***

Before the Great War began, there were already two British led armies in Egypt - the Army of Occupation headquartered in Cairo, led by Major-General J.H.C. Byng and the Egyptian Army, based in various posts in Egypt, the Sinai and the Sudan, led by General Sir Reginald Wingate. In August 1914, the 5000 troops in the Army of Occupation consisted of mostly British troops except for one Indian mounted battery.<sup>8</sup> It occupied the Qasr-el Nil barracks and the cantonments in Abbassiyya and in Mustapha, northeast of Alexandria. The Egyptian Army consisted mainly of Egyptians but was significantly

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<sup>7</sup> Jeffrey, p. 113.

<sup>8</sup>W.G. MacPherson, *Medical Services General History, Vol. III* (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1924), p.363 and George MacMunn and Cyril Falls, *Military Operations Egypt and Palestine* (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1928), p.11 states the actual composition of the troops in the Army of Occupation just before World War I. It consisted of a regiment of cavalry (3rd Dragoon Guards), a battery of artillery ("T" Battery, Royal Horse Artillery), a mounted battery (7th Indian Mountain Battery, Royal Garrison Artillery), five battalions of infantry (1st and 2nd Battalion Devonshire Regiment, 1st Worcestershire, 2nd Northamptonshire, 2nd Gordon Highlanders) and companies or detachments of Royal Engineers, Army Services Corp, Royal Army Medical Corps, and Army Veterinarian Corps.

led by British officers. However, after the declaration of war, almost every regiment of the Army of Occupation withdrew from Egypt and returned to Britain to fight in Europe since they were already well trained and ready for battle. British officers of the Egyptian Army joined the war effort in Europe as well, though the bulk of Egyptian Army's rank and file remained at their posts.<sup>9</sup> Without question, such a sudden exodus of British military personnel affected the British community in Egypt. Many of these officers had regularly attended the English churches, participated in British sporting and recreational activities and frequented the clubs and hotel dances of Cairo and Alexandria during the popular Winter season. Perhaps more painfully for their families, the hurried withdrawal of these troops meant that their families were abandoned in Egypt, and left to wait for their return to Britain. One British soldier, who came to Egypt to replace the departed forces, recorded that the families of these men who were now fighting in Europe

"were left behind here [in Egypt]...There were 15 or 20 English folk...mostly wives of the Northamptons (We relieved the Northampton Regiment)...[These] married women and children still occupy a large section of the barracks, and that is why some of us are in tents...[one family] takes up quarters that accommodate 19 of our fellows."<sup>10</sup>

For British men in Cairo who were not part of the Army of Occupation or Egyptian Army and were eligible to fight, they were urged to join the war effort. After Britain declared war on Germany on 4th August 1914, Lord Kitchener, who left his post as the British Consul-General of Egypt to become the Secretary of State for War, issued a call for 100,000 new soldiers to reinforce the 200,000 already in the regular army.<sup>11</sup> Initially, only British men with previous military experience and who were "athletic and well-educated English gentlemen"<sup>12</sup> from English public schools were encouraged to participate in the war effort. Many of them responded by volunteering. The "reason why so many men from the more privileged classes enlisted at the outbreak of war [is] not difficult to ascertain. Theirs was an interest well worth protecting."<sup>13</sup> The British upper

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<sup>9</sup>Henry Keown-Boyd, *Soldiers of the Nile: A Biographical History of the British Officers of the Egyptian Army* (Hertsfordshire: Thornbury Publications, 1996), p.9.

<sup>10</sup>Sergeant Harry Hopwood, Battalion orderly sergeant of the East Lancashire Brigade, also later of 2nd Volunteer Battalion of Manchester Regiment, in his private letters to his mother. (National Army Museum) 28/11/1914.

<sup>11</sup>John Keegan, 'Foreword', in Ian Beckett and Keith Simpson, eds., *A Nation in Arms: A Social History of the British Army in the First World War* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985), p.viii, ix.

<sup>12</sup>Egyptian Gazette, 28/09/1914.

<sup>13</sup>Jay Winter, "Army and society: the demographic context" in Beckett and Simpson, p.196.

classes, whether made rich by tradition, London-based commerce or manufacturing in the North of England, accumulated vast amounts of wealth during the last decades of the nineteenth century through a stable currency, the booming export trade and prosperity from overseas investments.<sup>14</sup> Since many of the men in the British community in Egypt belonged to this privileged class with interests to fight for and protect, their volunteering for the war effort was natural and immediate. Defeat by Germany would end the British Empire and threaten the loss of their livelihoods. However, besides economic concerns, a sense of urgency, a love for the well-being of their families and their way of life combined with the nationalistic tendency of the time, also motivated them whether they were from the privileged classes, well-educated or not. One appeal for British men in Egypt to enter the war effort in Europe clearly articulated this compelling and patriotic notion that there was nothing more important than victory over the enemy.

"Not only the future of England, or of the British Empire or even of Europe, but that of practically the whole world will be affected by this great struggle, and in these circumstances the man who is considering how he can afford his passage money home or what his employers or his family are to do without him should preserve some sense of proportions, and should also bear in mind that, if the Germans win, his firm may shortly find itself unable to pay his salary and his family may fall into the hands of the most blackguardly soldiering that has disgraced the civilised world for centuries past; the Germans have their eye on Egypt....They will not win, they cannot;...there are very few Englishmen worthy of the name who will hang back from the fighting line if it is at all possible for them to get to it....England is more important than any of her sons."<sup>15</sup>

However, some Britons were not willing to join the war at all costs. For example, British volunteers who were government officials in Egypt (many of whom were from the privileged classes) were not ready to participate in the war effort without the guarantee of a job after the war. Immediately after Britain's declaration of war, the British government in Egypt did not publicly acknowledge that it would facilitate the volunteering of British civilian officials in the war effort by retaining their jobs and giving them some paid leave. As a result, the aspiring volunteers kept quiet in fear of embarrassing the government by highlighting its lack of initiative and commitment to the war in Europe – but many did not join the war effort at the risk of losing their income and jobs. Finally, two months after Britain's declaration of war, "the announcement that the Egyptian Government [had] decided to grant leave to Anglo-Egyptian officials who wish to join the British army and will keep their posts open for them...led to...a rush of

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<sup>14</sup>Ibid.

<sup>15</sup>Egyptian Gazette, 01/06/1915

volunteers from Egypt."<sup>16</sup> Moreover, they were given a full paid leave of between three and a half months to six months.<sup>17</sup>

Besides the government's delay in providing paid leave and job guarantees to its employees, another financial factor hindered the initial deployment of British volunteers from Egypt to the war in Europe. A small number of these willing volunteers could not afford the passage home to Britain and initially, "no steps [were being] taken...by the British community [in Cairo]"<sup>18</sup> to counter this financial obstacle. Unlike the British community in Constantinople that provided a travel fund and an additional allowance for young men to return from Turkey to Britain to fight in the war, the British community in Cairo did nothing.<sup>19</sup> Although the military authorities granted a successful applicant third class passage from Egypt to Britain, there was initially no concerted effort by Cairo's British community to financially assist poorer volunteers with immediate transportation to Europe's battlefields. Nonetheless, by the summer of 1915, Mr. Birley, acting President of the British Chamber of Commerce, announced that if there was "anyone unable to get free passage home from the Government or get accepted by the Army",<sup>20</sup> he and the Chamber of Commerce would make sure that there was funding for that person.

With the promise of paid leave and jobs at the end of the war for government officials and funding for the passage to Europe for all willing volunteers, many Britons in Egypt joined the battlefield in Europe. They were from a diverse array of "Government services...banks, and other commercial undertakings."<sup>21</sup> For example, Mr. Willoughby of the Alexandria City Police; Mr. P. Sutton Page of the Egyptian Gazette; Mr. Thomas Henry Warwick and Mr. Douglas Charles Warwick, sons of H.S. Warwick of Cairo; Mr. Cooper, Director-General of the Blue Nile Barrage Projects; Mr. J.H. Scott of the Egyptian Law School; Mr. Stevenson, son of the Director-General of the Telephone Company; A.G. Mitchell, E.A.W. Plumtre and T.P. Williams of the Ministry of

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<sup>16</sup>Ibid., 02/10/1914

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., 02/10/1914

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., 01/06/1915.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., 03/06/1915

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., 04/09/1917

Education; and Mr. McCoughlin along with 24 others all joined the war effort from the Public Works Department. From the banking sector, eighteen from the staff of the National Bank of Egypt joined British military in Europe.<sup>22</sup> Others joined from the Anglo-Egyptian Bank, greatly reducing the number of the bank's English staff.

"Cairns has gone to the Dardanelles as 1st Lieutenant...Our English staff is much reduced, and we have nobody available to replace any of the men at the agencies, should any of them go sick. But I suppose that you cannot send us anyone and that we must rub on as best we can. Birch from Khartoum is in Alexandria at present and I gather that he rather wants too to join the army."<sup>23</sup>

Appropriately, members of the British Rifle Club in Egypt volunteered as well.<sup>24</sup> Even British missionaries of the British-based Church Missionary Society contributed to the war effort. Rev. W.W. Cash, Rev. R.F. Neale and Rev. A.J. Mortimore all became chaplains.<sup>25</sup> Altogether, several hundred Britons joined the British military from Egypt.<sup>26</sup>

Yet, how about the Britons who were not eligible to fight in the war? British men who wanted to join the war effort but were beyond military age or who were indispensable in their employment in Egypt created a small military unit named Pharaoh's Foot. They believed that there was something very indecent about British men in Egypt hurrying daily to a club to play purposeless games while their compatriots were engaged in a life-and-death struggle in Europe. The unit aimed to assist the existing forces under the supervision of General Maxwell. They modelled themselves after the Special Constabulary Force in Britain that was also founded by patriotic men who were hindered by business commitments, age or other reasons from joining the military. The Special Constabulary Force helped to provide police services during the war since many policemen, being ex-soldiers, were called into the Army. Since the Egyptian police was already providing an adequate service, the 'Pharaoh's Foot' became another military regiment. However, they were not given any weapons since the regular army were already short on rifles and General Maxwell wanted to wait and see whether their early voluntary enthusiasm would survive the drudgery of monotonous drills and living in

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<sup>22</sup>*Ibid.*, 25/01/1916

<sup>23</sup>Arthur Blunt, interim manager in Alexandria of the Anglo-Egyptian Bank, to H.R. Coombs, Manager in London, 20/07/1915, Barclays Group Archives.

<sup>24</sup>*Ibid.*, 06/08/1914.

<sup>25</sup>Canon Temple Gairdner, Secretary of Egypt Mission in *Church Missionary Review*, May, 1919, p.70.

<sup>26</sup>Egyptian Gazette, 16/02/1916.

barracks. As Maxwell anticipated, many well-to-do, successful middle-aged men and higher-placed government officials of the British community in Egypt refused to join the 'Pharaoh's Foot'. They refused to march without arms and face the ridicule and peremptory commands of younger sergeants, and they presumed that the daily discipline and drilling of army life were below their dignity. Yet others did join the 'Pharaoh's Foot' and patriotically marched and drilled regularly until the end of 1915 when a volunteer military unit in Egypt became unnecessary due to the mass influx of troops throughout that year.<sup>27</sup>

### *Why Conscription of British men in Egypt was unnecessary*

Besides the Pharaoh's Foot, there were many volunteers who were accepted and dispatched to various battlefields in the earlier stages of the war both in Britain and in British territories. However, there was still a need for conscription in Britain. The Military Service Act, passed in January 1916, conscripted all single men and childless widowers aged 18 to 41 in Britain. Later, the Military Service Act passed in May 1916 conscripted all men aged 18 to 41. By July 1917, the Military Services Act (Conventions and Allied States) was passed allowing the drafting of British subjects living abroad and of Allied citizens in Britain. By April 1918, still more soldiers were needed, so men between the ages of 41 to 50 were conscripted in Britain.<sup>28</sup> But as far as the British community in Egypt was concerned, conscription was never applied though the British government did consider it. In 1916, when the need for British soldiers was increasing,

“the General Officer Commanding in Chief in Egypt published a demand for an urgent census that indicated Britain's consideration of the question of conscription in Egypt. The military order required that all the male British subjects in Egypt from age 18 to 41 were obliged to answer questions regarding their name, address, profession, health condition, marital status, language skills, qualifications and willingness to serve in the military free of pay or not.”<sup>29</sup>

Besides the British military considering whether British men in Egypt should be conscripted from the results of this survey, British Parliamentarians also pursued the question of whether Britons in Egypt should be drafted towards the end of the war.

<sup>27</sup>P.G. Elgood, *Egypt and the Army* (London, Oxford University Press, 1924), pp. 147-148.

<sup>28</sup>Ian Beckett, "The Nation in Arms" in Beckett and Simpson, eds., *A Nation in Arms*, p.14.

<sup>29</sup>Egyptian Gazette., 03/05/1916 and 19/08/1916.

During a Parliamentary debate in June 1918, Major Earl Winterburn asked Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs Lord R. Cecil,

"if he is aware that there are large numbers of civilians of British...nationality in Egypt and the Sudan of military age; and if steps can be taken...to impose conscription upon all such persons...subject to the safeguarding of the efficiency of the Egyptian Civil Service and Egyptian industries."<sup>30</sup>

However, Earl Winterburn was mistaken. There were actually very few British men in Egypt of military age. A letter from the Judicial Adviser Amos stated that according to the 1917 census, the total number of male British subjects (not necessarily of British descent) between the ages of 20 to 49 was around 3000. This figure included the able-bodied men of Maltese, Greek and Indian origins that were British subjects. Even if all the British subjects in Egypt were conscripted, the number was still relatively small compared to the multitude of men needed at the time.<sup>31</sup> However, the attitude of the time was that if conscription was ever "applied to British subjects in Egypt, it would no doubt be limited to Englishmen."<sup>32</sup> British subjects of non-British descent were exempt. This meant that only 840 men of military age with British parentage were eligible for conscription. Further, a considerable proportion of these men was indispensable in the civil service or was medically unfit to fight. Only about 200 were useful for military service.<sup>33</sup> Since "the number of Englishmen of military age in Egypt...who [were] available for military service [was] exceedingly small...it [was] doubtful whether there would be any advantage in enforcing military service upon [them]."<sup>34</sup> Indeed, since the "number of British subjects remaining...in Egypt ...who...could be obtained for military service by the adoption of such a measure, [was] insignificant, [it] would not justify the passing of special legislation and the setting up of the necessary administrative machinery."<sup>35</sup> Although

"the authorities [eventually]...ordered all British subjects of military age to record their names at the Consulate....It is [not] more than a precautionary measure in case the information is asked for later on from England...*There are so few genuine Englishmen here of military age who are not doing indispensable work of some sort that anything like general conscription seems very unlikely.*"<sup>36</sup>

<sup>30</sup> FO141/664/2476, Parliamentary Debate 11/06/1918.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, letter from Judicial Adviser Amos to Residency, 22/07/1918.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, letter from High Commissioner Sir Reginald Wingate to Amos, 22/06/1918.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, report from General Headquarters of Egypt, 29/08/1916.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, letter from Office of Secretary of State for the Foreign Office to Wingate, 21/06/1918.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, letter from Amos to Residency, : 22/07/1918.

<sup>36</sup> Letter from W.R. Carruthers, Anglo-Egyptian Bank manager in Alexandria to Coombs, manager in London, 18/05/1916, Barclays Group Archives (emphasis mine).

Not only was conscription of British subjects in Egypt not worth the effort, it would have, in the view of the British Government, signalled to the Egyptian nationalists that Britain was at its last gasp in the war which would encourage the nationalists in their efforts to dismantle British rule. Undoubtedly, this disadvantage would have far outweighed any advantage gained by the conscription of a few hundred more men of little military value.<sup>37</sup>

***British civilian men who stayed in Egypt***

As implied already, some British men in Egypt could not join the British military because they were indispensable in key government jobs. Although

"from the very beginning [of the war], heads of Government departments were earnestly besought by many of their English staff to permit them to enlist forthwith, the difficulty was to reconcile these patriotic requests with the imperative necessities of administration, and to hold the balance as evenly as possible."<sup>38</sup>

The British staff in most Egyptian ministries was already a small proportion of the whole since the Egyptian Government had tried to allot a majority of the jobs to Egyptians themselves in order not to deny Egyptians the vital opportunities and experiences in governance, especially after Eldon Gorst became Consul-General in 1907. (The Egyptians would eventually complain that there were not enough jobs of significance and power given to them). However, certain handpicked and highly trained Britons were indispensable to the efficient administration of some Government departments. Particular businesses too could not have functioned without certain British staff members. The Anglo-Egyptian Bank prevented specific personnel from joining the war effort in order to maintain its viability as a bank. Only British members of staff could have fulfilled certain responsibilities in the bank - especially in light of the increased workload.

"Murray and Birch have been disputing as to which of the two has the prior right to go - I have told Birch that *he cannot possibly be spared* and I think he now understands this. ...As regards Moulson if you particularly wish him to go to Khartoum we will arrange to send him but we shall absolutely need someone to replace him. He is the *only* English man left on our staff, apart from the Chief Accountant and Cashier. Among other things Moulson has to deal with the Prize Court work, almost one man's job

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<sup>37</sup>FO141/664/2476: 06/07/1918 letter from B.B. Cubitt of the War Office to Lord Cecil.

<sup>38</sup>Egyptian Gazette, 04/09/1917

in itself. The military work is now so heavy that we have had to re-open the Bank in the afternoons and return to winter hours - so please don't think we have nothing to do in Alexandria."<sup>39</sup>

As conscription of all male British subjects from the age of 18 to 41 living abroad was being legislated in July 1917, these indispensable employees of government departments and other businesses had to be issued with consular certificates permitting them to remain in their posts. This exemption was allowed only if their

"retention in the country in which they are at present...[is] considered of greater advantage to the common cause and to British commercial interests [according to]...His Majesty's Consular officers...He should remain in the above employment until instructions to the contrary are issued by His Majesty's Government...A change of employment must be at once reported...This certificate may be reviewed or withdrawn at any time."<sup>40</sup>

Was the retention of key British workers successful? Even though the British authorities and certain businesses prevented certain important employees from participating in the British war effort, there was still a significant shortage of British workers in Egypt due to the many who had left to join the war effort. For example, as a result of providing a significant number of personnel for the war effort, the Ministry of Education was left desperately low on teaching staff. During the war, "about fifty per cent of the English staff of the Ministry of Education served in His Majesty's forces. Most...were teachers in secondary schools."<sup>41</sup> Further, "to fill the places of those who left, Egyptians were appointed to teach English in the lower forms and a few Englishmen were found locally. The latter were for the most part of an exceedingly poor type."<sup>42</sup> This desperation for teaching staff can be seen in the Education Adviser Douglas Dunlop's appeal to High Commissioner Wingate to issue more passports to teachers from England into Egypt and also in his pursuit of a 53 year old teacher who was now beyond the age of military service.

"The Ministry of Education has allowed its inspectors and the members of its teaching staff to go on military service in every case in which it was considered possible that some modification or arrangement of the work could be made. In consequence, the staff has been reduced to its lowest possible limit and it is of the utmost importance that vacancies occasioned by ill-health or retirement should, if possible, be filled. The Department has given instructions that these vacancies should only be filled by appointment

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<sup>39</sup>Letter from Blunt to Coombs, 09/08/1915, Correspondences between Anglo-Egyptian staff and managers, Barclays Group Archives (emphasis mine).

<sup>40</sup>FO141/664/2476, 18/05/1917 letter from Robert Cecil to His Majesty's Representative in Cairo.

<sup>41</sup>FO141/503/1604: 04/10/1926 letter from Egyptian Education Mission's Hebard to Lloyd Lord.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid.

of gentlemen ineligible for military service...and in order to fill a vacancy occasioned by the retirement from ill-health of a senior member of staff who had been in the service for 24 years, has been in communication with Mr. C.R. Ashbee, 53 years of age, now in England."<sup>43</sup>

The desperate hiring of Ashbee turned out to be a grave mistake, according to Dunlop, as explained in the previous chapter on crime and misdemeanours within the British community in Cairo.

Besides the Ministry of Education, other organisations, such as the police, the clergy and the judiciary, also lost or were in need of vital workers due to the war effort. The Alexandria City Police "owing to vacancies caused by the war, [was] anxious to enlist Englishmen"<sup>44</sup> as immediate replacements. The Church Missionary Society lost key missionaries particularly to military chaplaincies and "these sacrifices, willingly made (for they were all the Mission could do directly for the war), were heavy enough considering [the] none too great strength before the war."<sup>45</sup> Moreover, with the potential changes in the Mixed Courts due to the possible abolition or whittling down of the Capitulations in light of Egypt's new identity as a British Protectorate, it was "necessary to recruit more English lawyers...[However the Judicial Adviser Malcolm McIllwraith] scarcely knew how [he] could get men...during the war [since] nearly all the best of the younger men are away from their work and in [military] camp, somewhere or other."<sup>46</sup> In spite of the effort to withhold as many key workers as possible, the war severely crippled the British workforce in Egypt, multiplying job vacancies in many different of sectors.

### **The roles of British women**

Like the men, British women had various roles during the war as well. Although women were not welcome at the frontlines of combat in Europe or the Middle East, they were instrumental as volunteer nurses, hostesses and organisers of events to help convalescing and/or bored soldiers pass their days in Egypt.

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<sup>43</sup>FO141/669/4394: 10/02/1917 letter from Douglas Dunlop, Minister of Education to High Commissioner.

<sup>44</sup>Egyptian Gazette, 29/09/1914.

<sup>45</sup>Temple Gairdner, "The Nile Valley in War-Time: A Word to the Home Base", *Church Missionary Gleaner*, Vol. XLVI, No. 543, May 1919, p.70.

<sup>46</sup>FO141/621/321: 31/01/1916 letter to Lord E. Cecil from Malcolm McIllwraith.

### *The Gallipoli campaign*

In order to understand the significance of the work that the British women in Egypt were involved in, one has to realise the enormity of the task that they faced as the casualties from the Gallipoli defeat invaded Egypt. Though much has been written about this failed Allied effort, it suffices to say here that the military advance on the Gallipoli peninsula was an attempt to divert and relieve Turkish pressure on the Russians in the Caucasus. Further, a successful capture of the peninsula would open a supply route through the Dardanelles Straits into the Black Sea in order to assist Russia against Germany and the Austro-Hungarian Empire. It was also a reflex against the arduous and, by this time, immovable stalemate of trench warfare on European soil. The Allies assumed that the Gallipoli campaign was an opportunity to gather momentum and morale by emphatically crushing the Ottoman Empire which was allied with Germany and the Central Powers. Thus throughout the first half of 1915, Allied forces including Britons, Canadians, Australians, New Zealanders, and Frenchmen stormed the Turkish defences along the Dardanelles. Due to an initial setback of losing six battleships followed by a premature withdrawal in March 1915 against an Ottoman division that was extremely low on resources, the Allies allowed a month's time to pass before striking again. By this time, the Ottoman command had sent fresh men, equipment, and supplies to the region. Through the summer of 1915, the Turks held their positions and the "hastily planned, ill-coordinated, inadequately supplied, and badly led"<sup>47</sup> Allied campaign at Gallipoli was crushed. Casualties on both sides were staggering. The Ottoman casualties amounted to more than 250,000.<sup>48</sup> For the Allies, 45,000 Britons lost their lives<sup>49</sup> while more than 150,000 were wounded or captured, out of a total Allied force of 500,000.<sup>50</sup> Many of the 90,000 evacuated sick and injured travelled by ship to Alexandria, turning Egypt into one vast hospital during the war and rallying many of the women of British community in Cairo to active service and charitable activities.

<sup>47</sup> Roger Adelson, *London and the Invention of the Middle East: Money, Power, and War, 1902-1922*, (London: Yale University Press, 1995), p. 118.

<sup>48</sup> Karsh & Karsh, p. 144-145.

<sup>49</sup> Peter Liddle, "The Dardanelles Gallipoli campaign: concept and execution," in Peter Liddle, ed., *Home Fires and Foreign Fields: British Social and Military Experience in the First World War* (London: Brassey's Defence Publishers, 1985), p.110.

<sup>50</sup> Karsh & Karsh, p. 144-145.

### *Egypt as one big hospital*

The Gallipoli defeat meant that Cairo and Alexandria had to become the key centres for receiving ill or injured soldiers from the Imperial ranks.

"Few places presented greater facilities than Cairo and Alexandria for establishing hospitals in suitable buildings, and it was fortunate that this was so, as otherwise hospitals would have had to be pitched under canvas, exposed to the sand and dust of the desert, as was the experience in Sinai and Palestine."<sup>51</sup>

The requisition of buildings for hospital usage increased exponentially as the Gallipoli struggle raged on in the first half of 1915. In April 1915, only 200 beds were available for British officers while 3,780 were available for men of lower ranks in all of Egypt. By January 1916, there were 870 beds available for officers and 32,262 beds available for the men of ordinary ranks.<sup>52</sup> A similar pattern of growth occurred for the facilities available to Indian soldiers as well.<sup>53</sup> These hospitals were established in existing hospital buildings, hotels and schools and were equipped with general hospital equipment. Other improvised hospitals were also established with bedsteads made of native palm wood and mattresses stuffed with wool.<sup>54</sup>

A mass programme of requisition took place in Egypt to alter existing buildings into hospitals. In Cairo, Princess Fatima's Palace in Boulaq was made into a hospital for 500 to 600 British convalescents.<sup>55</sup> The old palace of the Citadel was transformed into a hospital of 543 beds.<sup>56</sup> A gentleman's college was transformed into the Nasriyya Hospital for Officers.<sup>57</sup> The German Agency in Garden City became the Red Cross Hospital<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>51</sup>W.G. MacPherson, *Medical Services General History, Vol. III* (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1924), p.382.

<sup>52</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>53</sup>*Ibid.*, in April, 1915, 235 beds were available for Indian officers and 5,282 for lower ranks. By January 1916, 1,131 beds were available for Indian officers while 34,874 was available for men of the lower ranks.

<sup>54</sup>*Ibid.*, p.383.

<sup>55</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>56</sup>*Ibid.*, p.362.

<sup>57</sup>Lady Harkness, nurse sent to Egypt with the Queen Alexandra Imperial Military Nursing Service (Q.A.I.M.N.S.), *Dairies*, 1917, Imperial War Museum.

<sup>58</sup>Egyptian Gazette, 04/09/1917.

while large and modern-built schools of the Egyptian Government became hospitals as well such as the no. 15 Hospital situated in the Abbassiya schools. No. 19 was in the Deaconess Hospital, and No. 21 was at Ras-el-Tin barracks.<sup>59</sup> In Heliopolis, Lady Beatrice Rochdale recalls that a new and luxurious Heliopolis Palace Hotel, made with marble steps and pillars and brass fittings had

"hardly ever been used and [was] now taken as a hospital.... It was like a palace...in fairy tales. One expected people in dazzling robes to be carrying gilt trays of lovely fruit about, but there were only a few hospital nurses and a few sick men in bed...It will take so many people to keep the place clean."<sup>60</sup>

Hospitals that were already in place were expanded or transferred to other buildings. The No. 2 Australian Hospital moved from the Mena Hotel to the Gezira Palace Hotel and increased to a capacity of 1000 beds. The Austrian Hospital in Shubra was taken over for the treatment of infectious diseases. Other existing hospitals were prepared to receive extra patients such as the Egyptian Government Hospital at Qasr-el-Aini. Further from the heart of Cairo, the Hyatt Hotel in Helwan and the Mena Palace Hotel, which was kept as an overflow hospital, were requisitioned too,<sup>61</sup> though certain hotels like the Shepherd's Hotel and the Continental were not (and became focal points of dances, dinners and parties for officers).<sup>62</sup>

In Alexandria, the Egyptian Government Hospital was placed on alert. The British Red Cross supplied the hospital ships entering Alexandria with food and comfort items. Three convalescent homes for officers with a total of 125 beds were established in Alexandria. In Montazah, just east of Alexandria, a hospital for non-commissioned officers and ordinary soldiers was set up with 1000 to 1400 beds.<sup>63</sup> Throughout the country, the British Red Cross established 13 auxiliary hospitals<sup>64</sup> and the Public Health Department set up tent hospitals as well.<sup>65</sup> Egypt had truly "now become one vast hospital. As transport followed transport, each filled to overflowing with mangled humanity,"<sup>66</sup> the military authorities in Egypt were trying desperately to transform nearly all suitable

<sup>59</sup>MacPherson, p. 377.

<sup>60</sup>Lady Beatrice Rochdale Dairies, entry 24/01/1915, Imperial War Museum.

<sup>61</sup>MacPherson, p.377.

<sup>62</sup>Henry Day, *A Cavalry Chaplain* (London: Heath Cranton Ltd., 1922), p.72.

<sup>63</sup> Egyptian Gazette, 16/08/1917.

<sup>64</sup>MacPherson, p. 377.

<sup>65</sup>P.G. Elgood, *Egypt and the Army* (London, Oxford University Press, 1924), p. 170.

buildings into hospitals, acquire the services of existing hospitals, maximise the number of beds for the patients and mobilise personnel to care for them. Remarkably, though "it was [initially] evident that the estimated accommodation in Egypt for the sick and wounded off Gallipoli was far short of the actual requirements ...in time, every wounded soldier had a bed."<sup>67</sup>

***Hospitals and hospitality: British women as volunteers, nurses and hostesses***

Not only were the sick and injured from Gallipoli given hospital beds, they were taken care of by many of the women of the British community in Egypt. These volunteers followed the pattern of British women in Britain who joined the Voluntary Aid Detachments (VAD) and had to finance their own way through courses and exams on nursing, first aid, and hygiene. They also funded themselves through the period of training in hospitals and were eventually paid only £20 per year – even less than some house servants who were paid, on the average, £25 to £30 a year.<sup>68</sup> Moreover, they learned to cram stretchers into makeshift wards; build successful rest stations; convert railway trucks into storehouses, packing-cases into furniture and condensed milk cans into mugs; and supply endless drinks and cigarettes to the dying, wounded, and ill British soldier.<sup>69</sup> Likewise, the British women of Egypt who volunteered in the wake of the Gallipoli defeat also demonstrated this same level of initiative and dedication. As the dying, the wounded and the sick from Gallipoli flooded into Egypt in the summer of 1915, the VAD in Egypt was not able to service the volume of patients. The need to recruit more women was clearly evident.

"When the terrible and unexpected Gallipoli casualties began to be brought back to Egypt, week by week...[the] Colonial and Voluntary Aid Detachment nurses...were far from proving sufficient. The requirements of the situation had, therefore, to be met by voluntary recruitment among the ladies of Cairo, Alexandria, and other towns and chiefly among the wives and daughters of the official and business classes. And most devotedly and whole-heartedly were these appeals to their patriotism and spirit of self-sacrifice responded to, though many of these ladies had plenty of domestic occupation at home."<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>66</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>67</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>68</sup>Sharon Ouditt, *Fighting Forces, Writing Women* (London: Routledge, 1994), p.15.

<sup>69</sup>*Ibid.*, p.13.

<sup>70</sup>Egyptian Gazette, 04/09/1917, Malcolm McIllwraith's comments.

As a result of these appeals for more helpers, more women of the British community in Egypt, mainly from Cairo and Alexandria, increased the ranks of the much-needed Voluntary Aid Detachments to about 1000 volunteers. Since the military doctors were already overwhelmed with clinical and surgical duties, the women in the VAD were responsible for the minor medical and non-medical needs of the patients from Gallipoli.<sup>71</sup> Instruction in Cairo and other centres was given to teach the art of bandaging and other elements of first aid. Many women, after a few weeks, became fairly proficient. Non-medical tasks included "making beds, and serving in overheated canteens,"<sup>72</sup> cooking, preparing snacks and afternoon tea in the hospitals, handing out cigarettes, writing paper, envelopes, pencils, handkerchiefs, books, pillows and walking sticks from hospital comfort stores which were managed by the British women volunteers.<sup>73</sup> Even "when organizational breakdowns...prevented the patients from receiving petty luxuries like picture-postcards and cigarettes, or basic necessities like razors, toothbrushes, and clean clothes, the...Englishwomen helped to supply the deficiencies."<sup>74</sup> Outside the hospitals, the women worked in tea kiosks on the quays and met the ships bringing in the sick and wounded from Gallipoli and assisted in hospital trains between Alexandria and Cairo. They provided "tea and recreation rooms, entertainment, games, [and] literature,"<sup>75</sup> organised tram rides provided outings for 6000 patients each month in Alexandria,<sup>76</sup> and helped to trace the whereabouts of missing soldiers from Gallipoli.<sup>77</sup> In their mission "to assist in alleviating as much as possible the suffering of the sick and wounded, and to assist the authorities in promoting the well-being of the...soldier,"<sup>78</sup> the British women of Egypt performed admirably and tirelessly.

Besides their hard work in the hospitals, British women were also indispensable in offering hospitality in their homes. In addition to the injured soldiers in hospitals, as many as 84,000 to 152,000 Imperial troops were also assembled in Egypt during the war waiting to be deployed to the battlefield.<sup>79</sup> The first contingent of troops from Australia

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<sup>71</sup>Elgood, p.144.

<sup>72</sup>*Ibid.*, p 145.

<sup>73</sup> Lady Rochdale, Diaries, Imperial War Museum, 12/06/1915.

<sup>74</sup> Suzanne Brugger, p. 54.

<sup>75</sup> Egyptian Gazette, 13/07/1916.

<sup>76</sup>*Ibid.*, 16/08/1917.

<sup>77</sup>*Ibid.*, 22/01/1917.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 13/07/1916,

<sup>79</sup> Brugger, p.56.

and New Zealand totalled 39,000 and the East Lancashire Territorials plus the Indian Army made the total count of troops around 84,000. By January 1916, after the final evacuation at Gallipoli, more than 64,000 troops from Australia and New Zealand were added, making the total force in Egypt about 150,000 strong.<sup>80</sup> Since there were so many idle soldiers in Egypt, hospitality was desperately needed and a fair number of British homes obliged. Some families strongly encouraged church attendance as well. For example, Mrs. G.M.A. Horsford's memoirs record the weekly Sunday dinners that were organised for a few soldiers at her childhood home in Cairo. Her eventual husband "W.H. Horsford become one of the *many* wartime soldiers who were made welcome in [her] home and who were regular visitors on Sunday afternoons and evenings."<sup>81</sup> Those who visited for dinner were rigorously urged to attend church too.

"There was one stipulation, whatever their denomination, if any, they were expected to go to church. This meant a long journey back into the town and then up again to the Citadel on time for 8 o'clock dinner. For many of them, these visits were their only touch of home life."<sup>82</sup>

Besides Sunday dinners, some British women entertained soldiers to tea or organised parties for them at the Continental Hotel or garden clubs near Qasr el-Aini.<sup>83</sup> Other women opened their homes for convalescent soldiers.<sup>84</sup> Though Australian troops "had few opportunities to enjoy private hospitality or develop personal contacts with [English] civilians,"<sup>85</sup> and Imperial officers were more welcomed into British homes, many British families did provide hospitality for them. As one Australian observer comments, "I would like to draw attention to the graceful way in which the kindness [of the British community] has been shown [and] their hospitality given."<sup>86</sup> Another Australian soldier praises "the splendid work for the soldiers"<sup>87</sup> carried out by the English community as a whole.

This effort to host and house Imperial soldiers followed a pattern established in Britain where "with every inch of space taken up and with thousands of men sleeping in the

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<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

<sup>81</sup> Mrs. G.M.A. Horsford, memoirs, Imperial War Museum (emphasis mine)

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

<sup>83</sup> Egyptian Gazette, 18/07/1916

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

<sup>85</sup> Brugger, p.56.

<sup>86</sup> Egyptian Gazette, 07/06/1915.

open, depot staffs turned to...private citizens for assistance in housing the overflow of recruits."<sup>88</sup> In Preston, for example, soldiers slept in gardens and accepted breakfasts in private homes.

"When the weather deteriorated, the people of Preston welcomed soldiers into their homes, transformed schools and clubs into dormitories and provided entertainment...and hotpot suppers for the men. *These gestures were repeated in towns and cities throughout the country.*"<sup>89</sup>

Not denying the involvement of men in the work of hospitality, British women were instrumental in the task of caring, catering and providing hospitality for the Imperial armed forces both in Britain and overseas. Their hard work as volunteer nurses and hostesses in Egypt was no exception.

### ***British men and women in Cairo high society***

However, was the role of British men confined to the battlefield or government office buildings or banks? Was the role of women only confined to the hospitals and the kitchens of British families? Apparently, British men and women during the war had a role in the hotel ballrooms of Cairo. Cairo high-society had by no means declined during the Great War except for a initial slowdown during the initial months of the conflict. In fact, Cairo high society may have gained momentum with the influx of British and imperial officers to the scene and later, their wives. The "big hotels [had] become the quarters of the higher officers."<sup>90</sup> The "English community...absorbed them warmly [and] welcomed their help in the maintenance of those pleasures [which] the war had threatened to curtail."<sup>91</sup> These officers, warmly incorporated into the best hotels at a reduced tariff, were admitted to membership in the elite Gezira Club on a special low subscription rate. Officers were offered hot baths, flowers to decorate their tents and messes, and help to purchase presents to send home. Invitations for quail shooting,

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<sup>87</sup>*Ibid.*, 04/06/1915.

<sup>88</sup>Peter Simkins, "Soldiers and civilians: billeting in Britain and France," in Ian Beckett and Keith Simpson, ed., *A Nation in Arms: A Social Study of the British Army in the First World War*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985), p.167.

<sup>89</sup>*Ibid.* (emphasis mine)

<sup>90</sup>Egyptian Gazette, 12/02/1915.

<sup>91</sup>Brugger, p.51.

tennis, polo, dinners, races and dances were never in short supply.<sup>92</sup> Most notably, mothers of young British women were eager to introduce their daughters to these officers. Society ladies were also desperate to be seen with them in hotel lounges and ballrooms. One humorous example of this desperation stands out. While Captain R.B. Gillett of the Second Battalion Hampshire Regiment was recovering in the Anglo-American Hospital one day, a society lady desperately needed a British officer to 'appear' with. Gillett recalls:

"It was fashionable for society ladies to be seen taking officers out in their cars. One day during the siesta when no one was about, two Egyptians entered through the French door, lifted me out of bed and carried me out to a large car occupied by a very opulent looking lady. After driving round Cairo we stopped at Shepherd's Hotel, where we had tea in a large lounge on two floor levels. This hall-like room was divided by clumps of palm trees and fountains played among them. I maintain that I am the only person who ever had tea in Shepherd's Hotel clad only in pyjamas."<sup>93</sup>

Not only were British and Imperial officers welcomed into Cairo society, their wives also enhanced the society's elegance and flavour. The "lounges of the principal hotels and the pavements of the shopping streets in the European quarter were brightened by the gay frocks of English wives"<sup>94</sup> for some time during the war. The population of British wives and womenfolk grew to very noticeable proportions. Eventually, for the interests of military efficiency an embargo was put upon this category of 'unnecessary luxuries'.<sup>95</sup> The "forbidding [of] women from coming to Egypt [was necessary, since]...the chief towns in Egypt were becoming swamped with officers' wives and other visitors. The hotels [became] so full that there was no room for military officers...The thing [the density of British women in Cairo society] had to be...rigidly put a stop to."<sup>96</sup> However, while wives were barred from entering Egypt, those in Egypt were ironically forbidden to leave. So as the Army moved eastward to fight in Palestine, the wives were left in Cairo. For the men remaining in Cairo society, the "sight of... Englishwomen in a hotel [in their] pretty frocks [was] as satisfying as anything in Cairo."<sup>97</sup> The roles of British men and

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<sup>92</sup>Ibid.

<sup>93</sup>Capt. R.B. Gillett, 2nd Battalion Hampshire Regiment, from transcript of BBC recording, from Imperial War Museum archives, date unclear..

<sup>94</sup>Briggs, p.28.

<sup>95</sup>Ibid.

<sup>96</sup>W.R. Carruthers, Manager of Anglo-Egyptian Bank in Alexandria, to Secretary of Anglo-Egyptian Bank in London, 31/12/1915, Barclays Group Archives.

<sup>97</sup>Ibid.

women were not restricted to the duties of war but they were instrumental to the image and betterment of Cairo high-society.

### **Organised committees and associations**

Not only did men and women in the British community of Egypt play a role in military service, indispensable jobs, nursing or hosting during the war, they also contributed to the work of various committees and associations as well. First, they participated in existing funds and established fund-raising bodies to assist the war effort, needy Britons in Egypt and the wounded from Gallipoli as well as to co-ordinate activities for idle soldiers. The British Benevolent Fund was established to seek the generosity of the British community through regular subscriptions in order to help British subjects in Alexandria who were in distress during the war.<sup>98</sup> Similarly, Dr. Lucinda Forster set up the British Refugees Fund to collect money and clothing for needy Britons.<sup>99</sup> Others raised funds for existing organisations like the British Red Cross. Dr. and Mrs. Creswell lent their house and garden in Cairo for a home arts and crafts exhibition. There were 100 exhibits and the cost of materials was limited to half a piastre. Side-shows and teas were served and prizes were given to different exhibits which best represented 'utility', 'beauty', and 'originality'. Many attended and a good number of exhibits were sold off on the day. Fifty-three pounds were raised for the British Red Cross on that day.<sup>100</sup> The British Chamber of Commerce also raised money to help injured Indian soldiers, part of the Imperial troops, from the Gallipoli defeat. In January 1915, the Chamber called a meeting of the British community in Cairo "to consider the best way in which to help the Indian Military Hospital."<sup>101</sup> As a result, £100 per month were pledged to the hospital to help the military defray costs and more nurses were hired. One organisation accomplished the dual role of raising funds for the war effort as well as entertaining the troops in Egypt. The Patriotic League of Britons Overseas was founded to arrange cinema showings and orchestras for the entertainment of the troops. Subscriptions were raised by the League to fund the construction of warships. To finance the construction of aeroplanes, the League sold tickets for the 24th May Empire Day celebration featuring

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<sup>98</sup>Egyptian Gazette, 02/03/1915.

<sup>99</sup>*Ibid.*, 22/02/1915.

<sup>100</sup>*Ibid.*, 13/03/1915.

entertainment at the Alhambra Theatre in the presence of the Prince of Wales and the High Commissioner. Prices ranged from 2 piastres to 300 piastres depending on the seat. All the Britons of Alexandria were urged to attend.<sup>102</sup>

In addition to fund-raising, the British community in Egypt also organised committees and associations in the attempt to curb the excessive behaviour of Australian and New Zealand troops in Egypt during World War I. As a result of their high salaries, excessive consumption of alcohol and youthful bravado, the troops from Australia and New Zealand turned Cairo into a resort for prostitution (as explained in the chapter on 'crime and misdemeanours') and drunkenness. Amusements like sightseeing were exhausted in a few days and thereafter boredom and curiosity drove the men to less wholesome pursuits.<sup>103</sup> The activities of brothel keepers and purveyors of cheap alcohol were not sufficiently restricted by the authorities while many new bars and taverns were opened to cater to this clientele and as part of an economic boom during the war.<sup>104</sup> At the same time, there were few respectable recreational facilities.

Several first-hand accounts vividly depict the alcohol-induced violence instigated by these troops. The Mancunian Sergeant Hopwood records:

"Though there are good fellows among the Australians, there are a lot of the other sort as well, [and] on the whole they have been a nuisance in the town. On this occasion they resided in a certain quarter of the native section of Cairo going in a lot of houses and throwing all the furniture out in the street where they set fire to it. They broke all the windows, and stole a lot of whiskey, wine etc. from various bars and other places. The redcaps were called out and were pelted with bottles etc., and then rushed. In defence, they opened fire with their revolvers and of course a lot of the 'Australians' got hurt, about eighteen I believe. The nearest Terriers [nickname for Territorial troops] were called out, and the streets were cleaned and all troops in town sent back to their barracks at once."<sup>105</sup>

As a result of the Australasians<sup>106</sup> misbehaviour, the British troops (from the British Isles) in Cairo "were confined to camp [as well], except in case of men going out of town on special passes. Of course, this has spoiled the weekend altogether and it has raised some [negative] feeling between [the British troops] and the gallant

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<sup>101</sup>*Ibid.*, 06/01/1915.

<sup>102</sup>*Ibid.*, 23/05/1916.

<sup>103</sup>Brugger, p.63.

<sup>104</sup>Egyptian Gazette, 12/02/1915.

<sup>105</sup>Sgt. Harry Hopwood, 08/04/1915.

<sup>106</sup>'Australasian', term used to collectively describe Australians and New Zealanders.

Kangaroos."<sup>107</sup> A year later, the outbursts were just as violent and even more frequent. The penalties of losing privileges remained unchanged. As one Australian officer describes:

"The soldiers' riots...until lately have been an everyday or rather night occurrence in Cairo. Some of our fellows are over the odds when they get loose, with the result that our leave and privileges have been greatly restricted in the city. They have burnt houses and motors and thrown pianos, beds and beer bottles into the streets from upstairs windows. *On one occasion I passed through a street about two minutes before a piano came down.*"<sup>108</sup>

Further, intoxicated Australasian troops sometimes wandered for days through the streets of Cairo in a stupor causing trouble for other civilians. The Egyptian Gazette records one incident whereby a drunken soldier was harassing a British family. At Sault's restaurant, a first class French establishment, a young man was dining with his betrothed and her family. At midnight, a drunken Australian trooper came in the restaurant, walked up to the table and wanted to offer a bottle of champagne to the brother of the betrothed. Then the soldier offered champagne to the whole table and turned to the bride-to-be's brother, saying, "I want to marry your sister." The brother of the engaged young lady replied immediately, "she is already betrothed." The drunken Australian then responded, "Never you mind...I will pay all the damages for a breach of promise," and then threw down a pile of banknotes.<sup>109</sup> The misconduct of the troops from 'Downunder' created a cocktail of violence, drunkenness, revelry and harassment. Though there were certainly incidences of misbehaviour on the part of troops from Britain, there seems to be much more evidence of lack of discipline and violent indulgence on the part of troops from Australia and New Zealand. Due to the behaviour of these Australasian soldiers, the British community in Egypt set up committees to co-ordinate entertainment, clubs, sports and lectures to steer the Australasians away from destructive activity. These activities were also for the enjoyment of soldiers from Britain who were waiting for deployment to the battlefield or who were recovering from injury and illness.

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<sup>107</sup>Hopwood, 08/04/1915.

<sup>108</sup>Second Lieutenant C.G. Meudell, of 1st Australian Artillery Unit and later, the Royal Flying Corps, Diaries, Imperial War Museum, 06/03/1916 (emphasis mine).

<sup>109</sup>Egyptian Gazette, 07/01/1915.

*Entertainment and concerts*

Britons in Cairo established various committees to organise performances for the troops in hopes of keeping them out of the trouble. One of the most appreciated committees was the Soldiers' Entertainment Committee set up by Lady McMahon and Lady Maxwell in January 1916. The objective was "to co-ordinate and extend work in connection with concerts and kindred entertainments in the many camps and hospitals which have sprung up in the Cairo district since the outbreak of hostilities."<sup>110</sup> The mission of the Committee was to spread out the concerts and entertainment regularly so that hospitals or military camps could fairly share the services of all the performers. As a result, just between April and May of 1916, concert parties staging 80 different performances visited 13 hospitals and rest camps. Thirteen concerts were organised in el-Ezbekiyya at the YMCA (Young Men's Christian Association) Soldiers' Club.<sup>111</sup> The Shepheard's Hotel hosted weekly concerts performed by military bands on Saturday afternoons.<sup>112</sup> Organ and violin recitals at St. Mark's Church in Alexandria were also performed in front of packed audiences.<sup>113</sup>

Besides organising concerts, members of the British community in Cairo were also active participants in plays and theatricals – a popular form of entertainment for the Imperial troops. During the war, the Cairo Amateur Repertory Players performed short plays at the Soldiers' Club in El-Ezbekiyya Gardens in Cairo,<sup>114</sup> in the Opera House,<sup>115</sup> and at the YMCA in El-Ezbekiyya in front of big audiences consisting of military personnel of all ranks, hospital nurses and civilians every Thursday evening. 'Standing-room only' was the usual scenario at the start of each performance.<sup>116</sup> In certain cases, even children of members of the British community were recruited to perform. In 1916, the daughters of Canon Gairdner, the missionary leader; Sir Malcolm McIllwraith, the Judicial Adviser; and Frank Rowlett, the President of the National Bank of Egypt; all performed in a

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<sup>110</sup>*Ibid.*, 30/05/1916.

<sup>111</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>112</sup>*Ibid.*, 12/01/1915.

<sup>113</sup>*Ibid.*, 12/01/1917.

<sup>114</sup>*Ibid.*, 09/05/1916.

<sup>115</sup>*Sphinx*, 13/01/1917.

musical entitled 'Mrs. Jarley's Famous Waxworks.'<sup>117</sup> Canon Gairdner played the leading role of Mrs. Jarley. In addition to amateur performances, professional theatre companies also came to Egypt like Miss Ada Reeve's London Company – a first-class theatrical ensemble.<sup>118</sup>

In addition to concerts and plays, the British community in Cairo also arranged circuses and various get-togethers. One corporal recalls his delight in the circus: "The other night I went to see a circus at the Kursaal in Cairo and enjoyed myself very much. It was a splendid performance."<sup>119</sup> The Rev. and Mrs. James Gillan organised sociable afternoons held at the Continental for soldiers to relax and enjoy more luxurious facilities, food and atmosphere.<sup>120</sup> Therefore, the efforts of the Soldiers' Entertainment Committee, the Cairo Amateur Repertory Players and others in the British community in Cairo facilitated plays, concerts, circuses and social events to entertain the idle Imperial troops in hopes of stirring them away from violence and trouble-making.

### *Clubs*

To counter the attraction of bars and brothels, members of the British community in Cairo, established social and recreational clubs where they were encouraged to read, write letters, participate in games and sports, and interact with fellow soldiers. Due to the clubs' warm, friendly, enjoyable and secure environment, the Imperial troops were also encouraged to confide in and seek the counsel of more mature women 'mother figures'. Such was the case at the British Soldiers' Café. Managed by a small group of British women, the Café was designed as a place for soldiers to read, write, talk and play games and eat simple meals at reasonable prices. The café provided the Imperial soldier, British, Australian or otherwise, with the opportunity to seek the listening ear of a sympathetic 'mother figure'.

"Recognising the fact that many men appreciate intensely the touch of home that is secured by the presence of a lady gifted with ready sympathy and a cheerful spirit, the Committee of the Café utilised a

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<sup>116</sup>Egyptian Gazette, 24/11/1917.

<sup>117</sup>*Ibid.*, 12/01/1916.

<sup>118</sup>*Ibid.*, 18/11/1916.

<sup>119</sup>C.H. Rastell, 1st Worcestershire Yeomanry, letters, Imperial War Museum, 06/09/1915.

<sup>120</sup>Sphinx, 11/03/1916.

small room near the entrance in which the Lady Superintendent should spend her afternoons and evenings, and ever since the beginning, with a short interruption in the summer months, there has streamed to and from this room a procession of soldiers from the homeland and from the Colonies, eager to ask for help and advice, or even to hear some friendly words of encouragement."<sup>121</sup>

Besides the British Soldiers' Café, women of the British community also gave their time, sympathy and energy to the Maadi Soldiers' Club and Tea-Room.

Perhaps the most prominent club established and frequented by the Imperial troops was the Cairo Soldiers' Recreation Club, run by the YMCA in El-Ezbekiyya. It provided British and Imperial soldiers with a venue for boxing matches, cinematograph shows, hockey matches on a skating rink, concerts, and lectures, frequently given by a well-known preacher named Oswald Chambers. Soldiers were given free use of writing paper, tables and games. They had to pay for refreshments but the proceeds were then harnessed to improve the club. Showers and plunge baths were also available at the Club and the Australian Comforts Fund supplied the soap and towels.<sup>122</sup> On one night, the "largest crowd of soldiers yet seen there assembled to enjoy the varied programme of events provided by the management."<sup>123</sup> The "programme included [a] boxing contest, exhibitions of wrestling, an attractive display of cinema pictures, and a novel item in the form of a free distribution of 16,000 cigarettes [made available]...from a friend and well-wisher of the YMCA."<sup>124</sup> One soldier wrote, in the book for visitors to make suggestions, "Cairo is hell, but the YMCA in Ezbekieh is nearly as good for us as the other place."<sup>125</sup>

Nonetheless, no account of the clubs in Egypt during the war would be complete without a glimpse at the work of the YMCA. There were 19 YMCA centres in Egypt. Six of them were in Cairo. They provided tent shelters, the supply of 300,000 sheets of paper for writing per month, an abundant supply of envelopes and ink in gallons plus pens and pencils by the thousands. It was "not the fault of the YMCA if mothers, wives or sweethearts were without the news of the boys."<sup>126</sup> For recreation, there were quiet

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<sup>121</sup>Egyptian Gazette, 01/04/1916.

<sup>122</sup>*Ibid.*, 20/03/1916.

<sup>123</sup>*Ibid.*, 04/03/1916.

<sup>124</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>125</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>126</sup>*Ibid.*, 25/01/1916.

games like chess, dominoes and cards. Every tent had a lending library and a piano and there was no restriction of when or who could use it. Lectures were given on a variety of topics. Concerts were given by the men themselves or from visiting concert parties.<sup>127</sup> There were also various classes and chess and draught competitions.<sup>128</sup>

"The work of the YMCA in Egypt was...worth that of all the chaplains put together. Their huts provided a home for homeless men, and they were the only homes they had. The troops lived in their thousands out in the desert...The ideal kept before the men by the workers in Cairo was the ideal of a home away from home...the YMCA was doing a work that perhaps no other organisation could have done."<sup>129</sup>

The British Soldiers' Café, the Maadi Soldiers' Club, the Cairo Soldiers' Recreation Club, and the extensive work of the YMCA across the military camps in Egypt, established bases of recreation for the Imperial soldiers and effectively turned a fair number of them from loneliness, boredom, drunkenness and misconduct.

### *Outings and sports*

Britons in Cairo also established the Convalescent Outings Society in order to promote "excursions to the various beauty spots and show places of Cairo and the neighbourhood, for the benefit of the sick and wounded soldiers"<sup>130</sup> as well as diverting idle soldiers from drink and violence. The excursions included visits to the Delta Barrages, Zoological Gardens, Aquarium, Pyramids, Citadel, El-Ezbekiyya skating rink, the Egyptian Museum and the Ostrich Farm.<sup>131</sup> The Society even "erected a canteen, with stores and accommodations for as large a number as 300 men, at the Delta Barrage, where good food is provided for them during the day."<sup>132</sup> Perhaps more so than outings, sporting leagues and tournaments captured the loyalty, participation and attention of many Imperial soldiers. Judging by the vast numbers of soldiers who played or watched, football was likely the most popular sport for the Imperial rank and file; perhaps because football enthusiasm was an important part of working-class culture.<sup>133</sup> Football

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<sup>127</sup>Ibid.

<sup>128</sup>Ibid., 10/07/1917.

<sup>129</sup>Ibid., 26/04/1915.

<sup>130</sup>Ibid., 25/01/1916.

<sup>131</sup>Ibid.

<sup>132</sup>Ibid., 25/01/1916.

<sup>133</sup>Winter, p.196.

tournaments were arranged regularly between British, Australian and New Zealand military divisions.<sup>134</sup> At times, proceeds from ticket sales to football matches were used to raise funds for soldiers in need. For example, a big football match between expert players from England and Scotland was held on 16 March 1916 at the Egyptian State Railway Institute in aid of the Convalescent Outings Fund.<sup>135</sup> Fourteen teams formed the Military Football League. Each team represented a different department within the military apparatus such as the military headquarters, the military police, the hospital staffs, Australian troops, Welsh troops and the Royal Army Medical Corps.<sup>136</sup> Besides football, there was a cricket league that brought together competitors and sportsmen from Britain, Australia and New Zealand and other countries of the Empire. Boxing matches, rugby, field hockey, horse races, and athletics tournaments were arranged as well.<sup>137</sup> Outings and sports were able to divert some of the troops' energy and attention away from vice whilst they recovered or waited for their next military assignment.

### *Lectures*

As aforementioned, lectures were one of the many activities, used by the YMCA and its most successful club, the Cairo Soldiers Recreation Club to channel the troops away from drunkenness and violence. Lectures were also designed to educate the idle soldiers and to challenge their minds. Topics included 'A 1000 miles on horse-back through Asiatic Turkey',<sup>138</sup> 'The Nile: From Central Africa to the Mediterranean',<sup>139</sup> 'General Gordon and the siege of Khartoum' and 'Christianity in Egypt during the First Six Centuries'.<sup>140</sup> Usually well-received, lectures by specialists and prominent members of the British community, combined with plays, concerts, clubs, outings and sports were organised to entertain idle and convalescing soldiers and diverting them from alcohol and unruly behaviour. During the war, the British men in Cairo participated in different roles such as soldiers in the European front or in Pharaoh's Foot, or in indispensable positions of employment. British women served as nurses, hostesses and volunteers to assist in the

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<sup>134</sup>Egyptian Gazette, 25/02/1915.

<sup>135</sup>*Ibid.*, 14/03/1916.

<sup>136</sup>*Ibid.*, 06/11/1916.

<sup>137</sup>*Ibid.*, 01/02/1915.

<sup>138</sup>*Ibid.*, 29/01/1915.

<sup>139</sup>*Ibid.*, 01/02/1915.

war effort and to care for the wounded soldiers from the Gallipoli defeat. Britons in Cairo also set up various committees and organisations in order to entertain idle and convalescing soldiers and to keep them away from misconduct.

### **Conflict between the British community in Cairo and government policy**

Having already mentioned the different roles of British men, women and committees during World War I, this chapter now turns to examining the conflicts that certain members of the British community had with official government policy at the time.

#### ***The Requisition of Victoria College and the non-requisition of the Gezira Club***

As aforementioned, the British military authorities requisitioned many large buildings during the war and the Victoria College of Alexandria was no exception. As explained in the chapter on 'symbols', the Victoria College attempted to import the best of English public school education into Egypt. At the outset of the war, Mr. Lias, the headmaster, was adamant that the school should remain on its premises since any alternative would damage the success of the school. Even before the official request for requisition, Mr. Lias, wrote to Sir John Maxwell, commander of the military forces in Egypt, on 10th of December 1914, to plead his case against the requisition of the college.

"I do not think it is generally understood how difficult it would be to carry on a boarding school (we have 53 boarders) in a provisional building. First of all there are the dormitory arrangements, then there is the question of a dining hall, not to mention the difficulty and perhaps impossibility of arranging for games, which are necessary for the boys' health, and such lessons as physics and chemistry, which need special classrooms."<sup>141</sup>

Mr. Lias wrote further to Sir Henry McMahon, British High Commissioner in Egypt on the eve of the requisition of Victoria College.

"Until it is shown that there are not equally great and perhaps even more suitable buildings available for a military hospital in Alexandria; I do not think that we ought to forget that we are morally bound by our engagement to the parents of our pupils."<sup>142</sup>

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<sup>140</sup>*Ibid.*, 08/04/1916 and 12/05/1916.

<sup>141</sup>FO141/512/608: 13/04/1915 letter from Mr. Lias to Sir Henry McMahon quoting letter from Lias to Maxwell on 10/12/1914.

<sup>142</sup>*Ibid.*, 13/04/1915, letter from Lias to McMahon.

Lias sent his final demand to the Victoria College Council urging its members not to allow the military to requisition its building.

"It is impossible to find buildings in any way comparable to those that we now occupy. Nothing can be found in any respect equal to the present dormitories (with their sanitary installations and arrangements for supervision), classrooms, physical and chemical laboratories, reading-rooms and kitchen. It will be equally impossible to find suitable playgrounds. Further, if the change must be made, the most suitable building for the school's needs is now in the occupation of the Survey Department, while the old playground has been encroached upon by temporary buildings. Lastly the highly important matter of dormitory supervision, cannot be properly arranged for. In these circumstances and for the reasons stated above, I am in the opinion that the Council should not spontaneously offer our buildings to the military authorities as a hospital. I think, on the contrary, that before this is done, every other available building should be submitted for their approval."<sup>143</sup>

Even with Lias' lengthy and articulate argument against the requisition, Victoria College was taken over by the military. Sir Maxwell confirmed to McMahon from the Army Headquarters that "I am afraid we must take up...Victoria College...[It] is the only possible building in Alexandria which will take 1000 beds."<sup>144</sup> And as expected, the requisition was very damaging to the continued success of the school.

The Victoria College was moved to the Egyptian Survey Department building near the Ramleh Railway Station in Alexandria. But the Survey Department, as Lias anticipated, did not have enough room for the various classrooms that the school required. For example, the College sought the use one of the sheds outside the main building as a chemistry classroom. Yet, the Survey Department refused this request stating that the sheds were needed for the storage of heavy iron and other articles. Although the Chairman of the College urged the High Commissioner to "invite the Survey Department to find some other storage accommodation"<sup>145</sup>, the ongoing problem of lack of quantity and quality of facilities persisted. Chemistry and physics were taught elsewhere as Headmaster Lias explained a year after the requisition:

"Our difficulties have not diminished and new ones have been added. I understand the necessity of providing proper accommodation for the sick and wounded, but I much regret that at our temporary buildings, which we have now occupied for more than a year, we have had to abandon almost entirely two such important subjects as chemistry and physics. [Our] application for a loan from the Ministry of

<sup>143</sup>Ibid., 13/04/1915 memo from Lias to Council.

<sup>144</sup>FO141/512/608: 16/04/1915 letter from Maxwell to McMahon.

<sup>145</sup>FO141/512/608: 12/06/1918 letter from Arthur Preston, Chairman of Victoria College Committee to General Wingate, High Commissioner.

Education for science laboratories [was] unsuccessful, so with the kindness of the Headmaster of St. Mark's Coptic School, two of our boys are getting lessons in chemistry and physics."<sup>146</sup>

Besides the lack of space, the school also suffered financially. By the spring of 1916, it had a deficit of £E 200 to £E 300 largely due to the reduction of student boarders. There were 64 boarders in March, 1914; yet only 40 boarders in 1916. Though there was a slight increase in the number of day-only students, the resulting financial increase could not cover the monetary shortfall of losing nearly a third of the boarders due primarily to the requisition of the old building and the inadequacy of the new premise.<sup>147</sup> The conflict between Mr. Lias and the British military authorities is an example of the different opinions and conflict that took place within the British community in Egypt during the war.

It may be observed that the British military command was willing to reduce the quality of education at Victoria College but were not willing to give up their leisurely pursuits at the Gezira Club. Indeed, the most prominent location that the British military did not requisition was the Gezira Club, most likely because the British commercial, political and military leaders needed it for relaxation and refreshment. One British observer blames the selfishness of the British leadership for preventing the Gezira Club from being requisitioned.

"I cannot understand why this great area in Gezireh has not been requisitioned by the military. What a splendid hospital camp or convalescent camp it would make. What an improvement it would be on a place like Luna Park. However, there is no hope of the members of the Club making such a sacrifice; were they ladies it would have been offered long ago, but men are selfish....I understand that the cream of the members have gone home to join the army and that only the old, infirm, and don't want to fight members are left. Are they not ready to sacrifice something to save wounded men being accommodated in places like the verandahs of Luna Park or the dormitories of the Citadel?"<sup>148</sup>

In other words, not all the best or most suitable places were requisitioned, especially if it was the Gezira Club - the sacred playground for the British military and political elite. Hence the requisition of Victoria College and the non-requisition of the Gezira Club represents an area of conflicting opinion within the British community in Egypt during the First World War.

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<sup>146</sup>FO141/512/608: 15/05/1916 letter Lias to McMahon.

<sup>147</sup>Ibid.

*The issuing of tax-free war bonds*

Besides the various aforementioned fund-raising schemes set up by the British community, the British government also sought to raise funds for the war effort by selling British Government Exchequer Bonds. The criteria for the purchase of the bonds with tax exemption status alienated and angered certain members of the British community in Egypt. The bonds were designated as tax-free investments for the patriotic buyer who would make money on the interest accrued. The purchase of these bonds was highly recommended by the British Chamber of Commerce but some small investors found the investment restricting and disadvantageous. The first problem for the small investor was the restriction of the amount of his purchase from outside Britain. One prospective investor from the British community in Egypt wanted to buy bonds worth only £5 or £10 and was willing to pay through a standing order to the British Government each month. However, bonds were not available in Egypt in such small amounts, though they were available in Britain. Overseas investors were invited to buy bonds ranging at least from £50 to £100. Since this investor only had £5 or £10 per month for the purchase of the bonds, he could not pay for them outside British soil. Only two arrangements were open to him. He could either pay a bank in Egypt to send his £5 home every month or he could pay a bank in England to purchase his £5 bond. Either way, he needed to pay again for postage and insurance on his bond to be sent safely to England.<sup>149</sup> Needless to say, this investor was unhappy with additional spending on postage and insurance and found the purchase of smaller bonds from overseas an inconvenient and expensive burden. In his own words,

"If the 'old country' [Britain] needs money surely she could put bonds in her Dominions - Protectorates or what you will - that I and many, many thousands, and tens of thousands of individuals, may step into a consulate, a Post Office, or a Bank, and exchange cash for bonds....[I appeal to readers to explain how] an individual with a small monthly income (exceeding by...say...£15 his actual out of pocket requirements) - can obtain bonds, loans or anything else that the Chancellor or Exchequer has for sale."<sup>150</sup>

Unfortunately for this prospective investor, the reply that he received from K.P. Birley of the British Chamber of Commerce was simply to take the trouble and invest anyway for

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<sup>148</sup>Egyptian Gazette, 12/06/1915.

<sup>149</sup>*Ibid.*, 09/05/1916.

<sup>150</sup>*Ibid.*

the good of Britain's war effort. Birley argues, "Does not the patriotic nature of the call appeal to all Britishers and encourage them to take a little trouble where necessary, in which I am sure, their bankers will help them."<sup>151</sup>

Even more disheartening for Britons in Egypt who wanted to invest in Exchequer Bonds was a response from the Chancellor himself hinting that they were not allowed to invest in foreign accounts or economies:

"I regard it as contrary to the national interest that, during the war, remittances should be made from this country for investment abroad in any form whatever. Monies accrued abroad to British subjects and firms...[should be] brought back...to invest in British securities."<sup>152</sup>

Hence any British investor who wanted to utilise the interest gained in bonds in Britain for his business in Egypt would be told by the banks that he was not allowed to do so; further stifling the purchase of bonds in Egypt.

Most disappointing to Britons in Egypt who hoped to invest in the tax-free bonds was the requirement imposed by the British government that if they wanted to purchase the bonds, they would have to declare their intention of never returning to Britain again. Only a permanent non-resident of Britain was allowed to obtain the tax exemption on the bonds. One potential investor explained his frustration over the need to assure the authorities that he was in perpetual exile in Egypt in order to obtain tax-free status and ever denying himself the greatest longing he had in life which was to return to Britain to reside in retirement. By purchasing tax-free bonds, he "must never again indulge in the hope, which ninety-nine out of every hundred Anglo-Egyptians cherish, that the happy day will come when he can spend his declining years among his relations and friends at home."<sup>153</sup> To declare one's permanent non-residency and then to return to Britain was a probably a fate even more punishing than not being allowed to retire in Britain. To renege on permanent non-resident status in Britain meant that one had to end up paying the tax accrued over the years with interest to the British Government upon one's return to Britain for retirement or whatever reason. The same British resident in Egypt described this frightening prospect in this way:

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<sup>151</sup>Ibid., 16/05/1916.

<sup>152</sup>Ibid., 10/05/1916.

"...after having invested in these Bonds, should he go back on his declaration and after many years decide to make his home in England either in order to retire or because he has obtained an appointment at home, the unfortunate and patriotic investor in such securities will, as soon as he lands on his native shores, find himself called upon to pay a quarter of his capital probably representing the arrears of income tax on these Bonds extending over years. He may have very little money and may have spent all his interest from such investments on educating his children, or he may have lost it through unprofitable business transactions, and then he will find the inexorable Income Tax gatherers selling him up and reducing him to ruin. This is the alternative to perpetual exile which will await the poor Britisher, who out of patriotism has invested his money in these Bonds. The Government will have no pity in taking its pound of flesh."<sup>154</sup>

The prospect of never living in Britain again was to be avoided at all costs for most Britons overseas. Even K.P. Birley of the British Chamber of Commerce asked, "However patriotic we may be, are we to declare that we will never live in England again as a price for such an investment?"<sup>155</sup> Not surprisingly, this predicament discouraged many potential patrons in the British community in Egypt from investing in Exchequer Bonds. Therefore, investors, among the British in Egypt, who wanted to retire to Britain were at odds with the British government over the permanent non-residency required to be eligible for the tax-exemption. Certain Britons in Egypt differed from the opinions of the British authorities over the requisition of Victoria College, the non-requisition of the Gezira Club and the criteria needed to be eligible for the purchase of tax-free British Government Exchequer Bonds.

### **The Various Economic effects of the War on the British Community in Egypt**

In this discussion of the diversity of challenges and responses that Britons in Cairo faced during World War I, it is important to mention the wide range of economic effects that the community encountered. There was a remarkable mixture of an economic boom, missed opportunities and hardship due to rising costs. As for the Egyptians, they were met with increasing economic struggles as a result of the war.

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<sup>153</sup>Ibid., 29/05/1916.

<sup>154</sup>Ibid.

<sup>155</sup>Ibid.

### *Economic Boom*

The mass influx of Imperial troops at the outset of the war created an economic boom in Egypt. The significance of the boom, however, can be seen even more clearly in contrast to the short yet severe economic depression that preceded it. Due to the war, there was a sudden cessation of the large influx of visitors to Egypt during the winter tourist season. Almost overnight, "the numerous large hotels of Cairo and Alexandria, the expensive shops, the principal dealers in oriental...rugs, and wares of various kinds..[were] confronted with the possibility of ruin."<sup>156</sup>

"The streets of Cairo, at the beginning of November 1914, when the early winter visitors [would normally] begin to arrive...and the 'Savoy' and other of the more luxurious hotels...re-open, [presented] the mournful and deserted appearance which [characterised] them at the height of summer. Numbers of the best shops and hotels remained barred and shuttered, and scarcely any motors or other vehicles were observable in the streets...The whole town...seemed hushed and deadened."<sup>157</sup>

Though Greeks, Levantines and other non-British Europeans ran many of these businesses, British businesses undoubtedly suffered as well during the general economic downturn in Egypt during those initial months of the war. However, just as abrupt as the economic decline was the speed and enormity of the unprecedented boom that followed. By the spring of 1915, the departed troops (to the European theatre of war) were replaced by two infantry divisions<sup>158</sup> and a cavalry brigade dispatched from India whose task was to defend the Suez Canal. At the same time, three divisions of infantry, the 42nd East Lancashire Territorial Force, and two divisions from Australia and New Zealand, were given the task of undergoing training to prepare for battle. Lord Kitchener, Secretary of War, had originally intended to use the Australasian troops to fight in Europe but there was not enough accommodation for them in Britain. Thus they were assigned to train in Egypt instead and were later directed to fight in the Middle

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<sup>156</sup>*Ibid.*, 04/09/1917, Malcolm McIlwraith's reflections.

<sup>157</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>158</sup>Elgood, p.115. The two Indian Infantry divisions were the 10th and 21st divisions of the Indian Expeditionary Force).

Eastern theatre of war.<sup>159</sup> The British "turned Egypt into an immense transit camp, supply and training ground."<sup>160</sup> Under the central command of Lieutenant-General Sir John Maxwell, who was ultimately accountable to Lord Kitchener,<sup>161</sup> the troops, numbering 40,000<sup>162</sup> by the spring of 1915, poured into Cairo, Alexandria and Port Said. Huge camps were set up for them. They not only saved hotels, shops, and touring and transportation businesses from bankruptcy but also compensated for the loss of the initial months of the war.

This economic boom was accompanied by the enormous spending power of the soldiers. Cairo "that began to bemoan and lament the coming misery [caused by the war]...acquired an army of military tourists that [spent] £E 3000 to £E 5000 a day."<sup>163</sup> Certain "English regiments contained some of the greatest peers, and richest men in England [and]...wealthy Australians and New Zealanders, too squandered their money in profusion."<sup>164</sup> Lady Rochdale records that the Australians "all [seemed] very rich, they [did] not mind what they paid for...[for] anything."<sup>165</sup> An average Australian trooper was paid two shillings per day whilst the entire monthly salary of a private in the Scottish infantry was only four shillings and two pence.<sup>166</sup> The Australians received the "highest pay given to privates in any army...[and] on top of that each man had seven and half pence over and above the British scale of rations."<sup>167</sup> Moreover, "Australian junior officers' pay was greater than in the British Army."<sup>168</sup> For all the suffering and pain that the Gallipoli campaign brought about for the British and Australian armies, it was partially offset by the ongoing payment of enormous sums in salary and the subsequent spending of this money in Egypt.

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<sup>159</sup>Marquess of Anglesey, *A History of the British Cavalry, 1816-1919: Vol. V: Egypt, Palestine and Syria, 1914 to 1919* (London: Leo Cooper, 1994), p.3.

<sup>160</sup>Brian Porter, "Britain and the Middle East in the Great War", in Peter Liddle, ed., *Home Fires and Foreign Fields: British Social and Military Experience in the First World War* (London: Brassey's Defence Publishers, 1985), p.162.

<sup>161</sup>MacMunn, p.13.

<sup>162</sup>Egyptian Gazette, 12/02/1915. Porter, p.162. There were 70,000 Imperial soldiers in Egypt in 1915 (including Indians and other Westerners). By the end of the war, the figure approaches 300,000.

<sup>163</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>164</sup>*Ibid.*, 04/09/1917.

<sup>165</sup>Rochdale, 26/01/1915.

<sup>166</sup>Anglesey, p.3.

<sup>167</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>168</sup>*Ibid.*, p.14.

"All the accumulated arrears of money that were paid out to the Anzacs [Australian and New Zealand forces] and the British troops who had been fighting for months at Gallipoli came in a great windfall to Cairo and Alexandria.....They had come out of the jaws of death, they might be returning there at any moment, and they made the most of the present, as only soldiers can...Egypt must have reaped a rich harvest from the Army...most of the money [was] spent in Alexandria and Cairo."<sup>169</sup>

The imperial troops, particularly the Australians with their free spending attitudes, filled the streets of Cairo and Alexandria with "a good deal of spare time and plenty of money. [They] monopolised every bar, music-hall, picture palace, and dancing hall, and almost wholly replaced the civilian element [in Cairo and Alexandria]."<sup>170</sup> They "squandered enormous sums on worthless 'souvenirs', on trinkets and handkerchiefs for their lady-loves, and in interminable drinks and drives."<sup>171</sup> They bought huge amounts of "food for themselves and fodder for their animals."<sup>172</sup> For the Cairo or Alexandrian businessman, European or native, times were better "than any he [had] ever known."<sup>173</sup> Thus "for the most part, the inhabitants, both native and foreign, [made] profit out of the war."<sup>174</sup>

Besides the profits gained through the troops' spending power, the economic boom also facilitated a rise in construction and the opening of new businesses during the war. The new Banco di Roma building, housing the Vaccum Oil Company, and the new Imperial Ottoman Bank building were erected in Cairo.<sup>175</sup> "Some fifty new bars and taverns were opened...in [just] six weeks,"<sup>176</sup> many new English bookshops were established during this period as well.

"The large quantities of English books for sale and the number of new bookshops that have sprung up, mostly stocked with light literature in English...[is] one of the most patent signs of the presence of English troops in Egypt...Van loads of...novels and other popular books...are ordered at regular intervals....The hundred of thousands of British and overseas troops in Egypt are insistent upon a supply of light and readable literature."<sup>177</sup>

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<sup>169</sup> Briggs, p.27.

<sup>170</sup>Egyptian Gazette, 12/02/1915.

<sup>171</sup>Briggs, p.27.

<sup>172</sup> Nelson,, p.76.

<sup>173</sup>Egyptian Gazette, 12/02/1915.

<sup>174</sup> Caillard, p.189.

<sup>175</sup>Egyptian Gazette, 10/10/1915.

<sup>176</sup>ibid., 12/02/1915.

<sup>177</sup>ibid., 10/11/1916.

Further, to refresh the tired shopper, tea gardens such as Alexandria's New English Tea Gardens, under the management of an English lady, were established to provide a place of respite, away from the heat and dust.<sup>178</sup> The building boom in Cairo and Alexandria not only provided facilities for businesses to function but comfort for customers as well.

### *Missed Opportunities*

Despite the economic boom, British businessmen in Egypt missed the opportunity to capitalise on new restrictions imposed on German and Austrian businessmen during the war. Soon after war was declared on Germany, the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the Ottoman Empire, the British authorities implemented martial law. Martial law was important in order to:

“override the Capitulations...in the first place...which would otherwise have kept the [British controlled] Egyptian government as powerless as before to take effective action against European foreigners. Under the umbrella of martial law however, it could control the businesses of firms suspected of trading with the enemy [and] take over firms of enemy nationality.”<sup>179</sup>

The imposition of martial law also allowed the British authorities to sequester German and Austrian homes for military service<sup>180</sup> and to freeze German and Austrian assets.<sup>181</sup> There were also prohibitions on "German ships entering Egyptian harbours; Egyptian ships entering German harbours; [the] import of German goods into Egypt; [and the] exports of all goods [from Egypt] to German ports."<sup>182</sup> British forces were permitted to capture enemy ships in Egyptian harbours and all Egyptian ports were closed to German shipping.<sup>183</sup> In light of these restrictions on German and Austrian assets and businesses and the anticipation of more favourable economic conditions due to the establishment of the British Protectorate, British businessmen were hopeful that the new political realities

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<sup>178</sup>*Ibid.*, 02/04/1916.

<sup>179</sup> J.C.B. Richmond, *Egypt, 1798-1952: Her Advance Towards a Modern Identity*, (London: Methuen and Co., Ltd., 1977), p. 172.

<sup>180</sup> Egyptian Gazette, 04/09/1917.

<sup>181</sup> Raafat, *Maadi*, p.47. For example, the German Luthy family and the Austro-Hungarian Lichtenstern and Scheynoha families had their assets sequestered and properties taken over by the British military.

<sup>182</sup> Sir Alex William Keown-Boyd, memoirs 09/08/1914 records letter from R.H. Dunn, Legal Secretary in Khartoum to Private Sec of Governor-General in Khartoum (in St. Antony's College, Oxford University, Middle East Centre)

<sup>183</sup>*Ibid.*

would translate into greater profitability. Early in 1915, the British Chamber of Commerce issued a statement articulating this new found confidence and hopefulness.

"With the change in the status of Egypt and the approaching abolition of the Capitulations and the unification of the courts of law, the establishment of better conditions for traders in this country may be awaited with confidence...Under the new order of things it is to be hoped that British manufacturers will take every opportunity to consolidate their position in the Protectorate, and those who have been deterred in the past from doing business in Egypt, by the unsatisfactory position of creditors before the courts - and they are by no means few in number - will make further efforts to gain a footing in this country."<sup>184</sup>

This new energy and buoyancy among the British businessmen of Egypt produced several new initiatives. The minutes of the 1915 annual meeting of the British Chamber of Commerce in Cairo clearly stated that "active measures [were] now being taken by the Committee of the Cairo Chamber to render itself more useful than in the past to businessmen in this country as well as to English manufacturers."<sup>185</sup> As part of this commitment to greater usefulness, two committees, one in Cairo and another in Alexandria, were set up by the Chambers of Commerce in both cities, "to study the question of how best British interests in Egypt [were to] be promoted and developed"<sup>186</sup> under the new Protectorate. As a sign of this active attempt to improve British business interests in Egypt, a committee was established to form a business reference library in Egypt in order to assist British businessmen. The committee consisted of the most experienced members of the British Chamber of Commerce in Egypt - J.W. Eady, W.D. Hart, W.E. Kingsford, M. Setton, J.B. Mason and Legal Adviser J. Grech Mifsud.<sup>187</sup> Lastly, after hosting a banquet every few years, the Chamber also committed itself to staging a banquet annually. The increased frequency of these banquets would bring "the official and commercial communities into closer touch"<sup>188</sup> since the Chamber felt that its members would be most "able, willing and...competent to advise [the Government] on all commercial matters [since they] have been here [in Egypt] for many years,...knew the language and country, the peculiar methods of the natives, and...each [had] an intimate practical knowledge of his own particular business."<sup>189</sup> Greater involvement with

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<sup>184</sup>Egyptian Gazette, 11/01/1915.

<sup>185</sup>*Ibid.*, 27/02/1915.

<sup>186</sup>*Ibid.*, 11/01/1915 and 27/02/1915.

<sup>187</sup>*Ibid.*, 27/02/1915.

<sup>188</sup>*Ibid.*, 26/04/1915, speech by President H.K. Baynes of the British Chamber of Commerce in Egypt at the Chamber's annual banquet.

<sup>189</sup>*Ibid.*

government departments and initiatives would allow British businessmen to maximise the relationship for commercial gain. However, in spite of this new hopefulness for prosperity, the British sense of fairness manifested by the reluctance to totally crush German and Austrian businesses seem to have hindered British businessmen in Egypt from accumulating greater profit.

For instance, High Commissioner McMahon's speech at the British Chamber of Commerce in 1915 indicated that Britain was just one player in the global marketplace of Egypt. He argued that a fair trading environment was crucial to economic credibility and growth.

"The British Protectorate would not be used to push unduly British interests at the expense of...other nations. It would benefit all interests by assuring a greater security and other advantages hitherto lacking. This would attract British capital and so give a fresh impulse to British trade in the country. Egypt, has now the advantage of an able and enlightened ruler, who was anxious to promote all industrial interests."<sup>190</sup>

Inasmuch as McMahon was committed to fair play, he assured the businessmen that "British prospects...were very bright and [promised] the British Chamber of Commerce in Egypt that he was ready to render them every reasonable assistance and support."<sup>191</sup>

Not only did the British Government not guarantee any economic advantage to British businessmen, British businesses were also slow to eliminate German and Austrian competition in Egypt. One British businessman lamented:

"Unfortunately, English commission houses in Egypt are not numerous; therefore, no great pressure can be brought upon the British Chamber of Commerce, which is content to go on in the same old drowsy manner and does not seem to realise that German and Austrian trade, which had a very strong footing in Egypt before the war, must be substituted by British trade, and *not find the market open to them immediately after the war.*"<sup>192</sup>

The commission houses, instead, were turning to America to replace German and Austrian goods. Surely, "a preference would be given to British goods if some energy were displayed by the British Chamber of Commerce and active steps were taken to put

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<sup>190</sup>Ibid., 26/04/1915, McMahon's speech at British Chamber of Commerce in Egypt banquet.

<sup>191</sup>Ibid.

<sup>192</sup>Ibid., 25/01/1916 (emphasis mine).

the British manufacturer in close touch with the responsible commission houses here."<sup>193</sup> Even though there seemed to be a revival of vigour among some British businessmen in the Chamber of Commerce, the leaders of the Chamber were only part-time in their commitment to the Chamber. Plus, they were mostly exporters and not importers...and so were not deeply interested in the vacuum left open by German and Austrian manufacturers.

More remarkably, though much of German and Austrian business activities and assets were frozen, some continued to engage in trade. The Government permitted certain German companies to carry on trade only if they were locally controlled by non-German partners, allowed to trade only in Egypt with Britain and its Allies, and licensed only to trade for the purpose of liquidation.<sup>194</sup> The Courts allowed non-German partners of companies with German owners in Egypt to continue the business so as not to hurt the businessmen of non-enemy states – Egyptians or Europeans.<sup>195</sup> Astonishingly, one such company, whose capital was mainly German and whose directors were mostly German, was allowed "to make profits out of contracts with the British Army."<sup>196</sup> Slack to destroy all of German trade and commerce in Egypt, the British Government may have allowed some Germans to prosper through the continuation of their businesses in Egypt. This may have economically benefited Germany and thus increased Germany's propensity and viability in the war effort.

Ironically, even given the opportunity at the time to replace German and Austrian businesses in Egypt with British traders due to the restriction and inactivity of enemy businesses, the British Government combined with a reluctant British Chamber of Commerce seemed to have done little to this effect. When asked by one British visitor whether the British Chamber of Commerce in Egypt had "taken any steps in the matter of bringing pressure to bear on the authorities on the scandal of enemy firms,"<sup>197</sup> one prominent British businessman replied, "with a shrug of the shoulders that as far as he was aware the Chamber had done nothing in this matter, and as for the idea of bringing

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<sup>193</sup>Ibid.

<sup>194</sup>Ibid., 22/02/1916.

<sup>195</sup> Hoyle, p. 100.

<sup>196</sup>Egyptian Gazette, 14/01/1916.

<sup>197</sup>Ibid.

pressure to bear on the authorities on such a matter or anything else, it was inconceivable that that institution would ever think of such a daring and audacious policy."<sup>198</sup> Hence, the British sense of fairness demonstrated by a reluctance to eliminate German and Austrian business interests in Egypt during the war, seemed to have strangled any economic advantage the British had as sole protectors of a new political reality in Egypt at the onset of the First World War. Though there may have been an economic boom for certain British and European businessmen during the war, they could have profited even more if the British government and the British Chamber of Commerce were more aggressive about eliminating German and Austrian competition.

***The high standard of living and the unfortunate rise in cost of living***

Accompanying the economic boom, Cairo became a centre of prosperity and abundance for the British and foreign communities, and the standard of living inevitably rose as well. One child member of the British community in Egypt during this time commented after a trip to Khartoum:

"Cairo...was cool and fresh....It was heavenly to get home at last....to find a well laid table with cold ham and tomatoes for breakfast with butter in a gleaming silver dish with an ice compartment in it. Real butter! In Khartoum, it came up once a week on the mail train, was in a tin and was always semi-liquid by the time it reached us and it always tasted rancid."<sup>199</sup>

In many parts of Cairo, well-dressed shop owners and well-dressed people in carriages were easily noticed.<sup>200</sup> As one visitor observed, "of all the various war centres, [Egypt] is decidedly the safest and most comfortable [place] to be in, and of all the capitals within the war zone, Cairo [is the best] for order and comfort."<sup>201</sup> The missionary Temple Gairdner affirms this by saying: "Egypt has been one of the safest and quietest lands on earth during the war, thanks to the overwhelming nature of the defense which the British Government saw right to bestow on the key of the Empire."<sup>202</sup> Safety, comfort and prosperity, essential hallmarks of a high standard of living, characterised Egypt during the Great War.

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<sup>198</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>199</sup>Mrs. G.M.A. Horsford, memoirs, Imperial War Museum.

<sup>200</sup>Egyptian Gazette, 10/10/1915.

<sup>201</sup>*Ibid.*, 15/03/1916.

<sup>202</sup>Temple Gairdner, *Church Missionary Review*, Vol. LXIII, 1916, writing from Cairo, 26/08/1916.

However, coupled with a high standard of living was an unfortunate high cost of living for the British and the other inhabitants of Egypt. A report by the National Bank of Egypt claims that the cost of living index doubled from 1914 to 1918, from 100 to 202.<sup>203</sup> Due to the increased cost of fuel and food, the Turf Club significantly raised its prices in 1917. The Club raised the cost of its dinners by 2 piastres while the cost of tea rose by 1 piastre. A fee for use of a table was 2 and a half piastres charged to non-members of the Club. The Club's normal annual expenditure for coal in 1914 was £E 200, but by 1916, it was £500 and by 1917, it was £E 800.<sup>204</sup> During the war, rents increased from 20 to 50% (in some cases by 85%)<sup>205</sup> and food stuffs by 92% in Cairo from July 1914 until May 1918, and by 116% in Alexandria during the same period.<sup>206</sup> Astonishingly, salaries of government officials increased only on the average of 10 to 20%.<sup>207</sup> After paying out all the essential costs, a government official and his family were left with little money for recreation and amusement which was "necessary for these hard times."<sup>208</sup> Needless to say, the sharp price rise presented grave challenges for British businesses in Egypt as well. Arthur Blunt, the interim manager of the Anglo-Egyptian Bank, in his letter to his manager in London, gives a glimpse of how businesses responded to the high cost of living facing their employees.

"Our Minet el Basal staff (near Alexandria)...complaining of the difficulty of making both ends meet owing to the further rise in the cost of living. Some of the lower paid married men must be feeling it and I suggested that I might be allowed to give the most deserving men up to £10 each. I have since heard that special war bonuses have been granted in several offices, the National Bank have I know done something, and the Credit Lyonnais have just inquired whether we had done the same so I suppose they have received complaints too, so perhaps my suggestion does not go far enough. Everything has gone up tremendously of late."<sup>209</sup>

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<sup>203</sup>*National Bank of Egypt, 1898-1948, 50th Anniversary Report* (Cairo: N.B.E. Printing Press, 1948), p. 51.

<sup>204</sup>*Egyptian Gazette*, 03/05/1918.

<sup>205</sup>*Ibid.*, 01/06/1918.

<sup>206</sup>*Ibid.*, 26/07/1918.

<sup>207</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>208</sup>*Ibid.*, 01/06/1918.

<sup>209</sup>Letter from Arthur Blunt to Coombs, 07/06/1917, Barclays Group Archives.

Though the Great War provided some Britons in Egypt with great economic benefit, it was also a time when certain members of the British community in Cairo suffered due to "the...cost of living in Egypt...[being] exceptionally high."<sup>210</sup>

### *The suffering of Egyptians throughout the war*

Though the British community in Egypt experienced an economic boom, missed opportunities and financial hardship due to the sharp rise in cost of living experience of many Egyptians during the war was by and large catastrophic. Besides the aforementioned high cost of living which affected Egyptians as well, they resented the immoral behaviour of the Australian troops and considered them "wild beast and only partially human."<sup>211</sup> Moreover, Egyptians faced serious food shortages due to the increased food exports, decline in food imports, lack of nitrate fertiliser imports for crops (since the production of explosives for the war effort needed nitrate)<sup>212</sup>, and the mass requisition of local food for Imperial troops.<sup>213</sup> Their camels, horses, donkeys and mules needed for haulage, transportation and industry were also requisitioned by the Imperial troops.<sup>214</sup> Worst, by 1917 Egyptian men were being conscripted into the Egyptian Labour Corps and the Camel Transport Corps to serve in Palestine. By the end of the war, 1.5 million Egyptians had been recruited into the British military machine. The Egyptian recruit "was being forcibly taken away from his land, home and family to serve as a labourer for troops fighting a war in defence of a foreign king and country and against the Ottoman Sultan and Caliph of Islam."<sup>215</sup> As the notable Egyptian historian, Abd al-Rahman al-Rafa'i observes:

"From the soldiers came hurtful and disreputable behaviour against the people – their possession, their persons and their livelihoods. So much that there was a deep effect of hatred towards the occupation and patronage...In the four years [of the war], the military authorities impounded the buildings, took over

<sup>210</sup>Letter from Carruthers to H.A. Richardson, chairman of AEB (1907-18) 27/01/1916, Barclays Group Archives.

<sup>211</sup>J. de Vere Loder, letter to his father, 27/02/1916, St. Antony's College, Oxford, as quoted in F. Lissauer, *British Policy Towards Egypt*, PhD Thesis, (University of London: London School of Economics, 1975), p. 90.

<sup>212</sup>Ellis Goldberg, "Peasants in Revolt – Egypt 1919," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 24 (1992), p. 264 (from pp. 261-280)

<sup>213</sup>Lissauer, p. 80.

<sup>214</sup>Goldberg, p. 271.

<sup>215</sup>P.J. Vatikiotis, *The Modern History of Egypt*, (London: Weidenfield and Nicolson, 1969), p. 245.

the grains, the harvest, the cotton, the food for the animals, the cattle, the trees (for firewood) and everything else. The English and Australian soldiers performed deeds against the Egyptians which caused them hatred and anger. The military authorities drafted a million workers in the Egyptian army and in their military campaigns, and many of them died in the killing fields."<sup>216</sup>

However difficult some of the economic challenges that faced the British community in Cairo, they paled in comparison with the hardship that many of the Egyptians faced. From their pain, the resentment and bitterness towards their British rulers increased the Egyptian resolve to remove Britain as rulers of Egypt in the subsequent post-war years.

### **Conclusion**

Among members of the British community in Cairo, there were a variety of roles, reactions and opinions with regards to the challenges that the First World War presented. Some British men joined the war effort in Europe while others stayed behind in key job situations. British women fulfilled the roles of volunteers, nurses and hostesses. Certain British men and women participated in Cairo high society. As for conflicting opinions during the war, some Britons in Egypt opposed the government's requisitioning of Victoria College whilst others disagreed with the criteria for tax-free war bonds. The British in Cairo also faced different economic predicaments as a result of the war. Some became very wealthy due to the economic boom, others missed opportunities to expand their businesses in light of the restrictions on German and Austrian firms, and yet others suffered due to the rapid rise in cost of living. In comparison, many Egyptians faced increased hardship and poverty throughout the war, which fuelled their resentment and bitterness against British rule as well as their pursuit of independence. And it is to this period of revolutionary change that this discussion now turns.

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<sup>216</sup> Abd al-Rahman al-Rafa'i, *Al-Tarāga' wa-l-intakās min al-ihtilāl ila thawra 1919*, (Cairo: Dar el-Ḥalāl, 1990), first published 1958, pp. 113 & 125.

## 7. The Community and the Revolutionary Period, 1919-1922

### Introduction

The previous chapter considered the differing roles and reactions of Britons in Cairo as they encountered the various challenges of the First World War. This discussion focuses on the diversity of challenges and responses that different members of the British community of Cairo faced during the final period of Britain's occupation of Egypt. After a brief glimpse at the causes and events of the 1919 Revolution until the declaration of independence in 1922, this chapter seeks to unravel the British community's vast array of problems and challenges during this time. These include the delay in demobilisation, the imminent abolition of the Capitulations, the pursuit of compensation in lieu of deaths or injuries, the threat of violent attacks and the accompanying economic downturn of the time.

### The origins and nature of the 1919 Revolution

As alluded to in the previous chapter, "nearly every segment of Egyptian society had reason to resent British rule and be receptive to renewed nationalist agitation...by the end of the First World War."<sup>1</sup> The Muslim majority in Egypt resented the defeat of the Ottoman Empire that resulted in British domination over Muslim holy sites in Arabia.<sup>2</sup> Large landowners were irritated by the British authorities' curtailing of cotton production for the sake of cereals and foodstuffs during the war – a policy that meant smaller profits for the landowners and food production for the British war effort. Moreover,

"the large landowners saw their interests as being further eroded later in the war when a Cotton Control Commission was formed and given wide-ranging powers, including the right to fix cotton prices and control the purchase of this crop from the producers. In early 1918 the Commission set the price of cotton at £42 per kantar, an act which infuriated the landowners, especially when the price of cotton in England began to rise significantly."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Joel Benin & Zachary Lockman, *Workers on the Nile: Nationalism, Communism, Islam and the Egyptian Working Class, 1882-1954*, (London: Tauris, 1988), p. 84.

<sup>2</sup> Sir Bertram Hornsby, of the National Bank of Egypt in Alexandria, private papers, Middle East Centre, St. Antony's College, University of Oxford, p. 5.

<sup>3</sup> John D. McIntyre, Jr., *The Boycott of the Milner Mission: A Study in Egyptian Nationalism*, (New York: Peter Lang, 1985), p. 9.

Besides alienated large landowners, educated Egyptian administrators and professionals were annoyed by their lack of job opportunities and promotions since the British authorities appeared to prefer younger, more inexperienced, less able and unsuitably behaved British officials. Sir Valentine Chirol, the Foreign Editor of the Times, affirmed this view when he pointed out that Egyptians were increasingly frustrated by the expanding volume of British personnel even in subordinate ranks of the government services while their efficiency, industry and manners deteriorated.<sup>4</sup> They were also angered by the amount of money channelled for the salaries of these second-rate British officials. One Egyptian articulated this frustration:

"a different class of Englishmen [has come] here to earn a living by competing with the educated Egyptians for posts and for work in which we have no need for them. Egypt requires experts only, and is not in need of such ordinary men, who arrive in crowds from England, and have no special abilities. Their presence here has been the cause of misunderstanding between the Egyptians and the English, and had the British Government known their real position, their bad acts and the prejudice they cause to British influence in Egypt, it would have sent them out of the country. These immigrants are the cause of dispute between the two nations, for they are similar to the guardian of a rich boy, who is frightened at the idea of the boy coming to age. They destroy every act which aims at proving the ability of the Egyptian. Is there any proof of good intentions to fit the Egyptian for self-government? We have proofs to the contrary, one of which is the the appointment of foreigners to posts under the Government, by groups of tens, although there are a great many educated natives who crowd public establishments killing time awaiting employment. These men are no doubt more capable than our masters the English .....The budget of the Government is now £E 30,000,000 of which the authorities availed themselves, without any justification for those enormous salaries to men of commonplace abilities whom the country has no need for. Education did not receive what money it ought to have received, while the country is in the hungriest possible condition for education and instruction. *The Egyptians are therefore right in claiming independence with the object of having a representative chamber to control such foolish expenditure from the funds of the nation*, which has been dealt with as if it were composed of trophies of past generations...Is it just that while the budget is of £E 30,000,000 money is still collected by subscriptions for works of public interest, such as ophthalmic hospitals?...Why pay such huge salaries and make such unnecessary expenses?"<sup>5</sup>

Moreover, reports in 1919 exposed the inefficiency, alleged corruption and dereliction of duty in the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Public Works and the Administration of Public Health in the Alexandria Municipality. Undoubtedly, this aroused further resentment towards the British authorities among educated Egyptian professionals who were eager and able to work in the civil service.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>Egyptian Gazette, 16/12/1919.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*, 23/09/1919, quoting from article in the Egyptian newspaper...Al-Ahram.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*, 17/12/1919.

However, most damaging for British rule in Egypt was not the resentment of the large landowners or the educated professionals, but the opposition of the peasantry.

“Fractiousness and indiscipline among the political elite was a familiar feature of the Occupation, and the British had come to expect violent rhetoric from the press and the threat of riots in the towns. But the upheaval in the countryside and a revolt of the fellahin...was an unexpected and wholly unwelcome novelty. The rural cultivators had long been thought of as the bedrock of Britain’s control of Egypt; their loyalty was thought to countervail the frothy nationalism of salon politicians in Cairo.”<sup>7</sup>

Peasants were bitter against the British authorities for requisitioning their animals and crops and for conscripting their sons for forced labour within the Allied forces of the Middle East. A severe food shortage, due to heavy Allied demands for food exports coupled with the decrease in foreign imports sent food prices skyrocketing while “wages of skilled labour [had] only advanced slightly.”<sup>8</sup> The limited supply of food combined with rapid inflation meant that “peasants had to tighten their belts and...had good reason to fear that they would go hungry in 1919.”<sup>9</sup> By this time, key sectors of Egyptian society – landowners, urban professionals and fellaheen – were frustrated to the point of demanding the end of the occupation. They had come to realise that during “the war years...the policies adopted by a colonial elite would place Egyptian interests – peasant, worker, or elite – well below the interests of the empire as whole.”<sup>10</sup> As long as Britain was in charge of Egypt, Egypt’s best interests were not to be served.

Nonetheless, Egypt’s disgruntled population needed a charismatic figurehead and centralised structure to inspire and organise its revolutionary course. Saad Zaghlul and his party, the Wafd, provided this need. Further, climatic events like revolutions are often caused by the fusion of underlying grievances and a trigger incident. The British government’s prohibition of Zaghlul and his colleagues from the Paris Peace Conference in early 1919 supplied such a trigger. Towards the end of the war in November 1918, American President Woodrow Wilson announced his Fourteen Points which was a list of recommendations for a more peaceful post-war world order. One of the points suggested that all subject peoples should be given the right of self-determination, “although

<sup>7</sup> John Darwin, p. 72.

<sup>8</sup> CMS papers, letter from J.L. MacIntyre, Assistant General Secretary of CMS Egypt to Rev. G.T. Manley, CMS leader in London, 26/04/1919.

<sup>9</sup> Goldberg, p. 262.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 276.

certainly referring to Central and East Europeans mainly.”<sup>11</sup> Not surprisingly, in response to President Wilson’s encouragement for subject peoples to seek self-governance, Zaghlul and his colleagues asked High Commissioner Reginald Wingate for Egypt’s complete autonomy. They also sought permission to travel to London to negotiate Egypt’s independence – just two days after the signing of the armistice that ended the First World War. Far from granting Egypt independence, the British government at the time was wondering whether it would maintain Egypt as a protectorate or annex it entirely as a colony.<sup>12</sup> So the British government rejected Zaghlul’s demands and did not welcome him to Britain. Not easily deterred, Zaghlul and the Wafd began to establish greater legal legitimacy for themselves by securing thousands of signatures throughout the country giving them power of attorney to act for the nation. Each signatory in effect “commissioned Saad and his adherents to seek the complete independence of Egypt through peaceful and legal means and based on the principles of liberty and justice for which Britain and her allies in the war had been fighting.”<sup>13</sup> As a result of acquiring these petitions, the Wafd and its cause grew in support from every sector of Egypt’s population and its leaders continued to appeal, though to no avail, to Britain and France for the right to negotiate Egypt’s independence at the Paris Peace Conference in January 1919. Fearing the potential of a violent encounter with Zaghlul and his supporters after hearing “wild talk [among some Egyptians] of raising an...army”<sup>14</sup> to overthrow foreign rule, the British authorities promptly arrested Zaghlul and four of his colleagues and deported them to Malta on 8<sup>th</sup> March 1919.

The British authorities' refusal to allow Egyptian delegates of the Wafd-led independence movement to present Egypt's case at the Peace Conference and the subsequent deportation of the nationalist leaders became known to the students and proponents of Egyptian independence the following day. Student marches in Cairo took place immediately and as the police dispersed the crowd, over 300 arrests were made.<sup>15</sup> By Monday 10<sup>th</sup> March, a riot had broken out in Cairo. Trams were wrecked, windows were smashed in the European quarters, violence and looting took place, and an uneasy feeling that the British authorities and the police were not able to cope permeated Cairo.

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<sup>11</sup> Vatikiotis, p. 248.

<sup>12</sup> J.D. McIntyre, p. 18.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 20.

<sup>14</sup> CMS papers, J.L. Macintyre, to Rev. G.T. Manley, CMS leader in London, 26/03/1919.

<sup>15</sup> J.D. McIntyre, p. 27.

Transport workers went on strike as well. On Tuesday, lawyers of Egypt's Native Courts and clerks from ministries of Public Works and Education joined the strikes. Although British troops restored order by Wednesday after killing 11 and wounded 51 demonstrators, the police were by and large ineffective in preventing the great deal of damage to property that had already been done. By Friday, with students slipping out to many Egyptian towns and villages to spread the demonstrations combined with the involvement of the fellaheen in the countryside, many of the country's main railway stations and junctions were sabotaged. Certain to have wanted to retain their food supplies during the food shortage, the peasants "attacked the rail lines to prevent the transport of agricultural commodities to the cities."<sup>16</sup> By Sunday, March 16th, Cairo was completely isolated and sections of the main lines both to Alexandria and to Port Said were torn up, and their respective train stations were destroyed as well. The main train line to Upper Egypt was damaged in many places and on March 18th, "English people [were] dragged out [on a train] and killed in cold blood."<sup>17</sup> On that same day, demonstrators threatened to disrupt water works but were effectively dispersed. By this time, the trams had ceased running and many important industries were called out on strike. Besides the transportation infrastructure, the disturbances hindered communication links as well. One bank official recalled on March 19th:

"We have been cut off from all communication with Cairo for four days now. The line is badly cut in several places, telephone and telegraph wires are down and even the motor road and bridges are cut. The disorders are generally all over the country and extend to Upper Egypt and Fayoum, being particularly bad in the latter district."<sup>18</sup>

To put an end to the situation, newly appointed High Commissioner Sir Edmund Allenby, victorious British general during the war in Palestine, released Zaghlul and his associates on 25<sup>th</sup> March 1919. A large measure of order was restored in Egypt when armoured cars and trains travelled up the Nile to put down the revolt. Mobile columns of infantry patrolled the Egyptian countryside to complete the task.<sup>19</sup> By the end of March, transportation and communications began to recover slowly and partially. Trains were running between Cairo and Alexandria, but not regularly. Postal service between the two

<sup>16</sup> Goldberg, p. 262.

<sup>17</sup> CMS papers: J.L. McIntyre to Manley, 26/03/1919.

<sup>18</sup> Arthur Blunt, Manager of Anglo-Egyptian Bank in Alexandria, to W.R. Carruthers, Manager in London, 19/03/1919, letters from Anglo-Egyptian Bank staff, Barclays Group Archives, Wythenshawe, Manchester.

<sup>19</sup> J.D. McIntyre, p. 31.

cities had resumed the normal two-day service. The telegraph and telephone wires were still not working though some telegrams were sent by aeroplane.<sup>20</sup> Whatever the outcome, the actions taken by so many Egyptians were taking effect. The British authorities were forced to consider the ramifications of continuing ownership of Egypt and the possibility of allowing greater autonomy for Egypt.

The 1919 Revolution was effective in evoking change via the involvement of a vast array of Egyptians from every sector of society. The conclusion drawn from the involvement of the peasantry was disheartening for the British authorities in Egypt. Zaghlul and the Wafd were able to unite much of Egypt's population against the British occupation. Political action was no longer confined to a small group of wealthy upper-class men from Cairo.

"No longer were Egyptian politics confined to the narrow and predictable activities of the pashas and the dynasty [the descendants of Muhammad Ali]. No longer could the placidity and indifference of the urban and rural masses be relied upon to countervail the rhetoric of drawing-room nationalists. Instead, the ability of the pasha politicians to mobilise popular support had to be reckoned with."<sup>21</sup>

Further, "during the 1919 Egyptian revolution, women from all social classes were active in mass demonstrations and marches. Schoolgirls distributed leaflets, upper-class women met to protest, and more humble women joined the protests with their husbands. They boycotted British goods, furnished food and supplies to militants and helped to sabotage British interests."<sup>22</sup> A small number of women were even killed in clashes with opposition forces. Besides the peasantry and women, "all classes of Egyptians seemed to be joining together to one degree or another in opposition to British authority in Egypt. The political leaders, students, lawyers, workers, street people, peasants and [even] bedouins played various roles in this revolution."<sup>23</sup> Both Muslim and Coptic leaders supported the Wafd and its demands for independence.

From March 1919 until 1922, a pattern of disturbances, violence, disruptions to infrastructure, anti-British agitation, and arrests defined the social and political landscape

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<sup>20</sup>Blunt to Carruthers, 26/03/1919.

<sup>21</sup>Darwin, p. 74.

<sup>22</sup>Selma Botman, *Engendering Citizenship in Egypt*; (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), p. 36.

<sup>23</sup>J.D. McIntyre, p. 30.

of Egypt. The Milner Mission, sent in the winter of 1919, was commissioned to “investigate, examine and determine the future form of the British *protectorate*,”<sup>24</sup> meaning that any recommendation from this body of six respected dignitaries from Britain would still be within the existing framework of Egypt as Britain’s property. Its boycott by the Egyptian populace (Egyptians were discouraged from speaking with any member of the Mission), proved successful since the Milner Mission’s eventual report to the British government in London discussed with candour Britain’s “past...shortcomings [in Egypt]”<sup>25</sup> and the possibility of the abolition of the British protectorate. As long as the actions of the British Government were interpreted by pro-independent Egyptians as dithering or delaying Egypt’s rightful independence, demonstrations and disruptions followed. In sum, the origins of the Revolution came from the grievances against the British during the First World War and the continuing drive for independence in face of the British Government’s opposition, both at the time of the Paris Peace Conference and thereafter. The actions of the demonstrators included riots, strikes, violence, murdering Britons, and disrupting communication and transportation. Eventually, by February 1922, Allenby, tired of the ongoing impasse and instability in Egypt, unilaterally announced the independence of Egypt – though it was granted on the basis of four ‘reserved’ points, areas that Britain would be in control until future negotiations. The four points were: Egypt’s defence and foreign policy, the security of the Suez Canal, the governing of Sudan and the protection of foreign interests and inhabitants in Egypt (i.e. the Capitulations).

### **Delay in Demobilisation**

After a brief glimpse of the causes and events of the 1919-1922 revolutionary period, this chapter now turns to the wide range of problems and challenges that the British community in Cairo faced during this time. Perhaps one of the immediate challenges was the severe delay in the huge task of demobilising British troops to Europe after the armistice in November 1918. Compared to the 5000 men in the British Army of Occupation in 1914, there were around 400,000 troops under the Allied Egyptian

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<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 32.

<sup>25</sup> Elizabeth Monroe, *Britain’s Moment in the Middle East, 1914-1971*, (London: Chatto & Windus, 1981), p. 68.

command at the end of 1918.<sup>26</sup> Though many of these troops were not ethnically British in origin because they included Indian soldiers and men from other colonies, there was still a significant percentage from Britain. Not a small number of soldiers, and in particular the officers, were part of the British community in Egypt due to their social interaction with the British residents in Egypt through the many dinners, dances, church services and the receiving of hospitality, entertainment, and health care. Although many were demobilised within the first six months after the war (more than 250,000 had been demobilised), close to 130,000 men were still left in Egypt in June 1919.<sup>27</sup> Though demobilisation may have been intentionally delayed since Egypt was undergoing a time of instability and upheaval soon after the war, demobilisation was still the modus operandi of the military authorities and individual soldiers and officers, caught in the delay continued to suffer in impatience and inactivity. Some of these men, though promised demobilisation six months after the end of the war, had to wait a much longer period of time before making their way home due to bureaucratic delays and extended strikes in Britain. In "the case of those who [had] employment waiting for them at home, [and] in the case of married men and those who have had no U.K. leave for two years or more, impatience [was] as great as ever."<sup>28</sup> Many of these soldiers, who were waiting to be sent home, became harsh critics of the British military command. According to one frustrated captain, the military authorities were untrustworthy and "can break their word, [but] we break ours under pain of death."<sup>29</sup> He wrote to his father saying:

"It is a typical bit of filthy wangling that makes the Army Red Tape and the authorities in general so loathsome in the eyes of every decent man. Over the demobilization of officers the Army has broken every bit of good faith it ever had. Out of 42 officers in the Div. 1 Artillery, 29 are being retained...One major is a solicitor, the only remaining in the firm. Another captain had one year to go before his final for the bar. His contemporaries will now gain a year over him...Incidentally, he is married...There is terrific discontent...You would have thought too that three and half years continuous service abroad would be something in my favour. I am not only frightfully disappointed, but as you can possibly tell, I am thoroughly disgusted...Altogether I am fed up to the teeth with everything."<sup>30</sup>

Similarly, another lieutenant described his disappointment as follows:

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<sup>26</sup> Jeffrey, p. 113.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> FO141/825/1132: From quarterly report on morale of troops, 31/03/1919, p.2.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p.3.

"I'm just about ready to mutiny. I'm a 1915 man, and now they say they'll keep me [on] staff for another year. I've refused to volunteer for the A of O (Army of Occupation), but apparently if you don't volunteer they can well break any pledge they've ever given, and keep you for ever. Me - I'm done - "finish". They can keep me I suppose, but I'm damned if they can make me work."<sup>31</sup>

Not only did the troops encounter bureaucratic inefficiency in the delays in demobilisation, their impatience grew due to the restrictions imposed on them during their waiting time. They unsuccessfully appealed to dispense with unnecessary parades and increase their opportunity for amusements, concerts, and relaxation since they felt they were largely a civilian army by this time – though some did see action in putting down the riots of March 1919.<sup>32</sup> Yet, perhaps their greatest source of despair and frustration was due to the scarcity of jobs back in Britain.

"The...uneasiness - and it amounts to exasperation - is due to the almost certain knowledge that the best 'jobs' are being seized at home by those whom fortune has favoured with early demobilization, and worse still by the munition workers, "shirkers" and the "conchies" whose release is being petitioned for, so many of whom stayed at home when they should have "joined up " and gone out to fight."<sup>33</sup>

Officers, however, were not exempt from the prospect of unemployment.

"With officers...the case is different and while many look to securing official posts in the Middle East, a greater proportion are wondering whether, on returning to civil life they will be able to get work and salaries that will enable them to continue to live at anything like the standard of the last few years. The common impression is that they will not, and they are worried about it."<sup>34</sup>

In addition to their frustrations over the delay in demobilisation, many within the British military also harnessed "anger and disgust at the behaviour of [the Egyptians]...that has derived nothing [in their opinion] but benefit and prosperity from the presence of British forces."<sup>35</sup>

"Disgust with the Egyptians, more especially with the trades people, is no new sentiment among soldiers with any experience of Cairo and the Delta towns. Many have looked for a day when they could 'get even' with those who have robbed them by overcharging."<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>31</sup>Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., p.2.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid.

Nonetheless, to the troops' credit, "the moderation of the views expressed in this hour [was] remarkable. Notable often [was] the very absence of comment in the letters of the men [for those who] for four years consistently "bled" them."<sup>37</sup> Eventually, "in spite of the bitter disappointment...at the consequent delay in demobilization, a cheerful and sensible spirit [was] noticeable. Apathy and despondency [gave way]...to alertness and a living interest in proceedings."<sup>38</sup> To assist the troops, funds were even raised by members of the British community in Alexandria under the auspices of the Alexandria British Benevolent Fund<sup>39</sup> in order to provide and create a souvenir booklet for all the British troops in Alexandria to take home with them.<sup>40</sup> The delay in demobilisation aroused frustration, impatience and long-suffering among the British military personnel. It also provided an opportunity for the civilian residents of the British Community to serve and give to the troops. By March 1920, there were 100,000 imperial troops under Egyptian command. By April 1921, there were 25,000; and by the summer of 1921, the British garrison settled to around 20,000 men (still more than three times the size of the pre-war garrison of about 5,000 men).<sup>41</sup>

### **Impending abolition of Capitulations**

Besides the delay in the demobilisation of troops, another area that aroused opposition to British authorities from members of the British community was the imminent abolition of the Capitulations. As explained in an earlier chapter on the ethnic boundaries of the British community in Cairo, the Capitulations was an arrangement whereby Europeans were allowed to be tried under the courts and legal codes of their own countries in Egypt. However, toward the end of the First World War, there was the anticipation that the Capitulations would cease and that a new legal code represented by the draft laws may be implemented to replace the Consular Courts. Under the draft laws,

"an Englishman will be tried under a modified form of the Native Code, and in the Mixed Courts. The proceedings will be conducted in a foreign language. The judge who hears the case may be a foreigner, who knows no word of English, and whose training under a foreign criminal system will certainly have imbued him with ideas of criminal law fundamentally opposed to the British sense of fair play. The

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<sup>37</sup>Ibid.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid.

<sup>39</sup>Egyptian Gazette, 08/01/1919.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., 12/04/1919.

<sup>41</sup> Jeffrey, p. 113.

system involves the possibility that a British subject accused of crime may be questioned, in the preliminary stage of the case, by a magistrate. Under the British system, the accused cannot be compelled to make any statement; under the new system, not only can he be compelled, but his answers in English may have to be interpreted by a person whose language the accused does not know, to a judge who does not know English. Further, in a host of small cases the accused may be convicted on a statement drawn up by a foreign official without any opportunity to traversing the accuracy of the statement...In civil cases British subjects will have their rights determined under a polyglot Code instead of under English law."<sup>42</sup>

Needless to say, the British community interpreted the draft laws as faulty, unjust and harmful to British interests and residents in Egypt. The Council of the Non-Official British Community (discussed in more depth later) urged all Britons in Egypt to "take every possible measure to prevent the final adoption of the laws [since] to allow them to come into effective force would be nothing less than a calamity to the community."<sup>43</sup> Although the Capitulations were not officially abolished until the Montreux Convention in October 1937 (and even then, the Consular Courts were given twelve more years of life)<sup>44</sup>, the threat of the implementation of the draft laws was a significant concern to Britain's legal and business communities in Egypt at the time.

### **Compensation for death and injury**

Besides the delay in demobilising and the imminent abolition of the Capitulations, the British community in Cairo faced significant tragedy during this post-war revolutionary period. This analysis attempts to not only to highlight a number of British residents in Cairo who faced actual physical harm either through death or injury, but seeks to examine some of their relatives' subsequent efforts at acquiring compensation. Britons who were killed during this period appeared to have been murdered indiscriminately as one observer pinpointed in his memoirs:

"Rioting and bloodshed, railway lines torn up, [and the] assassination of isolated bands of British officers, were now the order of the day...Sporadic assassinations occurred from time to time - here, a young corporal, on his way to spend an evening with his young lady, - there, a Professor in the Law School, riding home on his bicycle to lunch. Some twenty-two or twenty-three British subjects, several of them known personally to the writer, were either fatally, or at any rate, seriously, injured in this way."<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>42</sup>Ibid., 12/06/1920.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid.

<sup>44</sup>John Marlowe, *Anglo-Egyptian Relations, 1800-1956, 2nd Ed.*, (London: Frank Cass & Co, Ltd., 1965), p 303.

<sup>45</sup>Richard Vaux, unpublished memoirs, Middle East Centre archives, St. Antony's College, University of Oxford, pp.68 & 70.

The death toll of British personnel in Egypt began to mount on 15 March 1919 when at Kailub Markaz, about 2000 rioters gathered near a train station carrying pieces of timber and sticks. The police tried to disperse the crowd but when British soldiers and passengers arrived at the train station, one British soldier was shot dead while three Egyptians were killed and some were arrested.<sup>46</sup> More significantly, seven Britons were killed in the events of 18th March 1919 in and near Deirut, between Assiut and Minia. The seven were Alexander Pope, Inspector of Prisons, Upper Egypt; Major Cecil Jarvis of 20th Decca House in the India Army; R.F.B. Willsy, Staff Lieutenant; plus Summersgill, Peacock, Culyer and Private Reading. All were unarmed in the first class carriage on the train from Luxor to Assiut. Along the train line that day, "there had been much excitement...including greeting of trains with patriotic cries, free travelling by crowds, and demonstrations of hostility to...English inspectors."<sup>47</sup> When the train arrived at Deirut, a large crowd attacked the train and some rioters entered the first class carriage and killed two of the aforementioned Britons.<sup>48</sup> In response, the acting station master at Deirut sent a message to the local police in Dier Molis. According to a British report, when the train arrived in Dier Molis, the police officer came with six unarmed men out of forty armed men that were available, sent no further warning to other police stations, and did nothing while the crowd grew more and more violent. Sixty Egyptian soldiers returning from Sudan on the train cheered the rioters. In fear of the crowd and attempting to escape, two Britons reached the engine and together with the Egyptian driver, tried to start the train but the vacuum brake had been applied. The driver fled whilst the two Britons were overpowered and battered to death. Three other Britons made it to the engine but were killed as well. One British telegram recorded that "five bodies battered beyond recognition were thrown on the platform, stripped and subjected to [the] worst indignities."<sup>49</sup> Though many railway officials and employees did all they could to help, British sources asserted that the police and Egyptian army passengers did nothing. "If police officials in Assiut did their job, the massacre would not have taken

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<sup>46</sup>FO141/747/8972, memo dated 30/03/1919 recording the events of 15/03/1919.

<sup>47</sup>FO141/753/8940, telegram from High Commissioner to Foreign Officer, 19/04/1919 recalling events of 17/03/1919.

<sup>48</sup>*Ibid.*, telegram from High Commissioner to Foreign Office, 04/04/1919.

<sup>49</sup>*Ibid.*, High Commissioner to Foreign Officer, 19/04/1919.

place."<sup>50</sup> Eventually, 34 Egyptians were convicted to death, six to life imprisonment, others to hard labour and fines and some were acquitted.<sup>51</sup>

Another British fatality occurred just over two weeks later. On 3 April 1919, Dykes of the Egyptian State Railways was killed in Abdin Square. He "was shot opposite to and 30 yards from [the] barracks of the Egyptian Army...and received two wounds."<sup>52</sup> British witnesses saw two shots fired from the barracks while Egyptian witnesses say that British patrols also fired shots. A Reuters telegram reported that three more British soldiers and two Indian soldiers were murdered on 10 April 1919.<sup>53</sup> Some 75 Britons were killed or injured in the violent uprisings during the spring and summer of 1919 while at least 1000 Egyptians died at the hands of British troops attempting to suppress the insurrection.<sup>54</sup> Later that year, on 22 November, Marlowe records the murder of a British officer<sup>55</sup>, while the Egyptian Gazette mentions the attack and death of another British officer, "shot by an unknown person in Sharia Boulac"<sup>56</sup>, on the 6 May 1920.

A year and half later, on 30 December 1921<sup>57</sup>, while the disturbances were still occurring in Egypt, another British employee of the Egyptian State Railways, Mr. Hatton was killed by gunfire.<sup>58</sup> On 17 February 1922, another British resident, Michael Jordan was murdered.<sup>59</sup> The next day, Mr. Brown of the Egyptian Department of Public Instruction was killed. Later, the Assistant Commander of the Cairo Police, W.F. Cunliffe-Cave,

"while returning home about 1:30 p.m. on 24 May, was shot dead in the quarter of Cairo where most of the Egyptian Ministries are situated. His assailants, who are reported to have been three in number, escaped. Within the last three months, attempts have been made on the lives of no fewer than seven British subjects in Cairo, but in no instance have any arrests been made."<sup>60</sup>

<sup>50</sup>*Ibid.*, Ministry of Interior Report, 22/06/1919.

<sup>51</sup>*Ibid.*, High Commissioner Allenby to Foreign Secretary Lord Curzon, 14/07/1919.

<sup>52</sup>FO141/582/9116, High Commissioner to Foreign Office, 18/04/1919.

<sup>53</sup>Reuters Telegram, 10/04/1919 in Anglo-Egyptian Bank staff letters collection, Barclays Archive.

<sup>54</sup>Darwin, p. 79.

<sup>55</sup>Marlowe, p. 240.

<sup>56</sup>Egyptian Gazette, 17/05/1920.

<sup>57</sup>FO141/494/14268, Minutes from Residency, 16/07/1922.

<sup>58</sup>*Ibid.*, General Manager's Office of Cairo Station to Ministry of Communication, Cairo.

<sup>59</sup>*Ibid.*, Minutes from Residency, 16/07/1922.

<sup>60</sup>*Ibid.*, Parliamentary Questions, 29/05/1922, Mr. Cecil Harmsworth, Under-Secretary of Foreign Affairs responding to question from Lieutenant-Colonel James.

Besides the loss of life, British soldiers and civilians were also injured in the violence. For example, four British soldiers were fired at and wounded on 23 November 1919. Two more were shot and injured on 2 December. And yet two other British soldiers were wounded on 26 December.<sup>61</sup> The following year, on 21 May 1920, a Munster Fusilier officer and two Tommies (British privates) were shot on a main street in Cairo.<sup>62</sup> Besides soldiers, civilians such as "railway officials...Mr. Price Hopkins and Mr. Peach [were also]...shot in the streets of Cairo and [suffered] not very serious...wounds"<sup>63</sup> on 20 February 1922. Though British sources may be unlikely to record any merits on the part of Egyptians, they do give a glimpse of the extent of the deaths and injuries incurred by the Britons of Cairo and the hostile atmosphere between Britons and Egyptians at that time.

Not only did members of the British Community in Egypt face death and injury, they had to deal with the hassle of wrestling for compensation from the authorities in Egypt. Similar to demobilising and the potential abolition of Capitulations, the British community in Cairo found itself at odds with the British authorities once again. The Egyptian State Railways sought the Ministry of Finance to pay for Mr. Hatton's funeral expenses a month after his murder in January 1922. The Ministry of Finance "ruled that these expenses [were not to] be defrayed by [the] Government."<sup>64</sup> The Cairo Station Manager's office records that this denial of funeral expenses caused widespread resentment among the more than 230 Englishmen who worked for the Egyptian State Railways.<sup>65</sup>

"This decision...caused widespread indignation amongst the English staff of the State Railways, and more especially...while the Ministry of Finance is being administered by Englishmen. As one high official said to me this morning: 'I have a wife and children who will be put into serious straits if I am murdered; if they have to pay for my funeral expenses I shall give orders that my body is to be conveyed...in the cheapest wooden box procurable, which will be an object lesson of the generosity of the

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<sup>61</sup>Marlowe, p.240.

<sup>62</sup>Letter from Townsend, senior staff at Anglo-Egyptian Bank in Cairo, to Mr. Raoul Hector Foa, chairman of Anglo-Egyptian Bank, London, 21/05/1920.

<sup>63</sup>FO141/494/14268: General Manager's Office, Cairo Station, to the Adviser, Ministry of Communications, 20/02/1922.

<sup>64</sup>Ibid., from Under Secretary of State, Ministry of Communication to General Manager of Egyptian State Railways, Cairo, 28/01/1922.

<sup>65</sup>Ibid., General Manager's Office, Cairo Station to Ministry of Communications, recording the number of Egyptian and English personnel in the company, 15/09/1922.

Egyptian Government, as doubtless, the cortege would be followed by a considerable number of brother officials and subordinates."<sup>66</sup>

Eventually, the Financial Adviser allowed the Ministry of Communications to pay for Mr. Hatton's funeral expenses after much hard work and bitter feeling on the part of the employees of the Egyptian State Railways.<sup>67</sup> Although Mr. Hatton had no immediate dependants,<sup>68</sup> his family was eventually awarded £E6,171 in compensation for his death whilst working for the Egyptian State Railways.<sup>69</sup>

Though the process of acquiring compensation for Hatton's death was long drawn out, the outcome was desirable for his family and for the Egyptian State Railways. Similarly, the widow of Mr. Aldred Brown also had to wait before she was awarded compensation of any kind. Mr. Aldred Brown, of the Egyptian Department of Public Instruction, was killed on the eve of retirement, on 18 February 1922, after 31 years of pensionable service. Shortly thereafter, the High Commissioner informed Mrs. Brown that she would be awarded Mr. Brown's pension of £E 268 per annum regardless of what she may acquire in a capital sum in compensation. In the five subsequent months, the pension only reached Mrs. Brown in February and March but not in April, May or June - highlighting the lack of promptness and efficiency in the Government's administration. By June, Mrs. Brown's compensation of £E 10,000 was finally approved and was given assurance by Lord Allenby, the High Commissioner, that her pension would also be given her monthly.<sup>70</sup>

For those who were younger, like Mrs. W.F. Cunliffe-Cave, her annual pension consisted of £E600. But if she remarried, it would decrease to £E 212 per annum. Her son also received £E 250 annually until the age of 23.<sup>71</sup> Mrs. Cave's compensation was significantly smaller than Mrs. Brown because she was "considerably younger than Mrs. Brown and the [British-controlled] Egyptian Government...felt that part of her award

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<sup>66</sup>Ibid., General Manager's Office, Cairo Station to the Adviser, Ministry of Communications, 20/02/1922.

<sup>67</sup>Ibid., Financial Adviser's letter on 04/05/1922.

<sup>68</sup>Ibid., minutes of residency, 16/07/1922.

<sup>69</sup>Ibid., letter from Abdel Khalik Pasha Sarwat, President of Council of Ministers (Prime Minister) to High Commissioner, 13/11/1922.

<sup>70</sup>Ibid., letter from Lord Allenby to Mrs. Brown, 04/06/1922 and also in letter from Lieutenant-Colonel Cuthbert James (MP) to Cecil Harmsworth, Under-Secretary of Foreign Office.

ought to lapse in the event of her marrying again, according to the rules which govern pensions."<sup>72</sup>

The families of Mr. Hatton, Mr. Brown and Mr. Cunliffe-Cave received, though sometimes after a considerable period, substantial amounts in compensation for the loss of their loved one. Obviously, compensations for the injured were not so generous, but were on the whole fair. Mr. Price Hopkins and Mr. Peach received hospital expenses and full pay during convalescence.<sup>73</sup> Though they were initially denied the consideration that they were attacked by reason of their duties and were treated like any official who fell ill or suffered injury,<sup>74</sup> the Foreign Office urged the British authorities in Egypt

"to accord them compensation in the form of a sum of money calculated on the basis of the rate of pay of the official concerned multiplied by the number of days during which he was prevented from resuming his work, exclusive of any ordinary leave granted after his wounds had completely healed."<sup>75</sup>

Whatever the case, Mr. Peach's injury deemed him unfit for work and he was given a compensation of £E 5,600 if he retired immediately.<sup>76</sup> Needless to say, Britons in Cairo faced different challenges when it came to requesting compensation for death of relatives or injuries. By and large, the British authorities in Egypt obliged but not always immediately.

### **Threat of violent attacks and plans to counter them**

Though the most unfortunate members of the British community in Cairo faced death, injury or the loss or injury of a loved one, the entire community encountered a general sense of fear and danger and a need to make plans to counter these threats during this period of revolution. George Swan, Secretary of the Egypt General Mission, wrote to the British Consul in Cairo requesting protection for his missionaries in Cairo: Miss F.A. Langford and Miss S.W. Pim in Belbeis, and for Mr. And Mrs. A.Y. Steel and their two children, Mr. A.M. May, Miss Liblite and Miss Perkins in Shebin-el-Kanata. There "the

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<sup>71</sup>Ibid., minutes in Residency, 13/03/1922.

<sup>72</sup>Ibid., High Commissioner to Foreign Secretary, Marquess Curzon of Kedleston, 14/08/1922.

<sup>73</sup>Ibid., minutes of Residency, 13/03/1922.

<sup>74</sup>Ibid., High Commissioner to Curzon, 14/08/1922.

<sup>75</sup>Ibid., Foreign Office to High Commissioner Allenby, 25/11/1922.

mob has given away to wanton murder and pillage...I should be grateful if some steps could be taken for their protection."<sup>77</sup> He also urged the British Consul to protect other missionaries in Alexandria, Ismailia and the Suez.

A telegram from a British employee of the Anglo-Egyptian bank also expressed the British residents' frustration and concern over the gravity of the turmoil.

"On Friday afternoon very serious rioting took place here just near the bank and three or four men were killed. The worst incidents were in front of the French Post Office which is at the corner of the street that runs beside the bank. The mob which numbered thousands...filled the whole of Sherif Pasha St. and the Mohamed Ali Square and behaved like wild beasts. They smashed open and sacked several shops...and the police only arrived when all was over. The acting Chief of Police, an Englishman, undertook to keep order...*All authority is openly defied and unless something is done, and done quickly, we may be faced with consequences of a very grave nature. What little prestige remained to us is gone, and the natives attribute our attitude to fear.* No one who was not an eyewitness of what took place can form an idea of the wild and unchecked disorder."<sup>78</sup>

More than a year later, British members of the Anglo-Egyptian Bank at Minet-el-Bassal near Alexandria dared not leave their houses for several days due to the rioting. In the subsequent days, though some were molested, they safely reached the bank and kept the bank's property intact.<sup>79</sup>

Not only were British soldiers, missionaries and bank employees affected by fear and threats, even the highest officials in government officials needed to be careful. There were assassination threats made on the High Commissioner and the members of the Milner Mission.

"Information of unknown origin has been received from source, purporting to be in touch with certain Egyptian nationalists and Turkish followers of Talaat in Italy. This information reports...the existence of [a] plot to assassinate the High Commissioner...as soon as occasion offers, and all members of Lord Milner's Mission as soon as they land."<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>76</sup>*Ibid.*, High Commissioner to Sarwat Pasha, 24/10/1922.

<sup>77</sup>FO141/748/8882: George Swan, Secretary of Egypt General Mission to British Consul in Cairo, 17/03/1919.

<sup>78</sup>Telegram, 17/10/1919, in archives of letters from Anglo-Egyptian Bank staff, Barclays Archives. (emphasis mine).

<sup>79</sup>Letter from the Alexandria branch of the Anglo-Egyptian Bank to W.R. Carruthers, Manager in London, 26/05/1921., Barclays Archives.

<sup>80</sup>FO141/434/10684, letter from Buchanan in Foreign Office to High Commissioner, 25/11/1919.

Needless to say, nearly all British residents, whether soldiers, missionaries, bankers or the highest political officials faced the threat of death or harm day to day during these years of revolutionary instability in Egypt. Britons were even targeted by paid assassins. Abou Zaid, an official in the Ports and Lights Administration in Port Said had received a top secret message with instructions from the Egyptian Association in London to pay every Egyptian or Italian £E100 for shooting British officers, £E 50 for British soldiers and £E 25 for civilian women and children.<sup>81</sup>

"It seems clear that Englishmen [were] being shot at or assassinated simply because they [were] English and incidents cannot fail to greatly increase the uneasiness of British officials of Egypt whose faith in the Prime Minister's willingness and ability to safeguard their position [was] not...strengthened by the failure of the Government to prevent the perpetration of these political crimes."<sup>82</sup>

To confront the threats, the British community reacted by implementing various precautionary measures. First, a chain of communication starting from the most prominent members of the British community through which warnings of potential danger may be passed on to every British person in a given location was established in Cairo and then encouraged in Alexandria.

"The best procedure would appear to be that adopted in Cairo, namely, to warn the leading British residents in certain selected districts throughout Alexandria in a personal and confidential manner, making them responsible in their turn for the warning of those of lesser standing living in their respective neighbourhoods."<sup>83</sup>

Second, for Britons outside the main urban centres, James Morgan, Acting Consul of the British Consulate in Cairo, drew up a list of all British subjects living in places like Mansura, Zagazig and Birket-es-Sab. Though not many Britons lived outside Cairo and Alexandria, the list included missionaries, engineers, inspectors, merchants, teachers and officials of the Ministry of Public Works and Agriculture. The list allowed the military authorities to know who may have required protection or assistance.<sup>84</sup> A further precautionary measure was the insistence that British residents in Cairo were to "take refuge in certain places where they [were to] be under military protection...in case of a

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<sup>81</sup>FO141/748/8882: Top Secret Foreign Office telegram to High Commissioner, 16/12/1919.

<sup>82</sup>FO141/494/14268: Foreign Office to High Commissioner, 16/08/1922.

<sup>83</sup>FO141/748/8882: Letter from probably Residency to Mr. Alban, Consul-General, Alexandria, 12/12/1919.

<sup>84</sup>Ibid., Letter from James Morgan, Acting Consul, British Consulate, Cairo to Residency, 1919.

serious rising taking place."<sup>85</sup> Thus security arrangements for buildings like the British Consulate in Cairo were assessed. It was suggested by the Acting Consul-General in Cairo "that a British officer should go over the Consulate with him, and discuss its vulnerability and how best it could be defended by the Staff in case of a sudden attack by a mob. The consulate [was] on the street and the lower windows [were] only protected by wooden shutters."<sup>86</sup> Furthermore, Britons in Cairo were discouraged from going out alone.<sup>87</sup> Perhaps the most controversial safety measure was the bearing of arms for British residents in Egypt. Captain Heard, Acting Consul-General in Cairo suggested that "the... [British] consulates and Consular Agencies in the country...should be given a stand of arms and a supply of ammunition which would be under the sole control of the Consulate and used solely for the defence of Consular Buildings and of such British Nationals as had taken refuge there in time of stress."<sup>88</sup> Captain Heard had in mind the protection of smaller consulates such as the ones in Monsura or Zagazig where British military assistance was not so accessible. However, the obvious concern with this suggestion was that other consulates of other nations might also begin to arm themselves, setting an undesirable precedent that may further threaten the general security of Egypt and the authority of Britain. The Residency responded by suggesting that only Britons were allowed to use arms and that they were to be armed in consular agencies surreptitiously. Greeks, Italians and other nationalities were not permitted to bear arms.<sup>89</sup>

To protect the vital line of communication embodied by the Eastern Telegraph Company buildings in Suez, General Sir W.N. Congreve, Lieutenant-General Commanding the Egyptian Expeditionary Force proposed the idea that "forty men ...willing to volunteer for this Guard...all of whom are British subjects...would be for the defence of the Eastern Telegraph Company's buildings in the event of emergency when required by the Military Authorities...Such a force might be of great assistance in an emergency."<sup>90</sup> Congreve pointed out that there were precedents for this idea in the Abu Zaabal wireless

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<sup>85</sup>*Ibid.*, letter from British Consul General in Alexandria to High Commissioner, 25/11/1919.

<sup>86</sup>*Ibid.*, memo from Captain Heard, Acting Consul-General in Cairo to Mr. Furness, 28/05/1921.

<sup>87</sup>*Ibid.*, memo from Office of Acting Adviser of Interior, 19/02/1922.

<sup>88</sup>*Ibid.*, memo from Captain Heard to Furness, 28/05/1921.

<sup>89</sup>*Ibid.*, memo from Residency, 23/06/1921.

<sup>90</sup>FO141/664/2476: Congreve to Residency, 03/08/1921.

station near Cairo and the Civilian Rifle Club at Alexandria both of which had armed civilian guards.<sup>91</sup> General Clayton, Adviser to Ministry of Interior approved of the idea and suggested that the civil guard be called the Eastern Telegraph Rifle Club of Suez, following a precedent from the other rifle clubs in Cairo and Alexandria<sup>92</sup>.

In light of a volunteer guard protecting the Eastern Telegraph Company, Captain H.E.V. Huggett of the Royal Fusiliers promoted the idea of establishing a volunteer army in 1922 consisting of British residents in Egypt. Huggett's scheme involved the recruitment of British residents of military age that had served in the Great War as officers or soldiers along with a proportion of non-commissioned officers. The proposal assumed the raising of four companies of men at headquarters, two in Cairo, one in Alexandria and one in the Canal Zone. Further, like the Territorial Battalion in Britain, there were possibilities for pay and training in the new volunteer army.<sup>93</sup> However, the High Commissioner rejected the scheme due to fears that it may arouse other nationalities in Egypt to do likewise.<sup>94</sup> The British community in Egypt devised various schemes to counteract the potential dangers in urban centres and in smaller locations inhabited by Britons. Some of the plans were acceptable to the authorities whilst others were turned down due to the need to increase the protection of Britons while at the same time, decrease the possibility of other groups following the precedent set by the British in the acquisition of weaponry.

## **Economic downturn**

### ***Sharp rise in the cost of living***

Finally, this chapter aims to unravel the many economic setbacks, concerns and responses that the British business community in Cairo encountered as a result of the revolutionary period between 1919 – 1922. One of the economic problems that the British community in Cairo faced after the war was the sharp rise in the cost of living. It

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<sup>91</sup>FO141/749/8882: First Secretary of Residency in Alexandria to Adviser, Ministry of Interior, recalling a conversation with Congreve, 23/06/1921.

<sup>92</sup>*Ibid.*, letter from General Clayton, Adviser to Ministry of Interior, to Residency, 20/08/1921.

<sup>93</sup>FO141/664/2479: Captain Huggett to High Commissioner Allenby, 18/09/1922.

<sup>94</sup>*Ibid.*, High Commissioner to Huggett, 24/09/1922.

was generally assumed that prices would drop after the war since high prices were regarded as a 'war measure'<sup>95</sup> as a result of the inflationary impact of the spending power of the Allied troops, as discussed in the previous chapter. However, prices stayed high due to the shortage of raw material, the continuation of high wages, the need to clothe the demobilised men,<sup>96</sup> and the severe food shortages, as mentioned previously. In fact, the cost of living index increased from 1919 to 1920 even in spite of the nationalist disturbances that shook Egypt at the time (more will be discussed on the turmoil later). As stated in the previous chapter, the cost of living index had been 100 in 1914. During the war, the index doubled to 202 in 1919, and increased further to 237 in 1920. Although the index dropped gradually in subsequent years (196 in 1921, 176 in 1922, and 162 in 1923), it was still much higher than the pre-war levels.<sup>97</sup> Although "merchants, tradesmen and landowners had profited during the boom of 1919,...wage-earners and the salaried class were hard hit by the high cost of living"<sup>98</sup> and many in the British community were wage-earners and salaried.

For example, British teachers suffered due to the high cost of living.

"The failure to improve the salaries of foreign teachers in accordance with the present cost of living in Egypt results in very serious hardship to them, and we view our future in this country with grave alarm. A married man with children will find the greatest difficulty in paying his household expenses. With the present low rate of salary and absence of any opportunity of obtaining promotion, he has no prospect of so improving his position as to be able to educate his children adequately. In case of an expensive illness he would inevitably incur debts which he would find it almost impossible to pay. Moreover, unless he has private means of his own, he will not be able to go on leave to Europe with his family, however urgent the need may be on account of health, family, business or other reasons."<sup>99</sup>

The teachers were also not awarded any expatriation pay and surprisingly even started with an initial salary not much different from their Egyptian colleagues. They also started with less seniority than Egyptian colleagues with the same qualifications. Their 20% increase in monthly salary was highly inadequate since the cost of living had gone up 100% since 1914 and journeys home to England had increased nearly fourfold from the

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<sup>95</sup>Egyptian Gazette, 18/01/1919.

<sup>96</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>97</sup>*National Bank of Egypt, 1898-1948* (Cairo: National Bank of Egypt Printing Press, 1948), p. 51.

<sup>98</sup>*Ibid.*, p.49.

<sup>99</sup>FO141/503/16984: Restriction on English teachers, 1919.

prices of 1913.<sup>100</sup> Further, British teachers had to wait six to eight years before even a small rise in salary were to take place.<sup>101</sup>

Besides teachers, British salaried bank officials also suffered with the high cost of living. A letter drafted by a group of British Anglo-Egyptian bank officials urged for salary increases during this time following the example of British officials in the government of the Protectorate who were receiving substantial cost of living bonuses.

"The cost of living is extremely high, higher for all English requisites in every case than in England, and with a noticeable upward tendency. This has been realised and compensated by the Government for example, by the fact that they have increased the salaries of junior officials of a similar standing to ourselves by 20% (fixed) plus 60% compensation for the high cost of living (to be retained) during the present prevalence of abnormal prices)...We would also draw your attention to instances of Englishmen at present in charge of departments and agencies with subordinates on a higher scale of pay, which, of course is unusual and not conducive to efficiency...We trust that you and the Board will take a favourable view of the fore-going remarks and ameliorate the somewhat severe conditions under which we are at present working in your service."<sup>102</sup>

Later, a senior bank official in Egypt urged the management in London to consider the salary increases.

"As regards to the question of the young Englishmen's automatic rises, I am of opinion that these should not be withheld. The salaries which they are receiving, although perhaps appearing to be large on paper, do not leave them much margin over and above their living expenses. In any case, the rises which were given them...last...May, were granted purely in order to meet the present-day high cost of living, and as such, should not affect in any way automatic increases, which it was arranged to give them on their coming out East."<sup>103</sup>

From the pleas of British teachers and bank staff in Egypt, there can be no doubt that the sharp rise in cost of living after the War severely affected the British community in Egypt. Salaried workers were unsure whether they could make ends meet and many struggled as they saw Egyptian workers acquire helpful bonuses. The post-war boom ushered in a difficult time of high cost of living for many Britons in Egypt and as one bank official laments, "there is no doubt that the cost of living here is increasing almost

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<sup>100</sup>*Ibid.*, 1913, P & O ticket, Egypt to England, first-class, £14 and second class, £9, in 1922, first-class ticket, £46 and second class, £32.

<sup>101</sup>*Ibid.*, after six years, only 25 piastres per month increase, and after eight years, and increase of £E3.25 per month on a salary of just £E 36 per month.

<sup>102</sup>Letter from Anglo-Egyptian bank staff to Mr. Raoul Hector Foa, Chairman of AEB in London, 04/02/1920, Barclays Archives.

<sup>103</sup>*Ibid.*, Townsend to Carruthers, Manager in London, 29/07/1920.

daily...Food and clothing are at ridiculous prices and so far as one can see there is little hope of improvement despite talk about control."<sup>104</sup>

***Revolutionary violence and the British business community***

Besides the sharp rise in the cost of living, revolutionary violence adversely affected the British community in Cairo as well. The loss of transportation and communication links severely handicapped trading and shipping, whilst the violence, looting and threats all over Egypt meant that certain shops, banks or businesses had to close or were damaged. J.W. Eady, a British businessman and agent for 30 English firms in Egypt reported that "business was completely paralysed, wholesale merchants could not meet their financial engagements as collections from the villages are precluded."<sup>105</sup> Since transportation links were halted, it became impossible to get imported goods out of customs. This caused severe loss for British businesses in Egypt due to the accumulation of storage fees and the loss of sales as certain prices fell. British manufacturers were also harmed because they were unable to obtain payments for shipments because customers could not receive the products. Eady predicted widespread bankruptcies if the situation persisted.<sup>106</sup>

In light of the nationalistic uprisings, there was the fear that British products in Egypt were to face a widespread boycott by Egyptian activists. To counter the possibility of a boycott, British businesses created advertisements that urged Britons to "make sure that [their] uniform or suit is made of the best British material obtainable in Egypt and [to] support British industry for [their] own satisfaction."<sup>107</sup> Though the boycott would have hurt British businesses, it never attained the mass appeal needed to decisively harm British business interests because many Egyptians were committed to certain British firms and lines "which were in wide...[and] heavy demand for years, and which would

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<sup>104</sup>Ibid., from C.W. Green, Manager of Anglo-Egyptian Bank, Alexandria to Foa, Chairman of AEB in London, 07/10/1919.

<sup>105</sup>FO141/581/9132: J.W. Eady in report, 19/04/1919.

<sup>106</sup>Ibid.

<sup>107</sup>Egyptian Gazette, 30/08/1919 advertisement for Gabardine and Khaki for officers and Palm Beach, suitings made by John Collacott and Son.

continue to be sought."<sup>108</sup> To some Egyptians, brand loyalty prevailed over nationalistic interests.

The widespread disruptions also hurt the process of the reclamation of the Northern Delta and the British firms involved. Agriculture was the body and soul of Egypt and much of its further development depended on the reclamation of the Northern Delta, which required the on-site expertise and supervision of many British firms. But in light of the threats on Britons, "all the work of reclamation now stopped due to fears of uprisings since Englishmen were not safe to visit remote districts."<sup>109</sup> As a result, cattle were dying due to lack of water and the reclamation project came to a halt – not only harming the present and future prospects of Egypt's economy but many of the British firms involved in the completion of the project.<sup>110</sup>

#### *The British railways companies*

Perhaps a closer glimpse at a few British-run businesses during this time may help in the understanding of the issues and problems that the British staff faced as a result of the revolutionary era. As aforementioned, the Egyptian State Railways suffered the deaths and injuries of some of its British employees. The company employed 31,536 people in total, of whom 232 were British. The Britons were mainly engineering specialists and most of them were situated at the Boulaq shops. For some reason, few Egyptians were attracted to working as locomotive engineers and even if they were interested, it would have taken years to train Egyptian engineers to replace British ones. Thus the company consistently needed to recruit many more British engineers. Yet, with the inadequate salaries and the uncertainties of living in a volatile Egyptian regime, British engineers were hard to come by. However, on top of this, "when...there [was] a chance of a man being maimed for life, or killed, at all events enduring considerable suffering, it [was] hardly supposed that [the company would] be able to attract the proper class of man."<sup>111</sup> The only hope for obtaining new British engineers was to inform them that if they were

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<sup>108</sup>*Ibid.*, 09/01/1922.

<sup>109</sup>FO141/581/9132: Mr. C.R. Beasley, agricultural expert, at Advisory Board of Non-Official British Community, 19/04/1919.

<sup>110</sup>*Ibid.*

maimed or killed, they or their families would be handsomely compensated.<sup>112</sup> Obviously, with the 'attraction' of compensation in the event of death or injury as its centrepiece of appealing to new recruits, drawing in new and much-needed British engineers was a major problem for the Egyptian State Railways. So not only did the British community in Egypt lose some key railway engineers due to death and injury, but the disturbances kept away potential British newcomers from entering Egypt and may have dampened the morale of those Britons who stayed.

Another company with substantial British shareholding was the Egyptian Delta Light Railway. In March 1919, a trail of damage to the company's railway lines and carriages had "an immediate effect...upon [its] earnings."<sup>113</sup> Windows of carriages were broken. Goods under transport were stolen. Trains were derailed. Lines were cut in many places. Several of the train stations were burnt and pillaged.

"The company's train service was entirely suspended. For some days, the wreckage of the company's property continued. Many stations were wrecked, and very considerable damage was done... Rails were pulled up and bent, sleepers were burnt, embankments were destroyed, and the telegraph lines were practically wiped out of existence. The destruction of communications was evidently one of the chief aims of the rioters."<sup>114</sup>

At Mit Ghamr, where the company's main railway workshops were based, much credit could be given to one Briton – McKay, who successfully defended the workshop from the consistent attacks.

"Thanks to the courage and resourcefulness of Mr. McKay, [the] chief locomotive superintendent, who organised measures for [the] defence of his staff, the attack failed...Due to Mr. McKay's efforts, [the company] suffered no serious damage in this most important centre of [its] work. Had these shops been wrecked, it [was] difficult to estimate the loss that...should have [been] sustained."<sup>115</sup>

Altogether, the Egyptian Delta Light Railways lost more than £E 47,000 represented by loss or damage to property and an additional £46, 000 in earnings owing to the

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<sup>111</sup>FO141/494/14268: General Manager's Office at Cairo Station to Ministry of Communications, Cairo, 15/09/1922.

<sup>112</sup>Ibid.

<sup>113</sup>Egyptian Gazette, report on the Egyptian Delta Light Railways, 17/09/1919.

<sup>114</sup>Ibid.

<sup>115</sup>Ibid.

prohibition of train services implemented by the military authorities. The train companies suffered staggering losses both in financial and personnel assets.<sup>116</sup>

### *The Anglo-Egyptian Bank*

Another example of a British-run business that suffered as a result of the disturbances was the Anglo-Egyptian Bank. Due to the upheavals in the spring of 1919, the business of the bank was undoubtedly harmed. Arthur Blunt, manager of the Alexandria branch recalls:

"Business is for the time being at a standstill and I am not at all sorry that our advances stand at a very small figure, £200,000 in all, £120,000 on stocks and £80,000 commercial...Most of the people who were getting ready to go on leave have postponed their departure."<sup>117</sup>

Also observed in Blunt's notes was the sentiment that as the anticipation of profits decreased, so the fear of loss due to civil unrest increased.

"Business is at a complete standstill and our profits will be by no means brilliant this half-year. I am sitting on a big cash balance in case there should be any withdrawal or native deposits, but I don't anticipate such a thing happening. We have also large cash balances at the Agencies and I should like to reduce them but I can't quite see how to get the money up at Alexandria. *No insurance policy covers the risk of loss from civil commotion.*"<sup>118</sup>

Although the banks in Cairo and Alexandria experienced "a certain amount of booing... it [was] never...necessary to close the doors."<sup>119</sup> Yet, perhaps a more serious effect on the bank during this time of turmoil was the strikes of its Egyptian employees. Blunt's successor as manager in Alexandria - C.W Green wrote to Richardson's successor as chairman in London by suggesting that his employees were on the verge of a strike.

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<sup>116</sup>Ibid.

<sup>117</sup>Blunt to Carruthers, Bank Manager of Alexandria branch to Manager in London, 19/03/1919, letters from Anglo-Egyptian Bank staff, Barclays Archives, Manchester.

<sup>118</sup>Ibid. (emphasis mine)

<sup>119</sup>Ibid., Blunt to H.A. Richardson, Chairman of Anglo-Egyptian Bank in London, 11/04/1919.

"The political situation is most unsatisfactory, and not one of the many people with whom I have discussed it has been able to suggest a way out that would be acceptable to all concerned. Industrial unrest has spread to most trades, and it is a nasty feature of this movement that the strikes which have so far been settled have resulted in victories for the men. The Alexandria Syndicate of Bank Clerks held a meeting yesterday evening...which according to rumour it was definitely decided to strike. As soon as I have official information on the subject I will advise you."<sup>120</sup>

Since the Egyptian civil servants were given a pay rise of 20% plus an additional war allowance, Egyptian bank clerks also felt that they needed a substantial increase.<sup>121</sup> They were offered a 20% bonus but they refused this "on the grounds that [the] bonus [was] not salary and can be stopped at any moment."<sup>122</sup> By 1 October 1919, upon hearing that the Credit Lyonnais was to grant raises of 15 to 50% to its employees plus a war allowance of 20 to 25% and bonuses, the Alexandria Syndicate of Bank Clerks voted 600 to 18 in favour of strike action.<sup>123</sup> Green felt that the syndicate "was in irresponsible and bad hands."<sup>124</sup> The strike took place on 16 October. All "business was stopped [and] only military cash [was] kept open as only Englishmen remained on duty. A large crowd remained in front of the bank to impede the entrance of staff. Police protection...was present."<sup>125</sup> Though the strikes eventually ended with the acceptance of salary increases and bonuses slightly less than those awarded to employees of the Credit Lyonnais, these strikes proved to be a trying time for British bank managers and staff. Not only did British bank staff have to work harder in light of the absences of their Egyptian employees on strike, British managers also feared the decline of their authority over their Egyptian employees. One manager, Brewsher, asked for a transfer when "only one member of the staff spoke in his defence...His fear as to the possibility of his authority being ignored [was] well-grounded."<sup>126</sup>

*The Non-Official British Community and its opposition to the government*

Not only did revolutionary activities affect British importers, British firms involved with the reclamation of the Delta, British-run railway companies and the Anglo-Egyptian

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<sup>120</sup>*Ibid.*, C.W. Green, new manager in Alexandria to Mr. Foa, chairman of Anglo-Egyptian Bank, 20/09/1919.

<sup>121</sup>*Ibid.*, Green to Foa, 23/09/1919.

<sup>122</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>123</sup>*Ibid.*, Green to Foa, 01/10/1919.

<sup>124</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>125</sup>*Ibid.*, telegram 17/10/1919.

Bank, they provided an atmosphere whereby the Non-Official British Community was established. In April 1919, Mr. W.E. Kingsford, Chairman of the British Chamber of Commerce and resident of Egypt for over 33 years, met with High Commissioner Allenby to discuss the effects of the disturbances on society and commerce. At this meeting, Kingsford suggested the enforcement of martial law, the suspension of the Egyptian Prime Minister's authority until restoration of order, the arrest of the key leaders of the uprisings, and the appointment of a non-official advisory board made up of experienced British residents.<sup>127</sup> This advisory board of non-official British residents (also known as the Non-Official British Community and later as the British Union in Egypt)<sup>128</sup> was to consist of prominent members of the British Community primarily in the business world though some came from other professions as well. The members of the advisory board argued that their view and voice was needed in the governing body of Egypt (not only in any popular assembly but in the Executive Council as well) since they were far more experienced in understanding the commercial and social situation than government officials. And that through their long-established relationships and intimate contact with the Egyptian population, they were more likely to know or have access to more information respecting trade and commerce in Egypt than any government official.<sup>129</sup> The Non-Official British Community was also promoted as a counterweight to the poor quality of new British officials in Egypt, already mentioned earlier as a key factor for the growing resentment against the British among the Egyptians. Kingsford describes that,

"In recent years too many of an unsuitable class and character have been employed in some of the Government Departments, to the exclusion in many cases of qualified and capable natives. This had had a discouraging effect on the latter, and created a feeling of enmity and want of confidence in the stated good intentions under the Occupation. The feeling of trust and cooperation, which is a necessary feature in the rule of Oriental subjects, and which previously existed, has to a large extent been sacrificed. Young Englishmen though influence have been jockeyed into positions for which they were unfitted, attracted by an easy life, unwarrantably short hours of work, and a pension at the end of their service. Such men have been too frequently recruited from the Public Instruction Department...with too little regard to their suitability...Many of the Englishmen in Egypt are lacking in tact, courtesy and consideration. Owing either to antipathy, or absence of knowledge of native customs, they hold themselves aloof and fail to command the respect or sympathetic confidence of the native. The old-class of Anglo-Egyptians, carefully selected, were hard workers in the interests of the country, when

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<sup>126</sup>Ibid., Green to Directors, 21/11/1919.

<sup>127</sup>FO141/581/9132: minutes of meeting between Allenby and some members of the non-official British Community, 19/04/1919.

<sup>128</sup>Ibid., letter from High Commissioner Allenby to Lord Curzon, Foreign Secretary, 15/12/1921.

<sup>129</sup>Ibid., Dr. Beddoe's report, 20/06/1919, p.12-13.

Englishmen were few, and hard pioneer work under great difficulties had to be carried out. Lord Cromer's authority and methods, influenced generally a higher tone in the Government Service."<sup>130</sup>

Although there were sufficient reasons for the initiation of the Non-Official British Community due to their expertise and experience, linkage with the Egyptian population, and their depth of insight and competence far above the novice British officials, the association was only formed when the revolution threatened British sovereignty over Egypt.

By establishing the Non-Official British Community, British business leaders in Egypt were concerned that the British authorities were not proceeding effectively in their governance of Egypt. They felt that the British authorities had not sufficiently appreciated that the governing of a Muslim nation by a Christian nation was fraught with peculiar dangers and to govern well, with the least amount of problems, required utmost wisdom and circumspection.<sup>131</sup> The Non-Official British Community felt that the British Foreign Office lacked "a definite policy in Egypt [and that its] direction of Egyptian affairs [were] deficient both in sympathy and knowledge."<sup>132</sup> The Non-Official British Community seemed to have favoured a much more conciliatory approach to governing Egypt. It asserted that "Egypt should become a self-governing country in close and friendly alliance with the British Empire [and that] Egyptians [should be given] wider opportunities of showing their administrative capacities... [while] the rights of British subjects now existing under Consular jurisdiction [must be maintained]."<sup>133</sup>

On the contrary, other businessmen such as Walton, a senior official at the Anglo-Egyptian Bank argued that "this policy of 'wait and see' on the part of Great Britain hardly seems to be the thing judging by results. I think...Roosevelt's advice to govern or get out would be a much better line to follow."<sup>134</sup> Elsewhere, he stated that, "we seem to have made things worse by our continued dilatory policy and to have lost another opportunity of settling things once and for all."<sup>135</sup> Likewise, other businessmen "believed

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<sup>130</sup>*Ibid.*, Kingsford, report of non-official British community, 20/06/1919.

<sup>131</sup>*Ibid.*, Kingsford, report of the Council of Cairo non-Official British Community, 22/11/1919.

<sup>132</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>133</sup>FO141/799/14023: letter from Kingsford to Allenby, 08/12/1921.

<sup>134</sup>Letters from Anglo-Egyptian Staff, Walton to Carruthers, 25/05/1921.

<sup>135</sup>*Ibid.*, Walton to Foa, 28/04/1922.

that the nationalist movement could be extinguished if it was given a sharp blow by the British, but if the currently lenient and cautious policies were followed the nationalists would [grow] strong."<sup>136</sup> Whether the Foreign Office should have granted Egyptian independence with certain safeguards for British subjects or whether it should have opted for a military crushing of the uprisings and reinstated a strong-handed British hegemony over Egypt, most businessmen would have expected a more definitive approach from the British government. They believed that this indecisiveness created an environment for the violent disturbances since nationalistic activists were given time and space to plan and act. If independence were given quicker, activists would have had no reason to engage in violent activities. If a heavy-handed British military domination was quickly implemented, then the conspirators and perpetrators of the uprising would all have been aggressively punished and their actions promptly subdued. Businessmen, in favour of stability in order for their businesses to thrive, opposed the Foreign Office's policy of delay that accorded time and resolve to the nationalists.

Why then did British politicians adopt a policy of delay? In their opinion, unilaterally giving in to the demands of Egyptian independence was preposterous in light of Britain's colonial prestige and her many strategic, political and economic interests in Egypt. Further they did not feel that Egypt was ready for self-governance. Yet, to have crushed the nationalists with excessive force would have provided even more impetus for opposition propaganda and would have alienated the moderate and more conciliatory supporters of British political involvement in Egypt in the future. For the Foreign Office, to withhold force was part of the attempt to demonstrate Britain's efficient and peaceable administration of Egypt and to prevent the issue of Egyptian independence from the focus of world attention.<sup>137</sup> Thus Britain needed to exercise a delicate balance in the handling of the strikes, violence, and indeed, revolution. They opted for the maintenance of order by suppressing criminal activity such as attacks on individuals and the damage of property, but allowed for demonstrations of a political nature to take place.

However, the tide of Egyptian nationalism was perhaps too strong for any balanced British policy. The failure of the Milner Mission combined with the relentless nationalist

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<sup>136</sup> Tignor, p. 276.

<sup>137</sup> Brugger, p.111.

momentum throughout the country, independence was granted to Egypt on 28 February 1922.

### **Conclusion**

This discussion centred on the diversity of issues and challenges that different sectors of the British community of Cairo faced during the revolutionary period of 1919 to 1922. After a look at the origins and the nature of the 1919 Revolution until the granting of independence in 1922, this chapter examined the British community's variety of problems, struggles, and even conflicting views with the British authorities during this time. The main challenges included the delay in demobilisation and the imminent abolition of the Capitulations, the quest for compensation for deaths or injuries, the ongoing threat of attacks, and the economic hardships manifested by a sharp rise in the cost of living plus the negative effects of the nationalist insurrection. Adversity was encountered by a diverse array of Britons in Cairo: missionaries, railway workers, bank employees and other members of the non-official British community.

### Conclusion

On 28 February 1922, Britain issued a declaration announcing the end of the Protectorate and beginning of the independence of Egypt. From that point onwards, the British community in Cairo and in Egypt started to decline in numbers.

"As soon as the Anglo-Egyptian agreement was brought into force and it became known that the services of British officials would no longer be required, a liberal scheme of compensation for loss in pay and pension was prepared by the Residency and accepted with a generous gesture by the Egyptian government."<sup>1</sup>

By "twos and threes, by tens and then by hundreds, British officials were being sent away."<sup>2</sup> They received healthy packages of compensation. Men from 40 to 50 years old who earned £E1400 to £E2000 per year were being awarded £E4000 to £E5000 in compensation. Although these payouts were generous, the officials were giving up their life's work and few were qualified to work in other fields. Though the numbers of British businessmen did not dwindle as much as the number of British officials who were being 'forced' to leave,<sup>3</sup> a report on the finances of Cairo's All Saint's Church, in 1922 illustrates the significant exodus of Britons from Egypt.

"Finance greatly preoccupies [our Church Council]. We are faced with the possibility of a deficit in 1923. Not only have many supporters left the country, but many more are leaving, and those who remain find the calls upon their generosity more than they can meet. Every effort is being made to increase the sources of revenue but it should be remembered that the congregation has the solution of the difficulty in its own hands. Every member should scrutinise the accounts, satisfy himself that there is no waste, and then see to what extent he can not only increase his own contribution but induce any of his friends and acquaintances who do not contribute to do so...*No organisation of collectors could possibly vie in efficiency with such a mass movement of the whole congregation.*"<sup>4</sup>

The declaration of Egyptian independence, the end of the British occupation in Egypt, and the accompanying numerical decline in the membership of the British community of Cairo, mark the end of the 40-year period that this thesis is concerned with. As set out in the introduction, the thesis sought to examine several aspects of the British community in occupied Cairo. The study attempted to introduce a demographic overview of the community and discussed its boundaries, whether clear or ambiguous.

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<sup>1</sup> Young, unpublished papers, St. Antony's College archives, ch. 16, p.15.

<sup>2</sup> Caillard, p. 247.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup>FO141/451/4612: 1922 Church Annual Report, All Saint's Church, 31/12/1922. (emphasis mine)

An example of this ambiguity can be observed in the Maltese community where certain members of the Maltese considered themselves part of the British community yet most of the Britons from Britain did not accept them as part of their community with the exception of including them for fund-raising purposes. Another example of ambiguity was the case of the British missionaries. To avoid 'worldiness', they saw themselves as very separate from other Britons in Cairo and yet, they sought the respect of the British community when they looked for a new leader of the mission of high social standing and influence. The thesis also examined the symbols and institutions that solidified and reflected the community's British identity to those inside and outside the community such as military parades and exclusive sporting clubs. An interesting finding was the lack of financing for British institutions in Egypt due perhaps to the precariousness and uncertainty of British rule in Egypt. However, this scarcity of funds may have also stemmed from the British value of self-initiative and opposition to government funding which weakens individual responsibility. Ironically, the lack of financing for British institutions in Egypt, such as the Anglo-American Hospital, Victoria College or All Saints' Cathedral, may have expressed the British value of self-reliance while at the same time, by not funding these institutions, it may have limited the assertion of British identity and power.

Further, this analysis challenged the general perception based on official sources and memoirs of the upper middle classes, that almost all Britons in Cairo from 1882-1922 were law-abiding middle upper class citizens. The thesis suggested that not only were there significant numbers of poor lower middle and working class Britons in Cairo but there were also Britons guilty of crime and misconduct. Finally, the dissertation also pointed to the diversity of reactions and responses that the community faced during the monumental crises and challenges of World War I and the Egyptian revolutionary period of 1919-1922. Significantly, during these two events, there were times when members of the British community opposed the decisions made by the British authorities. During the First World War, members of the British community argued against the requisitioning of certain buildings and against the criteria used by the authorities for tax-free war bonds. During the revolutionary period, members of the non-official British community opposed the British authorities' indecisiveness and hesitant approach towards the revolution and voiced the concern that this uncertainty made room for even greater disturbances and violence. Overall, the study attempted to

add to the historiography of expatriate communities during the colonial era by examining the British community as a whole, as opposed to only British officials, and using sources that have largely been previously overlooked in the writing of the British in Egypt.

Perhaps, this thesis may serve as a signpost for further research. A thorough investigation of the British community in Alexandria during this same period is possible with similar sources. Though with a much smaller source base, another effort could be made, perhaps for the purpose of an article, in the examination of British communities in Port Said, Suez and the rest of Egypt. An interesting thesis could be written about the British community in Cairo, Alexandria, or Egypt from 1922-1956. There are ample sources for this and the added advantage of assistance from members of the British community during that time who are still alive today. This was a fascinating time that featured Egypt's liberal experiment in politics, World War II, the ensuing years of the Free Officer's revolution and the eventual expulsion of Britons from Egypt during the Suez crisis. Depending on the availability of sources, other ideas for future research relate to other communities in Egypt during this era. It may be possible to pursue a thesis on the Maltese community in Egypt though it may depend on the availability of memoirs or documents in Malta. Another worthwhile study would be the French community of Egypt. During the time of the British occupation, there was a sizeable French community and at times it was larger than the British community (Table 1.6). Since records on the French community located in Egypt appear to be insufficient, a study of the French community before or during the British occupation could be fruitful, though likely dependent on the existence of sources in France. As for pursuing a study due to the wealth of primary source material, a thorough history of the Church Missionary Society in Egypt during this time is definitely possible<sup>5</sup>. The CMS archives at the University of Birmingham are immense and provide an excellent source for biographies of CMS workers as well as studies of the entire mission's activities in Egypt. The All Saints' Church archives in Cairo are also extensive and have been clearly catalogued by an archivist. Although there has already been a book written about All Saints' Church,<sup>6</sup> the wealth of archival material at the church can certainly facilitate

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<sup>5</sup> It appears that the only recent publication that discusses the Anglican church in Egypt in some detail – Brian de Saram's *Nile Harvest: The Anglican Church in Egypt and Sudan*, (Bournemouth, Bourne Press, 1992) does not even utilise the CMS archives. The archives seem to be seriously underused.

<sup>6</sup> Burrell, *op.cit.*

further perspectives and approaches to the writing of its history. Without question, there is much room for the study of the British community in other parts of Egypt and at other times, and other expatriate communities and British religious institutions in Egypt, such as the CMS and All Saints' Church.

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