

*Rivka Yadlin*

*Egyptian Opposition:  
The Boundaries of  
National Consensus*

Policy Studies ★ 33

In Memory of Brigadier General David Carmon  
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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	1
The Meaning of Opposition	4
Limitations of Opposition Inherent in Legislation	6
Limitations of Opposition Inherent in the Conduct of Elections	9
Limitations of Meager Participation	11
The Nascence and Growth of Parliamentary Opposition	13
The Socialist Labour Party	14
The Liberal Socialist Party	15
The National Progressive Unionist Party	15
The Neo-Wafd	16
The Nation Party	17
The Muslim Brothers	18
The Alliance	20
The Nasserites	21
The Communists	23
The 1984 Elections	23
The 1987 Elections	24
Foci of Legitimization	25
The July Revolution	26
Non-Alignment	28
Arab Identification	33
Israel	35
Islam	40
Conclusion	48
References	51

## INTRODUCTION

The most momentous development in Egyptian internal affairs in the last decade has been the introduction and growth of a pluralist political system. Since the early days of the 1952 Nasserite revolution, Egypt spoke mainly in one voice; the existence of other opinions and attitudes was mostly hinted at through repressed attempts at takeover or organization. As Sadat's rule was taking on its particular shape, some variation was introduced within the Arab Socialist Union (Egypt's single party). Later, a "loyal opposition" was established that subsequently emerged as an independent one. The increased relaxation of regime-opposition relations by Mubarak brought the process to culmination, and following the recent (April 1987) elections, Egypt's political map is a far cry from Nasser's single-party system. A virtual pluralist system has come into being, with several oppositional parties representing a variety of trends and factions in the political community.

These competing and vociferous trends, however, do not reflect with any validity the distribution and strength of political stances in the community. While having crossed a tremendous span since the initiation of semi-democratic patterns in the mid-1970s, Egypt today, as most foreign and Egyptian analysts tend to agree, is not yet a full-fledged democracy (see for example Aly 1987, and *Intikhabat*, below). Various restrictions on the activity of opposition parties render the size of their representation only partially indicative of their following in the system. Nor do the published messages of the parties yield the full scope of political attitudes in the community, even though they are more indicative than election returns. Freedom of the press has indeed been expanded under Mubarak to an extent hardly known before in Egypt. Not only are more opposition organs than ever being published now; opposition personalities are permitted into the establishment press and topics are broached that in the past would have landed their authors in jail. When Egyptian political scientist Sid-Ahmed deprecates democracy by saying that freedom of the opposition press is what Egyptian democracy is mostly all about, he also confirms the unprecedented dimensions of this freedom. Yet even this freedom is not full: the press is subject to government supervision and both subtle and blunt interference set the parameters for expression (on direct

presidential interference see, for example, Musa Sabri, *Sadat, al-Haqiqa wal-Ustura* [Sadat, Reality and Legend], Cairo 1985; Baha' al-Din 1987).

Awareness of such limits is not only prudent, it is instructive as well: whatever is said and written may be taken to be within the scope of the acceptable. The full picture may be construed by adding the unacceptable, and in the current political makeup this is not impossible; illegal parties publish and propagate their views and programs in semi-clandestine publications and occasionally present them in the legal press. The significance of their expression in the overall distribution of opinions is not only in their operation as ghost-parties, but also in its circulation by their proponents who are active within the various legal parties.

Even more revealing is a constraint of a different kind, self-imposed by force of objective conditions. The main thrust of partisan activity in the last two elections—the most free and significant ones since the reinitiation of partisan life—was in the effort to achieve the difficult goal of getting into parliament. The need to appeal to constituencies in order to win as much following as possible is naturally part of the political game everywhere. It is more so, however, in the case of the budding Egyptian opposition. Due to its newness and the entrenched power of the government, it still lacks solid legitimization; due to various legal obstacles, the intimidating power of the government, and the ignorance or indifference of the electorate, it needs a great deal of appeal.

This quest for legitimacy and appeal seems to be at the root of the "great similarity" rightly observed by Egyptian commentators between the various party programs (*Rose al-Youssef* 30-3-87). These commentators further pointed out that even "the ordinary Egyptian citizen could easily perceive that many of the slogans and aims presented in the programs were in fact an expression of hopes and long-range aims on which something like a consensus exists" (*al-Ahram* 18-5-84, quoted in *Intikhabat* 1986). Not only did parties adhere to these precepts, they also contested each other for their exclusive representation, alternately denigrating each other for falsely propounding them.

The forms that this recurring "common denominator" principle took were not identical. Not all parties gave it the same primacy, the same emphasis,

or even the same interpretation. In fact, for some programs these precepts were clearly inorganic and obviously acquired. Parties could be identified as distinct bodies favoring different solutions, but at the same time paying tribute to the common principles. Idiosyncratic programs were, so to speak, vested with an ideological garb that was not altogether of a piece with their real essence.

This quasi-unanimity was not the result of inhibitions on organizations and personalities, although the campaign was not free of direct and indirect pressures and manipulations. The common profile was not identical to what the ruling party actually stood for; the latter too, like the smaller competing parties, accommodated in its program a number of ideological-political maxims that were not intrinsic to its essential stance. In fact, the glaring difference between official policies and the government party platform is just as telling as the case of the opposition.

The motive thus seems to be clearly positive. The strength of these stances in popular sentiment and political commitment is such that organizations that aspire to power would adhere to these stances and would certainly not bluntly disavow them. The ruling party propounds them in the effort to claim overall "national" representation which would present opposition as redundant (see for example *Mayo* 3-4-87: "[The National Democratic Party] is a party of the whole people . . . Every person will find that his principles are those of the NDP"). Small weak parties in their turn, in underplaying specific-issue politics and subscribing to generally entrenched attitudes, could transmit implicitly the same message of universal representation as well as avoid the hazard of actual marginality. The eminence of these common denominators in partisan messages was then not only an effect of their recurrence in the various programs but also of their strength as legitimating credos, maxims that are situated in the center of society's belief system, shared and sanctioned by most of the political community.

Thus in the case of Egyptian opposition, despite its extremity and antagonism to official politics and despite its freedom of expression, a major issue that may be studied meaningfully is the boundaries of national consensus.

## THE MEANING OF OPPOSITION

An episode related by Ahmad Baha' al-Din, an influential journalist, illustrates the mood and intent prevalent at the inception of the pluralist system in Egypt. In a talk with Baha' al-Din, Sadat shared his thoughts about some sort of "political pluralism." His idea was the de Gaulle constitution for the Fifth Republic—"something between a parliamentary system which places all authority in the hands of the parliament, and a presidential regime which places all authority in the hands of the president." Baha' al-Din approved of such a pattern, especially, as he said, for countries of the third world, where conditions guaranteeing the success of democracy were not yet well entrenched. He commented to Sadat, however, that the Egyptian constitution had surpassed the French one in the tremendous authorities it granted the President. To this Sadat replied: "Ya Ahmad, 'Abd al-Nasser and myself, we are the last of the Pharaohs! Did 'Abd al-Nasser need any clauses to rule with, or do I need any clauses? The authorities which we discuss are meant for those who will come after us . . . regular presidents will come . . . Muhammad and 'Ali and 'Umar [common names] . . . they will need clauses to carry on their work" (Baha' al-Din 1987).

For Sadat, political pluralism signified the two major issues he stood for: liberalization and institutionalization. It was geared to create a basis of legitimization for his regime that would be independent of and distinct from that of Nasser's and was in tune with his change of global orientation toward the United States. In fact, some analysts tend to maintain that the whole move was targeted to impress the West and obtain benefits and protection (*Intikhabat* 1986; Sid-Ahmed 1987-88; Aly 1987; Baha' al-Din 1987). It was constructed to keep society's various forces in check and give vent to some of the pressures for freer political expression, such as the demands for political pluralism made by intellectuals from various trends (*Intikhabat* 1986, quoting 'Ali al-din Hilal and others, *Tajribat al-Dimuqratiyya fi Misr* 1970-1981, *al-Markaz al-'Arabi lil-Bahth wal-Nashr*, Cairo 1982).



Such demands, however, were not tantamount to expressions of real public pressures for political organization. In fact, opposition at that time was bound to be a creation of the powers-that-be rather than an organic, independent growth. The military regime left behind a society devoid of any socially-based political power centers, with the resulting concentration of power in the presidency—the only real political institution. Moreover, most of the ruling elite was likewise not inclined at the time toward the change: The Central Committee of the Third National Conference of the Arab Socialist Union, held in July 1975, submitted a report saying that the conference supported the continuation of the Socialist Union as a representative of national unity and rejected the concept of political pluralism (*Intikhabat* 1986). This is not to say that opposition had been, or remained, altogether artificial or obedient. Some of the newly-formed parties had firm roots, both in doctrine and in following, in the pre-Nasserite past, and some of them have developed actual oppositionary postures and attitudes. At the time of their initiation, however, they were intended to be pawns in a game played under the guiding hand of the president, and for his own personal reasons.

The conditions of the birth of opposition—both the presidential initiative and the disregard for constitutional patterns—were to reflect on the future of political pluralism. As Sid-Ahmed points out, opposition parties—right-wing included—were tolerated only to the extent that they served the authorities' orchestration: there was never a question of implementing the rules of genuine democracy, especially the principle of granting the opposition parties the opportunity of coming to power by the will of the people as expressed through free elections. Despite Sadat's liberalization, the regime retained the basic institutional structure of an authoritarian state with little of the checks and balances mechanism inherent in western-style democracies.

*Limitations of Opposition Inherent in Legislation*

A cardinal factor restricting effective influence of the opposition is the immense authority invested in the presidency and anchored in legislation since the start of the Nasserite revolution (the 1956 and 1964 constitutions and Sadat's 1971 constitution). The head of the republic derives his authority from several sources: he is the supreme commander of the armed forces and supreme chief of police. He has the right of announcing a state of emergency after bringing the matter before the Assembly, as well as taking any measures that he sees fit, following a referendum, in cases of a threat to national unity or safety of the country or interference with the constitutional performance of state institutions. He also has the right to dissolve the Assembly following a referendum. Even though, according to the constitution, the head of the republic shares the planning of general policy of the country and supervision of its execution with his cabinet, it is clear that he is the main deciding agent since he enjoys the right of appointing—and dismissing—the prime minister and ministers. Such choice is likely to be made to fit his own attitudes, the result being that priorities and choices would have already been made by the president and perhaps some of his close assistants. The ministers' role is mostly the technical-application aspect of the policy. The legislature supervises only the cabinet and is therefore also limited to the technical-application aspects.

Thus the president is in fact outside of and above all other authority foci in society. The process of political struggle in the realm of decision-making is limited to the top of the government pyramid and, as far as other levels are concerned, politics are essentially nothing but administrative matters; differences could involve such matters and the level of related performance, barring interference with the political choices and preferences themselves. The right to choose and define political priorities remains the prerogative of the presidency, so that dealing with any prime political issues is not legitimate, including to think or talk about even, if it does not issue from the president. This level of authority reached its peak at the time of President Sadat, who presented the policies of the presidency as the goals and needs of the Egyptian people. Opposing his choices meant opposing the will of the Egyptian people (*Intikhabat* 1986; Hinnebush 1985).

The multi-party system, when finally launched, was never integrated organically into the political system. The amendment of the 1971 constitution instituting a pluralist party system was introduced on May 22, 1980, but was not reflected in the rest of the constitution which remained based on concentration of authority in the hands of the president. In other words, the endorsement by the constitution of the return to party life in Egypt did not entail an amendment of the structure of the distribution of power in the political system. For example, the president is not obligated to choose the prime minister and the ministers from the majority party, so executive power remains invested in the head of the republic with no obligating connection to partisan life in the country (*Intikhabat* 1986).

The Parties Law (no. 40 of 1977) sets various limits on the opposition that lend themselves to broad interpretation. The basis for political activity is defined as "national unity," "the alliance of the people's laboring forces," "social peace" (all of which rule out class struggle), democratic socialism, and protection of the rights of workers and peasants. The conditions are also defined for establishing a political party—its goals, principles, and program must not contradict the Shari'a (Muslim law), and it must safeguard national unity, social peace, the democratic socialist regime, and socialist gains. It must not be predicated on a class, communal, or geographical basis, must not hold any military formations or constitute a branch of a party abroad, must not have any clandestine branches, and half its founders must be peasants and workers. Parties that were banned following the 1952 revolution and those that contradict the principles of that revolution, as well as those that contradict the principles of the May 15, 1971 (Sadat's "corrective") revolution, are also banned from organizing (*Intikhabat* 1986).

The Law for the Defense of the Internal Front and Social Peace (no. 33 of 1978) reiterates the restrictions of the parties law. It prohibits political activity for those accused of corrupting political life before the revolution and after. This includes all participants in the rule before the revolution except for members of Young Egypt, members of the National Party, and those accused in the case of the "power centers" (the leftist Nasserite opposition to Sadat) in 1971. Under the provisions of this law, the Neo-Wafd was led to its self-dissolution, the leftist NPUP (see below) to the freezing of its activities, and the assault on partisan activity and the press which climaxed in the crisis of

autumn 1981 and the subsequent assassination of Sadat was facilitated (*Intikhabat* 1986).

Decree No. 194 of 1979, issued by Sadat in May of that year, required parties and candidates to abide by the principles approved in the April 19 referendum (*inter alia* the peace agreement) as well as by the law for the protection of the internal front (no. 33 of 1978) and the law for political parties (no. 40 of 1977). This meant that neither the peace agreement nor social and constitutional questions could be made issues in election campaigns (*Middle East Contemporary Survey* 1978-1979, vol. 3).

The Amendment to Parties Law (no. 36 of 1979) reinforced previous restrictions and introduced further ones. It empowered the parties committee with suspension of partisan press in many cases and stipulated that the committee must consist of at least four members: the minister of justice, the minister of the interior, and the minister of cabinet affairs, in addition to the chairman, thus restricting the role of judicial non-partisan elements. Finally, the amendment deprived parties that do not win ten seats in the People's Assembly, in addition to their deprivation of exemption from taxes, of the right to publish journals, thereby restricting these parties' chances for growth (*Intikhabat* 1986).

The Elections Law (no. 114 of 1983), amending the People's Assembly Law (no. 38 of 1972), imposed further restrictions on the actual power of the parties. The amendment increased the number of People's Assembly members to 448, while decreasing the number of constituencies to forty-eight. This increased the number of representatives per constituency, thus weakening the personal ties between candidates and the public. The law stipulated that the People's Assembly will be elected through party lists: every party has a special list that cannot include candidates of other parties, thus preventing alliances of opposition parties and forcing them to compete with each other. It also ruled out the phenomenon of independent candidates, an institution in Egyptian parliamentary life plausibly geared to isolate political trends which were prohibited from organizing and which attempted to bypass the prohibition by operating as independents. The amendment provided for a minimum eight percent blocking limit for a party in the sum total of votes in all forty-eight constituencies. This, too, forced the small and relatively new parties to compete against each other in all constituencies, thus further undermining

one another. Another stipulation was that the list in every constituency would include the required number of candidates, in addition to a similar number of reserve candidates—a difficult provision for the new parties whose numbers were still limited. On the other hand, amendments concerning the counting of the ballots and the allocation of seats granted the majority party in each constituency all of the votes that do not amount to the number required for one seat. Also, the party that gets the least votes must round up the percentage of workers and peasants in the constituency, which deprives the more prominent members of the party of getting the party's allotted seats (*Intikhabat* 1986).

Finally, the 1987 Elections Law, which followed the disbanding of the assembly by Mubarak and which met the opposition's demand to reinstate independent seats, was still favorable to the government party. Although it set aside one seat in each voting district for individual non-partisan candidates, it also permitted party-nominated candidates to contest these seats. A stipulation which led to runoffs between front-runners gave advantage to candidates with finances and the support of a strong party such as the NDP (the ruling party). Indeed, this party got away with nearly all of the independent seats (Post 1987; *Middle East Report* July-August 1987).

### *Limitations of Opposition Inherent in the Conduct of Elections*

Obstacles were not always as clearly articulated as those inculcated in law. No less hindering were various forms of government interference and manipulation of the actual process of election. Meetings organized by the opposition parties entailed tortuous negotiations with the authorities, and even approved rallies would be canceled at the last moment by state security. Regular activities, such as distribution of leaflets, were subject to government approval; demonstrations with posters, megaphones or cars were officially prohibited. Violent behavior and repression in the course of elections by the central security forces, the Ministry of Interior, and the *baltagiyya* ("stalwarts") of the government NDP candidates were not rare (Hendriks 1987; *al-Wafd* 7, 8, 9-4-87; *al-Ahali* 8-4-87). On the eve of the elections, police were said to have rounded up thousands of opposition activists—Muslim Brothers,

Alliance (see below) pollwatchers and a number of Communists. Police acknowledged detaining five hundred persons, mostly Islamic activists, on charges ranging from illegal Islamic sloganeering to weapon possession offenses (*Jerusalem Post* 5-4-87; *MET* 12-18 April 1987; *Daily Report* 6-4-87; Hendriks 1987). Finally, it was almost unanimously agreed by citizens, opposition spokesmen and foreign observers that results were bluntly rigged or doctored (Hendriks, *ibid.*, Sid-Ahmed). In fact, most analysts and observers also agreed that even without these measures, the NDP was likely to come out with a sweeping victory. It had most financial funds and TV time, and more importantly, control of local government and the ability to distribute—and make good—threats and promises. The prevalent method of recruiting support through cliental and patronage relations also guarantees ascendancy for the NDP whose supporters belong to the most powerful elite circles (see for example a study reported in *Rose al-Youssef* 30-3-87).

Another factor that invalidates election returns as an indicator of the ideological public map is the politics of the election campaign. Elections revolved around personal, rather than issue, politics. Except for the Leftist PNUP, relations between the government and opposition parties and among the latter were often aggressive on a personal basis (*Intikhabat* 1986). More significantly, there was considerable floating between parties: thus, for example, on March 5 Neo-Wafd representatives moved to the Government NDP (*al-Akhbar* 10-3-87). In Central Cairo NDP members joined the Neo-Wafd who were not nominated as candidates by their party, or were not in a safe place (*al-Musawwar* 13-3-87). A member of the NDP moved to the (nationalist left-of-center) SLP for similar reasons (*al-Akhbar* 11-3-87). The NDP was reported to court prominent opposition personalities such as the deputy chairman of the SLP, al-Dimirdash al-'Uqaili; Ahmad al-Khawaja, secretary general of the lawyers syndicate, a prominent Nasserist; and the prominent NPUP leader, Dr. Yahya al-Jamal, who in fact joined the NDP (*Sawt al-Shabab* March 1987; *al-Musawwar* 6-3-87). The party was reported to court especially Nasserite personalities, in order to don Nasser's garb and win popular sentiments (*Sawt al-'Arab* 8-2-87). An official announced that Nasserites would head Neo-Wafd lists in Giza, Alexandria, al-Sharqiyya and Asyut (*al-Wafd* 26-2-87).

In Assembly activity a similar personal tenor was indicated. During the Assembly's term of office, frequent clashes were reported between the opposition, mainly the Neo-Wafd, and speaker Rif'at al-Mahjub. Attacks were mainly personal or directed at relatives, and were considered to go back to the old days of clashes between Nasser and the Wafd leadership. Another similarly indicative phenomenon was "sphinxism"—failure of deputies to join in parliamentary debates, engaging instead in private affairs, both political and business (*MET* 22-28 March).

### *Limitations of Meager Participation*

Significance of absolute numbers was further limited by the low rate of participation in the elections. In the 1984 elections 5.3 million out of 12.3 million registered voters voted, representing 43.7% of voters (*Intikhabat* 1986). These numbers do not, however, realistically reflect the percentages of participating voters in the general eligible electorate, since the number of those registered in the lists was much smaller than the numbers of the population 18 years old and up. In 1974, 43.8% were registered, and in 1983, 54.06% (numbers released by the Ministry of the Interior in 1984 and quoted in *Intikhabat* 1986), which means that the real percentage of voters of the total number of eligible voters was 23.6%. Opposition leaders claimed that 2.5 million dead people were included in the lists, in addition to 3 million abroad (*MET* 26 April-9 May 1987).

In the 1987 elections, according to an Interior Ministry announcement on April 10th, out of 14.3 million registered voters only 7.7 million cast their votes, representing 54% of the electorate (*MET* 26 April-9 May 1987). According to a study published by 'Ayn Shams University, only 12 million out of 20 million eligible voters were registered (*al-Ahram* 18-3-87). Other estimates (e.g. by Wahid Ra'fat, vice president of the Neo-Wafd party, *ibid.*; Rif'at al-Sa'id, general secretary of the Central Committee of the leftist PNUP) were that more than two-thirds of the registered voters do not cast their votes (*MET* 26 April-9 May 1987). Percentages were lower in the cities: estimates (by Wahid Ra'fat) said that 90% of the voters in the capital and cities do not go to

the polls. Explanations for the low rate of participation were in part technical, such as the one offered by the minister of the interior (in a press conference on 30-5-87, quoted in *Intikhabat* 1986), namely that 4 million Egyptians were abroad, and that under the law, the military and the police did not participate. Another reason (offered by the editor of *al-Musawwar*, Makram Muhammad Ahmad), was that lists were complicated and voters unable to find their names (*Intikhabat* 1986). Opposition personalities concurred, adding that the confusion was created deliberately by government apparati, particularly in places known for their support of the opposition (*Intikhabat* 1986).

Apart from these technical difficulties, analysts offered explanations that had to do with underlying attitudes inherent in Egypt's current political culture. Opposition spokesmen referred to cynicism of voters concerning the impartiality of the elections, and the absence of prominent personalities belonging to outlawed parties, such as Nasserites and the religious trend, whose voters preferred to abstain (*MET* 26 April-9 May 1987). This may pertain especially to university students, among whom the radical Islamic trend is prevalent (*Taqrir* 1987) and who, according to a study carried out by the Faculty of Commerce at 'Ayn Shams University, mostly—some 80%—do not even carry elections cards (*al-Ahram* 18-3-87). 'Ali al-din Hilal, professor of political science at Cairo University, concurred with the explanation that voters felt that the result of the elections was fixed in advance. "The Egyptian people realize that political balance is already calculated ahead of time in favor of a given party and all that the other parties can do is to improve the position of the minority in face of the fixed majority. The turnout will rise only when the voter feels that his vote will make a difference. Egypt is still new to the multi-party system. These parties are still organizationally weak. Their voices are louder than their pull." Conceptualizing the phenomenon, Rif'at al Sa'id (general secretary of the Central Committee of the NPUP) said that voter apathy is chronic in Egypt: "they live in the country as individuals but not as citizens. They are not part of the country's moral or psychological make-up. The seriousness of this phenomenon is that such apathy creates segments of the population that are outside the scope of the political parties. Their future political action cannot be determined, in view of the absence of channels between the parties and these segments" (*MET* 26 April-9 May 1987).



*The Nascence and Growth of Parliamentary Opposition*

Following the revolution, in January 1953, a law was issued dissolving the existing political parties in the country. In the middle of 1954, following the attempt on Nasser's life by the Muslim Brothers, this association (previously left untouched because it was not defined as an existing political party) was also banned. The parties were replaced by successive single political organizations—the Liberation Rally, 1953-1957, the National Union, 1957-1961, and the Arab Socialist Union since 1961, until its replacement in stages by "forums" and then parties. In 1976, Sadat allowed deliberations in a "committee on the future of political action," which disclosed a majority support for developing the Socialist Union through establishing "forums" to be formed within it, and warned against a pluralism of parties at that stage. As the initiative developed, 40 forums were suggested, at which Sadat interfered and allowed the formation of three only, established in March 1976. The initial three organizations were the Socialist Liberals (right), Egypt's Arab Socialist organization (center), and the National Progressive Unionist organization (left). The three bodies participated in the elections to the People's Assembly in October 1976 which returned 280 seats for the center, 12 for the right, and 3 for the left. Independent candidates got 48 seats. In the opening session of the new parliament in November 1987, President Sadat declared his intention to turn the organizations into parties. The parties law of 1977 made the formation of other new parties conditional on the approval of the central committee of the Socialist Union, and required that a party have 20 parliament members in its founding committee. These conditions were met by only one additional party, the Neo-Wafd, which was established in March 1978. The subsequent June 1978 law "for the protection of the internal front and social peace" led to the self-dissolution of the Neo-Wafd and the freezing of the NPUP activities as a protest. In August of that year, having decided to head the government party himself, Sadat formed a new party, the National Democratic Party, and on August 13th Egypt's Arab Socialist Party issued an announcement stating its wish to join the new party collectively. Sadat became the head of the party and was succeeded in this position by Mubarak. Simultaneously, the idea was conceived of establishing a new opposition

party, a "loyal" or "constructive" one that would support the regime and have its blessing. Sadat himself signed the document concerning the establishment of the Socialist Labour Party, and assisted in meeting the requirement that 20 members of the Assembly join its founding committee. He also helped it, in the 1979 elections, to get 21 seats while other opposition parties failed (*Intikhabat* 1986; Aly 1987).

### *The Socialist Labour Party (Hizb al-'Amal al-Ishtiraki)*

The party was intended to fill the gap to the left of the government created by the self-freezing of the leftist NPUP; Sadat hoped that it would attract the NPUP constituency, as well as liberal and social democratic elements which would find the government party too rightist (*al-Ahram* 24-11-1978). Socially, both membership and targets of appeal in the political public were similar for the SLP and the (government) NDP. For both, it was the middle and upper-middle class, urban as well as rural. Politically, it was the continuation of the pre-revolutionary Young Egypt (*Misr al-Fatat*) from whence their leaders were drawn. That party's core was a radical populist supra-nationalist trend, similar in essence to Nasserism. Although both parties were avowedly centrist, with time the government moved right of its stated policy, while the SLP moved left. Having initially accepted *infitah* (the liberal economic Open Door policy) and a "just peace" with Israel, it later veered to stronger endorsement of the public sector and came out against normalization with Israel in the absence of an overall settlement. Its criticism, which grew harsher, initially involved performance rather than principles; but, since that too emanated from the president or his close associates, collision was inevitable and the party has become a "destructive" opposition. As the party turned into a virtual opposition, the regime's support diminished, and by the end of the 1979 Assembly duration, its members numbered only 7. In the 1981 crack-down on the opposition, some of the SLP members were arrested and its organ, *al-Sha'b*, was closed down (Hinnebush 1985).

*The Liberal Socialist Party (Hizb al-Ahrar al-Ishtirakiyyun)*

The Liberal Party emerged from the right-wing forum, and was expected to be another loyal opposition serving as home to both secular and religious rightists. It went even further than the government on the issues of democratization, implementation of the Shari'a, *infitah* and the curbing of the public sector, and was an ardent supporter of the peace treaty. The party appealed at the start with its liberal front to the private bourgeoisie, and also to popular strata critical of the regime which did not find a home in the leftist NPUP because of its Marxist hue. Its great resemblance to the government party, however, to the degree of declared tendencies to merge with it, made it vulnerable to the Neo-Wafd which enjoyed the halo of a long-standing nationalist, liberal and activist tradition. Twelve of its 21 members—12 returned in the 1976 elections and 9 additional ones picked up later—defected to the Neo-Wafd when it appeared in 1978; in the 1979 elections they won only one seat and that one too defected to the Neo-Wafd when it reappeared in 1984 (*Intikhabat* 1986; Hinnebush 1985).

*The National Progressive Unionist Party*

(Hizb al-Tajammu' al-Watani al-Taquaddumi al-Wahdawi)

This genuine opposition party evolved from the leftist forum, representing the nationalist left wing of Nasserites, and earmarked by its founders to include Nasserites, Marxists and nationalists, as well as the "enlightened orthodox," unionists and democrats. As such, it included, in addition to the main elements of Nasserites and Marxists, religious representatives, some *Misr al-Fatat* elements and liberal and social democrat independents. In its leadership, the salient elements were professionals—mainly journalists and trade unionists. In the lower cadres, as well as in membership and audience of appeal, they represented the middle to lower class, with a saliency of workers and other manual occupations. They were said to be all agreed on the prin-

ciples of support and continuation of the July revolution; rejection of colonialism, imperialism and Zionism; respect for democratic rights and liberties; respect for revealed religions and the establishing of a socialist society free of exploitation; belief in Egypt's Arab identity and the struggle for Arab unity and support of the Palestinian revolution. In the 1976 elections, the NPUP won 4 seats. In the 1979 elections it did not win any, but in the complementary elections in one constituency in Alexandria one candidate managed to get into the assembly (Hinnebush 1985; *Intikhabat* 1986).

### *The Neo-Wafd (Hizb al-Wafd al-Jadid)*

The Wafd, which had been dissolved by the Nasserite revolution, lived on in the memory of Egyptians as the liberal-nationalist independence movement, Egypt's most durable and successful party during the monarchy. With the de-Nasserization and liberalization process under Sadat, the Neo-Wafd managed to mobilize the 20 parliament members necessary for its establishment and was formally approved in March 1978. Three months later, however, it had to disband following the new restriction on partisan activity approved in a referendum. The party made a comeback at the end of 1983 and by the beginning of 1984 was able to rule out in court the government ban on its leaders and subsequently resumed its activity. It was thus the first opposition party to emerge without regime initiative and with no promise of "loyalty." In fact, it was established in spite of government pressures, and vied with the government party for the allegiance of the same constituencies—the upper middle class, the big bourgeoisie, plausibly that sector of the bourgeoisie which is less closely connected with and stands to gain less from the government. Its leadership consisted of free professionals and landowners, highly educated and prosperous. As opposed to Sadat's men, they mainly belonged to the private sector, and were less technocratic, military and statist in their orientation. The party also appealed to those interested in liberal reform in politics; even though all opposition parties included this demand in their programs, the Neo-Wafd, because of its liberal tradition, was the fittest to represent it. On the whole, because of its target constituency, as well as the fashion in which it emerged and its connection to the pre-revolutionary regime, it featured as an alternative to the regime. Following its formation, the party attracted 14

representatives in parliament, from various political trends—left and right, Islamic and non-orthodox. Following its return in 1984, it attracted 7 members from other parties and from among the independents (Hinnebush 1985; *Intikhabat* 1986).

The party's program reflects its character: it propounds a parliamentary republic, calling for confirmation of all liberties, and an increase in the authority of parliament, especially vis-à-vis the presidency. The party is inclined toward the United States and against the USSR, and is interested in economic unity of Arab countries as a stage preceding political unity. Before Sadat's visit, it demanded a homeland for the Palestinians on the West Bank and Gaza following Israeli withdrawal, and did not exclude military measures if the political ones failed. It was divided on the initiative issue, but unanimously opposed a separate peace. The party considers economics to be the main problem of the country, and sees the root of all evil in the corruption, indifference, and weakness of government administration. The remedy is to be found in encouraging personal motivation, balance between the private and public sector, competition and prevention of monopolies whether private or public, selling or abolishing unsuccessful public sector institutions, and restricting government control on industry, agriculture and services. In the 1977 program the Shari'a is mentioned briefly as the authentic source for legislation (*Intikhabat* 1986).

### *The Nation Party (Hizb al-Umma)*

In the summer of 1983, the Nation Party was recognized but did not participate in the 1984 elections. Its outlook is mainly expressed by its chairman Shaykh Ahmad al-Sabahi, and it is believed that some of the radical Muslim organizations joined it to benefit from its legality, as well as some Muslim Brothers (*Taqrir* 1986, 1987). In 1987 it participated in the elections under the slogan *qiam al-Dawla al-Islamiyya*—setting up the Muslim state—and the call for realizing the universal potential of Islam. Its insistence on an exclusive Muslim course was expressed through its attack on the Muslim Brothers, who cooperated with the (labor) SLP and the (liberal) LSP ("the Alliance," see below), for "making an alliance with the ghosts of Communism and totalitarianism" (*al-Masa* 28-3-87).

*The Muslim Brothers (al-Ikhwan al-Muslimun)*

While Muslim opposition includes several factions, differing in ideals and methods, the Nation Party and the Brothers are the only ones that do not reject activity within legal boundaries. Effectively repressed under Nasser, the Brothers have resurfaced on the wave of religious resurgence following the 1967 defeat, and were aided by Sadat's policies. Both through his increased liberalization and his encouragement of religious revival to defeat the threat of the left, opportunities were created for reorganization. The main remnants of the Brothers clustered around 'Umar al-Tilimsani (succeeded after his death by Shaykh Hamid Abu al-Nasr) and the *al-Da'wa* paper which opted for propagating their ideas within the establishment. Some of their members sat in parliament and advocated Muslim legislation. They have managed to gain a foothold in the professional syndicates, specifically those of the lawyers, doctors and engineers, which represent important sectors of the middle class, as well as in professors' associations in some of the biggest universities, such as Cairo and Asyut. Among all the Islamic organizations and bodies they are the major one, owing to their historical roots which go back to the '20s, their experience in dealing with both authorities and the grass roots, and their expansive international ties with branches in the Sudan, Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, and some small pockets in Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia and the Gulf Emirates. Resorting to their cadres in the Gulf and Saudi Arabia, they were able to establish an internal economic network connected with financial institutions in the Gulf (*Taqrir* 1987).

Following Sadat's peace treaty and the unfolding of the *infatih* and its concomitant social syndrome, criticism was sharpened, and in the 1981 crack-down Tilimsani was one of those arrested and *al-Da'wa* closed down.

The Brothers, like the other Muslim factions, favor some sort of a Muslim state where Shari'a will be the state law. They were opposed to the corruption incurred by *infatih* and westernization, and in reaction advocated some sort of Muslim-style welfare state. They approved of Sadat's rapprochement with the conservative Arab states and his cooling of relations with the USSR, and rejected the peace treaty which "returned but one-tenth of the usurped land."

They see the Arab-Israel conflict as inherently, because of the nature of the Jews, irreconcilable.

Both membership and recruitment audiences were urban, lower-middle class and lower moving up into lower-middle, but spilling over both upward and downward and into the villages (Hinnebush 1985). In spite of the Brothers' disavowal of connections with or responsibility for the clandestine organizations, local commentators believe that there is a common leadership or coordination between all these factions ('Abd al-Sattar Tawila, *Rose al-Youssef* 16-3-87; al-Sayyid Yasin, *Taqrir* 1987). Although disavowing violence and professing dialogue, there are also winks in the direction of the radical organizations, both for bolstering of ranks and as a bargaining card with the authorities. Inherently, too, the Brothers still maintain that "Islam is the Qur'an and the sword" (*Taqrir* 1987; *al-Musawwar* 20-3-87). Most of the smaller radical groups came out from under the Brothers' "cloak," such as the *Muslimun*—better known as *al-Hijra wal-Takfir*, and the Egyptian branch of the Muslim Liberation Party headed by Salih Siriyya (other major operative radical organizations are the *Samawiyya*—followers of Shaykh Taha al-Samawi, and the *Jihad* group, which gained prominence following the assassination of Sadat). The main disagreement between the Brothers and the radicals was in the latter's rejection of cooperation with the existent "non-Islamic" regime—the reformist and gradual approach of the founding fathers. Instead, they preached rejection of the whole infidel system, and a violent revolutionary method. The following of these groups is mainly among university and even high-school students. On the other side of the political map, the Brothers touch on the "Sages of Muslim Wrath," preachers and Imams belonging to the establishment who developed blunt criticism of the regime, insisting too on the application of the Shari'a (*Taqrir* 1987).

The Brothers first joined the legal partisan activity in the 1984 elections, when they ran with the Neo-Wafd party. Together they won 58 seats out of which the Brothers got 8.

*The Alliance (al-Tahaluf al-Thulathi)*

The 1987 Alliance with the (liberal) LSP and (labor) SLP was the Brothers' second successful attempt to enter legal parliamentary activity through the rear door. The background was the diffuse Muslim sentiments permeating the Egyptian scene. Among the facilitating conditions were the opposition parties' ongoing attempts to form coalitions which had a chance of passing the 8% minimum. Initially, these attempts seemed mostly to be power alliances rather than issue coalitions. On more than one occasion they were aborted by the Neo-Wafd, which felt that it was strong enough to enter the elections on its own (*Intikhabat* 1986; *Mena* 11-2-87; *Daily Report* 17-2-87). Nevertheless, all coalitions in which the Brothers participated were marked by their ideological impact. Such was the case with the short-lived Committee for the Defense of Democracy (1983), and later on in the 1984 alliance between the Brothers and the Neo-Wafd. Both platforms were replete with Muslim issues and slogans and showed promise of what became evident in the case of the Alliance—the development of tactics into ideology and strategy.

The story of the (liberal) LSP, one of the partners in the Alliance, was a sub-case of tactics turned into essentials: the Brothers' ascendance to power within the ranks of the party preceded its changing of tone. Not that there was no pre-existing basis—the liberals never extended their liberalism to include separation of state and religion, and in 1982, the party, like all others, started publishing a Muslim organ (*al-Nur*). The main turning point, however, occurred when the Brothers were falling out with the Neo-Wafd and started moving into the LSP. Salah Abu-Isma'il, a prominent Muslim activist, worked from within to build up opposition to chairman Kamil Murad, forcing him to forego his candidacy for the elections. In spring 1986 Abu-Isma'il became deputy chairman of the party and, after the elections, was approved by the People's Assembly as head of the LSP parliamentary faction (*Mayo* 9-3-87; *al-Ahrar* 14-5-87).

The (labor) SLP, even more than the LSP, had a basis for the Alliance: since its inception it was marked by a definite Muslim bent. Its first program published in 1978 was permeated by Muslim ideas and symbols and propounded the application of the Shari'a two years before it was adopted by the state. In 1985 'Adil Husayn, a leftist-turned-Muslim, became the editor of the



party's organ *al-Sha'b* and prepared the grounds for the rapprochement with the Brothers. While certain elements in the SLP were taking exception to the coalition, feeling that the basic cadres of the party were organizationally repressed, its major leadership was increasingly inclined to "Islamicize" both the party and the coalition. Ibrahim Shukry, founder and leader of the party, went on record with a statement that, had it been legally possible, he would have converted the party's name to "the Muslim Socialist Party" (*al-Nur* 25-2-87; *al-Musawwar* 6-3-87, 27-3-87). At any rate, the Alliance seemed to be dominated by the Brothers, both organizationally and in substance. Due to their connections in the streets and in many mosques, they managed to put many of their men at the heads of lists (*al-Musawwar* 6-3-87). In Alliance election rallies, slogans and chants of the Brothers were dominant, as well as corresponding incantations by the public (*al-Akhbar* 23-3-87). In mosques and streets, preachers and others distributed the Brothers' message independently (*al-Siyasi* 1-3-87). The Alliance won 60 seats out of which the Brothers got the lion's share (see below).

### *The Nasserites*

Nasserites aspire to organize, but are banned from doing so by force of the 1979 amendment to the parties law: they advocate a totalitarian regime, do not differ from the (government) NDP and the (labor) SLP, and oppose the principles of Egyptian policy—the Camp David Accords and the peace treaty. Their striving for organization is also obstructed by internal factors—clashes and differences between several groups over personal and doctrinal issues. Nasserism lived on in circles of veteran technocratic and military functionaries of the regime, as well as in those educated in the "youth organization" of the Arab Socialist Union, or in the Secret Socialist Avant-Garde organization. Younger people, "the '80s generation," absorbed Nasserism in student organizations in the universities, Nasserite "debate clubs" that spread in the universities, and the Arab Association for the Immortalization of 'abd al-Nasser, active in propaganda and mobilization. Although most differences were personal and generational (the old guard, the political activists of the '60s, and the young generation), there were also ideological differences. One trend

considered itself the Egyptian-Arab version of third-world Marxism, rejecting the "national" capitalist group that was included in Nasser's "alliance of the people's laboring forces," opposing cooperation with the religious elements or the rightist Neo-Wafd, and inclined exclusively toward the Leftist party. The second trend stresses the Pan-Arab element and propounds the establishment of one Arab movement which will tie together all Nasserite groups in the Arab world. Finally, a third trend supports an Egyptian-Arab-Muslim interpretation of Nasserism, and is willing to respond to dynamics on the local scene. A further internal obstacle to party organization was Nasserism's own reservations on the idea of political pluralism, going back to the revolution's perception of partisan life, based on the pre-1952 experience, as a source of corruption.

This notwithstanding, there are two Nasserite attempts at organization within the legal political system. The first was made by Kamal Ahmad, a former member in the People's Assembly from Alexandria and a graduate of the Nasserite youth organization, whose declared aim is the establishment of the "alliance of the people's laboring forces." The founders were mainly Alexandrians, with some support in al-Mansura, and Cairene groups publicized their intention to join in case of success. The request submitted by the founder to the Committee for Parties Affairs was rejected in December 1983, the grounds being charges of authoritarianism, rejection of democracy and political pluralism, all of which contradict the constitution. The founders appealed and the issue is still under consideration. The other attempt was led by Nasser's veteran supporters, including Farid 'Abd al-Karim, Amin Huweidi, and Muhammad Fa'iq, men of means, well connected locally and internationally, whose aim was to establish the "Nasserite Arab Socialist Party." The group does not oppose political pluralism and cooperates electorally with the (leftist) NPUP, although it insists on emphasizing the differences and independence of its program (*Taqrir* 1978; *al-'Alam*, London, 14-3-87; *al-Siyasi* 15-3-87). The first founding convention met in the leftist NPUP headquarters, and was attended by (labor) SLP representatives and by delegates from Nasserite movements abroad, such as the Algerian National Liberation Front, the Lebanese Nasserite Popular Organization, the Democratic Grouping from Kuwait, and the 13 June Front from Yemen (*al-Ahram* 24-2-87). The convention did not reach an agreement after a protracted argument on what

program to adopt. Some decisions have been adopted, however, in a framework program propounding a return to Arab socialism and withdrawing from *infatih*, as well as an armed struggle against Israel in lieu of Camp David, Fez and the Reagan initiative (*al-Ahram al-Iqtisadi* 2-3-87; *Sawt al-'Arab* 29-3-87, 12-4-87). Finally, an underground organization, Egypt's Nasserite revolution, in which the leading figures are Nasser's son Khalid 'Abd al-Nasser, his nephew Shawqi 'Abd al-Nasser, and Mahmud Nur al-Din, a former officer in Egypt's embassy in London, accuses Mubarak's regime of giving in to American and Israeli pressure on foreign policy issues, and is calling for a revolution backed by the military (Sid-Ahmed 1987-88; *Ha'aretz* 19-2-88). While these attempts are under way, Nasserites are working within the government NDP, the leftist NPUP, the (labor) SLP, as independents, and within the various professional syndicates such as the doctors, engineers, and professors, with special success in the journalists and lawyers syndicates (*Taqrir* 1987).

### *The Communists*

Communists, who are officially banned from politics, nevertheless participated in the 1987 elections as independents. Three prominent communist party members ran as Marxists—lawyer Nabil al-Hilali in the industrial district of Helwan, Mahmud Amin al-'Alim, a noted intellectual, in Giza, and Mubarak Abduh Fadl, a veteran activist from the '40s, in Heliopolis. None of them won more than 700 votes in their districts (*al-Ahali* 25-3-87; Post 1987; Hendriks 1987; Aly 1987).

### *The 1984 Elections*

In these first elections under Mubarak, and the first in Egyptian history to be conducted according to the proportional electoral system, the only opposition party that passed the 8% nationwide minimum was the Neo-Wafd in alliance with the Muslim Brothers. Votes received by the NDP were 3,856,372—72.9% of the sum total of valid votes, while the opposition parties won 1,427,396

votes—27%. Opposition votes were divided between the Neo-Wafd—15.1% of all votes in the country; the (labor) SLP—7.04% of all votes; the NPUP—4.17%; and the (liberal) LSP—0.65%. These returns gave the NDP 390 seats in parliament, and the Neo-Wafd 58, 8 of which went to the Brothers. The SLP, the leftist NPUP and the LSP did not pass 8%, but the president appointed four SLP representatives. The NPUP rejected the principle of appointment, but one of its members got in as a Copt, which led to the freezing of his membership by the party (*Intikhabat* 1986; *Taqrir* 1986; Aly 1987).

### *The 1987 Elections*

Of the 448 elected seats in the Assembly, 400 were to be distributed in these elections according to the vote by party lists and 48 were allotted to independents, one from each constituency. Of the 400, the NDP got 308 seats by winning 4,751,758 votes—68.75% of the vote. The Neo-Wafd won 746,024 votes—10.93% of the valid votes, and got 36 seats; the leftist NPUP won 150,570 votes—2.21%; and the (Islamic) Nation Party 13,031—0.19%, both failing thus to win any seats. The (labor) SLP, running with the Muslim Brothers, won 17.05% of the vote, 1,163,525 votes, and got 56 seats in the Assembly. The Brothers' predominance in the Alliance is reflected in the internal allocation of seats: 38 went to the Brothers' delegates, 16 to the SLP and 6 to the LSP. Of the remaining 48 seats set aside for independents or individual party nominees, NDP-sponsored candidates won 39, the alliance 4, and the rest went to independents (Aly 1987; *MET* 19-25 April 1987; *BBC* 11-4-87).

The 1987 elections constitute a landmark in Egypt's democratization process. They were precipitated by a lawsuit filed by an independent lawyer, and an impending verdict by the High Constitutional Court that the 1983 electoral law under which the Assembly came into being was unconstitutional. Encouraged by the court's ruling, the five legal opposition parties held a mass rally on February 5, 1987, calling for the amendment of both the elections law and the articles in the constitution relating to the President's election by the Assembly. Mubarak was forced into the successful maneuver of dissolving the

Assembly following the approval of a referendum, and setting a date for new elections, based on a partially amended elections law passed earlier by the Assembly (in December 1986). The main concession for the opposition in the new law was the reinstatement of independent seats, which in the past facilitated the bypassing of the many restricting rules on parties. Mubarak's success in outwitting the opposition notwithstanding, the fact remains that the judiciary was able to exert influence and affect developments, thus curtailing the tremendous traditional authorities of the presidency. Another major novelty was the size of the opposition—22.32%, which, in addition, included an organization that was in fact outlawed. Whether the regime turned a blind eye for its own considerations, or was forced by a growing power of the opposition, the door had been opened for forces that otherwise could not have found public expression or a legal say (*Daily Report* 14-4-87; *Middle East Times* 19-25 April 1987; *Post* 1987; Aly 1987).

#### FOCI OF LEGITIMIZATION

Predictably, all parties propounded as a matter of prior importance the issue of democracy. Although the natural sources for advocating it were the liberal Neo-Wafd and, in 1984, the still liberal LSP, it did not remain their sole domain. Not only was it the wherewithal of the game in which the parties were engaged, an inherent part of the dynamics of the emerging multi-party system. In practical terms, the demand for more democracy, which became a rallying cry in political life—*al-mazid min al-dimuqratiyya*—meant a demand for a greater scope of opportunities and more clout for the forming parties.

Less natural or organic were other common denominators which, precisely for this reason, we shall discuss in more detail. The July 23 revolution was one such point. All parties but the Neo-Wafd claimed to have their roots in and to constitute the real continuation of the revolution. But even the Neo-Wafd, clearly a natural antagonist, avoided all-out criticism or disavowal of the revolution, even going out of its way to give credit to some of its achievements.

All programs also advocated the issue of religion in its various aspects—morality, a framework for transcending the limits of the nation-state, and especially the issue of the application of the Shari'a as state law.

Foreign policy came last in both programs and campaign issues. This may indicate an awareness by the parties that foreign policy was out of their allotted scope of influence. It may also indicate the primacy of internal problems on the national agenda, or perhaps a recognition that daily issues were uppermost in the minds of the electorate. Finally, some influence must be ascribed to the various restrictions imposed by law on attitudes which contradict "national policies," especially vis-à-vis the peace treaty, which leaves a very narrow scope for opposing views. In whatever reference there is to foreign policy, however, the phenomenon of legitimacy of foci may also be clearly discerned: a general consensus is apparent on the essentials of Arab identification and integration, non-alignment, and a negative attitude toward the Camp David Accords and normalization. Differences are expressed through degrees of emphasis and scope of reference within the framework of adherence to these maxims.

### *The July Revolution*

While parties obviously differed on their stance on the July revolution and concrete issues related to it, practically all professed adherence. The very identification in principle with the revolution seemed to be the overriding matter, overshadowing concrete issues. A Nasserite spokesman advocating cooperation with the (government) NDP reasoned that both were affiliated with the revolution. The fact that most NDP policies were almost opposed to the revolution—*infatih*, American orientation, peace with Israel—did not seem to constitute any hindrance (*Rose al-Youssef* 16-3-87). In a similar vein, floating candidates such as (labor) SLP members who joined the government NDP vindicated their shifts in terms of the overriding importance of creating a "broad front" of the July revolution loyalists against the two right-wing trends of the Neo-Wafd and the Alliance (*al-Musawwar* 6-3-87).

What the NDP really professed, as Egyptian sources are wont to put it, is "the July 23 revolution without Nasserism." In its fourth general convention

in July 1986 the party reconfirmed the six basic principles of the revolution, but ignored the National Covenant (Nasser's socialist manifesto), thus reflecting the virtual social make-up of the party: the government bureaucracy and the rural upper-middle class (*Taqrir* 1987). Nevertheless, the NDP program (*Mayo* 30-4-87) strongly emphasizes adherence to the revolution, its positiveness and its achievements. It presents itself as the continuation of the revolution: "the NDP is the living expression of commitment to application of the July Revolution principles." Slogans published on the cover of the program included prominently "the living expression of the July Revolution" and "the application of the July Revolution principles" (*Intikhabat* 1986; *Mayo* 30-4-84). In its 1987 campaign statements (*Mayo* 3-4-87) the party reiterated its adherence, defining itself as "simultaneously believing in the struggle of the people, in religion, and in the July Revolution and its achievements." In many of its 1984 rallies, the party resorted to broadcasts of Nasser's speeches and national songs that were current in the '50s and '60s (*Intikhabat* 1986). Slogans in the 1987 campaign admonished against the threat to the revolution emanating from the (Neo-Wafd) "leaders of reactionism and feudals who reemerged from the darkness of the past" (*Sawt al-'Arab* 15-3-87).

The Neo-Wafd, known, as a party representing the pre-1952 era, for its intense antagonism to the revolution—and indeed indulging in considerable criticism of it both in its organ and its public meetings—nonetheless persisted in its official bulletins in confirming its positive aspects. Contrary to what was expected, its platform (*al-Wafd* 12-4-84) did not attack the revolution directly; rather, it confirmed its achievements—the agricultural reform laws and the gains of the workers and peasants—and satisfied itself with a critique of policies during the Nasserite period, such as issues relating to the housing policy. In its electoral campaign, the Neo-Wafd simultaneously denied its antagonism to the revolution and indirectly attacked it (*Intikhabat* 1986; *Daily Report* 27-3-87; *Taqrir* 1987).

The (liberal) LSP considers itself as having roots in the revolution, and in fact a number of the party's founders participated in making and keeping it. Rather similar to the ruling party in policy and even somewhat right of it, its 1984 platform nevertheless announced the party's endorsement of the revolution, and commended Nasser's stances in various fields, adding its subscription to Sadat's "correction" of the revolution (a term applied to Sadat's show-

down with his leftist opponents in 1971) (*al-Ahrrar* 26-4-84; *Intikhabat* 1986). In the 1987 elections, the party ran in the framework of the Alliance (see below); its separate platform for 1987 confined itself to internal affairs only (*Daily Report* 27-3-87).

The leftist NPUP (in cooperation with Nasserite protagonists) was particularly anxious to present itself as belonging to the revolution. As its first identifying line, the party (in the program published in its organ *al-Ahali*, 28-3-84) points out that it has defended and persists in defending the revolution and its achievements, and always has and always will firmly prevent attempts to disown it or retreat from it. In most external and internal issues, the program assumes that the right model in all realms is the one that came to an end with the death of Nasser, and that the following years were unsuitable, even destructive, for Egypt. In the electoral campaign the NPUP similarly extolled the achievements of the revolution, claimed exclusive representation and implementation of its real essence, and condemned the government NDP's attempt to "wipe out the revolution" (*Intikhabat* 1986).

Another party prominently identifying with the revolution is the (labor) SLP. Its program (*al-Sha'b* 24-4-84) opens with emphasizing the link between the revolution and the (pre-1952) *Misr al-Fatat* and the Socialist Party (from which the SLP leadership was drawn). It points out the *unia personalis* between *Misr al-Fatat* and the revolution, where a number of leaders were members or friends of the party, as well as an ideological identity: the Socialist Party paved the way for the revolution, and the latter was its realization (*Intikhabat* 1986; *al-Sha'b* 17-3-87).

### *Non-Alignment*

Just as the principle of the July revolution appeared to be an essential point of legitimacy, so were the particular issues in foreign policy which were its hallmark. All parties, though of different orientations, endorsed the principle of non-alignment, in its two contexts: policies vis-à-vis the superpowers, and the Third World non-alignment movement *per se*. Its status as a central consensus issue is evident in that even those parties that clearly lean toward the United States advocate non-alignment as a principle. The most patent



case is that of the ruling party. Even though the government practiced an obvious American-oriented policy and leaned heavily on the United States for economic aid, the NDP program professes, in principle, non-alignment: it declared a rejection of dependency on any of the superpowers, rejection of foreign military bases on Egyptian territory, as well as rejection of any alliances in the region "in order to avoid alignment with any of the international camps." As far as current concrete issues are concerned, the program practiced avoidance: it made no mention of the special relations with the United States which party leaders and senior officials often referred to, nor did it mention the issue of renewing diplomatic relations with the USSR.

In the context of the Third World movement, the program endorsed both promotion of non-alignment policy per se and relations with Third World states in general, as well as specific relations within that circle: Asian-African solidarity, bolstering the Organization of African Unity and cooperation with states of the continent (*Mayo* 30-4-84; *Intikhabat* 1986). In its 1987 elections statement (*Mayo* 3-4-87), which mainly listed achievements, the party included a balanced progress in relations with both the superpowers and the different camps. Here, too, non-alignment was included as such, with Egypt fulfilling a leading role in the Afro-Asian sphere.

In the case of the Neo-Wafd the difference between its essential attitude and the officially formulated one is also salient—and similarly telling. Wafdists were known to feel a strong affinity with democratic capitalist America, saw no dangers to Egypt from Western "imperialism," and feared the USSR. Their platform, however, ignored their preference of special relations with the United States. It rejected military alliances and foreign bases, propounded restoration of relations with the USSR, and professed adherence to the non-aligned policy and positive neutrality between East and West. Their Western preferences are implicit: while the program propounds "a balanced policy following an independent course," it also points out that this does not contradict befriending "those who seek our friendship and help us to overcome our problems without preconditions or interference in our domestic affairs" (*al-Wafd* 12-4-84; *Intikhabat* 1986; *Daily Report* 1-4-87).

The platform does not relate to the Third World movement as such, but points out Egypt's opportunity as a third world state to benefit from the services of the relevant specialized agencies in the U.N. Its interest in

specified Third World states emphasizes regional concerns: it calls for cooperation of the Nile Basin countries to utilize the river's waters, promoting the special Sudan-Egypt relations, and establishing an Afro-Arab common market (*Taqrir* 1987; *Intikhabat* 1986; *Daily Report* 30-3-87).

Much like the Neo-Wafd, the (liberal) LSP flaunted non-alignment policy while disclosing through it orientation to the West. It advocated the continuation of the policy of positive neutralism between the superpowers, but singled out the bolstering of relations with the United States, West European countries and Japan "because of their aid, loans and technology," and only mentioned reinstatement of normal relations with the USSR. Adherence to the Third World movement is expressed through advocating relations with "non-aligned states," which comes third, after Muslim states and African states (*Intikhabat* 1986; *al-Ahrrar* 26-4-84).

The supra-nationalist (labor) SLP, which in essence has the closest to a principled non-aligned stance, nevertheless has an anti-Western bent because of its Muslim tenor and anti-Israel stance. The platform professes a policy of non-alignment "in order to escape the snares of inter-power conflicts and maintain alertness to Israel's designs"; Egypt should resort first to its own resources, then to Muslim and Arab resources. However, while it reproaches both the USSR—for its aggression against Afghanistan, and the United States—for its "repeated aggression against Arab lands and interests," it alludes in special detail to opposition to the United States because of its bias toward Israel. Special relations with the United States must be avoided, in the light of her strategic pact with Israel and her open pro-Israel stance, in order to protect national interests. Therefore, no facilities should be granted to the United States, no military bases or joint maneuvers, nor should it be allowed to obtain information or data under the cover of scientific research or any other pretext.

Third World policy centers around the Arab-Muslim-African axis, in that order. Egypt-Sudan relations are defined as a convergence of the three circles; these relations, as well as relations with the Nile Basin states, should be made the central pillar of Egyptian foreign policy. Ties should be tightened with the Muslim states, and disputes between them settled; Arab-African cooperation should be promoted (*al-Sha'b* 24-4-84; *Intikhabat* 1986). Non-alignment is even more emphasized in the '87 platform (*al-Sha'b* 17-3-87) and more tightly

tied in with the Muslim theme and the anti-Israel stance. While in 1984 the point of departure for non-alignment was to escape global differences, here it is the aspiration for a global bloc, Egypt being the carrier of a message which transcends its territorial boundaries. Economic and military integration with the Muslim and Arab states is linked with elimination of superpower influences on political decisions and provision of defense means. The platform states that achieving independence vis-à-vis the two leaders of the international system is extremely difficult and requires effort and patience, but without such political and economic independence it will be impossible to realize the Muslim revival plan. Independence starts with putting faith in Islam. In the Alliance program the coalition called, in the same vein, and more concisely, for "non-alignment with either East or West," which is necessary for the Muslim revival, putting explicit stress on rejection of special relations with the United States. Development similarly necessitates liberation from "foreign economic control" (*al-Sha'b* 6-4-87).

The leftist NPUP's declaration of non-alignment indicates both its centrality as such and its classically anti-United States and pro-USSR orientation. The foreign policy section in the platform is entitled "the bolstering of national independence and the endorsement of Egypt's Arabism and her international non-alignment." The party views the United States as the leading power in the ferocious imperialist attack during Sadat's rule, aiming to subdue Egypt and complete its hegemony over the Arab world. It considers that goal successfully achieved with the abortion of the October War by the United States, the imposition of the Opening policy, and the separate peace (or reconciliation—*sulh*, as opposed to the term used by Sadat—*Salam*, indicating mostly non-belligerence) with Israel. The party therefore rejects Egyptian cooperation in realizing American interests in the Arab region and the Middle East, whether directly, through participation in military activities and maneuvers, or indirectly through providing facilities to the United States. Both military and economic dependency on the United States should be discontinued. As to the Soviet Union, the party propounds that the American presence in Egypt has obscured the Soviet role in supporting the Arab nation in its battles of war and peace, and calls for a struggle to correct the balance of powers in the region, including the restoration of relations between Egypt and the Soviet Union to their "natural state."

Third World non-alignment is organically linked to the anti-Western stance: Egyptian policy, says the program, should be reassessed in order to effect a concrete return to the non-alignment policy, fulfilling its historical role as leader of the Third World, which will enable it to put an end to the policy of economic dependency on the United States and break its monopoly on arms provisions. Specifically, the party propounds "real" integration between Egypt and the Sudan and restoration of normal relations with Libya. As a group, this leftist party singles out Muslim states, calling for the promotion of economic and cultural ties with them, and secondly African states, urging to support them in their struggle against imperialism (*Intikhabat* 1986; *al-Ahali* 11, 18, 25-4-84, 4-3-87).

Contrary to other parties (except the [labor] SLP), policy toward super-powers figured in the NPUP 1984 electoral campaign as well—dealing with the destructive role of American economic aid to Egypt, objection to facilities, and the demand to restore relations with the USSR (*Intikhabat* 1986). The Communist Party, operating within the NPUP, chose to use in its address a code language, advocating "a national progressive course in foreign policy" (*al-Ahali* 11-3-87).

The Nasserite trend, in a platform presented as a joint program for all Nasserite candidates, propounded non-alignment in a similar vein, with special stress on Arabism as an identification group and imperialism as the villain. The policy is one "which will put an end to the dominance of Western economy on Third World resources, and will fight all forms of racial segregation" (*Sawt al-'Arab* 29-3-87). Dependency on imperialism should be fought through the development by every Arab state of maximum self-sufficiency to free Arab resources, mostly oil, from the control of imperialist monopoly (Farid 'Abd al-Karim in *al-Ahram* 16-3-87).

Finally, from the Nation Party's Muslim point of view, a non-aligned policy is propounded in its basic sense, free of its leftist Third Worldist load of connotations, a true "middle-of-the-road position, neither rightist nor leftist." Its platform (*Daily Report* 1-4-87; *al-Umma* 8-15 March 1987), which advocates the establishment of an Arab-Muslim bloc, denounces from this point of departure the division of the Arab world into "allies, agents, lackeys and trumpets for the United States or the USSR." Their vision of the Third World is that of a Muslim-Arab alliance, a potent power, "capable of protecting every

country in the region from the two superpowers... A Muslim-Arab power [that would] protect this vulnerable region from [both] the Warsaw pact and NATO."

### *Arab Identification*

Another major Nasserist maxim which retained its legitimacy is Egypt's Arab identification as a major precept of both strategy and identification, let alone the restoration of Egyptian-Arab relations.

The government NDP's program confirms that Egypt is a part of the Arab nation. It accepts its historical responsibility toward Arab causes, committed to solidarity and unity of Arab fate, a commitment that is not affected by events or ephemeral political situations. The 1987 elections statement counted among the government's foreign policy achievements the establishment of an ongoing dialogue and growing cooperation with her Arab brethren, as well as fulfilling her Pan-Arab responsibility "through striving to achieve a comprehensive just peace for all countries and peoples" (*Intikhabat* 1986; *Mayo* 30-4-84, 3-4-87).

The Neo-Wafd, comprised mostly of "Egypt-firsters" (a trend endorsing Egyptian particular nationalism as opposed to Pan-Arabism), also dwells at length in its program on the issue of Arab identity and unity. The priority it allots to Egyptianism is expressed through the emphasis on politics motivated by primarily Egyptian interests rather than on principles. Arabism means the need for unity—the classical Nasserite tight "unification of ranks"—and the restoration of normal relations between all Arab states. Egypt should be present in the Muslim Congress and in the Arab League. Egyptian armed forces should be strengthened "for the safeguarding of the homeland and Arabism" (*al-Wafd* 12-4-84; *Intikhabat* 1986; *Daily Report* 1-4-87).

Even more than the Neo-Wafd, the (liberal) LSP's Arabism connotes mainly concrete policies of cooperation. The platform calls for a rapprochement with Arab states and the return of the Arab League to Egypt. "Total Arab unity" should be accomplished—based on cultural, social and economic cooperation, establishing Arab integration, a common Arab market and a common Arab coin (*Intikhabat* 1986; *al-Ahrar* 26-4-84).

Representing the more deeply committed camp, for the (labor) SLP Arab identity, belonging and unity are an essential of Egyptian national security, equal to its Muslim identification. The platform advocates reliance on the "unity of Arab ranks," Egypt being part of the Arab fatherland and her national security being linked with it. In the party's 1987 program the Arab-Muslim world is projected as the upcoming superpower. Work toward this end is advocated on the cultural level as well. Under the headline of culture and information, the program calls for an ideational and cultural revival which will restore the nation to its cultural roots—Arab and Muslim; Egyptian official information should become Pan-Arab, so as to inform the people of Egypt's realistic situation in the international constellation. The concise Alliance program propounds military and economic integration with Arab and Muslim states as an essential for the strengthening of the Egyptian army, "defender against enemies" (*Intikhabat* 1986; *al-Sha'b* 24-4-84, 17-3-87, 6-4-87).

For the leftist NPUP the issue of Arab identification and unity is an axiom, a given. The party holds that the definition of relations between Egypt and the Arab world is such as to render the main issue no longer the return of Egypt to the Arabs, or the Arabs to Egypt, but rather, whether there will be an Arab nation or not. This dictates a defined "realistic strategy" the aim of which is to realize national security and socioeconomic development. Egypt must put her Arab national commitments above any other commitments and strive to reinstate normal relations with all Arab countries, avoiding entanglement in any secondary Arab political axes in order to assume her leading position "in the Arab League and outside it." This notwithstanding, the platform propounds the promotion of common-struggle ties specifically with Arab "progressive" and nationalist forces, helping to settle conflicts between them to facilitate a united Arab stance "in the framework of an Arab popular front." From the Pan-Arab point of departure, the party takes an active stance on various Arab issues: it calls for the solution of the Lebanese problem, safeguarding her Arab character; supporting the Syrian people's effort to liberate its occupied territory; undertaking a Syrian-Egyptian cooperation in the "spirit of the October War" which will serve the goals of the Arab national struggle; settling the Iran-Iraq conflict so that all Arab and Muslim resources may be directed against "American hegemony" and "Zionist rioting"; promoting "real integration on a democratic basis" between the Sudan and Egypt;

striving for "normal" relations with Libya, and supporting and developing all steps toward economic integration between Arab nations (*Intikhabat* 1986; *al-Ahali* 11, 18, 25-4-84, 4-3-87).

Nasserites, too, naturally endorse Pan-Arabism but exclude Arab "reactionism" more explicitly than the leftist NPUP, propounding the establishment of a progressive Pan-Arab front, which will fight all settlement plans and support movements of national liberation and non-alignment policies (*Sawt al-'Arab*, 29-3-87).

Arabism is adopted by the Nation Party program as well, but for this Muslim party it is secondary to or even a derivative of Islam. Within its outline for the establishment of an Arab-Muslim bloc (see "Islam") the party calls on Egypt, in order to realize this goal, to take the initiative to normalize Egyptian-Arab relations (*al-Umma* 8-15 March 1987; *Daily Report* 1-4-87).

### *Israel*

The dominant attitude toward Israel is a negative one. All opposition parties are anti-normalization and anti-Camp David, and prescriptions range from freezing to abrogating them. The peace treaty itself was not a major issue in the elections, due, at least in part, to the prohibition, inculcated in the 1979 amendment to the parties law, to opposing the treaty. (The prohibition was lifted in May 1988 following a ruling by the High Constitutional Court that it was unconstitutional. The ruling was made in a lawsuit filed by a group of Nasserites whose request to organize had been rejected on the grounds of that prohibition [*Yediot Achronot* 8-5-88].) Taking credit for peace with Israel was apparently no electoral asset (except for the incident of the [liberal] LSP chairman who in 1984 emphasized that party's pioneering role in the peace process). The (government) NDP on the whole, and especially in 1987, ignored or avoided reference to "the peace she has achieved for Egypt," as one leading liberal commentator put it. The commentator, historian 'Abd al-'Azim Ramadan, suggested that the reason was the wariness of the NDP toward the "loud voices in the election campaign that flaunt their opposition to the peace treaty" (*October* 5-4-87). Arguments against the peace treaty were prominent enough to draw some counter-arguments, such as the one offered by the Neo-Wafd

ideologue Wahid Ra'fat in an interview with the weekly *al-Musawwar*, that the abrogation of the peace treaty was liable to strain relations not only with Israel—which might prepare for a war that Egypt could not confront—but with the United States as well (*Ma'ariv* 30-4-87).

The NDP program confirms that the Palestinian issue is the heart of the Arab issue and that its solution is the realization of Palestinian legal rights, of which the foremost is the right of self-determination and the establishment of a homeland (not "state") on Palestinian territory. That should be accomplished by the PLO, the legitimate representative (not "sole") of the Palestinian people. The program does not mention the Camp David accords in any way, but refers to details of existing problems, such as the need to solve the problem of Jerusalem (without suggesting any solution), rejection of Israeli settlements, etc. (*Intikhabat* 1986; *Mayo* 30-4-84).

In the campaign, Camp David figured as the last issue—in an apologetic context, with claims that it brought back Sinai, that abolishing the agreement would mean going back to war, and that the Taba dispute could be solved only through negotiations. In one rally, a candidate explained: "We took our petrol, territory and resources; the Israeli ambassador is like a dog, no one says good morning or good evening to him" (*Intikhabat* 1986). In the 1987 elections statement (*Mayo* 3-4-87), which substituted for a platform, the only reference to the subject was Egypt's retrieval of its sovereignty over Sinai as one of the party's foreign policy accomplishments. In the 1987 campaign the NDP was reported to ignore Camp David and peace with Israel (*Sawt al-'Arab* 15-3-87).

Curiously enough, the (liberal) LSP was the only party to flaunt its support of the peace treaty. In a 1984 platform article, the party's chairman upheld the fact that "the Liberals supported the policy of peace [*al-salam wal-sulh!*] and direct negotiations with Israel. Furthermore, he boasted that he was the first to advocate negotiations with Israel in a world press conference in '76, and "was violently attacked by the Arab press for that." The platform itself simultaneously calls for the liberation of the occupied Arab land, and an effort toward the restoration of the Palestinians' legitimate rights to be made by every Egyptian citizen in the Arab republic of Egypt. While it advocates that peaceful solutions are to be preferred, it also calls for constant preparation for war in case it might be needed (*al-Ahrrar* 12-4-84). Whatever support of the peace treaty the party offered seemed to require vindication in the 1984



campaign—spokesmen for the party defended support of the Camp David accords in terms of the economic losses incurred by wars, and cited the party's stance against the Israeli invasion of Lebanon and the supply ship sent by the party to Beirut (*Intikhabat* 1986). In 1987, *al-Ahrar*, in the framework of the Alliance, subscribed to the Alliance platform (see below).

The moderate Neo-Wafd takes an antagonistic stance toward Israel, but on allegedly defensive grounds. It views Israel as a threat to the region because of her "expansionist policy" and her "striving for power and dominance." Egypt and the Arab world must confront this reality with a deterrent military force. Similarly, the party rejects the Camp David accords and the peace treaty, not in principle, but rather due to circumstantial reasons: the platform states that the agreement has become non-existent and irrelevant because of Israel's deeds. Israel cannot demand that Egypt respect its commitments and live up to them while violating its own—to wit, the attack on the Iraqi nuclear reactor, the invasion of Lebanon, killing Arabs in Lebanon and the West Bank, and the expansion of Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories. The platform calls on all concerned parties to enter as soon as possible into negotiations to retrieve full sovereignty over Sinai, liberate it from the foreign forces stationed there and the special demilitarization or limited arms arrangements. Here, too, reports from the campaign indicate a response to a more negative attitude: in one rally a candidate reportedly spoke against the peace treaty "which the people reject" (*Intikhabat* 1986; *al-Wafd* 12-4-84; *Daily Report* 27-3-87).

The (labor) SLP platform similarly demands to freeze the accords because of Israel's allegedly repeated violations, but in more blunt terms and in the context of its ideological stance. Elaborating on this point, the conclusion is a total ban, both economic and cultural, on Israeli presence in Egypt, in order to abort Israel's goal to "dominate the region." It calls for supporting the Palestinians and their right for an independent state on their land, as well as the brethren in Lebanon. The 1987 platform adds that the conflict with the Zionist enemy is the most dangerous one. In the Alliance platform this stance was expressed in even more extreme terms. It presented opposition to the accords in the context of professing Arab and Muslim unity and viewing Israel as an enemy of such unity. The Alliance believes that Egyptian security necessitates Arab integration. It calls for support of the Palestinian struggle,

and for cooperation with Muslim states in all realms—all that involves the freezing of Camp David as a step toward abrogating it. The Alliance included this issue in its campaign as well: “no to Israel, yes to fighting, yes to welfare” (*Intikhabat* 1986; *al-Sha'b* 24-4-84, 17-3-87, 6-4-87; *Sawt al-'Arab* 15-3-87; *The Guardian* 11-4-87; *R. Monte Carlo* 21-3-87).

The leftist NPUP's antagonism toward the settlement with Israel is anchored in a broad, stated perception of the region's strategic reality, negating the very idea of the Egyptian-Israel treaty. The 1984 program departs from the basic analysis that the imperialist attack of the United States in the '70s and the Camp David Accords that followed were a grave turning point in the state of affairs in the region. It led to several negative results such as extracting official Egypt from the Arab struggle against Israel, and setting up the American adversary as an arbitrator in the conflict; it afflicted the Arab fatherland with a despicable state of loss of will in confronting the American-Zionist rampage; secondary contradictions between Arab nation-states have come to outweigh the primary conflict with the enemy. Departing from this conception, the party posits as its first foreign policy issue the demand to abrogate the Camp David policy through escalating measures. The suggested measures are the total discontinuation of normalization and “confronting Zionist infiltration into the heart and mind of the Egyptian people”; resisting anything which renders these accords and treaty a “restriction of the Egyptian national will internally and internationally,” such as the prohibition on the establishment of political parties opposing these accords. In the chapter on cultural development, resistance is advocated against the Zionist and imperialist “cultural assault” which tries to infiltrate under the slogans of peace and normalization, to subdue the Egyptian people and force submission and dependency on them. Terms used in the 1984 campaign testify to evaluation of audience response, and were mostly blunt: in East Cairo speakers claimed that it was not members that should be changed (as was done by the government NDP before elections) but policies, such as choosing between Camp David and “redeeming our country from Zionism.” In Imbaba, slogans said: “Abd al-Nasser, no *sulh*, no recognition, no negotiations; what was taken by force will be restored only by force.” In a rally in Misr al-Jadida one of the Nasserite candidates, speaking about the need for change, was reported to have said: Khalid al-Islambuli (Sadat's assassin)

changed with bullets, we shall change with machine guns. The crowd applauded enthusiastically. On the other hand, in an election meeting in West Cairo the party kept a low profile on the subject of dependency on the United States and the related issue of the formal settlement of the Arab-Israel conflict because it caused disagreements with the audience and was considered as a reason for possible loss of votes (*Intikhabat* 1986; *al-Ahali* 11, 18, 25-4-84, 4-3-87).

The joint program for all Nasserite candidates similarly but more bluntly calls for abrogating settlement plans with the "Zionist enemy," primarily the Camp David accords, discontinuing all forms of normalization, confronting all "submission" initiatives—the international conference, the Fez conference resolutions, the Reagan initiative, the Jordanian-Palestinian agreement; adopting a course of armed struggle against the Zionist presence and all forms of colonial invasion on Arab territory, and on the whole, constantly confronting colonialism, Zionism and Arab reactionism (*Sawt al-'Arab* 29-3-87). Articles in the mainstream press by the Nasserite leader Farid 'Abd al-Karim (*al-Ahram* 16-3-87, 25-3-87) set the conceptual context: Arab unity is geared against the alliance of imperialism, Zionism and Arab reactionism. Therefore, the stance must be offensive: a defensive approach will lead only to decline of the Arab nation. Because of the conspiracy between Zionism and imperialism in creating Israel, the Palestinian issue is the central problem. The "moderate forces" confused tactics with strategy, and have therefore come to the stage where the real goal was forgotten—that real goal being the annihilation of the Zionist element and the return of all of Palestine.

The Communists, in their platform published in *al-Ahali* 11-3-87, and addressing "not only Communists, but all laborers in Egypt who want Egypt to be a free democratic county," joined in the demand to abrogate the Camp David accords and its derivations.

As reflected in the (labor) SLP and the Alliance stances, Muslim attitudes toward the conflict are basically cultural. Borrowing an inside evaluation (al-Wardani 1986)—"all Muslim trends on the Egyptian arena unanimously agree that the only means to solve the Palestinian question is armed Jihad [holy war] . . . they take a fundamentalist traditional stance rejecting a national definition [of the "Arab-Zionist" conflict] and the attempt to give it a non-Muslim character. They consider it a conflict between Muslims and Jews,

between Judaism and Islam. Hence it is the problem of all Muslims, not only Arabs, and the Qur'an should be employed as a weapon, just as the Jews employ the Torah."

The Nation Muslim party does not refer expressly to attitudes toward Israel, but these can be deduced. The reference is implicit in the advocacy of an Arab-Muslim Third World power that would be able "to cut off the long arm that threatens to reach every part of the Arab world, the arm that struck the Iraqi nuclear reactor and the PLO headquarters in Tunisia" (*Daily Report* 1-4-87; *al-Umma* 8-15 March 1987).

While publications originating in Muslim Brothers circles refer to the "Jewish conspiracy against the Muslim nation" and the need to prepare for the decisive battle against them, reference by militant organizations such as the infamous Jihad is indirect though unequivocal. Discussing the imperative of Jihad, publications conclude that it follows from the Muslim general agreement (which has legal force) on fighting any group that does not accept one or more of the laws of Islam (which may be local leaders or Jews; al-Takfir wal-Hijra, for example, opposes Israeli leaders as infidels), on appointing a caliph for the Muslims (which means a Muslim empire that does not tolerate minority states), and on defending the territories of Islam and retrieving those that were occupied by infidels (of which the most relevant case is that of Israel) (*Taqrir* 1987).

### *Islam*

Islam has proved to be the principal point of consensus, and, moreover, a powerful rallying cry. All parties, in different forms and degrees, incorporated it into both their programs and election campaigns. Whether it was essential to their ideology, or mainly acknowledged as a compelling force in appealing to constituencies, it featured prominently, and over the period of partisan activity has become a focal issue.

The increase in the Muslim tenor in politics can be traced to the emergence of the Muslim Brothers as a legitimate force in the public arena. This was effected both by decisions taken within the ranks of the Brothers to forgo their reservations about "divisive" partisan activity, and by facilitating

political conditions. One such was Sadat's policy of balancing off his leftist contestants for power by encouraging religious organization and activity. Later, Mubarak not only gave greater freedom to all opposition trends, but eventually decided to coopt the more moderate trends of Islam in order to fight the radical trends.

The impact of the Brothers became apparent with the first attempt at opposition coalition in which they participated, and reached its peak in the 1987 elections. When in October 1983 the opposition first tried to rally its ranks in the Committee for the Defense of Democracy, the Brothers were only one faction among several others. The short-lived committee also included representatives of the leftist NPUP, the (labor) SLP, the (liberal) LSP, the (Muslim) Nation Party, Marxists, Nasserites, the Neo-Wafd (which was the first to withdraw), Muslim jurists, union leaders, and university professors. Still, religious issues were prominent in its program. The Committee demanded application of the Shari'a, reinstatement of the Imams who were removed in Sadat's autumn 1981 clampdown on the opposition, and renewal of the suspended religious organs. There was talk of Egypt as center of the Muslim and Arab world, ending with a prayer for the welfare of Egypt's Arabism and Islam, and the Qur'anic verse "Find shelter ye all in God and you shall not be divided." Their impact, obviously far beyond their numerical weight, may be ascribed to the authority inherent in a genuine Muslim message, or, as suggested by Egyptian analysts, to the fact that their presence represented the radical Muslim factions as well (*Intikhabat* 1986).

The 1984 elections showed further promise of the impact of Islam in the political competition. On election day, parties used Islamic symbols—a particular Qur'an verse or slogans published on list-cards of Ramadan fasting hours (*Intikhabat* 1986). The mood reached its peak in the April 1987 elections, which were virtually pervaded by religious fervor. By early March, all of Egypt was covered with Islamic slogans; the most common and sweeping was the generalistic one propagated by the Muslim Brothers—"Islam is the solution." Other slogans of a similar generalistic nature were: we shall reform the world with religion, God is our goal, his Messenger (Muhammad) our leader, the Qur'an our constitution. Similar slogans were specifically directed toward the election of the Brothers, such as "Give your vote to God, give it to the Muslim Brotherhood." Other signs made it clear that giving the vote to the

government was equal to giving it to the Devil. Even the non-religious started publicizing photos of themselves in prayer or hoisting religious posters. Counter-efforts on behalf of the government, as far as campaigning was concerned (as opposed to removing posters, arresting activists, or discouraging religious-based political activity—see for example *al-Liwa al-Islami* 26-3-87, 2-4-87, for opinions of Muslim sages against propaganda in mosques, or Muslim partisan propaganda altogether), consisted of religious argumentation. It sought to present the government as the serious proponent of Islam in the state, and hurled accusations of infidelity at opponents. Not that the masses could be misled: public enthusiasm revolved around those acknowledged as the genuine representatives of the message. Meetings of the Alliance and, even more so, those run independently by the Brothers were the best attended. The expanded scope of time and space allotted for religious programs in government media was, moreover, thought to be leading to an increase of the radicals' following, rather than enhancing the appeal of the regime (*Taqrir* 1987; on a similar pattern in Sadat's last years, see my "The Rise of Political Islam in Egypt," *Hamizrach Hehadash*, Vol. 29, 1-4, in Hebrew). At any rate, religion was the criterion and yardstick, which added to the accumulating feverishness in the overall atmosphere (*MET* 5-11 April 1987).

The rallying force of the call goes back in part to its vagueness and generality: there was hardly any detailed exposition of just how Islam would be the solution. But this was patently needless, and just as effective in omission: such a statement seemed reasonable enough and appealed to the diffuse belief in the redeeming power of Islam. It not only facilitated the mobilization of wide constituencies, but also the cooption of official Islam: the Muslim establishment (such as Shaykh al-Azhar and the Mufti) joined in calling to all Muslims to vote for those who advocated the application of Shari'a in all walks of life; preachers in most mosques repeated the slogans of the Alliance; Muslim non-political associations that in the past kept away from political activity, were active and called for support of the Muslim candidates (*al-Nur*, Lebanon, 1-4-87; *Taqrir* 1987).

One specific issue, however, stood out: it was the demand for the application of the Shari'a as state law. Although the extent of this application varied in different trends, in principle, and especially since 1984, the call for Muslim

law was sounded in all opposition parties, as well as in the professional syndicates of doctors, lawyers, teachers and engineers (*The Guardian* 5-2-87; *Taqrir* 1987). In contents it ranged from the immediate application of Muslim law to its codification and incorporation in the civil law; from the principle of a Muslim theocratic state to general inspiration by the Muslim heritage. Another major implication of the Muslim message was the transcendence of the national territorial boundaries of Egypt. This, too, had a broad range—from a diffused sense of Muslim identity and an advocacy of Muslim-based alliances, to intimations concerning a universal entity and message: an aversion to particularist, national, or party-based existence, and an aspiration to a universal bloc. All parties identified in principle with the issues of the Muslim law and Muslim-based identification and even political orientation; the differences were expressed in both practical and essential nuances: how far should these tenets be realized, to what extent were they inherently integrated in the overall world view (*Rose al-Youssef* 20-4-87).

For the (government) NDP the issue of the Shari'a was a major problem. The constitution stipulated that the Shari'a is the primary source for legislation (an amendment incorporated in 1980 under the Brothers' pressure), and fundamentalists interpreted this as denoting immediate application of the Muslim law in the courts. The regime propounded codification, rather than application, contending that 90% of the current laws were compatible with the Shari'a, and the rest would be amended accordingly. But the common demand in all opposition platforms for the application of the Shari'a implied that the NDP opposed it, and sometimes this was even explicitly claimed. On the whole, the party was walking a tightrope in dealing with the religious issue: while striving to project a Muslim image it was wary of playing into the hands of the fundamentalists and bolstering their stance. The result was a restrained but nevertheless conspicuous religious tone. In fact, except for the main point of endorsing Mubarak's leadership, the party concentrated on projecting itself as defender of the July revolution and the Muslim Shari'a. It appointed men of religion as candidates, and made use of religion in argumentation against other parties: the leftist NPUP was accused of atheism, infidelity and hostility to religion, and the Neo-Wafd of making deals with religion. Slogans in rallies and posters appealed to Muslim sentiments and inclinations such as "*Allahu akbar*" and "Long live Egypt" and "The Party of

God (*hizb Allah*) supports the NDP" (*Intikhabat* 1986; *Mayo* 30-4-84, 3-4-87; *al-Ahram al-Iqtisadi* 30-3-87; *MET* 5-11 April 1987; *al-Nur* 18-2-87; *al-'Alam*, London, 7-3-87).

In the (liberal) LSP program, endorsement of the Muslim Shari'a as the primary source for legislation was the first item; but simultaneously, the reformist line of the government was adopted, urging the substitution of the Shari'a laws for the present ones that did not accord with them. The 1987 electoral statement reflected the enhanced religious tenor in the party in its elaboration on the value of installing religious law—rather than expressing mere adherence to the Constitution—namely, that the Shari'a's spiritual and practical aspects deal with all aspects of human life (*Intikhabat* 1986; *al-Ahrar* 29-3-84; *Daily Report* 27-3-87).

The Neo-Wafd program and its 1984 election campaign bore the mark of the partnership with the Muslim Brothers, which put the energetic Alexandrian Shaykh Salah Abu-Isma'il on the Program Committee. The program endorses Islam as the state religion and the precepts of the Muslim Shari'a as the primary source for legislation and the best guarantee for national unity and social peace. In the fundamentalist vein, it also calls for devoting special attention to religious education, both in schools, where it should be a major subject, as well as in mosques and churches. The media, too, should be recruited to implement this role. A most significant slogan carried in the 1984 campaign was that Islam is both "religion and state"—one of the most radical maxims of the fundamentalists, connoting that religion belongs in the political as well as the personal sphere, and that separation of religion and state in Islam is a contradiction in terms. In rallies, Qur'anic verses and religious poetry were recited. One slogan said: "O Egypt, return to being Muslim." Audiences responded with cries of *allahu akbar*. In 1987, divorced from the Brothers, the tone was somewhat attenuated, with the party espousing the regime's stance of "purging existing legislation" of any contradictions to the principles of the Muslim Shari'a by the government (*al-Wafd* 12-4-84; *Intikhabat* 1986; *Daily Report* 27-3-87, *MET* 5-11 April 1987).

The (leftist) NPUP's program did not allot a special section to Islam and underplayed the concrete topical issues. Nevertheless, there is scattered reference to religion throughout the program. In the preamble the party identifies itself as "the party of noble values, believing that the divine missions



are a moving force of progress and struggle against all forms of oppression, tyranny and exploitation." In the chapter dealing with democracy the program includes as second in a list of 25 conditions for the development of democracy the drawing of inspiration from the precepts of the Muslim Shari'a as the primary source for legislation (a somewhat mitigated version of the constitutional amendment) and support of mosques, churches and places of worship. In the 1984 election campaign the party joined all others in demanding the application of the Shari'a, rejected accusations of atheism, infidelity and Communism, and stressed that its principles express the practical, genuine essence of Islam. In a counter-attack it claimed that the real essence of religion contradicts the corruption that characterized the (government) NDP policies, and hence the incredibility of the NDP's claim to adherence to religion. The NPUP opened rallies with recitals of Qur'an verses and included religious personalities in prominent slots on their lists. Reports indicated that such practices proved effective: for example, the presence in the streets of Shaykh Mustafa 'Asi (an al-Azhar sage, secretary of religious affairs and national unity in the party), distributing leaflets, was a positive influence on the voters (*Intikhabat* 1986; *al-Ahali* 11, 18, 25-4-84, 4-3-87).

The (labor) SLP party's program is markedly permeated throughout by a religious tenor. The preamble to the program states that the party aims at "applying socialism which is based on the basic precepts of our true religion." It boasts having been the first to stipulate in its (1978) platform that the Muslim Shari'a is the primary source for legislation, and current laws must not contradict it. Under the heading "the application of the Muslim Shari'a" as part of the party's efforts toward democracy, the platform urges introducing the parliamentary laws which have already been studied by committees of the People's Assembly so that their congruence with the Shari'a may be verified, as well as completing study of the remaining laws. The program also urges accelerating construction of society in accordance with the decrees of the Shari'a, applying the *Hudud* (the stringent criminal Qur'anic code) since it is a set of divine decrees, and reassessment of the Personal Status Law issued in 1980 (allowing more rights to women) in order to eliminate those parts that do not accord with the Shari'a. The goal of constructing the pure society also dictates such Muslim precepts as closing down alcohol industries owned by the government, and prohibition of gambling and offensive entertainment. In its

1984 election campaign the party denounced separation of religion from politics "which brought about the breach between the Muslim community and religion"; urged the masses to defend the might of Islam, and criticized the alliance of the Brothers with the Neo-Wafd, claiming it was more appropriate for the Brothers to ally with the SLP. The list of candidates was printed on the Ramadan fasting hours card. Signs in the campaign used the Qur'anic verse "and the star [the party's symbol] will be their guide" (*Intikhabat* 1986; *al-Nur* 11-3-87).

In the 1987 platform (*al-Sha'b* 17-3-87), the ideological stance is even more expressly stated, the religious-moral issue emphasized. The preamble submits that Egypt is going through one of its most critical stages in history. A title that would best express this stage is the depreciation of values. In the final analysis, the causes for Egypt's social, political and economic malaise are the lack of guiding, sound, constructive values in educational institutions for youth and adults, and the absence of models and paragons without which good qualities cannot be passed from generation to generation. The program points out that thanks to God, the "Egyptian social environment" still adheres to the heritage which upholds the criteria of the good tradition and renders religious faith "the main measure for judging behavior." This, however, will not last if Egypt does not go back fully to her eternal values, which always defended her against the conspiracies of enemies, and helped her to confront difficult crises and emerge strengthened. Reformists were hoping that the government would respond to these sincere emotions and deeply serious ideas, which they felt were based on a sound perception of realities in Egypt, past and future. But nothing happened. The laws of Allah were not applied, and unlawful gains ruled supreme. The quality of work deteriorated, as did fulfillment of duties and respect for law.

The demand for application of the Shari'a was preceded in 1987 by a statement submitting that the application of the Shari'a is a religious duty and a national necessity. There is no question of consenting or objecting; it is incumbent on every Muslim to obey God's decree and apply His law. The call for the construction of the pure society is similarly preceded by the principle that there are no morals without religion, and all educational media must be directed to shape the young generation accordingly. Mosques must once again fulfill an all-embracing mission. Under "culture and information" the pro-

gram calls for an ideational and cultural revival which will restore the nation to its cultural Arab and Muslim roots and remove expressions of Westernization.

The ten-point list with which the Alliance ran, a vague and generalized program, was unequivocally clear on one point only: its being Muslim. The first point is that "faith in God is the basis of morals and virtue, and from it will originate the solution of social and economic problems." The second point said that "the Shari'a is not limited to the Qur'anic criminal code; it is an all-embracing order of life and government." The fourth point stipulated "the spreading of virtue: leadership must be a model of obedience to God . . ." The fifth point said that "there must be a cultural revival which would revert the nation to its Muslim and cultural roots [*sic*]. All theater and cinema production, and all forms of artistic expression must be a means to instill the right religious values, and not a means to spread depravity and debauchery" (*al-Sha'b* 6-4-87).

For the Nation Party, the Shari'a is the primary issue, and is conceived as the all-embracing system of the state—cultural, social, economic, and political. Laws of men must be replaced by the laws of God, the regime of men by the regime of God, and a Muslim culture must be developed which will be based on science and faith, and serve as an instant cure to all problems and suffering in all realms of life. Thus society, economy, policy, regime, and state will all become Muslim.

The party demanded more reforms in the constitution which were traditionally demanded by the Brothers (but not included in the Alliance platform): for the first paragraph—"the Muslim republic of Egypt and the Egyptian people are part of the Muslim nation and will work to realize its total unity"; for the second article—"Islam is the state religion, Arabic is its official language, and the Muslim Shari'a is the sole source of legislation for society and state."

The Nation program also invokes the "third superpower" idea, calling for a Muslim-Arab military alliance that will ensure effective Arab-Muslim integration and action, and protect all states in the region from the aspirations of the superpowers and Israel. On the political level, the party calls for forming a unified, strong and effective "Arab and Muslim will," through the creation of a designated world Muslim spiritual leader, which "will realize the

universality of Islam." This person will be called "the Imam of the Muslim people" and will be elected out of bodies of senior religious sages in an international Muslim conference that will be held in Cairo. He will serve as the chief Imam of Muslims in all Muslim countries and communities, in order to unify Arab and Muslim thought and Muslim spiritual leadership in the world (*Daily Report*, 1-4-87; *al-Umma*, 8-15 March 87).

What was only implied or hinted at in the Nation program was explicit in treatises circulated by the radical organizations, in a half-clandestine manner. One such treatise, circulated by the Jihad group (reported in *Taqrir* 1987), propounds denunciation of both the United States and the USSR, as opposed to the unity of the Muslim nation, the establishment of a Muslim government as well as the Muslim Caliphate. The Caliphate was one of the main issues in symposia organized by the organizations in universities, under the slogan that most troubles befell the Muslim nation following the collapse of the Caliphate in 1924. Here too, however, it was not specified how this aim could be accomplished in the current political global situation, nor what was to be the nature of the Muslim political order in the various Muslim regions.

## CONCLUSION

The "Arab Strategic Report," compiled by the al-Ahram "Center for Political and Strategic Studies," a semi-establishment institute, defines five spheres that are relevant to Egyptian national strategic attitudes—including confrontation of the Israeli threat, the Pan-Arab commitment, the bolstering of relations with states of the Third World, specifically those of the Muslim world, and neutrality between East and West. In our analysis, these spheres emerge not only as issues for reference, but also as consensus maxims, to which homage must be paid in principle, regardless of concrete, specified, relevant attitudes. Put together, these points emerge as aspects of a central line in the political-ideological map: striving for an independent power bloc, which would transcend Egyptian territorial boundaries, and whose main tenor is Muslim-Arab, anti-West and anti-Israel.

Transcendence of territorial boundaries is congruent with Egypt's traditional self-conception as leader of her various surrounding circles. For all

trends, and specifically so for center and right-of-center trends, it is also a pragmatic consideration of gainful cooperation and power alliances with natural partners. For Pan-Arabs, scattered both as individuals and as political trends in several parties, the striving is for Arab unity. Indeed, the idea of political unification, which played a prominent role at the time of Nasserite Pan-Arabism, has declined as a professed or concrete goal, but the idiom lives on. The entity of an Arab world is taken as an axiom, and concrete aspirations concern alignments and integration in all spheres. For Muslim trends, whose tenor colors the whole political spectrum, transcendence is natural: Muslim self-conception, both spiritually and politically, is universalist. Acceptance of the limits of parties and states is a matter of compromise—except for the Arab sub-unit which some of them adopt—dictated by consideration of immediate gains.

The super-bloc idea derives support from yet another direction. Mubarak's regime tried to elicit legitimacy by re-emphasizing Egypt's traditional Arab, Islamic and African affiliations, a policy that by definition involves a renewed commitment to the non-alignment movement. Positive neutralism vis-à-vis the superpowers is essential to the self-respect of a country recently freed from the rule of imperialism, and for the promise of exercising some measure of leverage and freedom in steering her global policy. Center and right-of-center trends subscribe to this maxim mostly in principle, though insofar as it expresses a wish for its potential political gains such subscription is apparently genuine. Other opposition parties, both leftist and Muslim, subscribe more concretely to the non-alignment stance. Although starting from different points of departure all arrive at an overriding anti-Western emphasis: leftist non-alignment or positive neutralism is, as ever, anti-West and pro-USSR, while supra-nationalist and, even more so, the Muslim trends, which are essentially opposed to both powers, also tend to stress antagonism to the omnipresent West.

More generally concrete and genuine is endorsement of cooperation with Third World countries, though here, too, one can distinguish between pragmatic and doctrinaire attitudes. Center and right-of-center stances advocate affiliation with Muslim, African and Arab states mostly for expedience, while leftist, supra-nationalist and Muslim trends do so out of an ideological identification. In concurrence with the surging overall Muslim trend, most

factions single out specifically the Muslim states as their foremost Third World allies and the building blocks for their vision of an independent superpower.

Both attitudes of "Panism" and anti-Western stance, as well as the Muslim attitude as such, involve an antagonistic stance toward Israel. Even establishment spokesmen assert Israel to be the "main enemy" or the main danger to Egypt. If moderates take issue mainly with specifics of disagreements concerning the settlement, pan-Arabs, leftists and Muslims are following the inner logic of their ideological world view and perceive Israel as an existential threat. As opposition to the peace treaty was banned by Sadat (and, most probably due to a dread of war, by most factions as well), explicit exhortations to abrogate the peace treaty issue only from the illegal extremist parties. But nearly all parties are united in their opposition to the accords; the Alliance, which took 17% of the vote despite all obstacles, did so under the blunt slogan that "Zionism is our most dangerous enemy."

One cannot miss the fact that such points of consensus are most fully and bluntly expressed by the opposition, and more so by the banned parties. The most convincing and appealing interpretation, however, is offered by the Muslim movement. As illustrated by the case of the Shari'a, they may be marginal in numbers, but they do provide a coherent, comprehensive and authoritative theory, and therefore, a guiding focus. Nasserism is another such movement; its leftism (unattractive for popular Egypt) is offset by its "Panist" nationalism and adoption to some extent of Islam. As Egyptian analysts suggest, the ban on the more extreme Nasserite and Muslim parties might have been due to the threat that their full commitment to these points of consensus harbors for the regime: permitting the Nasserite groups to act within the political system would challenge the ruling party and force it, as well as the other parties that claim title to the continuation of the revolution, to look for an alternative legitimacy or ideological framework (*Taqrir* 1987).

The materialization of a similar challenge is already under way in the indirect incorporation of the Muslim trend in the legal political system. Mubarak has sought to coopt the moderate, or temporarily moderate, Muslim Brothers, simultaneously dissociating them from the radical trend. Such tactics are clearly a gamble: it is hardly plausible that the Brothers will rest on their laurels, and they may even serve as a channel for the attitudes, or

hidden pressures, of the more radical Islamic organizations. Apart from this, the very act of cooptation is fraught with danger. To carry it out and still maintain the claim to central legitimacy, the tone of the regime's campaign, and in fact the tone of the whole election campaign, was shifted toward religion. Just as under Sadat, this inevitably played, to some extent, into the hands of radicals of all hues. The threat inhering in outlawed parties such as the Nasserites and, more so, the Muslim Brothers is not in that the periphery will take over the center; rather it is in the potential of the periphery to better represent the essence of society and the political community, thus jeopardizing the center's basis of legitimacy.

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