

REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT  
OF THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY AT CAIRO  
TO THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
For the year 1938-39

Gentlemen:-

This Report is being written in September 1939 in the atmosphere of tragic world war developments whose significance for the future is beyond computation. It is difficult to detach one's mind from the startling events that are reported in the newspapers from day to day and the grave issues hanging in the balance for the future and address one's thoughts calmly to a review of a year of comparative calm and relative quiet that was completed before war broke out. However, it is to be observed that we who have lived in Egypt have been living to such a degree in a war atmosphere during the past year that the shock of war has not been so great for us. Indeed the question has been asked again and again whether war itself could be much worse. With hundreds of sand bags on the roofs of our buildings to provide for dealing with incendiary bombs, with repeated blackout practises by night, with the playing of searchlights night after night in the military practice for locating aeroplanes, with the instalment and equipment of a gas shelter on the University grounds, with the purchase of over a hundred gas masks for staff and servants, with lectures on air raids, with the government's imposition for the first time in Egypt's history of a personal income tax to provide funds for a program of militarization and self-defence, with all these signs of war, there has been no chance of our forgetting - those of us who lived in Egypt - that war was not merely possible but imminent. Furthermore, as one saw the thinking, the planning, the financial resources and the man power of society claimed by war preparation, all because of one or two men and governments pursuing lawless courses and threatening the peace and liberty of others, the

feeling developed that this evil needed to be dealt with even at the price of war, because already it had created practically a situation so fully the equivalent of war that all the creative and constructive processes of civilization were being arrested and their intellectual and financial resources diverted to plans for military self-defence against this ruthless and terrorizing enemy. The year with which this Report deals is therefore that brief breathing space of nominal peace which our world enjoyed between the Munich Conference and the opening of the present war.

The political background of our work in Egypt during the past year was the government of Mohammed Mahmud Pasha. My Report a year ago described this administration as not too friendly to Christianity or Christian missions, largely because it had come into power by appeal to the fundamentalist elements in Islam and, in consistency, had to pay its bill for political services rendered by that group, by assuming an attitude of hostility to Christianity. In passing, it is to be noted that just last month the Ministry fell and a new Ministry headed by Ali Maher Pasha came to power which has elements much more favorable for our work, if one may base a forecast on the past records of those who now form this new Cabinet. The present Report however deals with events under the administration of Mohammed Mahmud Pasha.

To the credit of Mahmud Pasha's Ministry stands a record of administrative efficiency. Things got done, where under the previous Ministry of Nahas the wheels of government had ceased to function because the Ministry was so much occupied with political campaigning. As proof that the American University

itself suffered no damage from the anti-Christian bias mentioned as being forced upon the Government through Moslem influences, it is to be noted that during the past year the University received from the Ministry of Education the most generous financial grants received in years, if not ever, and the Council of Ministers took action exempting the University from the payment of the Recording Tax, subject to usual rules for such transfer, whenever the University would transfer its suburban property's titles from the individual names of McClenahan and Cleland to the University as a holding corporation. The University has also maintained throughout the past year most friendly relations with many members of the Cabinet. The year was marked also by national festivities celebrating the marriage of Egypt's Princess Fawzia to Prince Mohammed Rida Shahpur, heir to the Iranian throne. There was, during the year, a few repercussions in Egypt of the increasing friction between Jew and Arab in Palestine. Mass meetings were held in Cairo in support of the Arab position and high Egyptian officials attended the London Round Table Conference. The chief effect of the Arab-Jew conflict has been a deepening of the feeling of cultural and racial solidarity among the Arab and Moslem peoples of the Near East.

With these general observations about public affairs in Egypt, we turn now to a review of the year's work by departments.