

REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT  
OF THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY AT CAIRO  
TO THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
FOR THE YEAR 1947-48

I. - THE EGYPTIAN BACKGROUND

All the problems of Egypt that have recurred in each of the President's Reports for the postwar years have been epitomized in the 1947-48 scene. A year ago it was hoped that Egypt would begin to pass out of the chaotic restlessness inherited from the war into the more stable conditions of peace. That hope proved false; never have we had a more confused, tense and difficult scene than that of 1947-48.

The outbreak of cholera in the fall of 1947 struck the whole Middle East with terror. Two years ago an epidemic of malaria caused more than 100,000 deaths among the peasants of the upper Nile Valley; an unchecked cholera epidemic would result in a much greater loss of life. Egypt's last major experience with cholera was in 1902. Then American missionaries in Cairo counted 300 funerals passing the mission building in a single day. However, in the forty-five years since that date, public health has made great strides and Egypt has learned much about modern methods of epidemic control. Prompt and well-planned action by the Ministry of Health, aided by generous supplies of serum and DDT from abroad, quickly brought the epidemic under control. All public assemblies were banned and schools were not permitted to open until the middle of November. The exact number of deaths is not known but probably it did not exceed 50,000.

Scarcely had cholera been brought under control when Palestine caused another upheaval. The decision of the Security Council in November to partition Palestine brought immediate and widespread violent reactions throughout the entire Arab world. When this was followed in March by the United States' de facto recognition of the State of Israel, Arabs felt they had lost their last hope of justice from the Western world.

Egypt immediately declared a "state of siege" and open warfare broke out between the Egyptian troops and Israeli forces. To date Egypt has spent nearly thirty million pounds in its war effort and has suffered casualties running into the thousands. Unfortunately the Arab press has given a false picture of "Egyptian successes." It is now known that from the beginning Egyptian troops were badly out-fought and the campaign ended recently in virtual rout. All the emotional resentment generated by this experience is now focused against the United States for the American aid given to the Israeli forces. Egypt has become so hysterically preoccupied with the Palestine struggle that other matters of foreign relations and internal administration have been pushed aside until the war is over.

Another significant feature of the year was the final enactment of the law bringing all private education under the control of the Ministry of Education. Such legislation has been repeatedly attempted during the last decade but each time its passage was prevented by British pressure. Now independent Egypt has taken the first step in extending government control to all private educational enterprises in the country. While the general tenor of the law is reasonable,

articles restricting co-education and the teaching of religion are causing much concern to all missionary institutions. There is little likelihood that this legislation will be repealed but its specific application to individual institutions can be negotiated. Such negotiations have taken place already between the University and the Ministry of Education, and the results are quite satisfactory.

To Americans resident in Egypt the most marked feature of the year was the complete reversal of public attitude toward the American Government and general American influences. Ever since the first world war, to be an American has been an asset in the Arab world; now it is a distinct liability. At the time of the cholera epidemic the prompt and generous help given by the United States impressed Egypt with America's sympathy toward the Arab world. Our Government's action in forcing a pro-partition vote through the Security Council, and later in hurriedly recognizing the State of Israel, has completely displaced this recent good will. Egyptians are puzzled, hurt and resentful at our pro-Zionist policy and can talk of little else. Indeed the present war in Palestine appears to many Egyptians to be essentially a war between Egypt and the United States since it is American money and American support that has made the State of Israel possible. Whatever the final solution of the Palestine case may be, it is doubtful if the Arab world for many years to come will lose its suspicion of American motives and policies.

## II. - THE POSITION OF THE UNIVERSITY

Despite this unfavorable situation, the University has had an extraordinarily successful year. It is one of the few schools in Egypt that has actually completed a year of academic work - the Faculty of Medicine of the Egyptian University completed only one-third of its prescribed studies. Moreover the attitude of the students was highly satisfactory. Without in any way retreating from their national pro-Arab feelings, they conducted themselves circumspectly and aided the Administration in maintaining necessary order. Particularly heartening was the insistence of the Arab-Palestinian student group in paying for the few pounds of damage done to the University by an Egyptian street-boy mob in the late autumn. This payment was made voluntarily as evidence of their belief that the University is not only free from involvement in American politics but is serving the Arab world through its program of education.

Public reaction to the University as an American enterprise was varied. Lincoln School and the Faculty of Arts and Sciences had no adverse experiences resulting from anti-American feeling. Indeed, when the exodus from Palestine started in the middle of the winter, we were besieged with Palestinian Arab students who wanted to enroll in our institution. The only place where anti-American feeling showed itself effectively was in the Division of Extension. Here the record of attendance for the first semester was low - due partly to the cholera epidemic and partly to a definite boycott movement on the part of Egyptian organizations such as El Azhar. It is encouraging to note that none

of our extension lecturers withdrew from participation in the program because of feelings against America. One lecturer did make a vigorous attack on the American Government from the platform of Ewart Hall but afterwards expressed appreciation of our tolerance and the freedom we granted him to express his views. His son, who was a student in Lincoln School, remained throughout the year although had the father followed the logic of his own speech he would have withdrawn the boy after the Partition vote. During the second semester the attendance in the Extension Program was almost normal, thus indicating that there is no deep and basic feeling against us as an American institution. Undoubtedly the attitude of the public was greatly helped by the two pronouncements issued by the University Administration. The first of these was in the form of a press interview by the President shortly after the Partition vote. In this it was stated that the University is a purely private institution and holds no relations whatever to the United States Government; it is therefore under no compulsion to support, defend or reject any particular United States policy. This statement was welcomed by our friends and received favorable comment in the Arabic press. In March, after the de facto recognition of Israel by the United States, the President, Dean Howard and Mr. Vandersall, as private American citizens, sent a strongly worded protest to Mr. Truman calling attention to the dangers and injuries inherent in the recognition of Israel and stating that as American citizens the signers repudiated the action. This cable was dispatched on the same day that Mr. Tuck, the American Ambassador, announced his resignation. A close friend in the Egyptian Government stated that these two acts probably prevented what might have been a very bad anti-American reaction in Egypt. The cable of protest by the University staff members brought an immediate reaction from the Egyptian public. The Prime Minister made an official call to the President's office, the King sent a personal message of appreciation, telegrams were received from numbers of alumni, and the Arabic press and radio carried the full text of the cable for three days. There is no question but that this action has gone far to relieve the University from the involvement in policies of the United States Government and to convince Egyptians that we are sympathetic toward their legitimate aspirations.

Relations with the Government were cordial throughout the year. In the autumn some officials of the Ministry of Education sought to withdraw the Ministry from cooperation with the Division of Extension in its educational cinema - this on the basis of their feeling over American policy. This movement was stopped by the Minister of Education himself who ordered that cooperation should continue as in past years. The passage of Law 38 (placing private education under control of Government) brought the President into close contact with the officials of the Ministry of Education, the Foreign Office and the Prime Minister. Throughout the extended negotiations the Government showed itself appreciative of our work and anxious to make reasonable interpretations of the law. During these negotiations the question was raised by the University as to whether it had a future in Egypt which would justify its continuance and the investment of a considerable sum in new buildings. The answer from the Government was emphatic; as long as our institution is sympathetic toward Egypt's national life, is integrated into its cultural program, and pursues educational methods and programs which have a unique stamp to them,

its work will be welcomed. This judgment was reinforced in a conversation with the Prime Minister shortly before the President's departure for the United States. Nokrashi Pasha reviewed the objectives of Law 38 and gave assurance that such legislation was not aimed at the University nor would it be interpreted so as gradually to drive us out of Egypt.

The enrollment of the year was unusually good. The Division of Extension again had total audiences of nearly 60,000, Lincoln School slightly exceeded 300, the Faculty of Arts and Sciences totaled 185, the Department of Education had 35 students, while the School of Oriental Studies gave the largest number of lessons in its history - approximately 11,500. Thus the problems and reactions of the year did not seriously affect the University clientele or its general circle of friends.

### III. - GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

In reviewing the detailed record of the year there is almost unanimous agreement in various departmental reports on the following points:

1. Paucity of Staff - The permanent staff of the institution has steadily diminished over the past few years and 1947-48 saw it sustain three further losses. Dr. C. C. Adams, Dean of the School of Oriental Studies, died suddenly in March; Dr. Lubbers and Dr. Smith resigned from the Faculty of Arts and Sciences to take up teaching positions in the United States. Thus the year closed with only four permanent Americans on the staff - Badeau, Beck, Howard and Vandersall. Dr. Cleland's position was filled by the appointment of John Rizk as Director of the Division of Extension but, since Mr. Rizk was already a member of the University staff, his appointment did not represent any strengthening of the permanent group.

Three permanent replacements are urgently needed; a Professor of Philosophy, a Sociologist to assist John Rizk in the Division of Extension, and an American associate for Dr. Boktor in the Department of Education. The appointment of these men is not only imperative from the standpoint of teaching responsibilities but also as contributing toward the administration of the University. With the present small group of permanent men, administrative duties have become very heavy and constantly compete with the more fundamental tasks of teaching for which the staff is primarily recruited.

All departments urge that more permanent staff members be secured at once if the University is even to maintain its present program. In addition to the replacements noted above, it is most urgent that a permanent head of the Journalism Department be found. This Department has functioned for ten years under the leadership of short-term teachers. It has grown to the place where it now accounts for approximately one-third of the entire enrollment of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences and reports the largest single block of Moslem Arabic-speaking students. Its work is in great demand and its opportunities for training are almost unlimited. Yet the Faculty cannot continue to offer a course in Journalism without the services of a permanent and adequately trained department head. Either such a head must be appointed or work in Journalism must be discontinued.

## 2. The Largeness of Opportunity is likewise noted by each department.

While the war has created much chaos in Egyptian life it has also broken down many intellectual and educational barriers. The public naturally turns to the American University at Cairo for a certain type of pioneering demonstration and to make such demonstration is to continue to improve the educational objectives of the institution. The newly enacted Companies Law which forces foreign concerns to employ a large percentage of Egyptians makes imperative better business training than Egypt now offers. This year the Faculty of Arts and Sciences has been constantly urged by friends to furnish such training. Again, Egypt has suddenly become library conscious and would welcome and support training in this field if we could offer it. The Division of Extension through its experience in the field of educational cinema is prepared to inaugurate an Institute of Visual Education for which one of its staff has technical training. The School of Oriental Studies, with its new staff of two research scholars and one administrator is diversifying its language program and is hoping to provide a "Service Station" in the Middle East for oriental departments in universities in America and Britain. Such advances are not luxuries; they are the instruments by which the University continues to maintain its place in a rapidly developing Egypt. Only by continuing to pioneer in developments such as these can our institution maintain its remarkable leadership in the Middle East.

These opportunities are made possible because of the unusually favorable public atmosphere now prevailing in Egypt. As Arab irritation with and suspicion of the official policies of the United States Government mounts, the contributions of the University become more significant. The Arab world is not anxious to turn its back on the American way and the services America can offer; it wants to maintain some reasonable connection with American life. Institutions like the University offer that connection and for the next few years it is expected that they will have an unusual opportunity to advance. Especially is the time ripe for the development of our building program. Egypt is prepared to accept such a program now as an evidence of our belief in the future of its life and our desire to continue to share in national development. Probably the next two years will be more valuable for our building project than any other period we may see.

It is worth noting that income from the field - chiefly in tuition - is steadily increasing. As reported two years ago, a much larger percentage of the budget is now underwritten by money received in Egypt than formerly was true. This trend has continued and the Trustees may be assured that every effort is made by administrators on the field to cover as large a part of University costs locally as is possible.

## V. - CHRISTIAN OBJECTIVES

With the enactment of Law 38 controlling private education, it is imperative that the Christian objectives of the University be reviewed both in relation to the underlying philosophy of the institution and as expressed through its program of education. For this the statement of purpose as suggested recently by Council is basic. Our problem is to find in Arabic a phrase that will be honest and intelligible to Egyptian Moslems and yet will embody the basic Christian aims of our institution.

The most immediate question regarding a teaching program in this field arises from the provision of Law 38 forbidding instruction of any pupil "in a religion other than his own even with consent of the parent." This prohibition has been discussed at length with the Minister of Education. The Minister's own statement was "teach but not preach" in the field of religion. This is a somewhat ambiguous difference but the Ministry appears to accept the present teaching program of the University and no difficulty is expected in continuing our present work in ethics, religion and philosophy. It may be necessary, however, to discontinue the Sunday morning service for students - or to replace it by a week-night forum in which religious matters would be discussed but without formal worship.

With the resignation of Dr. Smith, the University has lost the center of its religious program. Dr. Smith demonstrated that in the end the greatest religious influences can be exercised through personal contact with students, many of which grow out of discussions that begin in the classroom. Two incidents in the past year show how profound such discussions can be. One Moslem student came to Dr. Smith stating that he remembered a discussion in his sophomore year relating to the Christian concept of forgiveness as a basic ethical attitude. He now faced a situation where he needed to forgive an enemy and wanted to know how a Christian gets this grace of forgiveness into his character. Such an inquiry opened the door for deep personal sharing of the meaning of the Christian experience. Another Moslem graduate wrote from Yemen, deploring the anti-Jewish riots then going on and saying "When will we learn that only Christ's law of love will solve the world's problems?" To further such influences, a spiritual leader with adequate training in the field of Philosophy and Religion must be found at once.

Every year underscores the lesson that the ultimate religious effectiveness of the institution lies in the motivation of each member of the permanent staff. There can be no substitute for missionary commitment in each of our permanent men.

## VI. - CONCLUSION

Many details of the year's work have not been reported here since the departmental records are readily available. What is significant is that once again persons, money, buildings and motives have been combined in another year of unique effort through which Christ's way of service and His vision of the Kingdom of God have been brought closer to the Nile Valley.

JOHN S. BADEAU  
President

November 4, 1948.

(See folder Permanent File for Departmental Reports of  
1947-48 - under "Reports - Departmental")