

REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT  
of  
THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY AT CAIRO  
to the  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES

for the year  
1950 - - - - 1951

I - Egyptian Landscape

"Deceptive calm" has been the atmosphere of the Egyptian landscape during the past year. "Calm" because the months slipped by without their usual quota of student strikes and street demonstrations; a popular, majority government was in power, and some promising social advance has been made. Yet "deceptive", for beneath the surface the fever of nationalism has been rising, a warning of the outbreaks of recent weeks.

The failure of the Security Council in 1947 to act decisively on the Egyptian complaint against British occupation, the divided counsels of American foreign policy, the indifference of the West to the plight of the Arab refugees and the failure of every negotiation for evacuation with the British Foreign Office have been driving Egypt toward the dangerous and drastic step of tearing up the 1936 Anglo-Egyptian Treaty. Warnings of Egypt's growing hostility came in her refusal to take sides in the Korean struggle and studied indifference toward the conclusion of Establishment Treaty negotiations with the former Capitulatory Powers.

Yet in the midst of political tension, the country pushed forward in two programs of social advance. The first was the fuller implementation of the Government's long announced policy of universal, free education. Under Taha Hussein Pasha, Minister of Education, drastic steps have been taken to force the expansion of the school system. The largest educational expenditure in Egyptian history was made, new schools were hastily opened and old ones were crowded to the court-yard. By administrative order the Government sought to provide for every child applying a place in a state school. The immediate result has been confusion, inefficiency and the lowering of standards, but these are probably the inescapable prelude to a better day in free education.

A second notable social development came with the inauguration on February first of the first Social Security plan to be used in the Arab world. Although the benefits are small - almost infinitesimal by American standards - the principle of public responsibility for the aged and workless is clearly recognized, a peculiarly significant advance for a government of land-owners.

It is always a matter of wonder and gratification that the University continues to hold the good-will of the Egyptian public in such politically troubled times. Both the Egyptian Government and the Arab League contributed to the University's scholarship funds; three Cabinet Ministers served on the Division of Extension's Advisory Board; the Ministry of Social Affairs broadcast and printed a number of the Extension lectures; the Minister of Iraq was the Commencement

speaker. On every side there was evidence of cooperation, good-will and appreciation that seemed little affected by the political struggle with Great Britain and its inevitable reflection on America's own policy toward the Arab world.

This record is a needed reminder that present movements in Egypt are not inevitably anti-foreign or anti-Western. At the same time the Government was preparing to force the British out of the Canal Zone, it was sending student missions to both Great Britain and America, cooperating with enthusiasm in the Fulbright Exchange Program, and welcoming the assistance of social and economic experts from the United States. This is a reflection both of the genuine Western orientation of the Arab cultural and social awakening, and of the desire of Egyptian leaders to maintain useful contacts with the Western world even in the midst of political struggles.

## II - Programs and Policies

The basic program of the University has continued without spectacular alteration. The most drastic change came with the closing of Lincoln School in accordance with the decision of the University Council and the Board of Trustees. The American section has not accepted any entering class for the past two years, and thus consisted of only three classes, which will come to an end with the Graduation of 1952. The Government Section was completely discontinued at the close of the year, its students being able to transfer to state schools without alteration of program. Both parents and the Ministry of Education expressed profound regret at the discontinuance of the University's secondary work. For thirty-one years the program that was finally known as "Lincoln School" has made a major contribution to Egyptian secondary education. It has trained outstanding Arab and Egyptian leaders, shaped several scores of teachers in new educational patterns and demonstrated many fresh and valuable teaching techniques and programs. Undoubtedly the school closed at the peak of its reputation. While Faculty and Council regret the loss of this tested and recognized program, they continue to believe that the wisest course for the future is concentration of resources and effort at the true University level.

The approaching end of secondary responsibilities allowed the Faculty of Arts and Sciences to concentrate more fully on its true collegiate responsibilities. The Bachelor of Science degree was reinstituted after a lapse of fifteen years. Entrance and scholastic requirements were tightened, the program of major studies was more fully implemented. The entire college curriculum was reviewed and revised by the Faculty and Council with a view to reducing class hours and correcting certain over-emphases.

The rapid expansion of educational and social-service programs by the Government was reflected in increased enrollment in the Faculty of Education and the Division of Extension classes. Here the student body was so large as to tax both the physical and teaching capacity of the departments to the limit. With only one permanent faculty member in education and the absence of the Director of the Division of Extension in America, the task of giving proper instruction was formidable and could not have been faced without the assistance of a number of

## VII - Prospects of the Future

The Muslim and Arab world is entering upon a new period of political relation with the Great Powers of the West. Nationalistic resentment, social upheaval and cultural ferment are its chief characteristics. No longer are the Arab nations willing to be viewed chiefly as instruments of Western political policy or fields for commercial development. Yet for all their seriousness, current movements are not essentially anti-Western. Arab culture is not "oriental" in the sense of Hindu or Chinese, it is the Eastern end of Western culture. While having its own form and seeking to express its own historical patterns, Arab and Muslim culture is essentially oriented toward the Western world and desires to become a part of its life - providing it can do so on terms of respect and equality. The confusion of the present moment is not a sign of decay, but of life. A great and historic culture is again on the march.

In this situation, an American University located at Cairo has an unparalleled responsibility and opportunity. Thus far political tensions between Egypt and the West have not circumscribed its work or soured its welcome. While the future is sure to hold its difficult times, there is no reason why the University should not continue to give effective and welcome service. The more difficult political relations between the West and Egypt become, the more necessary are the non-political ties by which people can meet, understand and serve each other. There has been such an abundance of good-will <sup>toward the University</sup> during the past year, much of it emanating from the highest official Egyptian sources, that we can face the future with reasonable assurance.

In continuing to serve through this coming period of nationalistic ferment, the University must give serious consideration to the following general policies:

- a. Complete separation from all political programs, both Egyptian and American. Such matters as participation in Point IV and Economic Assistance programs must be scrutinized with the greatest care, and only undertaken if they are accepted and welcomed by Egypt.
- b. Continuous attention to public relations with the Arab and Egyptian governments and public. This already claims a large share of the President's time. It is equally important that University friends, staff and Trustees in America keep in contact with Arab students and Egyptian government and business circles.
- c. A unique educational program, ministering to the unoccupied or under-developed areas of Arab education. The University has been told repeatedly that it is welcome in Egypt so long as it supplements what the State Universities are doing. This means that the institution can never stand still; ingenuity, leadership and continuous creative development are its only guarantees of permanency.
- d. A foundation of religious and moral concern rooted in the personal Christian devotion of the Staff. The deepest confusion

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I - CHRONICLE OF THE YEAR

No year since the establishment of the Egyptian Monarchy (1922) has seen such change and upheaval as these past months. After five years of fruitless negotiation, Egypt finally repudiated the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty of 1936 on October 8, 1951, and began an active struggle against the British troops in the Suez Canal Zone. The government's official policy was one of non-cooperation - the withdrawal of Egyptian labor, closure of the ports to British military supplies, and cutting all communications with Egypt proper. Unofficially, it assisted in the formation of "freedom battalions," recruited from university students and Moslem Brotherhood organizations, who carried on active guerilla war.

Internal conditions became increasingly chaotic until the final explosion on January 26, 1952. On that day carefully organized mobs attacked the business district of Cairo, destroying over seven hundred stores and offices and causing a number of deaths. Such landmarks as Sheppard's Hotel, Cicurel's Department Store, Groppi's and all the principal cinemas were burned and looted. Only prompt action by the municipal authorities prevented a similar outbreak in Alexandria.

Martial law was immediately imposed and the Wafd government dismissed. Egypt was sobered and shocked by its own violence and set to work to repair the damage and restore confidence. A succession of Cabinets, appointed by the King and ruling without Parliament, attempted to stabilize the country and find some fresh approach to the impasse with Great Britain, but with little success. In the next six months, four governments came to power, one lasting only two days. Internal reform was hampered by political opposition and Palace influence; Great Britain showed no readiness to consider any new solution to the Suez-Sudan problem. Finally, the situation became so chaotic and helpless that an army junta, led by General Mohammed Neguib, seized power in a coup d'etat on July 23, 1952, forced the abdication of the King and the dissolution of the Palace clique, and instituted a radical program of social reform and political reorganization.

These months of tumult faced the University with many unusually difficult problems. General anti-foreign feeling was always a disturbing possibility, although the Egyptian discriminated quite clearly between the British and the American. Foreign (and some Egyptian) businesses were attacked indiscriminately on January 26, but whether by accident or design no religious or educational plant was touched and the University property was unscathed. After January 26, the atmosphere of Egypt changed drastically and the closing months of the school year were free from ill-will. The

President's Report  
1951-52 - Page 2

strenuous efforts of the American Ambassador to soften the British attitude were greatly appreciated by the Egyptian public, and American reputation stood higher than at any time since the announcement of Mr. Truman's Palestine policy.

Another problem arose from general student participation in the guerilla fighting. Most Egyptian institutions recruited "freedom battalions" and it is not strange that some students in the University felt they ought to share in the movement. Wise counsel by the University administration, especially by Acting Dean Naamani, and truly remarkable self-discipline on the part of the student body prevented any drastic action. While some students may have engaged in personal activity outside the University grounds and hours, there was no internal organization that contravened the institution's rule of political neutrality, or involved it in difficulties with the Egyptian, British or American governments.

Even the simple fact of holding classes and completing the academic program was difficult. With public transportation frequently suspended, street demonstrations a daily occurrence, Egyptian institutions closed or operating fitfully, nationalistic hysteria in the air, and curfew imposed by martial law, it was a question whether the A.U.C. reputation for unbroken operation could be maintained. Yet only eight and one-half days of school were lost and these were made up by extending the second semester. This record is probably unequalled by any other educational institution in Cairo. Even the lecture and evening activities suffered much less than expected. Due to the curfew imposed by martial law, it was necessary to shorten the periods of instruction and move the lectures to an earlier hour, but students and audience gladly accepted all restrictions and maintained their interest throughout the year.

In maintaining a successful and uninterrupted program throughout these months of disorder, the University has passed the severest test in its history. Part of its success was due to chance, part to the good judgment of the staff and the discipline of students, but the most basic factor is the esteem the institution has won for itself. This emphasizes again what so many Egyptians have said - that so long as the University serves Egypt with imagination, effectiveness and uniqueness, it will be welcome.

## II - GENERAL REVIEW

### Academic Program

While no radical changes in the academic program took place, several aspects of the year's work deserve comment.

The first is the opportunity and problem posed by the educational atmosphere in Egyptian institutions from which so many of our students come.