5

A Membership Obstructed

Egypt's Delayed Accession to the League of Nations

The negotiations for the creation of the Irish Free State and the nominal independence of Egypt occurred almost simultaneously. The Free State as an entity came into effect on 31 March 1922, whilst the unilateral declaration of Egyptian independence occurred a month before on 28 February. However, the similarities between Ireland and Egypt would end here, with both states diverging considerably in terms of foreign policy and membership at the League. Whereas Britain, under the suggestion of Round Table members such as Curtis, had actively encouraged Irish participation at the League of Nations, they would withhold Egyptian membership at the League until 1937. This would also make Egypt the last state to join the League of Nations.

Despite its symbolically more developed constitutional status than Ireland as a nominally independent state outside of the British Empire, Egypt's long-delayed entry into the League was not as a result of a lack of enthusiasm amongst Egyptians for League membership. Nor was it Article 1's of the League Covenant or its Sixth Committee blocking Egyptian entry on the basis of its self-governance. Rather, Egypt would be a case study of non-compliance with Britain's evolving imperial policy and how failure to conform could lead to isolation from the international system as a consequence.

Moreover, the case study of Egypt shows the perceived significance of shared cultural, historical, and racial ties that drove the ideals of the 'Third' British Empire and accession to the League. Unlike the British Dominions or India, Egypt was never formally a member of the British Empire. From 1882, Britain used an anti-colonial uprising within the Egyptian army as a pretext to occupy the Suez Canal and, later the whole

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of Egypt. Egypt itself was *de jure* an autonomous province of the Ottoman Empire, but *de facto* was ruled by Britain under what came to be known as the veiled protectorate. To maintain the illusion of Egypt's formal externality from the British Empire, Egypt was governed by the British Foreign Office, rather than by the Colonial Office. (For comparison India had its own Office due to its size and significance.)[1] British rule had maintained the dynasty of Muhammad Ali, who, depending on the monarch, ruled as both cooperative and reluctant puppets of colonial rule.

Egypt played a critical role within the Empire. The Suez Canal, which French engineers and Egyptian peasants had bored through the Sinai desert in the 1860s, had developed into the most significant transit point in the world. Despite initial resistance to its construction by the British, the Suez Canal Company had come under majority British Government ownership in 1875, and played a crucial role in shipping to Asia, acting as a place of paramount importance in maintaining Britain's thalassocracy and control of its colonies in Asia. As Lamartine once wrote to Gustave Flaubert: 'Egypt is Suez, Suez is India, and India is England.'[2]

Suez's strategic importance would be fought over in 1915, when the Ottoman army tested British defences on the Canal but were repelled. But it would also be a significant imperial focus point in which Dominion and Indian troops could be brought to bear, either against Germany on the Western front, or against the Ottoman Empire in Gallipoli or Palestine. The end of the war would lead to a massive expansion of British power in the Middle East, notably in Palestine and Mesopotamia or Iraq, which as aforementioned, would be governed through League of Nations Mandates. The informal additions of Iraq and Persia to the Empire shored up the Western approach to India, as well as them being significant suppliers for the Empire's growing energy transition from coal to oil.[3] The Middle East thus held a crucial role as the gateway to Britain's colonies in Asia and the Pacific. Consequently, Egypt and the Middle

[1] Genell has argued that the role of the Ottomans during the veiled protectorate was not quite as illusory as many historians have made it out to be Aimee M. Genell, 'Empire by Law: Ottoman Sovereignty and the British Occupation of Egypt, 1882–1923' (Columbia University, 2013), 1–2.

[2] Hubert Bonin, *History of the Suez Canal Company, 1858–2008: Between Controversy and Utility* (Genève: Librairie Droz S.A., 2010), 160.

[3] For more on the spheres of influence built around India, see James Onley, 'The Raj Reconsidered: British India's Informal Empire and Spheres of Influence in Asia and Africa', *Asian Affairs* 40, no. 1 (1 March 2009): 44–62.

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East's political significance to India would also mean that their political fates would also be intertwined.[4]

Although control of the Suez Canal was Britain's primary objective in Egypt, Britain had other hydrological concerns in the region. Control over the river Nile was not limited to Egypt, but was part of a much greater imperial project to control the territory along the whole river throughout Africa, leading to the term coined by geographer Terje Tvedt as the 'Imperial Nile System'.[5] More recently, Poti has described the Nile Valley as a significant 'trans imperial' region for the following reasons.[6] The Nile provided both economic and political control over swathes of Africa, from Britain's colony in Uganda to Alexandria, and upstream control of the main water supply meant that Britain could retain significant control over a now-nominally independent Egypt. Britain's maintenance of the Nile was key to the political control of Egypt, a control that was reinforced by the Lancastrian textile lobby which demanded new sources of cotton production and whose mill owners intended to develop cotton plantations in Sudan.[7] Cotton was not the only commodity of interest to Britain in Sudan. The petroleum company Shell also had interests in exploring Sudan for oil. They feared that Egyptian control would stop them from operating in Sudan and favoured the idea that Britain retain a large corporate presence, similar to the Anglo-Persian oil company in Persia.[8] Egypt was thus a hydrological centre of two of the world's main waterways, and Britain's maintenance of the control of the Nile would play a significant role in determining Egyptian independence, with Egypt's claim to upstream-Sudan playing a pivotal role on the future of Egypt's League membership.

[4] Noor-Aiman Khan, *Egyptian-Indian Nationalist Collaboration and the British Empire* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).

[5] Terje Tvedt, *The River Nile in the Age of the British: Political Ecology and the Quest for Economic Power* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2004), 7.

[6] Giorgio Potì, 'The League of Nations and the Post-Ottoman Recolonization of the Nile Valley: The Imperial Matryoshka of Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, 1922–1924', *Journal of Global History* 17, no. 2 (July 2022): 191–209.

[7] Tvedt, *The River Nile in the Age of the British*, 108–9; 'Report of the Special Mission to Egypt under Lord Milner, and Related Papers', 10 December 1920, Quatar Digital Library, www.qdl.qa/en/archive/81055/vdc_100080131819.0x00000af; Potì, 'The League of Nations and the Post-Ottoman Recolonization of the Nile Valley', 202.

[8] 'Memorandum on the Proposals for the Exploitation of Petroleum in the Soudan Contained in a Letter from Lord Eustace Percy on Behalf of the Shell Transport and Trading Company Addressed to the Financial Secretary, Khartoum', 10 January 1920, Extl – Dec – 37-192 – Part B (secret), National Archives of India.

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THE *WAFD* AND THE PARIS PEACE CONFERENCE

With the outbreak of the First World War, the formal link to the Ottoman Empire was severed and the 'veil' was thrown off, so that Egypt became a formal British protectorate in 1914. Whilst Egypt and Suez were paramount to maintaining British rule in India and the 'Far East', Indian troops played an essential role in safeguarding British interests in Egypt and the Middle East, supplying a third of the manpower of the Egyptian expeditionary force.[9] By the end of the conflict, Egyptian elites, like so many others in the colonised world, intended to use the upcoming peace conference as an opportunity for an independent Egypt to reappear on the world stage. By September 1918, a group of prominent Egyptian lawyers led by a veteran Egyptian politician and Vice President of the Legislative Assembly, Saad Zaghlul began to plan their bid for independence. On 13 November, two days after the armistice with Germany, they formed the *Wafd* (delegation) Party and approached the British High Commissioner for Egypt, Reginald Wingate, to ask for passage to London to negotiate independence. Wingate's response was vague and advocated waiting to see what would emerge from the British government at the future peace conference.[10]

The *Wafd* was a new political movement formed by Egyptian political veterans. Many of its members were reformers who favoured negotiation with the British authorities over direct action and wanted to see greater Egyptian participation within the governance of Egypt.[11] Moreover, they tended to occupy high-ranking and privileged positions within Egyptian society. Zaghlul himself had married into the establishment when he wedded Safiyya, the Egyptian Prime Minister's daughter. His position in elite Egyptian society aided him in later becoming Minister of Education and then Minister for Justice, before becoming Vice President of the Legislative Assembly. British intelligence reports in the secret 'Egyptian personality series' reveal further details of many of the *Wafd* leaders. Zaghlul had been considered a protégé of the former British Consul-General, Lord Cromer. Another, Mahomed Mahmoud had studied at Baliol College in Oxford and had 'distinguished' himself in government before falling out with the British in 1917. Another, Ismail Sidqi, had been Secretary General of Alexandria's municipality and held multiple

[9] Darwin, *Britain, Egypt and the Middle East*, 12.
[10] Manela, *The Wilsonian Moment*, 67–69.
[11] Khan, *Egyptian-Indian Nationalist Collaboration and the British Empire*, 28–29, 93.

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ministerial positions.[12] The *Wafd* was no grassroots political movement, but arose from Egyptian landowners who had a profound experience of and interaction with the colonial administration.[13]

The *Wafd*'s rapid predominance in Egyptian politics in late 1918 was watched suspiciously by the previously leading anti-colonial party, the *Watanists*. For over a decade, the *Watanists* had advocated more direct, often violent action against British rule, and mistrusted the *Umma-Jarida*, the forerunner of the *Wafd,* as either too lenient or even as potential collaborators with the British; especially Zaghlul.[14] This violence often extended to perceived Egyptian collaborators such as the Egyptian Prime Minister Boutros Ghali, who was assassinated in 1910 for his role as a judge in the infamous Dinshawei affair.[15] The *Watanists* espoused a more pan-Islamic ideology than the more territorially bound ideology of the *Umma-Jarida* and later the *Wafd*. However, this pan-Islamic ideology became more closely aligned with Ottomanism and the Central Powers in the First World War, as they relied on Ottoman and German support against Britain.[16]

The connections that the *Watanists* had made during the war with Germany and other organisations meant that they had a considerable network of organisations across Europe by 1919. These were based primarily in Paris, London, Geneva, and Bern.[17] This made the *Watanists* a valuable political group for the *Wafd* to ally with, to gain access to a network of nationalist supporters across Europe. With the rapid rise of the predominance of the *Wafd* in Egyptian politics, many *Watanists* defected to it in early 1919.[18] The *Wafd* proved to be a movement that could attract followers from other parties, representing a broad spectrum of Egyptian nationalism, whilst utilising pre-existing links to promote their message internationally.

For the *Wafd*, international recognition was initially the central means towards independence, as they hoped American pressure would push the British to negotiate or even allow the *Wafd* a voice in Paris.[19] The Protectorate had been presented by the British as a temporary emergency

[12] 'Allenby to Balfour', 13 May 1919, FO 608/214/1, UK National Archives.
[13] Marius Deeb, *Party Politics in Egypt: The Wafd & Its Rivals, 1919–1939* (Oxford: Ithaca Press for the Middle East Centre, St Antony's College, 1979), 43.
[14] Deeb, *Party Politics in Egypt*, 80–85.
[15] Khan, *Egyptian-Indian Nationalist Collaboration and the British Empire*, 61–63.
[16] Khan, *Egyptian-Indian Nationalist Collaboration and the British Empire*, 82.
[17] Khan, *Egyptian-Indian Nationalist Collaboration and the British Empire*, 49–51.
[18] Khan, *Egyptian-Indian Nationalist Collaboration and the British Empire*, 93.
[19] Manela, *The Wilsonian Moment*, 71.

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measure, imposed to protect the Canal and British imperial interests from the Ottomans. The *Wafd* and their associate organisations in Europe, hoped to make the case for Egyptian independence now that the threat to the Canal from the Ottomans had been removed and Egypt was no longer a province of the collapsing Ottoman Empire.[20] Egyptian political organisations hoped to use the significance of the Suez Canal, whose status was up for debate considering the significant political changes in the region, as a means to gain a seat at Paris.[21]

The leverage that Britain had over global transportation through the control of the Canal, was supposedly regulated under the 1888 Agreement of Constantinople, which meant that the Canal could not be closed to most Western states for political purposes.[22] This agreement had already been broken on multiple occasions, once during the Russo-Japanese war (1904–5) when Britain denied Russia access to the Canal, and during the First World War, when the Canal was closed to the Ottomans and Central Powers.[23] The British were not prepared to surrender such a vital lifeline to an independent Egyptian government and were thus unwilling to have Zaghlul, or any other Egyptian delegation, attend the Paris Peace Conference. Unlike India, there was no attempt to construct a delegation of Egyptian loyalists to attend the Conference to represent Britain's interests in Egypt. The Egyptian Prime Minister, Hussein Rushdy Pasha, who was also a rival of Zaghlul and less confrontational to British rule than the *Wafd*, offered to the British to send their own delegation. This offer was rejected by the Foreign Office and Wingate.[24]

The growing political anger in Egypt during the spring of 1919 caused the British administration to partially backtrack, inviting Rushdy Pasha to London to begin negotiations whilst not inviting him to the Paris Conference. This attempt to pick a more moderate Egyptian negotiator was also met with anger by many Egyptian organisations in Europe. The Committee of the Egyptian National Party in Bern sent a telegram stating that Rushdy Pasha was not a legitimate interlocutor for the Egyptian

[20] 'The Egyptian Association in Great Britain to the Foreign Office', 1 May 1919, FO 608/214/1, UK National Archives.

[21] 'L'association Egyptienne de Paris to the Heads of National Delegations', 27 January 1919, FO 608/212/11, UK National Archives.

[22] Bonin, *History of the Suez Canal Company, 1858–2008*, 173.

[23] Caroline Piquet, *La Compagnie du canal de Suez: une concession française en Égypte, 1888–1956* (Paris: Presses de l'Université Paris-Sorbonne, 2008), 174.

[24] Manela, *The Wilsonian Moment*, 72.

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people and that a plebiscite on the question of Egyptian independence should take place.[25] Recognising the popular support behind the *Wafd*, Rushdy Pasha threatened to resign if Zaghlul was not a member of the delegation, which was again rejected by the British.[26] In spite of Egypt's status as a protectorate rather than a Dominion like Canada or a colony like India, the British refused to put together a puppet delegation, revealing an inconsistency in their approach towards attempting to control the spread of anti-colonial nationalism.

Egypt's constitutional position outside of the Empire made Britain less eager to see an Egyptian delegation at the League of Nations. As it was not a formal part of the British Empire, British negotiators at Paris realised that they needed other powers to recognise the British protectorate over Egypt rather than see Egypt as an independent state under occupation. Allenby warned that the Egyptian 'extremists' hoped to gain recognition from the United States, Italy or France, and that until they recognised the Egyptian Protectorate, there would be the need for ongoing military repression to quell the protests.[27] It was American recognition that both Britain and the Egyptian nationalists sought the most.[28] Not only was the United States the most powerful of the Allied Powers, but many Egyptians, including Zaghlul, had over-optimistic expectations that Wilson would intervene on their behalf. British observers in Egypt believed that Egyptian demands for independence were built on a 'pernicious American theory of self-determination'.[29]

France, too, had been relatively compliant in recognising the Protectorate. Egyptian nationalists had also seen France as a possible ally that could attempt to check British power in Egypt, an area in which the French still harboured resentment for having been sidelined during the British intervention in 1882. Egyptian nationalists had stated in the French press that French citizens and financial interests would be protected from acts of civil disobedience, with the *Wafd* paying special attention to protecting a French sugar refinery in Cairo.[30] Some in the Foreign Office feared that there were elements in France that sympathised

[25] 'Sheikh Schainsch to Peace Congress', 17 February 1919, FO 608/212/11, UK National Archives.
[26] Manela, *The Wilsonian Moment*, 73.
[27] 'Allenby to Balfour', 18 April 1919, FO 608/212/11, UK National Archives.
[28] Manela, *The Wilsonian Moment*, 145; 'Curzon to Balfour', 30 March 1919, FO 608/212/11, UK National Archives.
[29] Manela, *The Wilsonian Moment*, 147.
[30] 'Derby to Curzon', 21 April 1919, FO 608_213, UK National Archives.

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with the *Wafd* so as to punish Britain for usurping France's prior predominance in Egypt in the early nineteenth century.[31] However, France had technically recognised the Protectorate from the outset in 1914, but was attempting to gain British recognition for its protectorate in Morocco before it reiterated its support for the Egyptian Protectorate.[32] To ensure the compliance of defeated Germany, Britain inserted Article 147 into the Treaty of Versailles by which Germany had to recognise Britain's protectorate in Egypt.[33]

Italy resisted recognition of the Protectorate. When Italy entered the war in 1915, it did so on condition of territorial gains in Europe and in Africa. With the Italians feeling increasingly sidelined at the Paris Peace Conference, the Italian delegation wanted to ensure that its demands for more territory in Africa were met before recognising the Protectorate in Egypt.[34] When Sultan Hussain died in 1917 and passed the throne to his half-brother Fuad, the British were surprised by the reaction of the Italian representative to Fuad's accession. The British feared that states that had not recognised the Protectorate would use the opportunity to symbolically snub the British, but most of them attended the crowning ceremony. The Italian delegate initially planned not to attend, then reportedly pleaded that he could not attend due to an illness, but finally conceded when other non-recognising states attended.[35]

The Residency in Cairo had become worried about the level of private Italian engagement with Egyptian nationalists. Italians made up a significant proportion of the European population in Egypt, and Allenby suspected that many sympathised with the Egyptian independence movement, with Italian banks allegedly offering financial services to anti-colonial nationalist groups.[36] Many *Watanists* had used Rome as a haven for their revolutionary activities throughout the First World War. However, Italy's own colonial demands also limited how useful a partner it could be in challenging Britain's claim to Egypt. Many Egyptian nationalists sympathised with neighbouring Libya's independence movement against Italy, increasingly breeding animosity between Egyptians

[31] 'Derby to Curzon', 17 April 1919, FO 608/213, UK National Archives.
[32] 'Peretti Della Rocca to Lord Derby', 13 May 1919, FO 608/212/11, UK National Archives.
[33] 'Minute by Sir Louis Mallet', 10 April 1919, FO 608/213, UK National Archives.
[34] Vansittart, 'The Article on Egypt in the Peace Treaty with Germany', 16 April 1919, FO 608/214/1, UK National Archives.
[35] 'Wingate to Balfour', 20 October 1917, FO 608/212/11, UK National Archives.
[36] 'Allenby to Rodd', 1 September 1919, FO 608/212/11, UK National Archives.

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and Italy.[37] Though Italian recognition was considered by the British as of secondary importance to that of the United States, gaining Italian support for the Protectorate would eliminate the chance of a major power supporting Egyptian independence.

Despite the faith placed in Wilson by Egyptian nationalists, Wilson recognised the Protectorate with ease, on the vague condition that Britain would work towards the creation of self-governing institutions.[38] The United States' recognition of the British protectorate was a blow to the *Wafd* and other independence organisations, with Allenby reporting back to the Foreign Office that the American recognition of the Protectorate had been a 'cold douche' for Zaghlul.[39] However, the *Wafd* had begun to set their sights higher than merely seeking international recognition. Zaghlul and other senior members of the *Wafd* had written a letter to Lloyd George demanding Egypt's independence, prompting the British administration on 8 March to arrest and deport the signatories to Malta.[40] Deportation had become a heavily utilised tool of British policing and would be repeated a month later to tackle nationalist leaders in India, but likewise in Egypt, the repercussions would ignite large-scale rioting in Cairo and Alexandria.[41] In the rural areas, villagers routinely cut telegraph wires, hampering British communications across Egypt. The army's response was harsh, with reports and photos collected by Egyptian associations in Europe of mass reprisals, whippings, and the torching of villages.[42] These stories and images were easy propaganda for the Egyptian associations, and the British Foreign Office had difficulty in trying to invalidate their authenticity.[43] The network of Egyptian nationalist associations that centred around Bern, Geneva, Paris, and London could quickly disseminate proof of atrocities and other pro-independence pamphlets across Europe (Figure 5.1).

In the midst of strikes and rioting in Cairo, Wingate was replaced by General Allenby on 25 March. Allenby, who had led much of the campaign in Palestine against the Ottomans during the War, sought council with the Egyptian Sultan Fuad, who recommended that removing the

[37] Khan, *Egyptian-Indian Nationalist Collaboration and the British Empire*, 97.
[38] Manela, *The Wilsonian Moment*, 147.
[39] Allenby, 'French Attitude towards Egyptian Nationalist Delegation', 28 April 1919, FO 608/213, UK National Archives.
[40] Manela, *The Wilsonian Moment*, 141. [41] Wagner, *Amritsar 1919*, 74–75.
[42] The Egyptian Association in Great Britain, 'British Militarists in Egypt', 14 May 1919, FO 608/214/1, UK National Archives.
[43] 'Cairo Residency to Curzon', 21 June 1919, FO 608/214/1, UK National Archives.

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FIGURE 5.1 The *Wafd* Delegation detained in Malta. Left to right: Mohamed Mahmoud, Ismail Sidqi, Saad Zaghlul, Hamad el Basel.
Source: 'Egyptian delegation detained in Malta', 12 April 1919, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ch.Schulz%26Kugel,_Egyptian_political_prisoners_in_Malta,_12_April_1919_(Mohamed_Mahmoud,_Isma%27il_Sidqi,_Saad_Zaghloul,_Hamad_el-Basel).jpg

travel restriction on Zaghlul and the *Wafd* would ease tensions, as would foreign recognition. Allenby agreed, backtracking on Wingate's deportations, allowing Zaghlul to proceed to Paris.[44] The *Wafd* leaders were released and proceeded to Paris via Marseille. However, Allenby had only recommended their release once he believed that the danger posed by the *Wafd* had been neutralised. Wilson had given his assurances of recognising the Protectorate, and the Egyptian delegation only discovered this on their way to Paris. Now, even if they arrived in Paris, the doors of the Conference would be closed to them.[45]

Allenby's ploy worked, albeit temporarily. Zaghlul and the *Wafd* arrived in Paris but would not be received by any of the delegations, with most not acknowledging them, with the exception of Italy's Premier Orlando.[46] Instead, the *Wafd* had to rely on a lively stream of letters to Clemenceau as well as gaining some traction in the more pro-Bolshevik press such as *l'Humanité*, denouncing Allenby's 'reign of terror by the

[44] 'Summary of Events in Egypt from Nov. 1918 to April 1919', 17 April 1919, FO 608/213, UK National Archives.
[45] Manela, *The Wilsonian Moment*, 148–49.
[46] Manela, *The Wilsonian Moment*, 150.

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Nile', and standing for Egypt's right to independence.[47] Clemenceau did not acknowledge Zaghlul's correspondence, but a political response could be implied through the newspaper '*L'homme libre*', a newspaper established and edited by Clemenceau. The Egyptian bid for independence was scathingly attacked in an article of *L'homme libre*, claiming that Egypt could easily become a Turkish province again and that an alternative possibility was for it to become a Mandate of the League of Nations. The article also defended Britain, stating that the growing autonomy of the Dominions was a commitment of British development of its colonies.[48]

Despite being able to fight a successful propaganda war against Britain, the *Wafd* were worried about their inability to access official circles in Paris. The British were content to receive reports that the delegation in Paris was making little headway and was worried about returning to Egypt empty-handed.[49] Back in Cairo, Allenby was also satisfied with a lull in public disobedience as the *Wafd* began to lose support and with a strike at the Suez Canal coming to an end.[50] A *Wafd* delegation sent to the United States under Mohamed Mahmoud made few inroads into affecting United States policy. Despite the anti-British sentiment that partially underpinned American antipathy towards the League, the Egyptian delegation did not make a significant impact in the United States.[51]

A British report on civil unrest was content that the barring of Egypt from the Peace Conference and the recognition of the Protectorate, had sufficiently disillusioned the *Wafd* from seeking to use the future League of Nations as a basis for independence:

> But now they see in the League of Nations a fairy godmother, remote and unobtrusive in their internal affairs, but always ready to step in and save them the trouble and anxiety of defending themselves from aggrieved or aggressive neighbours. There is no doubt that Egyptian amour-propre has been wounded by the absence of Egyptian representation at the Peace Conference, when India and, still worse, the disliked and despised Bedouin of the Hedjaz, have been represented.[52]

[47] A. E. Sayed, 'L'Egypte et La Paix de Droit?', *L'Humanité*, 27 June 1919, FO 608/214, UK National Archives.

[48] 'George Grahame to the Foreign Office', 22 July 1919, FO 608/214/1, UK National Archives.

[49] A. T. Lloyd, 'Note on a Conversation with G. N. Sarruf Bey, Son of the Editor of "the Mokattan"', 28 June 1919, FO 608/214/1, UK National Archives.

[50] 'Allenby to Curzon', 15 June 1919, FO 608/214/1, UK National Archives.

[51] Manela, *The Wilsonian Moment*, 155.

[52] 'Note on the Unrest in Egypt in Correspondence with A. J. Balfour, Sir R. Wingate, Lord Allenby, Lord Milner and Others on Egypt', 9 April 1919, www.qdl.qa/en/archive/81055/vdc_100075118298.0x00003f, Quatar Digital Library.

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By the end of the year, it was clear that on the diplomatic front, the *Wafd* had failed to convince any state to recognise them, whilst the international community had ultimately united in recognising the British Protectorate over Egypt.

MILNER'S MISSION TO EGYPT

The failure to gain international recognition temporarily dampened the revolutionary movement, although protests and resistance to the Protectorate remained throughout the summer of 1919. The unceasing opposition to British rule was a constant pressure on the administration to find a constitutional solution that would satisfy Egyptian nationalists but allow Britain to retain effective power over Egypt. The Minister chosen to head this mission was none other than Alfred Milner.

Milner had sat on a commission on the future of Egypt, established in 1917. The other members of the committee, Curzon and Balfour had looked at two possible options for Egypt; perpetuate the Protectorate or annex Egypt into the Empire. For Curzon, securing Egypt's place in the Empire was of paramount importance to safeguard British rule in India, which the ex-Viceroy considered to be the true lynchpin of the Empire, not the Dominions like Milner.[53]

Milner had initially been for annexation, envisioning Egypt's place in the Empire as a colony like India.[54] For an imperial federalist such as Milner, the formal façade of the Protectorate did not distinguish it from the rest of the Empire, a disguise that the previous British administrations had been keen to make use of. British administrations had heretofore been highly reliant on local elites, as well as the cooperation of the Egyptian monarchy. He even turned down a suggestion in 1919 by Robert Cecil to transform Egypt into a Mandate under the League of Nations, as was being done in other ex-Ottoman territories.[55] Up to this point, Milner had proven himself willing to make compromises, as in the case of the formation of South Africa, but always for the sake of maintaining the integrity of the Empire. Moreover, the choice to send the Colonial Secretary, especially one with such a long history in Colonial Affairs, rather than

[53] Darwin, *Britain, Egypt and the Middle East*, 19.

[54] John D. Jr McIntyre, *The Boycott of the Milner Mission: A Study in Egyptian Nationalism*, 1st ed. (New York: Peter Lang Inc., International Academic Publishers, 1985), 18–19.

[55] Pedersen, *The Guardians*, 33–34.

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Curzon the Foreign Secretary, revealed perhaps an initial preference by the British Government to formally incorporate Egypt into the Empire. The selection of Milner for the mission was to maintain Egypt's position within the Empire, not to satisfy Zaghlul's demands for independence.

What the Cabinet had not anticipated was that a staunch imperialist such as Milner, could drastically change his opinion when confronted face-to-face with the Egyptian bid for independence when he arrived in early December 1919. Historian John McIntyre in 'The Boycott of the Milner Mission' attributes this to the unity of the Egyptian movement between Egyptian Muslims and Copts, as well as urban and rural dwellers.[56] Zaghlul and the *Wafd* had called for a total boycott of the Milner Commission, employing a similar tactic to Eamon de Valera's refusal to negotiate on behalf of Ireland with the British and Smuts later in 1921. Despite the lack of international recognition, Zaghlul saw Egypt as an ancient nation and believed that negotiating with the Milner Commission would implicitly endorse the existence of the Protectorate, denying Egypt's nationhood.[57]

One circular disseminated by the *Wafd*'s Central Committee stated that:

> The persistence of the British Government will not compel the nation to deviate a hair's breadth from the legitimate policy approved by the Delegation and announced to Europe and America. The British Government requires the acceptance of the protectorate by the Egyptians. The protectorate cannot be legalised, even if it gained the consent of European powers, without the recognition of the Egyptian nation.[58]

Despite the mistrust of the League, Zaghlul was willing to negotiate with a League of Nations commission as a mediator between two states, rather than as an internal protest movement within the British Empire.[59] In spite of the boycott, Milner received considerable correspondence, though most of it comprised protests against his presence in Egypt.[60] Otherwise, the *Wafd* maintained strict enforcement of the boycott, interrogating local notables that made contact with the Milner Commission.[61]

[56] McIntyre, *The Boycott of the Milner Mission*, 67.
[57] McIntyre, *The Boycott of the Milner Mission*, 63–64.
[58] 'Enclosure 2. In No. 1 Circular Issued by Central Committee of the Delegation and Published in Nearly All the Papers', 1919, Extl – Sept – 14-211 – Part B (secret), National Archives of India.
[59] Deeb, *Party Politics in Egypt*, 47–48.
[60] McIntyre, *The Boycott of the Milner Mission*, 65.
[61] McIntyre, *The Boycott of the Milner Mission*, 69.

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During his 'fact-finding' mission, Milner was simultaneously confronted with both a *Wafd*-maintained wall of silence, and loud outbursts of protest and rioting. Four days into the Commission's arrival in Egypt, British troops stormed the al-Azhar mosque, described by Darwin as the 'great fortress of Muslim culture and religion in Cairo', whilst pursuing Egyptian dissidents.[62] Allenby had been keen to avoid deploying troops close to the mosque to avoid any 'fanaticism', making it both a haven and hub for Egyptian resistance. The perceived desecration of the mosque by British troops enraged public opinion in Egypt even further.[63] Just over a week into the mission, an Egyptian student had attempted to assassinate the Coptic Egyptian Prime Minister in his car, only increasing the impression of anarchy in Egypt.[64]

But despite the Egyptian resistance to the Mission and British rule, Milner's own perceptions of the Empire played a significant role in the position he would take over Egypt's fate. Without consultation from the Cabinet or Lloyd George, Milner stated his position of granting Egypt independence, with reservations that would safeguard British interests, three weeks into the mission in late December 1919.[65] Milner, who had initially been prepared to see some form of Dominion status imparted to Egypt, no longer believed it to be effective, stating that 'no grant to Egypt of a greater or less measure of self-government even Dominion Home Rule would meet the case because Egyptians do not regard their country as a British Dominion'.[66] This decision to backtrack towards Egyptian independence and association with the Empire seemed inconsistent with Milner's character and zeal for the notions of imperial federalism.[67] Yet for Milner, Egypt's *de jure* position as a Protectorate rather than a colony was an important distinction, that gave him more flexibility in striking a compromise with the *Wafd*: 'In a word we have had no fixed policy. We have never laid down definitely what was our business and what was the Egyptians. No one has ever known what the system or object of

[62] Darwin, *Britain, Egypt and the Middle East*, 70.
[63] McIntyre, *The Boycott of the Milner Mission*, 98–100.
[64] McIntyre, *The Boycott of the Milner Mission*, 176.
[65] McIntyre, *The Boycott of the Milner Mission*, 67.
[66] 'Egyptian Dossier', June 1921, DFA/ES/214/BOX 32, National Archives of Ireland.
[67] Darwin, *Britain, Egypt and the Middle East*, 95–96 also argue that Milner's position in Egypt was not a deviation from his usual imperialist outlook, but that Milner prioritised the connection to the Dominions over those of the 'dependencies', let alone protectorates such as Egypt.

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government has been.'[68] For Milner, federalism was the natural result of perceived organic connections of culture, race, and history, which he deemed Egypt not to share with England. As one British delegate to the League said about Egypt: 'There are few regions of the world more alien to us in history, national temperament or institutions. Egypt is a thoroughly foreign country.'[69] Rather than looking at the uniquely British forms of constitutional development that had defined the status of the Dominions, Milner studied the forms of indirect rule used by the Italians in Libya by granting a constitution to local regions, as a basis to retain British influence in Egypt.[70]

The decision to publish the report's conclusions whilst he remained in Egypt also had immediate political consequences. Milner attempted to establish a litmus test, tracking the response to the report in the Egyptian press and in political parties to his widely publicised statement about the future of Egypt. Many moderates, as well as the English-speaking press, saw the idea of replacing the Protectorate with a form of alliance, as a positive step. The *Wafd*, however, saw it as a tactic of division that would weaken Zaghlul's attempts to gain international recognition in Paris and League membership, though, in reality, Zaghlul had long been forsaken by the European powers and the United States.[71]

The *Wafd*'s boycott of Milner's mission had been a tactical success of non-cooperation with Britain, but a strategic failure in achieving any form of political devolution. Once Milner had returned to Britain in the spring of 1920, senior *Wafd* members fretted that they had missed an opportunity to gain concessions from the British. Secret talks were negotiated between Milner's aides in Paris and with Zaghlul and Adli Pasha at the end of April 1920, leading to unofficial talks with Milner in London in June.[72] These were more of a means for Milner to gain a sense of the negotiating terms, as neither party acted as official representatives for their respective governments. Nonetheless, Adli and Zaghlul came to

[68] 'What Should Our Policy Be?', March 1920, MS. Milner Dep. 449, Bodleian Library, University of Oxford.

[69] H. A. L. Fisher, 'The Case of Egypt', 15 November 1920, www.qdl.qa/en/archive/81055/vdc_100080131820.0x000004a, Quatar Digital Library.

[70] Cecil Hurst, 'The Constitution in Tripoli', 10 January 1920, MS. Milner Dep. 449, Bodleian Library, University of Oxford.

[71] G. S. Symes, 'Note on Egyptian Press', 22 December 1919, Extl – Sept – 14-211 –Part B (secret), National Archives of India.

[72] 'Milner to Adli Pasha', 29 April 1920, MS. Milner Dep. 450, Bodleian Library, University of Oxford.

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London with great trepidation, worried that their presence in London would be seen as a surrender by the Watanists and other hardliners within the *Wafd*.[73]

During these preliminary negotiations, a noticeable rift began to develop in the positions between Adli and Zaghlul. Adli attended the preliminary negotiations, whilst Zaghlul came to London later after Adli deemed the negotiations to be worthwhile, saving face for Zaghlul if the negotiations had turned out poorly.[74] Adli was keen for assurances that Britain would support an Egyptian application to the League, which was happily granted by Milner. Adli reassured Milner that 'Britain could always rely on the vote of Egypt practically as the vote of the Dominions'.[75] As a so-called moderate, Adli was prepared to subscribe to the British form of phantom sovereignty in international affairs, whilst Zaghlul was not. He felt that Milner's proposals were less generous than what he had offered during his mission in Egypt, and would make Egyptian diplomacy 'unreal', as Egypt was absorbed into the network of imperial communications, transmitting documents to London for approval.[76] There were also disagreements over the control of Sudan, which both countries claimed, foreshadowing future difficulties in future negotiations.[77] Zaghlul left London, and penned a letter 'to the Egyptian people', which was later reprinted in the *Ahram* newspaper, stating that they could not accept the terms without consulting the Egyptian people.[78] Talks were tabled to recommence in October but collapsed in November, when Zaghlul wrote to Milner that the Egyptian delegation was withdrawing from negotiations.[79]

Talks with the *Wafd* may have ended, but Milner had yet to convince the British Government that a form of controlled independence was the correct route to retaining British control in Egypt. A year after Milner had

[73] 'Walrond to Milner', 9 May 1920, MS. Milner Dep. 450, Bodleian Library, University of Oxford.

[74] 'Walrond to Milner', 19 May 1920, MS. Milner Dep. 450, Bodleian Library, University of Oxford.

[75] 'Notes on a Meeting between Adli Pasha and Alfred Milner', 1920, MS. Milner Dep. 450, Bodleian Library, University of Oxford.

[76] Deeb, *Party Politics in Egypt*, 51.

[77] 'Milner to Adli Pasha', 18 August 1920, MS. Milner Dep. 450, Bodleian Library, University of Oxford.

[78] 'Zaghlul to the Egyptian People', 22 August 1920, MS. Milner Dep. 450, Bodleian Library, University of Oxford.

[79] 'Zaghlul to Milner', 15 November 1920, MS. Milner Dep. 450, Bodleian Library, University of Oxford.

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commenced his commission in Egypt, his report was published in December 1920. The report's conclusions were highly controversial and angered Lloyd George and Churchill. Churchill, then Secretary for War, was horrified by the idea of partial independence that he saw as 'mere camouflage' and did not believe that it would improve the situation: 'I can only think that the Egyptian Nationalists must be very great simpletons if they let it rest there.'[80] Churchill saw the Egyptian claim for independence from an Empire-wide perspective, believing that what happened in Egypt would influence the current negotiations in Ireland or the situation in India:

> The repercussion of these proposals and this model upon other parts of the British Empire may even be more serious than the effect on Egypt. If we leave out the word 'Egypt' in the document circulated last night by the Foreign Office and substitute the word 'Ireland,' it would with very small omissions make perfectly good sense, and would constitute a complete acceptance of Mr. De Valera's demands. One can also easily see that these proposals will become immediately the goal of Indian nationalism. The ideal which Mr. Montagu has been endeavouring to hold up before Indian eyes of India as a great self-governing Dominion within the ambit of the British Empire and under the supreme authority of the British Monarchy will be discarded in favour of an independent Indian Empire.[81]

Rather than grant a form of independence to Egypt that was largely vacant of real self-governance, Churchill favoured what had become synonymous with the Round Table movement over the last few years, a path towards Dominion status. Churchill believed that full internal self-governance could be devolved but that Egypt must stay within the Empire, working on the precedent already set by Montagu in the Government of India Act 1919.[82] The idea of giving independence rather than Dominion status to Egypt also terrified colonial administrators in India. The Governor of the Bombay Presidency, George Lloyd (not to be confused with Lloyd George), wrote to Montagu that the news of the negotiations for Egypt's independence had been received like a 'bombshell' in India. He feared that Egyptian independence threatened to undermine Montagu's current reforms in India, setting an example that violence and non-cooperation were the most effective means of securing

[80] Winston Churchill, 'Memorandum by the Secretary of State for War', 24 August 1920, www.qdl.qa/en/archive/81055/vdc_100080131819.0x000001e, Report of the Special Mission to Egypt under Lord Milner, and Related Papers.
[81] Churchill, 'Memorandum by the Secretary of State for War'.
[82] Churchill, 'Memorandum by the Secretary of State for War'.

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independence.[83] When passing his reforms in India, Montagu had always attempted to maintain consultation with Indian 'Moderate' politicians, but had generally refused to interact with those seeking immediate Dominion status or independence. Montagu feared that Milner's decision to negotiate directly with Zaghlul and the *Wafd* would only lead to increased pressure for the Government of India to engage in dialogue with the Indian National Congress and the Gandhian non-cooperation movement.[84]

Montagu shared these fears, having already faced a year of protests:

> I believe we have turned the darkest corner and things will improve. My only fear is that the increasing hatred of Empire which democracy has evidenced by the extraordinary antics of the Egyptian proposals will make our reforms scheme unworkable and the landslide will take place.[85]

However, Milner's report retorted to those that believed that Dominion status was an adequate response to keeping Egypt within the Empire:

> It is evident from what has been said that any effort at reconciliation between British and Egyptians, any policy which seriously attempts to bring the more moderate and friendly elements of Egyptian Nationalism once more on to our side, must take account of this deeply-rooted feeling. No grant to Egypt of a greater or less measure of 'self-government,' even if it went the length of what is known as 'Dominion Home Rule,' would meet the case, because Egyptians do not regard their country as a British Dominion or themselves as British subjects. This wholly differentiates the problem of constitutional development in Egypt from the same problem in countries which have for years indubitably formed part of the British Empire, as, for instance, British India. We talk of such countries gradually attaining the status of nationhood. The Egyptians claim that they already have this status.[86]

The report thus revealed an acute awareness of Egyptian national aspirations and did not believe that formal imperial structures could sufficiently integrate Egypt into the Empire. Any attempts to retain British influence in Egypt would have to reconcile imperial interests with Egyptian national aspirations, whose strong identity, Milner believed, could not be successfully subsumed into the Empire's identity.

[83] 'George Lloyd to Montagu', 27 August 1920, Montagu Papers, Reel 3 Volumes 21–23, Nehru Memorial Library.
[84] Darwin, *Britain, Egypt and the Middle East*, 110.
[85] 'Montagu to Chelmsford', 9 September 1920, Mss Eur D523/4, British Library, India Office Records.
[86] 'Report of the Special Mission to Egypt under Lord Milner, and Related Papers', 16.

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Whilst the British Cabinet was bitterly divided on how best to retain British influence in Egypt, Britain was also engaging in colonial state-building in its Middle Eastern Mandates of Iraq and Palestine. In 1920, large parts of Iraq rose in revolt against British rule, which was violently put down with large numbers of troops with the support of the Royal Air Force (RAF). In the wake of the revolt, the British had capitalised on their position by putting the Hashemite King Faisal on the throne, buttressing his power through the formation of a new moderate party.[87] In 1921, Churchill, the new Colonial Secretary met the High Commissioners for Iraq and Palestine in Cairo, agreeing on the 'Sharifian solution' to Iraq, in which the British would rule vicariously through an Arab Government, whilst policing Iraq's fractured 'tribal' population from the skies through the RAF, all of which was to be ratified through a new Anglo-Iraqi Treaty.[88] This desire to work through Faisal and local elites in Iraq, embodied what Milner intended for Egypt. He believed that if the educated '10 per cent' of Egyptians that resisted British rule could be 'broken up' by offering concessions, as had been the case with what Milner deemed 'the much less civilised Arabs in Mesopotamia after a much shorter period of tutelage', then it was possible in Egypt.[89]

Meanwhile Palestine, which Milner had visited in 1920 as part of his fact-finding mission, was during this period, of secondary importance to Iraq and Egypt, with Curzon deeming it little more than a buffer to Egypt and the Suez Canal.[90] Palestine differed significantly from both Iraq and Egypt with regard to debates as to whether to incorporate the 1917 Balfour Declaration for the immigration of Jewish settlers into the Mandate. Not unlike Montagu's warnings of the deleterious effect that dismantling the Ottoman Empire would have on Muslim sentiment in India, General Allenby warned of the consequences of the Balfour Declaration on the already hostile public sentiment across the border in Egypt. The early incorporation of the Balfour Declaration into the Palestinian Mandate in 1921 led to protests, but this was a mere foreshadowing of the tensions that would erupt in the 1930s.[91]

[87] Darwin, *Britain, Egypt and the Middle East*, 222.
[88] Pedersen, *The Guardians*, 42–43.
[89] 'Appendix to Draft Conclusions of a Conference of Ministers Held in Mr. Bonar Law's Room', 1 November 1920, Mss Eur F112/260, British Newspaper Archive.
[90] Darwin, *Britain, Egypt and the Middle East*, 156.
[91] Pedersen, *The Guardians*, 41, 80.

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Whilst their position of Mandates had outsourced some of the debate to the extent that Palestine and Iraq could maintain a foreign policy, it became more of a sticking point in negotiations with Egyptian nationalists. Milner made it clear that it would be 'impossible' for Egyptian politicians to accept an agreement with Britain, without the right to external representation. But the British Cabinet feared that if Egypt was allowed foreign representatives, other foreign powers, notably France, would try and gain a foothold in Egyptian affairs. Moreover, an independent Egyptian foreign policy was considered 'detrimental to British interests'. Milner however, did not believe that such a foreign policy needed to be independent of Britain's: 'If the Egyptians were given the appearance of controlling their own foreign affairs they would not bother about the substance.'[92] What Milner intended was to ensure that safeguards were put in place, so that Egypt could not conduct foreign affairs with powers that Britain deemed 'prejudicial to British interests'.[93] Milner's report concluded that external representation was vital to fulfil Egyptian national pride but that it was impossible for Egypt to follow an independent foreign policy. Instead, Milner favoured that Britain would control any aspect of Egypt's foreign policy that was deemed political, but that the Egyptians would govern non-political commercial and other technical areas.[94]

The idea of jettisoning the 'expendable' attributes of independence whilst retaining the core political functions of an 'independent' Egypt was highly compatible with Curzon's perspective on the future of Egypt, which he compared to the securing of alliances with the Indian Princely States a century before.[95] But it was also compatible with the eventual admission of Egypt to the League of Nations. Milner had perceived that Egyptians placed great importance on an independent Egypt being represented at the League of Nations.[96] Curzon and Milner propelled the plan for Egyptian independence over Dominion status or annexation, and inserted a provision that once a treaty of alliance had been concluded

[92] 'Conclusion of a Meeting Held at 10 Downing Street', 5 January 1921, CAB 23/24/1, UK National Archives.

[93] 'Conclusions of a Conference of Ministers Held at 10 Downing Street, on Thursday, 4th, November 1920 at 11-30am.', n.d., 'Report of the Special Mission to Egypt under Lord Milner, and Related Papers', www.qdl.qa/en/archive/81055/vdc_100080131819.0x00008a.

[94] 'Report of the Special Mission to Egypt under Lord Milner, and Related Papers', 26–28.

[95] Darwin, *Britain, Egypt and the Middle East*, 115.

[96] 'Report of the Special Mission to Egypt under Lord Milner, and Related Papers', 26–28.

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between Egypt and Britain, Britain would support Egypt's membership to the League of Nations.[97]

Though Milner had consulted many British officials about the future of Egypt, there was great difficulty in persuading Egyptian politicians to discuss independence on his terms. Talks were briefly opened between the British administration and the *Wafd* in June 1920 but crumbled when Britain refused to recognise Egypt as independent prior to signing an agreement. Despite resistance from Lloyd George and Churchill, the publication of Milner's report in early 1921 led to an official declaration that Britain found the Protectorate an unsatisfactory form of relationship with Egypt, and that it wished to reform it. Rather than reassure Zaghlul, he began to fear that the British would divide the *Wafd* between those that were willing to accept the terms of the Milner report and those who were not.[98] Zaghlul's fears came to fruition when Adli Pasha was selected by the Sultan as Prime Minister, tasked with resolving Egypt's new status with Britain, and was joined by six prominent *Wafd* members who had been part of Zaghlul's negotiating team in Paris.[99] For Zaghlul, Adli was 'disastrous for the *Wafd*', with the creation of a non-*Wafd* delegation which allowed negotiations to resume with the British, rupturing the *Wafd*'s unity.[100]

With the British able to negotiate with more compliant interlocuters, Zaghlul returned from Paris in April 1921 to try to thwart Adli's negotiations. He launched a campaign of popular protests against the government in a bid to show its lack of legitimacy and popular support. To undercut negotiations in England, Zaghlul invited two British Labour MPs to Egypt, so as to show them that Adli's official negotiating team had no popular base.[101] The *Wafd* was successful, and Lloyd George, seeing that Egyptians were seeking nothing less than full independence, sided with Churchill's military faction in the debate by offering fewer concessions in the negotiations with Adli Pasha, to the point that the terms became unacceptable to Adli.[102] Lord Curzon handed the terms to Adli Pasha on 10 November, which would continue the British occupation of Egypt, leave financial control to the British administration, as well as give Britain

[97] 'Curzon to Scott', in Report of the Special Mission to Egypt under Lord Milner, and Related Papers, 1920, www.qdl.qa/en/archive/81055/vdc_100080131820.0x000083.
[98] Deeb, *Party Politics in Egypt*, 50.
[99] Malak Badrawi, *Isma'il Sidqi, 1875–1950: Pragmatism and Vision in Twentieth Century Egypt* (London: Routledge, 2014), 24; Deeb, *Party Politics in Egypt*, 50.
[100] Deeb, *Party Politics in Egypt*, 49. [101] Deeb, *Party Politics in Egypt*, 52–54.
[102] 'W. Markam Ebeid to O'Brien', 23 November 1921, DFA/ES/214/BOX 32, National Archives of Ireland.

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control over Sudan. Adli, who had been prepared to accept Milner's conditions, found the new terms 'insolent', again ending negotiations.[103]

Adli set out to embarrass the British by resigning as Prime Minister, showing that unreasonable British demands would lead to a lack of Egyptian cooperation with them. This he did, in spite of the pressure applied upon him by the British and the Sultan, who wanted to maintain him as interlocutor until a new one could be found to replace him.[104] As the Sultan scrambled to assemble a new Cabinet, Zaghlul mobilised fresh protests and the situation in Egypt threatened a new revolution. After two British soldiers were shot at by a rally of Zaghlul supporters, High Commissioner Allenby prepared to force through Egyptian independence, even without consent from London.[105]

But British fears of the failure to negotiate with Adli and the spectre of Zaghlul's nationalism began to expand beyond the confines of Egypt. Round Table-ist and Private Secretary to Lloyd George, Philip Kerr expressed his fears that Zaghlul would unite with Irish and Turkish nationalists, creating a 'Pan-Islamic Sinn Fein machine', internationalising the growing hostility against imperial rule.[106] In early December 1921, Curzon made an official declaration to the Sultan stating that Britain would act as a protector 'equivalent to the declaration of a British Monroe Doctrine over Egypt'. This attempted to define Egypt's separation from the rest of the Empire by stating that Egypt would no longer be subject to the application of international conventions adopted by the British Empire. But Allenby also believed that Curzon's declaration constituted a basis for domestic Egyptian independence, whilst Britain retained *de facto* control over its foreign policy.[107] Meanwhile, Allenby planned to deport Zaghlul from Egypt to Aden, which was carried out at the end of December 1921 to avoid having Britain's most prominent critic in Egypt present at the moment of a British-backed settlement.[108]

Allenby, never shy to send ultimatums, had composed two. He wrote to Curzon that if the newly constituted cabinet under Abdel Khalek Sarwat Pasha did not accept his terms, then Egypt would be

[103] Badrawi, *Isma'il Sidqi, 1875–1950*, 26; 'W. Markam Ebeid to O'Brien'.
[104] 'W. Markam Ebeid to O'Brien'; Badrawi, *Isma'il Sidqi, 1875–1950*, 26.
[105] 'Allenby to Curzon', 23 December 1921, Mss Eur D545/39/6, British Library, India Office Records.
[106] Darwin, *Britain, Egypt and the Middle East*, 123.
[107] 'Allenby to Curzon', 6 December 1921, Mss Eur D545/39/6, British Library, India Office Records.
[108] 'Allenby to Curzon', 23 December 1921.

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annexed.[109] Conversely, as the British Government was reluctant to carry out the recommendations from Milner's report, Allenby returned to London in early February 1922, threatening to resign as High Commissioner.[110] Allenby, had been more concerned about resolving the situation, whatever the outcome, than perpetuating Egypt's limbo status as negotiations dragged on. The British Government relented and agreed to implement Egyptian independence without consultation with the *Wafd* on the terms. In preparation, just over a week before the planned declaration, Zaghlul was deported even further afield to the Seychelles.[111] The original plan had been to intern Zaghlul in Ceylon but the Government of India feared that its proximity to India would only enflame India's nationalist sentiments.[112]

Without having secured an agreement with the *Wafd*, Britain unilaterally declared Egyptian independence on 28 February 1922, dissolving the Protectorate. Nonetheless, it was independence with a very large asterisk with significant reservations that left much of Egypt's defence, foreign policy, international personality, and most controversially Sudan under British control.[113] Though there had been disagreement in the

[109] 'Allenby to Curzon', 20 January 1922, Mss Eur D545/39/6, British Library, India Office Records.

[110] Tvedt, *The River Nile in the Age of the British*, 99.

[111] Deeb, *Party Politics in Egypt*, 57.

[112] Khan, *Egyptian-Indian Nationalist Collaboration and the British Empire*, 94.

[113] Declaration to Egypt by His Britannic Majesty's Government (February 28, 1922)

Whereas His Majesty's Government, in accordance with their declared intentions, desire forthwith to recognise Egypt as an independent sovereign State; and Whereas the relations between His Majesty's Government and Egypt are of vital interest to the British Empire;

The following principles are hereby declared:

(1) The British Protectorate over Egypt is terminated, and Egypt is declared to be an independent sovereign State.

(2) So soon as the Government of His Highness shall pass an Act of Indemnity with application to all inhabitants of Egypt, martial law as proclaimed on 2 November 1914, shall be withdrawn.

(3) The following matters are absolutely reserved to the discretion of His Majesty's Government until such time as it may be possible by free discussion and friendly accommodation on both sides to conclude agreements in regard thereto between His Majesty's Government and the Government of Egypt:
   (a) The security of the communications of the British Empire in Egypt;
   (b) The defence of Egypt against all foreign aggression or interference, direct or indirect;
   (c) The protection of foreign interests in Egypt and the protection of minorities;
   (d) The Soudan.

Pending the conclusion of such agreements, status quo in all these matters shall remain intact.

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British establishment over the future of Egypt, the conclusions were not unlike what had been agreed on in India. Milner's plans for Egypt derived from a similar handbook, where Britain maintained control of its most significant objectives, whilst devolving others, making Egypt's independence tokenistic in practice. Yet it was an important symbolic difference that differentiated Egypt from Ireland or the other Dominions, which may have offered more emblematic value and led Egypt to have less recourse to rely on political precedents set by the other British Dominions. It is partially for this reason that independence in 1922, did not guarantee that Egypt would become a member of the League of Nations.

THE UNILATERAL DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE AND THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS

One British memorandum had tried to explain Egypt's independence as inevitable, entering an age promulgated by the international norms set by the League of Nations of the 'free association of independent states'.[114] Nonetheless, Egypt's independence was largely a façade, with crucial elements of its governance subject to 'reservations' that limited its foreign and military independence, until it had concluded an agreement with Britain. The unilateral declaration had temporarily ended the bickering among the British Cabinet over what pretence Egypt would be governed under, but independence had been declared without having secured an agreement with the *Wafd*, since negotiations had collapsed with Adli's administration in November 1921. To normalise relations with the now-nominally independent Egypt, the declaration intended that future negotiations would lead to a form of alliance between Britain and Egypt, officially governing their relationship. Once this agreement had been reached, Britain would advocate for Egypt to be admitted into the League of Nations. The unilateral declaration was thus a symbolic but vacuous gesture, placing Egypt in a form of purgatory, giving it a nominal statehood until it had acquiesced to British interests in Egypt.

This approach both differed and resembled negotiations with Sinn Fein over the Anglo-Irish Treaty. Whereas Britain had secured an agreement in Ireland prior to the creation of the Free State, it had declared Egyptian statehood prior to securing an agreement with the *Wafd*. Nonetheless, Britain did not want to pre-emptively recognise an independent Egyptian

[114] J. Murray, 'Memorandum on the Political Situation in Egypt', 4 January 1923, FO 407/196, UK National Archives.

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state before it had assured Egyptian compliance to British interests in Egypt, in a similar fashion that Britain would not support Irish League membership until it had ratified its constitution.

Perhaps the most significant development that resulted from the declaration was the establishment of a constitution that would establish new representative bodies. The *Wafd* was excluded from drafting the constitution, which was instead penned by a new cabinet led by Adli's replacement Sarwat Pasha.[115] Sarwat faced pressures from both Zaghlul, who despite his exile, sent his nephew to push for free elections and the release of political prisoners and King Fuad. The King had disliked the idea of a constitution and the subsequent power that Sarwat would give the lower house. Fuad thus aimed to give sufficient power to the new Egyptian Senate, where his right to appoint two- fifths of the Senators, granted him the power to check the influence of what would likely be a *Wafd*-dominated Parliament once elections had been conducted. As both houses required a majority to pass legislation, the constitution compounded the King's influence in Egyptian Parliamentary politics. To compound this, Senators could only be drawn from the most powerful and richest men in the country, notably senior government officials, senior religious scholars, prominent landowners, and businessmen, a class of men who rarely favoured the *Wafd*.[116]

Sarwat Pasha's Cabinet began expressing a desire to enter the League of Nations as soon as possible, ratifying Egypt's international position. Allenby fed reports back to the Foreign Office, of the Egyptian government's interest in joining the League.[117] Curzon took considerable time finding a position on the question of Egypt's accession to the League. If Britain blocked Egypt's membership, it would jeopardise the declaration of independence by making Egypt's new status seem 'fictitious'. Conversely, if Egypt joined the League without concluding negotiations with Britain regarding the 'reservations', they risked being open to challenge at the International Court of Justice. On balancing these risks, Curzon was happy to allow Egypt to proceed with an application in the same spirit as the Irish Free State. Instead, he delegated the decision on Egypt's eligibility for membership to the League, which would decide whether the reservations compromised the prerequisite of 'fully self governing'.[118]

[115] Khan, *Egyptian-Indian Nationalist Collaboration and the British Empire*, 95.
[116] Deeb, *Party Politics in Egypt*, 59–60, 154.
[117] 'Allenby to Curzon', 29 September 1922, FO 407/195, UK National Archives.
[118] 'Curzon to Allenby', 19 October 1922, FO 407/195, UK National Archives.

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Under the Protectorate, Egypt had been subject to British international conventions.[119] Now independent, League Secretary General Drummond approached the Foreign Office for clarification of Egypt's status. He tentatively assumed that Egypt was not self-governing and could not independently adopt international conventions, but asked, unofficially, for clarification of Egypt's status.[120] The Foreign Office did not agree with Drummond's assessment of Egypt's statement, but said it was for the League's discretion to agree on whether Egypt was self-governing as under Article 1 of the Covenant. Moreover, Britain argued that Egyptian sovereignty did not particularly matter as to whether Egypt could accede to conventions, stating that it had acceded to the International Health Convention when under Ottoman Suzerainty.[121] Drummond also acknowledged that Egypt had long been a member of the UPU and ITU, but was unsure if communications in either organisation went through Britain before going to Egypt. Head of the League's legal section Van Hamel concluded that although Egypt's status as self-governing was still uncertain and would only be ascertained if it made an application to the League, it had the right to receive communications and documents from the League. However, he was unsure of Egypt's right to accede to international conventions due to the fact that Britain had declared that Egypt's foreign relations were to remain under the status quo until an alliance had been arranged between Egypt and Britain.[122] To the League, Britain's position on Egypt seemed conflicted: by legally retaining control over Egypt's international personality but promoting its right to join technical conventions. However, this paradoxical approach by Britain was not unprecedented, and revealed how Britain was eager to make overtures to Egypt's growing independence internationally, legitimising the declaration of independence, whilst having control over Egypt's treaty, peace-making abilities as well as its potential membership at the League of Nations.

The Constitution was finally unveiled in 1923, after some political wranglings between the Cabinet, the *Wafd*, and the Monarchy over

[119] An example of Egypt being bound to Britain's signature of the Labour Conventions can be found at 'Allenby to Curzon', 23 April 1920, Extl – Sept – 14-211 – Part B (secret), National Archives of India.

[120] 'Eric Drummond to Charles Tufton', 9 November 1922, R619/11/39825/39825, League of Nations Archive.

[121] 'Charles Tufton to Eric Drummond', 21 November 1922, R619/11/39825/39825, League of Nations Archive.

[122] 'Van Hammel to Eric Drummond', 27 November 1922, R619/11/39825/39825, League of Nations Archive.

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how much power should be vested between the House of Representatives and the Senate. The Constitution boldly proclaimed Egypt as a 'sovereign, free and independent country' in which no foreigner could hold a government or military position with no mention of the British occupation.[123] Despite these symbolic overtures, Egypt's independence in 1922 was thus an independence virtually only in name. Truncated by the reservations which deprived Egypt of real control over its foreign policy and allowed British control in Egypt, it had less international presence than British India, let alone the Dominions. The promise of greater sovereignty and devolution would be constantly dangled in front of Egyptians, tempting them to legitimise Britain's presence in Egypt by signing an alliance. The *Wafd* that had led the Egyptian Revolution had been initially sidelined in the drafting of the Constitution, and it began to seem like the British could begin to work through new 'moderate' interlocutors aligned with the Egyptian Monarchy. Nonetheless, independence and a new constitution would allow new electoral chambers that could now formally challenge the British Residency, formalising the *Wafd*'s position in Egyptian politics as the popular vanguard against colonial rule, a position which was about to take new proportions over Egypt's sovereignty over Sudan.

ANGLO-EGYPTIAN RIVALRY OVER SUDAN

Curzon's decision to allow Egypt to pursue its application to the League initially seemed to conclude the matter of an Egyptian membership of the League, yet negotiations regarding the removal of the reservations were quickly breaking down. The Governorship of the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium in Sudan became a sticking point, not just between the *Wafd* that had been excluded from the constitutional drafting committee, the *Dastur*, but the Palace and its Ministers that saw Sudan as an integral part of Egypt. Egyptian capital had paid for much of the administration and infrastructure in Sudan, and control of Sudan was an important facet in Egyptian nationalism.[124] The members of the *Dastur* were keen to using the drafting of the constitution as an opportunity to declare Egyptian sovereignty over Sudan and declare King Fuad, the King of Sudan.[125] Fuad's insistence on Egyptian sovereignty also helped undermine the fruits of stability brought by the declaration of independence.

[123] This covered Articles 1 and 3 of the Constitution respectively.
[124] Tvedt, *The River Nile in the Age of the British*, 103.
[125] 'The Status of the Soudan', 26 February 1923, FO 141/777, UK National Archives.

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The Monarchy had played an important role in alienating the *Wafd*, as many of the new powers devolved to Egypt went to Fuad, and not to the Egyptian Legislative Assembly.[126] The debate over the control of Sudan was one that could unite Egyptian parties once again against British rule.

The basis for rule over Sudan had been established in 1899 under the 'Condominium Agreement'. Sudan had been annexed by the Egyptian Khedive Muhammed Ali in the early nineteenth century but Egypt had lost control of the territory to a Sudanese preacher and self-possessed *Mahdi* or redeemer of Islam, Muhammad Ahmad bin Abd Allah. The *Mahdist* State was eventually reconquered by a combined Egyptian and British force under British General Lord Kitchener. The British had capitalised on the Egyptian claim to Sudan to reconquer it from the Mahdist State, with Kitchener retaking Khartoum under an Egyptian flag, whilst wearing an Egyptian military uniform.[127] Despite Kitchener's lip service to Egyptian sovereignty over Sudan, his 'Condominium' agreement for joint Anglo-Egyptian rule in Sudan gave significantly more administrative control over Sudan to Britain.[128] The Condominium was another example of a quasi-sovereign entity without precedent, which later David Hunter Miller would compare to the representation of colonies at the League of Nations as something to 'shock the sensibilities of international jurists'.[129] It was under the Condominium that Britain began planning the Gezira scheme, to partially dam the Nile in Sudan so as to expand irrigation and cotton production. The scheme was so controversial that most of the details of the scheme were kept top secret from their Egyptian associates, exposing the asymmetric partnership of the Condominium.[130]

The Egyptian revolution in 1919 accelerated Britain's desire to hedge its political and economic investments in Sudan, rather than in Egypt. Though there had been some discontent in Sudan after the war, large-scale revolts such as those occurring in Cairo or the sabotaging of telegraph wires in the Egyptian countryside were not witnessed in Sudan. Many Sudanese perceived the Egyptians in a similar light to the British, as foreign occupiers, meaning that the Egyptian revolution did not inspire similar levels of revolt in Sudan. One of the reasons why the effects of the

[126] Deeb, *Party Politics in Egypt*, 124.
[127] Tvedt, *The River Nile in the Age of the British*, 101.
[128] Tvedt, *The River Nile in the Age of the British*, 51.
[129] Miller, *The Drafting of the Covenant*, 1:491.
[130] Tvedt, *The River Nile in the Age of the British*, 92–95.

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Egyptian Revolution were mitigated in Sudan, was the British attempt to construct a class of allied Sudanese elites in Khartoum, with closer ties to Britain than to Egypt.[131] This could be easily built on Egypt's exploitative history of enslaving Sudanese during the Egyptian invasions of Muhammad Ali in the 1820s, which British propaganda was fast to capitalise on.[132] Some Sudanese elites, writing to the British, also rejected the notion that they were tied to the Egyptian nationalist project and that a 'clean cut' should be made between Sudan and Egypt.[133] Outside of metropolitan Khartoum, however, the British had little desire to foster a westernised elite that could one day construct a Sudanese national identity, and were happier to rely on local ties with fractured local elites and tribal leaders.[134] Many of these leaders had been responsive to the Milner Mission's delegates, and one Sheikh had even threatened to revolt if Sudan was passed to Egyptian control.[135] Despite some attempts to disseminate nationalist literature, which was quickly stamped on by the British censor, the revolution that raged in Egypt in 1919 did not replicate itself in Sudan.[136]

Though most Sudanese did not identify with Egyptian nationalism, Sudan became one of the central objectives of Egyptian nationalism. The *Wafd* who had been barred from the official corridors of power as King Fuad and the loyalist ministers drafted the constitution, came bouncing back in a landslide victory in the national elections in January 1924. Now Prime Minister, Zaghlul laid claim to Sudan as an integral part of Egyptian territory and supported King Fuad's claim to be monarch over Sudan. Moreover, fighting Britain over the control of Sudan was a very popular political avenue for Zaghlul, fulfilling Egyptian irredentist demands for recovering its southern empire.[137] Zaghlul regularly made speeches to the new Egyptian Parliament, exclaiming that: 'the Egyptian nation will not surrender Sudan as long as it lives!' and attacking the British as 'usurpers'.[138]

[131] Tvedt, *The River Nile in the Age of the British*, 102.
[132] Intelligence Department, 'On the Egyptian Movement and Its Effect in the Sudan', 12 April 1919, FO 608/214/1, UK National Archives.
[133] 'Keowyn Boyd to Allenby', 14 March 1920, Extl – Dec – 37-192 – Part B (secret), National Archives of India.
[134] 'Cheetham to Curzon', 10 February 1920, Extl – Sept – 12-211 – Part B (secret), National Archives of India.
[135] 'Rennell Rodd to Milner', 2 January 1920, MS. Milner Dep. 448, Bodleian Library, University of Oxford.
[136] Tvedt, *The River Nile in the Age of the British*, 100.
[137] 'Speech of Zaghlul Pasha', 27 March 1919, FO 141/777, UK National Archives.
[138] 'Stack to MacDonald', 16 September 1924, FO 141/777, UK National Archives.

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Almost simultaneous with Zaghlul's election as Prime Minister of Egypt was the electoral victory of Labour Party leader Ramsay Macdonald in late January 1924. Despite fears among the traditional Conservative and Liberal parties that Labour would be a soft touch to nationalists within the Empire, Macdonald's short-lived ministry largely perpetuated the status quo in regard to Egypt. Beset by lobbying from the London and the Liverpool Chambers of Commerce to guarantee their investments, especially in cotton production, the Labour Government was keen to retain control of Sudan.[139] Britain's aim was to open up substantial areas of potentially arable land in Sudan through the Gezira irrigation scheme by damming the Nile at Sennar.[140] The project was considered so important that one Foreign Office memorandum stated that due to the huge investments made in Sudan, it was 'even more essential to Great Britain than is Egypt'.[141]

The project had been envisaged since 1914 and had been kept relatively secret, yet leaks in the press about the project infuriated Egyptian nationalists, who described it as a 'pistol to the head' of an independent Egypt, with Britain controlling the water flow of the Nile.[142] This was not an idle threat, and the Foreign Office believed that 'the knowledge that a rupture over Sudan will rob Egypt of all hope of repayment for past advances and of any say in the control of the Nile will act as a powerful brake on the exuberance of even the most nationalist and irresponsible of governments'.[143] Moreover, an increase in cotton production from Sudan would lower the world price of cotton, which Egypt relied upon as its main export.[144] Construction had been halted by Allenby in 1921, presumably to calm tensions so as to allow negotiation for Egypt's independence, but the project had also run out of money. By October 1922, new investors had been found, and tensions had calmed to allow work to be

[139] 'A. De V. Leigh to Ramsay Macdonald', 13 June 1924, FO 141/777, UK National Archives; 'The Incorporated Chamber of Commerce of Liverpool to Arthur Ponsonby', 18 June 1924, FO 141/777, UK National Archives.

[140] Lee Stack, 'Memorandum on the Future Status of Sudan', 25 May 1924, FO 141/777, UK National Archives.

[141] British Foreign Office, 'Covering Memorandum on Sir Lee Stack's Memorandum of October 11th, 1923', n.d., FO 141/777, UK National Archives.

[142] Tvedt, *The River Nile in the Age of the British*, 88.

[143] British Foreign Office, 'Covering Memorandum on Sir Lee Stack's Memorandum of October 11th, 1923'; Also quoted in M. W. Daly, *Empire on the Nile: The Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, 1898–1934*, 1st ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 302.

[144] 'Allenby to MacDonald', 26 July 1924, FO 141/777, UK National Archives.

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restarted on the dam.[145] The re-initialisation of the project deepened Egyptian nationalist anger, which was in turn propagandised by the British, claiming that the Egyptian Government was rejecting a discourse of development in Sudan and was thus unfit to claim sovereignty there.[146]

The Sennar dam was not the only hydrological project envisaged in Sudan. The British administrators in Sudan had seen the potential for damming the Gash river in eastern Sudan, which ran through Italian-controlled Eritrea. Though the river was not a tributary of the Nile, and did not threaten Egypt's water supply, Britain had opened secret negotiations with Italy's government under Benito Mussolini to construct the dam. This was seen by Egyptian nationalists as a violation of the Condominium agreement, and when the negotiations with the Italians were discovered, Zaghlul lodged an official protest with the British Prime Minister.[147] Zaghlul too, had hoped that the rise of the Labour Party would give a better opportunity to negotiate with Britain over Sudan, but was disappointed.

> What is new here now is that the Labour Ministry – those whose principles are not colonising and who were known to be fond of liberty and support of the weak nations – should have approved of this policy. . . . This declaration (for retaining control of Sudan) has grieved me, especially me, who had hoped that the Labour Ministry would not follow a colonising policy.[148]

The British Government sent a complaint to the Egyptian Government on the basis that, declaring sole sovereignty over Sudan was in breach of the 1899 Condominium agreement and the 1922 declaration of independence that maintained the status quo over Sudan.[149] The British did not intend to retain the status quo themselves. The Governor General of Sudan (or *Sirdar*), Lee Stack, penned a memorandum outlining three possible options for the future of Sudan: (1) the annexation of Sudan by Egypt (2) Maintaining the status quo (3) Asserting the 'predominance of British control in the actual administration of the country'. Stack went with the latter.[150] The de-Egyptianising of the Condominium had been planned as early as 1920 during the Egyptian revolution, but was carried

[145] Tvedt, *The River Nile in the Age of the British*, 108–9.
[146] Lee Stack, 'Memorandum on the Future Status of Sudan'.
[147] 'Izzet Pasha to Ramsay MacDonald', 20 June 1924, FO 141/777, UK National Archives.
[148] 'Extract from the Egyptian Deputies' Chamber Proceedings of the 58th Meeting Held on June 28 1924', 7 July 1924, FO 141/777, UK National Archives.
[149] 'The Status of the Soudan'.
[150] Lee Stack, 'Memorandum on the Future Status of Sudan'.

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out in earnest in 1924.[151] This was implemented under the guise that Egyptian administrators were not qualified to run Sudan, but the real fear of the British administration in Sudan was that conceding junior posts would create a precedent towards allowing Egyptians to occupy senior posts and governing positions in Sudan. This was justified by arguing that, allowing more Egyptians would betray the Sudanese public's confidence by filling posts with Egyptians, rather than Sudanese.[152]

Perhaps even more important for Stack was the rapid demobilisation of the Egyptian army in Sudan. Despite only having around 1,000 British troops in Sudan, Stack's position as *Sirdar* of Sudan gave him control of the Egyptian army in Sudan. Only about 2,000 of the 13,000-strong army in Sudan were actually Egyptian (the others being Sudanese), but many of the junior officers were Egyptian.[153] Zaghlul believed that it was 'below the dignity of an independent nation' that the Governor General was not Egyptian and instead demanded that Egyptian officers follow orders from the Egyptian Minister for War.[154] Egypt's new War Minister, an 'ardent Zahglulist' was also contemplating removing British Officers in the Condominium for Egyptian ones.[155] Fearing that the Egyptian Officers would convert the Sudanese officers against him, and fearing a mutiny in Sudan, Stack began planning to remove all the Egyptian officers, followed by the remaining Egyptian troops, and replacing them with Sudanese soldiers.[156]

Stack's fears were realised when Sudanese troops of the railway battalion, followed by Sudanese cadets from Khartoum military academy, started street protests on 9 and 11 August 1924. Though the protests were minor in scale, the paranoid British administration acted quickly to exile the railway battalion to Egypt. The military academy in which Stack had hoped to train loyal Sudanese officers to replace their Egyptian counterparts was closed.[157] The 'mutiny' had very little popular backing among the Sudanese, but it was the fact that it was army cadets that were defecting that worried the British administration in Khartoum. Many of the cadets and officers were influenced by an Egyptian nationalist organisation called the White Flag League, a *Wafd*ist organisation that pushed

[151] Tvedt, *The River Nile in the Age of the British*, 110.
[152] 'Lee Stack to Clark Kerr', 6 April 1924, FO 141/777, UK National Archives.
[153] 'Opinion Dictated by Lord Haldane', 1 October 1924, FO 141/777, UK National Archives.
[154] 'Stack to Allenby', 24 May 1924, FO 141/777, UK National Archives.
[155] 'Extract from the Proceedings of Meeting of May 11, 1924', n.d., 11, FO 141/777, UK National Archives.
[156] 'Stack to MacDonald'. [157] Daly, *Empire on the Nile*, 1987, 293–94.

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for the unity of the Nile valley under Egyptian rule.[158] Stack and the British administration in Sudan believed that Zaghlul and the *Wafd* were influencing the Sudanese army, accelerating Stack's desire to de-Egyptianise the administration and military of the Condominium. Allenby and Stack were called to London after the mutiny to meet the Prime Minister, in which they decided to implement the removal of Egyptian officers and troops from Sudan, charting a political collision course with the *Wafd*.[159]

INTERNATIONALISING THE DISPUTE OVER SUDAN

The British were not initially in favour of blocking Egypt's application to the League of Nations. The Foreign Office questioned whether Egypt met the League's requirements for membership as 'self-governing', so long as Britain controlled Egypt's defence and most of its foreign policy. However, in the spirit of the Irish Free State's interest in joining the League, the Foreign Office aimed to leave the question of Egypt's admissibility to the discretion of the Council of the League, where Britain held a permanent seat.[160] Zaghlul's political offensive to retain Sudan for Egypt in 1924 quickly soured Britain's desire to support Egyptian admission to the League. The British Foreign Office feared external interference, especially the possibility that the Egyptian Government could take the case of control of Sudan to the new International Court at The Hague to adjudicate the matter. One British officer had initially contented himself that Britain would win the case but became increasingly doubtful, fearing after further investigation that 'continental jurists' might align themselves with Britain over the matter.[161]

Britain's response to the threat of the new Egyptian state seeking an international adjudication of the matter was twofold. The first was to delay Egypt's entry into the League of Nations, where it could gain more international recognition and gather more international support for the adjudication. The Lord High Chancellor of the Labour Cabinet, Richard Haldane, was very concerned that Egypt could make itself a member of the League of Nations via Article 17 of the League Covenant. Article

[158] Daly, *Empire on the Nile*, 1987, 292.
[159] 'Record of a Conference Held in the Room of the Secretary of State at the Foreign Office', 13 August 1924, FO 141/805, UK National Archives.
[160] 'Lancelot Oliphant to Allenby', 19 October 1922, FO 141/430/6, UK National Archives.
[161] 'J. W. Healam-Morley to J. Murray', 16 April 1923, FO 141/777, UK National Archives.

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17 stated that if a dispute arose between a member state of the League and a non-member state, the non-member could be invited to become a member of the League of Nations to resolve the dispute.[162] This would then allow Egypt, the protections granted to members under Articles 12 and 16. Moreover, Article 19 could be applied, whereby the League Assembly could be called upon to reconsider a treaty deemed 'inapplicable', such as the 1899 Condominium agreement by which Britain laid its claim to joint sovereignty of Sudan.[163] The rivalry of Sudan thus risked escalating and possibly dragging in other global actors, meaning that Britain could quickly lose control of the situation in Sudan. Until the Sudan-question had been settled, it was important for Britain that Egypt did not have access to the League of Nations.

The prolonged exclusion of Egypt from the League was also highly problematic to British policy. The declaration of Egyptian independence had been unilateral and without formal agreement from the *Wafd*. Zaghlul affirmed this position by stating: 'the acceptance of the Declaration would not only have the essential effect of strengthening the British control, but would furthermore legalise the British position, which has never had any really legal quality'.[164] Centrists like Adli had backed the unilateral declaration realising that the *Wafd* would not recognise Britain's terms, but there was no official recognition of the declaration by the *Wafd*ist Parliament.[165] The British strategy had been to convince Egyptians that their independence was genuine so as to curb anti-colonial nationalist sentiment. The prolonged-delaying of Egypt's entry into the League risked conceding to Egyptians that their independence was 'fictitious', undermining much of the purpose of the declaration of independence.[166]

Control of Sudan, however, had now become a stumbling block to the policy of appeasing Egyptian nationalist demands. Labour MP Thomas Johnston had raised the issue in Parliament, suggesting bringing the dispute jointly with Egypt to the League of Nations, primarily to deal with Egypt's concerns over water.[167] The British-administered Sudanese government resisted these calls to bring the dispute to Geneva. Not only

[162] Potì, 'The League of Nations and the Post-Ottoman Recolonization of the Nile Valley', 199.
[163] 'Opinion Dictated by Lord Haldane'.
[164] 'Minute on Residency Paper No. 7988/1926', 7 November 1923, FO 141/630/3, UK National Archives.
[165] 'Curzon to Allenby', 30 December 1923, FO 141/670/3, UK National Archives.
[166] 'Lancelot Oliphant to Allenby'.
[167] 'Foreign Office. (Hansard, 10 July 1924)', https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1924/jul/10/foreign-office#S5CV0175P0_19240710_HOC_344.

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would it mean an internationally agreed-upon compromise, but it also would not necessarily calm Egyptian antagonisms towards Britain. If the League adjudicated favourably for Britain, Egyptians would attack both the League and Britain for using their influence on the League Council.[168]

The British administration in Sudan intended to trap Zaghlul by offering to go before the League if he agreed to maintain the status quo of the 1899 Condominium Agreement.[169] This would have been impossible to Zaghlul, who had made very vocal political claims that a now-independent Egypt should have full sovereignty of Sudan, and had staked his Premiership on the Sudan dispute. The reality was that the British Government wanted to avoid international interference in the dispute. Even if they did not think that the League would force Britain to leave Sudan, it would be difficult to explain to the International Court of Justice why the administration had been expelling Egyptian administrators and officers from the Condominium. Moreover, the British administration in Sudan feared that Egypt would utilise agents to cause agitation in Sudan during a League of Nations inquiry into Sudan, giving the impression that Britain could not maintain stability.[170]

An alternative suggestion was to place Sudan under a League of Nations Mandate administered by Britain. This would be based on the precedent that as Egypt was formally an ex-possession of the Ottoman Empire, like other Mandates such as Syria and Iraq, Sudan which was *de jure* an extension of Egypt could also be a Mandate.[171] This view was later seconded by Lord Haldane, but was seen as impractical as it required the consent of Egypt, which would have to renounce the Condominium agreement.[172] Stack was also against the idea, as Sudan would have to be deemed to be in a state of 'extreme uncertainty' before it could become a Mandate, and he found that any deviation from the 1899 Condominium agreement would be seen as weakness.[173] The idea of even surrendering Sudan's financial commission as well as establishing a League-based water board for adjudication of the Nile, was also floated. This would have separated the question of the Nile waters and Egyptian irrigation from that of the sovereignty of Sudan, but this would not take into

[168] Colonel Schuster, 'Memorandum Respecting the Sudan Question and the League of Nations', 23 September 1924, FO 141/777, UK National Archives.
[169] Schuster, 'Memorandum Respecting the Sudan Question and the League of Nations'.
[170] Schuster, 'Memorandum Respecting the Sudan Question and the League of Nations'.
[171] Schuster, 'Memorandum Respecting the Sudan Question and the League of Nations'.
[172] 'Opinion Dictated by Lord Haldane'.
[173] British Foreign Office, 'Memorandum Respecting the Situation in the Sudan', 17 September 1924, FO 141/777, UK National Archives.

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account Egyptian nationalist feelings about ruling Sudan.[174] Initially, the League of Nations was more of a hindrance than an aid in attempting to maintain British supremacy in Sudan, and the British Government had to find means to avoid the dispute being brought by Zaghlul to Geneva.

Britain rested its defence on the interpretation that the dispute between Egypt and Britain over Sudan was a domestic one. Ramsay MacDonald declared in Parliament that: 'An agreement ought to be come to between the Governments of Egypt and Great Britain directly in contact with each other, and no attempt should be made to bring in any outside authority, the League of Nations or some other body. It is much more in the nature of a domestic problem.'[175] This was a difficult point to argue, considering that Britain had declared Egypt a 'sovereign and independent nation' in the 1922 declaration of independence. Yet, the reservations in the declaration of independence stated that foreign powers could not interfere with the 'special relationship' that existed between Britain and Egypt.[176] This was ironic, considering that Egypt had never formally been part of the Empire, and was now formally independent, yet the dispute would be framed as if, in all things relating to security and foreign policy, Egypt were a colony. This Monroe Doctrine-style ring-fencing of Egypt, also legitimised by Article 21 of the League Covenant, ensured that, internationally, Egypt was no more than a colony.[177] Similar legal reasoning would also be used later that year against the Irish Free State's attempt to register the Anglo-Irish Treaty as discussed in Chapter 4. In this case too, Britain had tried to deny that the Treaty was an international instrument, but a domestic one between two members of the Empire. However, as a Dominion of the British Empire, the Irish Free State's position was less ambiguous than was Egypt's, which was nominally independent, yet still subject to British policy in reserved matters, as if it were in the Empire. With no representation at the League of Nations, Egypt was arguably less 'independent' than a British Dominion such as the Irish Free State.

For the *Wafd*, the League could have played a role of putting pressure on Britain, yet Zaghlul ultimately chose not to approach the League, and opted for negotiation with Britain. This may have been to avoid the risk that the League might have forced Zaghlul to maintain the status quo of the 1899 Condominium agreement, which the Foreign Office's international lawyers had predicted to be the most likely

[174] Schuster, 'Memorandum Respecting the Sudan Question and the League of Nations'.
[175] Schuster, 'Memorandum Respecting the Sudan Question and the League of Nations'.
[176] Schuster, 'Memorandum Respecting the Sudan Question and the League of Nations'.
[177] Tvedt, *The River Nile in the Age of the British*, 101.

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outcome.[178] Moreover, there was considerable mistrust in the *Wafd* towards the League of Nations, which was still seen as a tool of British control. Rather than send an official delegation, Egyptian organisations in Europe petitioned the League to intervene in the dispute:

> Although we were never among the admirers of the League of Nations, which undoubtedly was the fruit of Earl Grey's and President Wilson's huge trap to win the great war and to deceive the world by false-pledges … we deem the moment opportune to vigorously raise our voice as a sign of protest before the members of the Executive Committee of the League against the barbaric and most inhuman action of the British Government and its attitude in the recent Sudan outrages. … We, therefore, politely solicit the League of Nations to institute immediate action … otherwise we shall to our deep regret be compelled to look upon the League of Nations because of its apathy and indifference to be nothing but a formidable instrument in the hands of the various imperialistic and capitalistic enterprises ….[179]

The second British objectivewas to symbolically elevate Sudan's international status by representing it separately from Egypt at the Postal Union and Telegraph Union. Prior to the declaration of independence, when Egypt's foreign policy was more tightly controlled, Britain had allowed Sudan to be represented by Egypt at the Postal Congress.[180] With the rapidly declining relationship with the *Wafd* over Sudan, Britain broke off Egypt's representation of Sudan, in favour of its own membership at international conferences.[181] As was seen before in the case of India, the separate representation of Sudan was a largely tokenistic action to underline its separation from Egypt. The Foreign Office could carry out this action content in the knowledge that Sudan's representation changed nothing in terms of its sovereignty. The Postal Conference of 1920 in Madrid clarified that member states were not sovereign entities but postal administrations. Whilst this had been widely understood before 1920, the changing nature of the membership of international organisations with the rise of the League meant that a clearer definition had to be applied to differentiate League of Nations members and members of such technical organisations.[182]

Similar actions were taken over Sudan's signature of certain international conventions. Lord Curzon stressed that Britain must attempt to

[178] Schuster, 'Memorandum Respecting the Sudan Question and the League of Nations'.
[179] Dr Mansur of the National Radical Group, 'Egyptian Protest to the League of Nations', 4 September 1924, R552/11/1012/33497, League of Nations Archive.
[180] 'Borton Pasha to Mr. Liddell', 25 May 1920, FO 141/457/2, UK National Archives.
[181] 'Lee Stack to Clark Kerr'.
[182] 'Ramsay Macdonald to Allenby', 18 March 1924, FO 141/777, UK National Archives.

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sign the International Opium Convention before Egypt acceded, thereby ensuring that Egypt could not make a claim on the control of Sudan's international personality.[183] One British administrator gave the analogy that Sudan was like an individual that could not access the stock market but could conduct business through a stock broker, with Britain and not Egypt being that broker.[184] The British wrote to League Secretary Drummond stating that though Sudan was part of a Condominium agreement, 'we insist on regarding and representing (Sudan) as part of the British Empire'.[185] With British officers dominating the Sudanese Condominium's administration, it was clear which partner they would choose first. Britain could thus internationally differentiate Sudan from Egypt without having to devolve greater autonomy.

Not only did the intention to marginally elevate Sudan's international participation segregate Sudan from Egypt, it also played into the public commitments made by the British to bring self-government to Sudan. This could not be achieved by what the British portrayed as Egyptian misrule; only a paramount British administration's 'civilising mission' could bestow self-governing institutions. Similar arguments had been made in 1919 so as not to devolve India's international representation at the League to India's Princes, claiming that only the British Government in India was competent enough to lead India to representative rule.[186] All the while, though, Stack maintained strict press censorship over debates on the political future of Sudan (Figure 5.2).[187]

Negotiations had officially ended unsuccessfully in mid-October 1924. The impasse guaranteed British predominance over the Condominium, and put increasing pressure on Zaghlul for his failure to gain concessions from the British.[188] The Watanist Party goaded Zaghlul for his inability to deliver on his promises or even secure a vote on the budget of Sudan.[189] Zaghlul's failure to negotiate successfully over Sudan, led to a group of Egyptian nationalists taking action into their own hands.

[183] 'Curzon to E. S. Scott', 24 April 1922, FO 141/451/10, UK National Archives.
[184] 'M. S. Amos to the First Secretary to the Residency', 24 May 1922, FO 141/451/10, UK National Archives.
[185] 'Alexander Cadogan to Eric Drummond', 15 January 1924, FO 141/457/2, UK National Archives.
[186] Lee Stack, 'Memorandum on the Future Status of Sudan'.
[187] 'Lee Stack to Clark Kerr'.
[188] 'Politique de provocation', *Liberté*, 25 October 1924, FO 141/777, UK National Archives.
[189] 'Allenby to Foreign Office', 9 June 1924, FO 141/777, UK National Archives.

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On 19 November 1924, Stack was fatally wounded by gunfire as he was driving in Cairo and succumbed to his injuries the following day.[190]


12 Pages

12 Pages

Le Petit Journal

illustré

HEBDOMADAIRE
61, rue Lafayette, Paris

PRIX : 0 fr. 30
30 Novembre 1924

L'attentat contre le Sirdar

Une page sanglante vient d'être ajoutée à l'histoire de l'Egypte. Le Sirdar, Sir Lee Stack, commandant en chef des troupes indigènes, a été assassiné à coups de revolver dans une rue du Caire. Deux bombes lancées contre sa voiture firent dans son entourage plusieurs blessés.

FIGURE 5.2 Depiction of the assassination of Lee Stack. No photo was taken of the assassination of the *Sirdar*, but many artistic renditions were published in the wake of his assassination.
Source: Assassination of Lee Stack in *Le Petit Journal*, Paris, 30 November 1924. Reproduced with the kind permission of the Bibliothèque National de France. Gallica, https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k717656f

[190] See UK National Archives, FO 141/502/2 for files on Stack's assassination.

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Stack had been a major impediment to Egyptian claims over Sudan, but his assassination would result in a massive loss of Egyptian control. The Residency were quick to try to uncover a link between Zahglul and the assassins. As they could not find one, they accused Zaghlul of turning Egyptians against Britain, thereby creating the conditions of hatred under which Stack was murdered.[191] Under the pretext of Stack's death, Allenby considered fully annexing Sudan. However, he feared that such a move would be a flagrant breach of the 1899 Condominium agreement and could give sufficient grounds for Egypt to challenge the annexation at the League of Nations.[192] Instead, Allenby sent Zaghlul an ultimatum that would mean that the Condominium would exist in name only. Egypt would withdraw its troops from Sudan within twenty-four hours, would pay a fine of 500,000 pounds, whilst the cap of 300,000 *feddans* (126,000 hectares) of irrigated land in Sudan would be lifted, threatening to deprive water downstream.[193]

Allenby prepared a show of force to reinforce the ultimatum. The Royal Navy would be deployed to coastal towns, and troops mobilised in major cities, seizing customs revenues from tobacco duties. Meanwhile, the Royal Air Force would police Egypt's more 'provincial towns'. Foreign relations would be broken off, with Allenby becoming Commander-in-Chief in Egypt, essentially leading to a state of re-occupation. Finally, and perhaps most controversially, Allenby suggested kidnapping Egyptian dissidents and holding them hostage, executing them if further attacks against Englishmen continued. This last point was rejected by Austen Chamberlain as repugnant, but he authorised the military re-occupation and police actions. The ability to reimpose martial control within days, stripped away the thin veneer of Egyptian independence that the British had declared in 1922. Even Allenby suggested that his sudden change of role from High Commissioner in a foreign country to an occupier, was that 'one more anomaly does not matter'.[194] Zaghlul refused the terms of the ultimatum and resigned on 24 November.

[191] J. H. Percival, 'Points Establishing Saad Zaghlul's Direct Responsibility for the Murder of Sir Lee Stack', 22 November 1924, FO 141/502/2, UK National Archives.
[192] 'Allenby to Austen Chamberlain', 5 January 1925, FO 141/777, UK National Archives.
[193] Daly, *Empire on the Nile*, 1987, 306–7.
[194] 'Allenby to Austen Chamberlain', 23 November 1924, FO 141/502/2, UK National Archives; 'Austen Chamberlain to Allenby', 24 November 1924, FO 141/502/2, UK National Archives.

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Zaghlul's resignation gave King Fuad the opportunity to isolate the *Wafd* by proroguing the majority-*Wafd* Parliament and establishing a new government under a pro-Monarchist British-sympathising politician named Ahmed Ziwar Pasha. With the support of King Fuad behind him, Ziwar's appointment was in defiance of the new constitution, as Ziwar had no majority in the Chamber of Deputies, yet the *Wafd* were unable to effectively challenge the new government.[195] Ziwar castigated the *Wafd* for an irresponsible and confrontational policy against Britain, that risked the nationalist and independence movement and sought to normalise relations with the British.[196] Nevertheless, the *Wafd*-dominated Chamber of Deputies decided to bypass the new Egyptian government and protest to the League of Nations about Britain's use of Lee Stack's death to act as a pretext to strip away Egypt's share of control of the Condominium in Sudan.[197] The British had feared that the *Wafd* would try and bring a dispute to Geneva, yet the League of Nations Secretariat was not prepared to take action based on the letter of protest from the Chamber of Deputies. The letter had not come from the Egyptian Government, even if it had been formed the same day the protest had been written (24 November). The protest was thus filed as a protest rather than taken as a recourse to a legal dispute, and would hold as much weight at the League as the many letters of protest that poured in from across both Egypt and sympathetic labour and women's organisations in Europe.[198]

Another attempt to turn the clash over Sudan into an international dispute was initiated by an Egyptian Senator in early December. Senator L. A. Fanous wrote to League Secretariat stating that under Article 11 of the Covenant, the League was obligated to take action in what he saw as an international dispute that threatened 'bloodshed and ruin' in the Nile Valley. Key to Fanous's argument was that the League must adjudicate whether the clash over Sudan was domestic or international, stressing that the dispute was international, as was Britain's relationship with Egypt as it was not officially part of the British Empire.[199] Fanous's prediction of

[195] Daly, *Empire on the Nile*, 1987, 317–20.

[196] Charles de Visscher, 'Le conflit anglo-égyptien et la Société des Nations', 1925, 26, R619/11/40641/40641, League of Nations Archive.

[197] 'Ahmed Mazloul to the Secretary General of the League of Nations', 25 November 1924, R619/11/40641/40641, League of Nations Archive.

[198] 'Paul Monthoux to Eric Drummond', 26 November 1924, R619/11/40641/40641, League of Nations Archive.

[199] 'L. A. Fanous to the Secretary General of the League of Nations', 10 December 1924, R619/11/40641/40641, League of Nations Archive.

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'bloodshed' was not baseless. Three days after Zaghlul's resignation, the *Wafd*ist White Flag Organisation launched a larger mutiny in Sudan, which was violently put down by British troops and Sudanese auxiliaries.[200]

The British Government, now under the control of the Conservative Party after MacDonald's government collapsed in November, was, conversely to Fanous, keen to assert the 'domestic' nature of the Egyptian dispute. MacDonald had been pressing for a new protocol for international dispute settlement for the League of Nations that would push states towards arbitration rather than war.[201] This dispute mechanism was called the Geneva Protocol (not to be confused with the 1925 Protocol on the control of chemical weapons). Britain did not, however, want to subject the issue of Sudan to the standards of arbitration stated in the Protocol. The Protocol passed preliminary approval on 2 October 1924 by all League member states, but the Conservatives, who opposed the Protocol, quickly set to work to ensure that it could not be used against Britain over Sudan. They wrote to the League, stating that if Egypt signed the Protocol, it could not 'invoke' the support of the League of Nations due to the fact that the status of Sudan was considered a reserved case as stipulated by the Declaration of Independence, which had occurred before the Protocol and thus took precedence.[202] This position was seconded by a prominent international lawyer, Charles de Visscher, who argued that despite Egypt's nominal independence, it occupied a position internationally akin to the British Dominions. Although the Dominions and Egypt had some form of international personality, it was not fully separated from Britain, meaning the Protocol could not be applied against it.[203] Despite Egypt's nominal independence and the debates that had raged within the British Government about the unilateral declaration, in the League's eyes, the Reservations made Egypt little more than a Dominion without a seat in Geneva.

With the *Wafd* essentially barred from the corridors of power, Ziwar quickly conceded to most of Allenby's demands. The Egyptian army was withdrawn from Sudan, and Allenby, under Chamberlain's request,

[200] M. W. Daly, *Empire on the Nile: The Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, 1898–1934* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 308.

[201] For more on the Geneva Protocol see: Yearwood, *Guarantee of Peace*, 282.

[202] 'D. G. Osborne to Eric Drummond', 4 December 1924, C/742/M/256/1924, League of Nations Archive.

[203] Potì, 'The League of Nations and the Post-Ottoman Recolonization of the Nile Valley', 205.

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softened his ultimatum on the Gezira irrigation scheme back to the previously agreed number of 300,000 *feddans*.[204] Ultimately, Britain had tightened its control over Sudan, with the Egyptian share of control of the Condominium being little more than a token. With the *Wafd* out of power, their protest was no longer seen as a legitimate international voice at the League of Nations and fell on deaf ears in Geneva.

Yet despite the seeming containment of the *Wafd*'s ambitions, the goal of the unilateral declaration of independence had failed. The Round Table published an article, stating that 'independence' had failed due to the 'megalomania' of Egyptian politicians, including King Fuad who had engaged in the politics of Egyptian irredentism in Sudan. Many who had supported the end of the Protectorate had hoped that independence would bring a sense of gratitude towards fulfilling Egyptian national aspirations.[205] The removal of the *Wafd* now meant that future interlocutors with Britain would have little popular legitimacy to rely upon.

THE BLOCKING OF EGYPT'S ADMISSION TO THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS, 1925–1935

By the end of 1924, Britain had effectively secured its hold over Sudan, toppled Zaghlul's government, and managed to stop Egypt from gaining ground at the League of Nations. With the dispute over Sudan seemingly being resolved after Ziwar's capitulation to Allenby's ultimatum and with a more pro-British Parliament in Cairo, Britain's need to block Egyptian membership of the League was seemingly diminished.

The fear of a *Wafd* resurgence was a constant threat to British control, but Ziwar had no popular backing, and the conciliatory effects of making Egypt independent were wearing off so long as he was in power without an electoral mandate. Elections were held in March 1925, which returned another *Wafd*ist majority, but King Fuad instead instructed Ziwar to build a coalition of anti-*Wafd* parties, denying Zaghlul a return to the Premiership. Blocked from power, Zaghlul was elected Speaker of the House by the Parliament's *Wafd* majority. Horrified at Zaghlul's return to a position of prominence, Fuad and Ziwar dissolved the Parliament. Despite his ejection from Parliament, Zaghlul claimed it as a victory, as the second dissolution of the Parliament had 'flouted' the new Egyptian

[204] Daly, *Empire on the Nile*, 1987, 317–20.
[205] The Round Table, 'Egypt and the Sudan', *The Round Table* 14, no. 56 (1 September 1924): 667–82.

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constitution 'which Great Britain had so often declared with pride that gave to Egypt'.[206]

The next decade would see a similar repetition of parliamentary instability, as the British tried to reconcile their desire to keep the *Wafd* out of power with the fact that they were by far the most popular party in Egypt.[207] This period has been described by some historians of Egypt as a triangle of power between the Egyptian Parliament, the Egyptian Monarchy under Fuad, and the British Residency.[208] The British sought allies in the Parliament, and in Fuad, who would sign a Treaty with Britain, yet all negotiations would ultimately collapse due to the *Wafd*'s refusal to submit to key British demands, Sudan being one of the most prominent. Each round of negotiations would see the tantalising promise of League membership dangled before the Egyptian negotiators' eyes, before being withdrawn.

A renewed attempt at marginalising the *Wafd* and building Fuad's power, through which the British hoped to benefit, came soon after the dissolution of the Parliament in March 1925. The incarnation of King Fuad in the Parliament was the *Ittihad* party, a monarchist clique that represented Fuad's political will in the legislature. Though they were not a large party, Fuad encouraged them to form a coalition with the more-numerous and less-vociferously anti-British Liberal Constitutionalists, in an attempt to keep the *Wafd* out and finalise an agreement with Britain. Moreover, the British Residency was reshuffled as Allenby retired and was replaced by the veteran colonial governor of the Bombay Presidency, George Lloyd.[209]

Despite a lack of popular support in the Parliament, Ziwar began the first of many attempts to gain entry for Egypt into the League of Nations. Before its closure, Ziwar had announced to the Egyptian Parliament that he would aim to normalise relations with Britain, and bring Egypt into the League of Nations.[210] Despite the British preferring Ziwar, they still

[206] 'Note on Zaghlul's Statement to Reuter Press', 20 March 1925, FO 141/670/3, UK National Archives.

[207] Paraphrasing British High Commissioner for Egypt, Miles Lampson when he stated that 'our unwillingness to see a Wafd Government in power whilst at the same time faced by the hard fact that the Wafd undoubtedly control an overwhelming majority of the people', Deeb, *Party Politics in Egypt*, 240.

[208] Khan, *Egyptian-Indian Nationalist Collaboration and the British Empire*, 95.

[209] Not to be confused with the British Prime Minister Lloyd George, Deeb, *Party Politics in Egypt*, 136.

[210] 'Allenby to Austen Chamberlain', 23 March 1925, FO 407/200, No. 38, UK National Archives.

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feared the significant influence that Zaghlul maintained over Egyptian statesmen, even with the prorogation of the Egyptian Parliament. The Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs' legal department prepared a document, stating that under the jurisprudence of admission to the League after 1919, Egypt was eligible for League membership. However, even if it were to become a member state, it could not overturn the Reservations until Britain decided to withdraw them. This showed that even after the Smutsian moment of infiltrating colonies into the League as founding members, states with core aspects of their statehood under the control of another member, were still eligible for admission. Moreover, Egypt as a non-member, could not bring a case against Britain to the League unless there was sufficient proof that the case constituted a threat of war. This meant that a League member would have to champion Egypt's cause, else the League would do little to advance Egypt's goal of removing the Reservations or securing Sudan.[211]

The imminent application of Egypt to the League put Britain in a precarious position. The Foreign Office was unsure whether it could officially block Egypt's admission unless it found reasonable grounds or it could use its influence at the League Assembly, bolstered by the Dominions, to stop Egypt from joining. Moreover, attempts to obstruct Egypt's membership would reinforce the 'illusory' nature of Egypt's independence, denying Egypt the 'token of sovereign independence' that the League provided.[212] However, Article 21 of the League's Covenant that safeguarded Monroe Doctrine-style arrangements, initially for the benefit of the United States, could be used to defend Britain's reservations over Egypt. The best possible route would be to conclude an agreement with Egypt, yet there were still outstanding disputes over Sudan and Britain's continued military presence in Egypt.[213] Britain's policy to conclude a treaty in Iraq with the promise of securing its membership of the League after independence, contrasted heavily with British attempts to mitigate Egypt's entry into the League.[214]

The Egyptian Minister of the Interior, Sidqi Pasha visited Geneva on 21 August 1925 and was received by Secretary General

[211] 'Memorandum on Egyptian Admission to the League of Nations', 9 May 1925, Enclosure in No. 52 FO 407/200, UK National Archives.

[212] 'Nevile Henderson to Austen Chamberlain', 11 August 1925, FO 407/201 No. 69, UK National Archives.

[213] 'Austen Chamberlain to George Lloyd', 29 October 1925, FO 407/201 No. 71, UK National Archives.

[214] 'Memorandum by Sir Cecil Hurst', 5 September 1925, Enclosure in FO 407/201 No. 71, UK National Archives.

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Drummond.[215] In defiance of the instructions of the British Residency in Cairo, Sidqi came with a letter of request for admission to the League, along with a copy of the application made by the Irish Free State a year earlier, to reinforce his position.[216] Moreover, the Egyptian Government had reached out to inquire about its admissibility to the Permanent Court of International Justice, which as of 1922, was open to non-League members.[217] The push for membership was being spearheaded by Liberals such as Sidqi, yet the *Wafd* and its allies in the press attacked the idea of applying without parliamentary approval. Another *Wafd*ist newspaper attacked an Egyptian entry to the League, claiming that the organisation was a 'creature of the imperialistic Powers that 'prostitutes its authority to their interests'.[218] With the date of the 1925 League Assembly slowly creeping into view, the Egyptian press intensified stories relating to why Egypt had yet to make an application to the League, blaming Britain for blocking its admission.[219] Yet Sidqi did not have the political support in Ziwar's Cabinet to defy the British Residency and make the application.[220]

The new British High Commissioner, George Lloyd, was more hopeful that an agreement could be concluded with the coalition of anti-*Wafd*ists, and attempted to dissuade the Egyptian government from applying to the League until a new Treaty had been concluded with Britain. The coalition of Liberals and Monarchists did not have a popular base like that of the *Wafd*, which continued its hold in Egyptian politics even when out of power. The Parliamentarians from the *Wafd*, Watanists, and even many Liberals resented that the Parliament had not re-opened in almost a year. Elections were eventually held, and the seats were divided up between the Liberals, Watanists, and the *Wafd*, who again controlled a majority of seats in the Parliament. A new Cabinet was formed with Adli Pasha as the Prime Minister, and Zaghlul as a minister.[221]

[215] 'Admission de l'Egypte dans la SDN', 25 August 1925, 242QO/60, Archives de la Ministère des affaires étrangères, La Corneuve.
[216] 'Nevile Henderson to Austen Chamberlain', 12 September 1925, FO 407/201 No. 33, UK National Archives.
[217] 'Nevile Henderson to Austen Chamberlain', 3 August 1925, FO 407/201 No. 68, UK National Archives.
[218] 'Nevile Henderson to Austen Chamberlain', 6 July 1925, FO 407/201 No. 9, UK National Archives.
[219] 'Nevile Henderson to Austen Chamberlain', 11 August 1925.
[220] 'Nevile Henderson to Austen Chamberlain', 12 September 1925.
[221] Deeb, *Party Politics in Egypt*, 137–39.

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Fuad, in his speech at the opening of the Egyptian Parliament in June 1926, declared that this new session would hopefully see Egypt's admission to the League of Nations.[222] Buoyed by the nationalist press that stated that an Egyptian entry would be an important step towards independence and towards asserting the removal of Britain's 'reservations' over Egypt, the foreign minister Sarwat investigated the possibility of making an application to the League. The French, in particular, were worried that if Egypt were to join the League, it would make up yet another vote for Britain.[223] However, Britain's imperial concerns for Egypt were of much higher importance, and Britain would not concede Egyptian League membership without having concluded a treaty with Egypt. Rather than confront the British on the topic, which would have likely caused a rift between the Liberals and the Monarch, Zaghlul took a more parliamentary approach, avoiding topics that would likely lead to a collapse of the government and further years in the political desert for the *Wafd*. They voted through the Condominium budget for Sudan, which Zaghlul had previously called on them to boycott, and did not insist on joining the League of Nations without an agreement with Britain.[224]

By mid-August, the talks had collapsed yet again, though there was less ill will between the British and Zahglul than there had been in 1924. Lloyd reported back to the Foreign Office that talks had been discontinued but that Zaghlul's 'behaviour has so far been unexceptional' and that he was 'making a sincere effort to win the good will of His Majesty's Government'.[225] Lloyd had told the Egyptian Foreign Minister that Britain could not support Egypt's application to the League at the present moment and that it was not in their interest to have the League analyse Britain's reserved points over control of key areas of Egypt's governance.[226] Nonetheless, the British believed that they could indefinitely block Egypt from raising the Reservations in Geneva, in a similar fashion to the way the British had opposed the Irish Free State's attempt to register the Anglo-Irish Treaty, as discussed in Chapter 4.[227] The honeymoon between Adli's

[222] George Young, *Egypt* (London: Ernest Benn Limited, 1927), 292.
[223] 'J. d'Aumale to the French Foreign Minister', 4 August 1926, 242QO/60, Archives de la Ministère des Affaires Etrangères, La Corneuve.
[224] Deeb, *Party Politics in Egypt*, 141.
[225] 'Leo Amery to the Governor Generals of the Dominions', 14 August 1926, TSCH/3/S5119, National Archives of Ireland.
[226] 'Leo Amery to the Governor Generals of the Dominions', 6 August 1926, TSCH/3/S5119, National Archives of Ireland.
[227] Young, *Egypt*, 293.

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Liberals and the *Wafd* quickly broke down once again, forcing Adli to resign yet again in favour of his replacement Sarwat Pasha in April 1927.

Sarwat was keen to reopen negotiations where Adli had failed and made a concerted effort to conclude a treaty in secret during King Fuad's state visit to Britain in the summer of 1927. Sarwat recorded much of his version of the events in the 'Egyptian Green Book', which he would later publish in 1928 to give a public face to the negotiations.[228] Sarwat and his foreign minister Hafiz Afifi Pasha used Fuad's state-visit as an opportunity to relaunch negotiations with British Foreign Secretary Austen Chamberlain. To retain the popular support of the *Wafd* during the negotiations, Sarwat claimed to have regularly kept an increasingly infirm Zaghlul informed of the negotiations.[229]

Chamberlain, too, was keen to finalise an agreement, with the negotiations being carried out with great courtesy. Chamberlain had tried to reassure Sarwat that the proposed Treaty would, over time, build the trust through which they could ensure that Egypt could defend itself and Britain's imperial interests, as though they were one of the Dominions.[230] The reality on the British side was somewhat less genteel. The War Office in particular, was highly sceptical of the basis of the British occupation in the Treaty that was to defend imperial communications and interests, notably the Suez Canal. This could mean that the Egyptian army could justifiably expel British troops from urban centres such as Cairo, weakening Britain's hold on Egyptian politics. Should they be expelled from the capital, the War Office was concerned that the Egyptian government could introduce conscription and overwhelm the isolated British troops, taking the Suez Canal by force and cutting the Empire into two.[231] Chamberlain assured them that Egyptian membership of the League would force Egypt to reduce the size of its army and its armaments, neutering the threat of the Egyptian armed forces to British influence.[232]

[228] 'Egyptian Green Book, Enclosure No 1. in Lloyd to Chamberlain', 17 March 1928, FO 141/824, UK National Archives.

[229] 'Egyptian Green Book, Enclosure No 1. in Lloyd to Chamberlain'.

[230] 'Document No. 7 in the Green Book. Chamberlain to Lloyd.', 24 November 1927, FO 141/824, UK National Archives.

[231] The draft treaty allowed the presence of British troops in Egypt for the maintenance of imperial communications, which could possibly mean that British troops would be forced to evacuate Cairo if Egypt appealed to the League.

[232] 'Text of Egyptian Proposals Communicated on April 2; with Departmental Comments Thereon', 2 April 1930, WO 32/4172, UK National Archives.

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On the Egyptian side, the point of contention, as ever, was that of Sudan. To break the impasse, Chamberlain and Sarwat decided to focus on reducing the impact on Egypt of the British occupation of Sudan, by creating an accord over the Nile. As aforementioned, Britain's ability to redirect the Nile into irrigation, panicked many Egyptians who believed that the British could use the Sennar Dam as a sort of tap, turning the water off in Egypt in the face of insubordination. Allenby had threatened the Egyptian Government in 1924 after the assassination of Lee Stack, that it would allow Sudan an unlimited share of the Nile water.[233] Concluding a treaty regulating the Nile's water would have been a relatively easy political concession, if it had led to the Egyptians dropping their claim over Sudan. Yet Sarwat retrospectively claimed that it would not convince the *Wafd*, but that he had decided not to pursue more concessions on Sudan, knowing the British might cease negotiations.[234]

Egypt's potential admission to the League played a pivotal role in the negotiations in that it might, once the treaty was agreed upon, both serve as a guarantor of Egypt's status and also in monitoring the treaty's implementation. Detractors of the proposed treaty feared that once Egypt made an application to the League, it could potentially claim Sudan as being within its territorial borders when going through the League's admission process.[235] However, for Sarwat and eventually Chamberlain, the realisation dawned that the League might act as an external guarantor to safeguard and interpret the agreement. This point seemed to have been particularly important to Sarwat, who needed a political force to underwrite the treaty.[236] However, the British initially believed that if a dispute was brought before the League Council, Britain's permanent seat would ensure that the League ruled in its favour.[237] However, it soon became apparent that if Egypt joined the League and it raised a dispute, both Britain and Egypt would not be able to vote on the matter at the Council as they would be conflicted, being involved parties.[238] This prompted Chamberlain to write to Sarwat, stressing the

[233] Tvedt, *The River Nile in the Age of the British*, 110.
[234] 'Egyptian Green Book, Enclosure No 1. in Lloyd to Chamberlain'.
[235] 'Conclusion of a Meeting of the Cabinet Held at 10 Downing Street', 11 November 1927, CAB 23/55/25, UK National Archives.
[236] 'Egyptian Green Book, Enclosure No 1. in Lloyd to Chamberlain'.
[237] 'Austen Chamberlain to Abdel Khalek Saroit Pasha', 28 December 1927, FO 141/824, UK National Archives.
[238] Committee of Imperial Defence, 'Treaty of Alliance between Great Britain and Egypt, Draft Report', 10 November 1927, CAB 24/189/22, UK National Archives.

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need for trust in the negotiations over unilateral interpretations of the proposed treaty. He compared the current agreement to Locarno, where the apprehension among states was overcome bilaterally, rather than through recourse to the League.[239] Nonetheless, the possibility of negotiating through the League was retained, although Chamberlain made it clear that it should only be a last resort.

Even within the Empire, the possibility of concluding a treaty with Egypt was raising existential constitutional questions. The treaty of alliance would bind Egyptian foreign policy to Britain's, in that Egypt would automatically declare war on Britain's enemies. This would have the effect of binding Egypt to Britain in a similar manner as a Dominion, in terms of imperial defence. Colonial Secretary, Leo Amery, consulted the Dominions on their position towards the treaty with Egypt.[240] Although most supported the current negotiations and Britain's right to sign an agreement with Egypt, Canada in particular had no desire to be a party to the agreement, citing the 1925 Locarno Treaty, where the Dominions had demanded the right of choice whether or not to adhere to a treaty entered into by Britain, as precedent.[241] This marked an important break between the autonomous parts of Britain's formal empire and its informal empire, with the former no longer automatically bound to the agreements negotiated by Britain with the latter.

The most significant obstacle to continued-negotiation by Britain of the treaty, was the scepticism that it could not be passed in the Egyptian Parliament. The British Cabinet knew that Sarwat did not have the political support in Egypt to push through the treaty without the support of the *Wafd*.[242] The treaty's terms may have been acceptable to Sarwat, but the retention of the status quo in Sudan and the proposed increased British involvement over the Egyptian armed forces were more likely to be rejected by the *Wafd*.[243] The early stages of the negotiations had been communicated to Zaghlul, who succumbed to his illness early in the negotiations. The *Wafd*'s leadership was taken over by Zaghlul's deputy,

[239] 'Document No. 11 in the Green Book. Chamberlain to Sarwat', 28 December 1927, FO 141/824, UK National Archives.

[240] 'Extract from Mr. Whiskard's Diary Relating to New Zealand', 1 December 1927, DO 117/86, UK National Archives.

[241] 'Stanley Baldwin to the Governor General of New Zealand', 5 December 1927, DO 117/86, UK National Archives.

[242] 'Conclusion of a Meeting of the Cabinet Held at 10 Downing Street'.

[243] Janice J. Terry, *The Wafd, 1919–1952: Cornerstone of Egyptian Political Power*, 1st ed. (London: Third World Centre for Research and Pub, 1982), 214.

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Mustapha al-Nahas. Sarwat had been less keen to divulge the terms of the treaty to him. By February 1928, when Sarwat and Chamberlain had reached an agreement on the treaty's terms, the negotiations could no longer be concealed and were revealed to Nahas to receive the *Wafd*'s blessing of popular support.[244] Concealing the treaty negotiations from the *Wafd* had been a blunder, with the terms over Sudan and the continued British occupation of Egypt as unacceptable to Nahas.[245] Nahas refused to accept the terms, claiming that they negated Egyptian sovereignty and effectively legitimised the British occupation. The Liberal-*Wafd* coalition broke down yet again, and Sarwat resigned.[246]

Despite the *Wafd*'s rejection of the draft treaty, Sarwat's Foreign Minister Afifi remained in London for months after the rejection, in an attempt for Egypt to yet accede to the League of Nations. However, with the treaty spurned by Nahas, the British were unmoved by his efforts.[247] Lloyd and the British Foreign Office were becoming increasingly resentful at the inability to pass a treaty, due to the Egyptian Parliament sinking all negotiations. The Foreign Office considered applying martial law in Egypt to encourage the dissolution of the Egyptian Parliament and force through the treaty. One administrator in the Foreign Office exclaimed that it was time to show the Egyptians 'that there was a whip in the cupboard'.[248] Yet the treaty relied on a level of good faith between Egypt and Britain to respect the agreement. Forcibly imposing the terms on a future government that would not adhere to them, was not a possibility. Negotiations thus returned to square one, though the draft treaty between Chamberlain and Sarwat provided a template for future discussions to work on.

Sarwat's resignation led to the *Wafd* coming back into government for the first time since Zaghlul had been Prime Minister. Under Nahas, the *Wafd* pursued a joint policy of putting pressure on British control in Egypt whilst negotiating the treaty with them. Nahas wanted to pass an 'Assemblies Bill' that would remove restrictions on the size of public gatherings, giving the *Wafd* the ability to mobilise larger street protests.

[244] 'Document No. 18 of the Green Book. Sarwat to Chamberlain', 18 February 1928, FO 141/824, UK National Archives.
[245] Deeb, *Party Politics in Egypt*, 141–43.
[246] 'A Rejected Treaty', *The Times*, 5 March 1928, 242QO/2041, Archives de la Ministère des affaires étrangères, La Corneuve.
[247] 'L'Egypte à la Société des Nations. Importantes déclarations de Sedky Pacha et de Hafez Afifi Pacha', 9 September 1935, FO 141/568/6, UK National Archives.
[248] Terry, *The Wafd, 1919–1952*, 214.

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Lloyd pressured Nahas to withdraw the bill and backed up his threat with the arrival of ships from the Royal Navy off the coast of Alexandria.[249] Simultaneously, Lloyd implored Nahas to accept a treaty with Britain, dangling before him the removal of judicial extraterritoriality and a promise of sovereignty that would be backed by membership of the League of Nations. Nahas was adamant though, that he would not accept the continued presence and occupation of the British army in Egypt. This impasse infuriated Lloyd, leading him to write disparaging remarks about Nahas's intellect, apparently confirming a rumour about his intelligence that had first been recounted to him by Sarwat.[250] Nahas backed down, and it wasn't long before the King was able to manufacture a sufficient case for his dismissal in June 1928.[251]

There was great disappointment in the Egyptian press at Britain's unwillingness to compromise on its control of Sudan as well as oversight over the Egyptian army. One newspaper, the *Siassa*, claimed that Britain's actions in Egypt contradicted its support for the positive zeitgeist of the Locarno Treaties of international dispute resolution, whilst simultaneously maintaining the 'old path of imposing her will on Egypt'.[252] In 1929, Britain signed the Optional Clause, accepting the jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice. This could have possibly led to another venue for the *Wafd* to launch a dispute against Britain. Yet the Foreign Office was unconcerned; Egypt was not a member of the League of Nations, and Egypt's occupation by Britain had occurred before the signing of the Optional Clause and was thus exempt from the Court's jurisdiction.[253]

British attempts at gunboat diplomacy had succeeded in routing the Assemblies Bill and the *Wafd*, but had revealed the failure to legitimise British control over Egypt. Moreover, the brief *Wafd* government of Nahas had led Britain further away from accepting Austen Chamberlain's envisaged treaty with Egypt and Egypt further away from membership in the League of Nations. In 1929, hopes of drafting a new

[249] 'Britain and Egypt. Settlement of Dispute. Ships Recalled. Firm Note to Cairo', *The Times*, 3 February 1928, 242QO/204, Archives de la Ministère des Affaires Etrangères, La Corneuve.

[250] 'Lloyd to Austen Chamberlain', 27 February 1928, FO 141/670/3, UK National Archives.

[251] Terry, *The Wafd, 1919–1952*, 216.

[252] 'Memorandum on the Egyptian Press, Enclosure in Lloyd to Chamberlain', 18 June 1928, FO 141/824, UK National Archives.

[253] Percy Loraine, 25 September 1929, WO 32/4172, UK National Archives.

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treaty were reignited as the Labour Party won the election, bringing Ramsay Macdonald into power once again. Macdonald had failed before in securing an agreement, leading to the November 1924 crisis over Sudan in which Zaghlul had resigned. This time he sought a more conciliatory approach to negotiations and attacked Chamberlain in Parliament for proposing a treaty that could never hope to pass in the Egyptian legislature.[254] The new Foreign Secretary, Arthur Henderson, found the High Commissioner in Egypt, Lloyd, to be an outdated imperialist who enraged the *Wafd*'s sensibilities and arranged to have him retired. Churchill came to Lloyd's defence in Parliament but was unsuccessful, leading to Lloyd's replacement, Sir Percy Loraine, taking over in the summer of 1929.[255] Labour was thus attempting to cast itself as a more progressive and conciliatory face to the negotiations so as to pass the treaty.

With the *Wafd* out of power, the British negotiated with a coalition of the Liberal Constitutionalists and the Monarchist Ittihadists, who were keen to strike an agreement with Britain.[256] The Labour Government conceded more than Chamberlain had, offering to reduce the level of occupation of British forces. British support for membership in the League of Nations was akin to earlier drafts and was still an important article within the drafting of the treaty. However, sensitive issues such as the control of Sudan were still left under the status quo, marginalising the nationalist demands for Egyptian sovereignty.[257] Yet there was considerable optimism that the greater flexibility from both the British Labour Government and the coalition of moderate Egyptian parties would finally conclude an agreement.

In anticipation of a successful agreement and Egypt's impending membership of the League, King Fuad visited Geneva in 1929 to review the international accords to which Egypt was a signatory.[258] Egypt's relatively extensive presence in many international regulatory accords gave hope that its full membership was imminent. Liberal leader Sidqi Pasha claimed that Egypt should have been the easiest country to gain entry to the League of Nations due to being a signatory to a host of different conventions prior to becoming a member state.[259] However, these

[254] 'Press Cutting', 10 May 1928, FO 141/824, UK National Archives.
[255] Terry, *The Wafd, 1919–1952*, 219; Deeb, *Party Politics in Egypt*, 147.
[256] Deeb, *Party Politics in Egypt*, 148. [257] Terry, *The Wafd, 1919–1952*, 219.
[258] Information Section, League of Nations, 5 July 1929, 242QO/2041, Archives de la Ministère des affaires étrangères, La Corneuve.
[259] 'L'Egypte à la Société des Nations. Importantes déclarations de Sedky Pacha et de Hafez Afifi Pacha'.

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conventions did not threaten British military control of Egypt, and the Royal Air Force wanted to discourage Egypt's adhesion to the Convention for the Regulation of Aerial Navigation.[260] Yet this degree of participation in international society was tacitly accepted by Britain as long as it had no impact on Egypt's admission as a member state of the League or Britain's ability to continue its military occupation. This was not unlike Egypt's position prior to the Protectorate, when it had been an autonomous region of the Ottoman Empire but was also a member of the ITU and UPU, which had now become subsumed by the League.[261]

One of the most significant international results of the negotiations was the completion of Sarwat's attempt to create a Nile treaty regulating the use of water. This was seen by both sides as a particularly low-hanging fruit in the negotiations, as it served to soften the question of Sudan by removing the risk of potentially weaponising the dams on the Nile against Egypt. The Labour government had been against using the dam as a coercive device against Egypt since Allenby had threatened to do so in 1924, with Ramsay MacDonald suggesting a regulatory water board.[262] In an 'exchange of notes', the water supply of the Nile was formally divided, with Egypt gaining the lion's share.[263] The government in Sudan could not undertake new irrigation projects without first complying with Egypt and its inspectors, who were given access to the Sennar dam and the Gezira irrigation area.[264] Having agreed on the division of the water, Nahas was quick to register the agreement with the League of Nations, hoping it would thereby gain some international legitimacy.[265] The relative ease through which this agreement was reached and the seeming generosity of the proportion of the water supply allocated to Egypt, however, did little to soften Egyptian claims to Sudan. For Egyptian nationalists, the dispute over Sudan was ultimately about national pride and identity rather than the perceived threat of Britain turning the water off.

[260] 'Curzon to Allenby', 20 November 1922, FO 407/195, UK National Archives.
[261] 'Charles Tufton to Eric Drummond'; 'Van Hammel to Eric Drummond'.
[262] Tvedt, *The River Nile in the Age of the British*, 111.
[263] Tvedt, *The River Nile in the Age of the British*, 145.
[264] Patrick Loch Otieno Lumumba, 'The Interpretation of the 1929 Treaty and Its Legal Relevance and Implications for the Stability of the Region', *African Sociological Review / Revue africaine de sociologie* 11, no. 1 (2007): 13.
[265] 'Al Nahas to the League Secretary General', 31 May 1929, R1840/1A/2536/2536, League of Nations Archive.

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Whilst the agreement bound Egypt and Sudan closer together over the regulation of water, the British were trying to separate them on the international level. After Stack's assassination in 1924, the British consolidated their position over Sudan's international expression to remove any existing 'ambiguity'. The Governor General of Sudan was to be the 'embodiment' of the Condominium, similar to how the Secretary of State for India was the embodiment of India at the League of Nations.[266] Britain signed the Lausanne Treaty on behalf of Sudan, as well as brought Sudan into the international convention on slavery in 1927.[267] Sudan's separate presence at international conferences enraged Egyptian officials. One such occasion occurred when Sudanese delegates were seated next to Egyptian delegates. Whether this was a mistake or by design, the seating arrangement provoked a formal protest by the leader of the Egyptian delegation, Fakhry Pasha.[268]

The British were sure to maintain representation of Sudan at international conferences in case Egypt were to take it upon themselves to speak for Sudan. In 1924, Britain lobbied for the separation of Sudan from Egyptian representation at the international conference on telegraphy, on technical grounds. The British had invested in the construction of up to ten wireless stations across Sudan, as opposed to only one in Egypt. These were grounds for Britain to argue that an Egyptian could not adequately represent Sudan at such a technical conference.[269] Similarly, Sudan could not attend a League of Nations conference on communications and transit in 1927, raising the possibility that Egypt would seek to speak for Sudan instead, superseding Britain as the broker of Sudan's voice internationally. To avoid this issue, the British planned to ensure that the official representing Egypt was not Egyptian but British, and thus would not raise the issue of Sudan at the conference.[270] Thus the practice of bringing British officers into the delegation, which was regularly practised for a colony such as India, was also applicable to a nominally independent one such as Egypt.

[266] 'John Munay to Allenby and Chamberlain', 22 January 1925, FO 141/457/2, UK National Archives.
[267] 'MacDonald to Phipps', 15 July 1924, FO 141/451/10, UK National Archives; 'H. MacMichael to Lloyd', 14 June 1927, FO 141/451/10, UK National Archives.
[268] 'G. Arthur Booth to Hartopp', 16 July 1927, FO 141/451/10, UK National Archives.
[269] 'Lee Stack to A. K. Clark Kerr', 16 January 1924, FO 141/457/2, UK National Archives.
[270] 'Nigel D. Davidson to the Foreign Office', 30 July 1927, FO 141/457/3, UK National Archives.

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Despite Egypt's nominal presence in Geneva, it did little to bypass Britain's hold on its foreign policy and negotiate its way to full League membership. Despite the coalition's willingness to conclude a treaty, without *Wafd* support, the coalition collapsed. The *Wafd* came into power once again in December 1929 in a landslide victory that saw it win 80 per cent of the popular vote. This new parliament gave a near-unanimous mandate to Nahas to reopen negotiations with Britain, with the exception of five Watanists that insisted on more direct methods to remove British control.[271] This time, Nahas expected to achieve more concessions over Sudan than Sidqi and his predecessors had. The British had placed immigration restrictions on Egyptians settling in Sudan to prevent its Egyptianisation as well as to negate the forces of nationalism that were more prevalent in Egypt than in Sudan. Nahas wanted these restrictions removed, in order to settle Sudan with a burgeoning Egyptian populace that could also take advantage of the growing irrigation and agricultural potential.[272] The obstinance of British negotiators over Sudan infuriated Nahas. After the threat made to him of annexing Sudan if Egypt did not accept the Treaty, Nahas secretly vented his frustration to the Residency, fearing that without compromise on the part of Britain, his government would soon collapse.[273]

The British themselves were less reluctant than they had been previously to negotiate with the *Wafd*. The new High Commissioner, Percy Loraine, realised that British aims in securing a treaty in Egypt could not be achieved without the popular support and legitimacy that the *Wafd* brought to the table, as well as their votes in Parliament that had led to the collapse of so many minority governments. Moreover, the British wanted to sideline King Fuad and his Ittihadist Party which they considered to have secured too much power within the Egyptian political system. The *Wafd* could serve as a counterbalance.[274] Yet, the threat that Nahas's removal of immigration restrictions, posed to British control of Sudan, was unacceptable to the British Government. By June 1930, the negotiations had once more disintegrated, and Fuad had Nahas sacked.[275] This was the closest the negotiations had come to successfully reaching an agreement, with King Fuad declaring that '90 percent of the difficulties'

[271] Percy Loraine, 6 February 1930, WO 32/4172, UK National Archives.
[272] Terry, *The Wafd, 1919–1952*, 540.
[273] Mr. Hoare, 29 April 1930, WO 32/4172, UK National Archives.
[274] 'Mr. Hoare to the Foreign Office', 28 April 1930, WO 32/4172, UK National Archives.
[275] Terry, *The Wafd, 1919–1952*, 220–21.

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had been overcome.[276] Loraine's policy towards the *Wafd* was a marked shift, that acknowledged the need to negotiate with popular nationalist intermediaries to secure an agreement, rather than seek to rule indirectly through traditional interlocutors such as moderates and the Monarchy. If there was ever to be a treaty between Egypt and Britain, it would have to be approved by the *Wafd*.

Other Egyptian factions that opposed the *Wafd*, however, believed that they could still conclude an agreement with Britain by weakening the Egyptian Parliament. Nahas was replaced by Sidqi in an ever-revolving merry-go-round of Prime Ministers either aligned with the *Wafd* or the Monarchy. Sidqi, however, aspired to break this wheel of Egyptian politics. Believing that the *Wafd* was the instigator of Egyptian instability, Sidqi set about attempting to reduce the power of the Egyptian legislature in a bid to secure an agreement with Britain. His target was the constitution, which he, with support from King Fuad, believed gave too much power to what he called the one-party tyranny of the *Wafd*.[277] He had begun drafting a new constitution that reduced the number of seats in the Senate and gave more powers to King Fuad. The Upper House, with its responsibility in amending or rejecting bills from the *Wafd*ist Parliament was now under the Monarch's thumb, as Fuad now appointed a majority (60 per cent) of members within the Egyptian Senate, effectively giving him a veto over the legislative process.[278] This he attempted to do, by closing Parliament symbolically with a large chain across the front gates to the Legislature. Sidqi's jump towards autocracy was matched by a growing resistance by the *Wafd*, which was increasingly reverting to acting as a resistance group rather than the parliamentary party it had developed into, in the late 1920s. Nahas had the chain blocking the parliament hacked down with fireman's axes and permitted *Wafd* activists to carry out bombings and assassinations against government officials.[279]

Sidqi passed his new constitution in 1930, which he ratified due to the boycott of the elections by the *Wafd* and Liberals and by fixing the election results to gain enough support to pass the unpopular constitution.[280] Having secured the political means, he and Foreign Minister Afifi

[276] 'Loraine to the Foreign Office', 8 February 1930, WO 32/4172, UK National Archives.
[277] Badrawi, *Isma'il Sidqi, 1875–1950*, 76. [278] Deeb, *Party Politics in Egypt*, 240–41.
[279] Terry, *The Wafd, 1919–1952*, 221–25.
[280] Deeb, *Party Politics in Egypt*, 243–44; Khan, *Egyptian-Indian Nationalist Collaboration and the British Empire*, 111.

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hurriedly opened negotiations with Britain. Sidqi was a favourite of Loraine and the British Residency in Cairo, yet the political instability and the rapid turnover of governments of the last six years made the British uncertain about negotiating with Sidqi.[281] British warships floated ominously outside Alexandria as riots broke out, warding off an Italian warship that sought to protect Alexandria's sizeable Italian diaspora.[282] The arrival of Gandhi, who was passing through the Suez Canal to attend the Round Table meeting in London on India's future, heightened tensions among nationalists. Much to the relief of the Residency, and to the chagrin of his many admirers in the *Wafd*, Gandhi did not proceed to visit Cairo, although several *Wafd* members travelled to Port Said to visit Gandhi as he proceeded through the Suez Canal.[283] Nonetheless, British fears of his presence sparking an anti-colonial backlash reveals how the political resistance to British rule in India was being followed in Egypt.

Sidqi's autocratic ministry was remarkably resilient, despite its lack of popular support. Although the *bête noir* of the *Wafd*, Sidqi had a similar agenda in seeking to achieve full independence, control of Sudan, and membership of the League, though where he differed was that he also intended to retain a good relationship with Britain.[284] Having proven capable of maintaining a government for two years, he approached the British again, asking for entry into the League of Nations. A meeting was agreed upon in Geneva between Sidqi and British Foreign Secretary, John Simon, and his Under-Secretary, Antony Eden. Despite a polite exchange in Geneva, the British refused to be moved on the issue of Sudan and were sceptical of Sidqi's ability to hold the government together.[285] The talks failed yet again, and Sidqi's ministry, burdened by the worldwide economic crisis and multiple political scandals, soon collapsed.[286]

Whilst the Egyptian Government had been mired in its attempt to break away from Britain's Reservations and enter the League of Nations, Britain's former Mandate of Iraq joined the League as a full member in 1932. The Iraqi government had gone through its own set of negotiations with the British Government, who had urged a form of alliance not dissimilar to the one offered to the Egyptian Government in exchange for nominal independence. The Anglo-Iraqi Treaty agreed upon

[281] Deeb, *Party Politics in Egypt*, 251.
[282] 'Loraine to Henderson', 16 July 1930, FO 407/212 No. 31, UK National Archives.
[283] Khan, *Egyptian-Indian Nationalist Collaboration and the British Empire*, ch. 5.
[284] Badrawi, *Isma'il Sidqi, 1875–1950*, 77.
[285] Badrawi, *Isma'il Sidqi, 1875–1950*, 87–88.
[286] Terry, *The Wafd, 1919–1952*, 225–27.

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in 1930 gave considerable scope for Britain to maintain military forces in Iraq, control its airfields, and have access to Iraqi oil fields. These were after all, Britain's main imperial objectives in Iraq, maintaining Iraq's position for imperial defence on the approach to India and Suez, whilst tapping its almost limitless oil reserves. This would essentially reduce Britain's role in administering day-to-day affairs in Iraq, distilling imperial interests to core objectives, whilst vacating the more expensive role of governing to the Iraqis.

Central to the agreement would be Iraq's entry into the League, which would symbolically see Iraq elevated from Mandate to 'sovereign' member state.[287] Mandates such as Iraq were supposed to have automatic access to League membership once their 'tutelage' had been complete. However, the terms on which the Mandate ended were due to British political expediencies rather than the League of Nations Mandates Commission deeming Iraq to be suitable for self-governance. Pedersen shows that the Mandates Committee, shocked at Britain's unilateral declaration of independence of Iraq and sceptical of Iraq's ability for self-governance, tried to apply extra conditions for Iraqi membership of the League. Britain having satisfied the demands of the other League Council members, the Mandates Commission acquiesced to Iraqi independence.[288]

The nature of Iraqi independence is portrayed by Pedersen as an important 'reconfiguration of power' in how colonialism manifested itself. The Mandates system itself had also been a paradigm shift in the manifestation of colonial power, but Britain quickly abandoned it in Iraq in favour of 'creating a cheap client state outside the realm of international scrutiny'.[289] Pedersen argues that this new form of governance was analysed by the German political theorist Carl Schmitt as the end of the civilisational-based order of imperialism and its replacement by an American Monroe Doctrine-style of hegemony.[290] This is certainly a prescient point, but the decision to end the Iraqi Mandate was one of several examples of Britain creating new forms of quasi-imperial sovereignty in the interwar era by effectively giving League membership to a

[287] The Anglo-Iraqi Treaty itself used the League as a guarantor of the agreement between Iraq and Britain, with the agreement of Iraq's automatic entry into the League by the end of the Mandate Manley O. Hudson, 'The Admission of Iraq to Membership in the League of Nations', *The American Journal of International Law* 27, no. 1 (1933): 133–38.

[288] Pedersen, *The Guardians*, 267, 269–77.

[289] Pedersen, *The Guardians*, 276.

[290] Pedersen, *The Guardians*, 284–85.

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new client state. Even within the British Empire, the Mandate of Palestine, as well as the South African-administered Mandate in South-West Africa, were maintained, not to mention France's other Mandates in Lebanon and Syria. This apparent shift in governance was far from universally applied and continued to co-exist alongside many other forms of colonial rule.

Arguably, Egypt represented an earlier example of Pedersen's 'reconfiguration' of imperial rule. The decision not to replicate the Third British Empire's vision of Dominion status in Egypt, was not merely symbolic but had repercussions for Egypt's constitutional development. It could not utilise the evolving nature of Dominion status to seek greater independence or League of Nations membership, as had the Irish Free State. The unilateral declaration of independence of 1922 and the attempt to apply a treaty to Egypt was a precursor to the Iraqi example but was, by the time of the Anglo-Iraqi Treaty, a failed experiment. Like in Iraq, the declaration of Egyptian independence and the Reservations had also attempted to distil British interests to the key goals, control of Suez, the Nile and Sudan, as well as the maintenance of British military forces in Egypt. Whereas in Iraq, the British had relatively reliable interlocutors, once independent, in this case being King Faisal and the Hashemite monarchy, in Egypt there were few such allies. Although King Fuad and the Liberal Constitutionalist party were sympathetic to signing a similar treaty, the popular power behind the *Wafd* made such an eventuality impossible, especially if the status quo in Sudan were maintained.

Iraq's overtaking of Egypt's status was not lost on Egyptian statesmen. The Egyptian media extensively covered the Anglo-Iraqi Treaty when it was concluded in 1930. Despite the attention, many Egyptian newspapers concluded that the Treaty in Iraq was not equivalent to Egypt's negotiations with Britain, stating that Egypt was a more significant nation, warning that the British should not attempt to pass a similar Treaty through Sidqi's 'sham parliament'. For the media, an Anglo-Egyptian Treaty could only be secured by negotiating with the *Wafd*.[291] Yet, after a decade of wrangling, Egypt was still stuck in a quasi-sovereign limbo, its status and international personality defined at Britain's whim. Despite Iraq's *de jure* elevation above Egypt, the *Wafd* was not prepared to concede hard political demands such as Sudan as the price for an increase of its status internationally.

[291] 'Loraine to Henderson', 6 December 1930, FO 407/212 No. 135, UK National Archives.

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THE ABYSSINIA CRISIS AND THE PASSING OF THE ANGLO-EGYPTIAN TREATY, 1934–1937

The paralysis that had marked Egyptian politics since 1924 would very rapidly change from 1934 onwards due to a combination of internal political factors and external pressures, as Egypt's geographic position in the British Empire took on new strategic importance. Mussolini's invasion of Abyssinia in 1935 was seen as a direct threat to Britain's hold over the Nile, Sudan and its control of the Suez Canal, threatening access to the Empire in Asia. Maintaining British influence in Egypt and ensuring that Egyptian elites did not work as a third column for Italian interests became central to British policy of securing a treaty with the *Wafd*. The tantalising offer of a seat at the League of Nations would play an important role in the discussions towards such a treaty.

Even prior to the invasion, the *Wafd* had begun a more conciliatory policy to finish the decade-long standstill of Egyptian politics and the domination of the legislature by the Egyptian monarchy. The *Wafd* hoped that the new Prime Minister, Muhammad Tewfik Nessim, would try to repeal the reactionary constitution of 1930 and return to the original document from 1923. Instead, Nessim suspended the constitution altogether. With King Fuad suffering from a severe illness by late 1934, the door was open to increased British intervention in the domestic governance of Egypt.[292] With the mounting unpopularity of the government, the Liberal Constitutionalist party abandoned Nessim, denouncing him as a collaborator and sparking student protests. The political situation had already been tense in Egypt after the Italian invasion of Abyssinia in October 1935, but British Foreign Minister Samuel Hoare misjudged the situation in Egypt. On 13 November, Hoare announced that the British government did not 'encourage' a return to either constitution.[293]

This speech confirmed to many that the British were trying to suspend legislative politics in Egypt, causing mass student rallies in the streets of Egypt on a scale unparalleled since 1919. Capitalising on the anger against the Nessim regime, disparate politicians from the rival *Wafd*, Sidqi's *Sh'ab* and Mahmud's Liberal Constitutionalists parties formed a pact against the government in December 1935, for the return of the

[292] Badrawi, *Isma'il Sidqi, 1875–1950*, 116–18.
[293] Badrawi, *Isma'il Sidqi, 1875–1950*, 118.

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constitution.[294] Although not yet in government, the coalition approached the new British High Commission, Miles Lampson, seeking to immediately reopen negotiations for a treaty with Britain.[295]

The British, too were keen to finally conclude an agreement with the *Wafd*. Egypt had become the lynchpin of maintaining British control over the Eastern hemisphere. The Reservations that Britain had maintained in Egypt had been intended to support the communications, trade, and security of the Empire, which were now under threat from growing Italian encroachment around Egypt. The potential for an invasion of Egypt from a rival European power had long been noted. In the 1921 negotiations over Egyptian independence, intelligence officer Gilbert Clayton had maintained that with Palestine to the North and Sudan to the South, it was unlikely that any local forces would pose a threat to Egypt, besides perhaps Senussi fighters from Libya, which Clayton believed that Egypt's limited armed forces could fend off. He was thus satisfied that British troops could be concentrated on protecting the rail and waterways to Sudan and Uganda, the Port at Alexandria, and of course the Suez Canal, which he somewhat ironically deemed any Egyptian Government that attempted to interfere with, mad. If an invasion of Egypt were to take place, it would come from one of the 'Great Powers'.[296]

From 1935 onwards, an Italian invasion of Egypt could come now either by sea from the Mediterranean or the Red Sea, or by land from Libya as well as through Sudan from Abyssinia, leaving Egypt surrounded.[297] The British Residency also feared collaboration from within. The Italian community in Egypt, which according to intelligence reports, numbered '54,800 souls', was considered 'the best organised and the most thoroughly disciplined foreign community in Egypt'. The Italians in Egypt were well established, with many families having settled there since the mid-nineteenth century, yet the British feared the new generation of Italian settlers that outwardly espoused a more expansionist fascist ideology. Some of these settlers had begun establishing societies such as the Society 'Naziste Allemande Italo Slav' with German and Slavic fascist

[294] Terry, *The Wafd, 1919–1952*, 228–29.
[295] Terry, *The Wafd, 1919–1952*, 229; Badrawi, *Isma'il Sidqi, 1875–1950*, 119.
[296] Gilbert F. Clayton, 21 October 1921, Mss Eur F112/260, British Library, India Office Records.
[297] Ultimately, the Italian and German invasion of Egypt in World War Two would take place through Libya rather than Abyssinia in 1940.

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groups.[298] Similar settlers had provoked outrage at the Residency in Cairo, when Italian troops under Marshal Badoglio passing through the Suez Canal were greeted by Italian expatriates with cries of 'Egitto a noi!' (We want Egypt).[299]

The British administration was particularly cautious of the influence the Italians would have on Egyptian nationalism. Large Egyptian student protests during the winter of 1935–36 were supported by the Italian diaspora, who also supplied funds to Egyptian nationalist organisations.[300] This initially benefitted the *Wafd*, as the protests led to the creation of the 'grand coalition' in December, the return to the original 1923 Constitution, and elections the following month.[301] Yet a new form of nationalism in Egypt threatened to supersede that of the *Wafd*, as the ultra-nationalist fascist ideology became increasingly fashionable.[302] Youth groups such as the Young Egypt Party with its para-military wing called the 'Green Shirts' favoured confrontational action against British domination, seeking common cause with Italy. The Green Shirts were highly confrontational to the *Wafd*, which they perceived as working through the establishment and utilising constitutional means by negotiating with the British. Street fights between Green Shirts and the *Wafd*'s 'Blue shirts' were not uncommon.[303]

The large Italian presence in Egypt encouraged the Italian Government to commence a propaganda offensive against British rule in Egypt. The perceived retreat of British control across the world throughout the 1930s played into the Italian discourse that the British Empire was in decline and ripe for overthrow.[304] Italian propaganda began boasting that Italy could destroy Britain's influence, navy and military bases in the Mediterranean within a fortnight. Britain's seeming apathy towards Italian expansion

[298] A. Keown Boyd, 'Italian Activities in Egypt and Measures Taken by the Ministry of the Interior during the Italian Crisis. September 1935 to July 1936', 11 August 1936, FO 141/762/4, UK National Archives.

[299] The Suez Canal was left open to the Italian navy throughout the invasion of Abyssinia to appease Mussolini's government 'Keown Boyd to the Residency', 7 June 1936, FO 141/762/4, UK National Archives.

[300] Keown Boyd, 'Italian Activities in Egypt and Measures Taken by the Ministry of the Interior during the Italian Crisis. September 1935 to July 1936'.

[301] James P. Jankowski, 'The Egyptian Blue Shirts and the Egyptian *Wafd*, 1935–1938', *Middle Eastern Studies* 6, no. 1 (1970): 79.

[302] Deeb, *Party Politics in Egypt*, 375.

[303] Jankowski, 'The Egyptian Blue Shirts and the Egyptian *Wafd*, 1935–1938', 83–84.

[304] 'Miles Lampson to Anthony Eden', 28 May 1936, FO 141/762/4, UK National Archives.

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into Africa seemed to confirm in the popular imagination that Italy was a rising power set to rival Britain.[305] This propaganda was also disseminated through radio *Bari*, which the Residency accused of 'constant anti-British hammerings'.[306]

The years of negotiations between Britain and Egypt had made Italians familiar with Egyptian aspirations. Former League Secretary General, Eric Drummond, now British ambassador to Italy, wrote from Rome about how Italian newspapers were claiming that Egypt was an 'ancient and present civilisation' that was 'worthy of a very different position of independence, in the concert of nations, from that which she enjoyed'.[307] The other significant objective was control of Sudan and the Nile. The Italian occupation of Lake Tsana, the source of the Blue Nile, gave them control over a large percentage of the water supply into both Sudan and Egypt. This, perhaps somewhat ironically, put Britain in a similar position to the one they had held over Egypt since the completion of the Sennar dam in 1924. This gave significant power to Italy in negotiating with Egyptian politicians; the British feared Italy would 'soon be dangling promises about Lake Tsana before the Egyptians and will seek to short-circuit our (British) influence'.[308]

As the Italian army advanced into Abyssinia, the Residency had considered sending troops across the Sudanese border to occupy Lake Tsana, yet the proximity of Italian troops led to fears of starting a flashpoint with Italy. There was the possibility of going to Geneva to stress to the League, Tsana's importance to Sudan and Egypt, but there was little hope that the League would provide the effective machinery to remove the Italians from the lake.[309] Both Britain and France cared little for Abyssinia's sovereignty, with British and French Foreign Ministers Samuel Hoare and Pierre Laval drawing up a pact in which three-quarters of Abyssinian territory would be ceded to Italy as a Mandate, whilst Lake Tsana would be occupied by Britain. The plan quickly unravelled when discovered by

[305] Sudan Agency, 'Local Reaction to Italy's Success in Abyssinia', 12 May 1936, FO 141/762/4, UK National Archives.

[306] Keown Boyd, 'Italian Activities in Egypt and Measures Taken by the Ministry of the Interior during the Italian Crisis. September 1935 to July 1936'.

[307] 'Eric Drummond to Miles Lampson', 8 April 1936, FO 141/762/4, UK National Archives.

[308] 'J. L. Maffey to Robert Vantsittart', 25 April 1936, FO 141/762/4, UK National Archives.

[309] 'Miles Lampson to Anthony Eden', 4 April 1936, FO 141/762/4, UK National Archives.

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the press in December 1935, leading to a crisis in the government and Hoare's subsequent resignation.[310]

The Residency's greatest fear was a form of secret pact between the *Wafd* or other nationalist organisations and Italy. British fears of the Italians 'dangling' Lake Tsana before them seemed to be confirmed, when reports announced that the Italians had contacted Egyptian representatives in Geneva to discuss the question of Lake Tsana and its waters, bypassing the British altogether.[311] Rumours abounded of an Italo-Egyptian non-aggression pact in the case of a war between Britain and Italy. These rumours seemed to have stemmed from a conversation between Sidqi and Nahas on a train journey to Alexandria. When challenged on these remarks, Sidqi denied them, but both he and Nahas had much to gain from even the whiff of talks with the Italians. Whether or not talks did occur, the risk of such negotiations played into the *Wafd*'s hands when negotiating with Britain, increasing the urgency of finalising an agreement with Egypt before Italy could.[312] These fears were not without some basis. Fascist Italy had played a significant outside-role in Egyptian politics prior to the Abyssinian crisis, and senior Egyptian politicians were relatively well-acquainted with Mussolini.[313] Another Egyptian minister claimed that he had been approached by an Italian Ambassador warning him that in the possibility of war, the Italian attack would come first through Egypt.[314] When confronted on these comments, the Italian Government claimed that the accusation was 'absurd'.[315]

An action plan was drafted by the British Residency to counter the potential danger of Italian influence in Egypt. In the case of a crisis, Italian community leaders were to be arrested, and there was increased monitoring of the Italian diaspora. The number of guards at all strategic points, such as bridges, dams, and oil depots, was increased, so as to protect against sabotage.[316] For many Italians living in Egypt, the measures were

[310] Tvedt, *The River Nile in the Age of the British*, 172–73.
[311] 'Anthony Eden to Miles Lampson', 26 May 1936, FO 141/762/4, UK National Archives.
[312] 'Miles Lampson to Anthony Eden', 3 April 1936, FO 141/762/4, UK National Archives.
[313] Sidqi for example had had two meetings with Mussolini in 1932 alone, Badrawi, *Isma'il Sidqi, 1875–1950*, 86.
[314] 'Percy Loraine to Miles Lampson', 24 November 1935, FO 141/568/10, UK National Archives.
[315] 'Eric Drummond to Miles Lampson', 8 April 1936, FO 141/762/4, UK National Archives.
[316] Keown Boyd, 'Italian Activities in Egypt and Measures Taken by the Ministry of the Interior during the Italian Crisis. September 1935 to July 1936'.

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perceived as a harbinger of imminent war, and many began liquidating their assets. An Egyptian Minister complained of the number of Italian portfolios being shifted to Switzerland and Holland, precipitating a stock market crash in Alexandria.[317]

With Italy deploying significant propaganda into a region where the British were deeply unpopular, the new British policy became to win hearts and minds, or as one British officer stated: 'if we cannot give Italy the knock we must try to win the Egyptian and Arab worlds to our side'.[318] By mid-1936, the Italian propaganda tone had changed from one of support for Egyptian independence, to direct threats. The continued negotiations between the Egyptian Government and the British had prompted the Italians to use the threat of chemical warfare against Egyptians, which they had used in Abyssinia, if Egypt sided with Britain in a future conflict.[319] These threats did not have the desired effect, and by August 1936, the British contented themselves that the Italian propaganda campaign had failed.[320] The Italians' use of poison gas in Abyssinia had been very controversial, and the threat of its usage in Egypt pushed Egyptians back towards the British who promised that: 'His Majesty's Government would of course assume the responsibility for protecting Egypt against any consequences of Italy's annoyance'.[321] Actions such as the planned provision of gas masks to Egypt could be employed not only to protect the civilian population, but to win the propaganda battle and counter Italian threats.[322]

Some Egyptian statesmen saw the conflict in Abyssinia as an opportunity to gain the long-coveted seat for Egypt at the League. The League had applied sanctions against Italy in November 1935, albeit half-heartedly, as oil was excluded from the embargo. The British themselves

[317] 'Lewellyn Hugh Jones to the Residency', 21 September 1935, FO 141/568/10, UK National Archives; 'Summary of Recent Italian Press Comments on the Situation in Egypt', 23 September 1935, FO 141/568/5, UK National Archives.

[318] Sudan Agency, 'Transmits Note on Local Reactions to Italian Success in Abyssinia', 25 May 1936, FO 141/762/4, UK National Archives.

[319] Keown Boyd, 'Italian Activities in Egypt and Measures Taken by the Ministry of the Interior during the Italian Crisis. September 1935 to July 1936'.

[320] 'Arthur Yencken to Anthony Eden', 20 August 1936, FO 141/762/4, UK National Archives.

[321] Cairo Residency, 'Aide Memoire', 18 October 1935, FO 141/568/10, UK National Archives.

[322] Mr. Monypenny, 'Abyssinia-Italo Dispute. Attitude of Egypt', 30 August 1935, FO 141/568/5, UK National Archives; 'Home Office to Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs', 12 September 1935, FO 141/568/5, UK National Archives.

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were somewhat reluctant to apply sanctions against Italy, as it went against their policy of appeasement and gaining Mussolini as a possible ally against Germany, but decided to press the League for sanctions, nonetheless.[323] An Egyptian official, Abdul Hamed Badawi, wrote to British Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin, asking for Egyptian participation in the League's co-ordination committee on the application of sanctions. Britain's initial response was non-committal. Having Egypt as a partner against Italy would be useful in securing Egyptian political support, yet High Commissioner Lampson warned the Foreign Office that Egypt's participation in the committee would make it difficult to avoid the question of Egyptian membership of the League, which Lampson acknowledged as one of Egypt's 'national aspirations'.[324] Simultaneously in Geneva, Egyptian representative to the disarmament conference, Fakhry Pasha, had been in contact with League officials, lamenting Egypt's lack of membership and asking the League to forward all new information about the conflict in Abyssinia and sanctions.[325] Such a move was not unexpected. Leading politicians such as Sidqi, Pasha, and Hafez Afifi had made noises in the press that the Abyssinia conflict directly affected them due to the control of Lake Tsana and the Blue Nile.[326] Egyptian politicians thus saw the Italian invasion as leverage to convince the British, as well as the League, of Egypt's readiness for League membership.

The Foreign Office was unconcerned, believing it could simultaneously gain Egyptian participation in the sanctions committee whilst restricting Egypt's bid for full League membership. Egypt could be admitted into the committee as an observer state, a position often given to non-League members in League committees. However, when the British wrote to the Egyptian Government that they could participate on the committee, they did not inform them that it would only be as an observer state. The League's sanction committee would be left to take the reputational blow of informing Egypt of its limited status.[327] As Egypt was not a League

[323] G. Bruce Strang, '"The Worst of All Worlds:" Oil Sanctions and Italy's Invasion of Abyssinia, 1935–1936', *Diplomacy & Statecraft* 19, no. 2 (13 June 2008): 226.

[324] 'Miles Lampson to Samuel Hoare', 13 November 1935, FO 141/568/6, UK National Archives.

[325] '"U.G" to the Secretary General', 5 September 1935, R3654/1/15227/19731, League of Nations Archive.

[326] 'L'Egypte à la Société des Nations. Importantes déclarations de Sedky Pacha et de Hafez Afifi Pacha'.

[327] 'Samuel Hoare to Miles Lampson', 26 November 1935, FO 141/568/6, UK National Archives.

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member, applying sanctions was voluntary and economically detrimental as both countries had signed a 'most favoured nation' clause. To encourage the application of sanctions, the British offered to assume responsibility for the 'consequences' to Egypt of applying sanctions.[328]

Egyptian willingness to apply sanctions clearly indicated that it had taken a position against Italy and in favour of Britain, yet Egypt had few military forces to protect itself if a conflict did erupt. The British had long interfered to ensure that the Egyptian army was insignificant in numbers and weak in terms of training and equipment so it could not constitute a threat to British control.[329] Yet British forces were already overstretched, and though there were significant defences at the Suez Canal, it could not defend Egypt from all sides. Moreover, since the British had purged Egyptian troops from Sudan, the defence of this large territory neighbouring Abyssinia would be conducted by Britain and its Sudanese auxiliaries under the Sudan Defence Force. The Italian invasion of Abyssinia laid bare this considerable overextension, with Britain being unable to adequately defend so many fronts, and the *Wafd* fearing that Egypt was a focal point of Italian ambitions in Africa.

With the growing international pressure from Italy, coupled with another bout of violence in Egypt's cities as student protests continued unabated, the coalition of Egyptian politicians centred around Nahas approached Lampson to reopen negotiations. Their letter ignored Sudan and was centred on the threat posed by Italy, stating that Egypt and Britain were now natural allies, as Egypt had taken up the League of Nations call to impose sanctions on Italy.[330] The British wanted to attempt to renegotiate the 1930 Treaty between Nahas and the British Labour Government, which had been agreeable to the *Wafd*, with the exception of the control of Sudan.[331] The negotiations hadn't opened in earnest when Foreign Secretary Hoare was replaced by Antony Eden, former Minister of League of Nations Affairs. Eden was keen to formally reopen negotiations with the Egyptian Government and announced the formal resumption of talks to the British Parliament in February 1936.

[328] 'Aide-Mémoire du Conseil des ministres egyptiens', 31 October 1935, FO 141/568/5, UK National Archives.

[329] L. A. Fabunmi, *The Sudan in Anglo-Egyptian Relations: A Case Study in Power Politics, 1800–1956*, New ed. of 1960 ed. (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1973), 105–6.

[330] 'Mustapha Nahas Pasha and Heads of Other Political Parties to Sir. M Lampson', 12 December 1935, FO 407/220 No. 1 Enclosure, UK National Archives.

[331] 'Miles Lampson to Samuel Hoare', 13 December 1935, FO 407/220 No. 1, UK National Archives.

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The new and relatively young Eden seemed well placed to conclude such an agreement. Eden was fluent in Arabic from his degree from Oxford University in Oriental languages, was prepared to negotiate the treaty in Cairo rather than London, and had experience working at the League and understanding Egyptian aspirations there.[332] In spite of Eden's attributes, the negotiations were very slow, and the political landscape shifted during the talks. Elections in Egypt returned another large *Wafd*-majority in parliament, confirming their popular support.[333]

Using the 1930 agreement as a basis for negotiations considerably simplified the negotiations, yet under cover of the Italian threat and the lack of readiness of the Egyptian armed forces, the British were not prepared to withdraw from Cairo and Alexandria to the Suez Canal. Negotiations formally opened in March 1936, with British Commanders trying to impress upon Nahas the 'great spirit of lawlessness abroad' and how Egypt constituted a 'temptation' to Italy and Germany.[334] Conversely, Nahas argued that Britain would be able to repel an enemy invasion of Egypt from Suez, and with sufficient airbases in Egypt, without having to maintain troops in major urban zones. The removal of British troops from the streets of Egyptian cities, was of course a highly significant symbol of the end of Britain's military occupation of Egypt, even if Egypt would be occupied from afar.[335]

The topic of Sudan could not be circumvented, and the *Wafd* insisted that the League of Nations act as a guarantor of the Treaty.[336] Percy Loraine had described how Egyptian politicians were still beholden to delivering Sudan to the Egyptian public, and that an Egyptian politician that signed away Sudan would be 'liable to assassination'. Many Egyptians still feared British control of the Nile that the British rule in Sudan entailed. Both sides were willing to see a return to the 1899 Condominium agreement, yet the Sudanese Governor General refused to allow an Egyptian battalion to return to Khartoum after the events of

[332] It is ironic that Eden, deemed a suitable candidate in resolving the 'Egyptian Question' in the 1930s would go down in history for his failed attack on Egypt during the Suez Crisis in 1956, Fabunmi, *The Sudan in Anglo-Egyptian Relations*, 107–8.

[333] Fabunmi, *The Sudan in Anglo-Egyptian Relations*, 108.

[334] 'Record of Proceedings at the Third Meeting with the Egyptian Delegation', 16 March 1936, FO 407/220 No. 80, UK National Archives.

[335] 'Miles Lampson to Anthony Eden', 17 March 1936, FO 407/220 No. 73, UK National Archives.

[336] 'Miles Lampson to Anthony Eden and Enclosure of General Weir to Miles Lampson on the 31st December 1935', 17 January 1936, FO 407/220 No. 16, UK National Archives.

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1924.[337] Negotiations began to stall, and in the midst of these disagreements, King Fuad, ever the thorn in the side of the *Wafd*, passed away, with the throne being inherited by his less-Anglophile teenage son, Farouk. An early meeting between Lampson and Farouk revealed that he believed that Egypt should 'trim her sails to whoever was the Dominating Power' and that the League was a poor guarantor of the Treaty as it might not exist in twenty years' time.[338] The British were quickly running out of allies in Egypt, leaving the *Wafd* in a stronger negotiating position.

Ultimately, the *Wafd* secured many of their goals when an agreement was finally concluded in August. Although Sudan was still a Condominium, many of the rights that had been taken away in 1924 were restored, including unlimited Egyptian immigration and the right to deploy Egyptian troops in Sudan. Meanwhile, British troops would be relocated to the Suez Canal, with the exception of those in Alexandria that could stay for a further eight years. Underpinning the Treaty was an agreement that Britain would promote Egypt's accession to the League, that the League would be an arbiter in interpreting the Treaty, and that Britain could continue control of the Canal Zone for another twenty years.[339] The agreement was successfully voted upon, with a huge majority in favour by both the Egyptian and British Parliaments.

EGYPTIAN ACCESSION TO THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS

The signing of the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty finally removed Britain as an impediment to Egyptian membership of the League of Nations. Nonetheless, Egypt still had to make a formal application, meet the standards of statehood set by the League's Sixth Committee on admissions, as well as secure support for its membership bid in the League Assembly. Rather than automatically sending an application, the Egyptian Government had agreed under Article 3 of the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty that Britain would invite Egypt as a member state. Article 3 was explicit in that within the same article, it expressly tied Britain's recognition of Egypt as a sovereign independent state to its support for admission

[337] Foreign Office, 'Memorandum on the Sudan Question in the Forthcoming Treaty Conversations', 15 April 1936, FO 407/220 No. 119, UK National Archives.

[338] 'Miles Lampson to Anthony Eden', 28 May 1936, FO 407/220 No. 143, UK National Archives.

[339] J. S. Somers Cocks, 'Summary of the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty Signed on August 26, 1936', 27 August 1936, FO 407/220 No. 304, UK National Archives.

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at the League of Nations.[340] This was provided Egypt met the requirements of the League Covenant Article 1 as a self-governing state.

The first state to invite Egypt was Iraq on 7 February 1937.[341] This was followed by other non-Empire invitations, but the Secretariat was waiting for a British invitation to materialise.[342] With no sense of alacrity, the British Government sent its invitation on 18 February.[343] To throw its considerable clout behind Egypt's admission, Britain rallied its Dominions to invite Egypt prior to its formal application to the League. Meanwhile, the British aimed for Egypt to gain entry to the League prior to the official Assembly by requesting the Secretariat for an extraordinary session.[344] The invitation ensured a clear route to an official application, which the Egyptian foreign minister Wacyf Boutros Ghali made on 4 March 1937.[345]

The League Secretariat was quick to consult the British Foreign Office to assess Egypt's fulfilment of the conditions for membership. The Treaty had legally ended the British occupation, although Britain maintained several military bases. The British affirmed that Egypt was self-governing and was recognised by Britain as such. On the question of the capitulations, which would be abolished later in May, the League had no issue with it, considering that other League members, such as China, were still under the capitulatory regime. Ultimately, Egypt was considered 'self-governing' enough for membership, but the League consulting Britain gave the latter considerable discretion in defining Egypt's status.[346]

Despite Britain agreeing to Egypt's accession, it was decided that the abolition of the capitulations and consular courts would be signed prior to Egypt's entry into the League. The Montreux Convention was signed

[340] 'Under-Secretary of State India Office to Under-Secretary of State Foreign Office', 16 February 1937, IOR/L/E/9/529, British Library, India Office Records.

[341] 'Naji Al Asil to the Secretary General of the League of Nations', 7 February 1937, R3689/1/26084/27963, League of Nations Archive.

[342] 'Letter to the Secretary General', 15 February 1937, R3689/1/26084/27963, League of Nations Archive.

[343] 'W. R. Connor Green to the Secretary General', 18 February 1937, R3689/1/26084/27963, League of Nations Archive.

[344] 'Circular Telegram to the Governments of Canada, Commonwealth of Australia, New Zealand, Union of South Africa and Irish Free State', 16 February 1937, IOR/L/E/9/529, British Library, India Office Records.

[345] Wacyf Boutros Ghali, 'Request of Egypt for Admission to the League of Nations', 4 May 1937, R3689/1/26084/28213, League of Nations Archive Wacyf Boutros Ghali was the uncle of future UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros Ghali.

[346] J. H. F. Abraham, 'Entry of Egypt into the League', 17 February 1937, R3689/1/26084/28036, League of Nations Archive.

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on 8 May 1937 by most European states and the United States, renouncing their consular courts. For Egypt, this was a symbolic removal of a form of civilisational hierarchy that had deemed Egyptian law too barbarous to try Europeans. Nonetheless, the Convention gave twelve years for these foreign states to abolish their system, meaning the results were not immediate.[347] Moreover, the Convention hardly set a universal principle and was clearly targeted to just Egypt, allowing the continuation of extraterritoriality in other states such as China.

The extraordinary session of the League Assembly was held on 26 May. Antony Eden used the Assembly to deliver overtures on Britain assisting Egypt 'to the realisation of full independence'. Many of the speakers praised Egypt for its ancient civilisation but contrasted this with the perception that its state had only just reached 'maturity'. Other representatives from Iraq and the Aga Khan who represented India however, lauded Egypt's arrival as an expansion of the non-European membership in a highly Eurocentric organisation.[348] Egypt's admission was approved unanimously at the League Assembly.

Egypt's bid for membership of the League of Nations reveals that the struggle of colonial membership went beyond formal British colonies and into the world of its informal Empire. It was in this context that Britain's imperial politics clearly overrode any normative sense of self-governance as a condition for League membership. Whilst a non-self-governing colony like India, as well as a Dominion such as the Free State could gain membership, a nominally 'independent' state such as Egypt could not, until it had complied with British interests.

Egypt's nominal independence in 1922 was an independence of Britain's making, albeit under pressure from nationalist parties. It was a form of independence that was chosen by the British administration against many that would have preferred to have either tried to legitimise British rule through a League Mandate or have given Egypt Dominion status bringing it formally into the Empire. Ironically, either of these options might have led to an earlier accession of Egypt to the League of Nations than through the unilateral declaration in 1922. Iraq had shown

[347] 'Final Act, Convention and Other Documents Regarding the Abolition of the Capitulations in Egypt' (HMS Stationary Office, 8 May 1937), Mss Eur D545/39/6, British Library, India Office Records.

[348] 'Records of the Special Session of the Assembly Convened for the Purpose of Considering the Request of the Kingdom of Egypt for Admission to the League of Nations' (League of Nations Official Journal: Special Supplement no.166, 1937), IOR/L/E/9/529, British Library, India Office Records.

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how the British were prepared to surrender the Mandate in favour of a controlled form of sphere of influence in the 1930s, whilst League membership had become implied for Britain's Dominions since the Paris Peace Conference. No such precedent existed on which Egypt might rest its case for admission.

The significance of Egypt was that it represented a normative shift in colonial rule that would attempt to reconcile nationalist demands for sovereignty and international recognition, by supporting the formal symbols of statehood whilst secretly (and sometimes overtly) controlling the levers of power. This was an attempt to rebuild indirect Empire, which had long been a hallmark of European rule, but in the age of anti-colonial nationalism. This form of independence was as Priya Satia argued, sovereignty 'evacuated of substantial meaning', or 'nominal sovereignty'.[349] The day before the signing of the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty, the Residency began to plan the incineration of their documents which revealed correspondence with the Foreign Office and files that would 'reveal the extent of Residency intervention in administration in the past'.[350] This attempt to disguise the magnitude of British rule in a nominally independent state would be the precursor to actions such as 'Operation Legacy', a later empire-wide attempt to sanitise Britain's actions in the states it was withdrawing from.[351]

This was perhaps the paradox of the League of Nations. An institution undeniably founded by the interests of imperial powers, yet a club whose membership was still coveted by many nationalist leaders. These nationalists, from the *Wafd* to *Sinn Fein* knew what kind of organisation the League was and had soured to it after their initial rejection in 1919. Although many nationalists retained an ambivalence towards the League, the international space that it provided was seen to elevate nationalist claims to statehood, by ascending the marble steps to the Palais Wilson by the shores of Lake Geneva. Most histories of the League would rightly deem that by 1937, the League had become a largely redundant institution, that had failed its primary duties of preventing conflict as conflict raged in Manchuria, Spain, and Abyssinia. Nonetheless, in spite of the departure of great powers such as Germany

[349] Satia, 'Guarding *The Guardians*', 485.

[350] 'Lewellyn Hugh Jones to the Residency', 25 August 1936, FO 141/455/6, UK National Archives.

[351] More can be found on Operation Legacy in Shohei Sato, '"Operation Legacy": Britain's Destruction and Concealment of Colonial Records Worldwide', *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 45, no. 4 (4 July 2017): 697–719.

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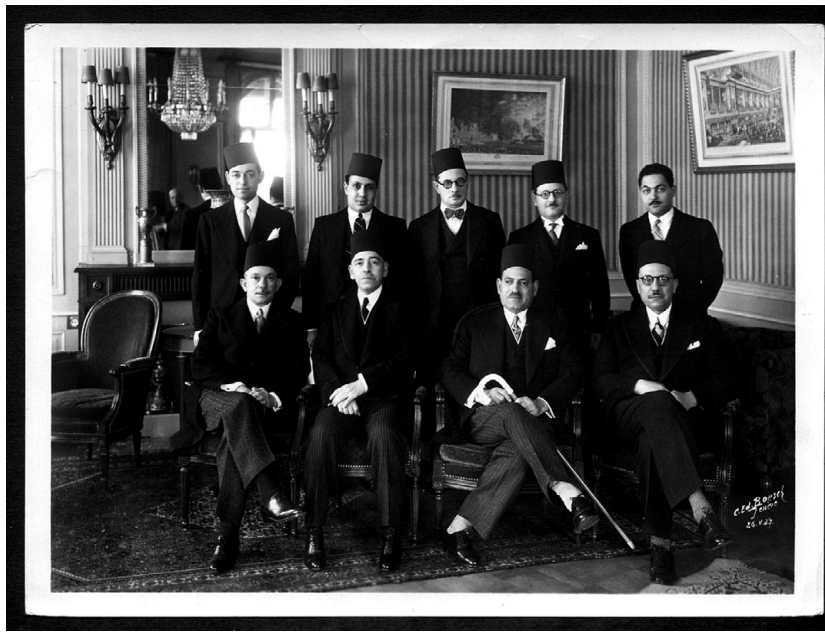


FIGURE 5.3 Official photo of the Egyptian delegation. Nahas centre right seated. *Source*: 'Delegation Egyptienne', 1937, P045_01_058, League of Nations Archive, P045_01_055. Reproduced with the kind permission from the United Nations Archives at Geneva.



FIGURE 5.4 Mostapha El – Nahas centre with the Egyptian delegation in Geneva. *Source*: 'Egyptian Delegation, Rue 31 Decembre Genève', 1937, P045_01_058, League of Nations Archive. Reproduced with the kind permission from the United Nations Archives at Geneva.

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and Japan from the League, it continued to wield some measure of totemic power for Nahas and the *Wafd*, who Abdelkarim argues that the Egyptian delegation's arrival in Geneva, in their *tarboush* hats (as pictured below), an emblem of Egyptian modernity, marked a symbol of a new Egypt taking its place among the world's nations.[352] The League's Sixth committee ratified Egypt's new status, recognising Egypt as self-governing, confirming Egypt's international status, however transitory it would be (Figures 5.3 and 5.4).

[352] Abdelkarim, 'Nuances of Recognition in the League of Nations and United Nations', 168–69.

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