

THE SIDQI REGIME IN EGYPT (1930 - 1935):

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NEW PERSPECTIVES

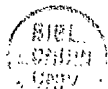
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by

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Doctor of Philosophy at the University  
of London, School of Oriental and African  
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## ABSTRACT

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This study focuses on statesmanship in Egypt in the early thirties. Following another of the periodic clashes between King Fuad and the Wafd, Sidqi was summoned to lead an emergency government. This time the constitutional crisis was complicated by the effects of a World Depression and attended by Egypt's partial recovery of its fiscal autonomy. Effective government was urgently needed then. Sidqi's background qualified him for the task which he assumed with architectonic vision and determination.

Rising above his immediate difficulties, Sidqi transformed the crisis into an opportunity to create institutions which would buttress Egypt's independence. Convinced that excesses threatened that independence, and that imbalance underlay the compound crisis, he reinstated a dynamic equilibrium which accommodated growth to stability. His immediate priority was to adapt parliamentary life to the Egyptian situation and develop the latter to make it more conducive to the former. Thus, he re-organised the Administration, amended the Constitution and instituted a government which combined effectiveness with representativeness. At the same time he implemented a protectionist policy to stimulate and diversify the economy. Perceiving the inter-dependence between structural and institutional change, he launched an energetic campaign to cultivate compatible public attitudes and values. Preaching by example, he inspired his followers and subordinates to follow suit.

Throughout, he coped with the principal political forces on the scene. With force and guile he contained his opponents and handled the British High Commissioner and the King dextrously. This enabled him to retain power long enough to institute his basic reforms.

Although he succeeded in his immediate objectives, the same background which qualified him for success combined with objective factors to undermine its consolidation. The implications of his Regime, however, outlasted its duration.



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I visited Egypt twice for prolonged intervals during this study. The first, in 1972, was prolific and active, devoted to research. I conducted a number of personal interviews with members of the family of the late Ismail Sidqi Pasha. Others were conducted with people who had been closely associated with him in one form or another. The value of these interviews essentially lay in the insight they provided into aspects of the subject of my study, although in one case they yielded worthwhile documented material. I am grateful to Mr. Mahmud Rashid, the one time political secretary of Sidqi, for the Malta memoirs. In contrast, my second visit was spent in almost total seclusion, in which time I applied myself to drafting the Chapters. I should however mention that one of my most productive and lucrative single interviews was conducted then, in Alexandria, with Mr. Muhamad el-Shazli. A special debt of gratitude, also rooted in this period, goes to Counsellor Anwar Abu Sehli, who went to lengths to prepare me a biography of his uncle (which I have, unfortunately only made restricted use of here).

I am indebted to Dr. A.K. Lashin of Ein Shams, for the excerpts from Zaghlul's memoirs, to Dr. M. Anis, Director of the Centre for Contemporary Egyptian History, for access to certain collections from the Abdin Archives, and to the late Mr. Mahmud Fahmy, Under Secretary of State, for facilities in consulting Ministerial Archives at the Presidency of the Council of Ministers.

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My warm appreciation goes to all those who have helped me in different contexts. In the early stages of my research Prof. Roger Owen willingly met my queries and made worthwhile suggestions for which I remain deeply grateful. Dr. M. Deeb (AUB), Dr. H. Habib (McGill) and Mr. A. el-Dessuqi (Helwan Technical Institute) each promptly responded to my request in connection with their theses. I benefited from some acute remarks made by my friend M. Lovall, at the LSE, who saw sections of my draft. In the final stages of my work, Miss J. Chrysostomides was friend and tutor to me giving generously of her time and constructive advice which I gratefully acknowledge.

It is obviously impossible to include here all who have helped me in one way or another. If I must single out a few names, I would like to mention Mr. M. el-Feqi, Miss N. Ghamrawi and Mrs. R. Adie.

NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION  
& SOURCES

For familiar proper names I have used the English spelling in common usage at the time. Hence, Ismail Sidqi, Mohamed Said, Saad Zaghlul, Mustafa Kamel etc. Elsewhere, in transliterating Arabic words, I have generally conformed to the method adopted in the Encyclopaedia of Islam, with slight variations.

The telegraphic and confidential correspondence exchanged between the High Commissioner and the Foreign Office is found in a limited series of indexed volumes on the Egyptian political situation and are easily accessible. (FO 407) I have therefore confined my reference generally to the document itself. Where relevant minutes and enclosures are found in the confidential despatch, which are not included in the confidential print, I have indicated the document in its original volume in the General Correspondence.

Sidqi's speeches and public addresses of a given date are generally found in the *Ahram* or the *Sha'b* of the following date. *L'Egypte Industrielle* has been my source for his more specialised addresses and his talks in the forties.

A select bibliography is included at the end of the study in which the cited primary sources are listed and, where necessary, briefly annotated. 'Primary' here refers to the source material as well as to the way I have used it, so that where I have consulted technically primary material without citing it, I have listed that in my secondary sources. The latter includes works referred to in the body of the thesis as well as a selection of others which though not used directly in a study drawing essentially on primary material, have nonetheless, been influential upon it or closely relevant to it. In listing them, I am acknowledging both this relevance and influence.

List of Abbreviations etc.

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<u>B T</u>	Board of Trade
<u>Cab. 23/24</u>	Cabinet Conclusions / Memoranda
<u>C.M.</u>	Council of Ministers
<u>C.P.</u>	Cabinet Papers
<u>DOT</u>	Department of Overseas Trade
<u>D T</u>	Daily Telegraph
<u>E C</u>	Egypte Contemporaine
<u>EFI</u>	Federation of Egyptian Industries
<u>EI (L'EI)</u>	L'Egypte Industrielle
<u>ESR</u>	Egyptian State Railways
<u>FO 371</u>	Foreign Office - General Correspondence
<u>FO 407</u>	" " Confidential Print
<u>FO 141</u>	" " Residency Archives
<u>FO 800</u>	" " Private Collection
<u>H.C.</u>	House of Commons - Parliamentary Debates
<u>MGTQ</u>	Majallat Ghurfat Tijarat al-Qahira
<u>MIQ</u>	Majallat al-Iqtisad wa'l-Qanun
<u>MMN</u>	Maqābit Majlis al-Nuwwāb
<u>MMS</u>	Maqābit Majlis al-Shuyūkh
<u>MMW</u>	Maḥādir Jalasāt Majlis al-Wuzarā'
<u>NCMPB</u>	Note to the Council of Ministers on the Project of the Budget
<u>O.M.</u>	Oriente Moderno
<u>PRO</u>	Public Record Office
<u>PVSCM</u>	Procès Verbaux des Séances de la Commission Municipale
<u>PVSDM</u>	Procès Verbaux des Séances de la Delegation Municipale
<u>P.Q.S</u>	Parliamentary Questions
<u>R.I.I.A.</u>	Royal Institute of International Affairs
<u>RMC</u>	Report on the modifications to be introduced into the Constitution...
<u>STS</u>	Ṣaḥīfat al-Tijāra wa'l-Ṣinā'ā
<u>RECE</u>	Report on Economic Conditions in Egypt
<u>TLTS</u>	Taqrīr Lajnat al-Tijāra wa'l-Ṣinā'ā
<u>YMMA</u>	Young Men's Muslim Association

## INTRODUCTION

This study is an attempt to deal with part of a controversy which surrounds a statesman and a regime, both of which have long been lost between the frailties of bias and neglect. By exploring different aspects of each in a fresh perspective it hopes to shed a light on an episode and a figure that are central to an understanding of contemporary Egyptian history and politics. The relevance of this attempt is heightened at this moment by its coincidence with the centenary of Ismail Sidqi Pasha (June 1875-July 1950).

Sidqi assumed the premiership of Egypt at two critical junctures: the first during the inter-War period (June 1930 - September 1933) and, the second, almost immediately after the War (February-December 1946). Each of his terms in office was beset with a host of problems and, in each, he assumed his challenge with a self-confidence that was only matched by an equal will and determination. In both instances, he established his claim to statesmanship and yet, in the annals of contemporary Egypt, his role has scarcely been acknowledged. Here, it is the first of his two terms in office which will be examined. For all his difficulties in 1946, he was, at least, working within an established framework of political order whose basic legitimacy was not contended by the main political parties on the scene. In contrast, Sidqi came to power in 1930 at a moment when the political balance was completely undermined and he had not only to steer a government, but also to found and impose a regime, almost single-handed in the face of imminent insurrection. This provides a ready field for exploring the creative and architectonic aspects of his statesmanship.

The historical setting of the enquiry adds to its topical relevance in some ways too. The turn of the thirties brought with it its own challenge with the onslaught of an economic depression of unprecedented severity on the one hand, and the rise of fascist regimes and movements on the European continent on the other. Both developments threatened a long-established order of production and prosperity in the West and undermined the tenets of a liberal philosophy which had dominated the turn of the century. Events though localised in origin, reverberated beyond and the test of statesmanship came to lie in its ability to grapple with their consequences. Egypt

was one of the foremost geopolitical outposts to feel the effect of developments beyond its borders as it was bound through its cotton trade to international markets and through its aspiring secular elite to European culture, while its political connections with Britain and the Capitulatory powers sealed these links. In addition, Egypt possessed its own stock of domestic problems which were complicated by the onsetting repercussions of outside events and the problems with which statesmanship had to contend were accordingly made more difficult. The challenge to statesmanship at this juncture here in Egypt, as elsewhere, was great.

At this point some similarities between the 'thirties and the 'seventies could be drawn. Just as today inflation affects all countries without discrimination, few countries could escape the rigours of the Depression in 1930. Economic preoccupations dominated then as they do now and the ability to grapple with the problems of political economy provides the measure of statesmanship in both eras. It is perhaps, worth recalling that while Egypt bore its common share of international problems at the time, under Ismail Sidqi it also presented its model of statesmanship. Sidqi proclaimed his dictum that " economic policy constitutes the heart of politics". By doing so, he introduced a radical and timely conception of power which brought with it a much needed element of realism into the Egyptian political setting.

The rise of a regime headed by a strong and determined figure however, sounded a regressive note that drew Egypt away from the orbit of the democracies and brought it nearer developments elsewhere, such as Spain, Italy and the Balkans. In the spectrum of national politics, the advent of Sidqi was reminiscent of two previous palace coups which had already, in the brief span of parliamentary life in the country- threatened a fragile experiment. Being the third in a series of such setbacks, the regime has hitherto received scarcely any attention on its own and its uniqueness is lost beneath a welter of superficial historical parallelism. In the eyes of the nationalist historian, it was merely another setback to the national movement. With the political debacle compounded by the effect of the Depression, an era of vital developments in the history of an emergent sovereign country is further shrouded in a haze of blackness, prejudice and neglect.

Other sides of the picture may yet deserve exploring. For the political historian there was the timely convergence of a number of factors which lend the Regime a uniqueness and entitle it to examination in its own right. The presence in government at that moment of a man of strong, independent views, backed by a long and distinctive political and administrative experience, and who was moreover, a veteran of the nationalist movement, coincided with the presence at the Residency of a High Commissioner who championed an unprecedented course in Anglo-Egyptian policy. This coincidence gave a peculiar turn to the course of political events as, for the first time, Egypt was ruled by a man who, more than any of his predecessors, knew his own mind and was determined to have his way, while he was fortunate enough to be supported by an equally intent and idealistic High Commissioner who was prepared to stand back and let an Egyptian statesman act. This convergence occurred at a historical juncture which reinforced its consequences, as the advent of a statesmanship fundamentally oriented towards economic questions coincided with a significant turn in economic developments in Egypt. Consequently, any unqualified identification of the regime that emerged in 1930 with its formal precursors in 1925 and 1928 would seem facile. If, in addition, it could be suggested that the distinctiveness of the Regime owed at least as much to statesmanship as to the mere fortuitous combination of circumstances, then it would be reasonable to assume the enquiry from the standpoint of statesmanship.

Statesmanship, by definition, assumes knowledge, skill and expertise in conducting public affairs. It entails the pursuit of a resolute and purposeful activity which is exerted upon events, or upon other wills. This engages it in a constant mental and physical endeavour to control, influence or mould the fortunes of the state and, in the course of its exercise, a conflict of political wills, and a clash with events, becomes inevitable. The Regime which emerged in Egypt in 1930 was the outcome of this confrontation rather than a simple expression of the will and ideals of a statesman.

This Regime was formally consecrated in the 1930 Constitution and it continued uninterrupted until the end of 1934, when it was legally abrogated. For practical purposes, the period of transition which continued until the restoration of the 1923 Constitution in December 1935,

constitutes an extension of the Regime, or its aftermath. The period between 1930-1935 thus presents a neatly defined one stretching in a solid, homogeneous six-year span. Sidqi himself, however, having laid the foundations of the Regime and presided, in part, over the beginning of its dissolution, left the helm of affairs in September 1933. The remaining year of its life saw its steady perversion into the palace regime in which it ended. The present essay confines itself to the earlier phases of the Regime rather than the later ones and to Sidqi in office rather than to Sidqi in Opposition.

This focal restriction partly conditions the approach as it postulates an architectonic statesmanship and enquires into the attempt to lay the foundations of institutions. Conversely, the scope of the enquiry is defined and comparatively restricted; it is neither the British High Commissioner, nor the Depression, nor the Regime itself which outlasted its author that are its objects. To the extent, however, that the Regime was the product of statesmanship it constitutes a relevant area for enquiry. Similarly, to the extent that the Depression was a challenging factor and the British High Commissioner and British policy were unavoidable elements in a situation in which the statesman was striving to promote the ground for stability and prosperity, they equally constitute relevant areas for study.

The Regime emerges at the crossroads of a social and political evolution, presides over an era of crisis and transition and endures long enough to consolidate embryonic traits and impress its existence on the national psyche.

Apart from its uniqueness, the integrality of the Regime to the historical whole of the Egyptian setting constitutes one of its essential characteristics. Despite its ephemerality, its timely emergence, progression and recession, it was no superfluous incident that possesses little meaning or relevance outside its own narrow confines. Nor was it an isolated 'accident' in the political history of Egypt, whose submergence by events merely served to underline its insignificance and inconsequence. It had, on the contrary, flowed just as naturally out of the mainstream of Egyptian political evolution as it later fused with the subsequent flow of that mainstream. In its emergence, it reflected the social and political forces out of which it grew; its submergence left



its subtle legacies behind, which it bequeathed, not necessarily to its specific successors but to the generality of Egyptian political evolution. The Regime partly derives its significance from its 'historicity'. Its emergence was related to a particular constellation of forces in convulsion at that historical moment and it contributed, in turn, to their evolution.

Part of the quest here is for an intrinsic element in a historical evolution which is conditioned by a complexity of elements. It is neither the passive reflections contained in the Regime which are sought, nor the Regime as a reflection of an era of transition - a refraction of a prism. The search is for a creative dimension which could be attributed to the political process, the essence of which lies in a conscious human activity. It matters little whether it is rational or otherwise, or whether it is conditioned by forces outside its realm, or whether it ultimately reflects the tension between human wills and their limitations or their obstruction by objective forces which present the constant challenge to the political will. These are considerations that can hardly detract from the principle of political activity or rob it of its creativity.

This aspect of the enquiry into the historicity of the Regime, however relevant, is only incidental and marginal to the principal quest. The Regime itself, approached from the vantage point of an architectonic statesmanship, remains its central theme.

Leadership provides a convenient conceptual point of departure in approaching a political regime on more than one count. If politics could partly be conceived as a will to power, it is the will of individuals which ultimately provides the subject of the power struggle. Even where such a struggle is perceived as a conflict between opposing and rival forces, the drama is acted out by the representatives of these forces, whether they are isolated individuals or collective, organised groups of such individuals. Perhaps, however, the single major justification for the leadership focus of the enquiry here may lie in the individualist, personalised nature of Egyptian politics. In the absence of dominant institutions and in the quicksands of ideological uncertainties and disorientation, the individual, for all his capriciousness and

inconsistencies, becomes the only solid certainty capable of dominating, even momentarily, the stage of events.

Conversely, if politics may be conceived as a version of purposeful and meaningful activity, leadership becomes an even more tangible focus for an enquiry into a political regime. For then politics is no longer solely a concentric and consecutive sequence of power struggle entailing the conflict of rival wills among infinitesimal dwarfs seeking to establish their hegemony and to satisfy an insatiable craving that ultimately becomes its own justification. In the leadership/statesmanship perspective, politics ceases to be the sterile 'tour de force', as the will to power is destined to serve ends - whether material goals in the form of personal or group interests or goals in the form of sectional or collective ideals.

One of the substantial features which contributes to the uniqueness of the Sidqi Regime lies in the advent to power of a statesman who possessed both a mature conception of the ends of political power as well as the will to apply his conception. Moreover, this coincidence of the conception with the situation in Egypt in 1930 served to lend a sense of direction to politics in circumstances that inclined towards general disorientation and confusion.

Historically, the types of government in Egypt since the inception of parliamentary life in 1924 could be identified in the following : (a) those Wafdist dominated, (b) the Palace variety, (c) coalition governments and (d) "caretaker" governments. \* The last were essentially administrative bridges to pave the way for one of the preceding variants while the coalition governments on the other hand, involved the intervention of the British to bring them about. There thus remained the two 'standing' variants of regime-types, the one dominated by the palace and the other by the Wafd. Apparently, the criterion here is whether they were imposed from above by the monarch or hailed from the people below. The fact that neither King nor people

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\* This classification is suggested in a Foreign Office memorandum drafted by the Head of the Egyptian Department, Mr. J. Murray on 5.7.1930. FO 371/14616.

qualified in the prevailing Egyptian situation for absolute sovereignty should, however, be emphasised. While the monarch was tethered to the British will, which exercised its effective constraints, the people were in effect constrained in their freedom, not merely by the objective factors common to the average under-developed situation (ignorance, poverty, etc.), but also by a hypnotism induced by their obsession with a charismatic figure and a popular idea. Consequently, while the constraints on the monarch may have mitigated the likelihood of arbitrary power, those binding the people were of a nature to foster arbitrariness.

Alternatively, some normative criterion may be sought to classify regimes to some advantage from a practical point of view. Here a distinction is suggested between regime-types dominated by an administrative set of values and others dominated by a political set of values. Classifying the types of government which emerged in Egypt since the inception of parliamentary life accordingly becomes more meaningful and relevant. On the one hand, an element of historical continuity is maintained and, on the other, the reality of change and divergence is taken into account. Governments dominated by the administrative penchant may find an affinity with those which existed prior to the parliamentary era and could well compare more generally with the colonial model. In contrast, Wafdist governments under Zaghlul and Nahas accentuate the switch to political priorities and the advent of the first Wafdist Government in 1924 may be of some revolutionary significance proclaiming as it did the inauguration of a new era of politics. Conversely, while the non-Wafdist variety of governments maintain a common denominator in their greater inclination towards the administratively orientated type, they could still be distinguished from one another by the varying combination of the two basic dimensions. The extreme administrative type may be found in the 'caretaker' variety, like Adly's in 1926 and 1929, while the palace-Government under Ziwar, following the resignation of the Liberals in 1925, and under Yahia in 1933-34 may be seen to have shifted the administrative spectrum away to a variant of the political. The coalition governments which emerged under Adly and then Sarwat in 1926 and 1927 contrived a greater balance between the political and the administrative. However, as this contrived balance was not a spontaneous development in prevailing circumstances, it needed the manipulating influence of an external agent.

In this analysis, the Sidqi Regime may be conceived as an attempt to marshall the elements of the Egyptian political setting towards an indig-enous equation. It strove partly to impose and partly to evolve a measure of harmony between the two sets of priorities. While the last Wafdist Government could have conceivably evolved towards a measure of such an equilibrium, in its own terms and in a slow circuitous manner, this could have been ill-afforded by the situation then. Sidqi consciously strove to bring about that balance, with a deliberate administrative bias, but equally with a calculated political intent. How he sought to achieve this end and create his own sources of political support in the process, constitutes an aspect of his statesmanship which is considered in the principal enquiry.

Statesmanship was not, however, operating in a conceptual void any more than it was acting in a contextual vacuum. Sidqi believed that a solid social and economic middle ground provided the sole guarantee for a stable middle ground politics, which was in turn the pre-requisite for progress. He saw, moreover, the creative minority as the driving force behind such progress and the presence of adequate institutions enabled it to assume its role. The reality he perceived around him though was quite different.

In the Egyptian context, the extremes were epitomised in the Wafd versus the monarch spectrum. The first represented a decadent minority whose ability to beguile the crowd and appeal to its primitive instincts exhausted its genius, time and energy and exposed its mediocrity. Its sole claim to rule rested on a numerical majority and the contention that superiority resided in quantity shocked the more delicate senses. The grave responsibilities of government called on a fund of morality and wisdom, practical knowledge and experienced faculties. The will to power was no justification for its command. It was a travesty to assume that the most complex of all tasks, the gravest and most far-reaching in its consequences should be left to individual frailties and mass fantasies, at the command of passion and ignorance. Competence and reason alone could adequately justify a will to power. The perverse oligarchy established itself in power by exploiting the ignorance and the passion of the crowd and by intimidating and tyrannising the erudite and competent into silence and submission. The government was geared to serving the

personal interests of its glib partisans on the one hand and catering to the whims of the masses on the other. Responsibility was denigrated and eroded; chaos was imminent in such conditions, as it could neither itself provide for progress, nor could it ensure the conditions for such progress.

The objection to the other extreme was equally a rejection in principle as one born out of historical experience. Autocracy may be benevolent or otherwise, but in either case its weakness lay in its arbitrariness and unpredictability, neither of which provided for a durable basis for that stability which was conducive to progress. In its widest implications, the monarchy as a hereditary institution and as a symbol of national power could be congenial to stability, but it was pernicious in modern civilisation if it meant that the complex affairs of the State were to be left to the monarch's personal power and to a handful of courtiers and palace officials, accountable to no one but their Royal Master, whose final arbiter was more often his passion rather than his wisdom. Palace government ensured neither competence nor progress; the country was, in fact, managed as a private estate - the King's - and the spoils were shared among those who could play on Royal caprice and seduce his wisdom where that was cultivated.

At both ends of the spectrum, the monarch and the crowd, government was an arbitrary affair. In one case, the locus of power was definable, located in a supreme individual; in the other, it was vague, residing in an anonymous mass. In both cases, effective power was in the hands of a skilfull and unscrupulous minority, regardless of its respective characteristics: as in the one they may be the wealthy, in the other the propertyless. In the one case, they would prey on the monarch to augment their wealth, the very preservation of which was dependent on the continuation of his good-will; and in the other, they would use power to create their individual fortunes. Power was personalised, not only in its exercise, but also in its use. In both extremes, arbitrariness and personalism were factors of dissipation and instability. The history of nineteenth century Egypt under the Mohamed Ali dynasty bore testimony to the dangers underlying the potential achievements under that form of government, while the brief interludes under the Wafd more recently, pointed to the dangers inherent in the other. Both forms of government - for convenience, the "Monarchical" and the "Republican" - may, however, possess their virtues in principle.

The defined locus in the one emphasised the principle of action and accomplishment. The diffusion in the other, symbolised accountability to the whole. The fact that an absolutist ethos predominated in both defeated their respective purposes. The remedy to excess lay in moderation.

The sound institutionalisation of power was a guarantee that moderation would prevail. It entrusted power to a creative minority which was, by definition, both competent and responsible. It equally retained the virtue of action without violating the mores of accountability. Above all, it depersonalised power and stabilised it. This depersonalisation of power rendered it more amenable to regulation and control and so endowing it with the elements of stability and engendering that environment conducive to progress. The creation of adequate institutions ultimately ensured that the minority which ruled was eligible for its task and that it exercised power rationally. Sidqi's search for an indigenous solution to the problems of sharing and exercising power was essentially conducted in this perspective.

The enquiry begins by casting the Regime in general perspectives, first of its author, or architect, and next of its emergence and development in the context of the power struggle. With the British integral to the peculiar Egyptian power-setting at the time, a glimpse will be shed on the internal aspect of the Anglo-Egyptian Question. Perspectives aside, the transition from the whole to the part occurs during the enquiry into the consolidation of authority, where the examination of Sidqi's leadership in a national spectrum comprises elements of both a macro-level analysis and a micro-level one. At this point, the structural pivot of the general enquiry is meant to coincide with its focal contention regarding the creative dimension of statesmanship. The sequence explores the substance of the architectonic endeavour, first by considering the political institutions which emerged under the Regime to provide the framework for political activity and, next, by examining the goals and trends of such activity in the policies which were launched. Throughout, the focus is on principles and practice as in the former instance, the conception of a new executive is postulated and its development is pursued in the course of two conflicting trends which governed its evolution. In the latter part of the essay, the goal of a more balanced and viable national economy is postulated; here the protectionist pursuits and the trend towards rationalisation are the two main themes.

In the absence of an adequate political history of the period and of the institutions of the Sidqi Regime, it has been necessary to contour historical developments and spotlight aspects of these institutions. Throughout, however, it is not the political history of the period which is the primary object of the enquiry, but it is the role of statesmanship. Thus, it is the retention of power, its institutionalisation, its exercise and its goals that provide the heart of this political essay. Part of the test of statesmanship is sought in its political agility and in its effort to grapple with adversity to promote its ends. How far it was able to impose itself upon the setting in which it acted, and how far it was compelled to drift with the current and to what extent it became dominated by forces beyond its control, constitutes a central theme throughout the presentation.

Despite its dynamic component, the choice of statesmanship as a focal point for the enquiry disposes it towards a static plane. An attempt has, therefore, been made to accommodate the temporal dimension as well. At certain points, this is explicit, as in Chapter IV, where the object of the enquiry is treated on two distinct levels, first that of the architectonics of power, where fundamental principles are sought in the new institutions, and next, on the evolutionary plane where discernible trends are pursued. Elsewhere, however, the distinction is left implicit, as in Chapter II, in examining the role of the British factor in the rise and consolidation of the Regime.

Statesmanship left its imprint on a regime and that regime left its imprint on the political evolution of an era. If, throughout the study, the theme has been that of statesmanship, and the quest for its principles, techniques, objectives and accomplishments, or, alternatively, its weaknesses and limitations, it is only in order that the enquiry should expand its horizon to consider the historical role of the regime, or point out some of its possible implications. This speculative aspect constitutes a sequence to the historicity of the regime and is dealt with in the Conclusion.

## CHAPTER ONE

### BACKGROUND TO STATESMANSHIP

#### I- Early Experiences and Formative Influences.

" The Past is an Index to the Future... "

(Sidqi. 6.12.1923)

#### A. The Early Years.

Sidqi was born in Alexandria on the 15th June, 1875, into a well-known old Egyptian family which hailed from a village in the Delta province of Gharbia.(1) The family had a tradition of public service.(2) His grandfather, Mehamed Sid Ahmad Pasha, was the Chief of Prince Sa'id's Cabinet, while his father, Ahmad Shukri, was Governor of Cairo, Under-Secretary of State for the Interior and, at one time, Director of the Sudan Administration in the Egyptian government. While the image of his grandfather is that of the charitable and learned character living in the affluent style of the epoch's ruling class, his father's is that of a capable and energetic administrator, ambitious, unscrupulous and with aspirations to modernity. His mother, Fatma Hanem Sid Ahmad, possessed a strong personality and a mind of her own, and the image she conveys is that of a woman indulgent of her private life and devoted to her public vocation. She was a pioneer in feminist education and headmistress of a school, in which capacity she channelled her creative talents. Only upon the counsel of her ageing father did she consent to marry her younger cousin, just returned from an education mission in Europe.(3) The style of the marriage and the age difference provides an interesting feature in the home in which young Sidqi grew up.

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(1) An official biographical note in Sidqi's files in the Council of Ministers' archives uses the epithet : " a well-known... "

(2) For relevant account see Sidqi's memoirs. Mudhakkirāti(1950), pp.5-6.

(3) Views on his mother and on his early upbringing are inferred from personal interviews with his daughter, the late Amina Sidqi, conducted in summer 1972.



Although not an only child, Sidqi was the youngest of four, and he was brought up in a manner that set him apart from his brothers. "His mother chose to keep him by her side" and instructed him in his leisure, so that while members of his age-group frolicked about, little Sidqi would be tucked away in a quiet, detached world of books and dreams of his own; dreams that were not merely the product of his readings, but also of the household stories he overheard. Bearing in mind the turbulent political climate at the end of Khedive Ismail's reign, the general sense of insecurity must have been reflected in the high ranks of officialdom. The echoes of indignation at foreign encroachments, at financial bankruptcy and at a receding sovereignty, may well have perplexed the young but vigilant brains of an imaginative listener. (4) Then he may have been labouring away to understand the riddle of his country's occupation and the source of anxiety to those he loved. With maturity and learning, however, childish perplexities gave way as facts and figures came to provide the key to understanding and resolving his country's problems. He discovered that he had a "natural inclination" for economics and finance, while history was a subject he learned to devour. (5) Gradually, he came to nurture a 'realistic vision' to which his entire career was anchored. The ambitions he held for Egypt did not impair his sense of political reality nor did the latter hinder his struggle for the realisation of his ambitions.

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Ahmad Shukri, Sidqi's father, had returned from his educational mission abroad, imbued with an admiration for French culture and a resolve to provide his children with a modern education. As a result, Sidqi received his primary and secondary schooling at the College des Frères where he proved himself a capable, intelligent and conscientious pupil who duly impressed his school-masters. In an auto-biographic entry, Hassan Bey Youness, a school-mate of Sidqi and a future umda (village headman) of Manfalut, records his recollections on the score.

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(4) See Sania Qorra'a, Nimr as-Siyāsa al-Misriya (Cairo, 1952), pp. 64-65

(5) Mudhakkirāti, p. 7; Sidqi was an amateur book-collector and his personal shelves abound with some rare editions like Gibbon's *Decline and Fall (1777-1788)* as well as numerous volumes of European history, French literature and biographies.

"... He was the youngest amongst us but he was the cleverest, the most ambitious and energetic, the model of virtue and good manners. I followed in his footsteps and took him for my example. As a result, I partook of a share of the esteem which his conscientiousness and good conduct evoked among his teachers and we took turns at the prefectship of the class..." (6)

The convergence of a number of factors singled him out for a situation that spelled both privilege and isolation. He earned his privileged position through hard work and impressive conduct, and became the object of envy for his less able mates as well as an example to be looked up to. The situation was confounded by his age. His peers could hardly accept a perversion of an ascriptive pattern of seniority while the young prefect, finding himself in a position that was coveted by many but only attained by the few, equally nurtured his vanity. He reacted to the general resentment his age engendered by cultivating an introversion that his home initially encouraged. The result was that complex sense of benevolent superiority, dutiful obligation and righteous self-confidence that converged to foster the paternalistic figure of later years and the convinced elitist he remained throughout life.

The Khedivial School, on the other hand, provided Sidqi with his first practical opportunity to realize his patriotic aspirations and to bridge the cultural rift with his surroundings. At the hands of distinguished scholars of the day he improved his Arabic to his satisfaction and joined Mustafa Kamel, the nationalist student leader, who was then a senior colleague at the School, in editing a bulletin, al-Madrassa. He also contributed to another patriotic literary enterprise with Lutfi al-Sayed and others in al-Sharā'i, where he edited topics on economics and law. His activism developed his political ideas and wataniya (patriotism) became a practical concept. It meant first, to hold fast onto the rights of the motherland, and to resolutely strive to achieve them; second, it meant to devote oneself to the pursuit of learning (al-ilm) not simply to prove worthy of independence, but to use it as a weapon for real independence. (7)

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(6) See Farag Soliman Fuad, al-Kinz al-Thamīn li'Udhamā' al-Misriyyīn, Part I (Cairo, 1917), p.207.

(7) Mudhakkirāti, p.7; cf. another version: 'to know where the interests of the country lie and to pursue them relentlessly;' - communicated in the course of interviews with his son, Dr. Amin and other close associates.

Sidqi started his career in 1894 at the modest salary of £5 a month. (8) His early years were spent as an assistant at the Alexandria Parquet before he joined the Alexandria municipality in 1900. Possibly, his personal connections with Mohamed Said Bey, who was then chef du parquet, was behind the handsome promotion he received in his very first year as he rose from the sixth grade to the third grade. (9) But Said was equally aware of his protégé's abilities. (10) The correspondence of the period in his personal service records casts an illuminating side-light on the public spirit and conscientiousness with which the younger Sidqi undertook his work. (11) On one occasion he felt he could take his leave a couple of days earlier as his colleague, Abu Zeid, had returned from his and so, "the work will not be affected." On another occasion he returned from his holiday abroad ten days before his leave was over, and he wrote in giving up the remaining period in order to resume work. It was not surprising that he should impress his superiors favourably wherever he went. His transfer from the Tanta Parquet in the Autumn of 1898 and his resignation from the Cabinet seventeen years later, in 1915, were two events of different purport that left their common imprint in the manifest regrets of the head of the one and the President of the other.

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(8) This section is based on material in Sidqi's personal files in the Citadel Archives in Cairo, nos. 5365/5616/1/167. The following table gives the sequence of his rise in the service between 1894 and 1915 :

<u>Function</u>	<u>Salary (£E)</u>	<u>Date of Appointment.</u>	<u>End of Service.</u>
Clerk in Public Prosecutors Office	5	14/8/1894	6/10/1894
Assistant in Alexandria parquet *	10 (8)	7/10/1894	February 1900
Secretary General, then Under-Sec. of State (Interior)	135	27/12/1908	4/4/1914
Minister of Agriculture then of Waqfs	200	5/4/1914	8/5/1915

\* He had a promotion here on 30/3/1896

(9) Mohamed Said was Minister of Interior in 1908, Prime Minister in 1911 and again in 1919; in 1924 he joined the first Zaghululist Cabinet. See personality list in FO 371/12388 (file 1353)

(10) See Kashkūl, 12.12.1924

(11) From Citadel Archives cited above.

Meanwhile, the Administrative Order of 13th December, 1908, designated Sidqi to a newly instituted post as Secretary of the Interior. In this capacity he was vested with wide powers in connection with the supervision and control of personnel, as well as with liaison functions among the Directors of the different departments and the Minister. Sidqi used to advantage his recent experience at the Municipality to reinforce his competence in his new position. It was here that he derived his stock of first-hand knowledge on conditions in the administrative services in government. Sidqi was soon promoted to be Under-Secretary of State for the Interior from his short-lived incumbency as Secretary, which was, incidentally, abolished. With the further enhancement of his authority, he occupied his new post with a rare dignity and patriotism that in some ways presaged his conduct when he came to power in 1930. (12)

It was not long before Sidqi became a Minister in the government of the day. His first political appointment in 1914 was to the recently instituted Ministry of Agriculture where he further consolidated its foundations and provided it with a cause to promote. The draft legislation on Cooperatives which he introduced then and the Consultative Council for Agriculture which he formed set the pace for the numerous institutional innovations he launched in later years. The outbreak of the War in Summer 1914, and the proclamation of the British protectorate over Egypt brought about a government reshuffle and Sidqi emerged as Minister of Waqfs. His term here came to an abrupt end in the flush of a private scandal. The Minister of Religious affairs, it was exposed, was the secret lover of the daughter of a patrician, a notorious young lady who, in a crisis of despair, had committed suicide and left behind an incriminating list of her affairs. The application of the censorship law might have restrained the Press but not the rumours. Upon the formation of the Delegation to defend Egypt's claim for independence three years later (the Wafd), his compatriots feared that his offensive reputation might prejudice their popular mandate. It galled Sidqi to realise that his tarnished public image undermined his credibility as a nationalist. (13)

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(12) For general account see Mudhakkirātī pp. 10-11

At this time Sidqi drafted a note on behalf of the Egyptian government upholding Egyptian sovereignty.

cf. below Ch. II. p. 63

(13) See Saad Zaghlul Memoirs (Mudhakkirātī) (unpublished) Note-book no. 32, pp. 1846-47; 1851.

By 1915, Sidqi had been awarded a number of grades and decorations. In 1909, he received the Mirmeran and, so, became a Pasha at the age of 34. This was preceded by the grade of Sania (Bey) in 1905 and the Medgidia in 1908, and was followed by the Osmania in 1911. (14) His awards came from across the Mediterranean too, as in 1911 the King of Italy vested him with the decoration of Commandore and, three years later, the President of the French Republic awarded him the grade of Officier de la Legion d'Honneur. (15)

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In retrospect, Sidqi left his imprint on the Egyptian setting not only as the strong man who daunted his opponents, but also, as the solitary figure who baffled observers and detractors alike. To round off this sketch of his early years it might be useful to pause briefly at this phenomenon of his political isolation and examine its likely origins there. Sidqi seems to have had a communication problem on the personal, cultural and political levels which was not, perhaps, peculiar to him as an individual, but it acquired a particular relevance in frustrating his political ambitions. This problem could possibly be referred to as a non-communicability syndrome.

Introversion was a dimension of this syndrome that was fostered by his isolated upbringing. Apart from a lifelong friendship with a boy, older than himself, the period spent at school confirmed him in an initial disposition. (16) Later, his

(14) His next awards followed in : the Grand Cordon de l'Ordre du Nil, 23/3/1918; Grade d'el-Imtiaz in 1921; Grand Cordon de l'Ordre d'Ismail, 26/3/1925; Grade d'el-Riyassa, 21/6/1930; Grand Cordon de Mohamed Ali, 10/10/1930 - In 1931, following his settlement with the ex-Khediye (see Ch.IV below) the King found no other honours to vest his Prime Minister with, so he presented the Badge of Perfection to his wife, Fatma Hanem, "as the reward which I can offer him in your person", His Majesty said. See Mudhakkirāti p.55

(15) He received La Grande Croix de la Legion d'Honneur (Fr) on 11/1/1932; in 1932 two further decorations came from Italy : Le Grand Cordon de l'Ordre du Pape Pie IX and Le Diplome de " Le Grand Cordon de l'Ordre des Saints Maurice et Lazare" - His two other decorations that same year came from Hungary and Austria.

(16) Mohamed Abdel-Khaleq Sarwat (d.1927); graduated from the School of Law two years before Sidqi and launched his career as Minister in 1914; twice Prime Minister in the 'twenties and led an Egyptian negotiating delegation in 1927 - Sidqi entertained for him respect and admiration bordering on affection. See his Mudhakkirāti, p.35 - For personality see also, FO 371/12388 .

social life was confined to restricted circles. Frequently, he retired to his country residence where he divided his leisure between reading and managing his estate. (17) His loneliness on the political stage was almost a replica of his personal solitude as a trait in childhood persisted into adult life.

There were other factors that obstructed his ability to communicate on a personal level. An outstanding intelligence, widely read and disciplined, and a methodical mind, had from early life, given him a mental advantage over his peers that was appropriately reflected in the different stages of his education. (18) In public life this early mental maturity encouraged modes of thought and reasoning and developed traits, like foresight, which might have rendered him "ahead" of his times, but ultimately, left him isolated in his age.

This was reinforced by another communication barrier. His early launching into a foreign culture deprived him of an initial grounding into the national one, while an innate intelligence and his social seclusion heightened his assimilation of foreign values and symbols. The turn his career took confirmed this barrier, as his service at the Alexandria Municipality opened up for him a social milieu and new cultural and intellectual vistas that widened the gulf between him and his countrymen.

The resulting cultural rift, eventually, separated him from the national leadership cadres and barred his accessibility to the wider public. He became the object of misunderstanding and distrust among his people and at the same time, he remained incapable of appreciating their more sensitive qualities and aspirations. As he could not appeal to them in their language or on their terms, his leadership left the people unstirred and the ground for mutual identification between leader and followers was eroded.

Moreover, his career in the Administration combined with his family tradition of public service to render the rulers-ruled complex another dimension of the syndrome. His elitism was partly a defensive gesture to overcome the communication barriers by evading them. His attempt to break out of his isolation

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(17) Contrary to convention, Sidqi did not assign a nāzir (overseer) - He equally cultivated his hobbies, like rose-gardening, and won contests.

(18) He was, incidentally, admitted to the Khedivial school at the age of 15, below the age-limit, on an exceptional basis; maintained his record of distinction and came out top of his class upon graduation.

often ended in frustration. Significantly, the universal hostility with which his constitutional venture met in 1930 was compounded by the inhibitions that surrounded his person as much as by the formalistic turn of Egyptian politics. (See below).

## B. Formative Experiences

While it is usually difficult to single out a particular episode or experience in the life of an individual and extropolate on its effects in shaping his attitudes and outlook, the attempt is sometimes worthwhile and instructive. Sidqi seems to have had three key public experiences in his youth and riper years that contributed to his distinctive formation as a statesman and nationalist. The first of these was his experience on the Commission of the Alexandria Municipality while the other two coincided with a turning point in the national fortunes. The Great War left its repercussions on the Egyptian economy and stimulated the movement for independence. An important economic commission was formed to examine the former aspect and a national delegation or (wafd) evolved to meet the latter aspirations. In both, Sidqi played a prominent role.

### 1. The Alexandria Municipality.

" The period I spent as Secretary on the Commission of the Municipality was of immeasurable value... it decidedly helped me in making my way through later on. In effect, the Municipality is but a minuscule government that contains all the different administrations that have their counterpart in the government." (19)

At the turn of the century, there emerged on the frontiers of Egyptian political institutions, a unique cosmopolitan body entrusted with governing the city of Alexandria. (20) By virtue of a convention between the Capitulatory Powers signed on 5th January, 1890, the Commission of the Municipality was vested with wide

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(19) Mudhakkirāti, p. 9; See also his elections manifesto in Ahram, 7/12/1923 and interview in weekly, Kol-Shei (No. 112) 2/1/1928, where he alludes to the impact of his municipal experience.

(20) About this body see, Municipalité d'Alexandrie, Décrets et Arrêtés relatifs à la Constitution et l'organisation de la Municipalité (Alex. 1892).

statutory powers that conferred upon it fiscal privileges which the Egyptian government itself was deprived of. The Commission was overwhelmingly foreign in composition, owing to its restrictive qualifications, and it stood as a select and closed "club" with a sophisticated system of representation. Sidqi saw himself on that body acquiring a unique apprenticeship in government.

Following a successful competition entry in 1899, Sidqi was appointed Secretary of the Commission and Director of the Contentieux. (Legal Department)(21) Six years later he was promoted to a new post as Secretary-General and his salary was raised from £E600 to £E800 per annum.(22) Throughout these years, he was involved in varied activities. Apart from the standing committees which he invariably attended, he frequently participated in special committees that were formed to deal with contingencies as they arose.(23) He was so dynamic and competent there that when he left to further his career prospects in the central government, his functions had to be divided among his successors.(24)

His term at the Municipality coincided with its reorganisation.(25) Its

(21) The subject of the contest was a French essay on the ideal system of running public transport. Having explored the pros and cons of public and private enterprise, he opted for the latter. The recollection seems interesting in view of a divergence with the Palace over 30 years later over the Alexandria Ramleh Concession. See FO 371/16116/16119 (file 239)

(22) See proceedings of the Municipal Commission (PVSCM) 26/12/1906 - Earlier he was twice promoted and received three pay rises; "une gratification mensuelle de £E10", was recorded in 1904 followed by his additional nomination a year later to the post of Director of Administrative Services.

(23) See examples below - notes 27 & 31 - The most active of the standing committees was the Finance Committee whose sittings often extended late into the night; Public Works was equally busy, with road-works and adjudications prominent on its 1907-1908 agenda. Between August and November of that year Sidqi chaired meetings as acting Administrator. See Delegation proceedings for 1908 in PVSDM .

(24) See PVSCM, 13/1/1909.

(25) A joint commission designated by the government and the municipality met on 21st October, 1902, and continued to meet regularly for the next seven weeks. It reviewed the Organic law in the light of its application, investigated corruption in the Administration and presented its recommendations to the Ministry of Interior on 13th December, 1902. Organisational issues continued to be debated long after. See for ex. Ibid., 18/5/1904



executive was strengthened, a new cadre of officials was introduced and a judicious rationalisation accompanied both. Pragmatism dictated the adoption of the institutional models compatible with the Alexandrine situation. A reflection of the prevailing mood was echoed in a member's warning, "... sans cela (i.e. the appointment of a Director), l'administration resterait sans tête et l'institution même serait en danger du fait de l'anarchie et du désordre...". (26) The episode duly impressed Sidqi who was directly involved with the ongoing proceedings. (27) He realised too, that the city itself was in a dynamic stage of development.

The expansion and transformation which Alexandria saw in the first decade of the century was directly reflected on the scope and nature of the activity of the Municipality. In due course, Sidqi became familiar with such things as the technical aspect of modernisation, the advantage of stimulating local production, the requisites for balancing the budget and centralising fiscal legislation, as well as with the more general proposition that administrative powers were a corollary of fiscal powers. (28)

Sidqi eagerly took up the challenge to prove himself as an Egyptian before his foreign associates and put his heart into what was to him more than a job. (29) The excitement around him was contagious and he identified himself with the developments and the dynamic tempo that became his own. His attentiveness to the proceedings on the Commission and on the Delegation (the executive organ) heightened, while he diligently pursued his work on the committees to improve his knowledge of the issues debated. It was in committee work too that he evolved those technical skills, like memoranda-drafting, in which he eventually excelled. (30)

(26) Ibid. The issues of anarchy and disorder continued for long to preoccupy Sidqi

(27) Sidqi was delegated at the time to the ad hoc Enquiry Commission & the Disciplinary Council set up. While two other officials were similarly delegated, it is interesting that Sidqi received the highest emolument, possibly due to his greater responsibility.

(28) Examples of some relevant sessions may be seen in those on 14/5/1902; 5/12/1906; 10/2/1906 - Ibid.

(29) Sidqi dwells on this challenge in his electoral manifesto in 1923.

(30) An influential model on the individual level may be traced to the Baron de Menace. See for ex. memo in Annex to Proceedings in PVSCM, 2/5/1906.

Moreover, as Secretary, he could not participate in the debate, but he cultivated an additional dimension of detachment that enabled him to entertain that breadth and balance which often characterised his judgement. This combination of the subjective and objective aspects of his involvement in the work of the Municipality proved a rare and inspiring one.

The period was one of practical and intensive assimilation and many of his ideas on Authority stem from it. The compound electoral system taught him to view society as a corporate entity with a plurality of interests, all legitimately entitled to representation and to the attention of Authority. (31) The latter had a delicate task before it in the process of compromise and balance in an effort to advance the general interest, while decisions could hardly be taken without taking the views of those affected into consideration. (32) It was here that the roots of government by consultation were sown. Equally, a rationalist outlook was cultivated as the Commission provided a practical model in techniques of administration. Instead of the prevailing personal and arbitrary conception of Authority, it afforded him with an institutional and objective perspective. Ultimately, it was a balanced and coherent view on the means and ends of government which came to underlie the architectonic dimension of his leadership.

Sidqi learned to handle with ability both men and issues. His contacts carried him among differentiated and distinct circles, while the absence of established traditions allocating spheres of competence rendered much of the communication between the Government and the Municipality, which passed through his medium as Secretary, of a creative and substantial nature. The skills and arts of organisation and negotiation were duly cultivated. If it was the autonomy of a local body that was then at stake, soon it would be the Sovereignty of a nation he would embark on negotiating.

His policy in later years bears testimony to the impact of his municipal

(31) The electoral college of exporters, for ex., whose grievances were brought to the attention of "Sedky Bey" had representatives of six distinct functional groups sitting in varying proportions. Ibid., 27/2/1908 - Sidqi was delegated to the electoral enquiry commission.

(32) In a note on the question of navigation in the Mahmudiah Canal Sidqi recorded his observation on a letter from the Interior noting that a certain proposal proved acceptable to the Municipality not only on grounds of viability, but also on those of its approval by affected interests, "les representants des commerces" - See Annex to Proceedings of Delegation. PVSDM, 6/1/1908

experience. Some examples may be sought in the abolition of the octroi duty, the proposed institution of a patente tax, the reform of the officials cadre and the legislation on local government, all of which occurred under his Regime in 1930. (33) Other issues too, like the reorganisation of the Municipality and the execution of the Corniche project, which were among the live issues in the 'thirties, bear some direct affinity to interests bred in this period. (34)

By confirming him in his rational instincts and in his elitism, his experience in the Municipality deepened the communicability rift. To the extent that it enhanced the prospects of the statesman, it diminished those of the popular leader.

## 2. The Commission for Trade and Industry. (1916-1917)

Sidqi was appointed to preside over a Commission of distinguished figures in the economic field whose object was to examine the effect of the War upon the Egyptian economy and to put forward recommendations for future development. (35) Although its terms of reference and powers were extensive, the practical nature and scope of its task depended largely on its conduct.

The Commission first met on 13th March, 1916 and held 38 sessions in the next 18 months. Its bureau, composed of the President and Vice-President, undertook a series of tours to inspect various workshops and factories and engaged in contacts with major business elements. The results were laid before the entire Commission in a sequence of meetings before it split into sub-committees. Meanwhile, specific aspects were delegated to particular members or outside experts. Technical education provided another area of intensive enquiry which was similarly conducted in a practical perspective. The activity of the Commission infused a corresponding zeal in the country and, upon its initiative, the first exhibition of Egyptian

(33) See below Ch. V - for some of these policies.

(34) The reorganisation of the Municipality involved an attempt to upset the status quo to the benefit of the Egyptian element. See Sidqi's letter to Loraine on 25/2/1932; and relevant correspondence in FO 371/16124 (file 726) - In exonerating himself of certain charges connected with the Corniche Road scandal, Sidqi referred - inter alia - to his experience at the Municipality. See Ahram, 25/5/1934.

(35) The vice-president of the Commission was the Director of the Department of Technical Education, Sidney Wells. Other members included Y. Aslan Qattawi, Craig, Amin Yehia, M. Tal'at Harb, F. Murdoch, H. Naus and M. Bourgeois. - For composition and terms see J.O. March, 1916

manufactures was organised at Alexandria during the summer. Its conduct provided an insight into the calibre of its leadership.

Sidqi gave the lead to a constructive venture in his "open" and "pliable" attitude. (36) Apart from adopting sound managerial principles, a mood of practical common-sense pervaded as he availed himself fully of the powers conferred upon him to overcome formal obstacles and resorted to first-hand sources wherever he could. His chairmanship involved the simultaneous exercise of authority and submission to it. This stimulated the tempo of the enquiry and lent it a breadth of spirit compatible with its purpose. While there were equally competent members on the Commission, it took the presence of a dynamic, responsive, resolute and clear-minded head to transform the body into the hive of activity it turned into and to stamp it with the unity of purpose it maintained throughout. The choice of Sidqi for its presidency was particularly fortunate, for he combined the technical and business orientation with political vision. This showed up in the Report of the Commission which he drafted and which was submitted in November, 1917. (37)

The Report appeared in about 300 pages, the core of which lay in just over one third. (38) It comprised an eloquent, forceful, balanced and comprehensive statement of the case for development, expounded in a spirit of informed moderation and realism. (39) Its essence, however, was political. Equilibrium was sought as

(36) See obituary notice by A. W. Stewart. Times, 14/7/1950 - This was the Director of the School of Arts and Crafts and Inspector of Trade Schools at the time and was closely involved in the work of the Commission. He observes in retrospect that, "...though he (Sidqi) was not a technically trained man, his quick mind grasped the essential facts of an industry and the need for modernisation."

(37) This report is distinct from two others on the impact of the War on trade and industry, submitted earlier in September and December, 1916.

(38) Sidqi personally drafted this report. The remainder comprised 30 subsidiary reports on individual industries or on particular aspects of industry which were all appended under four main headings : small industry, large industry, new industry and miscellaneous.

(39) See excerpts in Report. Taqrīr Lajnat al-Tijāra w'al Sinā'a (TLTS) (Cairo, 1925) pp. 19-20; 62-75.

a means to secure "the widest possible measure of economic independence without which political independence would be of negligible merit." (40) The exposition itself was conducted in an evolutionary perspective that stressed the ethos of progress. (41) The practical merits of the Report essentially lay in its extensive and meticulous policy recommendations. A twelve-point programme for developing industry was presented; (42) a six-point educational programme was included; (43) particular attention to a flexible tariff policy was given; (44) and the institution of a department for Trade and Industry was advocated. (45) It provided Egypt with a valid framework for its development long before the adequate executive organs were established.

In presenting the case for industrialisation, Sidqi combined the objective detachment of the rational with the ardent vehemence of the enthusiast. The vigorous physical participation in the work of the Commission and the mental consecration to the literary and intellectual background of the subject, fostered a conviction that became an integral part of the Nationalist.

The temporary respite from administrative responsibilities, thus afforded Sidqi an opportunity to devote himself to the economic aspect of the Egyptian Question. He acquired a first-hand knowledge of the fundamental social and economic structure of Egyptian society, developed an insight into its weaknesses and potentialities and emerged with a lucid framework of practical ideas which embodied the constitution for a viable economy.

(40) Ibid., pp. 95-98

(41) Industry was conceived as an index to progress as much as industrialisation itself was seen as an ongoing process which corresponded to the degree of civilisation attained at a particular moment in a given situation. (al-ḥāla al-ṣinā'iya al-monāzira li-mablagh taqqadumihi fī marāqī al-kamāl al-ʿomrāni).

(42) Ibid., pp. 95-98

(43) Ibid., pp. 111-112; also, pp. 72-73

(44) Ibid., Ch. IX and annex 29.

(45) Ibid., p. 118 - See also Ch. V below pp. 208-209

### 3. The National Movement (1917 - 1920)

Between 1917 and 1920 Sidqi played an active political role in promoting his ideal of Egyptian Independence. In October 1917, Ahmad Fuad came to the vacant throne following the decease of his uncle, Sultan Hussein Kamel. Sidqi gladly took up the opportunity of cultivating his old friendship. He became his willing confidant much to the alarm of the British Advisers who attributed the growing tension with the new Sultan to Sidqi's "pernicious" national influence.(46) But Sidqi's own private life had an unfortunate intrusive quality about it, so that, once again, following another of his "scandals" about a year later, he was removed from Palace circles, much to the relief of Sir Reginald Wingate.(47)

As the War drew to its close, a state of euphoria and expectation prevailed over the impending Peace Conference. But Sidqi, who knew his own mind, combined his enthusiasm with a clear vision and practical sense, to pen a comprehensive note on the Egyptian Question in anticipation of the event.(48) Subsequently, it formed the draft of the memorandum that the Egyptian Delegation presented to the Conference. On the basis of this note he was admitted into the ranks of the nationalist movement, which was formally institutionalised in the Wafd. The latter was a national delegation originating in a popular mandate and Sidqi's place in it was discomfitingly ambiguous from the beginning. His "unpopularity" precluded the inclusion of his name on the list circulated to secure this mandate and, only later, was he coopted into it on the exceptional authority vested in its leader, Saad Zaghlul.(49) For a moment, Sidqi stood as the indispensable embarrassment to the national movement for whom, paradoxically, he was embarrassingly indispensable.

Meanwhile, his activity confirmed him in his own self-image of a dedicated nationalist working for the good of Egypt. He assumed a consolidating influence upon the national movement as he bridged the gap between an unpopular, isolated Sultan and the Wafd. He acted in the conviction that "... if the nation flocked to

(46) See Wingate to Balfour, 31/08/1918 (Confid) in FO371/3199

(47) See Wingate to Balfour, 18/10/1918 (V. Confid) Ibid.

(48) See Mudhakkirāti, p.17

(49) See note No.13 above.

its Prince and its elite frequented his circle, a mutual understanding would evolve which could be everyone's advantage." (50) At the opportune moment too he used his personal influence with members of the Government to effect a liaison between them and the Wafd, much to the concern of the British, who reacted to the united front by deporting its instigators to Malta.

During his internment there (March-April 1919) Sidqi recorded some of his impressions. (51) These memoirs contain an eloquent and incisive indictment of British policy and underline the extent to which, in folly and vengeance, it contributed to heightening nationalist susceptibilities. They also contain a statement of principle absolving the Wafd from the stigma of revolution and emphasising its moderation. But the popular uprising was proudly acclaimed.

" The crystallisation of the determination for independence (al-*azīma al-istiqlāliya*) has occurred and... with it a stride in the cause of Egypt has been paced."

His reflections truly convey the mood of the times. A mystical sense of elation was experienced at the prospects of a cohesive body, "where each of us has absorbed the spirit of the whole" - solidly contending the righteous and noble cause. The mis-givings voiced about the Sultan's position were drowned beneath an optimistic wave of faith and confidence, before which, "personalities dwindled", and towards which, "every emotion was channelled". Generally however, a profusion of idealism is checked by realism, extremism is tempered by moderation and reason complements emotion. This phase was vital for the psychic and ideal formation of the Nationalist and the impact of subsequent developments should be seen against it.

When the deportees were later allowed to join their colleagues in Paris, Sidqi was, on all counts, the unacknowledged secretary of the Wafd there. He brought his French fluency, social agility in European circles and customary energy and ability to the service of the national cause, notwithstanding the British restrictions on the movements of the Egyptian Delegation. (52) But his

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(50) Saad Zaghlul Memoirs, Note-Book, No. 28, pp.1552 - 1553.

(51) The manuscript was made available to me by courtesy of the one-time political secretary for Sidqi, Mr. Mahmud Rashid. They fall in 17 pages of close, neat hand-writing and comprise personal reflections interspersed with an account of the internment.

(52) See Mudhakkirāti, p.21

quick perception and realism soon sensed the practical futility of these efforts and signalled an impending reversal of the Wafdist course.

In a situation where the reality of power dominated the benevolence of its ideals, Sidqi realised that it was not possible to resolve the Egyptian demands in the international context. Ultimately, it rested in British hands and their resolution on a bilateral basis was inevitable. He urged a readaptation of Wafdist tactics accordingly, and emerged at the nucleus of an informal opposition. This earned him the personal wrath of Zaghlul and a dishonourable eviction from the Delegation. On the 23rd June, 1919, the Wafd met under Zaghlul and took its decision in Sidqi's absence. (53) His private conduct in Paris, which was "offensive to his colleagues", once again prejudiced his case. (54) In effect, a difference of opinion was branded as heresy and a momentary retreat to avoid a conflagration was returned with an abrupt excommunication. (55)

Sidqi returned to Egypt disillusioned with the turn the movement was taking. He revolted against its indulgence in self-delusion and what he saw as its "foolery" of the people back in Egypt. (56) This did not however stop him from resuming his activity among the nationalists in the country, so that soon, once again in the winter, the military authorities banished him from the Capital. (57) In popular eyes though, his fate as a nationalist was sealed by the short-schrift he had been dealt.

The next phase in the national movement began with the coming of the Milner Mission in the winter of 1919-1920. This was the phase Sidqi had anticipated and which the Wafd in Paris belatedly acknowledged. Following his release from detention, as part of a general amnesty, he joined hands with the faction of Moderates. (See below) This was consistent with the rationalising influence he had hitherto exercised

(53) See Mahmud Abu'l-Fath, Al-Mas'ala al-Misriya wa'l-Wafd ( n. d. ), pp. 122-124

(54) See relevant correspondence in FO 371/ 3718

(55) See for example of difference in opinion, in letter from Sidqi in Vichi to Zaghlul in Paris, 30/6/1919 in Muhamed Anis, Thawrat Thafatha wa'Ishrin Yulyu, ( 1955 ) pp. 287-289.

(56) See letter from his colleague, Mahmud Abu'l-Nasr, the second casualty on the Wafdist list of dissentors, in Yusuf Nahas, Dhikrayat..... ( 1937 ), pp. 34-36

(57) An article by Sidqi written on 2/12/1919 commenting favourably upon Lord Curzon's speech and withheld from publication for reasons connected with his banishment, reveals him despite his moderation - a convinced nationalist. On this count he was accused of "political prejudices" that distorted his common sense. See Lee Stack to Keown-Boyd, 3/12/1919 in FO 141/448. (cf. 6143)



within the Wafd and confirmed him in his original moderation.

Sidqi's experience in the Wafd left its scars on both the career and the psyche of the nationalist. But a sense of personal injustice did not detract him from his national pursuits and a negative public image merely confirmed him in his disdain of the ignorant and passionate mob. He did, however, emerge from it with a profound distaste for authoritarianism, factionalism, and the cult of the individual, while the sense of political reality which was behind his dissension continued to temper his future conduct.

By 1920 there emerged an ambitious figure considerably involved with the course of the national movement and possessing an ideal stake in national development. At the age of 45, the traits of the politician and the statesman were maturing, but it took the practical experience of the next ten years, in an eventful political career, for them to crystallise into that form they eventually assumed when he founded a regime in 1930.

## II - Political Involvement (1920-1930)

### A. The Political Context

Egyptian politics in the 'twenties provide the natural setting for Sidqi's political involvement as well as the background to the regime that emerged in 1930. There were three principal constellations of power, or forces, that, in one form or another, dominated the arena. These were the British, the Monarch and nationalist movement, commonly identified with the Wafd. In fact, the national movement was more extensive. Among the anti-Wafd, there were two general groups, a nationalist one challenging the Wafd's monopoly, and another whose partisans were apprehensive of the outcome of the nationalist movement or hostile to it. From 1920 onwards, Sidqi may be seen in the anti-Wafd, fundamentally rooted in the nationalist camp, and, through his business interests, associated with the non-nationalist section.

It was the convergence of interests and attitudes towards the two central issues of the period, the Treaty and the Constitution, that drew Sidqi to one constellation or power group and away from the other. The group of moderates originally signified those who were prepared to negotiate a settlement with the British, and as the Wafd

accepted the principle of negotiation too, the ostensible dichotomy between the two groups posed the first milestone in the politics of formalism. The Moderates equally identified with a liberal code of government, or claimed to adhere to it. They reflected a current of opinion more than an organisation, and when they emerged with one, it was loose and infested with individualism. Apart from their Treaty objectives, their commitment was twofold ; to circumscribe Wafdist domination and to assert the constitutional base of parliamentary government, with a manifest concern for domestic reform. It was natural that Sidqi should be drawn to this group, although his distaste for partisanship made him dodge any official party commitment. (58)

In the meantime, political formalism characterised the mainstream of Egyptian politics and steadily submerged it in a welter of inconsistencies. Political appearance conflicted with political reality and the embattled power groups were caught in paradoxical conduct. This formalism operated on two distinct levels that were soon, by virtue of the 1922 Declaration, interlocked. The seeds were first sown in the dispute that arose over the leadership of the official negotiating delegation in 1920 and left their sinister echoes in the popular chants : "Occupation under Zaghlul far better than independence under Adly." This shifted the focus from the rallying war-cry of Independence to the divisive quest for the identity of the chief negotiators.

The next milestone in the politics of formalism appeared with the Unilateral Declaration of 1922 by which the British granted Egypt a qualified independence pending the resolution of Four Reserved Points in a negotiated settlement. The addenda of the Declaration provided for the creation of a parliament "with the right to control the policy and administration of a constitutionally responsible government", with whom the Treaty agreement would follow. (59) The Wafd reacted to the event by condemning the Declaration as an act of treason - on the part of the moderates who had secured it - and simultaneously, welcoming it as a spring-board to power. The promulgation of the Declaration was, moreover, accompanied by a political

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(58) Apart from a passing reference in his memoirs to his distaste to partisanship (Mudhakkirāti pp. 45 and 57), his manifesto upon his final resignation from the Sha'ih Party in 1938 contains an articulate and concise statement of his views on the score. See Ahram, 24. 8. 1938.

(59) See draft letter from Lord Allenby to King Fuad of 25th February, 1922 and Cabinet Conclusions in FO 371/7732.

crisis that presaged the subsequent instability. Anglo-Egyptian relations became the exhaust-pipe that polluted the vulnerable parliamentary institutions that emerged. The institutionalisation of the connection between the two issues brought with it another interesting development. In time, the Wafd became conciliatory towards the British and intransigent towards their rivals. As attitudes became interchangeable, the mores of nationalism were internalised while those of constitutionalism were externalised.

The ongoing institutionalisation and internalisation of ambiguous conflict patterns led to successive anomalies. A complex pattern of volatile alignments followed which involved each party in manifest contradictions. At one moment, the King aligned with the "extremists" against the "moderates"; at the next, the "moderates" aligned with the King against the "extremists" and, eventually, the "extremists" aligned with the British against both. Professed principles were subverted by mundane interests, while the momentary convergence of these interests combined with intensive rationalisations to lend a surrealistic quality to the confounded political setting.

At each juncture in the political web, Sidqi figured prominently. In the first effective Administration since the 1919 troubles and on the first official Delegation in the 1921 negotiations, he was conspicuous. Adly, who led the Delegation then, referred to him as "our youngest in years, but our wisest in wits" and left him to draft the forcible note terminating the negotiations. (60) He was, with Sarwat, the joint architect of the controversial Declaration which he viewed with a mixture of pride and contentment, determined to preserve its gains and extend them. (61) He, too, was drawn into the same anomalies as the Constitutional Liberals, now formed as a Party, who became pawns in the hands of the Monarch in fighting the Wafd. The Wafd in turn, posed as the defenders of constitutionalism in a way that rendered power their exclusive preserve. Doubly dismayed at the distortions that had overtaken the nationalist movement and parliamentary life, Sidqi was determined

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(60) Yusuf Nabaş., Safha min tarikh mişr al-ḥadīth, mufawadāt Adly-Curzon (1951)

(61) See Mudhakkirāti, pp. 25-27 and facsimile of Declaration in Sidqi's handwriting facing p. 48.

to find a radical solution that would put an end to abuse. The quest drew him into further anomalies that merely confirmed the issue of political formalism.

## 2. Sidqi's Political Career.

If Sidqi's presence in office in 1921 coincided with the emphasis on the external aspect of the national question, the focus shifted in the following year to the internal aspect. Sidqi in office in 1922 was more than Minister of Finance, for he was the intimate counsellor of Sarwat, the Prime Minister, and his right-hand man. He became the moving spirit behind an Administration committed to implementing the Declaration of Independence which, together, they had procured, and his task involved him both in liquidating the legacy of a pseudo-colonial era in which Egypt was the trustee of a team of British advisers, and in laying down what he saw as the "organisational foundations of independence." (62)

His practical experience here confirmed him in the insight into the substance of independence which he had acquired earlier, during his engagement on the economic Commission. At the same time, the Sarwat government undertook its mission in particularly difficult circumstances, shorn of the support of the Monarch and actively denounced by the populace. Sidqi first savoured the double fledged task of confrontation and asserting Authority. His distaste for factionalism grew as he watched passions prevail over reason at another critical moment of the country's development. He was disgusted to find his conscientious efforts at consolidating independence, and those of his colleague, meet with agitation, as anti-British manifestations turned against Egyptians. If the crowd might be excused its ignorance, he thought, there was less justification for its leaders. At the same time, his activity involved him in the ongoing drafting of a Constitution which consecrated the sovereignty of the nation and this brought him, with his friend Sarwat, into an internecine backdoor conflict with "surreptitious forces". (63)

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(62) See 1923 electoral manifesto. Below p. 41

(63) A spate of accusations of "secret" agreements between Sarwat/Sidqi and Lord Allenby transpired to the national press at the time and recurred in 1925. Upon the publication of Sidqi's memoirs first in 1948, a diatribe occurred between Sidqi and Hassan Nashat, one time palace favourite, which discloses their Palace source. See al-Muṣṣawar, May, 1948. The book version, in which these memoirs were later collected merely refers to "reactionary influences" (pp. 29, 30.) For Royal pin-pricks against Sidqi personally, see FO 141/448 (file 1648).

In more than one sense, his maiden political involvement here, at the cross-roads of Egypt's independence, left a profound impact which subsequent events fortified.

The next milestone in his political career came with the holding of the first elections in the following year. Although the Wafd had vehemently denounced the Constitution that was proclaimed in the Spring, in April 1923, it rallied to elections bringing with it to a new field the mass organisation that had grown out of the mobilisation for independence. The outcome of these elections was a foregone conclusion before the combination of efficient organisation and Zaghlulist charisma. Sidqi stood for them as an Independent, but vigorously maintained his conviction in the value of a truly representative parliament, including all parties and shades of opinion. "If other countries have benefited from such representation, we are in far greater need of such benefits." He especially warned against the event of domination.

"Should a single party monopolise for itself the seats in Parliament... we are bound to stumble into disaster." (64)

The warning was prophetic. The election results confirmed its implications as the dawn of an era of mass politics converged with that of parliamentary politics to the detriment of constitutionalism.

Moreover, Sidqi found himself the object of an insidious campaign which, to his distress, jockeyed him into the defensive.

"... God alone knows how I had never once imagined that the day would come when I should have to defend myself against slander.. when my record, crystal-clear, speaks for itself needing neither explanation nor justification.. Indeed, it deeply pains me to feel necessity call me to my own defence." (65)

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(64) The quotations here are taken from the electoral statement he made to the elector-delegates in his native constituency of Ghorayeb on 6.12.1923. This appeared in the Ahram on the next day.

(65). A graphic description typifying that revulsion followed : "Do not expect me to descend upon the villages with scores of supporters and boys on the riffs of cars, waving banners in the air and drums beating in reception... and the sirens of women-folk rending the skies... ( I declare) I will not take part in this or any part of it myself, nor will I resort to this deplorable innovation whereby they raid the homes in rowdy procession.. make oaths and force others to make such oaths with them,swearing upon all sorts of deities, not to forfeit that spot till all, in unison, are pledged to their demands..."

His constituency was singled out for a concerted dose of Wafdist electioneering during which he became acquainted with a novel phenomenon, batsh al-ghawghā' (mob tyranny). "From that moment on," he confessed to a circle of electors, "I have sensed my own impotence at meeting this campaign in kind." Neither by upbringing nor by disposition was he inclined to pamper the whims of the masses, and his conception of the national interest did not admit of indulging in the unedifying exercise of exchanged pejoratives. The extent of his revulsion with the ways of his opponents was commensurate with his determination not to give way. But he saw the harbingers of the Constitution, himself included, ousted, and the country was deprived, in its hour of need, of experience and ability. His later reflections on moral compulsion were backed by a vivid and concrete experience which had established him in his elitism. (66)

Sidqi's own version of electioneering was distinctive. He preceded his candidature with informal lobbying patterned on traditional village life, as he held parleys with the opinioned members of the community and evolved a consensus on the means to tackle outstanding problems of the day. This was followed by a public statement - one of the two which appeared in these elections - in which he refuted the allegations of his opponents and proclaimed his basic political principles. He presented a lucid definition of his conception of the national problem in its general dimension, as well as its "no less important" internal dimension, and outlined his political programme. This statement provided the practical credo to which Sidqi continued to adhere in future years. (67) It introduced a note of reason into a setting infested with passion and, in so doing, it gave a foretaste of a style he brought to power seven years later.

The inception of parliamentary life hastened the evolution of the power constellation as it confirmed the transfer of the tensions besetting Treaty politics to the constitutional arena. Sidqi's original dissension from the Wafdist mainstream

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(66) In the presence of a charismatic influence, Sidqi equates moral coercion with administrative coercion. Mudhakkirātī, pp. 29-30. His appeal to the public under his regime in 1930 was to urge people to think for themselves. See Ch. III below, pp. 94, 116.

(67) He stated his guidelines on public affairs in regard to specific issues ; economic independence, budget policy, economic structure of society and fiscal capitulations. cf. recommendations of parliamentary finance committee in 1926. (see below p. 45)

on an issue of opinion deepened with the onsetting difference of principle. Meanwhile, the trials of office exacerbated Wafdist tensions which inhered in its conflicting loyalties between a Party seeking power and a movement for independence. At the close of nine months, it left behind it Anglo-Egyptian relations on the brink of disruption, the Administration subverted with partisanship and the provinces plagued with factionalism. Constitutional liberties proved farcical and the practice of parliamentary government merely consolidated Zaghlulist hegemony. By November 1924, the truce between the Wafd and the Monarch had ended, and with the murder of Sir Lee Stack, Sirdar of the Sudan, British tolerance crudely snapped. The first political crisis flared up.

Sidqi joined the government that was formed in December 1924 "to save what it could of the wreck." He was appointed to the Ministry of Interior" as a reinforcing element", and all matters of political and even administrative importance were referred to him for decision. (68) He reorganised the Administration, restored confidence among officialdom and prepared for elections. The briefest convocation of parliament followed, ending in the first textual infraction of the Constitution and, a committee was formed to review the electoral law. (69) Although it was modified in August 1925, the political turn of events prevented its application. (70) Sidqi was not prepared to let the victory of the Monarch become the basis for royal autocracy. The Palace perceived in his obstructive and "discrediting" tactics a threat to its advances, particularly in the departments of the Interior, and by the Summer, his removal from office constituted the "super-imposed issue". (71) The disaffection between the two figures was reflected in the "indecent alacrity" with which a tentative resignation was snatched up in the early Autumn. The episode underlined the ultimate instability of any coalition round tactical interests and confirmed the distrust and ambiguity that underlay their mutual relationship.

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(68) See Annual Report for 1925 (paras. 233-238) in FO 371/10911

(69) The Committee was composed of M. H. Issa, Ali Maher, A. F. Yahia and Mohamed Ali, who, with the exception of the last, were all in the Cabinet in 1930.

(70) For events - See G. Lloyd, Egypt since Cromer, Vol. 2 (1934) p. 110-12. Kohn, Nationalism & Imperialism... (1932) p. 90-1; Shafiq, Hawliyat. (vol. 2) pp. 247 ff. pp. 1081-1089.

(71) See N. Henderson to Austin Chamberlain on 11.9.1925 and 12.9.1925 in FO 371/10888; for more general account see situation report of 6.12.1925 in FO 371/10889.

While his experience in 1925 established him more firmly in his negative public image, it provided him with the model for emulation and improvement in 1930. If his ruthless performance had aroused consternation among the Wafd, its outcome equally taught him a lesson. During the mutual antagonistic confrontation, he came face to face with Zaghulism as an indomitable myth which captured the public imagination and will and which, in its ubiquity and intensity, taxed the sturdiest fighter. (72) This realisation induced him to modify his approach later under his regime as he reinforced administrative firmness with an energetic campaign aimed at changing people's beliefs and values. (73)

His experience in 1925 also brought to light another basic ambivalence which characterised his relationship with the British. Unlike 1930, the British here had welcomed his advent as opportune and, in time, Sidqi's Ittehadist (palace) colleagues were anxious to attenuate this enthusiasm by exposing his duplicity towards the British. (74) For Sidqi, on the other hand, if the British were welcome counterweights to the King on the constitutional front, they were ultimately the obstacle to a much coveted national sovereignty, a fact which he could not, as a staunch patriot, forget. (75) Indeed, the British had little doubt that beneath a complacent exterior, there lay a hard core and they held him in distrustful vigilance. The acting High Commissioner at the time, Mr. Neville Henderson, expressed this attitude in a perceptive lucidity.

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(72) He aptly refers to an aspect of the charismatic phenomenon thus : shakḥṣiya gabbāra ghamarat al-bilād, i.e. a stupendous (daunting, overpowering) personality overwhelmed the land. Mudhakkirāti p.32

(73) See Ch. III below. pp 111 ff

(74) In connection with Egypt's application to the League of Nations, for ex., Sidqi urged the government to ignore advice earlier tendered it by the Residency and to address Geneva forthwith without consulting the High Commissioner. At the same time he launched his own efforts in Paris. See FO Minute of 2.9.1925 in FO 371/10911.

(75) Sidqi voiced the first official demand for evacuation in Parliament in 1945, his daughter, Amina Sidqi pointed out to me in our interview. Shortly after, she continued, at a reception, the British Ambassador greeted Sidqi with " Comment ça va notre ennemi " - to which Sidqi retorted in equal humour, "If the defence of my country's rights renders me an enemy, then I am your permanent enemy."



"... He is at heart as nationalist as Saad and I am sure he has no real love for us. I have the impression that once he has utterly crushed Saad he would like to put on his mantle as the saviour of the country from the British. He is unscrupulous and dangerous. But... far and away the most intelligent man in the government..."(76)

In the next round between the King and the Wafd, in the Summer of 1928, Sidqi was the abortive Palace candidate. (77) The Residency however, found in Mohamed Mahmud, the leader of the Liberals, a more appropriate alternative and Sidqi prudently overcame his personal disappointment. He threw in his lot wholeheartedly with the new Administration and took an active part in its political rallies and in Party counsels. (78) He was, nevertheless, critical of the temporary suspension of parliamentary life as a means of circumventing Wafdist domination. He sponsored a trend within the Party that favoured the restoration of an amended, constitution to avoid the dubious prolongation of an interim period, which was by definition, unstable. With the return of the Wafd to power in January 1930, Liberal fortunes rapidly declined. Mahmud's petulant self-abandonment was the sequel of an ineffective policy that provoked discontent in the Party at his sterile leadership. In the early months of the year, Sidqi took some initiatives to resuscitate the Party, but they were futile and merely left behind them the personal tensions which conditioned the reception he met when he arrived to lead the government in June.

Before then, however, there were other significant phases of his political and more general involvement in developments in the 'twenties. In 1926, he played an active role in bringing about the coalition government that put an end to palace rule. His role here was reminiscent of its counterpart in 1918 when he brought Wafd, Sultan and government together, and it was equally embryonic of a pattern which re-emerged at similar junctures in later years. (79) His aversion of factionalism asserted itself in the successful liaison role he assumed in Opposition and it confirmed him in his ideal of national unity.

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(76) Henderson to Murray, 25.7.1925.

(77) See Mudhakkirāti, p.38

(78) Although Sidqi denies having ever joined the Party (Ibid., p.45) there is some evidence to the contrary. See Ismā'īl Sidqi Pasha, Ṣaḥīfa Baidā' (1932) p.26 ; this does not belie his fundamental stand on partisanship. See above note - (58).

(79) See above p.34 ; Sidqi took the initiative in bringing about the united front that emerged in 1935, (see Ch.IV p.187) and again he was central to the formation of the National Front in the 'forties. See Weekly Summaries, July 8th-14th, 1943 (Secret) in FO 371/35536.

In the next phase of his political career (1926-1928), Sidqi joined Parliament, where he brought his customary vitality and a mature conception of a deputy's role. He used the Chamber as a forum for advocating his ideas on social and economic reform to cultivate a trend of opinion behind them. He urged the benefits of promoting development works like the Gebel Aulia and the hydraulic power station at Aswan, campaigned for protecting local industry and deprecated the fiscal Capitulations. (80) He presided over the financial committee with exceptional ability. (81) The budget report for 1926-1927 outlined a seven-point programme for economic development, which the Speech from the Throne at the beginning of the next session publicly endorsed. (82) He demonstrated, thereby, how government could be influenced through concrete policy proposals and their diligent pursuit. He learned too, of other ways in which parliament could provide an effective source of support to a national government in strengthening its hand on a question of sovereignty. (83) His interventions in debate were notably compact, informed and perceptive, which removed them from the manifest parochialism and average performance of the day. But it was his zealous industry in committees, out of the limelight, that confirmed his practical faith in the value of committee work for any serious parliament. The futility and ostentatiousness of the plenary sessions were even less gratifying when they combined the spectacle of numbers not only out-weighting opinion but also seeking to tyrannise it. (84) He grew convinced of the need to strike a more equitable balance within its organisation so as to secure efficiency against mediocrity and to safeguard the representative principle.

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(80) Sir Bertram Hornsby attributed the agitation against the fiscal Capitulations in the late '20's to him. See Residency despatch of 16.5.1929 in FO 371/13813; and Residency Minutes of July 1932 in FO 141/769 (file 443); for Sidqi's policy advocacy see ex. in interpellation in Chamber in MMN, 9.2.1927.

(81) Zaghul, who was President of the Chamber then, paid tribute to Sidqi's role: see Ibid, 19.7.1926 and 15.7.1927; much to Sidqi's gratification. Mudhakkirāti, p. 33.

(82) See Chamber debates in MMN, 18.2.1926; cf. 13.7.1926.

(83) See Mudhakkirāti, pp. 36-37; see example in session of 25.6.1927 where he tabled three questions. One of his general questions here presages the ambitious programme he launched in 1946 when he formed an independent Superior Council, directly attached to the Council of Ministers to lay a plan for combating poverty, ignorance and disease: a blue print for social and economic reform.

(84) The Wafdists tried to alter the statutes of the Chamber to the disadvantage of the minority during the 1927-1928 session. See MMN, 9.6.1928

When Mohamed Mahmud came to power in 1928 he vigorously took up the issue of Sidqi's candidature for the auditorship-general with the King and the matter constituted a bone of contention between them. Mahmud was anxious to placate a dangerous rival while the King was hostile to both the creation of such a post and, especially, to Sidqi's candidature for it. After all, in 1926, Sidqi had been behind the parliamentary offensive on the dilatory Royal purse, and, whatever his qualifications, he could not be welcome. (85)

By 1930, there was little doubt about Sidqi's qualifications on fiscal as well as broader economic issues. His record of active achievement and involvement in the economy reinforced this conviction. As Minister of Finance in two consecutive governments in 1921 and 1922, he had wrestled successfully with the central issue of public finances and emerged with his first budgetary feat. He balanced a critical budget, bequeathed his successors a Reserve Fund of £E 9,000,000 and laid down the foundations of a policy successive Administrations followed. (86) He explained to his compatriots how the budget was a measure of national credibility while a strong Reserve was a cornerstone for development. (87) At the same time he sought the opportunity to promote some of the ideas which he had formulated in the 1917 Report. In extending industrial credit to Bank Misr he departed from prevailing orthodoxy and set up a bold precedent. Similarly, with the 1922 legislation encouraging local production, he instituted in a mild but unmistakable beginning the principle of protectionism, which he later reinforced when he came to power in 1930. (88) Early in 1922 he actively encouraged the formation of the Association of Industries that was launched then. (89) Industry called for organisation and partnership and the new Association with its preponderance of foreign elements -

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(85) For ex. of such an offensive see Ibid, 11.8.1926

(86) See Confidential Report on Egypt for 1921 (Ch. II., government finances) enc. in Residency despatch, December 1922 in FO 407/195.

(87) See statement in 1923 electoral manifesto.

(88) See ex. in Ministerial Decrees of 22.6.1922; cf. extension of preferential treatment to local products in decree of 31.7.1930. See below Ch. V. p. 198

(89) The Federation of Egyptian Industries originated in an Association of Industries in February, 1922. For constitution and objectives see Misr al-Šinā'īya (which will be referred to below in its French version, L'Egypte Industrielle (L'EI) Vol. 1., 1924.

reflecting the objective situation in Egypt at the time - came to consecrate these principles. (90)

Sidqi also left behind him as Minister, the Economic Council. This was another expert consultative body presided over by the Minister of Finance and comprising different elements of competence and authority, inside and outside government, formed with the object of conducting systematic research into economic policies "along scientific lines".(91) Outside office, he retained his connection with what proved to be a vital and effective organ. He headed sub-committees on it set up to study the legislation on the Crédit Agricole and drafted the comprehensive memorandum on it in June 1930, just before he came to power. (92) He was similarly involved with examining the proposed tariff modifications in the new Customs regime in 1929. (93)

Between 1925 and 1930 Sidqi assumed an equally active role in private business and came in close contact with foreign, notably Continental, interests. He presided over the Egyptian Electric Co., the Komombo Sugar Co., the Deutsche-Orient and Egyptian Pharmaceuticals, while he held directorships in other Companies, notably, Tramways, the Filature Nationale, Cement Orient and Egyptian Cement and Tilbury Dredging and Contracts. (94) Faced with the prospects of Independence, foreigners sought Egyptian connections and, in Sidqi, they found more than the figure-head they needed to bolster their security. For Sidqi, it was a case where his personal interests converged with those of Egypt as he saw them. In 1929, he became the Vice-President of the Association of Industries.

(90) See Ch. V below. p. 203

(91) See Note on the formation of the Economic Council submitted by Sidqi to the Council of Ministers on 12.8.1922.

(92) See text in Ṣaḥīfat al-Tijāra w'al-Ṣinā'a (STS), July, 1930.

(93) For Customs regime, see Ch. II and V below. pp. 56-57; p. 222.

(94) Upon his advent to power in 1930, Sidqi resigned his directorship in eleven Companies. See list in Ismā'il Sidqi Pasha, Ṣaḥīfa..., p. 18

By 1930, Sidqi's reputation of long-standing interest and ability was matched by an equal credibility in business circles. Representations reaching the Residency on the unsatisfactory conditions under the Wafd quoted the views of "H. E. Ismail Sidqi Pasha" for their authority. (95) Conversely, there were those who directly attributed Sidqi's rise to power to "surreptitious" business influences and the polemic assumed an interesting form in the Press of the day. (96) While the evidence here is inconclusive, there is little doubt that Sidqi's record of credibility qualified him for the commendation of influential business elements with access to the Palace. More significantly, his record of achievement qualified him for the candidature.

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While his early career and the War interval exerted their formative influences on Sidqi, the future statesman, his practical involvement in the 'twenties provided him with the consolidating influences in this regard. Each time his appearance in government had coincided with a political upheaval and his presence was often crucial for implementing that government's programme. He contributed decisively to the cause of Independence in its early stages and later, when it was threatened. Outside office he maintained an equal vitality and a matching capacity for handling power effectively. By 1930 he was fully alive to the implications of the gathering storm in the political and economic scene and he was equally prepared for what he conceived to be a rescue-mission.

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(95) See enc. (2) in Residency despatch of 14. 6. 1930 in FO 371/14641.

(96) The authors of al-Inqilāb al-Dustouri (1931) and Fuād al-Awal (1937) for ex., see bibliography - adopted this line. For implications of Jewish community in the Regime, see Cattaoui (Cairo) and Alfred Tilche and Raphael Toriel (Alex), its official representatives, denouncing an earlier publication by a certain Maurice Fargeon of a 'Union des Juifs Libres'. See polemic in the Réveil, 28. 11. 1930 and Liberté, 29. 11. 1930 and 30. 11. 1930; For comment, denouncing any political affiliations, see La Bourse Egyptienne, 29. 11. 1930. More generally, Jewish business elements interested in the Regime, are referred to in FO 141/722 (File 352)

CHAPTER TWO

THE RISE OF THE REGIME AND ITS CONSOLIDATION

IN THE LIGHT OF BRITISH POLICY

"Politics requires particular qualities in the mind, spirit and learning... a balanced mind, that can weigh the facts and calculate the consequences, without indulging in either optimism or pessimism, and without relying on chance or rumour... Politics is like war, for it requires a bold and venturesome spirit... it differs from war in that it calls for temperance and moderation..."

(Sidqi, 3.10.1931)

"The formula of our Egyptian policy is a very simple one..."

(A. Henderson, 18.9.1929)

"We remain neutral and both sides look with diverse hopes and apprehensions to us as the potentially deciding element..."

(Loraine, 21.2.1931)

A. The Rise of the Regime

The setting for the new Regime lay in the months that shortly preceded its rise. In the space of six months, between January and June 1930, Sidqi was among those who apprehensively followed the trend of developments under a faltering Wafdist statesmanship. This was the third time, in the course of six years, for the Wafd to resume office and this time they meant to retain it at all costs. Their determination was reflected in their priorities and dictated the course of developments from the outset. For the first time, the conclusion of a Treaty with Great Britain, hitherto the raison d'être of the Wafd, was relegated to a secondary position in a programme headed by the objective of "protecting the Constitution".(1)

The new Government under Nahas took its first practical steps in the direction of consolidating its immediate power base on the political and executive levels. It ensured the coordination of the party in parliament by endorsing the statutes of the Parliamentary Wafdist Group in February, 1930. (2) These vested a central executive

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(1) See Speech from the Throne, MMN, 11.1.1930

(2) A summary of the statute is enc. in Residency despatch of 13.3.1930. (Confid.)

organ with authority such as would concentrate power in the hands of an inner group that would control the organs of government whenever the Wafd was in power. At the same time it formed within the Administration a cabal of party agents under the "Assistant" Director General, a newly created post. The Wafdisation of the government machinery in the Capital was matched by a decline in the authority of umdas and officials in the provinces as the latest local elections in May had transformed the provincial councils into Wafdist strongholds. The actual power of the Wafd grew stronger than it had ever been before. (3) To secure it however, certain basic legislation was needed in order to curb opposition, procure an effective say for the Wafd in the Courts and deprive the King of his constitutional prerogatives. The last objective was sought in the Bill of Ministerial responsibility. (4)

The proposed legislation was ostensibly introduced as a measure to protect the Constitution, qualifying as high treason any violation or suppression of it and providing for severe penalties against offending Ministers. However much the King disliked it, he knew that according to the provisions of the Constitution, it would ultimately become law. (5) All he could do meanwhile, was to use his month of grace to delay the event. But the Wafd was anxious to pass the bill before the parliamentary session ended. Upon the return of the negotiating delegation from London towards the end of May, Nahas forced the issue with the Monarch -significantly, without consulting all his colleagues. He threatened to resign unless the King gave his consent forthwith to the outstanding bill. A familiar pattern appeared to repeat itself here, as the King and the Wafd quarrelled at a moment of apparent rupture in Anglo-Egyptian negotiations. Yet, beyond the formal similarity with previous

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(3) See details on the Administration under the Wafd in letter from Keown-Boyd to Smart on 25.5.1930 in FO 371/14615

(4) For copy of Bill and accompanying explanatory note, see enc. in Residency despatch of 25.6.1930 (Confid); for history and nature, see letter from Judicial Adviser to Oriental Secretary of 24.6.1930 and FO confidential despatch of 4.8.1930. Cf. Law 32/1922 (penal code amendment) See Allenby to Curzon, 15.10.22 in FO 371/7769

(5) Article 35 in 1923 Constitution stipulates that if the King fails to return the bill to Chamber within 1 month it would be promulgated and come into force. "The interpretation... is arbitrary... it would be more correct to deduce an opposite meaning." RMC, p.19

events in 1924 and 1927, the crisis in 1930 had its distinctive features. The transformation that overtook the Wafd itself as it was at a critical phase of its evolution from a nationalist movement to a ruling Party was among these features. Forced to come to terms with the Treaty eventuality, the Wafd was anxious to protect itself from an anticipated treacherous thrust that would exploit the concessions inevitable in any Treaty and oust it from power. It seized the cordiality prevailing with the British, notwithstanding the breakdown in negotiations, to effectively undermine the position of the King. In fact, neither the Wafd nor the King himself would have acted in the present clash without probing British reaction.

The Socialist government which had come to power in Britain in the Spring of 1929 was then pursuing a line of policy which, in effect, constituted a novel departure in the annals of Anglo-Egyptian relations. (6) It was genuinely anxious to reach a settlement on the Egyptian Question with a "freely-elected representative government." (7) It was explicit in its intentions and confident in its ability. To prove its good-will, it proclaimed its resolution to refrain from intervening in all affairs not related to the four Reserved Points as it was convinced that such interference could only hinder the desired objective. As a result of this policy the Wafd was restored to power and treated to a series of concessions by the British. (8) When negotiations broke down towards their end over the Sudan, one of the Reserved Points, the rupture was declared temporary; Mr. Henderson extended his good-faith in proclaiming an "open door policy". (9) As the constitutional crisis developed during the month of June, the Secretary of State's personal sympathies counselled a more flexible interpretation of British neutrality on the side of the Wafd. Indeed, by interjecting his opinion at a critical juncture of its development, he underlined

(6) The novelty lies more in the rapprochement with the Wafd. Theoretically, British policy since 1922 maintained its consistency. See FO Memorandum by Mr. A.F. Orchard on 24.7.1934.

(7) See statements by the Under Secretary of State, Mr. Dalton, at Welwyn on 29.8.1929; and by the Secretary of State later in the debate on the Adjournment on 23.12.1929. H.C. (vol. 233).

For Anglo-Egyptian relations between 1929 and 1934, see memorandum by H. Godwin on 9.4.1936 in FO 407/219.

(8) See Loraine to Henderson, 19.1.1930. (Confid).

(9) Times, 9.5.1930



his difference from earlier British Administrations.

" I have no regrets that we came to grips with political reality, the Wafd, and ceased chasing political phantoms... and it is certainly right, now, to do all we can to keep the door open and the friendship firm." (10)

The Foreign Office was ready to forego the implications of the controversial bill if this would keep the way clear for the Treaty. The last thing it wished was to mar the political climate which seemed so "unbelievably good." (11)

Much of the credit for rehabilitating Anglo-Egyptian relations went to the British Representative who had arrived in Egypt in the previous Autumn to implement the new Labour policy. Sir Percy Loraine was a talented diplomat and he differed radically from his predecessor, George Lloyd, who was steeped in the imperial tradition. (12) Loraine himself was fundamentally a humanitarian who saw "no loss of prestige or dignity in treating human beings as such," and whose self-avowed purpose was "to take the sting out of Anglo-Egyptian relations." (13) He had assumed office at a difficult moment and succeeded by dint of his discreet handling in winning the confidence of both the King and the Wafd. His Fabian principles made him a capable devotee of the policy of non-intervention, to which he substantially contributed. (14) This was particularly evident with the outbreak of the constitutional crisis as he faithfully reported back on the situation and sought

(10) See FO Minutes, 27.5.1930.

(11) Loraine to Selby, 3.2.1930.

(12) Loraine, Rt. Hon. Sir Percy Lyham (of Kirkharle) - b. November, 1880 d. May 1961; educated at Eton and New College, Oxford; Spent 25 years in the Foreign Service between Constantinople, Tehran, Rome, Peking, Madrid, Warsaw and Athens before coming over to Egypt from where he was promoted to Angora and ended his diplomatic career in Rome. UK delegate on special Commissions inc. Peace Conference (1918-1919) - A character of integrity and perception with a passion for fairness; a conscientious idealist and perfectionist. Lord Lloyd's was a Colonial Office career. See biography in C.F. Adams (1948) in bibliography.

(13) From Gordon Waterfield, Professional Diplomat (1973) p.166

(14) For examples see telegraphic despatches, Loraine to Henderson on 12.6.1930 and 8.7.1930 and 12.7.1930 - For contrast with views of Egyptian Dept., see FO memo of 5.7.1930. FO 371/ 14616

guidance, but, typically, anticipated his instructions. (15) Unlike his political masters in Whitehall, he clearly saw the implications of the proposed bill and was less sanguine of it; his political conscience however, counselled a strict observance of neutrality in consistence with past Labour professions. Indeed, actuated by the twin desire for fairness and consistency, Loraine was to steadily imprint British policy with his scruples and carry it beyond the original intentions of the Labour Government. For the moment though, he acted with its full authority and the communication which he made to the King and to Nahas respectively on British policy had been endorsed by the Cabinet earlier. (16)

This policy communication influenced subsequent developments in a manner which neither the parties to the dispute in Egypt nor the Labour Government in London could foresee. Loraine made it clear to the former that while HMG would remain strictly neutral to the internal issue at stake between them, it attached the utmost importance to the pending Treaty settlement. To Nahas he added his counsel, purely as "a private friend", urging him not to precipitate a crisis at this juncture<sup>(17)</sup> But Nahas, who was heartened by the communication and possibly, by the disarming friendliness of the High Commissioner, dismissed it. His immediate power preoccupations were more compelling. The King, on the other hand, took little comfort from the communication which merely added to his immediate difficulties.

During the two weeks in which the constitutional issue was at stake there was acute anxiety in the Palace. The King found reprehensible the personal conduct of his Prime Minister upon his return from London and, soon, the tension was compounded by the substance of the outstanding issues between them. He had anticipated the breakdown in the negotiations which would embarrass the Government and provide the opportunity to get rid of it. The mutual flirtations between Mr. Henderson and Nahas however, perplexed him and the "open-door" proclamation was even more annoying. But he did not spend his time in idle contemplation. Eager to test the British reaction at closer range, particularly to the topical bill, he sent

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(15) Cf. Loraine to Henderson, 12. 6. 1930 & Henderson to Loraine, 24. 6. 1930.

(16) See Cabinet Conclusions on 4. 6. 1930 in Cab. 23/64

(17) Loraine to Henderson, 10. 6. 1930 ( Tel./Confid.)

his emissaries to the Residency. (18) Their readings of the barometer there were more confusing than helpful and, for the first time he was at a real loss. He was caught between anxiety and despair before the evasive professions of neutrality which were coupled with the warning against anything that might upset prevailing Anglo-Egyptian good-will. The prospects of the Bill of Ministerial Responsibility were particularly galling for it was intended to tip the balance permanently to his disadvantage, and before the distracting development of a Wafdist-Labour axis, he realised he could only play for time. It was a grim future he feared, for himself and his son. (19) But Fuad was a gambler and rather than succumb to apparent British indifference to his fate, he took advantage of it and met the challenge of his smug Prime Minister with a vengeance. "When Nahas Pasha throws down the gauntlet, the King knows how to pick it..." was the spirit which beckoned in the next government. (20)

In inviting Sidqi to lead the new Government the King was knowingly adding fuel to smouldering ashes, for he could not have found a more ruthless and able exponent for his anti-Wafdist offensive. Rumours circulating earlier of nocturnal exchanges between Sidqi and the Palace lent a semblance of premeditation to the Royal offensive and confirmed growing fears of an assault on the Constitution. Twice, in the brief span of parliamentary life the former had been in danger and on both occasions Sidqi was conspicuous. (21) The link between the new arrival and its authority-bound precursors was reinforced. Sidqi's appearance now jogged the memory of rivals and opponents alike and provoked an ominous public reaction which was aggravated by its timing.

The historical context confounded reactions to the crisis out of which the Regime arose as the growing telegraphic service of the national press satisfied local

(18) Loraine to Henderson, 3.6.1930. (Confid)

(19) See Fuad's conversation with a British resident in Egypt - communicated in Hoare to Henderson, 18.10.1930 (V. Confid); cf. FO Memo. on 21.6.1930 and FO Minute on 3.7.1930 anticipating an anti-dynastic turn.

(20) The King said this in a private audience to Adly, who was then President of the Senate. See Loraine to Henderson 14.7.1930. (Tel.) Cf. Note by Selby on record of conversation with Ziwar on 22.7.1930. (FO memo) FO 371/14617

(21) For political involvement in the 'twenties see Ch.I. p. 39 ff.

curiosity on developments elsewhere. It may be suggested here that when a deputy rose in the Chamber and threatened to bash in the biggest head in the land that dared to tamper with the Constitution, and similarly, when the outgoing Wafdist assembly vouched for the sacrosanctity of that Constitution, they were both over-reacting to events beyond Egypt, as much as to real home-spun fears. (22) The apprehensive anticipation which had filled the Wafdist press columns in the week preceding the resignation of the Cabinet contributed to moulding public attitudes in a manner prejudicial to the new Regime, and more generally, to the constitutional cause itself. In the following month, the repercussions of world events continued to exercise their impact on the nationalist psyche and the same rebellious deputy, for example, did not refrain from incursions in the same vein; this time in the national press. (23) The margin of liberal intellectuals, led by the editor of the Siyāsa, was among the most vulnerable to this impact, and suggestions in the House of Commons that Egyptians were possibly not worthy of democratic institutions, provoked a belligerent defensive which partly precipitated an eleventh-hour volte-face by the Constitutional Liberal Party against the Regime. (24) Nor did the implications of the Fascist wave on the other side of the Mediterranean escape the critics of parliamentary life in Egypt. The Report which provided the modified Constitution with its rationale contained its share of anti-liberal influences in the derogatory allusions to parliamentary institutions it contained. (25)

Meanwhile, the World Depression which had set in with the Autumn of 1929, was a crucial feature in the historical setting and, it too, left its political repercussions. Indeed, two particular questions arise in considering the implications

(22) See MMN, 17.6.1930 & 23.6.1930

(23) The offending deputy and journalist, Abbas al-Aqqad, was subsequently prosecuted on a charge of lèse-majesté over a series of articles in al-Moayyed in September, 1930 - An undated publication by him denouncing European autocracies on the rise may be attributed to this period. See al-Hukm al-Muṭlaq.

(24) See below pp. 59-60  
See esp. Commons debates on 29.7.1930. H.C. (Vol 242 )

(25) See for ex., the allusion to the "decadence of parliamentary institutions" in RMC p.5 - See further ex. pp. 12, 24, 25.

of the economic situation in 1930 on political developments in Egypt. The first is whether the apparently impulsive conduct of the Wafd was directly related to its immediate economic difficulties. Here, although no direct link between the Wafdist resignation and the former can be conclusively ascertained, there is little doubt that they contributed to the sense of insecurity which overwhelmed its leadership. The onsetting repercussions of the Depression in Egypt, mainly reflected in the sharp fall in cotton prices, emphasised the incompetence of the Wafdist Administration and disclosed its readiness to gamble with the economy in the short-run in order to maintain its popularity. (26) It realised however, that it could not escape the consequences of its pursuits indefinitely and its alarm led to such random measures as the massive draft made on the Government account in the National Bank, in the week before Nahas forced his hand with the Monarch. (27) Irresponsibility gave way to panic and the urgency of despatching the Wafd's political problems seems to have dawned on the Minister of Finance, Makram Ebeid, who was second to none in Nahas Pasha's counsels at the time. (28) The Wafd, too, was not insensitive to the uneasiness its mediocrity in administrative matters, and in the management of the economy, provoked among interested quarters and critics alike. The invective Sidqi incurred on his arrival was partly a measure of this awareness.

The second question here concerns the opportuneness of Sidqi's arrival at this juncture. It coincided with a turning point in the national economy as the new Customs regime, which was under preparation in the relevant government departments during 1929, came into force in February 1930. The last of a series of

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(26) It was not its intervention in the cotton market that was reprehensible, as this was a practice common to all governments - But it was reproached for its indulgence in it in worsening conditions for the absence of an alternative policy.

(27) See confidential memorandum on economic situation under the Wafd by the Commercial Secretary, R. Turner, 14.6.1930. For Wafdist defence see letter to the editor from Makram Ebeid. Times, 14.7.1930 - Challenged in the same columns on 18.7.1930 by M. A. Abboud.

(28) See Loraine to Henderson, 19.1.1930 (Confid.) - Ebeid's personal conduct in the Ministry of Finance was not inspiring. See note of Financial Adviser to the Residency of 11.6.1930, and further note on 28.7.1930. (Confid.)

commercial agreements concluded in the latter part of the nineteenth century, the Agreement with Italy of 1889, had expired in 1929, and for the first time in fifty years, Egypt was free to regulate its tariff legislation. (29) The event was greeted jubilantly particularly among industrial circles. Egypt was seen to have made a "geste de principe" in favour of its local production.

"Cette année, 1930," the President of the Association of Industries, M. Henri Naus, happily observed, "a marqué dès son début, une orientation heureuse vers un régime économique plein de possibilités d'avenir." (30)

Industrial interests which stood to benefit most from these possibilities reorganised themselves into the Federation of Egyptian Industries to mark the development of corporative interests within big industry and to underline its national character. At a moment when its prospects of regeneration were good, industry could hardly regard with equanimity the complications attending the Depression and the aberrations of an incompetent administration. Sidqi's protectionist creed, backed by a practical record of achievement, made him the most eligible candidate for the ministry of the economy at this turning point. (31) If his appearance at the head of the new government provoked a stormy political reception, it was welcome among business circles.

The situation, however, was an integral whole and, in imposing itself on the statesman, it presented him with simultaneously incongruent and interlocking elements. International currents aggravated the background of distrust against which the constitutional crisis in Egypt evolved. Sidqi's own professions of a constitutional faith in the interlude preceding the promulgation of the new Constitution in October 1930, meant little against his actual record of commissions, while the duplicity and formalism in which Egyptian politics were cast did even less to simplify their language and conduct. (32) The climax of the Wafdist programme

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(29) This freedom was actually qualified in view of existing Capitulations. See Ch. V below. p. 222.

(30) General Assembly of the Egyptian Federation of Industries, 7.4.1930.

(31) See Ch. I. pp 47-48

(32) For political context see Ch. I. p. 36 ff.

which had led to its debacle, vitiated the substance of the constitutional component that was formally contended. The more general effect of the Depression itself was to confound lucidity among the politically conscious and to encourage a sullen and irritable mood among the general public. The situation called for sobriety, as well as a clear vision and a ruthless will. Sidqi realised that self-restraint needed to be combined with self-assertion, for his possible command of his objectives was not matched by an equal control of his course. The timing of his arrival and the reactions he elicited left him little room for manoeuvre. But he was not dispirited. His strongest asset lay in a robust self-confidence and in his innate love of a challenge. The first quality ensured him his sobriety and the second, his determination, while the trials of the previous decade backed vision with experience, so that he knew precisely what he wanted.

Sidqi saw in the elimination of the excesses of the nationalist movement a condition for national prosperity and progress. The Wafd had to be contained, the Administration entrusted to elements of ability and merit, and power distributed more equitably among its legitimate contenders. The absence of a Treaty with Britain undermined internal stability, while the conclusion of one was complicated by British scruples over the representative character of its negotiating partner. Sidqi felt that he could reconcile effectiveness with representativeness, neutralize the Wafdist menace, rescue the country's administration and finances and, conclude an Anglo-Egyptian settlement which would crown his own earlier efforts in 1922. Such was the national mission which he felt he was destined to assume and for which he temporarily sacrificed his private business interests. (33)

His immediate priority, however, was political survival. The primary elements of the situation were not particularly encouraging. An ambitious but frightened Monarch provided, for the moment, the regime's main source of stability, while lukewarm and unsteady pockets of support were not entirely absent. Otherwise, a hostile public and an aggressive Opposition, together with a reticent and unpredictable British presence hovering in the wings were the only other certainties on the scene. The principles of statesmanship in the circumstances called for the containment and control of hostile forces and the cultivation of confidences wherever possible.

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<sup>p 4.7</sup>  
(33) See Ch. I, <sub>A</sub> - Sidqi saw himself then as a business man - See Ch. III below, p 122

Sidqi's first act in power was to issue a proclamation of his intentions and an outline of his policy. He affirmed the resolve of his government to maintain order and stability and to devote its efforts to the economic crisis. Despite the diffuse generality and apparent complacency of the manifesto, each of its carefully couched statements contained a vital message for the particular sector of the public at whom it was aimed. The exhortation to calm, coupled with veiled threats, was directed at the Wafd; the assurances about the economy at the business community; the affirmations of the constitutional intentions of his government at the British; and the assertions of equity and justice to the Constitutional Liberals, the recent victims of Wafdist excesses. The subtle division of the anonymous public he faced was typical of Sidqi's concrete approach, while the entire gesture was characteristic of a style he developed and refined throughout his stewardship in an attempt to overcome the traditional trappings of authority and to establish his personal credibility. (34) It did little, however, to allay suspicions and fears, while the rational gesture accompanied by the symbolic renunciation of partisan allegiances and the proclamation of a National Cabinet - together with its rationale - was greeted with mockery and disbelief. His firm declaration of intent to undertake his responsibilities undeterred provoked the challenge that set the pace for subsequent events.

His next task was to secure allies and to ensure his flanks against an unexpected British thrust. A background of common experience and personal association, together with a community of interests and ideas, led him to expect from the Constitutional Liberals something more than the tame and equivocal support they initially gave him. The hope of forming a government from among them was dashed from the beginning when Mohamed Mahmud, their leader, categorically refused any official collaboration. (35) For an instant Sidqi was left at the mercy of the Palace Party. In this context, the National Cabinet bid was partly a gimmick aimed at the Monarch as much as at the public whose confidence it was

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(34) See the bid for Leadership in Ch. III below, p. 107

(35) Mohamed Mahmud, betrayed by the British, snubbed by the King and never on the best of terms with Sidqi adopted a dog-in-the-manger attitude towards the Regime and his personal antagonism cost him nearly £E20,000 in a libel suit in 1932. M. H. Heykal, Mudhakirāt . . . (1951) Vol. 1, pp. 314 ff. - furnished the Liberal version of accounts.



deemed to enhance. Sidqi, however, retained their informal provisional support and procured the active services of one or two of their numbers whose resignation from the Party obviated an embarrassment. (36) Meanwhile, the negotiations and bargaining for a more positive stance continued feverishly during the summer until they broke down in an open declaration of hostilities with the promulgation of the new Constitution.

The handling of the British called for another kind of dexterity of which Sidqi demonstrated a greater command. Aware of the key role the Residency traditionally played in 'government-craft' and remembering, in particular, the personal role of the previous incumbent in similar circumstances, Sidqi paid the customary call on the High Commissioner with more than the usual anxiety. He had, after all, been appointed by his Sovereign without prior British approval and he arrived at an unpropitious moment from the point of view of Anglo-Egyptian relations as Sir Percy bluntly informed him. (37) The dubious British detachment from internal affairs was unprecedented and, in leaving all the parties guessing, it did little to alleviate the uncertainty in which Sidqi found himself. In his first meeting he hinted at his intention with regard to constitutional changes, but firmly maintained his belief that parliamentary government had come to stay. He also reassured HMG Representative of the prompt resolution of the treaty problem. He was really anxious for an assurance against British interference with his programme, but had to be contented with a non-committal response. In this first exchange, however, he laid down the foundations of the 'corridor diplomacy' of which clarity, candour and a mutual appreciation of respective interests provided the cornerstones. Sidqi realised that his Regime ultimately depended upon the benevolence of British neutrality and he was aware that the policy was a frail growth that could be imperilled if it were left to the political vicissitudes in which it

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(36) These included Hafez Afifi, Abdel Fattah Yahia and Mohamed Ali Alluba; the last declined to join the new Cabinet.

For Liberal Party resolutions offering Sidqi limited or conditional support, see al-Siyāsa, 19.7.1930 & 27.9.1930

(37) Loraine to Henderson, 19.6.1930 (Confid)

Outlets for the Sudan impasse over which negotiations foundered were under active consideration in the Foreign Office. FO memorandum 12.6.1930 - while informal talks with Nahas were actually started in Cairo.

originated. He assiduously strove to cultivate British good-will, and, for the moment, to retain British neutrality.

## B. The Power Struggle

The events that followed Sidqi's assumption of power conformed to a pattern that was by then familiar. On the 21st June, parliament was prorogued for one month, a formality observed in order to comply with the constitutional provision for the duration of an ordinary session (art. 96). Shortly after, another Royal Decree proclaimed the closure of the session to provide the Government with an interlude to study reforms. So far, the Government had acted without incurring any technical violations of the Constitution, for out of practical self-interest Sidqi was anxious to observe the bounds of legality. Theoretically, the situation in which he acted facilitated the implementation of his resolution to do so. While on previous occasions the Wafd had been dismissed from office, this time it had resigned. Similarly, by giving its exclusive vote of confidence to the out-going government, Parliament provided the new one with the excuse to adjourn the session without presenting itself before it for a vote of confidence which was formally denied it. But the intentions of the newly formed government were so suspect and the distrust of Sidqi's person was deeper still, so that he was, out of hand, deprived of options which had been open to his predecessors. (38) His very choice to lead the government was, in the circumstances, a challenge to the will of the nation. His actions were consistently represented in such terms in the vernacular press of the day and his efforts to maintain good faith were repeatedly thwarted as a result.

The first phase in the politics of protest and rejection was already in full swing even before Sidqi had counted his third day in office. "The Day of the Breaking of the Chains", as the 23rd June came to be known, when Deputies and Senators forced their way into Parliament to contest the decision to prorogue the session, pointed in Opposition circles to the imminent deposition of the new government. (39) Forecasts

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(38) See example in text of correspondence between him and Wissa Wassef, the President of the Chamber of Deputies, who refused to promise that session would be confined to reading the decree as the case had been in 1928.

A.R. Rāf'i, Fī' Aqāb al-Thawra ... (1949) vol. 2, pp.114-5

(39) Analogies from the French revolution were frequently drawn at the time and the storming of the Bastille was invoked here in the triumphant challenge of MPs.

to that effect consumed the columns of the press. Three days later, a national congress, the forerunner of other assemblies of diminishing impact, met. It passed a unanimous vote of no-confidence in Sidqi and warned him of a universal boycott campaign if he failed to present himself to Parliament in a month's time when it was due to meet. The congregation of MPs and provincial councillors dispersed on a pledge to lay down their lives for the Constitution. There was little that was manifestly novel in this procedure to alarm a government of experience and good memory. It was, however, the sinister pitch beneath the formal similarity in protest patterns which was ominous.

Confrontation was inevitable in the presence of an active will to defy authority. The season was inaugurated on the 1st July 1930 with a series of provincial visits undertaken in reponse to ostensibly innocent invitations to Nahas Pasha by prominent local Wafdists. The Government warily contented itself with security measures and mudirs made officious arrangements with local Wafdist committees so as to minimise the threat to public order. But the whole object of the visits was to undermine such order so as to embarrass the government and intimidate the British through a rowdy demonstration of popularity. Disturbances reached their peak in the riots that broke out in Alexandria in the middle of the month, when a foreigner was killed, shops damaged and casualties among both civilians and police were high, (40) These had originated in a memorial for the "martyrs" of Mansura incidents, five days earlier, but turned out to be a deliberate, well-organised affair in which the assaulted police were taken by surprise. It took the timely arrival of suitable reinforcements to save the situation, but this did not prevent the chain of repercussions that followed. Two British warships set sail for Alexandria and Mr. MacDonald made a threatening policy statement in the House of Commons on the next day, which was officially communicated to both the Egyptian Government and the Wafd. In the British recognition it earned for itself and in the embarrassment it caused the Government the Wafd had almost secured its objective.

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(40) It is interesting to note that the riot organisers, "sweating effendis blowing their whistles and waving their handkerchiefs," made a point of keeping foreigners unharmed. An authoritative and comprehensive account is found in Residency despatch of 23.7.1930 in FO 371/14618

However necessary and practical the Statement was from the British point of view, it was symptomatic of differences in the Foreign Office over Egyptian policy. It denounced the intentions of the Egyptian Government to use HMG "as an instrument for an attack on the Egyptian Constitution", upheld the 1922 Declaration, invoked HMG's international responsibilities and placed the responsibility for public security squarely on the shoulders of the Government and the Wafd alike. It infuriated the King, a basically frightened Monarch, and led his disheartened Prime Minister, for a moment, to consider resigning. (41) Sidqi was more articulate than his sovereign in exposing the inconsistencies of the British gesture. He found it inconceivable for them to invoke in one and the same breath the 1922 Declaration in principle and deny it in action. He thought it equally absurd for them to call the Egyptian Government to account for that which it had not committed, and it was difficult to reconcile the responsibility laid upon it with actions that undermined its authority. After all, as he pointed out to the High Commissioner, he had managed to control the situation with his own resources, without seeking British assistance. Sidqi, the 'unflappable', however, soon recovered his composure, although he remained critical of the gesture. (42) On 18th July, he handed Loraine a strong, but carefully worded, note in which he communicated this resolve, recorded his criticism, defended his government's conduct and upheld the precincts of Egyptian sovereignty. (43)

One of the earliest commitments which Sidqi had undertaken, in return for continued British neutrality, concerned British international responsibilities in Egypt. The gentlemen's agreement he concluded in the early interviews with Loraine contained an assurance that his actions would be steadfastly designed to provide against such a contingency arising whereby physical British intervention would

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(41) Such reports were broadcast on 19.7.1930; For record of audiences with King Fuad see telegraphic despatches from Loraine to Henderson of 17.7.1930, 21.7.1930 and 22.7.1930 - For Loraine's interviews with Sidqi see separate telegraphic despatches of 17.7.1930 and 18.7.1930.

(42) L. Grafftey-Smith conveys a vivid description of Sidqi's conduct in his Bright Levant (1970) p. 28.

(43) He immediately released the note to the press. It was "a historic document" - Moqattam, 22.7.1930; Sidqi was commended for his statesmanlike qualities by Watanist Ahmad Wafiq. Ahram, 20.7.1930; while a leader in the Egyptian Gazette (23.7.1930) criticised the British statement. The Wafdist columns either ignored it or saw in it an act of collusion. In fact Sidqi had sought Loraine's leave before giving him the note to communicate to the HMG.

become necessary. He promised to keep the High Commissioner accurately and fully informed of events through the Director of the European Department, and if he, by any chance, miscalculated and an anti-government movement gained the upper hand, he would accept the consequences of his failure, and he would give his warning in time. (44) Much depended upon this pledge. His ability to contain the active threats of his opponents in the long months before the new regime was launched thus constituted the acid test for retaining power. But Sidqi wanted to remain in office to achieve certain objectives and, in the absence of British support, he was anxious that they should not impede his freedom of action. So he embarked on the thorny course of cultivating British good-will by observing an irreproachable conduct.

His hesitant debut in the power struggle was dictated by his intentions to abide by the "fringes of legality". (45) The first setback to a policy of resoluteness interlaced with scruples had come upon the prorogation of parliament when conflicting instructions were issued to the police designed to preserve the dignity of the body of MPs and at the same time to maintain his authority; they were impracticable. More resoluteness was essential in the presence of an active will to provoke disorders. Upon the troubles at Bilbeis and Sharqia one week later, he issued a communique restricting the activity of the opposition and followed it up with an emphatic statement. He stressed that, as Minister of Interior, his role was preventive as well as punitive; while not wishing to resort to exceptional measures, he promised he would not hesitate to do so if necessary. He urged the public to attend to its business unperturbed. (46) In practice, however, he continued to observe a considerable show of scruple as seen in his statement, upon the Mansura riots, shortly after.

"In order not to furnish a pretext to subversive protests... the government decided to have only recourse to such measures as were the least likely to be considered as an attempt against individual liberty and which, on the other hand, were such as to prevent collision." (47)

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(44) Loraine to Henderson, 8.7.1930. FO 371/ 14616

(45) Ibid.

(46) La Bourse Egyptienne, 4.7.1930

(47) Ahram, 10.7.1930

In his anxiety to refute the Wafdist campaign underway in London which imputed the disorders to provocative government measures, Sidqi overreached himself. He had issued strict instructions to the police at Mansura to practice moderation and restraint which observers subsequently confirmed they did - while the police at Alexandria had remained unarmed in pursuit of this policy.

"It is this nervousness which has generally weakened the Government in its handling of the situation which in no eastern land can be controlled without administrative sternness."(48)

One of Sidqi's fundamental sources of disappointment with the British ultimatum following the disturbances at Alexandria, was the disregard with which it met his painstaking effort to preserve law and order without recourse, up till then, to severe or provocative measures. Thenceforth, he resolved on a redoubled vigilance. His opponents would be given no cause to doubt his resoluteness, nor an opportunity to triumph in his lapses, while his British umpires could still be meted the necessary prudence. The next active round between the government and its opponents was expected on the 21st July, the date of the convocation of the adjourned parliament. The riots were promptly put down and the authority of the government was proportionately enhanced. The principle of deterrence became effective.

The combined effect of Sidqi's firmness and the British communication to Nahas produced equivocation in the ranks of the Wafdist leadership. While still anxious to embarrass the government, it was particularly loathe to expose itself to British wrath and it partly wished to escape the retaliatory measures of the government as well. It sought alternative channels of protest and petitioned the Monarch for an extraordinary session which was duly refused it on equally valid legal grounds. Meanwhile, it launched a non-cooperation campaign, Indian-style.(49) It incited the populace against paying taxes on the revolutionary pretext that a government shorn of the support of the representatives of the nation was not entitled to public money.(50) The publicised reversion to 'constitutional' tactics was an admission of the futility of its street offensive as much as a device to impress its British mentors.

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(48) Loraine to Henderson, 17.7.1930 in FO 371/14617 -

For witnesses referred to in Mansura riots see confidential despatch of 12.7.1930

(49) Mr. Ghandi was invited by Nahas to visit Egypt on his way to Uganda and Sidqi was disconcerted. Official arrangements were made to preclude his landing at Port Said. Ebeid was also active on the India Committee. See Residency despatches of 16.12.1931 and 28.12.1931 in FO 371/15412.

(50) These resolutions were passed at a meeting of Wafdist Body of MPs and provincial councillors on 26.7.1930 - The taxation boycott campaign was a disappointment. Hoare to Henderson, 6.12.1930. (Confid)

The Wafd was even more anxious than Sidqi to secure British favour and their contest incriminated them in a manner which his did not. They attributed their fall, their exclusion from power and their accumulating grievances to British complicity, and they strenuously denounced British neutrality. Their salvation lay in British intervention and its delay heightened their efforts to bring it about. While Sidqi's public utterances underlined the thesis of Egyptian sovereignty, the effect of his opponents' appeals was to denigrate it. The spectacle of the nationalist leaders denying their own purpose was hardly the opportunity to be missed, although Sidqi may have exploited it less to his advantage than to their detriment. In dwelling on the conflicting implications of hizbiya (partisanship) and waṭaniya (patriotism) he was, in the same breath delivering a civic lesson to his compatriots and exposing the contradiction in which the nationalist leaders were trapped.

The internal political conflict gained its momentum from London. The Wafd, mindful of its recent political victory which had restored it to power, had lost no time in sending its leading emissaries to organise its political campaign there. (51) Its efforts on the home-front were run on lines to support the British-aimed offensive conducted in London. (52) The Palace too had its emissaries there while the Liberal leader who initially sulked his way into indolence, soon joined the fray. (53) The annual leave of the High Commissioner too, in this eventful summer, coincided with

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(51) Makram Ebeid and Ahmad Maher left for England at the beginning of July. A monthly publication, Egypt, was the mouthpiece of the campaign, while Ebeid gave lectures and interviews in British circles as in the Union of Democratic Control on 24.10.1930 and in the Manchester Guardian, 17.10.1930. For resulting pressures on the Foreign Office, see FO/371/14621.

(52) For ex. in anticipation of suitable instructions from Ebeid in London, Nahas delayed his declaration to the press on Anglo-Egyptian treaty possibilities, which was in reply to references to Egypt in the prorogation of Parliament debate in the House of Commons, for nearly 3 weeks. Ahram, 13.8.1930.

(53) e.g. Mahmud luncheon in FO circles. FO Minute, 10.7.1931; Letter to the Times, 27.10.1930.

Abboud's efforts on behalf of the Regime : See Chancery despatch of 29.6.1930 and FO Minute by Mr. Selby on 15.7.1930 - FO 371/14616 -

Later these efforts were directed at undermining the Regime through dubious contacts maintained with the diplomatic correspondent of the Daily Telegraph, an enigmatic Prof. A.M. Gerothwohl. See Ch. IV notes - no. 168

the imminence of major constitutional developments and London became the barometer for tensions in Cairo and Alexandria. In those circumstances, professions of British neutrality rang somewhat hollow.

In fact, doubts were initially raised in Foreign Office and Residency circles about the practicability of maintaining complete detachment from internal affairs. Its wisdom in the constitutional issue particularly was questioned on more than one occasion. (54) But Sir Percy maintained his faith in it even at the more difficult moments. By a painstaking process that involved avoiding "anything calculated to give the impression that our weight is thrown in one scale or the other" Sir Percy almost succeeded in impressing its feasibility as well as its utility.

"When absolute neutrality was decided on a year ago," a senior Residency official observed, "I denounced it vehemently as outside the region of practical politics. Sir Percy Loraine has done more with it than I should ever have thought possible." (55)

British neutrality was not originally intended to be a disinterested stance. As mentioned earlier, the Labour Government had adopted it in order to remove obstacles from the path of negotiations and it maintained it towards the constitutional issue for the same purpose. Upon Sidqi's arrival, however, there was some confusion and a perceptible divergence set in between the motives of the High Commissioner and those of the Egyptian Department. Following an initial jerk the latter continued to postulate the imminent, if delayed, resumption of treaty negotiations with the Wafd and neutrality was regarded as a chastening device before the Wafd could be brought back to the next conference table. To Loraine on the other hand, while the ultimate objective was relegated indefinitely to the near

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(54) The strongest reservation from the Secretary of State came just before elections. "Are you satisfied that the complete absence of that Residency guidance and advice which has prepared the way for so much political evolution and which strict adherence to neutrality and aloofness would preclude, will in time promote a 'natural coalition' with a definite programme for constitutional compromise and treaty settlement..." and goes on in stronger terms still. Henderson to Loraine, 11.5.1931 (Immediate) - Sir Percy replied denouncing any change of policy before elections - cf. FO telegraphic despatch of 28.6.1930.

(55) Hoare to Henderson, 20.9.1930 in FO 371/14620.



future too, his sense of honour permitted a tactical concession in priorities to keep the gentleman's agreement with Sidqi. He used British neutrality here to allow the crystallisation of an Egyptian answer to the Egyptian question of power-sharing. To put it differently, if somewhat ungenerously, "to keep the ring clear and help both sides fight their quarrel out to the bitter end," as an angry critic acidly remarked. (56) In the perplexity it produced among Egyptians though, the policy led to a discreet strengthening of the British position.

Historical patterns and political habits died hard. Far from diminishing its impact on the conduct of internal events and allowing an "Egyptian answer" to evolve to an "Egyptian question", the British presence was progressively dragged to the foreground. Loraine could hardly grasp the impact of the Cromerian legacy and the decades of an ambivalent authority structure on the Egyptian mind. He was consequently disillusioned with the abortive results of his conscientious pursuits.

" All that happens is an indictment of HMG, a request for intervention in internal affairs, a suggestion - and rather an impudent suggestion - that I should 'consult' with people who allowed and I believe encouraged their press openly to denounce British policy as a sham fraud and insidious insincerity, who do not shrink from personal abuse of Mr. MacDonald, Mr. Henderson and myself. No, I will have no such 'consultations'. To any schemes which aim at union in Egypt... and which are inspired by the good-will towards England commensurate with the good-will towards Egypt as a whole which so palpably informs the policy of HMG and my own efforts to carry out that policy... I will listen with every sympathy." (57)

The manifest good-will which motivated Loraine's personal efforts was, to Egyptians, as novel a departure as that policy itself. The consultations which provided the backbone of Opposition attempts to break out of their impasse and in which they desperately sought British connivance, were, however repugnant, the only means of political action in which Egyptians were trained.

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(56) Mr. Churchill's address to a Conservative meeting at Minster echoed his earlier attack on Labour "scuttle" Egyptian policy. See Times, 20.8.1930 - Cf. H.C. (Vol. 242) p. 1018.

(57) Residency Minutes, commenting on notes of an interview between the oriental secretary and a Wafdist moderate (F. Barakat) in April, 1931, enclosed in 18.7.1931 despatch in FO 371/15407.

With Sidqi and his opponents anxious to placate their unwieldy arbiter, the British remained throughout the pace-setters. Statements on Egypt made in London, debates in the House of Commons, newspaper columns were all nervously scanned by the Opposition in the hope that the straw in the wind that spelt their deliverance might be clutched, while the actions of the High Commissioner were closely followed and variously interpreted with the same object in view. While the bulk of Wafdist journalism continued its arid forecasts of the end of the Regime, Sidqi's press interviews and editorials in the pro-government press on the other hand, aimed at combating this impression. Meanwhile, the inter-party consultations and bargaining between the Wafd and the Liberals degenerated into a banal exploration of alternatives to entice British action before they dwindled into mutual abuse on the reef of despair.

The initial rejection of Sidqi and the stolid refusal to come to terms with the regime anticipated a derogatory policy that steadily outmanoeuvred its authors beyond the political system to which they had become wilful outcasts. Sidqi urged his opponents to address themselves to their Sovereign and to rehabilitate their power through accepting to compete within the newly established framework instead of seeking to overthrow it. But he could not repeat himself too frequently since that was interpreted as a sign of weakness. The Government was taunted for its non-viability and attendant non-eligibility as a negotiating partner, and the taunt was a cruel reminder that continued to unsettle Sidqi's peace of mind. Contented though he was with his initial round of successes in quelling insurrection and putting his reforms through, their consolidation demanded the final round.

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Beyond the elections the continual flow of assertions on British neutrality constituted a liability and Sidqi had to adapt his tactics accordingly. Instead of harping on the benefits of that neutrality and on its conformity to the 1922 Declaration, the moment had come to channel the good-will under cultivation into practical avenues and to resume the Treaty negotiations. In the process, the regime could acquire that element of authenticity (i. e. stability) which, otherwise, would continue to elude it. Although the treaty-negotiations were invariably the Achilles heel on which his predecessors had stumbled, he was confident of his ability and, despite

the absence of palpable British encouragement, he was determined to tackle them. He had practical incentives for their resumption. The allied Opposition that had emerged in April 1931, shortly before elections, from the National Pact concluded between the Wafd and the Liberals, had emphatically warned the British that any treaty concluded with Sidqi would be open to repudiation. The issue thus became a critical test for his authority. Furthermore, with the convocation of the new Parliament, Sidqi had to defy the challenge that exploited procrastination as well as to appease growing pressures within the Regime itself. In this context, the protraction of the Treaty issue in the post-parliamentary period ensured the continuation of the power struggle side by side with the consolidation of the Regime.

Impelled by various reminders, Loraine too had to reconsider his priorities and adapt his weapon to the changing situation. By the end of 1931, British tactics congealed round two central points, both equally inspired by his ideals and, together, designed to create a treaty-ripe situation. One was aimed at Sidqi and the other at his opponents; and the purpose was to inspire, by indirect British influence, the crystallisation of a union of national leaders. As usual, the case was presented with a persuasive eloquence that stilled the more doubtful elements at the Foreign Office.

"...we are not without slow, tacit, methods of pressure, even though we eschew intervention, and those methods are far safer far saner, and in my view, far more honourable than those which the Opposition parties wish to dictate to us. A refusal to intervene is the strongest form of pressure on those parties to think and act in a truer spirit of democracy and constitutionalism. An unwillingness to negotiate a settlement with Sidqi until his Regime has a broader political basis than it at present possesses is the strongest lever for inducing him to seek the cooperation among other political parties..." (58)

He was aware of the fears and expectations the British presence inspired in both parties to the dispute. Faced with the futility of a pure Egyptian solution to a question whose purity was mistakenly assumed, Sir Percy reverted to the bridge

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(58) Loraine to Henderson, 28.11.1931 (Confid.)

that linked Constitution to Treaty. Neutrality was now inoculated with a more positive element in the discreet contacts he resumed with members of the Opposition. (59) But the political education underway was not without its qualifications.

" The various steps which I have taken have not had for their object the detachment of prominent Egyptians from their political creeds or their attachment to fresh allegiances. They have been designed to discourage extremism and to sow, so far as may be and in the least unsuitable soil the ideas of conciliation and cooperation, to point a moral but not to administer a lecture. " (60)

To honour the pledge of non-intervention and to drive home the practical moral, he remained emphatic on the limits of such British political excursions.

" I have laid it down as a rule, alike for myself and for officers of the Residency who see Egyptian personages, that our responsibility<sup>3</sup> is on no account to be involved in relation to such future courses of action as these personages choose to adopt, least of all in the direction of any condition of guarantees... " (61)

In following in the tracks of his predecessors Percy Loraine remained true to form in abiding by his earlier scruples. Despite his caution, hopes to use British influence as a lubricant were dashed by intransigence.

To the Opposition, British neutrality was an "expensive innovation" to which they continued to react with mounting frustration. (62) Requests for British intervention which previously confined themselves to sections of the Wafdist press were now urgently repeated in private interviews with officials of the Residency. (63)

(59) These contacts were resumed as early as April 1931 and understandably they posed difficulties. See Loraine's personal despatches to Murray of 19.3.1931 and 2.4.1931 in FO 371/15404

(60) Loraine to Henderson, 12.12.1931. ( Confid. )

(61) Ibid.

(62) Mohamed Mahmud to Reuter correspondent = Mr. Delany on 3.12.1931.

(63) See Loraine to Simon, 28.11.1931 and 7.12.1931 - Nahas had aired his ambivalent feelings to British neutrality from the beginning, first to Loraine and next to Consul-General H-Smith. See Residency despatches of 20.6.1930 and 29.6.1930 ( Confid. )

The restrictions on the press did not prevent abuse. (64) The belligerent tone was maintained and instead of a constructive trend evolving towards compromise and cooperation as Loraine hoped, an alternative to abortive insurrection was sought in subversion as Sidqi had feared.

" Among the factors encouraging the opponents of the present regime in their rebellion to this day has been an illusion... which has turned into a conviction among them, that the present government is incapable of negotiating..." (65)

The delay in pronouncing upon his eligibility for negotiations obstructed the consolidation of the regime by inhibiting potential loyalties and by the opening it left for irrefutable attacks in a vulnerable flank. Thus, the uncertainty that pervaded the fate of an Anglo-Egyptian settlement effectively undermined authority.

### C. Treaty Diplomacy

By the Spring of 1932 Sidqi was feeling sufficiently confident that his position invited the active recognition of HMG. His firm administration, his prudent handling of difficult economic and financial circumstances and his preservation of law and order had rendered a great service to Egypt as well as to the British. Politically, he possessed the full confidence of his Sovereign, he had a large majority in the new Parliament which was functioning normally under the modified constitution, a number of his former political opponents had swung to his side, and altogether, he felt that he had enlarged and strengthened his following in the country to a notable extent since the elections. (66) At least the forms were perfected while the substance was felt to be a matter of time. British fears of repudiation by a subsequent government were remote and overdone. The moment for disproving the humiliating inference that he, Sidqi, was the only impediment to concluding an Anglo-Egyptian settlement had arrived.

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(64) See Ch. III. pp 98 - 99

On his side the High Commissioner swallowed the discomfiture of the anti-British campaign in order not to give Sidqi "an excuse to muzzle the press."  
Loraine to Henderson, 29.3.1931 (Confid).

(65) This was said in the course of an address to MPs on 2.11.1932 ushering in tougher measures against the Opposition, upon his return from Geneva. The speech was broadcast to the nation and Sidqi, thus, became the first head of government in Egypt to use this medium.

(66) An imposing list of the provincial families adhering to the Regime was compiled in the Interior in the Spring of 1932 in preparation of the Treaty offensive. See copy in Residency despatch of 17.6.1932.

As the conclusion of the Treaty was a main item in Sidqi's programme from the outset, he had never lost sight of it. He realised however that he needed the active cooperation of a separate and independent will, beyond his immediate influence, in order to implement that part of his programme. The difficulty was compounded by the plurality of interests which contributed to that other will. With an eye on the power constellations in the Foreign Office, he appointed the able and experienced Dr. Hafez Afifi to the Egyptian Legation in London. (67) In the meantime, in anticipation of the moment when negotiations were resumed, he invested his personal efforts in power centres nearer home. He set about his task in two directions, one was aimed at the High Commissioner's person while the other sought to foster the general impression that he, Sidqi, was a credible ally to legitimate British interests. Before long, he was able to convince Loraine of his reasonableness, good faith and earnestness. The transformation that overtook an initial critical reserve on the part of the High Commissioner was the measure of this success.

" The fact is, " Sir Percy admitted, " that I am now able owing to the personal confidence I appear to have won from Sidqi Pasha to discuss with His Excellency, with a frankness only limited by the discretion necessarily imposed by the imponderabilia of the situation and not possible with other statesmen with whom I have had to deal, the range of Anglo-Egyptian relations in their broader and in their more detailed aspects alike. Sidqi Pasha naturally understands where he himself stands as regards Egypt; what is unusual is the exactness of his appreciation of our position. " (68)

Other qualities, too, were equally conducive to Sir Percy's personal esteem.

" Apart altogether from political considerations, " he reflected, I cannot help admiring the man's courage. He has as his unrelenting adversary the most formidable political organisation that has been in modern Egypt. His only point of support is the

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(67) Hafez Afifi, b. 1886 originally a Nationalist who joined the Wafd in 1919 and later played an active part in organising the Constitutional Liberal Party and its mouthpiece, al-Siyāsa. Vice President of the CLP; deputy in 1926 Parliament and under the Mahmud Regime, (June, 1928 - October, 1929) was Minister of Foreign Affairs. Described as "tactful and friendly, while sticking up for Egyptian interests" (FO Personalities) - A doctor by profession who turned to diplomacy and, eventually, to business. He vividly recorded his impressions of political life in England and Egypt - See bibliography.

(68) Loraine to Simon, 17.6.1932 (Confid.)

King and His Majesty's support, though I believe it to be sincere in the present case, in the past has not usually been a constant or dependable factor; the Residency, the third force in the situation is abstractly friendly but distractingly aloof and enigmatic; it has not heaped curses on him but it has been even more economical of its benedictions and generally its attitude must appear to him like that of a crouching leopard. A man does not work in such circumstances for purely selfish reasons." (69)

In tribute to the undaunted resoluteness, Loraine pledged himself, in the event of Sidqi succeeding in consolidating his precarious position on a constitutional basis, not to grudge him "one ounce of the satisfaction of having achieved that result by his own personal resources." Although for long months ahead he overtly maintained an uncompromising reserve and would not recommend any positive departure from the proclaimed neutrality, yet when he perceived that the moment was due his verdict was in Sidqi's favour.

"I feel that if we were to conclude a Treaty with Sidqi, we could not find among Egyptian statesmen a better or more reasonable collaborator for the purpose of its proper implementation!" (70)

It was a candid confession based on the experience of two hard years on probation.

Sidqi had not attained his objective fortuitously. It was the outcome of a steady stewardship in which prudence supplemented courage and tact resoluteness. He knew he was playing a dangerous game in a vulnerable setting. The daily exposures of his Opponents' equivocation in invoking British intervention were backed by a persistent edification of Egyptian sovereignty in a manner that was not beyond provoking a British offensive. (71) But his personal discretion and practical restraint prevented a double-edged weapon from abuse. A wedge, moreover, was driven between deeds and professions as he was always anxious to record his practical solicitude for "reasonable" British interests. The contracts of British officials in the police and Interior were renewed for three years instead of one as previously; Egypt's commitment under the 1885 Loan Agreement involving the

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(69) Ibid.

(70) Ibid.

(71) Campbell to Simon, 8.10.1932 (Confid).

payment of nearly £E1,000,000 to HMG was spontaneously disposed; a British Trade Mission visiting Egypt in early 1931 was secured a cordial welcome and certain British lapses, like the failure of a British contractor working on the Aswan Dam, were shrewdly overlooked. (72) The general deference with which Sir Percy's representations usually met - and "the occasions have not been few" it was remarked - all indicated an active desire to reduce friction and cultivate a preliminary fund of good-will in anticipation of an impending alliance.

"I myself," the scrupulous Sir Percy admitted, "agree that we have cause to be grateful to Sidqi in these respects and that a wide measure of credit is due to him..." (73)

Apart from the Treaty, Sidqi was shoring up his resources for the immediate and vital expediency of safeguarding his personal position against an unexpected change in British neutrality. The retention of the good-will of key British officials and subordinates ensured him an influence over power-centres to his benefit as well as the efficiency of his Administration. His hopes were justified when Mr. Keown-Boyd, the Director of the European Department, proved one of his staunchest supporters in local British circles and, for all practical purposes, was his right hand in the Interior. The vehemence with which his particular position was attacked, was a measure of the fury of the Opposition at their rival's lack of scruple.

Indeed, Sidqi's whole position depended upon the reliability of the Egyptian army and the Egyptian police. The former was assured him by the British Inspector-General and by the presence of a British staff officer with each of the three brigades into which the army was divided, while the latter was under British command and had its share of British constables so that the Cairo City Police, the provincial police and officials generally felt ultimately subjected to the watchful eye of an Englishman. (74) In view of the impending Treaty, Sidqi felt that he could afford

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(72) Another instance of handling a vital British interest is seen with regard to the controversial position of the Egyptian State Railways (ESR) London office. See file 88 in FO 141/722.

(73) See Loraine to Simon, 17.6.1932

(74) In 1931 the number of British police officers of all ranks employed by the Egyptian Government was recorded as 208. See file 199 in FO 371/15418 Part of the feminist contribution of the era was the petition against the use of British officers: Manchester Guardian, 4.5.1931. More effective pressure was brought to the Foreign Office by Mr. Spender. See FO Minutes on 2.5.1931 in FO 371/15404.



to restore momentarily to the British officers and officials in the Egyptian service a power which was virtually eroded. The result of this subtle policy was an efficient organisation that proved an obedient and reliable instrument. But it was not without its setbacks. Sidqi paid for his exploitation of these British elements when he received another untimely representation from a harassed Labour Government. (75) He was visibly dismayed. To him those British members in the Egyptian service were executive officers in the fullest sense and the Egyptian government was acting strictly within its legal rights in employing, as it had hitherto done, the British army and police officers who were in its service. The Foreign office did not deny him the justice of his claim, but there, again, it was simply another matter where the legality of the issue did not coincide with its politics.

While he was disposed to listen with the most "attentive and sympathetic" consideration to the High Commissioner's representations there were limits to Sidqi's complacency. Several attestations confirmed him as "an ever vigorous defender of the Egyptian point of view." In securing the withdrawal of the air and wireless caveats against adequate guarantees for the British, the negotiations were described as "long and tough". (76) He strove, by dint of tact and perseverance, to promote an Egyptian interest particularly where an issue of sovereignty arose and the right of the government to control activity of foreigners in Egypt was questioned. (77) Although he was eager to resume negotiations and was always ready for a conciliatory gesture, he remained tenacious on one point. At a moment when<sup>a</sup> British reversal was imminent and the Service Departments were examining new proposals in the Draft Treaty under consideration then, Sidqi refused to accept terms, less generous than those offered to his predecessors on the ground that he was no less a nationalist

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(75) See Loraine to Henderson, 8.5.1931 (Tel.)

(76) See Residency secret despatches of 6.2.1932 and 21.5.1932 in file 249 in FO 371/ 16120/16121.

(77) A case in point was the control of missionaries and another was the subjection of foreigners to press legislation. See confidential despatches of Loraine to Simon of 2.3.1932 and 24.6.1932; for issues of fiscal legislation see below. Ch. V. pp. 222 ff

than the Wafd. (78)

The resurgence of the treaty-diplomacy which characterised the greater part of 1932, coincided with onsetting rumours about the impending replacement of Sidqi by a National Government. The emergence of a Coalition Cabinet in Britain in the previous Autumn stimulated fresh hopes, particularly among the "moderate" elements in the Opposition and, so desperately convinced was Mahmud of the soundness of the British example, that he brought it to the attention of the King in the one solitary petition he raised in June 1932. (79) The dubious contacts in progress between the Residency and such elements, fed the speculation and raised tangible fears elsewhere. (80) Sidqi realised that the critical test that would terminate his uncertainty could not be indefinitely delayed. Already, towards the end of 1931, he had intimated to Loraine in two successive encounters, that he was at his disposal to resume the negotiations and that Hafez Afifi would return to England in the early Spring with instructions in this sense. (81) As the months dragged on and Sidqi received no positive response to his initiative, beyond an inconclusive meeting with Sir John Simon, the Coalition Cabinet Secretary of State, at Geneva in September 1932, his simulated patience and composure gave way. British procrastination in the circumstances could only confirm his apprehensions that the threats of his opponents outweighed all effective demonstrations of ability and good-faith on his part. The thesis of the Wafd's exclusive mandate to negotiate which he strove to demolish

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(78) For items in 1930 offer to the Wafd under revision see Annex no.2 in FO memorandum by Mr. Mack, 25.11.1931. Another FO memorandum includes the points at issue with other -Service- departments as well as the draft under revision. See 31(33) 3 in Cab.23/76 - The revision already started in June 1931 when new proposals for British forces were under examination at the Residency. See Loraine to Peterson, 20.6.1931 (Personal, Confid.) - in FO 371/15407.

(79) This idea eventually led to the split in the Wafd in November 1932 and was at the root of diplomacy and scandal in Opposition circles earlier in the year. See disclosure in Ahram, 13.4.1932.

(80) See note no. 59 above. The effect on Sidqi was disquieting. See Residency despatch of 19.12.1931 and further confidential despatches - Loraine to Simon, 30.1.1932 and 6.2.1932.

(81) See Loraine to Simon, 15.11.1931 (Tel.) & to Oliphant, 19.12.1931 (Personal). A further insight into Sidqi's intentions is given in private letter from Campbell to Peterson on 7.11.1931. FO 371/15407.

could only gain credence in public eyes. Towards the end of the year, he communicated his disillusion to the correspondent of the Daily Mail, in an implicit threat in which he hinted at the advantage of "Irish tactics". (82)

The High Commissioner was not insensitive to Sidqi's predicament. In the course of the year Sidqi partly reaped the rewards of his prudent handling as Loraine aroused himself from his aloofness and pronounced on his "negotiability". (83) He drafted two comprehensive reports dealing at length with the issue of negotiations, its opportuneness and its prospects, the one shortly before his annual summer leave and the other following his return towards the end of the year. The first paved the way for the Geneva meeting while the second came to urge on the need to follow that meeting with some concrete action. (84) His earlier analysis of the situation was interspersed with reservations that detracted from the force of his recommendation, while until December 1932, the views of his Advisers were not unanimous on the advisability of resuming negotiations with Sidqi. By then, however, there was little doubt in Loraine's own mind that the Sidqi Administration was strong enough to conclude a Treaty and to implement it. He was, moreover, convinced that the prospects were propitious for a settlement and he established a plausible thesis for resuming the negotiations.

" We are now in the presence of a situation which I believe is unique in the rather chequered career of Anglo-Egyptian treaty negotiations - viz. an Egyptian Government eager to resume negotiations in a friendly and unbombastic frame of mind, enthusiastically supported in this and in other respects by their Sovereign and possessing a stable majority in Parliament,

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(82) This interview was given to Ward Price on 31.12.1932. cf. pressures following Geneva meeting in records of conversation with Egyptian Minister in London. FO Memoranda on 11.10.1932 (Secret) and of 21.12.1932 (Secret). FO 371/16110.

(83) A term coined by Sir Percy to designate the eligibility of Sidqi as a negotiating partner.

(84) On Geneva meeting see memorandum by Sir J. Simon and Sidqi's Note to the Secretary of State enc. in despatch from UK Delegate, Geneva to the Foreign Office on 23.9.1932 (Confid.). The only immediate action taken in consequence was to refer the FO draft proposals to a special sub-committee of the Committee of Imperial Defence (CID) for examination. See ref. in 50(32)6 in Cabinet Conclusions. See Cab.23/72 & C.P. 329 - Cab. 24/233. For glimpse of Simon's personal state of mind see his Note on 30.8.1932 and his personal letter to Sir J. Maffey on 4.12.1932. FO 800/287.

during the lifetime of which the major portions of the Treaty could be implemented. If we are sincerely anxious to reach the treaty settlement, it would seem actually imprudent to neglect the opportunity... The implementation of the Treaty is more important and will probably prove more difficult than its signature. The best guarantee for successful implementation in Egypt is harmony and coordination between King, Government and Parliament. That we can have now. With a Wafdist Government, I fear we shall never have it."(85)

Seeing the undermining effect of the continued absence of any clear British stance on an issue that had become the hotbed of public controversy, especially after the Geneva meeting, Loraine too became demonstrably anxious. Apart from the preoccupations of HMG elsewhere which delayed any action on the Egyptian Question, doubts at the wisdom of the Treaty policy were arising among certain interested departments in London, while the effective modus vivendi under which Anglo-Egyptian relations were conducted in the past two years suited some tempers and promised an alternative to the Treaty. As long as the latter, however, remained the proclaimed objective of HMG, the present position could not be prolonged indefinitely. In warning of the consequences, Loraine echoed a familiar note.

"Egyptian good behaviour under the Sidqi regime during the last two years has been very largely conditioned by the expectation that England would shortly grant Egypt her complete independence through an honourable settlement. Anti-Wafd which the Sidqi regime mainly represents believes that good behaviour is the best road to British good-will and a treaty; Wafd... believe that 'Irish tactics' alone are efficient for the purpose of extorting Egypt's rights from British imperialism. If anti-Wafd, notwithstanding good behaviour, reach the conclusion that a treaty is nevertheless withheld, it may well come to share the Wafd's views on the subject of tactics."(86)

Just as Lord Allenby ten years earlier had been anxious that British policy should not alienate the 'moderates' so, now, Sir Percy Loraine was keen that "good conduct" should not go unrewarded and that the anti-Wafd should not be driven to despair. But British policy languished into vacillation under the National Cabinet. The impending deterioration of local conditions in the resulting void impelled him to

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(85) Loraine to Simon, 17.6.1932

(86) Loraine to Simon, 9.12.1932. (Secret)

adopt a conspicuously novel tone away from the practice of leading opinion in the Egyptian Department by the masterful insinuation in which he excelled.

".. It is necessary that a decision should be taken. Some definite course of principle must be laid down. I have shown that there are risks and dangers in every course; but I dislike more than any of them the idea of drifting and not knowing what we are aiming at." (87)

Gravity could not endure trifling with and the moment for stern advice to his superiors had arrived.

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A combination of diligence and scruple under the Regime underlined the void and imbalance for which the inconclusive Anglo-Egyptian connection enshrined in the Declaration of 1922 was responsible. At the same time it accentuated the objective role of the Residency as the centre for effective power and prestige in the polity itself. Political reality was such as to defeat any policy which overlooked or underrated its consequences. "It must be confessed," the Head of the Egyptian Department reflected, "that the Egyptians have a good deal of excuse for regarding it -(neutrality)- as a disingenuous pose and for drawing the inference that it is adopted to screen a policy that cannot openly be avowed." (88) One of the active impediments to the constructive pursuit of such a policy even if it were possible, lay in the fact that the Anglo-Egyptian Question, like its contemporary Anglo-Indian counterpart, constituted an issue of inter-party politics in England itself. The regular forecasts on the impending disappearance of the Regime thrived on the periodic visits by prominent Britishers and the more frequent incursions

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(87) Ibid.

(88) FO minute in Residency despatch of 6.5.1931. FO 371/15404.

into Egyptian politics by British journalists and politicians alike. (89) Sidqi had not only to contend with the evils of party politics in Egypt but he had before him a more formidable adversary in the workings of the democratic process there. It held him in a double-fisted anticipation of an imminent policy reversal in the Foreign Office to his disadvantage and of an endemic bout of local reverberations in the Egyptian political clime. (90) In the immediate context British neutrality exerted a moderating influence on the power struggle, restraining Sidqi and emasculating the anti-Regime offensive. Ultimately, inaction proved as effective as action. It contributed to the emergence of the Regime and was equally instrumental in obstructing its consolidation. It thwarted the efforts of statesmanship and underlined the limitations imposed on the statesman by the situation. The Anglo-Egyptian dimension, however, was one among others in the struggle to consolidate authority, and its importance did not overshadow the more immediate problems which Sidqi took up with equal vigour and determination.

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(89) Mr. J. Murray, Head of the Egyptian Department, visited Egypt in January-February, 1931. See his interesting memorandum on 20.2.1931 in FO 371/15403 - Other visitors included Mr. J.A. Spender, member of the Milner Mission and journalist whose activity annoyed Sidqi. See Sidqi's letter in News Chronicle, 29.4.1931 Sir Arthur Balfour at the head of a trade mission in March 1931 was guilty of a diplomatic "gaffe" in a publicised exchange of civilities with Sidqi on 6.6.1931. Sir Wardraw-Milne, MP and member of the Anglo-Egyptian Association arrived in early 1933. For other controversial functions relating to the British business community see file 352 in FO 141/722. The tours of the oriental secretaries nearly collided with Sidqi's electoral campaign. See Residency despatch of 23rd March, 1931. In London, critical leaders and letters to the editor (eg. Times 21.5.1931) and correspondent messages (Daily Telegraph, June and September, 1932 & July 1933 - See Sidqi's letter in Ibid, 22.7.1933) often inspired developments in Egypt. Statements in the House of Commons, despite deliberate curb, were inevitable. eg. 23.7.1930 and 27.10.1932 - apart from untimely P.Qs in May, 1931. Far-flung and isolated intrusions, eg. George Lloyd on Egypt in the New York Times, 3.8.1930, were equally provocative. Sidqi, the King, and even the High Commissioner at diverse times protested.

(90) The memoranda on the Egyptian press for July-August 1930, see in FO 371/14617/6 and the second part of 1932 - esp. June 1932, provide representative samples of such local reverberations. See separate file 92 in FO 371/16116.

## CHAPTER THREE

### THE CONSOLIDATION OF AUTHORITY

"Egypt is not served by pretty words but by deeds."

(Sidqi, 27.10.1930)

"The great reformer... the leader... who went back to the people, journeying the length and breadth of the country... in astounding energy and boundless perseverance - at risk to his very life - rendering to the electors in their own villages, a direct account of his deeds and... intentions... investigating their needs and desires, soliciting their consent."

(Latif Nakhla, a deputy, 7.7.1932)

#### I - The New Administration

A concrete notion of effective government lay at the heart of the "energetic movement of renaissance" which Sidqi envisaged for Egypt.<sup>1</sup> Its core rested on a sound Administration which was qualified in the following terms :

- (i) It afforded people order, justice and security that enabled them to proceed undistracted with their business;
- (ii) It was spurred by concrete, purposeful thought to resolve outstanding problems and to devise means for progress and reform;
- (iii) It was marked by profuse output;
- (iv) It inspired respect (haiba wa'ihirām), retained its boundaries intact and its authority unimpaired.

Only through the undiminished retention of its status would the Administration be in a position to sustain its discipline, vitality and efficiency at a level which enabled it to discharge its responsibilities and transform itself into an instrument of regeneration(2).

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(1) A limited, but useful, summary of the message of Sidqi's electoral campaign is found in Residency despatch of 24.4.1931 (Confid.)

(2) Beni Suef political address, 14.4.1932.

The Administration was thus conceived as a repository of authority and a custodian of order, as well as an agent of change. This dynamic conception prompted changes in the Constitution to enhance the executive, and it brought the Administration into prominence under the Regime. But, there were practical motives, too, behind its consolidation. The crisis out of which the Regime emerged and its subsequent political isolation confined Sidqi's initial options to force and repression. Equally, the situational contingency made the agents of the new Administration exercise their coercive powers before they could prove themselves in an architectonic capacity. Politics were complicated by the prevailing financial stringency which provided a further incentive for strengthening the executive machinery. A strong Administration was imperative for the retention of power and for justifying Sidqi's claims on public allegiance. Both purposes ultimately depended on his ability to maintain order and protect the national economy.

#### A. The Reorganisation of the Administration.

Sidqi's first step was to reorganise his forces in the Interior in order to overcome the disruption and shaken morale he found there.

" When Sidqi Pasha took over the government on June 20th, the spirit of the administrative officials was broken. Except in the City Police Forces there was little or no attempt at conscientious work and the public good was entirely forgotten in the race for the favour of the politicians. . . "(3)

The problem he faced here was as much a Wafdist legacy as a result of developments over the past decade. In tackling it he charted a course that constituted a laudable departure.

" Sidqi Pasha has made some effort to break away from the spoils system which exercised such a poisonous influence on the Egyptian Administration and is introducing even in village life the savage personal feuds which is the Egyptian understanding of party politics. "(4)

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(3) Note by Keown-Boyd to Oriental Secretary, 15.9.1930 (Secret). FO 371/14620.

(4) Loraine to Henderson, 27.9.1930 - FO 371/14621



The Promotions Board, up till then a neglected body, was called in full session and worked continuously for almost a month during which period it devised a scheme to improve the Service. On the basis of an objective examination of their records, officials were classified into categories of fitness : inefficient ones were placed on half-pay or transferred to less responsible posts and latitude for the promotion of good junior men was thereby afforded. Promotions were secured in order of seniority, while zealous and active men were posted, after consultation with the mudirs, to the more important districts. Account was taken of the need to maintain a balance among the provincial and city forces so that transfers and promotions from the centre to the fringes were compensated by equivalent moves that left the middle echelons of the service as well equally reinforced. A notable absence of vengeance and of party spirit characterised the process underway and, where political considerations could not be avoided, Sidqi acted with discretion. (5) Occasionally, he was prepared to pay the price of maintaining a high calibre in the Administration by running the risk of indisposing his executive associates or alienating his potential allies. (6) The fact that these moves were adversely criticised by Wafdists and Liberals alike was perhaps a measure of their moderation. In official British circles in Egypt, they were acclaimed as "the first genuine attempt made for several years to improve the Service." They were also estimated as, "the beginning of a measure of permanent administrative reform" rather than a political move calculated to meet a transient situation. (7)

The attempt to reconcile good administration with political congeniality was more evident in the move affecting senior posts, where, however, a measure of discretion and fairness was again the rule. (8) Capable and upright Wafdist figures

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(5) Subordinates known to be under control of local Wafdists were given fresh starts elsewhere, eg. sub-mudir of Qena .

(6) Note by Keown-Boyd, 15.9.1930, op. cit.

(7) Ibid.

(8) See note of 12.8.1930 on some of the changes in Egyptian administrative personnel compiled by the Oriental Secretary in collaboration with Keown-Boyd, in FO 371/14619.

were retained in active responsible service even if they were transferred elsewhere to pander to some political bargaining in progress at the time with the Liberals. Patronage also played its part, although here, too, it was comparatively minor and moderate, as promotions, generally, involved cases of some merit. The transfer of Sidqi's nephew, for example, to the Department of Public Security, brought with it youthful vigour and ability together with a reliable and trustworthy element in a top security post. (9) In the absence of party allegiance the search for loyalty in sensitive posts occasionally invited patronage. Conversely, the more critical the political situation grew and the greater the political preoccupations, the more vital the issue of loyalty and trust became. Sidqi naturally preferred an Advocate-General who was amenable, as well as capable, in order to keep him informed of enquiries in progress, while the advent of "a more energetic and courageous" Procureur-General, coincided with the pursuit of a firmer line of policy towards the Opposition. (10)

Unless, however, a means were found to instil a sense of security in the ranks of the Administration, its reorganisation would be undermined and senior officials would continue to abide by political prudence and evade administrative diligence. On the 22nd September 1930, a decree was passed whereby government officials appointed by Royal Decree would, in future, be dismissed only by the same method, on advice of the Council of Ministers, or the Minister concerned. The political

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(9) The Wafdist London-based campaign against Sidqi's nepotism caused the Foreign Office to make enquiries, and the result of investigating four specific cases : Ibrahim Sid Ahmad, Abbas Sid Ahmad, Mansur Ismail and Ahmad Kamel are found in Cairo Chancery despatches to the Egyptian Department of 17. 9. 1930 and 30. 9. 1930 in FO 371/14621. Ahmad Kamel had the necessary seniority for the appointment to the Dept. of Public Security and was described as "experienced and capable". He acted as Sidqi's personal secretary in the Palace go-between in September 1933, became Secretary of the reactivated Sha'b Party in May 1935 and considerably revived its moribund organ; in 37/38 when Sidqi was Minister of Finance, A.K. was Minister of Trade and Industry. Sidqi had a genuine interest in advancing and encouraging young men of talent and ability; Abdel Rahman el-Biali (See Ch.IV) was another notable object of his active solicitude. This observation was confirmed to me in personal interviews, notably with Dr. Hanafi Abu'l Ela (see 1000 Great Lives). The mentor/educator trait left its mark upon a circle of graduates of the Trades and Economics School. See tribute in Majallat el Tijara wa'l mohasaba, July 1953.

(10) See memorandum prepared by Judicial Adviser on Mustafa Mohamed enclosed in Secret Residency despatch of 12. 11. 1930.

purpose of this measure was apparently to strengthen the hand of the Crown in the dismissal of higher government officials. In point of fact, it secured rationality and stability as it introduced a uniformity of procedure where its absence was long felt; it was moreover, a check upon the arbitrary dismissals that followed a change of government. While the decree was one aspect of a policy designed to introduce an element of security among officials, the firm restraint with which Sidqi handled individual situations established a precedent of conduct for his subordinates and helped sow the seeds of confidence and reliability in the Service as a whole.

The combined effect of reorganisation and discretion paved the way for restoring a considerable measure of administrative consciousness in milieu where it had either been corroded or practically extinguished, as in the Ministries of Interior, and Justice. This duly reflected on the zeal with which threatened rebellion was quashed and order maintained at more than one critical juncture. On the eve of the elections in May, 1931, administrative efficiency was at its peak both in organisation and personnel. "... today, I can express with assurance," the Director General of the European Department remarked, " that governors and commandants of police are the best I have known." (11) Following an extensive and meticulous enquiry into the course of what turned out to be the most controversial elections in Egypt, he concluded that " the usual pressure being exercised by an interested and efficient government had been unusually effective" and, that the results were, consequently, not without merit. The testimony of a competent - if not an altogether disinterested observer - was, itself, a tribute to the skill and acumen of a statesmanship which had succeeded in reinforcing its executive ranks as well as in propitiating its prospective arbiters. If British neutrality was initially instrumental in Sidqi's rise to power, its retention and consolidation were almost entirely shouldered by the Administration he reorganised. The performance of his Administration, moreover, strengthened a provisional stance of British policy in his favour.

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(11) See the comprehensive Report on the elections by Keown-Boyd on 22.5.1931, together with enclosures in Residency Confidential despatch of 29.5.1931 in FO 371/

In invoking the ideal of good Administration, Sidqi might have conceived a certain affinity with the British colonial tradition. As Under Secretary of the Interior between 1911 and 1914, he had witnessed Kitchener's reforms and was, apparently, impressed by his conduct. (12) In the post-colonial era, however, which Sidqi conversely saw as "the first stages of independence", objectives differed. (13) The model Egyptian official here was expected to be actively committed to reform and development. Sidqi appealed to officialdom to observe a patriotic zeal in its daily pursuits, particularly where these contributed to advancing Egypt's economic independence.

" De même, je souhaite de voir les efforts des administrations de l'état en faveur de l'industrie s'inspirer non seulement du devoir administratif mais du sentiment qu'ils ont à s'acquitter d'un devoir national ayant dans leur esprit la valeur d'un dogme." (14)

But the scope for the dedicated official was coextensive with his activity which was not confined to his executive duties. (15) His conventional political impartiality, assumed in the model official, carried him beyond renouncing the politics of partisanship to denouncing it actively. This partly justified the contradictory role in which officials found themselves as they engaged first, in creating a political party and next, in canvassing for elections. This again seemed to be a necessary concession to the requisites of a transitional phase from subjection to sovereignty in the Egyptian setting. Under the Regime, the political concept itself was adapted to accommodate the political role of the Administration as reason was seen to replace emotion in the later phases of political evolution. (16) This plea for rationalism was as much a bid for moderation in the conflict-ridden political atmosphere of the day, as a legitimisation for the political role of the Administration. The resemblance of good Administration under the Occupation and that under the Regime is, consequently, qualified.

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(12) See Mudhakkirātī p. 11

(13) See Electoral manifesto, 6.12.1923.

(14) Address to VIIIth General Assembly of the E.F.I. on 7.4.1930.

(15) See Administrative tours and profiles below. p 92 .

(16) See "The Meaning of Leadership" (al-za'ama), Sha'b, 26.5.1931. cf. later editorial of 25.1.1932

While the political crisis led Sidqi to reorganise his forces in the Interior, the prevailing financial stringency gave him an additional impetus to rationalise elsewhere. He organised senior officials in the different departments into an expert consultative body and required them to study the economic situation and report on it constructively to him, as Minister of Finance. The theme of power with responsibility echoed in this, his first lesson, to officialdom. (17) Individually, he vested the members of this new Council with broad discretionary powers in their respective departments, subject only to guidelines on economy which the Cabinet endorsed consecutively in the Summers of 1930 and 1931. He infused his subordinates with a sense of their importance and corporate identity as he appealed to their authority and competence and reminded them of their responsibility. Unlike Ministers who "come and go," and whose political preoccupations prevented them from self-improvement in knowledge of the affairs of State, they, officials, justly constituted the backbone of government. (18) They were credited with both impartiality and responsibility.

Sidqi recognised the value of setting a practical example to his subordinates. Behind his desk he broached the problems he was confronted with methodically, diligently and energetically, maintaining throughout his characteristic prudence and composure. Within one week of taking office in the Ministry of Finance, he had taken decisions on matters which had been accumulating since January 1930, and about which his predecessor had failed to take any action at all. (19) Individual accounts gave further evidence of the prudent energy he brought to the administrative machinery. As a result of Sidqi's efforts, the Manager of Shell Company in Egypt, Mr. Martin, was able to settle the numerous cases pending, some of which had been at issue with different government departments for many years. Sidqi's exemplary conduct here could be imputed to both his political objectives and administrative ideals.

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(17) Address to meeting of Under-Secretaries of State and Directors of Services on 29.12.1930.

(18) See address on 11.9.1930 to congregation of supporters in Continental Hotel at a party held in honour of his escape from the first attempt on his life.

(19) Note by Financial Adviser of 12.7.1930 - Enc. in Confidential Residency despatch of 2.8.1930.

The characteristics of the Administration in its recovered confidence and improving self-image steadily evolved in the upsurge of administrative consciousness that followed. There emerged a vigorous and efficient organisation inspired as much by the personal example of its chief, as by the ethos he instilled in it and the practically unlimited powers it enjoyed. Officials became the leading agents of political change, as well as the conventional custodians of law and order. Throughout the provinces, the role of tax-collector and police agent was reinforced by that of reformer. The periodic tours which the different members of the Administration undertook in the provinces were instrumental in consolidating authority and constituted a striking feature of the Regime. They equally provide an appropriate scope for exploring some of the traits of the evolving Administration.

### 1. The Administrative Tours

The summer of 1931 witnessed a series of provincial visits by central government officials. In his address to the councillors of Sharqiya, the Under-Secretary of State for the Interior, explained the object of his visit as "to lay myself at your disposal". He elaborated on his mission thus :

" I have begun my present tours at the instructions of the Prime Minister in order to communicate with you and enquire into your wishes and attend to your grievances because this prudent government (al-rashīda) desires to promote provincial councils and raise them to befitting standards, especially as it is they who control primary, compulsory and technical education and upon them (i.e. the Councils) rests the country's welfare."

The speaker paid homage to the mudir, who was also the President of the local council, and pledged "to join hands" to secure the prosperity of the province. It was not enough to lend a sympathetic ear and to acquaint the government with local needs and problems, but effective power called for coordination between central and local authorities. (20)

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(20) Sha'b, 6.8.1931. Similar visits were made to Mansura and Benha Municipal Councils. This activity coincided with the convocation of a committee in the Interior under his colleague, to examine proposals on local government legislation which was, eventually, passed by the Chamber in 1933. An interesting series of editorials dealt with Sidqi's intentions and the proposed legislation. Ibid. 8.9.1931, 30.9.1931 and 30.11.1931.

The provinces themselves maintained a semblance of vivacity as their wardens displayed their zeal in their respective domains. Mudirs in the delta and Upper Egypt inspected their localities and convened the newly elected councils. (21) On 18th August, 1931, the Councils of Behera and Gharbia were simultaneously convoked, while the recently transferred mudir in Menufia, had already scheduled his tours of his province two weeks earlier. On 10th August the Minia mudir announced his tours while ma'mūrs and hekemdārs (district police and commandants) conducted inspections in Girga. Admittedly though, the activity in Upper Egypt was less intense, or at least, less publicised. Some of the general activity too was the sequence of administrative moves which had followed elections. The new incumbents were anxious to abide by their injunctions and to acquaint themselves at first hand with conditions in their localities. At the same time, however, the resumption of parliamentary life coincided with growing adversity and the vigilance of Authority was as much an act of political prudence as a dictate of economic needs. (22) In a despondent era, vitality became the hall-mark of a regenerated Administration as officials emulated the example they beheld in their chiefs. In Sidqi's own tours, which will be duly discussed, and in those launched by his subordinates, a model of action evolved whose political content rose in proportion to the grade from which it emanated.

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(21) Wafdist provincial councils were dissolved following change in electoral law by a Royal Decree on 29.10.1930 - and the new Councils were elected according to the modified electoral provisions.

For administrative moves following elections see MMW, 9.8.1931.

(22) cf. injunctions to deputies to keep in close touch with their constituents and the affairs of their localities during the summer recess : " Let each of us be a little Sidqi in his constituency" (Biali), MMN, 7.7.1931. Sidqi addressed inter-parliamentary economic committee on severity of situation on 25.8.1931, while the meeting of the Council of Ministers on 19.8.1931 emphasised the urgency for economies stressing earlier resolutions on 7.7.1931. The plea to landowners for frugality first echoed in Sidqi's address at Mit Berra on 14.8.1930 and again in an interview with the Moqattam on 30.8.1930, frequently recurred in the columns of the Sha'b in August, 1931.

At the same time, a Ministerial Decree on 26.8.1931 launched the Crédit Agricole.

It was essential to "humanise" authority in order to reconcile it with the constitutional framework and aspirations of the new regime. The party organ dedicated its leading columns to the "noble reformers" and the "firm administrators" who were seen to embody the pedagogic and ethical principles of the Regime. (23) It stressed the benefits of preaching by example and saw in it a practical alternative for exercising power compatibly and effectively. In effect, the administrative tours were a bid for public confidence by demonstrating the active concern of the present government for the public weal; equally, they were an attempt to modify traditional perceptions of authority by bridging the gap between the rulers and the people. Their more immediate relevance, however, lay in the implications of the unrelenting power struggle in progress.

Deprived of a sympathetic press and a well-disposed audience the Regime sought to break out of a vicious circle of allegations and overcome its political isolation by transposing the Administration into its mouthpiece as well as its executive agent. The object of communicating with the public was two-fold. While administrative seizures and forced sales were inevitable daily occurrences in the circumstances, the government issued measures from time to time to alleviate the situation by postponing the collection of its debts, or otherwise. Where ignorance prevailed such instructions often failed to reach the common man, or they were misinterpreted to him by unscrupulous individuals who exploited the hardship to their pecuniary benefit and left the odium for an unpopular government. It was necessary, therefore, for administrators, apart from exercising vigilance, to explain to the people the direct relevance of such measures for them. It was equally vital to urge on indifferent audiences the importance of their active cooperation to alleviate the general plight. This message was corroborated in Sidqi's simultaneous practical exhortations. In time, the one available channel for combating seditious rumour became a lucrative means for contacting and converting - or more often neutralising - political opponents. Some of the more intimate activities of mudirs weaned away erstwhile political activists from their party allegiances in preference to an alternative creed that

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(23) Accounts of provincial correspondents during 1931 especially, and generally, references to the Administration in the Party organ disclose a kind of lore woven round it. See an ex. in Sha'b, 21.9.1931 and 23.8.1931. - For pedagogic and ethical principles see Ch.IV. pp.130 ff.



upheld a single-minded devotion to business interests and an enlightened patriotism. The ebbing fortunes of hizbiya ('party-ism') became the practical measure of the accomplishments of the Administration.

## 2. Administrative Profiles

In consolidating the Administration, Sidqi strove to instill in its agents an ethos compatible with the purpose he conceived for it. Its absorption and manifestation within the different milieus and localities provided the scope for a diversity in the substantially uniform administrative orientation (élan) of the Regime. Admittedly, different patterns of conduct evolved in the course of the interaction between the , personality and the situation. Where the political situation was relatively quiescent there was less need for the administrator-politician and a proportionately greater scope for the energetic reformer to demonstrate his zeal in more conventional fields. Conversely though, the political temperature of the locality depended upon its handling by the responsible incumbent. Generally, two distinct models may be singled for attention. The Mudir of Daqahliya, Harun Abu Sehli, provides the prototype of the administrator-politician while the Mudir of Behera, Abdel-Salam el-Shazli, embodies the ideal administrator-reformer. The models are not mutually exclusive and they may best be conceived as counterpoised at different ends of a continuum along which a variety of intermediate types are discernible. The centre model here would be the efficient, 'not very scrupulous' administrator, to which category many a mudir, in greater or less degree, conformed. (24)

Abu Sehli emerges as the budding autocrat. (25) A bold extrovert, with a characteristic lack of scruple, he set out with great determination to harness his

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(24) See the secret note by Keown-Boyd on administrative moves on 15.4.1933 in FO 371/17008, for abstracts on mudirs involved.

(25) Harun Selim Abu Sehli : b. 1886 - d.1937; son of a ma'mur, hailing from a family of Arab stock, traditionally vested with the umdaship of Farshot/Upper Egypt; early education at kuttāb, then went to amiri schools and graduated from Law in 1909; enrolled as lawyer; served in Parquet and Judiciary ; Assistant Under Sec. in Interior in 1926 and mudir of Assuit in 1928; politically active ; a deputy in 1924, 1926/27 and 1936; non-partisan; victimised by Wafd for independent stance on electoral commission in 1924 - Renown for courage, said to be inherited from his maternal grandfather, a notable agha in Ibrahim Pasha's armies, while his piety is attributed to his father.

province, the central Delta hotbed of Wafdism, which was among the last to be subdued. (26) Although he doubtless had a difficult task, it may be questioned whether his offensive may not have inflamed the populace and made order more difficult to secure. His scheme of forcing Wafdists to change their colour by closing down their factories on ostensibly technical grounds, or more generally by threatening their vital interests furnished the discontented and sceptical with ample cause for grievance and doubt. In methods and pursuits he may not have differed greatly from his counterpart in Sharqīya, Niazi, another ruthless and efficient figure - though of a perceptibly different temperament - but he exceeded him in his talent as a propagandist. During the Wafdist riots at Mansura in July 1930, Abu Sehli issued his own press communiques and followed up events with an interview rationalising the ban of Wafdist meetings and disputing their legality and intentions. (27) Shortly before the provincial councils were dissolved in the Autumn he called a meeting and laid down the principles of action in the province. (28) He next threw his weight behind the electoral campaign and led illustrious processions which drove through the centre of the town amid cheers, including hails to himself, the sa'ādat al-mūdir. (29) Apart from their mildly humorous quality, the accounts of these tours convey a vivid impression of the pomp, ceremony and formality, the paraphernalia of authority, associated with the era. His political speeches lend themselves to quotation, in their staccato eloquence, as he faithfully reproduced the ideas of the Regime and invoked Sidqi's appeals to reason and action with a fervour and communicability which Sidqi might have envied.

" I am a man who is not beguiled by praise, a man of action, not profession. I represent a government pledged to your good and to securing peace among you; striving to emancipate your minds from the vain servitude of illusion and myth. . .

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(26) The most turbulent centre outside Cairo during elections, was Daqahliya (Mīt Ghamr, Gedīda and Dilbāna) and the disturbances justified its mudir's reservations that his province was not ready for elections (the only such Province so reported.) The riot at Dilbana, near Mansura, in which villagers were armed and took possession of the village ended in negotiations between Government forces and villagers. See Residency telegraphic despatch of 18.5.1931.

(27) Ahram, 11.7.1930.

(28) Ibid, 21.9.1930.

(29) Sha'b, 17.3.1931.

I ask of you no more than that you should think with your own minds not with others', and that you should judge for yourselves not through the eyes of others... You, gentlemen, are the glory of this country, its heads and umdas... so, assume its leadership and set up an example... follow not the ignorant and let not glibbers enthrall you... I want you to muster the courage that would place those mites (aṣṣāghir) in their proper place..."

In an appeal for loyalty and reliability, the speech rounded off on a quotation from the Quran condemning hypocrites. (30)

As circumstances rendered the entire Administration an active partisan in the new regime, Abu Sehli was not alone in his political excursions, nor were his achievements confined to his political exploits. He saved a local budget which was on the verge of solvency in 1930, overhauled the institutions of education in his province, and actively prosecuted a programme of public works which earned him public acknowledgement from his chief, the Minister of Interior. (31) His political zeal however distinguished him from other administrators whose talents and circumstances enabled them to present an alternative model. This latter model embraced another dimension of the executive acumen which the Regime took pride in.

While the convergence of political necessity and economic adversity contributed to the growth in power of the Administration, it also provided the opportunity for the energetic and conscientious administrator to assume greater responsibility. Contrary to the authoritarian emphasis in the administrator-politician the shift

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(30) Ibid, speech at Mit Ghamr, 19.3.1931.

For another version of this pseudo-political campaign, see account of activity of mudir of Girga/Sohag on the 24th/29th March, 1931.

(31) See Ahram, 20.10.1930 ; 23.12.1932 ; also Muqattam, 5.5.1932

to an image of paternal benevolence characterises the administrator-reformer. (32) He demonstrates a genuine concern for the welfare of the local populace, without discrimination, and is solicitous of their grievances. The opportunity for relief abounds in the prevailing duress and he accordingly sets his heart on giving effect to measures mooted in the capital, especially in regard to the campaign against the high cost of living. (33) In some cases he takes the initiative himself in instituting such measures, setting a practical example to the capital, and he effectively benefits his locality by persevering in their pursuit. (34) He is characteristically modest in his public demeanour, will not shirk attending the simplest function of the common folk and, in the same token, he renounces the pomp and ceremony of his more autocratic counterpart. (35) He will occasionally hint, to deflect flatterers, that he is duty-bound

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(32) cf. Abdel-Salam el-Shazli. (May 1889 - September 1957) born at Shubratana/Kafr el-Zayyat, the 13th son to an old, large family descended from Sidi Abu'l Hassan el-Shazli. His father was the 'ein el-ayār (leading notable) of Gharbia and sat in the Legislative Assembly. Educated first in the kuttāb, and then at the School of Law and trained under Abdel-Rahman Fahmy of the Nationalist Party. He rose in the Administration starting off modestly from a mo'āwen idāra, in 1936 became Director of the School of Police and subsequently Governor of Cairo - Became the first Minister of Social Affairs (1938-39) where he introduced the system of compulsory cooperation. In 1935 he was among the high officials of the Sidqi era tried for infringing the fiscal laws. He was cleared and the Court verdict held him for a model official. A side-light on the 'model admin.' may be seen in his touring of his locality in disguise by night to get a first hand knowledge of its grievances in an Umar Ibn al-Khattab gesture. Following the Badari exposures he was transferred from Behera to Assuit as the one figure qualified to restore peace and confidence to the Province.

(33) See Ch. V. p.199 & notes.

(34) Another example of this type, Mohamed Sa'id Ezabi, mudir of Menufia and later Gharbia, initiated rival butcheries and bakeries by the local council to force merchants to reduce their prices, and he overcame initial fiscal difficulties which threatened his enterprise, Sha'b, 16.3.1931. The precedent soon became official policy and was adopted in other provinces, ibid., 27.3.1931. In Tanta the production of ice-blocks by the municipality selling at 25mms. instead of 60 mms. soon induced the Concessionary Company to sell at 20 mms; ibid. 14.9.1931. It was another instance of the mudir's administrative acumen; In March 1933 he was promoted Under Secretary of State for the Interior.

(35) Accounts of Shazli. Sha'b, 9.11.1932; 12.11.1932; 23.4.1931

in whatever he undertakes. Above all, he is discreet in handling political opponents and, instead of seeking to embarrass them at every turn, he quietly seizes opportunities, when they are afflicted or in need, to condole with them in a gesture of sympathy, or to step forward and relieve them without much ado. The relationship that develops between Authority and the people here tends to be generally of a more spontaneous and reciprocal variety where active concern is returned with an appreciative recognition. One of the practical side-effects is a concrete improvement in public security. Political attitudes in particular, tend to be ambivalent and it was perhaps indicative that Wafdist defections should maintain a studious non-commitment and content themselves with affirmations of patriotism and loyalty to the Throne. Such conduct amounted to a reluctant, but not an altogether grudging acquiescence in the status quo. In sparing the dignity of his subjects and in striving for their welfare, while observing an unflinching loyalty to his chief, the administrator-reformer, in effect, secured a political achievement for the Regime by living up to its professed standards. (36)

#### B. The Evolution of the Administration.

The Administration was consolidated against a highly charged background of conflict and intransigence which affected its own evolution. The Regime provoked a shrill outcry of an emotional nationalism which rallied to it elements from the two factions of the nationalist movement. The National Pact concluded between the Wafd and Liberals in the Spring of 1931 sealed the fate of a rational idealism and left the drop-outs to gather round another banner of rational self-interest. Nahas himself sounded the bugle in his invocations to the Almighty, the noble nation, the martyrs who fell in the clashes with Authority and, "the blood that runs in (his) veins", while Mahmud corroborated the chorus by condemning the rule of "iron and

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(36) The note by Mr. Bennett (19.5.1931) on tour to Behera district during the elections, provides a sympathetic account of the Administration there and particularly of the role of the mudir.

"I am told that his Administration is both firm and paternal, that he is accessible to the humblest, that in regards to payment of arrears in these hard times, he is inclined to give the debtor twice the delay he asks for rather than squeeze him; that he makes no distinction on Party grounds, in fact, makes a point of showing impartiality." See enc. Appendix C. in Keown-Boyd's electoral report cited above (note 1.)

fire "perpetuated by a "band of criminals". (37) Speeches and manifestos were replete with the theme of blood, sacrifice and sacrosanctity as the caliph of Saad exhorted his countrymen to avenge the honour of a ravished nation and to live up to the memory of "the leader of the awakening and the champion of sacrifice". When police cordons were drawn round the Saadist Club and the Mother of Egyptians became the object of shameless warnings from the government, Zaghlul's tomb became the sanctuary for orators. (38) It provided the morbid setting for renewing nationalist pledges and forecasting the sinister fate that inevitably attended usurpers and oppressors. The message and conduct of the demagogues posed a challenge to Authority which perceived in them the threat of danger and anarchy.

The image of tyranny and oppression was countered by the conviction that without order and stability progress, the goal of civilised society, could not be attained. While Authority was not synonymous with oppression, freedom implied responsibility. The absence of such responsibility invited a dissidence which could not be reconciled with a healthy body politic. (39) The latter, moreover, was particularly threatened by the perversion of parliamentary institutions into a facade for perpetuating an emergent tyranny. This benevolent disguise of the tyranny of the numerical majority rendered it more pernicious than any personal autocracy. The only remedy lay in effectively restituting that necessary authority which spelled, besides knowledge and efficiency, rules and limits, in contrast to the charlatanism

(37) See examples of revolutionary rhetoric in Nahas's speeches at Mansura 10.7.1930; at Zaghlul's tomb, 13.11.1931; 1.2.1932; 16.4.1932 and 15.1.1932. Nahas and Mahmud in speech on Gebel Aulia on 25.5.1932 and Mahmud's speech to Ramadan delegations at Liberal Club on 21.1.1932. See also manifestos of 16.10.1930 and 25.5.1932.

(38) Upon his return from Geneva (see Ch. II) Sidqi adopted a firmer line towards the extra-parliamentary opposition, and his advice to Mme Zaghlul to restrict the use of her house (the House of the Nation) to people she personally knew was a sequence to this policy. His interview to the Sha'b on 13.10.1932, statement in the Moqattam on 7.11.1932, along with his addresses to Sha'bists on 2.11.1932 and 24.11.1932 heralded the new line.

(39) For a comment on the pathology of revolution, see editorial, "al-ṭaḡra marad ijtimā'i". Sha'b, 25.1.1932 - This theme ran through other editorials and Sidqi frequently referred to the diseased society which fostered agitators and convulsive changes instead of orderly evolutionary development. cf. analogy below. p.118.

and ignorance of the demagogues. In contrast, too, to the capricious appeals to the passions and emotions of the crowd, its fatifa, authority addressed itself to interest and reason - al-maṣlaḥa and al-ʿaql. It was this conception that animated many of Sidqi's discourses and underlay some of his controversial decisions, like his conduct towards Zaghlul's mausoleum. (40) He believed that enlightened patriotism consecrated the national interest and was deferential to the collective efforts that served the national cause. In the absence of reason and enlightenment, the statesman was compelled to assume the mantle of the autocrat as a practical and temporary expedient to restore authority. (41)

One of the first arenas in the race to restore authority and curb demagoguery was the press. Before the new regime was launched in June 1931, powers of suspending dailies were vested in the Minister of Interior, and of weeklies, in the Council of Ministers. With Parliament due to meet on the 21st June 1931, Sidqi realised that the Government would lose its powers while a delay would have to elapse before it could pass alternative controls through the Chambers. To overcome this predicament, he sped through with press and publication legislation, just before Parliament met. (42) Subsequent modifications defining and restricting somewhat arbitrarily, the freedom of journalists were later passed through Parliament in the following session in May 1932. (43) Sidqi defended the severity of the provisions on the grounds that "the

(40) Its conversion into a national pantheon was rejected by Mme Zaghlul whereupon a decree was issued attaching the monument to the Egyptian Museum as a repository for the mummies of 20 pharaohs. The incident had its obvious Palace connotations, while its timing coincided with the ban on the commemoration of the first demand for independence (13.11.1918) Sidqi was thus seen to have laid the finger of ridicule on a national shrine and provoked deeper public resentment still. See Residency despatch of 5.11.1931 in FO 371/15408.

(41) cf. Sidqi's views on dictatorship below. p.109.

(42) Decree Laws No.97 & 98 of 17.6.1931. The accompanying explanatory note made an interesting emphasis on the institutionalising purpose of the legislation. - to regulate the journalistic profession. (cf. with legislation on Chambers of Commerce in June, 1933). On the other hand, some provisions undermined this objective (art. 166bis). See Note by Mr. Graves enc. in Residency desp. of 14.7.1931 in FO 371/15423.

(43) Amendments in the Penal Code, in June 1932, followed the Tema Bomb incident (see note<sup>54</sup>) and were justified by the need to protect the Regime against press licentiousness and irresponsibility. Contending with articles "susceptibles de déprécier le régime, le dénigrer ou en diminuer le prestige" these amendments lend themselves to arbitrariness. See enc. in Residency despatch of 24.6.1932 in FO 371/16127.

systematic misinformation of the public mind must be stopped, "and that some kind of protection was necessary in a country where the reader was credulous and semi-literate, and the press absolutely unscrupulous. It was, moreover, by a judicial process that he sought the remedy, and not by administrative methods. (44) Despite this keen attention to confine the press, in practice, moderation was the rule, and true to the spirit in which it was conceived, under Sidqi, the law was applied more as a deterrent rather than a punitive instrument. (45) Notwithstanding the preventive measures, the press remained a mercurial adversary that outbid the rigours of the Administration and constituted one of the more effective weapons in undermining the Regime. (46)

In contrast to its activity in the earlier months which had called for an impartial vigilance over public security, soon the Administration was involved in the dual task of containing insurrection and enforcing the new political order. Two related events occurred in the interlude that followed the promulgation of the new Constitution in the Autumn of that year, both of which left their indelible imprint on the evolving Administration. Recruiting members for the new political party and mobilising the country for elections became integral to the daily activity of officials. This transported the Administration to the obscure borders where the executive and the political ambiguously mingled. The conventional duties of surveilling, checking and policing were complicated where the law itself was questioned and the menace to order came from sources other than the common criminal. In the capital the government machinery engaged to advantage in the organisational preliminaries

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(44) Loraine to Simon, 24.6.1932. (Confid.)

(45) Outside July 1930 and the elections (May 1931) the incursions against the press were surprisingly limited. See Annual Reports for 1932, paras. 409-416 (FO 371/17015), and for 1931, paras. 324-330 in (FO 371/16124) - Sidqi's esteem of constructive opposition may be seen in the light of an incident related by the proprietor of the weekly Rose al-Yusuf in her memoirs. (1952) p. 140.

(46) See Mudhakkirāti p. 58 - But Sidqi too had unscrupulous innings with the press relying on his agile political secretary, Mahmud Rashid, for the purpose. The nightly haunt of journalists, Bar al-Lewā', was the setting for calculated government leaks and inspired rumours. The exposure which embarrassed the moderate Wafdists in April 1932 is one example of such leaks. See note 79 in Ch. II.



which eventually ensured an unprecedented efficiency and an unexpected alacrity in carrying out the elections. Beyond that, the picture differed as extensive powers were delegated to subordinates and unconventional duties became systematised. Ma'murs for example, upon whom much effective power devolved, were required to study the situation in their areas, submit proposals for resisting the Opposition and report on political tendencies of prospective candidates, while the burden of guaranteeing loyalties fell on them, in conjunction with the umdas. (47) The successful conclusion of elections in the teeth of a desperate resolve to prevent them imposed a strenuous responsibility on the Administration. This officially condoned the wide powers it vested in its agents and, inadvertently, it sowed the seeds for future deviation.

The efficient and capable body in which Sidqi prided himself could hardly escape the consequences of its political involvement. The divisive currents which it sought to evade infiltrated in the heat of the electoral campaign and resulted in resignations and dismissals which threatened the esprit de corps he strove to instil (48) The criteria for professionalism were equally undermined as promotions and awards came to depend -at least for a moment- upon political zeal and loyalty apart from knowledge and ability. (49) The strains and tensions under which officials

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(47) Following the first stage of the elections, Nahas sent out to the Procureur-General a long documented letter comprising a compendium of alleged irregularities during these elections. See Ahram, 20.5.1931, and further one on 17.6.1931. He cabled a similar communication to the Manchester Guardian simultaneously. (20.5.1931) A compact catalogue of charges against the Administration is found in the Report on the elections by Keown-Boyd. op.cit., Appendix B. The Wafdist Miṣr which continued to appear during elections, constituted a repertoire on coercion, summary detention, fraud and intimidation.

(48) The head of the syndicate of officials, Abdel Qader effendi Mokhtar, resigned just before elections and was publicly feasted by the Wafd, together with colleagues who followed his example. At the same time the Cabinet met in an extraordinary capacity on 13.5.1931 and announced the dismissal of six officials : the above mentioned, Moh. el Bakri, Saba Habashi, Hassan Hamdi, Musa Nasr, Moh. Fahmy el Maghraby - (File 150 -11/137 in C.M. Archives) - Other dismissals followed elections

(49) A series of exceptional promotions, rises and special salaries were provided for in a memorandum by the Finance Committee requesting special powers for the Minister of Interior to be confined to present circumstances. This was endorsed by the Cabinet in its sitting of 9.8.1931; cf. earlier decision on 15.7.1931 announcing general ban on increments. Isolated cases of individual exemptions, like the effective promotion of mudir of Girga occurred. This was clearly a case of nepotism, as Habib Hassan, the brother of a Minister, was one of the less able mudirs, "the blot on the picture". See Secret Report of 15.4.1933 by Keown-Boyd. cited above.

laboured demanded their recognition in their exemption from penalties and their enjoyment of privileges, which further enhanced their material and legal power base. Discrimination within officialdom was practised in favour of senior officials generally, and Sidqi's disposition to exercise his prerogative in delegating power reinforced their privileged position. (50) Conversely, in practising politics officials nurtured connected habits and values which adversely affected the ethos of discipline and order upon which the hierarchy depended. (51) The political contamination of the Administration was subsequently aggravated by the course of the power struggle as in the post-parliamentary phase public agitation and open insurrection were replaced by the politics of sedition and, in exposing surreptitious plots, the agents of authority came to connive with criminals. The cases pending, before the Courts in 1932, offshoots of electoral animosities - tended to incriminate parquet officials as much as party politicians. (52)

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(50) A comparison of figures for the first two and half years under the Regime with a similar period preceding it, disclosed a bias in applying the law in favour of ma'murs, officers and mo'awen idāra men as distinct from other minor officials, or those less directly connected with the Administration, eg. umdas and sheikhs. See table of record of actions and complaints against administrative officials and letter from Judge Booth to Smart, on 7.2.1933 - (enc.) in FO 371/17008 - Sidqi's wide resort to delegating power seems to have precipitated abuse in the senior ranks of officials. See interpellation of commutation of pensions scheme. MMN, 10.4.1934.

(51) For example, the collective exemption from penalties afforded subordinates, following elections, clearly implicated a breach of discipline. The preliminary investigation into 279 complaints submitted by the parquet to the Minister of Justice on 10.8.1931 indicated only one side of the question, the practice of wholesale forgery by the Opposition. Subsequently, these complaints were filed, as the boycott policy deprived the Opposition from resorting to the judicial machinery.

(52) See, for ex., the Forged Letters Case (December, 1931 - February / March, 1932) This case originated in a letter referred to in Nahas's communication to the Public Prosecutor, alleged to have been written by Allam to Sidqi, implicating the use of state funds for electoral bribing; the signature proved to be a forgery. For sequence and appeal judgement, see Residency despatch of 19.2.1932 in FO 371/15423.

The integrity of a regenerated Administration was threatened to the detriment of the authority which it had successfully restored, but whose sustenance now depended upon the parliamentary course it launched. The reorganised political institutions had sprouted out of the pinnacle of administrative power and their own prospects lay in their ability to prove themselves, notwithstanding their decreed origin. This depended as much on the subsequent conduct of the Administration as on their own. (53)

The conditions for maintaining the integrity of the Administration in the circumstances were as essential as they were uncertain. It was essential that it should retrench its systematic and dubious political activity, retract its extensive and arbitrary powers, re-assert and tighten its professional and institutional premises and finally, submit itself to some form of effective control. Whether, having savoured the pleasures of its growing powers, it would have been willing to relinquish them, is irrelevant before the sheer weight of the objective obstacles to its doing so. The same force majeure which had justified the central political role of the Administration continued to exert itself in the unabated, if somewhat altered form political hostilities assumed, and the vigilants of authority could not afford to relax their grip or divert their attention from political opponents. At the same time, the seditious exploitation of the effect of the prevailing economic depression further complicated their task. In the capital, the combination of the politics of the Depression and Opposition politics inspired a wave of political crime as the grievances of the swelling hosts of unemployed were more readily fanned than remedied. Many of those were victims of the electoral battlefield, collectively dismissed following strikes in the Government workshops, and it was not difficult to transfer their plight into a political issue. (54)

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(53) For evolution of parliamentary institutions see Ch. IV below. p. 153 ff.

(54) The real figures for unemployment outstripped those officially registered - 23,850 (STS June, 1932). The wave of political crime involved a series of demonstrational bombs, begun in the latter part of 1931 and aimed at politically strategic targets connected with the Regime. The most serious was the explosion at Tema on 5.5.1932 aimed at Sidqi and company of 22 Sha'ibist deputies and other figures. The Bombs trials opened on 19.3.1932 and the proceedings are invaluable for the light they cast on the politicisation of grievances, the role of political agents and the self-image of the culprits. See Case No.114/1932 in the Archives of the Supreme Court (Cairo); the Tema bomb is filed separately, as Case No.157/1932 (available also on micro-film in records of the Superior Council for the Protection of Arts and Crafts).

Elsewhere, in the provinces, the task of collecting tax-arrears fell on the unpopular officials in hard times, and the boundaries between judicious firmness and tyranny in performing an onerous duty were, in practice, blurred. (55) Nor were relief policies without their side-effects as the new Agricultural Bank, with its network of shūnas (stores) throughout the country, unleashed an army of officials, whose increased powers, equipped as they were with intimate details of their clients' financial status, spelled a growing invasion of privacy. (56)

Never shorn of influence, the Administration in agricultural Egypt was now doubly reinforced with the means and the opportunity to indulge it. Precautions to control it remained verbal formalities. In the correspondence exchanged between Sidqi and Shukri, the Director of the Bank, in August 1931, it was explicitly maintained that the Bank was a national institution and that its relief operations would be conducted on "individual merit". Sidqi himself, too, is credibly reported to have intervened on behalf of political opponents to withhold sequestrations. Neither stipulation nor precedent, however, prevented political abuse of the relief funds and credit facilities. Generally, the further away from the centre of authority the greater the incidence of arbitrary conduct, while, the closer the personal contact between the exacting official and the afflicted party, the more the abuse was felt. But political discrimination was not the rule, for officials were often indiscriminately bent on extracting government dues. The politicisation of their role, moreover, disposed the Government to maintain the defensive and to hood-wink some of the more ominous reports implicating their repressive conduct.

Meanwhile, discipline in officialdom sagged and, with growing Palace intervention, the channels of communication in the hierarchy became ambiguous.

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(55) So prompt were officials in carrying out their duties that in Sohag, for ex., the taxes were collected before they were due! Officially, this was explained by the good onion crop. - Towards the end of 1931, the Residency sent out a circular to consular agents to enquire about allegations of increased tyranny and oppression in the provinces. The result of investigations did not definitively incriminate the Administration. See memorandum with summary and other enclosures in Residency despatch of 12.12.1931. FO 371/15408

(56) This effect was anticipated in the memorandum Sidqi drafted in on the Crédit Agricole. See Documents, STS, July, 1930.

The operation of an internal control mechanism was upset and the way for irresponsibility was paved. Control grew increasingly dependent upon Sidqi's effective presence and his continued exercise of statesmanship at a moment when both were on the wane. Sidqi's own heavy dependence upon the Administration as his ultimate bulwark of support was not of a nature to facilitate his exercise of authority over it, while he was, moreover, handicapped by the impact of inescapable economy policies. Individual exemptions from the effects of the enforced ban on salary rises and promotions were, by the Spring of 1933, giving way to collective exemptions in departments that were particularly exposed to increased pressures and responsibilities, notably in the Interior and Finance. (57) The struggle to maintain standards and ensure that proven zeal did not go unrewarded, went side by side with his multiplying economic preoccupations and with the switch in his priorities to the Anglo-Egyptian question. His deteriorating physical condition and, eventually, his protracted absence from office during 1933, deprived the regime of a necessary element of political control before a more reliable alternative had been institutionalised. The wide publicity given earlier to the activity of the Administration in the party organ, which had presented an indirect check on its actions, subsided and, even the opposition press, perhaps partly due to the restrictions on reporting cases before the Court (sub judice), was momentarily deflected from its pursuit. Lulled into a false sense of security, the power of the Administration continued unchecked before it could exact its nemesis.

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The initial rehabilitation of authority on the eve of Sidqi's assumption of power involved the concurrent reinforcement of the Administration together with the Courts that would review its exercise. While effective government demanded a strong executive, Sidqi's commitment to a constitutional ideal underlay the quest for a

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(57) "In order not to have responsibility and competence go unacknowledged for so long," a series of exceptional rises and promotions were granted mudirs (File 150 - 29/10 in C.M. Archives) and officials in the Finance - (File 150 - 11/503); see MMW 27.4.1933 and 11.5.1933. Earlier on, awards were granted to officers who had "proved their merit" in the Bombs cases (See memorandum by Minister of Interior on 28.11.1932) although their implementation was delayed until April 1933. Out of the 9 candidates, 5 were effectively promoted, while the rest were given exceptional rises. Sidqi had originally conceived of the distinction between effective and nominal promotions in the hope of retaining a moral incentive. His view prevailed over that of his colleague in Education, who saw in the formality an administrative inconvenience. Ibid., 19.8.1931.

working 'balance' within the modified framework of power. Under the Regime the consolidation of the judiciary by creating a higher court of appeal was executed in a spirit that offset forebodings of the eventuality occurring under the Wafdisation impulse of its predecessors. (58) The Cour de Cassation that emerged was presided over by a distinguished authority of renown and personal integrity, whose appointment bade well for its prospects as an independent national institution. (59) The corrective to administrative abuse ultimately lay in its verdict.

In December, 1932, the Supreme Court took a decision to revoke an appeal judgement condemning to death the murderers of the late ma'mur of Badāri /Assuit, on grounds that mitigating factors condoned the behaviour of the culprits. Investigations had unearthed the conduct of the deceased as brutish and inhuman, and although the Judge of Cassation was legally unable to remit the sentence of the lower court, he condemned this conduct and urged the former to review its sentence. Further enquiries into other cases in the same province showed administrative abuse to lie, specifically, in three main areas : corporal torture to extract confessions, imprisonment without trial and forgery in recording proceedings. (60) These disclosures, together with the Cassation verdict, inspired a heartsearching in the ranks of the Regime and provoked a public outrage which political opponents exploited with a vengeance. On 4th January 1933, the Cabinet resigned and, on the same day, the reconstructed Cabinet was announced. (61)

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(58) See Decree-Law No. 68/1931. For comment see letter from Judge Booth to Smart on 7.5.1931 (Confid.) enc. in FO 371/15426. cf. Ch. II p. 50.

(59) Abdel Aziz Fahmy was President of the Native Court of Appeal in 1929 and Minister of Justice in two previous governments - ex. member of the Legislative Assembly, founding father of Wafd and President of CLP, but abandoned politics in pursuit of original career in judiciary. "... a convinced and unusually disinterested nationalist", sums him up. See Personality List in FO 371/15421. The new Court came to fill in a "lacune" in the administration of Justice. See Speech from the Throne, June, 1931 - cf. another such gap was filled with the creation of the long debated Conseil d'Etat, again under Sidqi, in 1946.

(60) See statement in reply to question on administrative brutality MMN, 1.2.1933 - The Minister's reply constituted a statistical defence of the Regime which was shown to have provoked less complaints against officials than some preceding governments. It should be pointed out though that the change in the law of prosecutions against officials under Mahmud in 1928, resulted in less convictions against officials.

(61) On the same evening the new government received a vote of confidence and on the following day, Sidqi explained the reasons for the changes and gave his account of the split with Maher in a lengthy reply to an inspired question. MMN, 5.1.1933. This was in retort to earlier interviews in the Balāgh with the outgoing Ministers. See also letter from Judge Booth to Oriental Secretary on 13.1.1933 (enc) in FO 371/17007.

The avid politicisation of the issue complicated Sidqi's task. While he was prepared to placate public opinion by giving justice its due course, he was anxious to retain the loyalty of his subordinates who, on account of the offensive conduct of a few of their number, were now subjected to a vicious campaign of undisguised political design. The wisdom of combining discretion with firmness was more important here than at any previous juncture for he had to counteract the impending demoralisation of the agents of Authority without infringing the necessary discipline. He urged on his colleague, the Minister of Justice, the advisability of postponing the cases pending judgement before the Courts for several weeks until the political conflagration had subsided. Ali Maher demurred and gave way to his successor, Ahmad Ali, who adopted this line. At the same time, Sidqi launched a swift administrative movement in the provinces which involved transfers, promotions and new appointments, so that, by the Spring of 1933, the Administration temporarily recovered much of the cohesion, efficiency and morale which were at stake in the Winter.

Despite the political contaminations that extended the malaise of the Administration to the entire regime and which, consequently, undermined the benefit of an effective corrective, yet the consolidation of the judiciary was an act of statesmanship. The measure, which had accompanied the reorganisation of the Administration amounted to a paradoxical vindication of Sidqi's constitutional intentions. These, however, were more fully borne out by his bid for leadership which sought to check the weight of the coercive dimension necessity had so disproportionately emphasised. While the Administration remained the indispensable institutional weapon in consolidating authority, its limitations were evident enough to inspire and sustain an alternative recourse to the only other weapon he readily commanded.

## II. The Bid for Leadership.

The architectonics of power lay in the sphere of politics, not in Administration, and Sidqi met the immense challenge to his authority with a concrete and energetic bid for leadership. He conceived his role in terms of consolidating a new way of government as well as in terms of the more immediate contingency of the power struggle. Realising that the foundations of the new regime depended on inculcating new values and not simply on destroying others, he launched his constructive bid for public loyalties, significantly, not for his person, but for a new public outlook on political life in general. He believed, among other things, that the absence of a constitutional ethos had been one of the main obstacles to parliamentary life over the past decade. On the other hand, the parliamentary ideal was not his sole preoccupation at a time when the scope for action and reform was vast and urgent, if Egypt were to catch up with the march of progress and occupy its rightful place among the other civilised and sovereign nations of the world. Sidqi, above all, saw the reality that was Egypt in the problems it had to contend with as it emerged from an era of British domination to one of independence and he was keenly aware of a profounder structural and cultural evolution which imposed its own exigences on the situation. (62) Indeed, the purpose of fostering a civic ethos comprising the major virtues of moderation, action and reason and others, like self-discipline, frugality, self-reliance and cooperation, was to make it possible for the modern institutions Egypt was adopting to strike root and to survive the quicksands of transition. (63)

### A. The Constitutional Ethos

Sidqi conceived the ethos that underlay parliamentary institutions to lie in a spirit of moderation. He condemned the preceding era for its disruptive excesses which had engendered its generic instability and led to a gulf between thought and

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(62) This awareness can be traced to his formative experience, esp. on the Alex. Municipality, while his work on the Commission in 1916 confirmed it. See Ch. I <sup>28, 29, 31</sup> pp. In 1930, he strove to communicate it to the public in his earliest addresses, eg. on 11. 9. 1930, 10. 12. 1930 and 1. 10. 1931 - "En avant", was his slogan (EFI address, April, 1931) - In 1946, Sidqi became the first president of the Institute of Scientific Research, which was launched to lead Egypt into the technological era and for which he had long campaigned.

(63) Cf. the requisites for institutionalisation below. Ch. IV. pp. 132-134.



action, aspiration and achievement. The result was frustration. In neglecting fundamental principles, it had fostered a basic disequilibrium in which boundaries between institutions were infringed, rights and duties confused and responsibility lost. "Al-ifrāṭ w'al-tafrīt, w'al qusūr w'al-taqṣīr" were, consequently, its landmarks.

(64) In contrast, a sense of temperate sobriety underlay sound Authority. He perceived "a basic harmony and complementarity in the various institutions in the new era which ensured it profusion, variety and a steadiness in its activity at a moment of world adversity when such attributes were strikingly rare. (65) He took pride in the restored parliament for the strain of moderation which he found among its parties and members and which was partly reflected in the enlightened tolerance it maintained towards the Government - (al-tasāmuh̄ fī al-ḥaqq) This attitude induced the latter to solicit the general interest and refrain from parochial concerns. (66) He contrasted this with blind partisanship, on the other hand, which he deprecated for its attendant excesses and for the manifest passions and tyranny it had led to in the past. Nor in his view, did it accord with the constitutional spirit for private interests -generally - whether of party or individuals-to override the general interest which he felt he had now restored as the common point of reference for all. Waṭaniya constituted the antidote to ḥizbiya.

"In turning over a new leaf, the epoch of cults (of persons and parties) is gone. We have all become human beings (ʿabīdullāh) in a constitutional era where the Waṭan reigns supreme... The present era is not stamped with the seal of a particular faction (fī'a) but it embodies the Nation (umma) in its totality and diversity, in its struggle for reform and its aspirations for Independence..." (67)

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(64) Beni Suef, 14.4.1932.

(65) Ibid.

(66) Ahram, 24.7.1931.

(67) Address to Shaʿbist Parliamentary Body on 17.6.1931.

Despite the hitherto unhappy experience of parliamentary government in Egypt which had left authority undermined, the executive trampled upon and an unworthy legislature, dominated by a tyrannical faction wringing havoc with the national interest in the ascendant, Sidqi retained his basic conviction. "... but, I still remain a constitutionalist. " The alternative was reprehensible.

"Dictatorship is a dangerous weapon that should only be resorted to in particular cases and then only for a limited period... The new Constitution (on account of its greater compatibility) prevents the excesses that are likely to lead to dictatorship." (68)

He saw dictatorship itself as a form of excess which, as such, was neither conducive to security and confidence nor, in the long run, was it conducive to political stability. Under it the conditions for progress were uncertain, as people were subject to the whims of the dictator and to his arbitrary exercise of power. In contrast, he believed that, "in every nation security and order provide the basis for material and moral progress"; (69) the superiority of constitutional government lay in its compatibility with the conditions for progress. (70) It ensured the supremacy of the law over the will of individuals, subdued passions and secured the effective equilibrium that characterised a healthy polity. Moreover, by adequately safeguarding the principle of representation, parliamentary life promoted stability and progress. It was political realism and utility which may thus be seen to have conditioned Sidqi's option for constitutionalism.

In public Sidqi was categorical in his assertions.

"... the unquestionable intention of our Government is to maintain constitutional principles and to safeguard most carefully, the liberties gained by the people." (71)

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(68) Interview with the correspondent of the Echo de Paris, 10.5.1931. See, in the same vein private interview with T.P. Conwell-Evans on the 27.11.1930 in FO 800/282

(69) Address to Guiza delegation, 3.5.1931.

(70) Address to Sha'ibist parliamentary body, 7.1.1932.

(71) Address in Continental Hotel gathering of supporters, 11.9.1930.

This re-assurance was given to a heterogeneous congregation in September 1930, at the height of the political speculation that preceded the promulgation of the new order. Towards the end of 1932, in an informal address to a group of deputies and senators, Sidqi reiterated his basic conviction and reflectively pursued his option.

"Had we not been truly constitutionalists believing in the principle of shūra (consultation) and seeking to propagate it and abide by its precepts, and to confine ourselves within its bounds, how easy it would have been to follow in the tracks of others who assumed power under exactly similar circumstances... We could, then, have suspended the Constitution for a period and suppressed the press in batches of tens and hundreds... then, we could have governed without tribulation of the ignorant and we could have escaped the vigilance and censor of the legitimate representatives of the nation - But we were loathe to deprive the nation of one of the dearest fruits of its struggle."

He further added,

"We could not think of following the example of others because we earnestly believe that the government of the country ought to be conducted upon the basis of consultation and along constitutional principles on condition that the docile, peaceable people are spared the charlatanism, guile and agitation... It is this conviction that has kept us from slipping impulsively into... a dictatorship... whose very conditions are not present in our country. (When we opted for the Constitution) we did so without hesitation, fully content in our resolution."(72)

Assuming a certain consistency in Sidqi's personality, projection could possibly provide an indirect measure for testing his professions of faith. Modesty, temperance, sincerity and integrity were among the foremost traits he admired in the self-denying devotion to the Waṭan and to Right (al-Ḥaqq) which he perceived in another eminent statesman.

"The highest offices in the land did not corrupt his modest and noble character... Sarwat Pasha led his life a thinking head (Ra's mufakkira) as well as an active and productive figure... no irresponsible tattler or agitator... (but) throughout a man of deeds, not a man of words."(73)

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(72) 23.12.1932.

(73) Sha'b, 1.3.1931

The strains singled for praise upon the commemoration of his friend included qualities he tried to inculcate in his country-men, while, in the model of character and conduct he upheld to them, he conceived the embodiment of that ethos in whose absence constitutional prescriptions were subverted.

The practical corroboration of a constitutional ethos however, was not confined to Sidqi's reflections nor to isolated confessions. "Egypt is not served by pretty words, but by deeds", was a motto that was sooner proved than echoed under a leadership which sought to confirm its message in the course of realising itself. Part of this message aimed at emancipating Egypt from exploitation by a faction of its own sons. (74) Sidqi had learnt from his experience in 1925 that his arch-enemy was, not the superior political organisation of the Wafd, which he could counter and repress by a more efficient and determined organisation, but the Zaghulist myth for which the Wafd indomitably stood. Unless the latter was successfully challenged the authority of the Regime remained precarious, while, in the absence of an alternative set of norms, the parliamentary course could not prosper. Conversely, the search for public consent involved a radical endeavour to cultivate a more propitious climate of public norms in which the constitutional ethos would be reinforced by an ethic of action and reform.

#### B. The Provincial Tours.

To preach the new civic ethos, Sidqi launched a systematic campaign that took him at regular intervals on periodic visits from Aswan, in Upper Egypt, to the provinces of the Delta and to the coastal cities, and from Qantara in the East, to outposts in the western desert. (75) These tours (which should be seen in conjunction with the Administrative tours above) may be crudely classified into electoral and post-electoral, the latter generally falling in two phases : August-October, 1931 and February-July, 1932. The electoral and immediate post-electoral tours are more sharply delineated by the ostensible proclamation that "political"

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(74) Sha'bist delegation, 6.1.1931.  
cf. editorial in the Sha'b, 27.1.1931.

(75) The number of such tours and visits conducted in 1931 and 1932 amount to nearly 40. Sidqi stopped at Qantara on his way back from Palestine and the Levant in the winter of 1932 and referred to the brotherly ties that bound Egypt to its neighbours. Interest (maṣlahā), however, was the basis of their relationship. See Sha'b, 14.2.1932 and 11.3.1932.

tours were over and that the moment called for a concerted and single-minded consecration to national economic problems. (76) Sidqi, accordingly, put himself at the disposal of the people, sought their opinion and demands, examined for himself conditions peculiar to each locality and collected the information that would help him devise relief policies. The parliamentary recess accentuated the importance of these contacts, while their field nature enhanced their utility. The tours in 1932 generally followed invitations by local delegations to which he readily responded...

"... not to entertain myself with ceremonious receptions... but to see your problems on the spot and to inspect your contribution to the reforms underway in the country... as the time is gone when Heads of State stand aloof from the people.."(77)

The convocation of Parliament, then, did not prevent the executive from intensifying its own effort to live up to its responsibilities and meet the vital problems in a situation that demanded it. (78) Government was, after all, a tax exerted by the Waṭan. (79) The importance he attached to his mission urged him, notwithstanding his manifold preoccupations in office, to give priority to the tours and his own reward eventually dawned on him one day as he observed that "a remarkable change" had come over the beliefs and attitudes of the people. (80)

Sidqi retained a national character to his tours and strove to differentiate between the Regime and the Political Party. This was especially obvious during the

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(76) Interview with Shā'ib and press statement in Ahram, 20.9.1931. It is difficult to make a strict classification for hardly a month passed without a visit to a provincial locality, a public amenity, an enterprise or a government department. The crudity of the classification is evident eg. on 2nd July, 1931, he was in Qaliubiya and between 24/26th December, 1931, he inaugurated works in Esna and Edfu; November 1932 in Port Said recuperating, but still politically indefatigable (24.11.1932) For the rest of the year he confined his visits to industrial, commercial and cultural sites in the Capital.

(77) Address to Daqahlia delegation, 22.4.1932.

(78) Shā'ib, 12.5.1932.

(79) To Shā'ibist delegation, 6.1.1931.

(80) Alexandria, 1.7.1932. The speech on the occasion comprised a comprehensive political evaluation of the past two years. cf. similar speech delivered earlier in Assuit, 22.3.1932.

elections where the nature of the challenge to his authority transformed them into a plebiscite about the Regime. The simultaneous excursions by Mohamed Allam in his capacity as Party Manager were undertaken separately; they followed in the tracks of the Prime Minister to confirm a conviction and uphold a model of determination to see elections through - and, more significantly, to mobilise for the Party, recruit agents, dispense patronage and, generally, supervise the organisation he presided over. Sidqi, on the other hand, who was usually accompanied by an Ittehadist colleague as well as a Sha'bist, canvassed for the principles of the Regime and, by preserving his image as champion of a national cause, provided a political dimension of volition which the Regime badly lacked.

One of the important functions of these visits lay in their demonstrational value. This was again particularly evident during the elections where a ritual for the legitimization of authority emerged in the pattern of exchanges that occurred. The typical audience comprised provincial notables or tribal eminents (eg. Beni Suef/Wasta) along with executive representatives of authority. Posters and placards with suggestive Quranic verses announced the gracious arrival - eg. "And remember in the (holy) Book (the story of) Ismail; Aye, he was truthful of (his) pledge". Festivities usually commenced with an announcement to the Prime Minister by the host disclosing an act of public munificence in honour of the occasion. Various speeches followed upon which Sidqi commented on the manifest devotion and asserted his determination to remain in power in view of such enthusiastic support, inspired "to continue to serve you." (81) The procession subsequently went onto the next township where, amid ceremony, it was received by the mudir and a local notable, a public site would be inaugurated and another round of exchanges followed. In contrast to his opponents - 'a theoretical lot' - who by their actual conduct were opting for autocracy Sidqi was actively soliciting the consent of the public and exploring all quarters for allegiance. Early in April, he visited the government workshops where he was welcomed by a representative of the workers who stressed the implications of the Prime Minister's practical concern for labour, notwithstanding, his numerous other preoccupations. Sidqi's reply, typical of its counterparts on other similar occasions,

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(81) Sha'b, 2.4.1931.

dwelled on the "noble symbol of enlightened patriotism" embodied in the arsenal before him, explained its contribution to the national wealth, and in a pointed diversion, referred to the importance of industry, "the pillar of progress", and to the imperative duty of government to encourage it and protect its architects. On the present occasion, the oral exchanges culminated in a practical demonstration in which the Director of the workshops introduced the heads of different sections to Sidqi -all graduates of technical colleges- and he shook hands with each one. The encounter closed on a photographic consecration of the occasion (82) The rituals of legitimation were thus duly carried from the green fields to the shop-floors.

In the course of the formalisation of public consent Sidqi was also evolving a counter-weight to the autocratic origin of his power. In the immediate post-electoral tours he remarked with satisfaction upon a growing sense of conviction in the country that his was a national government "deriving its strength exclusively from public opinion." (83) Regardless of its veracity, such statements backed by his active gestures throughout the land were not of a nature to improve His Majesty's disposition. The tenor of subsequent statements strove to strike a balance by emphasising the indispensability of Royal support, while in later tours prudence counselled economy in such utterances. Other means were resorted to to convey the political principle he sought to impress on his public, but their implications did not escape a wary Monarch either. Sensitive to the growing tension in palace circles, Sidqi interrupted an audience towards the end of 1932 enjoining it to cheer, not for himself, but for H.M. the King. (84)

Meanwhile, the inculcation of principles and values was actively pursued less by preaching, more by practice. One of the first lessons he demonstrated by his incessant tours was that government derived its vitality from the momentum its pursuits engendered. As a national responsibility government could only be discharged through perseverance. The tasks confronting it could not be resolved by incipient,

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(82) Ibid., 8.4.1931. Similar visits were undertaken to technical schools and industrial sites.

(83) Ahram, 20.9.1931 - The emphasis here was to deny the allegation that the Regime derived or sought British support. Generally his tribute was divided between the King and the deputies. See Ch.IV. pp.179-180; 163-164.

(84) Daqahlia delegation, 27.12.1932.

isolated acts - they demanded a systematic self-application that involved continuous activity. Another of his lessons on the attributes of government was that, far from being a fortuitous activity, it called for ability, knowledge and expertise as well as for resolution. (85) With the object of exploring the potentials of a neglected part of the country and investigating its problems, he twice journeyed to the western desert first to collect practical information on the basis of which he propounded a number of active measures, and ten months later, to inspect the progress underway in their execution. (86) There was more than knowledge, however, as government was subject to rules which enjoined spheres of competence and the observance of bounds. On one occasion, Sidqi's assent to a demand was granted, but its implementation was made subject to the decision of the local Council concerned before the decree could be promulgated. (87) On another occasion, he referred the matter to his colleague, the Minister of Education, on grounds of competence and responsibility. (88) Government was not an arbitrary exercise of power, but an orderly and disciplined activity whose concrete purpose, moreover, precluded it from being a literary contest or an end in itself. To impress this meaning Sidqi accompanied his professions of reform, action and production (al-nashāṭ, w'al'amal, w'al-intāg) with successive practical demonstrations that ranged from works benefiting a particular locality to those of a national import. Power stations, pumping

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(85) In Assuit, 23.3.1932. Sidqi referred somewhat vaguely to the mores of power (taqalīd al-ḥukm) as the basis for government. Earlier statements emphasised the role of knowledge and rationality eg. Sha'b, 22.9.1931, and address to Fayoum and Qaluib delegates on 17.10.1931. He carried the point further in his speech at Alexandria on 1.7.1932 - See P. 127.

(86) Between 11th and 16th October Sidqi undertook a tour of the western desert and among its notable incidents was the visit to Mersa Matrrouh, the stop at Siwa Oasis, the visit to the Frontiers Administration and the address to units of the Egyptian army in their barracks there. (15.10.1931) He went back in June 1932 to inspect the works in progress on the summer resort he suggested in a campaign to develop local resorts and reduce the annual outflow of capital.

(87) Faraskor, 16.4.1931.

(88) Menufia, 20.9.1931.



installations, bridges, hospitals, schools, a new district administration (ma'muriat Kafr el-Sheikh), a new summer resort (Mersa Matruh), a national crop exchange, the Gebel Aulia Dam, were all among the works that were begun in this era and whose practical significance to the populace was the object of active exposition. The measure of a government lay in its effective contribution to the national welfare, and Sidqi took pride in drawing attention to the fact that his days in power were productive despite the prevailing economic adversity. (89) He declined any personal share in a perceptibly evolving sense of approbation which he attributed to a dawning recognition of the Idea for which he stood, namely, that of "energy, action and cohesion" (al-nashāṭ, w'al-ʿamal w'al-taḍḍāfur) (90)

The nature of the relationship between the government and the people was equally an object of practical demonstration on these tours. Allegiance was essentially a bond that rested on rationality and utility, not emotion. By expounding at regular intervals the various policy measures in progress, Sidqi appealed to the public to pass judgement upon his government not on the basis of unfulfilled pledges, but of its actual record. The active gesture that frequently accompanied these visits confirmed the lively concern of the government for the affairs of the locality. Both, exposition and gesture, illuminated other attributes of this relationship. In contrast to the foolery and deceit of its opponents, information and candour provided the yardstick of its exchanges with the public which, implicitly, constituted an effective recognition of the principle of accountability. This yardstick, too, postulated a responsiveness and activism in the dynamic interaction that governed such a relationship.

A technique was used to diffuse a current of interaction between the two parties whereby, specific demands were articulated by representatives of interests, usually a local council member, and they evoked a response of like nature. In his reply to speakers on one occasion, for example, Sidqi, in a sequence of precision, clarity and pointed brevity dealt with each of the demands raised relating to aspects of reform in the locality and illustrated the extent to which the Government could

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(89) Girga, 9.3.1931.

(90) Damietta, 17.9.1931.

comply with them. (91) On other occasions the impact of the current of demand and response was heightened by the spectacle of Sidqi complying - on the spot - with one of the demands raised, where that was technically or legally practicable. (92) An important message Sidqi wished to communicate to the public was that government was amenable to reason and that people could influence it to their benefit. In a characteristically brief but pointed address at Bilbeis, Sidqi startled his audience by drawing their attention to a demand, recently made to him in Cairo by a visiting delegation of their number, but which had, on the present occasion, been overlooked. Then, he had turned it down; but now, having witnessed for himself its justice, he had changed his mind and, as Minister of Interior, he instructed the Mudir and the Director of Municipalities Division to lend the demand the priority it merited. (93)

Sidqi made a point in his discourses to invoke a code of participation by explaining that the effectiveness of government depended upon that of local bodies and individuals. (94) While the potential of strong government was vast, it was not unlimited and, without reciprocity, its capacity for effective action was undermined. (95) The economic depression was the practical occasion for urging public cooperation, while the measures pursued were designed, rather than panaceas to national problems, as stimuli to others to undertake their share in solving their problems. (96) Cooperation was invoked between individuals and authority, corporate bodies and authority and among individuals. The positivism and activism enjoined in the principles of interaction and participation precluded the objective of autocratic

(91) Sha'b, 2.10.1931.

(92) A telephone call to the district official in Zifta settled on the spot the first of a list of grievances a local delegation petitioned Sidqi with in Gharib (his local constituency).

Ibid., 2.4.1931

(93) This concerned the transfer of a railway line that was inadequately located in the middle of the little town, much to the inconvenience of its inhabitants. Ibid., 1.10.1931.

(94) Girga, 9.3.1931; Benha, 13.9.1931; Menufia, 20.9.1931; Sharqia, 1.10.1931; Girga, 6.5.1932.

(95) Address on the agricultural programme of the government given on occasion of the inauguration of the Mit-Berra/Zifta railway line, 14.8.1930. See also address to visiting delegation on 7.2.1932.

(96) See Ch. V. p.220.

consolidation of authority of which his opponents accused him. In dwelling upon the strength and limitation of government he evolved a concept of power that allowed for plurality, as individuals and groups were invited to partake of their responsibility and contribute to the effectiveness of authority.

However, he maintained a firm conviction in the nature of that dynamic relationship. It was incumbent on the government to protect its ward and train it. Conversely, Sidqi often drew the analogy between rulers and doctors.

"Rulers are the doctors of society. 'Prevention better than cure' is their motto - They must stop poisons from entering the bloodstream, hence, protect their charges from going astray or contracting a political infection spread by agitators." (97)

The constitutional modifications represented one aspect of an essentially elitist ethos, whose positive implications were now being imparted in the ongoing process of political education.

A practical confirmation of the essence of leadership was also underway. Sidqi believed that responsible and responsive leadership lay at the heart of sound authority, and that it provided the dynamo in the political system. In its effective exchanges with the public, through its functional and representative bodies, it bridged the distance with the people and negated the role of charlatans. Through information, it dispelled apathy and, by elucidating government policies, it could, in time, create a stake in them. On the other hand, he did not confine the interactive element between leadership /following to its concrete demonstration in demand and response currents, but he strove for an additional psychological dimension to produce an impact of unison. He often, for example, attributed his own vitality to the support and encouragement he sensed in the public. Sidqi further believed in the integrative role of leadership and he sought to bridge the gap, not only between authority and the people, but also between the national and the regional. He constantly invoked the practical link between parochial interests and the general interest by placing the former in the perspective of the latter. (98) In demonstrating its responsiveness,

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(97) Address to MPs, 2.11.1932.

(98) eg. Rosetta, on 8.8.1931, having discussed some works of interest to the locality, Sidqi went on to tell his listeners of the problems and projects of their "larger watan" - cf. his next address at Benha, 12.9.1931 and Siwa, 14.10.1931.

responsible leadership which Sidqi represented, retained its creativity and forged a bond with its following, not by bending it to its whims, but by raising it to its responsibilities.

Above all, the test of leadership in the course of its exercise, lay in the nature of the acclaim it evoked. The leader represented a way of government, but he did not embody it, and he strove to transmit values and ideas, but not to assimilate the people to himself. He might set up an example, but he could not incarnate the nation, for leadership was instrumental and it should not set itself as an end. Leadership, as Sidqi saw it, was not a process of self-aggrandisement, but in diffusing its ideals, it fulfilled and dissolved itself. This impersonal concept of leadership - and of Authority - underlay his hostility to the cult of personality - that legacy of Zaghulism - and underlay his instinctive urge to promote institutions. In practice, however, these tours brought to light the tension between Sidqi's efforts to depersonalise power on the one hand, and a conflicting disposition on the part of the populace to idolise, on the other. (99)

### C. The Press Statements and Public Address.

The transition from government as an act of authority to government as a principled and purposeful activity, realisable in the coordination of wills not in their subjugation, was the object of this exercise of leadership which was not confined to the provincial tours. From the outset, Sidqi's emergence promised to bring with it a distinctive style of government. The policy manifesto and appeal for public cooperation and tranquility set the pace. (100) His premiership struck a new note in Authority as it focussed on communication and no longer solely on imposition. It set out to inform people of its intentions and solicit their active regard, instead of imposing itself mutely and compelling a passive obedience. The gesture was a turning point whose momentum was sustained in the course of the steady flow of public statements and addresses which he delivered on different occasions and at diverse levels.

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(99) In Deirut, Ahmad effendi Kamal el-Far eulogised Sidqi, "the Great", the "Khalid (eternal), the Beloved, Sha'b, 9. 8. 1931. The "Za'Im" (popular leader or Fuehrer) becomes one of his attributes. Again in Behera the Arabs on horseback feast him like a Conqueror and hand him 'the key of the fortress', *ibid.*, 9. 5. 1932. Upon a visit to a girls' school in Damietta he is treated to a poetry recital in his honour opening with the verses : "O Hope of the Nile - O Felicity's countenance" (Yā Raja' al-Nīl, Yā Wajh al-Sēūd...) *Ibid.*, 17. 9. 1931.

(100) See Ch. II above. p. 59.

Sidqi could perhaps be credited with initiating the systematic exploitation of the press for the purposes of the government of the day. In doing so he was impelled as much by the absence of a respectable partisan organ that would wholeheartedly advocate his views, as by his desire to address the widest possible sector of the public to promote a national appeal - as distinct from a partisan one. It was made obligatory for all newspapers to announce official communiques, while the columns of the major independent dailies like the Ahram and the Moqattam provided the forum for expounding government policies and the medium for announcing and justifying its measures. The personal imprint of senior officials was occasionally felt in the national press, while Sidqi himself engaged in reasoned diatribes with his critics. (101) It was mainly, however, in his statements and interviews that he conveyed his style of government.

A glance at the personal press communications shows them to have been deliberate and calculated excursions that tended to recur in the heat of a public controversy or at the turn of some critical political development. The message they contained meant to exonerate his government from hostile or unfair charges, to impress, on opponents and neutral observers alike, a point scored by his Government, to allay fears or reassure a particular sector of public opinion, or to convey a *discreet* warning where it was due. The general tone was one of optimistic self-confidence designed to instil in the public a like measure of confidence in the government, in his personal authority and statesmanship. They also reflected his determination to overcome an imposed isolation, defuse a rumour-ridden atmosphere and generally ease the prevailing tension.

Their subject was as varied as the situation warranted. Anglo-Egyptian negotiations and anti-Wafdist measures or developments were frequent topics for elucidation. The former increased before the mounting offensive of his opponents in 1932 and towards the end of that year, as British vacillation threatened to undermine, irrevocably, his gains. His statements and interviews were deftly designed, by virtue of their cumulative effect, to confront the British government with a

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(101) eg. Abdel Hamid Badawi, head of the Contentieux, contributed anonymous articles ("an eminent jurist") defending the amendments but he was detected and criticised. Rose al-Yusuf, 4.11.1930 - At the beginning of September, a dialogue/diatribe took place between Sidqi and Prince Omar Tossoun. Ahram and Moqattam, 2. 9.1930

de facto situation and impress upon it the opportuneness and wisdom of embarking on the negotiations. Nearer home, in the context of the power struggle, such statements were sometimes designed to provide his wavering opponents with a face-saving bridge for retreat. The press communiqués that punctuated the course of elections culminated in a proclamation that the country needed the effort of all its sons at that moment, and he beseeched his opponents to consider carefully whether, in the light of actual facts, devotion to the Watan was not a worthier cause than false passions and an obstinate hizbiya. He made his appeal at the height of his power, addressing his adversaries, not as head of government but as the leader of a party pleading the cause of the Watan. (102) At the same time, the challenge to his power lay as much in the prevailing economic adversity. While remedies were being devised in government departments, he realised the importance of cultivating confidence in the soundness of the economy, the adequacy of his policies and in his personal competence. One of his earliest interviews was with the correspondent of a leading organ of the business community, the Bourse Egyptienne, where he outlined the policy and priorities of his Government. While following elections, to offset the effect of the political indulgences they had involved, he reassured anxious local foreigners of the stability of his régime and of the non-discriminating nature of its protectionist policies. (103) The more vulnerable his position grew before the offensive which exploited the economic situation and politicised its issues, the more pointed and specific the statements became to refute allegations, expound measures and, generally, to dispel the doubts and anxieties rumours fostered.

Sidqi was equally anxious to secure a representative image of his actions abroad, especially as the efforts of his detractors were not confined to the Egyptian setting, while among his foreign spectators were his critics and potential executioners. (104) He explained that he was essentially a constitutionalist and that any

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(102) Ahram, 15.5.1931; 2.6.1931 and 24.6.1931. cf. series of editorials "For the sake of the watan, not for individuals", in the Sha'b, September, 1931.

(103) 6.7.1930; Tachodromes, 5.6.1931 - Members of local foreign communities occasionally took an active part in the welcome given Sidqi on his tours in Upper and Lower Egypt. See egs. in Sha'b, 9.3.1931 and 21.4.1931 - Still, the unproclaimed state of martial law in force during elections inconvenienced business. See consular reports and letters addressed to Keown-Boyd-enc. in Report on Elections. op.cit.

(104) Cf. Loraine's simile.. ' a crouching leopard ' - p.74 above.

practical divergence from professions was accounted for by the peculiarities of the Egyptian setting; that freedom was a relative concept; political development an evolutionary process, and that, meanwhile, the concrete gains under the Regime in terms of political stability and economic achievement were its practical measures.

(105) He emphasised his desire to leave behind him an organised and mature Administration and a consolidated nucleus of worthy elements who could be relied upon to maintain the reputation and credit of Egypt among other nations intact. (106)

In accepting office at a critical moment, he reminded his audience, he did so wary of his responsibilities to his country and, once his mission was completed, he would return to his private life as a citizen and patriot, and resume his business activities (107).

His defensive did not exhaust itself in projecting a more congenial self-image for himself. But his statesmanship ultimately aimed at promoting Egyptian sovereignty. His foreign communications emphasised the independence of Egypt and its right as well as its ability to run its affairs as it saw fit in the light of its national interests. Aware of the role of foreign investment for development, he stressed the soundness of the economy and underlined its prospects in order to cultivate international confidence in it. (108) This was evident in Egypt's endeavour to join the League of Nations and in its invitation of foreign capital to partake of its economic and social revival - in a spirit of mutual collaboration and equal partnership, not as a field of colonial exploitation. In his contribution to the foreign and national media Sidqi combined his bid for public consent to a more enduring claim on statesmanship.

The personal and direct imprint of his style of government appeared more particularly in Sidqi's public addresses, where a broad anonymity was reduced to

(105) See example of his articles in the Manchester Guardian, 19.3.1931 and the Financial News, 27.1.1932. Sidqi also sent letters to the editor or messages as the occasion arose. Eg. News Chronicle, 25.4.1931; the Daily Herald, 23.5.1931 and the Daily Telegraph, 17.12.1931.

(106) Daily Mail, 1.1.1933 (interview)

(107) L'Echo de Paris, 19.5.1931 (interview) - cf. description in his memoirs : " I am but a passer-by" Mudhakkirāti p.39

(108) Sidqi discussed Egypt's foreign policy realistically and intelligently in an article on the subject. L'Europe Moderne, 31.12.1932

definable proportions in a group bound by some political, social, occupational or regional affinity held in purposeful convocation. While these addresses were few and mainly limited to a sequence of provincial delegations at the outset, the creation of the Sha'b Party and the intensification of electoral activity afforded new opportunities. With the restoration of parliamentary life they acquired a different and more varied character which reflected a greater balance and marked the progressive consolidation of the Regime. Audiences alternated between Sha'bist meetings, parliamentary receptions and business or ceremonial functions.

Sidqi sought the opportunity to communicate directly with elements of the population hailing from different walks of life. In the provincial elements, he conceived the fellah<sup>as</sup> the backbone of the country-side with vital interests at stake, and he assured him that there was "a close identity between the interests of good government and that of the people at large - as opposed to professional politicians - the objective of the first was tranquility and uninterrupted business... while that of the others lay in chaos and agitation... (109) In other elements of the urban population, notably workers, he infused a sense of identity and relevance to the kind of society the Regime aspired to. He took pride in being called naṣīr al-ummāl, he told a visiting delegation of workers from Mansura on the 1st January, 1931, for he believed that whoever promoted the interests of labour promoted those of the country in their persons, as Egypt depended on their efforts in its present quest to replace foreign by national wealth. He hoped that they would live up to their image as "an instrument of reform", and trust in the identity of interests that bound them to a regime dedicated to reform, action and independence in its action. To youth delegations at the Sha'bist centre he equally invoked a sense of responsibility and national calling and appealed to them to exercise their independent will and judgement. (110) In contrast to the euphoric Wafdist vision of the undifferentiated Umma, Sidqi invoked the individuality and distinctiveness of its components and, in the process, he might have encouraged the development of an incipient social consciousness.

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(109) Sha'b, 12.3.1931.

(110) Ibid., 6.1.1931 - cf. appeal to workers to avoid politics and beware of impostors (politicians), issued upon the proclamation of an Egyptian Labour Party. Ahram, 26.7.1931



Generally, his addresses displayed a notable poverty in the orator and a comparative wealth in the educator. Taken in conjunction with the tours, they provided sessions of national political enlightenment. Those delivered to the parliamentary body or to more sophisticated Sha'bist audiences provided a fair sample of a more balanced exposé that combined the economic to the political. (111) The characteristic brevity that marked many of the addresses was justified by the urgency for action rather than words. (112) Sidqi sought to introduce a sense of time in an easy-going environment by setting an example. Frugality, too, was another virtue he sought to impress on the individual conscience, seizing upon the difficult economic conditions of the day to stress its validity. Just as the tours became the occasion for inculcating political attitudes compatible with the constitutional ethos, Sidqi's addresses and accompanying gestures strove to link independence and the political claims of the nation to an individual ethos of toil in daily life.

A distinction could be drawn between the public addresses in general and the 'closed' addresses. The emphasis in the latter was usually on Authority rather than on enlightenment. They reflected Sidqi's immediate political preoccupations and were prominent at critical turns in the launching and consolidation of the Regime when the challenge to its authority was heightened. Their incidence coincided with the intensification of the flow of organised delegations to the Ministry and they constituted a means of personalising the official communiqués warning the Opposition against its seditious intentions. They were not, however, uniform in their tenor. The earlier addresses played on the primordial instincts of fear in his audience, while his later addresses became demonstrably less strained. The contrast seen in the following two excerpts is perhaps typical. On one occasion, following a brief exposé on the amendments to the Constitution, Sidqi sonorously reminded his audience, a

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(111) For example of such, see addresses to Continental Hotel gathering on 7.1.1933; in Sha'bist Club on 16.1.1932 and to Sha'bists on 11.11.1932, 1.10.1932 and 8.11.1931. For examples of more specialised addresses to qualified audiences, see lecture to foreign journalists on 1.2.1932; in Alex Chamber of Commerce, 11.9.1931 and esp. upon Crop Exchange inauguration at Rod al-Farag, 7.11.1932. On the other hand, the analysis and statistics at Fayoum on 14.5.1932 seemed slightly out of place, as beyond their audience.

(112) Sidqi sometimes resorted to economy in order to avoid an awkward situation and this frustrated his supporters. cf. his address to welcome deputations upon his return from Europe, on 27.9.1932.

gathering of provincial delegations, that :

"... Such is the Constitution of the Land... that must be venerated and followed. Let him who knows not - and he who cares not to know, be informed... for it is futile to waste time on vain attempts... their result will only rebound on their instigators and there can be no excuse for whomever has been warned..." (113)

With Authority established and the Constitution effective, threats were replaced by more bouyant assertions. Commenting to a visiting delegation from Fayoum upon his latest visit to their province he observed :

" It was a happy and fortunate visit, not with regard to my person... for I wish to transfer onto my country and the Regime... all the noble meaning manifested in the welcome and good-will which I witnessed..." (114)

With the diversity in channels and opportunities for communicating with the public 'closed' addresses to visiting delegations lost their original importance as occasions for political discourse and brief, informal injunctions, in reply to the visiting spokesman, became the rule.

Generally, however, the political importance of the delegations grew in proportion to the need to communicate with the public at a given moment when other forms were not available or they were inadequate. Just as these delegations had first become an audience for political discourse at a time when the Opposition campaign gained a new momentum with the promulgation of the Constitution, so too, their importance grew towards the end of 1932. With the recrudescence of public agitation over the Badāri affair, Sidqi felt the need to break the barriers of doubt and suspicion by reassuring professions delivered from a position of stable authority. (115) Personal contact remained the one effective weapon for persuasion at his command, and he retained a pristine faith in the power of the spoken word to influence minds. The delegations were ultimately meant to become unwitting mouthpieces for Authority in their localities.

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(113) Address to Menufīa, Guiza and Beni Suef delegations, 17.10.1930.

(114) Sha'b, 17.5.1932

(115) For the Badāri affair, see above. p. 105.

While the feature of organised delegations found a precedent in the Mahmud Regime, its originality under Sidqi was in the use to which it was put, as delegations came to provide the prelude and, on occasion, the sequel to the tours which he, himself undertook. Although, too, the imprint of the Administration was felt in the sundry groups that flocked to the seat of Authority to pay homage and receive a lesson in the mores of submission, spontaneity was not absent. Provincial notables, out of sheer self-interest and out of conviction, went to the Capital to exchange their allegiance for a guarantee of their interests. In those hard times, however, journeying to the Capital was expensive and the ingenuous reversion of the current, as Sidqi launched his tours and visits, was a dictate of expediency as much as of political principle. The flow was not completely checked but regulated in a manner that linked it to the tours. While the energetic bid for public consent went on with its formalisation on the spot at times, the intermittent formalisation of allegiance, embodied in the visiting provincial delegations, ensured that such visits retained their demonstrational value.

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The consolidation of authority under the Regime was a complex task, and the challenge confronting statesmanship in the process, lay in striking a balance between the coercive and voluntary elements of a situation that left little room for manoeuvre. Leadership provided the dynamo that inspired a sense of confidence and regeneration in the ranks of a reorganised Administration. In projecting his presence and ideas on the national and regional planes, Sidqi aspired to create, in due course, that mature and enlightened public opinion which could bolster the Regime and offset its authoritarian origins. The scope of leadership, however, was coextensive with the scope of its activity, and the course of the emergent political institutions also depended upon it.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### THE NEW EXECUTIVE

#### I. Conceptual Foundations

" Great works must pass through distinct stages: first, an acute awareness of an urgent need to act in respect to a given problem; second, a profound and thorough consideration of the means required to secure a solution; and, third, once a decision has been made, a firm, courageous and unflinching resolve to execute it..."(1)

Paradoxically, Sidqi endeavoured to consolidate the foundations of parliamentary life in Egypt through reinforcing the executive. His gesture aimed at remedying the excesses of a volatile legislature by provisionally restricting its powers, without violating the fundamental principles of the Constitution. At the same time, he sought in the Cabinet an effective and credible nucleus within the executive which could provide the base for a steady evolution of parliamentary institutions. He believed that a strong government would, moreover, be better qualified to handle the difficulties inherent in " the first stages of independence", and that it could thus, benefit the prospects of national regeneration as well as constitutional development.

The presentation here will first consider the roots and principles of Sidqi's quest before it deals with its substance and practice.

#### A. The Genesis of Executive Power

To resolve the political deadlock of the 'twenties, Sidqi turned for inspiration to the past. His patriotism did not impair his judgement as he conceived the relevance to modern government of the techniques and principles introduced by the British. Although many of the pre-War institutional developments were British-controlled and inspired, he believed that in the course of their application, they had become Egyptian practices and, thereby, they constituted a part of Egyptian historical reality. In his quest for continuity, Sidqi saw in the earlier pattern a model for that effective and representative form of government whose foundations he was anxious to secure. The trouble with the 1923 Constitution was that, in idealising Egyptian political reality, it had overlooked earlier developments and undermined its

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(1) Sidqi referred to a "theory" that inspired the constitutional modifications in a political address in the Sha'ibist Club at Alexandria on 1.7.1932.

its identity and, in its mediation between the British, the Khedive and the Assembly, it acquired its self-confidence. Ultimately, however, the British remained responsible for the smooth functioning of the government machinery. In 1930, when Sidqi re-established the organic continuity with an incipient tradition, his action was prompted by other considerations. After a decade of political instability, authority was undermined, the Treaty-settlement deadlocked and prosperity threatened. Moreover, Egypt was at a critical stage in its economic evolution which called for effective administration.(3) The exaggerated suspicion of the executive had unjustifiably curtailed its powers at a time when the country needed them most.(4) In the early stages of Independence, the responsibilities of a national government were credibly multiplied and it assumed them in difficult or "delicate" circumstances.(5) It was called upon to lay solid foundations in the different walks of national life and it was entitled to the powers which enabled it to discharge its responsibilities in the best possible way. The new executive, consolidated on a constitutional basis, provided a timely and rational response in the circumstances.

#### Trusteeship.

An ethos of trusteeship inspired the exercise of authority during the period of transition.(6) Government could only be entrusted to those who were capable of bearing its responsibility. The protection of its ward from undermining influences was one aspect of this responsibility. Another was the establishment of models for emulation and the provision of standards of conduct. Implicit in its exercise of authority too, was the aspect of educating its ward and providing the necessary political training so that, in time, it could assume a greater share of responsibility in turn. This ethos permeated the provisions of the new Constitution as well as the institutions that emerged.

The provision for indirect elections in the body of the Constitution was the principal safeguard to ensure the elitist principle. Contrary to

(3) For new customs regime and excise laws see Ch .V. pp.191;222,223; & pp.56-57.

(4) Sidqi, in his inauguration address in the Sha'b Party, 10.12.1930.

(5) Sidqi referred to the difficult situation in his speeches, see for example, 11.9.1930 and his statements, e.g. manifesto on 6.12.1923. The "delicate" situation is one of the factors prompting constitutional amendments (art.28), see RMC, p.19

(6) cf. Ch. III. p. 107

own institutional basis in consequence.

Under the Occupation, the history of constitutional development was intimately bound up with that of self-government.(2) Democratisation and consultation devolved from the symbol of the Occupation, Lord Cromer and the British Advisers, to the "Egyptian people", i.e. the Council of Ministers and, eventually, the Legislative Assembly. A radical departure from the Cromerian style occurred under his successor, Eldon Gorst, when existing Ministers were replaced by younger, more energetic, men, all of whom had had considerable experience as Administrators and Judges. They now took on a more active part in public affairs and the Council of Ministers was no longer prepared to accept draft laws and proposals for credits without full explanation of the object in view. Many of the proposals emanated from the Ministry of Finance and it became the practice in that Ministry to furnish full notes of the new projects to the Ministers, some weeks in advance, before the matter came officially before the Council. Subject to British control on important matters, the Council of Ministers developed into a fairly effective governing body. At the same time, more weight was given to the Legislative Council, with Ministers reluctant to pass legislation of which it disapproved, (e.g. the extension of the Suez Canal Concession - 1911). Under Kitchener, advances were made in two directions. First, mudirs and governors were strengthened as a step towards consolidating the national Administration. Second, the Organic Law was introduced and the Legislative Assembly emerged. The latter development signified an extension in the powers of the Legislature without undermining the effectiveness of the Executive. Legislative powers were given to both the Council and the Assembly with the necessary approval of the one exercised in consultation with the other. (See articles 12-16 in the 1913 Organic Law.)

From the above glimpse of the course of self-government, two significant aspects of Egyptian political reality emerge. First, that the benefit of the overt retreat of the British accrued to the body of Ministers, not as acolytes to the Sultan, but as responsive agents of power endowed with a measure of autonomy. Second, that the concept of the power of the executive in the Egyptian setting was not synonymous with that of the power of the Sultan or the King. As it interposed between the contending forces on the political stage, the Council of Ministers developed

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(2) See historical review of constitutional developments under the Occupation in Note by Sir W. Brunyate presented to the special commission on constitutional reform in 1918, enc. in Wingate to Balfour, 18.11.1918 (Secret) in FO 407/183.

the erroneous assumption that elections were a right, the Report on the modifications explained that "Authorities were agreed that elections were a function" for which electors should be properly qualified.(7) The Electoral Law spelled out the necessary qualifications for electors and delegates, as well as candidates, prescribing for minimum fiscal or educational faculties.(8) The two-stage electoral system was compared to - and here the report quoted 'experts' - "a filter through which water passes freshened and purified" and at the same time it reconciled the principle of representation with the need to maintain the high standards necessary for legislative assemblies. Politics was thereby prevented from being reduced to a profession followed by persons of "mediocre intellectual and moral capacity". Moreover, by reducing the size of the Chamber to proportions more compatible with the real needs of the country in its present stage of evolution, a greater efficiency would be secured, while the deputy returned by larger constituencies, was deemed to be "naturally ... of a higher standard and more ... capable". Indeed, the whole argument for maintaining two chambers and readjusting the proportion of nominations to the upper Chamber was based on the assumption that it would provide Egypt with the reservoir of experience, ability and mature judgement which it strongly needed and which parliamentary life in its early phases, with its novel and unfamiliar electoral practices, threatened to deprive it of. Ideally, a body was stipulated whose elitism was only confined by the need to advance another objective - political training.

The pedagogic principle notably inspired the Sha'fist political clubs. Apart from the opportunity they provided for younger members in particular, to organise and to develop a cooperative spirit, their declared aim was to enlighten and educate youth.(9) The national perspective, in which their mission was conducted, shifted the focus away from their partisan origin as they became a forum for spreading political, social and

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(7) The quotations here are taken from the Report on the modifications to be introduced in the Constitution (RMC) (Cairo, 1930). An English copy, used here for pagination, is found in FO 371/14621.

(8) Elector-delegates were required to pay £E 1 tax p.a. or house rent of £E 12 p.a. or have rented land for one year paying not less than £E 12 - or possess a primary or secondary school certificate. Voting age was raised to 25. Deputies had to be on the electoral list for two years and could only be nominated for 2 constituencies in the same mudiriya. For other provisions see Electoral Law - No. 38/1930.

(9) See address given by Mahmud Rashid, Sidqi's political secretary and leader of Young Sha'fists, of Cairo - Sha'f, 29.5.1931.

economic culture.(10) But the provision of political training and culture was one dimension of the needs of a transitional society whose progress depended on a wider movement. In the field of national policies, particular attention was paid to educational programmes, with the emphasis on the technical aspect and on a practical, as opposed to an academic, orientation.(11) A special committee sat to consider an adequate educational policy on a comprehensive scale and began by drafting the legislation enforcing national elementary education.(12) The political disturbances that arose in early 1932 following the transfer of Dr. Taha Hussein Dean of the Faculty of Arts, to the Ministry, were seized as an opportunity for drafting the statutes of the various faculties and the organic statute of the University itself.(13) Subsequently, other legislation was passed in 1934 subjecting independent institutions to regulation and control. Education was the acknowledged key in any effective evolutionary thrust and the stability and growth of parliamentary institutions partly depended on it.

The third dimension of trusteeship lay in the ethical principle. The provision that granted the Administration the right to appeal to the Courts to suspend offensive press organs for "a period long enough to efface the memory of the offence" , was justified on the ground of danger of a grave subversion of public morality" among other reasons.(14) Violation of articles pertaining to the Press, it explained, was different from the violation of other laws; it had "graver results, a wider field and was more difficult to combat." The guardians of society, who were ultimately responsible for its standards, had temporarily to take the matter in their own hands.

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(10) See address by Hanafi Mahmud Abul-Ela at Alexandria Sha'ibist Club on 22.1.1932.

(11) See Ch. V<sup>1933</sup> Sidqi stressed the priority he gave to technical schools on his tours. See esp. incident in Damietta, on 17.9.1931 - A Sha'ibist deputy, Nakhla, contended with his colleague that, "In this day and age of materialism, the nation could not afford to pursue its sentiments", and that people needed the education that would qualify them to earn their living. MMN, 6.3.1933.

(12) The law was promulgated on 4.5.1933 to give effect to art.19 of the Constitution. For priorities and comment see Campbell to Simon, 23.6.1933 in FO 371/17023.

(13) See Law No. 20/1933. For T. Hussein incident and general background for such legislation, see Loraine to Simon, 22.3.1932 & 8.4.1932, in FO371/16124 Laws modernising education in the Azhar were also promulgated at the time. See A.Yallouz, "Chronique legislative... in E.C.vol.25 (1934) pp.761 - 809.

(14) RMC, pp.27-28



In practice, the mouthpiece of the Regime, the Sha'b, proclaimed a Press Charter in its first issues in which it pledged itself to uphold certain standards in the political and ethical spheres.(15) It defined the scope of journalistic activity, its obligations towards its readers and the legitimate means it was entitled to adopt in its political warfare with opponents. The policies of the Regime, too, were sometimes influenced by such considerations of morality. The lift of the ban on the lucrative opium culture in Upper Egypt, for example, was refused on the grounds that profit was not the only motive to be taken into consideration. (16)

### C. The Requisites for Political Institutionalisation.

Sidqi's prime concern was "to establish things on a solid and durable basis which would last into the future".(17) The amendments in the Constitution were thus undertaken with an eye on the requisites for institutionalisation. He believed that the viability of political institutions was undermined if fundamental considerations were overlooked. The first such consideration was compatibility. The wisdom of the unqualified transplant of a regime that was the product of the 19th century evolution in Europe was questioned. The constant adaptation of parliamentary institutions in Europe itself was invoked to dispute the existence of a 'model' system ideally suited to all situations. Historical, social, economic and political reality were all eloquently cited to justify the restrictive provisions of the new Constitution. "The prevalent uniformity of conditions in the various spheres of Egyptian life", for example, and the "lack of differentiation and political education" reduced the needs of representation.(18) Elsewhere, it was pointed out that Egypt was "an agricultural country" where "the village is the basis of social life" and where, "rural standards of society" prevail.(19) This rendered the two-stage electoral method a more authentic system of representation, for, if the illiterate villager was not qualified to pass judgement on public issues, he was perfectly capable of choosing those among his community who possessed wider knowledge and could more adequately represent him. A historical affinity was, moreover, conceived between the new

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(15) Sha'b, 10.12.1930 and 12.12.1930.

(16) MMN, 19.1.1932.

(17) Address to Continental Hotel gathering, 11.9.1930.

(18) RMC, p.7.

(19) Ibid. p.10

Chamber and earlier legislatures, while room for future amendments was admitted on the assumption that political education and economic development justified a political change. A reasonable, realistic compatibility between structures and institutions admitted of a rational and principled change which deferred to the laws of evolution and continuity. Compatibility was thus not a static, but a realistic concept.

The temporal dimension was another vital consideration in laying the foundation of institutions. Whatever the Government's ideas about the limitations of parliamentary government, it was convinced that it was the most suitable in the circumstances. But it was equally convinced that "a long period must elapse before this life can be definitely established in Egypt." (20) In private, Sidqi contended that it was not a dictatorship that he aimed at but a parliamentary regime, "gradually, getting more democratic". (21) In the meantime, those in authority bridged the span by spreading education among the public, protecting it from decadent influences and providing it with an opportunity to promote its wealth and social differentiation. In effect, Sidqi sought to create new values through the new Constitution and its institutions. Durability, however, was an essential condition for maturation. The explicit ban on the revision of the Constitution during its first ten years was the answer (art. 156). The period was not altogether arbitrary. With two parliaments behind it, the third could reasonably expect an era of earned liberalism. With its foundations firmly established, it was in no imminent danger of challenge; Wafdism would have receded further back in the national memory and emancipated its mental captives; a degree of political training would have been acquired. In the presence of a positive programme of reform, and with reasonable expectations of its execution in a framework of political stability, the volume of wealth would have grown and its distribution developed to the advantage of the evolving form of government. By then, too, the problematic Anglo-Egyptian question would have been resolved and in the process, political opinion (hitherto, synonymous with nationalist opinion) would have matured. The strategic objective of the period of institutional incubation would have thereby been attained.

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(20) Ibid., p.16.

(21) See interview with T.P. Conwell-Evans on 27.11.1930 in FO 800/282.

The conditions for stability and durability were, however, undermined if an effective weapon of political action went unchecked. The exceptional provisions to control a licentious press reinsured the conditions for institutionalisation.(22) The interim stipulations could be abrogated by law on the initiative of the executive, taking into consideration the wishes of the legislature. But their abrogation could not occur before the lapse of three years - another set limit, explicitly inserted to protect the Constitution "in its infancy".(23)

D. The Amendments in the Constitution.

Political power was rationalised within a framework of stability and continuity.(24) The supremacy of the law was upheld in every title of the Constitution and provided the standard for the conduct of power. Law-making was ultimately subordinated to the will of the people (art.23). While the cardinal principle remained intact, the provisions ensured the executive arm considerable latitude. It could, for example, exercise its prerogatives in the absence of the representatives of the people to whom it remained accountable; that it should not abuse its licence and culminate in absolutism was procured by the provision for the continuity of parliamentary life (art.38) as well as by the obligation to submit all legislation for sanction before parliament when it met, (arts. 25 and 41). To secure an element of stability in public affairs, the exercise of the popular will was bound in its conduct by certain principles, such as the stipulation that no legislation could be abrogated except by law. But it was the quest for a compromise between effectiveness and balance that essentially characterised the constitutional amendments.

A fundamental balance was, in fact, maintained. "No law can be promulgated if it were not voted by Parliament and sanctioned by the Monarch" ensured that legislative power was concurrently exercised by both powers. "The King exercises his powers through the intermediary of his

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(22) Article 153 stipulated an "exceptional press regime" that entitled the Administration to prosecute offending newspapers before the Courts. See note 14 above. Press legislation was passed on 18.6.1931 before Parliament met. See Ch.III. p 98

(23) RMC, pp.12,28.

(24) The term "rationalisation" became current then. 'Le rationalisation du pouvoir' was first used by Prof. Mirkine Guetzewitch. See art. by White Ibrahim "Systemes Parlementaires dans le Monde", MIQ, Vol. 1, 1931. A useful and comprehensive Note on the amendments prepared by the Judicial Adviser, Judge Booth, is enc. in 30.11.1930 despatch in FO 371/14621.

Ministers" (art.48) and the provision that "The acts of the King bearing on the affairs of State are void unless they are countersigned by the President of the Council of Ministers and the competent Minister," (art.60) defined the locus of the executive power. The appointment of the Sheikhof al-Azhar and the heads of religious institutions was the personal prerogative of the Monarch that was duly circumscribed by other restrictive provisions (see art. 134 in conjunction with 142 & 143). At the same time, the transfer to the Courts of powers concerning the Press and electoral offences countered those vested in the executive.(25)

But there were also stipulations to speed up the pace of government. The reservation for the executive of the initiative in financial legislation was among such measures (art.28). The management of the State finances was a principal function of government and efficiency called for the introduction of financial measures by the executive so as to avoid clogging up the parliamentary machinery in its infancy with unnecessary bills.(26) The "final decision" rested with Parliament with regard to the "proposals" of the executive and the latter would not neglect the proposal of any urgent law. Other stipulations too extended the general legislative powers of the executive. It was no longer necessary to convoke Parliament in an extraordinary session to receive decrees promulgated in cases of emergency during its recess (art.41). The Constitution which granted that right did not subordinate it to this restriction, which "annihilated that right" as the Report argued. Its extension to periods when Parliament was dissolved was justifiable for "so long as the right had been delegated to the executive to dissolve Parliament (it) must not be deprived of the power of promulgating urgent laws during periods of dissolution".(27) The object was to secure the effective administration of the country during periods of political disarray comparable to the contingency in which the Regime was launched. By resolving the practical embarrassments that attended such occasions it deprived its adversaries of their legalist defences. But it also made the constitutional balance more precarious.

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(25) See art. 90 of the Constitution for electoral offences. The Report explicitly refers to the balancing principle in justifying provision 154 on press offences.

(26) RMC, pp.18-19.

(27) Ibid, pp. 19-20.

Flexibility, however, did not conflict with the observance of limits. The retention of the initiative in fiscal legislation did not lose the parliamentary deputies control over such fiscal measures and the financial policy of the government in general. Like all other legislation they were voted by the Chamber. Although the closure of the session no longer depended upon the termination of the budget review, the government was bound in its execution to confine itself to those sections voted and to observe the provisions of the preceding year on its own responsibility. The recourse to its prerogative of issuing supplementary credits in the interval was not to circumvent the control of Parliament as all legislation passed between sessions had to be submitted for approval within a month of its convocation.(28) The vote of confidence remained the ultimate weapon in the hands of the Chamber; but the gravity of its implications, which was reinforced by recent experience, led to constraints on its exercise.(29) The upshot was to qualify the limits on the executive's initiative without destroying them. Further, by attenuating one Power and activating the other, the shifting balance reduced potential friction to the advantage of effectiveness.(30)

Effective government, however, did not depend on the efficiency of the executive alone and, paradoxically, some of the curtailment in the powers of the legislature were means to improve its standards of performance.

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(28) The corresponding clause in 1923 was more strict. It provided for the immediate submission upon the meeting of Parliament of the exceptional legislation for ratification.

The Egyptian Gazette, 25.10.1930 gives in parallel columns clauses changed in the old Constitution and the corresponding clauses in the new one, together with new clauses with no counterpart. An instructive summary is found in FO memorandum by JB Mack on 27.10.1930.

(29) Art.65 provided for a special majority and delayed action. In the previous Wafdist Chamber a vote of exclusive confidence, passed on the spot, in the resigning Government drowned the odd voices that counselled deliberation. See MMN, 17.6.1930

(30) An analogy was drawn here with the head and the heart, the limbs and the will, in evaluating the restitution of the balance between the executive and the legislature. This reinforces the recurrent theme that appealed to reason and interest against sentiment. See above.Ch.III note 75 & pp.116,123; also cf. p.41, Ch.I.

Reducing its absolute numbers to proportions more compatible with the present needs of the country for representation, and with efficiency, was one such measure.(31) Similarly, the provision for a comité législatif to which every draft law was submitted for examination on points of form and harmony with existing legislation (art.96), in turn, insured the parliamentary regime against another of its weaknesses.(32) A time limit was stipulated for the work of the committee in order not to allow it to hold up necessary laws and undermine the prerogative of Parliament. Despite its offensive wording the provision for a law to determine the rules for the internal organisation of the Chambers was, equally, an effective gesture in rationalising what had hitherto lent itself to arbitrariness.(33) The law that emerged confirmed the general quest for effectivity, variously expressed in the terminology of the Regime.(34) By reducing potential friction between the legislative and the executive, and by enhancing their efficiency in their respective spheres, a modicum of effectiveness was provisionally ensured.

The meticulous attention paid to defining the relative scopes of competence of the two powers was sometimes abrasive. There were, for example, provisions introduced to protect the executive from actual or potential "aggressions" by the legislature (arts.67 and 69 on ministerial impeachment) and others to protect it from unwarranted interference. The only legitimate control that Parliament was entitled to was to be exercised through the medium of questions and interpellations. The legislators admitted the superfluity of the provision, but they sought their justification in a past that rendered "some such measure imperative". On the other hand, intra-power relations were less assured and, even at this early stage of idealisation, tensions were perceptible. An example here is found in

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(31) RMC, p6

(32) Ibid., pp.24-25

(33) Referring to the confusion and abuse, notably in fixing their emoluments, the Report suggested that "if this state of things is to be remedied, the Chambers must be deprived of the right to order their internal regulations as they wish." (p.25)  
The new law (No.88/1931) disqualified a Chamber from benefiting from rises enacted during its tenure.

(34) Cf. "All our days in power are productive..." (Sidqi at Girga, 9.3.1931) Other recurrent terms of the era were: 'Amal' (action), Intāg (production; utility) muntiga (fruitful, productive); Iṣlāḥ (reform); Binā' (construction); Tagdīd (renovation).  
They were often interchangeable. See also Ch. III and V. pp. 115, 116; 195.

reserving for the King the last word, "la haute main", in the appointment of Senators and, accompanying the prerogative with the insistence on the counter-signature of the Cabinet "as a sure guarantee of complete co-operation between the King and the Ministry in a spirit of mutual understanding."<sup>(35)</sup> By transferring effective authority to the executive and by defining the boundaries of competence of the legislature, it was clear that a potential source of tension lay, not in their inter-relations, as in relations within the executive. The extension of its prerogative, moreover, increased the chance of abuse without adequately safeguarding against it. It was left to the exercise of these powers to create, in their momentum, their own checks.

Perhaps the gravest weakness in the new Constitution lay in its decreed origins and the circumstances in which it was promulgated. Its provisions amounted to a consecration of government by decree while its formal endorsement of other decrees passed under earlier crisis regimes was prejudicial to the prospects of normalising the present one. Nor could the amendments be abstracted from their situation and they were thus conceived in the spirit of a defence with a vengeance. The new Constitution could hardly be judged on its own merits and its constructive aspects were lost to the public.

The amendments ultimately constituted a legal expression of conflicting political aspirations. On the one hand, they were the result of an autocratic will and were conceived as a means of promoting autocratic ambitions. On the other hand, they were a means of securing an elitist government that was both effective and representative. In the former instance, the retraction of parliamentary powers was a stepping-stone to their withdrawal, or abrogation, in favour of a personalised government represented by the King. In the second instance, retraction was a therapy designed to foster the conditions for institutionalising a way of government compatible with modernity. The ethos of trusteeship flowed from the latter aspiration. While the uniqueness of the new regime lay in its overt search for institutionalisation, circumstances conspired to overshadow this dimension and bring into prominence its autocratic aspect.

#### E. The Palace-Sidqi Dimension of Power.

Although Sidqi had assumed power with the object of promoting his conception of the national interest, the political context in which he acted rendered him an instrument of the Royal will. His initial success in imposing authority and promulgating the new order in the face of mass

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(35) See RMC pp. 12, 13, 14.

opposition, constituted a triumph for the King. In view of the latter's undisguised hatred for the 1923 Constitution and his previous offensive against it, the anti-liberal implications of the victory were clear. The violations implicit in the manner of introducing the amendments were defended on grounds of force majeure. But this defence could not alter the Royal gratification entailed in the notion that what the King granted he could withdraw; that power consisted in a series of "actes d'autorité".(36) The legal quibbling on the point merely confirmed the pragmatic substance of a compromise imposed by necessity.(37) With elections pending, the consolidation of the new Constitution spelled a further gain for the King personally. Sidqi's determination to impose the new order stirred latent animosities and sharpened political alignments, so that existing cleavages within the Royal Family were openly politicised.(38) As princes were drawn into the power struggle and contested the authority of their master, King Fuad was increasingly isolated and his position on the Throne, which he had occupied at a wink of fortune and upon which he never felt quite secure, was further shaken.(39) In this context, the upshot of some private diplomacy in which Sidqi engaged at the time was politically significant. The ex-Khedive, Abbas Hilmi, unseated by the British sixteen years earlier upon the outbreak of the Great War, and always perceived as a

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(36) This observation was made to Adly upon Fuad's accession to the Throne. See Wingate to Balfour, 8.10.1918 (V.Confid.) in FO 407/183.

(37) A controversy arose over the oath of fidelity to the new Constitution which the King did not administer. In a riposte to critics, Sidqi maintained that the oath to the original instrument was ipso-facto valid for its successor, as replacement did not spell discontinuity. See reply to PQ in MMN, 26.6.1931. See also statement to press earlier. Ahram 23.6.1931.

(38) Fuad's autocratic temperament alienated his kith and kin as well as his subjects. See Hoare to Henderson, 11.10.1930 in FO 371/14621. While Abbas Halim's manifestos were more noisy (Ahram, 27.9.1930 and 8.10.1930) and Prince Omar Tossoun's dissension more dignified (ibid 2.9.1930) the adhesion by a host of princes to the resolutions of the 8th May National Congress in 1931 was of a greater consequence.

(39) For ex., the draft of the Sultanian Rescript drawn by H. Rushdy in consultation with Sultan Hussein Kamel, shortly after the declaration of the protectorate, provided succession on a collateral basis in which Fuad's prospects were remote. See enc. in Wingate to Balfour on 19.8.1917 (Secret). Nor was Fuad financially secure before his accession to the Throne. See Secret memo by Financial Adviser in Allenby to Curzon, 16.3.1923 FO 407/196.



keen adversary and potential threat by Fuad, was persuaded, against a lucrative pension during his lifetime, to abandon his claims to the Throne and recognise the rights of his Uncle and his line of successors according to the 1923 laws regulating the Monarchy.(40) The settlement also contained an endorsement of the new constitutional regime, and its announcement came at a moment when the opposition had reached its climax and King Fuad's isolation had seemed complete.(41) The invitation of Sidqi to spend ten days in the Royal Estates at Edfina, in the summer of 1931, marked the peak of Royal favour displayed towards a dutiful Prime Minister.(42)

Sidqi was disposed to emphasise his loyalty in the hope of evolving enough trust from his Sovereign to ensure his co-operation. Confrontation, he thought, would merely hamper his policies or objectives and his past, as mediator and coordinator in the national movement, made him a credible champion for such cooperation.(43) Moreover, he realised that his influential presence within the Regime was necessary for its consolidation in the early stages. The longer he retained the King's favour and manipulated the capricious Royal will, the more he could play for time to enable the young institutions to attain the necessary autonomy. With the mere duration of the regime, and with the promotion of conditions that favoured stability and institutionalisation, he believed that the King could be

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(40) This occurred as a result of an initiative by Abbas Hilmi who was a personal friend of Sidqi - Correspondence started on 14.2.1931 in the strictest secrecy - with the ex-Khedive's private secretary as a go-between. Loraine, as well as the King, were informed, although communications on the subject were made on a personal basis to restrict circulation in the Residency, and, "to respect Sidqi's wish for strict confidentiality" (Lorraine to Murray, 17.3.1931) Sidqi was aware that his success benefited Fuad as well as the British who had a legal suit pending against them by the ex-Khedive. See file 76 in FO 371/15412 & 15413

(41) Although ready by April, the Agreement was released to the public on 12th May, 1931 - The recognition of the 1930 Constitution was not originally included in the formal draft of the government but seems to have been voluntarily submitted, more as a token of his friendship for Sidqi than for his uncle.

(42) Earlier tokens of Royal favour were shown in Accession Day Honours when the King granted Sidqi the 'Grand Cordon' of Mohamed Ali and decorated the different members of the Council of Ministers to show it stood on a different footing from previous ones. The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Justice, Agriculture and Waqf got 'al-Imtiāz'. The Minister of Communications (T.Doss): the Grand Cordon of the Nile. The Ministers of Public Works and Education, Karim and Sid Ahmad, became Pashas

(43) See above Ch.1.pp. 33-34.

induced to come to terms with a situation in which his dignity remained intact.(44) Meanwhile, he was ready to compromise over points of form, little aware that the gesture would eventually subvert the principle. Further, by alternating covert pressure with persuasion and flattery he hoped to initiate the King into the mores of constitutional conduct. (45)

The King, however, was aware of the ambitions and peculiar notions of his Prime Minister and he saw in them a blemish on that loyalty. Sidqi had, moreover, assumed power on terms that assured him a wide measure of freedom in exercising it.(46) Although the King initially kept his side of the bargain, the strains were there. A legacy of personal and political ambivalence fed these strains and conditioned the development of their relationship.(47) The political framework within which it developed was analogous to its counterpart in the past decade but the difference lay in the increased vulnerability of the King's personal position. This rendered him more amenable to the discreet handling of his Prime Minister. Sidqi, in turn, relied heavily on the forces in the situation in advancing his objectives.

The launching of the new Constitution provided the first practical test of the alliance. Sidqi counted on the initial good-will of the King and, more particularly, on his fears. For the moment, the King's principal anxiety was lest the British, "who never knew what they wanted and always changed their minds", should resume their intervention in internal affairs to his disparagement.(48) Sidqi shrewdly impressed on the King the implications of such a departure and reminded him that the continued observance

(44) i.e. in contrast to the indignity that had accompanied the promulgation of its predecessor in 1923 - See earlier correspondence between Allenby and Curzon: 8.8.1922 in FO 371/7736; 15.10.1922 and 7.11.1922 in FO 371/7738.

(45) As an example of flattering the Royal ego, Sidqi substituted the ritual dinner to 200-300 guests given on the occasion of Accession Day in 1930 by an entertainment with a buffet-supper for 1500 guests.

(46) See Residency despatch of 25.10.1930 in FO 371/14621 Mr Hoare's conjectures here seem quite plausible in view of another account of Sidqi's return to power in 1946 (interview, Ibrahim Rashid). While always ready to assume power in difficult circumstances, he made sure he had the freedom of manoeuvre he needed.

(47) For earlier relationship between Fuad and Sidqi see file 6148 in FO 141/448

(48) See audience in Loraine to Henderson, 17.7.1930 (Confid.)

of British neutrality depended on how far the new regime satisfied British conditions to qualify it for resuming negotiations. Continuity of parliamentary life was the first such condition.(49) Part of the representativeness of the regime, too, was secured by the adherence to it of as many elements as possible. To this end Sidqi exploited his negotiations with the Liberals to retain the fundamental principles of the Constitution against the currents that threatened them.(50) Fuad followed the bargaining with distaste and was only too relieved when it broke down.(51) However unsettling its general effects on the Regime, Sidqi profited from the equivocal stance of the British to advance his constitutional purposes.

At the same time the King could not altogether trust his Prime Minister. He wished to ascertain for himself the limits to which amendments could be safely passed without provoking a British backlash. Sir Percy Loraine, the only British representative the King thought well of, could, he reckoned, be counted on to let well enough alone.(52) So, he sent out his feelers beyond the Residency to test reactions in the Foreign Office - but he was duly rebuffed.(53) It was in this gnawing uncertainty in which the King hovered that Sidqi pushed on with his plans.(54) The implications of the Wafdist

(49) The inferences in Mr. MacDonald's statement disinclined the King from indulging his conventional reservations on the amendments. See Ch. II<sup>53</sup> But this did not prevent attempts to undermine the principle of ministerial responsibility.

(50) See below - Note 56

(51) Hoare to Henderson, 27.9.1930

(52) King Fuad believed that Percy Loraine was "un gentleman" among his race. He received the news of his transfer on 12.8.1933 "rather tearful and subdued" and, in a later audience, Mr. Campbell recorded his remarks on the King's attitude to Sir Percy thus "... of whose qualities and manner of conducting his mission His Majesty, on this as on all other occasions, he spoke in the warmest terms." Campbell to Simon, 19.8.1933 (Confid.) in FO 371/17009

(53) Tyrrell to Henderson. 11.10.1930 (confid.)  
The soundings here were conducted by the King's son-in-law, Mahmud Fakhry, in charge of the Egyptian Legation in Paris.

(54) In countering currents advocating postponement of elections, the British lever proved equally effective. See Confidential Residency despatches of 21.2.1931 and 17.3.1931 in FO 371/15403

menace for the Monarchy, together with the British factor, rendered the balance of forces initially in his favour and he used it to advantage.

The Constitution that emerged contained the seeds of tension and compromise. At first glance it appeared that the Monarch had had his way. The extension of the Royal prerogative in the appointment of religious heads, for example, was at the expense of the Council of Ministers (Law No. 15/1927), while the change in the proportion of appointed Senators and the undue emphasis on the King's role in the process were at his command. In both instances, however, the qualifications were significant and the attempted reconciliation between the loci of power was noteworthy. But it is perhaps the lobby diplomacy which accompanied the promulgation of the 1923 Constitution that casts an illuminating light upon its successor.(55) Then, the removal of the stipulation that sovereignty emanated from the Nation (art.23) was bitterly contested, while the constraints on the executive (arts. 48 & 60) were no more palatable. These principles were no more agreeable to the King in 1930 and their retention signified a qualified success for Sidqi.(56) The outcome of the tacit bargaining pointed towards a mutual compromise and concession that might have been inequitable but was nonetheless important in principle. The Prime Minister had, by guile, taught a vain, headstrong monarch his first lesson in constitutional politics.

The seeds of tension in the Constitution were equally reflected in the institutions that emerged. The formation of the new political party, for instance, entailed a perceptible strain on the loyalties of the administrative agents who were involved in political recruitment. Latent strains between the Palace Ittehad Party and the Sha'b Party were brought to the surface by the unscrupulous press organs of the Opposition. Even before Parliament had met and the two rivals confronted each other in it, its posts provided the bone of contention behind the scenes.(57)

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(55) See memorandum on the principal modification in draft of the constitutional committee introduced under T. Nessim at the insistence of King Fuad, enc. in Allenby to Curzon despatch, 23.4.1923 in FO 407/196; cf. Abdel-Aziz Fahmy's open letter, Ahram, 17.3.1923.

(56) The question of ministerial responsibility was bitterly contended by the King in 1923. See remarks by Sarwat in 15.10.1922, despatch of Allenby, op cit. In 1930, he tried to circumvent it by including the Senate in the vote of confidence. See palace-inspired leakages in the Ahram 13.10.1930 and the Daily Telegraph 15.10.1930.

(57) For clash between Palace candidate, Tewfiq Rifaat and the Government candidate, Tewfiq Doss, see Sha'b (editorial) 17.6.1931.

While the majority of the intermediate and lower posts eventually went to Sha'ibists, both Chambers were headed by Ittehadists.<sup>(58)</sup> The difference lay in the ostensible compromise reached over the non-partisan character of the presidency of the lower Chamber. Tewfiq Rifaat, Minister of War, resigned his Cabinet post and was "elected" as an Independent. The solution reflected the uneasy alliance that broke down two years later, when the balance of forces switched to the disadvantage of the Prime Minister.<sup>(59)</sup> Meanwhile, with adequate Sha'ibist representation in the secretariat, Sidqi was content to remain in effective control of the Chamber and gave way to the King in matters he regarded as formal.

From the outset, the development of the new institutions under the Regime was conditioned by the dual conception of power. Whereas the one encouraged a trend towards institutionalisation discernible within the executive and legislature, the other ultimately defeated it. The shifting balance between the King and Sidqi provided the framework for the trends that emerged.

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(58) The Vice-Presidents in the Chamber were Allam and Menzalawi while the Secretaries were el Saïd Habîb, Hassan Ismail, Moḥamed Ibrahim Helali and M. 'Azîz Abaza and the Questeurs were M. Towayyer and Wali el Gindi (the only consistent Ittehadist). In the Senate, the Vice Presidents were Hassan Sabri (Independent) and Ahmad Talaat (Sha'b) with the Secretaries evenly divided between the Sha'b and Ittehad.

(59) By 1933, the appointments in the Chamber were no longer a formal matter. See Loraine's confidential memorandum, Paris 23.8.1933. See also below. p. 175 ff.

## II. THE EVOLUTION OF THE EXECUTIVE

### A. Trends towards Institutionalisation

The impetus for institutionalisation lay with Sidqi. As President of the Council of Ministers, Minister of Interior and Finance as well as leader of the parliamentary majority, the burden for proving the new institutions fell on him. Characteristically, he began with an attempt to inculcate the constitutional ethic in the course of his practical conduct.

Sidqi posed as the model Primus inter pares. Information and persuasion provided his standard of conduct. Controversial policies concerning economies or new tariffs for example, were explained in open discussion.(60) Differences were admitted and other views, when not conceded, were acknowledged. When the Minister of Foreign Affairs disputed the restrictions in the proposed legislation for the Chambers of Commerce, Sidqi explained their necessity in the early stages of the movement as interim provisions until a more compatible cooperative ethic developed. If, moreover, their recent chequered course was to be overcome, some such restrictions were needed. He did, however, promise to take into consideration some reservations expressed by his colleagues.(61) On another occasion, he deferred to the view of his colleagues on the method of applying the proposed stamp duty increases.(62) Policy decisions were usually taken by steering opinion to evolve a form of consensus. Having given rein to his colleagues to express their views on a proposal at stake, he generally rounded off with an eloquent and forceful presentation of the case, which took into consideration their views.(63) His style animated the meetings of the Council and the difference his presence made was felt particularly upon his return from an absence.(64)

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(60) See for ex. Cabinet meetings on economies: 19.8.1931; on agreement with Land Co.: 25.11.1931; on Gebel Aulia cement: 2.11.1932 in MMW.

(61) Ibid, 27.1.1932

(62) Ibid, 30.1.1932.

(63) Ibid, 21.12.1931 and 24.1.1932

(64) cf. sessions of 6.10.1932 with earlier ones under Yahia and again meetings of 13.4.1933 and 27.4.1933. Ibid.

His readiness to delegate power to colleagues and subordinates was another aspect of this collegial disposition. The practice was resorted to as a means of enhancing effectiveness and initiative in the Administration. When he delegated powers to senior officials to implement the newly proposed scheme for the commutation of pensions, he vested them with the necessary discretion on grounds of their assumed competence.(65) During his incapacitation in 1933 Sidqi informally entrusted the Minister of Public Works, Mohamed Shafiq, with the conduct of the government. He kept in constant touch with affairs and through him he communicated his views to the Cabinet. At the same time he allowed him some discretion. He was, as Sidqi informed him in a cabled message from Montp  llier in August 1933, the man on the spot, who, while knowing Sidqi's recommendations on the issue at stake, was nonetheless better informed of its practicability in the prevailing circumstances.(66) Conceivably, work pressures and practical considerations induced him to entrust others with wide responsibilities and discretion. But expediency here was reinforced by a stand of principle. Originally, he believed that "a Minister should not arrogate all authority to himself".(67) In the Council and the administrative departments he headed, he availed himself of the opportunity to practise his professions. This was equally true of his style in the other political institutions he presided over.

#### Sidqi's Leadership in the Party

Sidqi's vital role in the Party did not dispose him to arrogate to himself the wide powers ear-marked for its executive.(68) His deputy,

(65) This led to abuses as shown in the cases brought against the heads State Domains Dept., Mahmud el-Orabi, and of Direct Taxes Administration, Abdel Hadi Mohamed. They obtained in exchange for the capital value of their pensions, government lands at favourable prices only to resell them at a vast profit. See below. Note 203.

(66) Some messages and cables sent by Sidqi in 1932 and more in 1933 are found in his personal file in the Archives of the Council of Ministers. The above formulations on Sidqi's conduct of his office are partly based on their perusal.

(67) See his 1923 Electoral Manifesto referred to earlier.

(68) The organic law for the Party emerging in 25 articles, was drafted by a committee under the ex-judge Ahmad Tal'at. See text in Moqattam & Ahram 19.11.1930.

Tewkif Doss, who was also a Cabinet colleague, delivered the annual address to the General Assembly and assumed an influential political role in the Party.(69) Mohamed Allam, the somewhat cryptic Party Manager, was delegated wide powers to speak and act on its behalf.(70) Sidqi encouraged activists to chair meetings at which he himself was present. This was particularly noticeable during the later period when the Party became the setting of the internecine conflict between him and the Palace.(71) By vesting his supporters with responsibility and providing them with opportunities to prove themselves, he encouraged ability and talent. This was not confined to his political supporters, but it was an attitude that stimulated colleagues and subordinates alike.(72) By publicly acclaiming their efforts moreover, he denied himself an undue credit and divested power of a personal connotation. This reinforced his objectives of institutionalising power and confirmed his conception of leadership.(73)

This conduct was reflected in the Party. Resolutions were passed here in a manner that sharply contrasted with its counterpart in the

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(69) Doss. b. about 1875, a son of a bible colporteur in Assuit. Educated at the American Mission; lawyer by career, left Zaghlul and joined the C.L.P. in 1922; Minister of Agriculture in 1925 where he came under Palace influence and left the Liberals. A Sidqi partisan in 1928; joined the Executive of the Sha'b upon formation of Party and became the Cabinet mouthpiece and the "well-informed source" of foreign telegrams. Strong suspicions of corruption made him an embarrassing colleague and, upon Palace pressure, he was dropped in January, 1933.

(70) Allam, served in parquet before becoming Mudir of Guiza and Assuit during the War. His appointment as Governor of Alexandria in 1921 was frustrated by his record during the 1919 disturbances. Later, as Judge in Cairo Native Court of Appeal (Assuit), put on pension in 1928. An active Party manager and provincial orator in 1931 and 1932; as Minister for Agriculture introduced a programme for training agricultural graduates; fervent and compromising partisan of Sidqi in subsequent developments.

(71) Thus, younger elements like Biali, Abaza and Nazmy came into the fore to chair meetings. See for activity of Party the Sha'b of October and November 1933.

(72) This was confirmed to me in personal interviews with people who worked with Sidqi. He often praised efforts of others in public, like Gamal eddin for his role in Provincial Councils legislation and Abdel Wahab, for the Cotton Policy.

(73) See Ch.III. p. 119



Wafd during the same period.(74) As a rule, Sidqi would present the questions that preoccupied the Government and invite their exploration in the free discussion that followed. The resolution subsequently adopted was not binding, so that differences in opinion could still be expressed in Parliament.(75) In the absence of an imposed uniformity tolerance was rife and some of the most articulate and constructive critics of the Government were often Sha'fbists.(76) But there were vital issues for the Government like the debate on the Gebel Aulia where greater discipline was necessary.(77) It was indicative that Sidqi sought to secure this discipline by a real mobilisation of opinion and not simply by coercion which was not unfamiliar to his Administration. At such times, Sidqi frequented the Sha'fbist Club more regularly to discuss with its members while important meetings with its Executive and with the Sha'fbist Parliamentary Body were held to coordinate party activity with the progress of the parliamentary session.(78) His political addresses on these occasions were substantial and the discussion that followed invited a sense of involvement and reciprocity among their audience. The relationship between him and Sha'fbists, as one deputy remarked, was one of "understanding and consultation (shūra)" away from dictation and domination.(79).

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(74) The split that occurred in the Wafd in November 1932 resulted from the autocratic conduct of Nahas towards the majority of the Wafdist body, who broke away with the Vice-President, Hamad el-Bassel. It originated in a quarrel between Gharably and Makram during the prosecution in the Bombs trial cases and ended with his dismissal from the Wafd by Nahas, who backed Makram. In his speech in Port Said, Sidqi referred to the Wafd being "consumed with the fire of its own tyranny." Ahram, 23.11.1932. See also Ch.II. Note 79. Geschichte der Wafd... (1937) outlines course of split.pp.137 ff.

(75) See editorials in Sha'b, December, 1932. This account was corroborated to me in a personal interview with the late Aziz Abaza in his home at Maadi in summer 1972.

(76) For ex. Amin Amer attacked the pensions scheme in its first reading on grounds of principle (its restriction to govt. officials) and its timing (a loss to the Treasury). MMN, 22.3.1933. Another Sha'fbist, Abdel Megid Nafe', campaigned with a radical Watanist, Abdel-Aziz Soufani, for liberalising measures. Ibid. 19.3.1933

(77) The construction of the Gebel Aulia in Southern Sudan was one of the most divisive issues within the Regime and in the country at large. It raised palpable fears, essentially political, and no previous Administration could muster the courage to execute it. See Ch.V. pp. 194-195.

(78) The spirit of the times was vividly conveyed to me by Aziz Abaza, less by what he said than by the way he reminisced over it.

(79) Hassan Hosni, Sha'fbist deputy for Gammalia/Cairo in anniversary of union of Parliament on 20.6.1932.

Sidqi was anxious to uphold his image in the Party as a constitutional leader. He made a point of observing the letter as well as the spirit of the Party Statute. As a result of its expansion, a new headquarters for the Party in Alexandria was considered in 1932. He called a general meeting in which he was officially delegated the necessary powers to proceed with the purchase.(80) The emphasis on constitutional mores was particularly evident with the onsetting breach with the Palace. On the 27th September 1933, at the first signs of the impending storm, the Party was called to an extraordinary meeting in which it endorsed a resolution delegating to its President special powers to act on his own discretion in the prevailing circumstances. His conduct here was an antidote to the administrative origins of the Party.

His leadership here too, was equally directed at developing the identity of the Party and invoking a sense of corporativeness within its ranks. He strove to achieve this effect by expounding its purpose and role. Here again, he emphasised the rational principle of political organisation. The object of the Party was to propagate ideas and not to congeal round individuals. Sha'bi political clubs got their impetus from their value as a means of developing the political, social, economic and cultural consciousness of its members. Their core lay in the young men in whom he perceived the promise of his Regime.(81) To them, persons meant little for they had adopted the principles of the Party.(82) Their allegiance to their leader was based on those principles which he represented.

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(80) Sha'bi, 6.3.1932

The deal could possibly have been among the financial vagaries as it involved a handsome bargain for Mahmud Towayyar (Sha'bi Deputy from Alex) - whose property was bought.

(81) Sidqi saw two categories in the Party: "the old and timid ones ... on the other hand, there was a larger part of the younger and he found that it was all he could do to keep them in hand" Interview with Mr. Furness enc. in Residency Confid. despatch of 4.11.1933 FO 371/17010  
A secret report on "Sidqi Pasha's grave statements" submitted to the King on 2.10.1933 maintained that S. deeply regretted his failure to introduce into his Cabinet "une majorité composée d'éléments jeunes et constants", who would not have been subject to (such) influences and who would have been able to hold their own during his absence. (Abdin Archives).

(82) Address in Sha'bi Club on 4.11.1932.

"Every movement for renovation or reform, as our present movement is, ought to be led and steered to safety by a strong, competent man, supported by faithful followers ... This is the sound principle upon which the city of Alexandria has rallied to a man to Sidqi Pasha, not merely as head of Government, but as a political leader worthy of every respect and admiration." (83)

Political prudence, however, counselled Sidqi to acknowledge and underline the objective criteria of renovation and by-pass the personal references to himself.

With the new parliamentary era successfully launched, a perceptible transformation overtook the Party as it was reduced into a potentially effective quantity in the Chamber. Sidqi impressed on the Sha'ibist Body its relevance, not only to the Regime as "a Pillar of Progress", but also to the governmental process. It was ultimately the guardian of the means of "our great renaissance" i.e. the Constitution, in whose hour of peril it was called to its defence. (84) His exhortations to Sha'ibists on unity and cohesion contrasted with the comparative indifference he displayed towards them at the outset. (85) By pursuing a method dear to his heart in attributing his own strength to their support, he was at once reinforcing his own position and consolidating the role of the Party as well. Inculcating a corporate ethos among Sha'ibists was not altogether in vain.

There emerged within the Party a tendency among members to contest decisions affecting them. The elections and appointments for the bureaux of the Chamber that were at the beginning left to an implicit agreement between the two Parties were no longer acceptable to Sha'ibists. Pressure from within the Party rank and file became a factor to reckon with by the beginning of the third session (1932-1933). Sidqi acknowledged the symptoms of restiveness accompanying the growing body, but urged its members on the eve of their re-union to continue mindful of their cohesion. (86) The

(83) Dr. Hanafi Abu'l-'Ela, Secretary of Young Men's Sha'ibist Committees in Alexandria - recently returned from Paris with a degree in political economy. He was more of an enthusiastic supporter of Sidqi at the time than a committed partisan, and he made the comment at a gathering in the Alex. Sha'ibist <sup>club</sup> on 25.11.1932.

(84) Sidqi at a meeting of Sha'ibist Parliamentary Body on 2.10.1933.

(85) His first Party address (10.12.1930) hardly paid heed to the new members/partisans beyond giving them a perfunctory welcome.

(86) 23.12.1932.

reconstruction of the Cabinet in the Spring was partly a response to this growing self-consciousness within the Party as well as a measure to strengthen the parliamentary position of the Government. Aly Menzalawi, a key Sha'ibist who chaired the parliamentary finance committee, was appointed to the Waqfs while his colleague, Mohamed Allam, the Party Manager and the Vice President of the Chamber, was made Minister of Agriculture. The restiveness was a landmark in the evolution of the Party from a creature of the Administration into a volitional political organism; much depended on the response it elicited from its leadership.

The rift with the Palace towards the end of 1933 showed up some of the strength of the Party as well as its endemic weaknesses.(87) Sidqi's efforts to mobilise his supporters were not entirely unproductive. Between October and December the power conflict was reflected in an intensification of party activity. The Sha'ibist Club in Cairo became the main setting for the rivalry between the two factions into which the Party split. In a move to strengthen his hand, Sidqi tendered his resignation and, ostensibly, under pressure of his partisans withdrew it. The Government which had recommended Sha'ibists to accept it, was squarely outwitted.(88) The struggle reached its peak shortly before Parliament was due to meet when he manoeuvred first to contest the palace-government candidate in the Chamber and next to resign from the Chamber.(89) Despite the Palace attempt to reduce them to impotence, his faction constituted an embarrassment to the Government who threatened, at one point, to dissolve the entire Chamber.(90)

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(87) See below. pp. 180 ff.

(88) The Party met on 11.11.1933 and voted against accepting Sidqi's resignation by 42 against 36 - Sidqi's triumph came as a surprise for he was then a sick man with the Palace forces ranged against him. On the 15th December he finally resigned.

(89) See accounts in the memoranda for the press in December 1933 (file 11) in FO 371/ 17003

(90) The Sha'ib and Ittehad Parties were convened under Yahia and Issa respectively on 17.12.1933 and warned of the consequences of refusing Sidqi's resignation. Just before Parliament met, Sidqi withdrew it "in order to save a fatal rupture" in the regime in view of that unconstitutional conduct. Ahram 19.12.1933.

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Consultation provides a key trait in Sidqi's leadership style. It encouraged the collegial and participative behaviour he exhibited in the Cabinet and in the Party and it left an intrinsic effect on the actual process of government. Just as the concentration of power in the executive was originally conceived to enhance effectiveness, consultation had the same end in view. It was intended to make the executive both more proficient in decision-making and more capable in implementing its decisions. This was all the more necessary in view of the expanding scope of government action, before its protectionist creed and its commitment to partnership.(91) Consultation afforded it more extensive and authoritative information and, at the same time, ensured it the implicit consent of the affected parties by involving them in the decisions. Under Sidqi, the performance of a strengthened executive confirmed the principle of government by consultation.

But consultation was not a capricious trend of personal government. The injunction against arrogating power by the Minister to himself was corroborated by providing for "a body of experts" whose knowledgeable opinion he could solicit.(92) The Council of Under-Secretaries of State, which he introduced shortly after he came to power to coordinate the work of the Administration, provided the institutional nucleus for the practice he preached.(93) By pooling the key personnel in the different Departments he was in a position to confront the national economic problems on a comprehensive scale. Equally, he could reasonably expect a greater efficiency and accountability from his subordinates. This central institution gave a practical impetus to individual departments, and minor consultative bodies emerged.(94) In effect, it provided a model for regulating and systematising decision-making in an essentially consultative framework.

The institutionalisation of this practice within the different levels of government and its extension beyond (as will be shown below) provided decision-making with a modicum of rationality and constituted a self-generated safeguard against arbitrariness. Power, here, was not conceived in absolutist terms and its consolidation was compatible with constitutional politics.

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(91) See Ch.V. p 200 ff

(92) See his electoral manifesto in 1923.

(93) The Council was officially proclaimed on 9.9.1931 - some months after it had already been meeting informally. See Ch.III. p 88

(94) The Department of Trade and Industry was a focal partner in many of these Committees in view of the policies of the Regime. See Ch.V. p 198

## 2. The Sidqi Parliament

Parliament provided the natural ground for testing the institutional prescriptions and vindicating the amendments in the Constitution. In composition it was as 'viable' as any previous legislature. The majority of deputies from rural constituencies represented wealthy provincial elements(95). Ex-umdas were notable, while the Shiakhāt Commissions provided a fertile ground of recruitment.(96) Commercial or mercantile interests were well represented with some old faces like Abdel Monem Raslan of Menufia, and new ones bearing the names of "well known families" like the Shiatis of Gharbia. There were others, of more obscure origins, like Mostafa Sidqi effendi, from Guiza, who was a contractor. It was not surprising that Alexandria should be well represented with prominent personalities of the city like Gemē'ī, Ḥeddāya and Arslan and new ones like the rising marathon contractor, Ali Hassan Ahmad. The ban on the candidature of professionals outside Cairo (partly intended to combat the stronghold of the Wafd in the provinces) was made up by a compatible representation of professionals from the Capital with three lawyers, an engineer, a doctor and two officials. There were, in all, twelve active lawyers, besides a number of ex-judges and other legal men, two doctors and four engineers, while some fifty or sixty of the members held diplomas equivalent to a university degree. The provincial deputies were, almost without exception, natives of their constituencies with local interests and ties binding them to their electors. With Senate appointments made on a functional basis, a more authentic form of representation was further assured. At the same time with a nucleus of 41 ex-M.P.s sitting in it, the new Chamber was not without political experience. Politically too, it was more balanced, with roughly over double the proportion of Sha'ibists to Ittehadists and a balancing bloc of Independents and Watanists. As will

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(95) See Who's Who in the new Chamber, a compendium compiled by a one-time inspector in the Interior, R. Graves. Enc. in Residency despatch of 12.5.1931 - FO 371/15009.

(96) As the law forbade the combination of public posts with membership of Parliament (art.71) the first sittings witnessed a flood of letters from new deputies renouncing their umdaships etc. There was, too, the odd renunciation of the deputyship in preference of the mayorship, as with the Dshna/Qena deputy. See MMN, 29.6.1931. Cf. "The Prime Minister means ... to get away from the artificial imposition of an elaborate Western electoral system and back ... to the election by groups of Egyptians of their natural leaders, (ie) ... the men who would in the time-honoured village Meglis naturally preside over the meeting and direct opinion - Sheikh in the old meaning of the word." See Keown-Boyd's letter of 12.12.1930 in FO 371/14623.

be shown below, this balance went beyond formal organisation to actual performance both within the Chamber and in the relationship between the Chamber and the Senate. In view of its origins, however, the prospects of the new parliament depended on the conduct of the executive.

The earnestness with which Sidqi took parliamentary life provided a tangible measure of his desire to consolidate the new executive on constitutional lines. His first concern was to instill in it a sense of identity, self-respect and self-confidence to combat the demoralising effects of the atmosphere in which it arose. Although the first session (21st June - 23rd July) lasted for only one month, the mere fact of its convocation following the elections confirmed its tactical purpose. It vindicated Sidqi's pledges that there would be no interruption in parliamentary life.(97) Equally, it proclaimed the end of the "régime d'excéption" and the beginning of the new era. Despite its brevity, it set the pace for his conduct in future sessions. In his triple capacity as head of government, and Minister of Interior and Finance, he replied to the greater proportion of parliamentary questions, answering alone, 26 out of the 39 questions posed. By the next session (1931-1932) a more even balance was secured among his colleagues. By then too, Sidqi had soundly established the principle of government responsibility to the Chamber by the importance he gave to the three major interpellations that were launched against it during the session.(98) Meanwhile, he secured the practical foundations for a productive and constitutional institution. Sidqi played a major role in developing the Chamber. The core of parliamentary life, he believed, lay in "public discussion" and in free "exchange of opinion."(99) Its exercise in the Chamber corroborated the ethos of participation he preached in his tours. He acknowledged an able offensive against the Government for he was anxious to invite opinion, stimulate informed

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(97) In an interview with Signor Luigi Morandi of Corriere della Serra on 30.9.1930 he said: " There shall be no interruption in parliamentary life." cf. similar statement in Egyptian press, Moqattam, 29.8.1930 and pledges to High Commissioner in private. Ch. II p. 60

(98) The first was prompted by missionary proselytisation, the second by the transfer of the Dean of the Faculty of Arts, Dr. Taha Hussein to the Ministry and the third by the government's decision to undertake the Gebel Aulia project. See MMN 23.2.1932; 28.3.1932; 18.5.1932. Stricter, more precise, provisions in the new organic law led to a clearer distinction between questions and interpellations, absent previously this rendered interpellations fewer and more serious.

(99) See RMC, p.5 - The Wafd was accused of transforming government into a "mystic cult."

discussion, maintain a sound precedent for relations between the Government and the Chamber and, above all, to uphold the example of deputies whose conduct promoted the image of responsible representation.(100) Unlike previous parliamentary deputies, members here were individually and collectively respected and they were entitled to influence government decisions in the public interest. His mere presence often benefited the debate, while his discreet and timely interventions prevented the development of a strained situation into an offensive confrontation between the two powers. Throughout, he made a point of inculcating the constitutional ethos among deputies by his practical conduct.

There were two essential lessons he wished to demonstrate. The first was that no one party could always be the winner and the second, was that constitutional vocabulary was not confined to winners and losers. Credits were sometimes passed with a narrow majority and positions were reversed with the Opposition voting with the Government and Sha'bists voting against it. A credit for swamp clearance found 50 in its favour and 38 against it, with the entire finance committee opposing the Government.(101) But the Opposition was not always defeated and the Government set an example in graceful retreat.(102) On occasion, the Government's position was paradoxically made more difficult in the Upper House.(103) It was in compromise that conflicts between the Government and the Chamber were more often resolved. The controversy over stipulated tax limits in the Provincial Councils' Bill, which was brought before the Chamber at the beginning of the third session, occupied two full sittings.(104) Sidqi defended the Government's case for extending taxation powers of local bodies as a step towards their effective reinforcement. But the Chamber was averse to any extension to the existing 7 per cent limit and it maintained that the Government should balance the deficit in the budget of the local bodies. Eventually, taxation powers were raised to a margin of 12 per cent instead of the proposed 15 per cent. Parliament responded to the lessons it received.

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(100) See debate on report of budget committee contending for amendment in credits for Ministry of Agriculture. Mahmud Zaki, an ex-official sitting as an Independent deputy was praised for his competent offensive. MMN, 20.4.1932.

(101) Ibid., 25.4.1932.

(102) Ibid., 20.4.1932, 7.7.1931.

(103) See below. P. 157

(104) MMN, 21.12.1932 and 3.1.1933.



Signs of vitality were not lacking as Parliament soon became a forum for promoting interests and contesting government policies. Landowners, who were numerically the strongest lobby in the Chamber, were vocal. They demanded the full attention of the Government and distrusted its professions of balancing interests. During debates, Deputies were outspoken in their distress. "Is the Government persecuting us?" they contended.(105) As early as the summer of 1931 they played a prominent role on a parliamentary economic committee which had been formed among deputies and senators to examine the deteriorating situation. It met Sidqi more than once and submitted its recommendations, some of which were subsequently implemented.(106) The activity of afflicted landowners intensified with the progress of the sessions. Disappointed with the Government's apparent lack of response to their demands for remitting the cotton tax and reviewing land taxes, they launched their first full-scale interpellation against it in June 1933. Its weight was an embarrassment and out of 40 signatures tailing it, 20 were persuaded to withdraw.(107) With the growing activity of cereal interests (shitwi crops) and emergent rice interests, differentiation grew. Sometimes regional interests clashed as Ṣa'īdīs (Upper Egypt) defended export bounties and Bahārīs (Delta) clamoured for more direct aid to stricken landowners.(108) The incidence of voting over policy issues reflected the development of alternative points of view as well as of diverging interests. An export subsidy proposed for barley in 1932, while naturally supported by cultivators, was opposed by a large number of deputies in the conviction that the crop was a staple diet and that its export would provoke popular hardship.(109) It was not altogether surprising for the controversial bill to be ultimately defeated in the Senate.

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(105) Ibid, 5.6.1933 . This was uttered by Ibrahim Dessuqi Abaza, a big landowner from Sharqiya; an Independent and Vice-President of the Chamber in 1933/34, led the two interpellations on the land tax in 1933 and 1934.

(106) E.g. the agreement with the Land Bank. See Ch.V. For recommendations see Ahram, 7.9.1931.

(107) With the provision that an interpellation should be presented by 10 members (Law 88/art. 107) the number here reflected on the confidence in the Government.

(108) MMN 2.5.1933. One of the earliest divisions along regional lines occurred over the cultivation of opium. Ibid 26.6.1931.

(109) The entire finance committee voted against it. Ibid.31.1.1933.

The Senate assumed a positive role that reinforced the balance between the two Chambers. Despite its appointed majority, it proved a tough contender for the Government and refused to rubber-stamp bills passed by the lower Chamber. From the outset, its reply to the Speech from the Throne came more detailed and critical. Shortly after, it introduced the major amendment in the fiscal powers granted to the Government in connection with the newly launched *Crédit Agricole*, notwithstanding the sanctioning of the government draft by the deputies.(110) During 1931-1932 nine bills were returned to the Chamber with amendments for reviewing. It was the first Senate since 1924 to make its weight felt and its unexpected vitality was exemplified in the role of the young independent figure who chaired its finance committee.(111)

At the same time, a growing assertiveness on the part of the Chamber provided another aspect of its evolving identity. It was anxious to uphold its rights against the executive as much as against its partner in the legislature. Some of the provisions in the Organic Law which the Government had drafted, were regarded as an unwarranted encroachment on its autonomy and a special committee sat to examine and modify them on lines more acceptable to the Chamber.(112) Another question of similar implications for its authority arose with regard to the fate of the Decree Laws passed during the parliamentary recess. Here it was the Vice-President of the Chamber who posed as the jealous defender of its rights to examine them and not merely to deposit them as some other deputies contended (113) and as the practice had been in previous Chambers. Tension also developed as deputies experienced a sense of rebuff at the repeated return to them of bills amended or refused from the Senate. It was the discretion of Ministers, who were also M.P.s, like Doss in

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(110) See Sidqi's note to the Council of Ministers on 19.3.1932 on difference with Senate and Appendix to Chamber's proceedings on 15.6.1932. For novel departure of Senate, see *Journal du Caire*, 26.7.1931.

(111) Hassan Sabri: an ex-Wafdist who stood as an Independent in the belief that with the new constitution enforced, it was only fair to give it a try, constituted an energetic opposition. As President of the Finance Committee in the Senate, he produced valuable reports, but noted for his legal hair-splitting (the fastest to empty the Chamber) and a stubbornness that irritated his colleagues. The insistence of the Palace on his appointment to the Ministry of Finance was the direct cause of Sidqi's resignation in 1933.

(112) E.g. Instead of limiting the number of officials the Chamber could employ (art.145), deputies secured the same end (i.e. checking against previous practice of over-staffing and inflating budget) by posing a ceiling and leaving the Chamber itself to designate its staff. *MMN*, 23.6.1932.

(113) *Ibid.* 18.1.1932; 9.1.1933.

particular in 1932 and later Menzalawi, and the role of key Sha'bists more generally, like Biali and Aziz Abaza, that prevented awkward situations from aggravating.(114) Generally, the conciliatory attitude of the executive was maintained to the benefit of the developing self-consciousness of the Chamber. Characteristically, Sidqi set the pace in the usual bridge-throwing propositions he advanced.

The dispute that arose in connection with the parliamentary rebate demonstrated the growing sense of dignity among deputies. Previous Chambers had raised the issue inconclusively, but the urgency of its resolution in the present instance grew under the effect of the prevailing economic stringency. The government that had reduced emoluments and qualified the powers of the Chamber to review its financial status, realised the gravity of the ongoing administrative seizures for maintaining the Chamber viable at all. It took the initiative to propose the inviolability of the rebate and was opposed by deputies who sensed in the protective gesture an implicit slight.(115) In the event, parliamentary qualms were dismissed and its material basis was secured. But Sidqi showed himself no less concerned over that sense of honour that was the symbol of a developing identity. When deputies protested against the defamatory inference to themselves in the Wafdist columns and urged for tougher controls, he promptly responded. If until then he had tolerated abuse of the government, he could not possibly allow it for the representatives of the nation. (116) The Chamber was deftly mobilised behind a line of action already determined by the government.

The performance of the new parliament was equally influenced by the example it beheld. On the one hand, there was a notable shift away from the forum of oration to the working committees. The session (1931-1932) saw a total of 224 such meetings, of which the Finance Committee alone

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(114) Ibid, 6.6.1933; 15.6.1932; 4.7.1932.

(115) Ibid, 23.6.1932.

(116) Ibid, 31.5.1932.

scored a record 72 meetings, averaging one a day. Each session could boast of its achievements. Despite its brevity, the first one had passed the supplementary credits for the Cr dit Agricole, while the third, was dubbed as the session of "culture and social legislation". In it, the pioneer bills safeguarding women and children in industry and trade were sanctioned together with a law banning vagrancy. The bill organising the Chambers of Commerce was endorsed, while a series of laws organising education on elementary and higher levels was passed. The quality of debate improved and, in contrast to the parochialism of the past, it was directed at more general issues.(117) The factors that contributed to developing parliament into a more productive organ varied. They lay as much in the impetus it received from an energetic executive as in some of the institutional changes that were introduced. Its reduced numbers and re-adjusted proportions, the presence of elements with a real stake in promoting their social and economic interests, and the new organic law which enhanced its organisation were among these factors.

The new parliament manifested a greater constitutional consciousness too, which was similarly influenced both by the impetus it received from its leadership and by institutional improvements. Minority representation which originally constituted one of Sidqi's preoccupations(118), was secured in principle on the level of the daily despatch of affairs as well as on the plenary level. A provision in the organic law stipulated the parties to a debate in an interpellation to include at least five members, presumably to represent different views. It was the manifest endeavour to live up to the stipulation that was interesting. During the land interpellation debate in June 1933, nine members had wished to participate but, time allowing for only five speakers, these were chosen to represent the different parties. On another occasion, where no particular provision was made concerning the parties to the debate, the Chamber opted for a liberal solution on grounds of "free discussion".(119)

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(117) Foreign concessions and the Capitulations progressively figured among these issues, until they dominated the session in 1933-34. Sha'ibist, Abdel Aziz Nazmy, doctor from Cairo, and Mohamed Fahim el Q 'i, (originally independent, Sidqi partisan in 1933, possessed cotton ginning factory) were among the most active crusaders in this offensive.

(118) See Loraine to Henderson, 21.8.1930 (V. Confid.) Cf.Ch.I.p.45

(119) This admitted the participation of opponents of the interpellation together with the conventional speakers for the Government and the supporters of the interpellation. MMN, 1.5.1933.

An engaging feature was the tolerance shown the opposition which, in the Chamber, was officially composed of Watanists. Sidqi gave the lead in the first session, when he took the unprecedented action of welcoming it and inviting its leader Hafez Ramadan to address the Chamber from the rostrum. On other occasions, he acknowledged their role publicly much to their gratification.(120) It was not surprising that, although a numerical minority, they were vocal and assumed a prominent role in the Chamber.(121) The comparative rehabilitation of the constitutional ethos and the more effective performance of Parliament under the new regime seemed to vindicate the constitutional changes.

### 3. The relationship between Parliament and the Executive.

A degree of rationalisation characterised the relationship between the executive and the legislature. Communicating requests to government departments and exercising parliamentary control depended more on committees than on individuals. Coordination was further secured by the regular attendance by the Minister concerned of the plenary session. He also appeared when necessary, to answer queries of working committees which were otherwise normally attended by the senior official who represented the government.(122) At the same time, greater administrative efficiency narrowed the gap between parliamentary resolutions and government action so that the emphasis on effectiveness was generally secured.

The positive role of the executive within the Chamber raised the standard of debate and provided a unifying policy conception. This spared it the petty deviations that in the past took up much debating time. A case in point was the debate on the final budget for 1931-32 where Ministers frequently intervened to clarify an ambiguity or to comment on a controversy. In justifying the claim for a supplementary credit

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(120) Sidqi referred to the "integrity and patriotism" of the Watanists. Ibid., 20.6.1932. See also references in 6.1.1932. The tolerance was recognised by the Watanists ... "a beacon to an era of respecting minority opinion" (Shorbagi, 1.7.1931) and Ramadan thanked Sidqi for respect shown following a heated debate (23.5.1932). Others were more belligerent and staged walk-outs. The most serious occurred over the Gebel Aulia credits(12.4.33)

(121) In absolute numbers, it was the largest to sit on any legislature(8); they led the anti-missionary interpellation as well as those which followed on Taha Hussein and the Gebel Aulia, and they were central in other policy debates like that on elementary education (esp. Abdel Hamid Sa'id).

(122) See references in statement by Minister of Agriculture to work of Chamber's Committee in examining 1932-1933 budget. MMN, 31.5.1932.

for swamp clearance, Sidqi underlined the principle of government responsibility for obligations undertaken by previous Administrations and showed that policy continued, notwithstanding the change of governments.(123) When the Minister of War faltered in extricating himself from a charge of irresponsibility, Sidqi came to his aid and plausibly refuted that charge. Unlike its predecessors, he maintained that the Ministry did not make propositions for creating an Aviations Committee, but instead, it presented the Chamber with concrete results.(124) When the Watanists seized the voting of credits for the Ministry of Finance to raise their customary reservations on the separate allocations for the British Advisers, Sidqi stole their thunder and saved the order of the Chamber. There was nothing apologetic about his statement when he took up their point and turned it to the advantage of his government by reminding the Chamber that the irregularity of the provision simply strengthened the hand of the Egyptian negotiator in any future negotiations.(125) The national orientation which could be attributed to the legislature under the Regime, was partly due to the initiative of the executive.

Aware of the necessity of coordinating the activity of the Government and the Chamber to establish a healthy precedent of parliamentary government, Sidqi relied on the Sha'fist parliamentary body on the one hand, and on Ministers, who were also M.P.s, on the other. Key offices were held by Sha'fists who often played a leading role in debates. Although beyond major policy issues there was notably little attempt at regimenting them and they enjoyed considerable latitude in expressing their opinion, he actually depended on a handful of them in manipulating the Chamber. Among these parliamentary activists (who were not all Sha'fists) Sidqi found his core of supporters who eventually fought his battles against the Palace offensive and who, generally, lent a vitality to debate.(126) In his absence, they assumed his role

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(123) Ibid, 25.4.1932.

(124) Ibid, 20.4.1932.

(125) Ibid, 6.4.1932.

(126) Among these activists were Amin Amer, who staunchly defended deputies' rights against the executive, 18.1.32; and argued for the extension of government role in industry 18.5.33. (cf: p.210). Others included Latif Nakhla, M. Fahim el-Qā'i (see for examples of independent-minded and constructive criticism of government policy on 19.3.1933 and 26.5.1932 on Agricultural Policy), Biali and Nazmy. See below. p.166

of reconciliation and appeasement, as necessity arose.(127) In practice, it was not always easy to distinguish between the relevant spheres of competence and the resolution of an issue often depended on the tact of the executive itself. With the exception of a reminder to the Chamber to observe its boundaries, which was tactfully administered during the debate on the fundallocations for the new Agricultural Bank, under Sidqi there were no major incidents.(128) While pockets of tension existed, his presence and discreet intervention ensured that they did not develop.(129) His absence, during the greater part of the third session reflected adversely on relations between the Government and the Chamber, before the growing assertiveness of the one and the declining parliamentary aptitude of the other.(130) Significantly, the responsible exercise of their deputyship by some members during the fourth session (1933-1934), was a legacy Sidqi left behind him which strained the mediocrity of his successors.(131)

There was little doubt, throughout, where the initiative lay. A glance at the comparative fate of proposals originating in the Chamber and at the Bills of the Government show the latter at a decisive advantage. The end of the 1931-32 session, for example, saw all the Bills passed, while the others which were generally mediocre in substance, were more often suspended or shelved. The Government usually found a way of pushing through a credit or a bill that was vital to it or which it was not prepared to let languish indefinitely in the parliamentary machinery of deliberation. The matter was put on a guillotine motion and strong Sha'ibists discreetly mobilised behind it. The debate over the controversial concession to the Delta Railway Co., for example, ended at the request of ten Sha'ibists who presented a petition to the President of the Chamber requesting its

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(127) For example of a restraining influence, see Ali Menzalawi, who chaired the finance committee before becoming Minister in 1933. Ibid, 22.3.1933 & 19.4.1933; he read out Sidqi's reply to the interpellation on 1.5.1933. The spontaneous younger Sidqyists inc. Abaza (Aziz) and Biali; see sessions on 7.6.1933 and 29.5.1933.

(128) Ibid., 7.7.1931.

(129) Ibid., 18.1.1932.

(130) See p.171.

(131) MMN, 6.2.1934 & 19.6.1934.

termination.(132) When a debate threatened to get out of hand, the Government whip was evident in rushing the bill through.(133) Despite the fact that the initiative lay with the executive there was a manifest attempt to subordinate power to its constitutional mores. Upon the initiative of the Chamber, the Government was authorised to pass credits for new buildings during the summer recess of 1932. Sidqi thanked the Chamber and expanded on the benefits of the motion.(134) The formation of an ad hoc inter-Party commission, in February 1932, to examine the Gebel Aulia project, was a concession to the violent opposition the project aroused.(135) While the Government retained the substance of an issue at stake, it conceded to the Chamber on a point of procedure. Whenever it could do so, it sought the authorisation of the Chamber for its powers. In the event, Parliament became an effective surrogate to the executive.

It was the emphasis on demonstrations of its relevance to the conduct of government and of its importance to the political process that characterised Sidqi's stewardship in Parliament. Parliament, he maintained, was indispensable for running the country and the sense of responsibility of the Government was heightened before the confidence it evoked. "The Government takes pride in your confidence, esteems your support, and sees its proper scope in working here with you, within the sacred precincts of these Chambers ..."(136) "Without you," he confessed earlier on to a congregation of members on the first anniversary of their convocation, "we could not progress at all".(137)

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(132) Ibid., 26.5.1932.

(133) Ibid., 29.6.1932

In rushing through the bill on the Thornycroft Bus Concession, the govt. contented itself with a brief statement on the constitutionality of its conduct. Among the most prominent opponents here were M. Fahim el-Qei . cf. note 126. .

(134) Ibid., 9.6.1932

(135) Between the 1st March and 21st April, 1932, the committee met 17 times and even then the bill had to be whisked through on a guillotine motion. Subsequently, the issue occupied four long sessions in the Chamber, the last continuing from 5 to 12.30 past midnight, the longest in any previous legislature. It wound up on a lengthy statement from Sidqi, appealing to deputies to rise to the historic situation and stressing the national, social and economic aspects of the project, above partisan politics.

(136) MMN, 7.7.1932.

(137) Ibid., 20.6.1932



This was a recurrent theme he resorted to for obvious political ends. Apart from the quest to instil the constitutional ethos in his immediate audience, it was equally necessary to impress upon his British umpires the reality of parliamentary government. The end of the session in particular provided an apt occasion for a tactful demonstration which combined tribute to Parliament with praise to the Monarch. His reference to the invaluable support his Government received from the Sovereign here however, was an appeasement which was impaled by the parliamentary focus of the occasion. Yet, his stress on the role of Parliament was more than lip-service to woo his partisans and deceive his spectators.

Parliament, in effect, developed into a positive forum for defending the Government. Parliamentary questions provided the occasion for publicly extricating it from a difficulty as well as for demonstrating its cohesion. Sidqi used it to advantage upon the first serious challenge to the established order. Two questions were tabled at the juncture of the crisis over the Badari incident and the resignation of the Cabinet in January 1933. In both instances he stood for the model constitutional leader as he enlightened the Chamber with the details of the dispute at stake between him and his dissenting colleagues. Both occasions led to a motion of solidarity behind the action of the Government. In the first, deputies tenaciously defended the Regime and the probity of the Administration against the insidious offensive of their detractors. In the second, the denunciation of the conduct of the resigning Minister of Justice, Ali Maher, was all the more effective as it came from the Chamber rather than from Sidqi. There were other means, both formal and informal, to demonstrate the cohesion of Government and the strength of its parliamentary support. The vote of confidence which followed the Debate on the Address on the Speech from the Throne was one such example, while the occasional friendly gatherings between the Prime Minister and M.P.s was another. Parliamentary questions and interpellations further provided the Government with an effective weapon in internal politics, whose value grew in proportion to the difficulties it encountered. Through information they vindicated it on issues that were deliberately selected to undermine it or to arouse the public against it.(138) Moreover, they secured the Government the necessary legitimacy in its offensive as the further restrictions in the penal code, in June 1932, were ostensibly undertaken in response to parliamentary appeals. (139)

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(138) See the questions on administrative seizures and on National Government rumours, Ibid., 4.2.1932; on the independence of the Courts, 17.2.1932; on the Capitulations, 6.1.1932

(139) Ibid., 15.6.1932 & 9.5.1932

On other levels too, Parliament proved its value. While official Departments persisted with indifferent success in an endeavour to introduce fiscal legislation which would increase revenue, discontent against the Capitulations was discreetly fanned in the Chamber.(140) Sidqi himself used the views of the parliamentary majority to strengthen his hand in dealing with the High Commissioner or to advance an Egyptian interest with a foreign power.(141) Already in the past he had learnt the value of parliament as a weapon for Egyptian sovereignty and, now, he manoeuvred to exploit it to this end whenever he conceived an opportunity.(142) Meanwhile, as long as discipline was maintained and the executive remained in control of debate, parliament provided a valuable make-weight on the side of the Government.

There were also other signs, however, to indicate that the Chamber was picking its own momentum and in the process developing certain initiative and autonomy. The inequitable relationship based on the domination of the executive became less one-sided as the debates in the Chamber grew tougher with the progress of the session in 1933. It was here that a deputy persisted perversely on a course much to the discomfort of his colleagues and the Government alike.(143) He opposed a supplementary credit for the sake of proving that "Parliament could obstruct the Government if it wished." Clashes between the Government and the Chamber became more frequent and the government grew more arbitrary in exercising its prerogatives. The protracted absence of Sidqi complicated the situation as his Acting Deputy, Shafiq lacked the subtleness, patience and the sheer personal weight to match the parliamentary juggling.(144) A case in point was the debate on the report of the finance committee where tempers ran short between the committee rapporteur and deputies on one level, and between deputies and the Government on another.<sup>(145)</sup> At the same time the positive role of parliament

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(140) Ibid, 4.7.1932.

(141) Loraine to Simon, 22.6.1932 (Confid.)

(142) See ex. on Capitulations on 19.2.1932. See also above. p 161

(143) Ibid., 7.6.1933.

The long-winded oratory of Wahib Doss (Sha'ibist) incurred on him the charge of indulging in shahwat al-kalām.

(144) Mohamed Shafiq was popularly dubbed as el-doghri ('the straight-forward'). See below. p.171

(145) MMN 18.5.1933 & 25.5.1933.

continued to develop as it switched from a forum for the Government to defend its policies into an active promoter of these policies. In the debate on the 1933-34 budget, the defence of government policy in retort to Watanist charges came from a Sha'ibist deputy instead of the official spokesman. Here, Abdel Rahman el-Bialí, having ably expounded its economic policy, followed in the example of his absent leader, urging his colleagues to raise the issue of the Capitulations and back the Government upon it instead of disparaging it for seeking to balance the budget.(146) Indeed, as deputy, Bialí could afford to be more audacious and explicit than Sidqi as head of Government. This development in the role of deputies was among the positive features that emerged, alongside the more numerous negative ones, during the session of Sidqi's absences.

The restiveness of the Chamber and its desire to free itself from the tutelage into which it was born, were not unhealthy signs either.(147) Thanks to Sidqi's handling of it, Parliament evolved an awareness of its role and, generally, conducted itself on lines that vindicated the changes in the Constitution. By proving itself more productive and by displaying a greater constitutional consciousness, it contributed to an incipient trend towards institutionalising a compatible and effective form of government. The viability of the new institutions, however, depended less on their evolving autonomy than on their ability to withstand the disintegrating influences which emanated from the executive.

#### B. The Trend away from Institutions

The prospect of the stability and growth of parliamentary institutions was a vexatious predicament for King Fuad. With the growing importance of Parliament, his Ministers, especially his Prime Minister, were at a decisive advantage, for he could hardly compete with them in its forum. He sensed an uneasiness lest the reins of power should slip

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(146) He summed up the policy thus: (i) diversification of crops, (ii) preservation of land-wealth, (iii) amelioration of the lot of the fellah, (iv) extensive public programme, (v) fighting unemployment, organising production and extending markets, (vii) protecting local industry, (viii) improving the balance of trade. MMN, 29.5.1933. cf. Ch.V. below.

(147) I.e. as comparable with developments in the Party - see above. p 150

out of his grip and he vested minor events with a gravity that was heightened by his own superstitious and paranoic disposition. Sidqi's public demonstrations of corporative cohesion which were exercised by him throughout the country on his periodic tours, in Parliament, and eventually at the Royal threshold itself, did not please the King at all.(148) To His Majesty, Sidqi was, after all, a rogue who did not basically differ from the detested Sarwat and, but for a sheer need, he would hardly have trusted him with so much power in the first place.(149) That need had now diminished, thanks to his own ruthless ability, and the time had come to curtail his powers and remind him where effective power lay and how it should be wielded. Sidqi's declining health left him a poor match for the offensive that was being hatched against him.(150) In the event he was powerless before the reversing trend which was precipitated by weaknesses inherent in the institutions of the Regime.

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(148) On one occasion, presumably Accession Day in 1933, Sidqi paid a visit to the Palace at the head of a host of MPs. Upon their departure, the King swore out furiously, "Ah, that ..., he imagines he can frighten me with his deputies - I will show him!" (interview with Abaza, confirmed by another source.)

(149) "Fuad considered that Sidqi had reached a position of strength ... which entitled him to act virtually as a dictator and to keep all matters exclusively in his hands ..." (4.11.1933 (Confid.) op cit.) Elsewhere "... the King was surprised that Sidqi should select his successor" - Campbell to Simon, (Confid.) 16.9.1933; Sidqi met the King before his departure in May and complained about direct interference in the Administration by Palace officials and on his return he made representations to the King on the same lines; compliance with these was his condition for reflecting on his resignation and the King was non-committal. (Mr. Furness's interview with Sidqi, enc. in Residency desp. 4.11.1933.).

(150) Palace intrigues could be traced to the late summer of 1932, during Sidqi's first absence in Europe. Later, Ibrashi recalled that it was not possible to "entirely dislodge the idea (i.e. of Palace conspiracy) from his brain" (Lorraine to Simon, 4.11.1933.) The King deigned to reflect on the early days when he decided to "humour all his caprices" to give him a fair run. (Campbell to Peterson, 2.9.1933, Personal and Confid.) The lines on which the King's mind ran, by the summer of 1933, is seen from the various "combinaisons" of his own he had in his head in the event of Sidqi not being sufficiently well to resume office "...a fact (i.e. the combinaisons) which he repeated twice with some relish" as the Acting High Commissioner remarked (Campbell to Simon, 19.8.1933). For Sidqi's own premonitions, see below. p. 173

## 1. The Cabinet

The same factors which initially contributed to the strength of the Council of Ministers, in time obstructed its consolidation. Sidqi had chosen his team with a view to forming a strong and effective body, capable of strengthening the institutional basis of authority and impressing on the public the non-partisan image of the Government. Apart from Tewfiq Rifaat, the eldest of the team, the others were in their fifties, generally possessed of personality and ability. Most of them had previous Ministerial experience; some were colleagues in 1925, (151) others were senior Administrators at the time, (152) others still, made their political debut under the Regime. The attempt to secure a national facade was assured, in principle, by constructing the Cabinet from the elements available. At the outset three were officially Ittehadist and three others had some affiliation, past or present, with the Constitutional Liberal Party while the remaining member was an Independent. (153) With the growing focus on non-partisanship, the admission of new recruits of no party affiliations was an asset. (154) The Cabinet which consequently emerged possessed a measure of homogeneity in the common background of administrative experience and the absence of positive political affiliations. The only political commitment that bound some of its members was an anti-Wafdist predilection and good relations with the Palace. The homogeneity was enhanced among others by a shared interest in the evolving economic structure. The two Egyptian Vice-Presidents of the Federation of Industries were in the Government and at least four of the others were connected with commercial or industrial

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(151) Abdel Fattah Yahia, Hilmi Issa and Ali Maher.

(152) Ali Gamaleddin.

(153) Ali, Maher, H. Issa, T. Rifaat (Ittehadists). T. Doss, A.F. Yahia, H. Afifi (Constitutional Liberals or ex C.L.); Hafez Hassan (Independent). See Royal Rescript, 19.6.1930.

(154) E.g. Murad Sid Ahmad, Fahmy Karim, A. Gamaleddin, Ahmad Ali.

enterprises.(155) Administratively and, up to a point, socially, the new Cabinet was qualified for the challenge it assumed.

It was not long, however, before the weaknesses began to show. Once the primarily executive task of quashing rebellion was accomplished, the emergency team was transformed into a body to preside over the normalisation of affairs. Another form of dedication was now required. Sidqi sought to consolidate the Cabinet on a more congenial political basis, by recruiting elements from Parliament to the Cabinet in order to reinforce the constitutional link between the two bodies. At the same time, his behaviour encouraged a sense of cohesion among his colleagues.(156) But this was not enough to remedy the basic political defect - the absence of political dedication to the new order; while the move to reinforce the parliamentary base of the Cabinet came rather late. The Ministerial crisis which broke out towards the end of 1932 underlined existing weaknesses.

Personalism was rife in the absence of a positive political outlook to bind loyalties and the strong personalities that had earlier lent the Cabinet strength and authority, eventually undermined it. While the clash between Ali Maher and Sidqi assumed the dimensions of a clash of opinion over the administration of justice - behind it was a conflict of personalities. Ali Maher, a strong and ambitious figure, originally nursed a resentment against Sidqi as he had secretly coveted the premiership for himself. This resentment was behind his equivocal conduct as far back as the summer of 1930 when he was prepared to mediate to bring back

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(155) Hafez Hassan, Public Works and Agriculture, June 1930, was the other Vice-President of the Egyptian Federation of Industries. Abdel-Fattah Yahia, Foreign Affairs, June 1930, was brother of a leading Alexandria cotton merchant, with sidelines in many other companies. Tewfiq Doss, Communications, held shares in Thornycroft Bus Co. under Abboud's name. Ali Maher, Maaref, later Justice, was a Director of the Deutsche Bank. If it is difficult to establish with precision the financial connections of the individual Ministers at the time, a retrospective view of their later connections is helpful. In the later 30's for ex. Hafez Afifi, Foreign Affairs (transferred to London Legation July 1930), became Vice-President of the EFI and eventually succeeded Sidqi to its Presidency. T. Doss and Hilmi Issa were other prominent figures in it.

(156) In the name of ministerial solidarity and collective responsibility, Sidqi took up the reply in the Chamber on behalf of his colleague, Yahia, and defended him against allegations of dubious connections with the Thornycroft Co. MMN 23.2.1932. Cf. Conduct on provincial tours. Ch.III above p. 415

the Wafd.(157) It also fed the rumours that were circulated in the columns of the Opposition towards the end of the year which exploited latent tensions between Sidqi and the Palace. Although he actually cooperated with Sidqi for the length of two eventful years, the tensions between them persisted and were reflected in the conduct of the cases before the Courts in 1932.(158) The Badāri case, over which he resigned at the beginning of 1933, was the occasion rather than the cause of the open split between them. Another key figure in the crisis was the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Abdel Fattah Yahia, who supported his dissenting colleague and was ostensibly reluctant to continue his association with a Government of whose probity he was critical. But the outgoing Minister was credited with a strong sense of vanity as much as a keen sense of integrity. The relationship that ultimately bound him to the Prime Minister was a personal one and the daily exercise of authority generated tensions and jealousy that upset old friendships.(159) But the obstacles did not stem only from strong or independent figures. The Minister of Public Works, for example, Fahmy Karim, "a straightforward and capable character" who, up till his appointment to the Ministry in 1930 "had always appeared to make a point of keeping away from politics", received a Pashalik in October 1930. Graced with Royal favour, he soon moved closer to the Palace, despite a formal Sha'ibist allegiance, and he became Ibrashi's 'henchman'. Whether the personality was a strong one, like Ali Maher and Hilmi Issa, or a weak one like Yahia and Fahmy Karim, personalism consistently undermined the prospects of cohesion in the Cabinet.

While effective government remained the ideal and inspired the attempt to reconcile it with parliamentary reality, it did not resolve the political problem. At a moment when such effectiveness was impaired, as at the juncture of the Ministerial crisis, the quest for ability and experience became urgent. With the normalisation of the situation, the portfolio of Interior which was up till then held by Sidqi, went to the

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(157) See conversation of Ali Maher with Cecil Campbell on 30.6.1930, FO 371/14616.

(158) See Ch. III. note 52 & 54.

(159) Sidqi spoke of Yahia as "an old friend." Yahis acted as Prime Minister during Sidqi's leave in 1932 and the experience went to his head. The rumours on Palace intrigues (see above) concerned the possibility of replacing Sidqi by Yahia who was a more pliable instrument in Palace hands.

Under Secretary of State, Mahmud el Keissy, who had proved his executive ability in the previous two and a half years. He was "an able little man whose political bias was limited to his family feud", and who was, politically, a 'trimmer'. The new incumbent of the Ministry of Public Works, Mohamed Shafiq, deserves particular mention, as Sidqi went to great lengths to secure his services for his government.(160) Eventually, too he entrusted him with wide powers and, on the eve of his resignation, he chose him for his successorship. He is variously described as "honest, straightforward and industrious", "conscientious and over particular". Technically and administratively, he was particularly qualified for his appointment. Politically, he was a dedicated, but sensible patriot. Shafiq was also a Sha'ibist and his recruitment to the Cabinet was, provisionally, a political asset as well. In a sense, he was a combination of the capable official and the knowledgeable expert, the kind of technocratic reinforcement to a traditional administrator that Sidqi was anxious to promote in his Administration.(161) His patriotism overshadowed what partisanship he professed while politically, he was not strong enough to impress his weight in the parliamentary arena or against the Palace.(162)

Statesmanship could not, in itself, continue to guarantee the consolidation of the Cabinet. In the absence of a corporate sense of identity or a common explicit commitment to the parliamentary ideal, the constitutional trend was threatened from within. Palace affiliations that might have provided a common point of reference for Cabinet members proved a negative influence which was ultimately detrimental. This was dramatised in the oath of allegiance that was imposed on Ministers early

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(160) Although Shafiq was the most competent figure to replace the outgoing Director of the Egyptian State Railways in 1932 (Abdul Hamid Suleiman), the British feared his patriotism might obstruct British interest in this vital Dept. Sidqi interceded on his behalf, reassured the British, had a word with him and subsequently all went well. Shafiq too was Director of Siemens Orient and involved with Continental concerns. Cf. note 155.

(161) Among the representative types Sidqi relied upon, advanced or backed up when necessary, were figures like Ahmad Abdel Wahab (Under Secretary of State for Finance) and Abdel Hamid Badawi (Head of the State Legal Dept.). These were figures who combined deep patriotism with outstanding ability. Their personal sympathies varied, with the first Wafdist in sentiment and the latter inclined towards the Constitutional Liberals. Neither, however, was a political partisan and Sidqi could draw a line between the personal and the public, as shown in his conduct towards another senior official of professional calibre and Wafdist loyalties, Mohamed Kamel Selim (interview).

(162) See below. p 177



in 1934 and by virtue of which they were required to swear their fealty to the King's person and to the 1930 Constitution.(163) It proclaimed the triumph of the personal conception of power over the institutional one which Sidqi had striven in vain to promote.

## 2. Palace Influences

Palace influences operated to the detriment of the Regime on two main levels. First, there were the myriad of sectional and personal interests which sought to influence government decisions from without. This pattern was reinforced by social custom and by a political tradition of ambivalence found in the dual structure of Authority which had long distinguished between its formal locus and its effective one. This current was naturally encouraged by the King whose own preconceptions had not changed from the time parliamentary life was introduced into Egypt. The premise of reigning without ruling was as incomprehensible to him as it was preposterous: at best an imported piece of English hypocrisy he could well dispense with.

"In a Bolshevik Constitution Lenin has all the powers, in a democratic Constitution it is the President of the United States who has all the powers ..."(164)

If Egypt must have your Constitution then he, King Fuad, was entitled to as much. The King never abandoned this conviction and it was only natural for the Palace to remain the focus for self-centred interests. While Sidqi conceded to the Monarch his share of moral authority, he questioned his right to rule. "The King," he admitted, in a moment when conventional loyalties were severely strained, "should reign, but he must never rule .."(165) Under the Constitution any such attempt had to be made through irresponsible Palace officials whose influence undermined the fundamental precept of ministerial responsibility.

Conversely, the changes in the Constitution reinforced the executive and invited interested parties to influence it directly so that the way for extra-parliamentary influences was made easier. Although

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(163) "Avant d'entrer en fonctions les ministres prêteront, entre Nos mains, serments d'être fidèles et dévoués au Roi et à la Patrie, d'obéir à la Constitution et aux lois du Pays, et de remplir consciencieusement les fonctions de ministre qui leur sont confiées." It was made incumbent on Ministers in power to take the oath. See J.O. 29.1.1934. This was the last official act the King undertook before he took to bed on 26th Jan. His indisposition delayed its translation into effect until the ceremony of 21st March, 1934. This was his first official act upon his recovery.

(164) See Allenby to Curzon, 23.4.1923, op cit.

(165) Campbell to Peterson (Personal and Confid.) 22.9.1933.

such interests could still promote their ends through institutional channels within the executive, the pressures which emanated from the Palace made themselves felt outside the regular machinery of deliberation.

As the scramble for public contracts increased under the impact of the policies of the Regime, the undermining effect of Palace influences protruded on the scene. The private war waged in late 1932 by an ambitious contractor with strong Palace connections, Ahmad Abboud, was a case in point.(166) The latter relied on his Palace connections and initially, on his camaraderie with the Prime Minister in tacitly pushing his business through.(167) When his vital interests were threatened by competitors he did not hesitate to reinforce his ties with influential elements in the Palace and to exploit dubious connections beyond, in order to fight Sidqi and undermine the stability of the Regime.(168) Although Abboud himself was a key figure in the Chamber of Contractors, an affiliate of the Federation of Egyptian Industries, he generally acted outside this body. Where the issue at stake was personalised, intrigue was rampant and the disintegrating influences grew. Such influences, moreover, that stemmed from the Palace or hovered around it were generally diffuse and it was difficult to combat them without the confrontation degenerating into a banal personal affair.

In contrast, the wishes and influences that came from the King himself operated on another level. For all their force and potential threat, they were localised and this made them - other obstacles

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(166) Ahmad Abboud, Engineer and Contractor, about 50, of lower middle-class origin. Studied at Glasgow University on a Turkish Government grant and served as army contractor in Iraq, Syria and Palestine during the Great War. In 1925 was Wafdist MP, broke away in 1928 and as a result of propaganda activities for Mohamed Mahmud in London then was formally expelled. Engaged in similar activities on behalf of the Regime in 1930 and by the summer of 1933 was the Palace emissary whose diplomatic activity in London annoyed Dr. Afifi. He was made Pasha in 1931, ostensibly for his work on the Fuadia Canal.

(167) For relations with Sidqi, see file 512 in FO 141/769. Abboud represented 27 important British firms, was equal partner with Topham, Jones & Railton in the Aswan Dam contract and the largest shareholder in the Omnibus Co. Is said to have influenced British contracts for over £4,000,000 under the Regime.

(168) Abboud maintained secret contacts with a dubious figure in London, a Professor Maurice Gerothwohl, the diplomatic correspondent of the 'Daily Telegraph. (D.T.) Most of the police reports about him listed in the Green Paper Index (PRO) have been destroyed. But some copies and relevant references remain. See Scotland Yard Report, 10.9.1931 (Secret) in FO 371/14620 also FO letter and Minutes of 17.1.1933 and 7.2.1933 (Priv. & Most Secret) - FO 371/17109. The upshot of these contacts appeared in the controversial articles in D.T. in summer 1932 and 1933 which upset Sidqi and put him on the defensive. See ex. letter to editor, DT 22.7.1933, statement in Bourse Egyptienne in August 1932; cf. Abboud's letters. Ahram 8.5.1933 & 11.5.1933.

notwithstanding - more amenable to control. While Sidqi was admittedly powerless to resist an express wish of the King, his genius in handling him was exercised in two directions. On the one hand, he successfully avoided open confrontation; on the other, he effectively established himself as the medium for conveying Royal bids to the relevant Government department. Until 1933, Sidqi could maintain that, on the whole, King Fuad behaved on constitutional lines, closely supporting his Prime Minister who still retained a share in the initiative.(169) Throughout, however, the King displayed an avid interest in the details of his realm. Instead of incessantly reminding him of the distinction between reigning and ruling, Sidqi compromised to avert confrontation. With calculated discretion, he kept him informed of government activity but, indiscreetly, he bowed to expediency and interposed an intermediary between himself and the Monarch.(170) Knowing that the King discussed all affairs with the Director of his Royal Khāṣṣa and his private confidante, Zaki el Ibrashi, "anyway", Sidqi conceded to a practice which eventually proved costly. For the moment, as long as Sidqi enjoyed the King's confidence and the King refrained from directly intervening in the Administration, the constitutional facade continued to be maintained.

This arrangement between the King and his Prime Minister was fragile and arbitrary. Sidqi imposed nothing on Fuad which the latter did not voluntarily concede.(171) Yet the flexibility of the King's will was partly conditioned by Sidqi's tact and resourcefulness, his apparent

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(169) See Sidqi's interview with Consul-General Heathcote-Smith on 20.4.1934, FO 371/17977. The Cabinet reconstruction in January 1933 went far to show that Sidqi still retained Fuad's confidence despite the summer clouds of 1932.

(170) Zaki el Ibrashi emerged under the Regime as a less 'flashy' Hassan Nash'at (1925). Hardworking and intelligent, his humble origins did not prevent him rising from the parquet to the Under-Secretaryship of State (Finance) in 1925. Became Director-General of the Royal Khāṣṣa in 1927 where he managed the King's private estates only too loyally. With the resignation of Tewfiq Nessim in 1930, the post of Chef du Cabinet of the King remained vacant and for all practical purposes, Ibrashi filled the role. He steadily became the King's reporter and agent in Cabinet circles.

(171) There were the grudging concessions too. King Fuad, for ex., had never wished to appoint Afifi to the Legation in London, but he did so to humour Sidqi (See above). *note no. 150.*  
In fact, "Sidqi was able to impose his views on King Fuad to the extent of His Majesty's fears." Loraine to Simon, 2.12.1933 (Confid.) in FO 371/17010.

submissiveness and ready self-effacement and the ability to play up to the Royal ego whenever that was necessary.(172) His personal presence in power, his vigilance in attending the conduct of government and, above all, the retention of mutual accessibility with the King were all necessary conditions for the continuation of their implicit accord intact. Events in the course of 1933 consistently undermined these conditions so that, by the end of the year, the constitutional facade (which in the last resort depended on Sidqi) crumbled.

The immediate effect of his protracted absence from government hastened the confrontation. While he convalesced Sidqi remained intent on his exercise of power.(173) He kept in active touch with the conduct of affairs, with the result that where business was not delayed it was transferred outside the formal seats of Authority. It was more difficult to persuade the King of the wisdom of Sidqi conducting business from Mena House rather than the King from Abdin. Until then too, his tact as well as his promise as a likely and able negotiator in any impending British settlement enhanced his favour as well as his authority in the King's eyes.(174) The conditions in which he now strove to retain that authority undermined the basis of his relationship with the King. Communication was impeded at a moment when Palace involvement in public affairs increased and the scope for mutual misunderstanding grew. Old suspicions revived and the rumours which circulated during Sidqi's prolonged summer convalescence in Europe made matters worse.(175) His illness, too, took its toll of his temperance and deprived him of his greatest asset in handling the King. Gone was the image of the humble

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(172) Cf. note 45 above. The public demonstrations of allegiance to the King increased in late 1932. See Ch.III.p.114. The Sha'b Party gave an uncustomary grand reception to celebrate Accession Day in 1932. Before he left for Europe in May 1933, Sidqi visited the King to renew his pledges of loyalty.

(173) At the beginning the King commented on Sidqi's fervour in an essentially exasperated good humour. He was satisfied, however, that despite his physical handicap, his stroke did not affect his lucidity and mental agility. See audience with Fuad: Lorraine to Simon, teleg. 1.2.1933 (Confid.).

(174) The chances of Sidqi concluding a Treaty with the British provided one of his most attractive qualifications for the King. See audience with Lord Hutchinson of Montrose on 25.2.1933 and further despatch, Campbell to Simon, 4.3.1933 (Confid.) in FO 371/17008.

(175) Although the ex-Khedive's position was settled by the 1931 Proclamation King fuad did not completely abandon his old sensitivity. Among the rumours that disturbed him were Sidqi's contacts with Abbas Hilmi in Paris. (Ibrahim Rashid interview). The distinctive coldness of the King towards Sidqi grew during the Summer. See Campbell to Simon, 19.8.1933.

obedient Minister, as strains mounted and Sidqi could no longer disguise his disapproval of the conduct of Royalty.(176) Meanwhile, the casual exasperation of King Fuad at Sidqi's persistence in managing affairs gave way to growing irritation. By the end of the summer, it was spent in an outspoken fury at the insolence of his Prime Minister telling him what to do. Sidqi steadily witnessed the mounting strain and his declining authority, and realistically, but belatedly, he recognised that "a tradition once established was difficult to dislodge."(177) By the end of the year, Ibrashi's interference in the Administration had become the rule. His contacts took him beyond individual Ministers to senior and junior officials. Notwithstanding its origin and the different form it assumed, the disruption in Administrative discipline recalled its counterpart under the Wafd.(178) There were elements in the situation that encouraged this trend towards Palace dominance.

The Cabinet in 1933 worked under a particular disadvantage. Its formation at the beginning of the year had lost it some of its more prominent political elements while its reconstruction in the Spring indicated that it was essentially in a state of flux. But the new Cabinet hardly met before it was deprived of its directing head. Out of its subsequent nine months in power Sidqi barely presided over it for four weeks altogether at intermittent intervals.(179) Out of deference to Sidqi, a deference that was still retained towards him in the early months, the King appointed neither an acting Minister in the portfolio of Finance, nor upon Sidqi's travel did he appoint an acting Prime Minister. The burden fell, in effect, on Sidqi's reliable colleague, Shafiq Pasha, whose competence, however, did not make up for the political weakness of the new Cabinet. Sidqi's

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(176) Later, in a meeting with the Financial Adviser, Sidqi spoke bitterly of King Fuad whom he described as "a 20th century Louis XIV incapable of understanding the meaning of constitutional government and ready to sacrifice the interests of Egypt to his own glorification and to his own pocket." See interview with F. P. Watson on 29.9.1933 enc. in Residency Confidential despatch of 3.10.1933. FO. 371/17010. Cf. conversation with the Consul-General at Alex., (note 169) where he speaks of an atavism in the present dynasty that unfits it for constitutional government.

(177) Residency despatch of 3.10.1933, op cit.

(178) See Ch.II. note 3.

(179) Since his stroke on the 23rd January, 1933, Sidqi ceased to attend his office at the Ministry. Cerebral congestion induced a temporary paralysis in his left arm. Feeling the impact of his absence, however, he resumed his attendance in the second week of April, although he restricted it to two hours in the afternoon in the Ministry of Finance.

handling of important issues from his bedside ensured that public affairs were conducted efficiently enough, although some delay was inevitable where a decision of the Council of Ministers was required.(180) His constant contact with his colleagues, principally through Shafiq, might have kept him informed of the trend of events, but it was not enough to imbue the Council with the necessary spirit of cohesion. Council meetings decreased. In his absence the Cabinet disintegrated into a collection of individuals with neither the authority nor the moral courage to resist Palace encroachments. Party labels were meaningless as Ministers gravitated towards the Palace and turned to it for instruction. Even Shafiq, it was claimed, could hardly handle an issue without referring it to the Palace.(181) The King naturally cultivated this attention. In the late Summer, shortly before Sidqi's hustled return, he took an unprecedented step and hosted his Ministers to a banquet in the Royal grounds in Montazah Palace. His nonchalance towards Sidqi contrasted sharply with his earlier solicitude. By that time, however, the Palace had stepped in effectively to fill the political vacuum he had left behind.

With the political viability of the Cabinet in doubt and his own resources failing him, Sidqi reverted to the British. The erstwhile pride he had taken in his Government's unimpeachable national conduct was now subdued. It was not the moment to boast in public that his authority rested solely on the confidence of the King and the people represented in Parliament, as there was less reason and opportunity now for such proud and confident claims. Observing the steady shift in the balance of power towards the Palace, Sidqi abandoned his earlier discretion for open intimations to the Residency. He privately confessed his misgivings and shortly before his departure for Europe, he asked the acting High Commissioner to "keep an eye" on the Palace and "to drop a hint" in case of an aggravation of the situation in his absence.(182) Immediately

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(180) This is seen in the length of the agendas of 13th April and 27th April Cabinet meetings. Here resolutions taken in January only came into effect then as with the promotions and rises due to police officers in the Bombs Case. See Ch.III. Note 57.

(181) Shafiq, Ibrashi maintained, was constantly begging him to come to the Ministry and on each occasion produced long lists of questions which he desired to submit to the King. Loraine to Simon 4.11.1933 op cit. On the other hand, Sidqi returned to find Shafiq in bad odour with the Palace for obstructing Abboud's bid for the Gebel Aulia contract.

(182) Campbell to Peterson 23.9.1933 (Personal & Confid.)

before he left Egypt he sent for Keown-Boyd and disclosed to him his sense of uneasiness, a sense of "une trahison quelconque ..." in the air; the same sort of feeling he said, as he had in 1925.(183) It was another anxious message to the Egyptian Minister in London and its sequel, in a meeting between himself and Percy Loraine in Paris, that increased the tensions with the Palace.(184)

The ideal of the King and his Prime Minister working hand in hand crumbled. Each was turned against the other irrevocably to the detriment of the ideals he professed. Failing to generate its own momentum, the Cabinet was powerless to stay its own eclipse and to sustain the constitutional precepts on which it was originally conceived. It did not take Sidqi long to realise, upon his return to Egypt, that his options were severely narrowed and by 21st September he finally resigned.(185) Sidqi's resignation from the government was the climax to one phase and a prelude to another. It signalled the resumption of the conflict between him and the King in another arena of political action.

It was unlike him to succumb to defeat. If the executive could not be checked from within, given the altered circumstances, then he could strive to control it from without. In the next stage of the struggle, he mobilised the Party and made a bid for the presidency of the Chamber. He aimed at substituting the tacit personal control he previously wielded over the King from a position of relative strength within the executive, to a more objective form of control from institutions only recently brought into a sheltered existence.(186) The attempt constituted the test of their viability.

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(183) Ibid.

(184) See FO Minute by Mr. Ronald on 11.8.1933. Sidqi phoned from France and asked for urgent meeting with Sir Percy. He wanted a "full exchange of views" with him about certain matters connected with the present political position in Egypt. For sequel, see memorandum by Loraine (Paris) 23.8.1933 in FO 371/17009.

(185) Sidqi felt it was impossible to re-establish his former position on his return and intended to resign from the beginning. Loraine memo, ibid. The pressure and enthusiasm he perceived in his supporters dissuaded him; a meeting followed with the King on 5th September whereupon he deliberated on his resignation and accepted to continue. But when he realised that the King was determined to have his way with ministerial appointments he finally resigned. The resignation was accepted the same day while he was in a Cabinet meeting informing his colleagues of his decision.

(186) Sidqi was prepared to support the new Government on condition the Sha'b Party remained in the same proportionate numerical majority.. His manoeuvres in the Party embarrassed the Government (See p.151 ) and the King saw Sidqi's intention to devote himself to leading the Party as "pulling strings and doing as he liked." Campbell to Peterson, 2.9.1933. op cit.

Deflecting influences, however, were found at all levels within the Regime including the executive nucleus and the party base on which parliamentary organisation rested. From the beginning, the initiative for integrating Government and parliament lay with the executive and its use depended on Sidqi's personal leadership. Similarly, the degeneration of the constitutional amendments into an outright arbitrariness which made for a potentially inequitable dominance of the executive was prevented by his statesmanship. It was questionable whether away from the reins of power he would still be able to wield enough authority to exert the same moderating influence upon the Regime he had installed. He was alive to the opportunities in both Parliament and Party, confident that he could use to advantage the institutional trends within them and resist the autocratic turn that threatened to sway them. He under-estimated, however, the basic weaknesses that deprived these institutions of their autonomy and obstructed their consolidation.

The extent to which Parliament was a barometer for developments within the executive can be seen from a glimpse of its closing session (1932-1933). Growing Palace influence within its ranks overshadowed the general deterioration in discipline which had followed upon Sidqi's absence. Adulation of the Monarch was a notable feature and the only reference made to Sidqi was by an Independent who proposed cabling a message of good-health to the Prime Minister.(187) Immediately after, the President of the Chamber moved to terminate the session and the remaining Speakers who were Sha'bists agreed to give up their speaking time. The session closed on a burst of "long applause" for the Monarch. On similar occasions in the past, the latent tension between the conflicting conceptions of power within the ranks of the Regime had surfaced in the exchanges between the Government and the Chamber that occurred during the adjournment debate. The President of the Chamber who had formally assumed his post as an Independent, brought to bear the personal conception, attributing the achievements of the session to His Majesty's gracious will. This contrasted with Sidqi's customary procedure in dividing tribute between the deputies and the King while emphasising the role of the former for the achievements of the current

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(187) Ibrahim Dessuqî Abaza. MMN, 22.6.1933. On his departure for Europe, Sidqi sent to MPs and Sha'bists a message of appreciation for the goodwill shown him at the farewell they had given him. Sha'b, 25.5.1933.



year. In June 1933 Sidqi was not present to shore up the frail autonomy of the Chamber and to defend the precarious balance. The acclaim of the Royal prerogative was the consequence.

It was evident that Parliament was powerless in the circumstances as it echoed the forces that wielded power over it. Its effectiveness depended on how it was manipulated. While Sidqi as Prime Minister and leader of its majority had commanded it to effect, the outcome of his present venture depended on the cohesion and loyalty of the Sha'bist majority. One of his first actions here was to convene the Party Executive and request it to delegate him the special powers he needed to act as circumstances demanded in the interval before Parliament met.(188) The step was significant in view of the dimensions the struggle assumed as Sidqi now openly championed the constitutional cause against the King. The result ultimately depended on the viability of the Party.

### 3. The Sha'b Party.

The Party originated as an artifice of the Administration and it was created in the throes of an electoral campaign. Its initial growth was considerable so that within less than six months of its creation it had put up candidates for 150 electoral constituencies and emerged in Parliament with a credible majority. By its first anniversary it boasted of the existence of 18 Central Committees in the mudiriyas and governorates and 1938 branches in the districts and villages.(189) In fact, little was heard of the countless committees following elections. Party activity was generally confined to the Capital and to Alexandria with only minor developments elsewhere. In Alexandria, its fortunes were on the rise and its discernible strength and growth there were matched by the general consolidation of the Party organ and the flourish of political clubs that contrasted with the more static conditions of the regional committees. In time too, the new recruits to the Party reflected more authentically the social strata to which it appealed.

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(188) See above, p. 149.

(189) Allam addressing a Bairam audience, Sha'b 1.3.1932

By the end of 1933 the balance shifted from the more traditional social elements to mercantile elements.(190) This partly pointed to the direction of policies under the Regime as those who benefited most found in the Party organisation an adequate vehicle for their political ambitions. The Party also appealed to a vague patriotism which afforded the opportunity for traditional and apolitical elements to join it. Such elements as the powerful Abul 'Azayems in Minia, for example, recovered an authority which the influence of the spreading Wafdist caucus had undermined. But they were no more devoted partisans than those who benefited under the Regime. The latter were hardly in a position to risk their unconsolidated gains in defending the political order.

The Party organisation could possibly be conceived in two concentric circles. The outer one bore the imprint of the Administration and comprised, mostly, traditional elements. The inner circle contained more notables with a stake in the developing economy along with a margin of professional and ex-officials similarly oriented. In between there was a floating quantity of "effendis" from the Capital and from urban centres comprising emergent contractors, merchants, bosses, (mo 'allem) and employees in commercial establishments. It was these elements that provided the voluntary substitute for the original rank and file comprised in the outer group, as they crystallised round the core. When the Ministerial crisis broke out in 1933, the Party organisation was in a state of flux, moving away from a "mass" organisation, administratively controlled and orientated towards a more restricted political association of elements with a real stake in the Regime.

The Party organisation thus contained elements of imposition and volition. While the former were more conspicuous at the outset, there were signs that the latter could, in due course, prevail. With parliamentary life resumed, the Sha'bist Parliamentary body acquired an importance which overshadowed that of the remoter committees in the Provinces. This growing importance was at the behest of the Party leadership and a shift of focus occurred from the mudīr 'am (or Administrator General) to its

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(190) The Sha'b columns in Summer 1933 (July-September) are especially instructive here. Upon Sidqi's return, delegates turned up to meet him and names and occupations of members are often cited at length. Earlier, upon its formation, mercantile elements were only occasionally preponderant. E.g. Aswan Central Committee consisted of three merchants, the remainder of the General Committee was composed of Sheikhs. Traditional elements included sharī'ā lawyers and 'ulamas in the towns (e.g. Bulaq Central Committee was headed by a sharī'a lawyer in contrast to Shubra Committee under a Contractor). In the provinces umdas and sheikhs presented the equivalent traditional elements.

President (or Za'īm). Sha'ḥbist clubs developed a special vitality.(191) The swing from the administrative to the political was equally reflected in the disappearance of the ambiguous nomenclature. The Presidents of the General Committees and their Secretaries 'replaced the "Manager of the Administration of Committees", the "administrative executive committees" and the "general controllers". The more prominent role assumed by Sidqi in the Party attracted elements, ideally and materially more akin in spirit. While the direction of the policies of the Regime confirmed the developing homogeneity.

The core of the "inner group" was not consolidated in any single formation within the Party. A representative cross-section could be found among its Executive Committee, the Sha'ḥbist Parliamentary Body and the political clubs. In some ways it constituted a promising base for an emergent "bourgeois" party in the Egyptian setting. The composition of the Parliamentary Economic Committee formed in October 1933 under Sidqi, provides some guide to this group.(192) Socially, it was heterogeneous with provincial elements as well as urban elements, an older generation (represented by the octogenerian Gallini Fahmy) and a younger age-group. Intellectually, a greater measure of homogeneity is discernible in the common outlook on the advantages of a modern national economy. The degree of commitment to the ideal differed and the conception of economic modernisation itself was not uniform. The older generation of notables was more conservative, less imaginative, and less committed than the younger elements who were more radical, dedicated and enthusiastic. The different elements generally possessed a material stake in the emergent economic order.(193) Conversely, however, no explicit commitment to the parliamentary form of government among Sha'ḥbists was particularly

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(191) The Sha'ḥb Party Clubs reflected a diversity that contrasted with the earlier regimentation in the Committees. The Guiza Club for example bore little affinity with the spirit of its Alex. counterpart. It had a stronger conservative, pro-administrative bias. See account of Guiza inauguration in Sha'ḥb, 14.8.1932.

(192) This Economic Committee included Elias Awad, Gallini Fahmy, Mahfouz el Far, Serageddin Shahin, Abdel Rahman el Biali, Abdel Aziz Nazmy and Latif Nakhla.

(193) The bank account of Biali, for ex., rose by £E 112.00 between 1931 & 1933 as a Palace report notes.(Abdin).

noticeable.(194) The conspicuous failure to preach the parliamentary ethic on the part of Sha'ibist members was occasionally underlined by a theme that stressed the importance of a strong man for a movement of regeneration.(195)

Generally, the Party was not without vitality. Ideas were not wanting and the coalition of material and moral interests, given time to crystallise into a self-conscious corporate entity, provided an adequate institutional foundation. The original six principles which centred on independence, sovereignty and overall reform were not peculiar to it, but their interaction with developing social interests rendered them more relevant and, politically, more meaningful to the Party. Leadership, however, was a crucial factor in linking ideas to interests and giving cogency to the Party organisation. By temperament Sidqi was non-partisan and he could hardly expect to inspire a sense of partisanship among his followers. (196) As a statesman and a reformer, his fundamental approach to institution-building in the political arena was concrete and evolutionary. Parliamentary government, he believed, would strike root with the development of the necessary and congenial social and economic structure which would support it. Meanwhile, although he could inspire ideas and ideals in his "pupils", and infuse subordinates and colleagues with something of his zeal at work, this was quite different to leading a new-born political Party.

The forces that for all practical purposes destroyed the Party came from outside it. Under direct Palace instructions the Administration carried out an intensive campaign to detach Sha'ibists away from Sidqi. While three years earlier it had been similarly employed to suppress the Wafdist organisation, this time it lacked the plausible pretext. In persecuting Sha'ibists it was not out to maintain order against insurrection(197)

(194) In March-April, 1931, some lectures were given in Cairo and Alexandria by prominent Sha'ibists. The former lot was delivered by Mark Habashi (to be elected Senator in June) - a self-styled disciple of Sidqi - in which he dwelled on the dangers of a mono-cultural economy and preached diversification and modernisation. The political lectures were given by the Party Secretary, Ahmad Rushdy, in Alexandria and were a negative reversion to the evils of Wafdisim and its abuse of the nationalist movement to the detriment of the political development of Egypt. Neither actively preached the virtue of parliamentary government.

(195) See above p.150.

(196) See Ch. I. p.37 & note 58

(197) Sidqi addressed an official complaint to Mahmud el Keissy, Minister of Interior, in this sense. See Ahram 2.12.1933.

But the moment the pseudo-political organisation was on the point of asserting itself under a political leadership within the constitutional framework, its danger was realised. The manner in which orders were issued, without the knowledge of the responsible Minister, confirmed the consolidation of the reverse trend. Power had effectively passed into the hands of irresponsible Palace officials.

The task of the Administration was easier this time. Not only was its machinery of repression perfected, thanks, ironically, to Sidqi's efforts, but there was hardly an organisation in existence to contend with. Out of the committees that mushroomed during elections, there remained only a handful of general committees which were easy targets for suppression. The sheikhs and umdas who constituted the organisational backbone in Upper Egypt were easily persuaded to abandon their political excursion. The odd pockets of resistance, observable notably in Alexandria, took some muscle-flexing but were eventually subdued. Conversely, the quality of the early recruits who sat on the Party Executive showed up to its disadvantage. Some were time-servers, initially welcomed for the prestige element they rather dubiously lent. (198) Many were ex-Liberals who were anxious to secure their vital interests. (199) It was not difficult for the palace to cajole and to threaten. At the same time an untimely shift of emphasis occurred from the political and organisational to the pedagogic and cultural. Beyond its formation and the electoral flurry there was little compulsion or active canvassing for its membership. The Sha'ibist clubs that came into prominence were themselves a vehicle for dissolving partisan differences in the cause of

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(198) Among these, for example, were Senators Ahmad Tal'at and Mahmud el-Towayyer, both ex-judges with notorious records. The first had been President of the Native Court of Appeal in Cairo for 10 years (1919-1928) during which term his corruption was proverbial - was only removed by manipulating pensions scheme under Mahmud Pasha. Towayyer was a judge in the Mixed Courts in Alexandria, whose unprofessional conduct resulted in his transfer.

(199) The Lamloums, for example, were a powerful tribe of Arab stock in Upper Egypt (Minia) who were also Constitutional Liberals. A Lamloum brother reportedly commented in exasperation (in the pungent dialect typical of Sa'idis) at the indecision of the Party Executive under Mohamed Mahmud and the consequent threat to prestige and interests it entailed. "Sit we thus as lightweights in society... neither with the Government nor with the Wafd.. and what about our interests, where do these go?" Rose al-Yusuf, November, 1930.

an impartial course of national "enlightenment". (200). While they might have constituted an antidote to the administrative origins of the Party, they were not sufficiently developed to be a source of strength in its organisation.

The Party, still in its "infancy", had not reached the point where it could balance the discipline and formal structure necessary for its organisation with the principles and allegiances necessary for its vitality. The search for an equilibrium left it unconsolidated, fluid and vulnerable before the concerted Palace offensive to which it was now exposed.

The parliamentary session for 1933-34 opened with a new and interesting balance of forces. Following his final resignation from the Party and his abandonment of a controversial candidature for the presidency of the Chamber, Sidqi retained his deputyship. (201) He used his influence discreetly to mobilise forces in the Chamber not restricted to his partisans, and there briefly emerged, under his impetus, a United Bloc comprising Independents, Watanists and ex-Sha'bists. Power was divided among three almost equal groups with the comparative numerical disadvantage of the Bloc offset by its superior organisation and vitality. As a result, the elections of the bureaux of the Chamber did not go smoothly for the Government, its awkward handling of its difference with the Native Bar Syndicate was exposed; Prime Minister Yahia's indiscretion that reflected on Egyptian sovereignty was questioned; while the Government was interpellated before it had recovered its composure. (202)

However, the semblance of Parliament and Party working in close harmony to bolster and check the executive was invalidated as the latter was drained of its institutional substance. The interest of the Palace in both institutions was restricted to their use to disparage their founder. As soon as Sidqi resigned from the Party this interest in it subsided, while the manipulation of the Chamber was mainly limited to meetings devoted to exposing

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(200) See above. p.130 .

(201) See above. p.151.

(202) See MMN, 22.12.1933 & 26.12.1933; 3.2.1934; 8.1.1934.

the misdeeds of the Sidqi Administration.(203) By implication, such exposures emphasised the integrity of its successor and vindicated the Royal will in making and unmaking governments. All the scruples of co-ordinating between Parliament and the Government were obviated by the simple formula of the oath of allegiance which transferred ministerial responsibility from the Chamber to the King.(204) It struck a new balance between political reality and political prescriptions. Both Parliament and Party became marginal to the governmental process as the notion of a parliamentary executive disintegrated before the autocratic reality.

The 1930 Regime owed its distinctive traits to Sidqi's role in it and its duration depended on his continued presence in office. His departure, however, marked the end of an era that was long enough to leave an imprint on political developments. The palace rule which asserted itself during 1934 was distinguished from its invertebrate versions in the past by a self-conscious Administration and a bold and unruly parliament which eventually proved to be an embarrassment to both the British and the Government; it was subsequently dissolved with the advent of Tewfiq Nessim in November 1934. All that remained under the new Administration was an emasculation of the Regime in a coterie of bureaucratic and technocratic elements manning a neutral government. During 1935, a brief lease of life was given to the decimated party organisation when Sidqi came back to it suddenly in the Spring. With both independence and the Constitution in imminent danger of erosion under Nessim's vaccillating Administration, he resumed its leadership and, in May 1935, he launched his appeal for a United Front among all the parties and political forces in the country. This appeal was eventually adopted by other parties too, and it led to the restoration of the 1923 Constitution towards the end of the year and to the resumption of the Treaty negotiations shortly after.

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(203) For such examples see sittings on 10.4.1934 and 11.4.1934; 30.4.1934; 2.5.1934 and 21.5.1934. Ibid.

(204) See note 163 above.

The essentially personalised and centralised power of the Regime, which was represented in the extraordinary powers exercised by Sidqi, was originally the function of a crisis situation. He had embarked on his enterprise from precarious premises aspiring not only to impose an element of stability in a state of flux, but also to consolidate institutions in volatile circumstances which reduced the likelihood of such an eventuality. The concentration of power accentuated its strength as well as its vulnerability, as the fate of the Regime depended on that of its founder. By the same token, it orientated the power conflict to its detriment. The presence of a keen and ambitious Monarch, inimical to institutionalising power, precipitated deviations. Effective resistance called for a devoted cadre that did not exist - or, at best, was only inchoate. As a result, the consolidated executive, originally conceived as the bulwark of a compatible parliamentary regime, degenerated into an appendage of Palace officialdom.



CHAPTER FIVE

ECONOMIC POLICY UNDER THE REGIME

" Economic Policy is the heart of Politics."  
(Sidqi, 24.8.1931.)

"Today, Egypt has an industrial policy," Sidqi reminded his colleagues in a Council meeting that sat to consider the question of cement supplies for the reconstruction of the Gebel Aulia Dam towards the end of 1932. "One of the preoccupations of this government," he continued, "is to ensure that the Balance of Trade retains every piastre within the country." (1) At its next meeting, the Cabinet met to consider "one of the worthwhile projects the government was anxious to promote". The electrification of the Aswan Dam and the establishment of a nitrate factory would enhance Egypt's self-sufficiency in a vital quarter, benefit the Balance of Trade, reduce the cost of production and, above all, "provide the nucleus for great industrial projects in the future". The Ministry of Public Works had completed its adjudications for the project and Sidqi promised to present his colleagues with a comprehensive technical memorandum on the subject, which, once sanctioned, could be followed out by "the necessary steps for its execution". (2)

Both instances illustrate the trend of policy under the new executive. Although the prevailing Depression confronted the government with a host of problems and difficulties that frustrated the realisation of its ambitions, it in no way dampened its resolve to pursue them. In some ways, adversity provided the incentive and the occasion for such pursuits.

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(1) MMW, 2.11.1932.

(2) Ibid., 13.11.1932

"The present crisis should stimulate us to an energetic effort to increase our capacity to confront difficulties. This is the spirit which underlies the thought and action of the present government and which should equally inspire the public." (3)

In this spirit, too, Sidqi strove to promote the concepts he had always held. Economic independence was the cornerstone of political independence.(4) The prospects of political development and the consolidation of parliamentary institutions, equally depended on expanding and diversifying the basis of national wealth in order to secure a basic equilibrium in the economy which would, in time, reflect on a more balanced polity. (5) At the same time, he believed, government had an active responsibility for securing the favourable conditions required for such a development. (6) Industrialisation was a key aspect in this transformation, although Sidqi notably conceived it with the undertones of the reformist.

"Je suis d'avis que le mouvement industriel doit se développer normalement et petit à petit. Une industrialisation en masse sera une oeuvre sociale néfaste, tandis qu'en procédant avec méthode, on assure à l'industrie égyptienne une stabilité dont elle a grand besoin."

When Sidqi came to power in 1930 he brought with him this developmental perspective that pushed fiscal policy into other quests beyond balancing the budget. Indeed, in striving to reconcile a balanced budget to a balanced economy, Sidqi went beyond current orthodoxy at a moment when the ability to grapple with the immediate problems of the national economy posed a grave new challenge to statesmanship. (8) The conception of a national policy was itself an act of statesmanship.

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(3) Political address at Benha, Sha'b, 12.9.1931

(4) See Ch-I. p.32

(5) See Chapter IV. Sidqi maintained his views on the connection between the social economic structure and the political and administrative structures - or, generally, culture - until the end of his life. See his opinion in review of Subhi Wahida's book (bibliography) - in Ahram, 16.3.1950; cf. summing of his views in article in al-Siyāsa al-Isbou'īya, 31.3.1929.

(6) See TLTS, pp. 11 - 12; 91 - 92.

(7) Address in annual General Assembly of the Federation of Industries, 14.3.1932; cf. views in previous address on 30.3.1931 in similar vein.

(8) An editorial "The Meaning of Leadership" (Ma'na az-za'īma) proposes new criteria. See Sha'b, 26.5.1931; cf. Sidqi's address to Sha'bist Parliamentary Body on 24.8.1931.

This policy conception under the Regime was a new point of departure, while its coincidence with the onsetting Depression made it particularly timely. The new customs regime which came into force in February, 1930, meant that Egypt had recovered a measure of its fiscal autonomy, and this provided the Regime with an effective weapon to promote its policy objectives. Protectionism, which Sidqi had advocated in 1917 and championed in the 'twenties, now became practicable politics. But his original conceptions were now tempered or reinforced, by improvisation to meet an unforeseen contingency in the repercussions of the World Depression. This was signalled by the pursuit of policies to preserve existing wealth and safeguard a threatened social structure, side by side with others, to promote local production and equilibrate the economy. Generally, the presence of a national policy influenced the issues raised under the Regime as well as the approach to them.

#### The Rational Approach.

Sidqi adopted a characteristically methodical and probing approach to the wide range of problems with which he was confronted. His search for means to alleviate his immediate difficulties led him to a more radical quest to "establish things on a solid and durable basis which would last into the future". (9)

The Cotton Policy that was brought before the Council of Ministers in October, 1930, was the first indication of this new approach. It was inconceivable to Sidqi that cotton, the staple crop of the economy and the major source of national wealth, should continue without any form of rational husbanding. (10) The present situation in which the government found itself, with the major portion of its liquid reserves tied up in cotton purchases on the one hand, and with little capacity for either storing them or disposing of them, was simultaneously the result and the demonstration of this absence of husbanding. While immediate steps were taken to reduce storage risks and costs by steam-pressing cotton stocks, and additional

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(9) cf. Ch. IV. p. 132

(10) See Sidqi's Memorandum to the Council of Ministers on 18.10.1930-Henceforth, A. Abdel-Wahab could confidently (and competently) expound on the Government's policy towards cotton. See eg. International Cotton Bulletin, Vol. X (No.40) July 1932, p. 524 ff.; & Vol. XI (No.44) July-August 1933, p.459.

storage facilities were briskly undertaken, the search for new outlets was launched as part of a more general export policy. (11) This policy was among the proposals of a comprehensive report on the cotton question which was the outcome of a mission Sidqi had assigned to his diligent Under-Secretary of State, Ahmad Abdel Wahab, in August 1930. In this Report, the different aspects of the cotton situation were examined in depth, including its production, financing, marketing and processing, while the possibility of alternative crops was also explored. The recommendations constituted the foundations of a cotton policy that continued to influence subsequent Administrations and provided a safeguard against the presence in office of Ministers for whom "Parliament was more important than cotton". (12)

Another Report on measures to reduce the cost of living came in the train of the Cotton Report, just over three months later, to confirm the same approach. Towards the end of the 'twenties, a widening gap developed between wholesale and retail prices under the impact of falling commodity prices. (13) The protectionist pursuits under the Regime only reinforced the rift and aggravated the problem of the rising cost of living, (14) While palliatives were sought with varying degrees of effectiveness, the situation, here too, was examined objectively and the results were put to the Council of Ministers in early February 1931. The Report disclosed that the control of retail prices was one dimension of a complex solution that called for reducing the cost of production, organising markets and credit structures, controlling rates, salaries and concessionaries, and generally

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(11) A deal, for example, was concluded with Hungarian firms towards the end of 1931, involving the sale of 60,000 to 100,000 bales of cotton on special terms. In July 1932, Sidqi was invited by the Hungarian Government to visit the textile site using Egyptian cotton.

(12) Makram Ebeid is reported to have made this remark to Mr. F. Watson. See Minute by Financial Adviser of 14.6.1930 in FO371/14641.

(13) For tables, see Memorandum of 31.1.1931 found in documents in STS, February 1931. Periodic tables, quoted from the Bulletin of the Statistics Department, comparing the trend of basic items in the different months between 1931 and 1934 point to a general decline in both sets, with the drop in wholesale greater than those in retail prices.

(14) A more incriminating appraisal is found in the reports from informants contained in the memorandum on the financial situation on the provinces of 28.11.1933. See FO 371/18001 - Conversely, it was easy to use such pursuits as a scapegoat for abuse - e.g. kerosene prices. See paras. 331-389 in Annual Report for 1932. FO 371/17015.

raising overall productivity. Some of the measures which will be referred to below, in discussing the rationalising impact of the pursuits of the Regime, were a result of these recommendations.

At the same time, one of the foremost preoccupations of Sidqi when he came to office in June 1930, was one of public finances. He arrived to find the 1930-1931 budget estimated at a deficit of £E8,000,000, and to find nearly £E14,000,000 out of a liquid Reserve Fund of about £E18,000,000 frozen in cotton commitments. A solution was sought to the estimated deficit in drastic economies, largely in the estimates for new public works, and in manipulating the new tariff to increase revenue. (15) Eventually, the budget was balanced and maintained at an increasingly favourable range over the next few years, despite the unabated general fiscal stringency. (16) On the other hand, the partial solution that was sought in economies, shed a light on some of the inherent features of the budgetary situation that called for remedy. Sidqi distinguished between two types of expenditure, "productive" and "unproductive", and saw how the inflatory trend in the latter threatened to undermine the former. He designed a policy which aimed at reducing this inflatory trend on the one hand, and ensuring that productive expenditure was systematised and stabilised in the budget structure, on the other, to protect it from an unforeseen contingency, like the present one.

To deal with unproductive expenditure, a new grading of officials was introduced in February 1931. (17) In principle, it narrowed the differential between the highest and lowest grades and fixed the ceiling (marbūt) in a grade at an average within it. The annual and bi-annual periodic rises and promotions ceased to come into effect automatically as this now depended on the presence of a surplus in the budget of each year. New

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(15) See NCMPB (1931) pp.27-30. A relevant analysis of the 1931-1932 Budget by Acting Financial Adviser on 3.8.1931 is found in FO 371/15409.

(16) In the first exercise for 1930-31, the deficit was reduced to £E2,648,174 and the balance drawn from the Reserves. In the following year, a surplus of £E778,758 was effected. To remove a source of disequilibrium and enhance rationalisation, the 1933-34 Budget was cast in a new form separating the ESR Budget (Railways etc.). See instructive review and analysis in Note on Financial Position enc. in Residency despatch of 23.3.1933 FO 371/17011.

(17) The new cadre, originally drafted by Sidqi, was endorsed by the Council of Ministers on 25.2.1931 and came into force on 1.5.1931. For provisions, see Ministry of Finance Circular No. 10/1931 (25.4.1931).

appointments equally depended on the budgetary situation, while the various government departments were regarded as a single unit so that individual departments could no longer fill vacancies and issue promotions irrespective of the overall situation. The effect of these controls was cumulative, rather than immediate, while they directly saved the budget an annual increase of £E250,000, i.e. the cost of these periodic increments. In dealing with inflation in officialdom, Sidqi took up a perennial problem which previous Administrations had only tentatively broached. (18) Its immediate yield to his own Administration was an increase of £E500,000, which included the sum of £E250,000, the issue of postponing effective promotions and pay rises due in May 1931 for the following year, and a further £E250,000, the result of an increase in the stamp duty on officials' salaries. (19) The introduction of this cadre in the depressed conditions of the era, was not of a nature to endear Sidqi to the afflicted majority of junior officials who were hit most by the new measures. (20) The slogan of interest above sentiment, here, echoed only too sombrely.

The positive side of the budgetary question called for instituting the principle of planning. While Sidqi's measures of economy did not affect those public works already in progress, the new works which were postponed, together with other projects pending in the different Government departments, became the object of serious study in the Ministry of Finance. (21) Their execution was relegated to a five-year programme which came into force in 1935.

Meanwhile, Sidqi's determination to advance the controversial Gebel Aulia project under the Regime was a typical illustration of his

(18) E.g. as a result of proposals of the parliamentary finance committee in 1926/27, a special commission was formed to study inflation in officialdom but until 1930, when Sidqi dissolved it, it had achieved nothing concrete.

(19) The stamp duty was collected on a differential basis of 7% for incomes of £E20 and over and 5% for less. See memorandum from the Ministry of Finance of 7.9.1931 in STS, November, 1931. Follow up in Economic News, ibid., June 1932.

(20) To this day, Sidqi is acrimoniously remembered by the average Egyptian in his late '60's for this cadre. Senior officials, by contrast, were not adversely affected. See below, No. 40.

(21) See Circular No. 20/1931 in J.O. of July, 1931.

approach, as well as of his priorities. The Gebel Aulia was a dam to be constructed in the southern Sudan, as part of the irrigation network to harness the Nile; its effect was to bring 250,000 feddans in Upper Egypt under perennial irrigation and to reclaim another 300,000 feddans in the densely populated Delta. Sidqi, deeply convinced of the social and economic advantages of this project, as well as of its political implications for reinforcing Egyptian claims in the Sudan, strove to convince his compatriots that the Depression, for all its severity, was a temporary event that ought not to be used as a reason for delaying vital works. (22). With the completion of the second stage of heightening the Aswan Dam at the end of 1932, no major projects were underway and the budget which ought not to relax on development schemes, could well afford to provide for the new project from its ordinary resources. In fact, he launched this project with his eyes not only on the budget of the next three years, but with the ten years' duration of the scheme in view. (23) While Sidqi's rational approach to the budgetary question should be seen in perspective of his earlier efforts in 1922, his emphasis on developmental projects should be equally appraised against his earlier public pronouncements. (24)

The same methodical quest was extended to social problems, like unemployment, that were brought to the fore by the incidence of the Depression, or precipitated by certain policies under the Regime. (25) Significantly, unemployment was originally conceived as a social menace that was more deeply rooted than in an ephemeral depression and the solution sought went beyond the search for expedients. (26) A strong inter-departmental committee

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(22) See MMN, 23.5.1932 for one of his most forceful statements. Earlier, equally persuasive and lengthy addresses were delivered in the Sha<sup>6</sup>b Club on 16.1.1932 and on his tours in Girga, 7.5.1932.

(23) See his letter to the Financial Adviser on 7.8.1932 in FO 371/16115. See also statement in Chamber. MMN, 23.5.1932.

(24) See Ahram, 7.12.1923 (Election Manifesto) - See Ch. I. pp. 41, 45.

(25) See Ch. III notes. Although no reliable figures are available, unemployment first appeared as a major problem then. An inspection by the Labour Office conducted in 1931 in small spinning and weaving establishments found an average reduction of over 40% - unemployed drivers in Cairo alone were estimated at 8,000 - 10,000. See also RECE (July 1931) p.97.

(26) Sidqi was aware that industrialisation was the only effective solution to a social problem whose implications were spelled out in the 1917 Report. TLTS, pp.63 - 64 - See also article in al-Siyasa al-Isbou<sup>6</sup>iya referred to above.

sat under the Under Secretary for the Interior, Mahmud el-Keissy, to deal with the question. (27) Its immediate recommendations included the stimulation of a public works programme and of subventions by the government to local authorities to enable them to carry out their programmes so as to alleviate unemployment, take advantage of the prevailing low costs and keep entrepreneurial interests content. (28) One of the results was that this period, 1929-1933, the height of the Depression, witnessed the highest urban electrification in the inter-war years. (29) Meanwhile, significantly, the promotion of an outlook compatible with the new technical orientation went side by side with the promotion of local industry.

A committee met in the Ministry of Maâref (Education) on 5th March 1931, to lay down a general policy of education that stressed the technical aspect. (30) Shortly after, a Consultative Council emerged under the Director of the Department of Trade and Industry, with two representatives from the Maâref sitting on it, to consider credit facilities for small industry and employment opportunities for technical graduates in public enterprise. (31) In impeding the prospects of employment in the civil

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(27) The committee was composed of delegates from all chief labour employing departments in the government as well as the two representatives from the EFI. This is not to be confused with a separate committee that sat under A.F. Yahia to investigate a problem of labour dwellings. Typically, Sidqi seized the opportunity of a stop in Egypt at the time by Sir Felix-Poole of the Association of Electrical Industries in Britain, who was on his way to Ceylon, and sought expert advice on the problem. For Report see enc. in Residency desp. of 5.3.1931 in FO 371/15426. The Abu Za'bal labour complex was launched a year later, in 1932.

(28) Thence, the Government was authorised to raise supplementary credits for the purpose during the summer recess of 1932. See MMN, 9.6.1932.

(29) See table given in article by Albert Dorra, "L'Électrification urbaine en Egypte" in EI (No.2), 1939. This was due to uninterrupted in extensive pumping works in the Delta, at the time, which Sidqi refused to axe for economies.

(30) See interview with Minister of Education, H.Issa, Sha'b, 9.3.1931 and leading articles on 11.3.1931.

(31) See Ministerial Decree of 25.11.1931. Growing pressure on technical schools and increase in graduate force is recorded in the period. See Ahram, 27.10.1933 and 2.10.1933. The Sha'b also studies figures and comments on 30.8.1932. See also Chamber Debates on Budget of Ministry of Education. MMN, 6.4.1932-1933. The search for outlets in public enterprise was criticised by affected interests. See editorial in EI, (No. 16) December, 1933, and Ahram, 24.9.1933. The threat of government enterprise is a recurrent theme in the organ of the Federation during 1932.



service, the government was anxious to encourage new outlets in free enterprise, in principle, (al-ʿamal al-ḥurr) and in public enterprise, where necessary. The control of a deteriorating employment situation among white-collar workers, or effendi circles, eventually depended on this quest for practical alternatives.

In dealing with the outstanding issues of social legislation, the approach was again consistent with the executive spirit. A central organ, the Labour Bureau, was founded in December, 1930, and, temporarily, attached to the Department of Public Security, as much for reasons of economy and expediency as for reasons of security. (32) Leading members of the international labour movement were invited by the Government to study the labour situation in Egypt on the spot. The gesture was equally aimed at cutting the ground from under the feet of its opponents who sought to politicise labour and campaign against the Regime abroad. (33) The Butler Report was the result of a visiting mission from the International Labour Organisation in the Spring of 1932, and its recommendations were adopted by the Labour Office. (34) By the end of that year, the Superior Council on Labour Affairs had emerged as a result of these recommendations. (35) The following summer, the first legislation on Women and Child labour was promulgated, having been examined by Parliament during

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(32) See Sidqi's memorandum to the Council of Ministers on 25.11.1930. See polemic in Ahram and opposition press, notably, Miṣr and Siḡāsa at the end of November and early December, 1930. S's approach of preceding legislation by an executive machinery equally satisfied the demands of the EFL (see edit. in EI, November, 1930) in contrast to the approach of the Rida Commission, whose Report, published in March 1929, was criticised on grounds of unpracticability and 'idealism'.

(33) The visit by M.W. Schewenels of the IFTU to Egypt in October 1931 was a result of this campaign. See Campbell to Reading, 23.10.1931 (Confid.) For other activity abroad and formation of Egyptian Labour Party under Abbas Halim see file 49 in FO 371/15411.

(34) An Arabic copy of the report was recently reproduced in the documents series in al-Ṭalīʿā, July, 1965. The pragmatic, gradualist and piece-meal approach recommended in the Butler Report made it welcome to industry. See EI (No.14), November, 1932.

(35) For composition, see Decree-Law of 21.12.1932.

the previous session and passed on a guillotine motion. (36) Meanwhile, the bill on indemnities, the third item on the legislative programme, was before the advisory body for its consideration. For the first time Egypt saw effective action taken in the social field. (37) The efforts to lay the institutional foundations here, coincided with the measures taken elsewhere to consolidate the basic structure of the national economy.

Other aspects of the rational approach are seen in the spirit of follow-up (esprit de suite) and co-ordination that attended the implementation of policy. One of the earliest decrees passed in July 1930 to promote local production, had given priority in government adjudications to local products within the margin of 10 per cent above rival tenders. Subsequent circulars were issued instructing government departments to modify their specifications to accommodate local tenders wherever possible, and extending the order to municipalities. Early in 1932 a further circular came to assess concrete results as the different departments reported on the measures taken by each to enforce the original decree. (38) At the same time, an earnest effort to co-ordinate activity was discernible in the quest to resolve the problems of one department without incurring others elsewhere. This occurred in organising efforts on a limited scale to deal with a specific issue, as with the instituting of a wool factory by the Prisons Department in October, 1932, as well as in mobilising resources for a wider issue. The study of problems related to local production, in general, for example, was the object of an inter-departmental committee founded in the Autumn of 1931 and chaired by the Under-Secretary of State for Agriculture. (39)

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(36) See MMN, 16.5.1933. The laws, Nos. 58 and 65 were promulgated on 26.6.1933 and 17.7.1933 respectively. For instructive repertoire on social legislation and measures under the Regime, see Zaki Badaoui, La Legislation du Travail en Egypte (1942).

(37) For a negative appraisal of the effort, see Amin Ezzeddin, Tarikh al Tabaka al-Amila (1971), pp. 179-180, where he condemns the whole rubric of social legislation under Sidqi as "a mean sop" to absorb and deflect labour opinion.

(38) See memorandum on the pace of substitution of local industry in STS, October, 1932.

(39) For examples of other such committees see the inter-departmental committee between the Ministries of Agriculture and Departments of Trade and Industry to deal with dairy products in September, 1931, or with setting up a tomato-sauce factory in July 1933. But there were obvious loop-holes in co-ordination which the EI pointed out (see Nos 3 & 9 in 1932 and No.8 in 1933, for examples.).

In confronting his immediate difficulties, however, Sidqi resorted to expedients that were not always rational. Some were popular, like the institution of poor canteens in urban centres - an activity which was heightened to coincide with his electoral campaign in the Spring of 1931. Others were not, like the temporary ban on all new appointments and effective promotions and increments which he instituted in 1931 for one year, to be successively renewed in the following two years. Nor again, was his refusal to cut down salaries among senior officials a decision void of political considerations, despite his plausible rationalising of it. (40) Some of these expedients too, like those taken to check prices and control merchants, were not very effective either. (41) The decision to abolish the short-lived section instituted in the Ministry of Finance in Spring, 1931, to preside over the campaign to control the cost of living, might have been a rational one in the circumstances. (42) But it pointed in the direction of the priorities of the Regime which, eventually, proved socially expensive. In the present context, however, it is the rational approach to outstanding issues, and its consequences, that provide the point of emphasis in examining Sidqi's statesmanship. The readiness to take account of the views and opinion of affected interests constituted another interesting dimension of this approach.

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(40) Estimating the economy resulting from such cuts at £E 170,000 he contended that it was not worth the shake in confidence in the country's solvency such a measure would incur. MMW, 19.8.1931. He communicated his contention to the Moqattam on the same day.

(41) See, for example, order from the Ministry of Interior providing for the obligatory declaration of prices on 17.3.1931. Later the Cabinet announced a series of measures to combat the rising cost of living on 28.4.1931; but effective sanctions to control merchants remained unavailing. See econ. bulletin in STS, October, 1932.

(42) The section was established in the Ministry of Finance under Amin Youssef, with a team of 15 officials and 14 members delegated from the Interior to supervise markets. Some of its activity is chronicled in the monthly bulletins in STS; one of its principle obstacles was public inertia. See interview in Sha'b, 9.4.1931. For reasons of abolition and transfer of competence, see Ministry of Interior Order of 12 .8.1931.

B. Consultation and the Doctrine of Partnership.

While the concentration of power in the executive was accompanied by the creation of consultative machinery to rationalise the process of decision making, consultation assumed an interesting form in the relation between the government and interest groups. As Minister of Finance and head of a government professing certain policy objectives, Sidqi was subject to pressure from organised, as well as from isolated, interests. (43) Although the Federation of Industries was only one among these groups, Sidqi's connections with it and the particular pursuits of protectionism brought it conspicuously to the fore under the Regime.

To Sidqi, the Federation stood for national regeneration. It was the noble bearer of a mission, "... une mission élevée, qui est celle de servir la nation et de promouvoir le progrès économique et social de notre cher patrie." It was the arche-type of the institutional setting for reconciling private interests to the public interest. Its primary task was not the defence of the individual, but, "... la coordination et l'ajustement de son action avec celle de la collectivité, la conjugaison de ses efforts avec ceux de ses confrères en vue de progrès du pays." (44) The relationship between the Federation and public authorities was soon stabilised and regulated through the permanent representation of the Director of the Department of Trade and Industry on the Board of the Federation. (45) "Il est certain que cette nouvelle forme de collaboration

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(43) For organised agricultural interests see Yusuf Nahas, Juhūd al-Niqāba al Zirā'īya (1952) pp. 228-229, 235-246, 292. Proposals for a wheat policy from the Agricultural Syndicate are found in Sidqi's correspondence for April, 1932, in his private files in the Archives of the Council of Ministers. For foreign concessionaries see ex. of a businessman, M. Ismalun, on behalf of Sinai Mining Co. referred to in R. Turner's despatch of 18.6.1931 - FO 371/15400.

(44) Address in XVII General Assembly of the Federation, 14.4.1938.

(45) STS, February, 1932.

dirécte et suivie," the letter from Sidqi to the Federation read, "rendra plus productive et efficace l'oeuvre convergente des deux institutions". (46)

A new feature appearing at the beginning of 1932 in the now fortnightly publication of the Federation, chronicled, among other events, the course of the reinforced relations between Industry and the Government. Its confident tone reflected the legitimacy and the ascendancy which industry was hitherto denied. Under the Regime, an element of dialogue springs to the fore as praise alternates with criticism and concrete proposals are put to specific departments, while the head of government is made directly responsible for certain policies. (47) Sidqi met what he conceived to be its legitimate appeals, whenever that was possible. (48) The legislation protecting the growing food industry was a prompt response to such appeals. (49) In another instance the Federation adopted the grievance of the Association of Contractors who protested against the tendency of the government to favour iron and steel, at the expense of concrete, in its buildings. The representation which was made to Sidqi directly, resulted in the establishment of the desired link between the industry and the authorities and a compromise solution was reached. (50)

(46) This, too, was one of the demands of the Federation stated in its annual report (Compte Rendu) for 1930. See also, annual meeting and resolutions in April 1932 and welcome editorial in EI (No. 2), January, 1932. As Minister of Finance in 1938, Sidqi further consolidated these links. See notice in L'EI (No.6), March, 1938.

(47) See "Chronique" in L'EI, January and May, 1932.

(48) The "Compte Rendue" for 1931 speaks of "la cordialité parfaite" that characterised this relationship. For examples of the positive exchanges see editorials in EI (No. 8), 1930, (No. 1), 1932, (No. 4), 1932 and (No. 1), 1933. The search for a rational solution to the rivalry between the different means of transport was a topical issue, see ibid., 7.12.1932. Sidqi's letter to the General Assembly meeting in 1933 discloses the strains in that perfect cordiality.

(49) It was at the same time part of the legislative drive underway to safeguard commercial morality. See Speech from the Throne in December, 1932.

(50) See editorial in EI (No.10) May, 1933.

The problems of the Federation and its constituents were only a part of other national problems that sometimes imposed conflicting, but equally legitimate, claims on the attention of the government. The promotion of local production was, itself, beset with mutually conflicting commitments between the different sections of production and within the single branch. The demands of balancing the budget in hard times occasionally brought these conflicts to a head. The reduction of the freight rates by the Egyptian State Railways and of import duties on certain primary and intermediary products were, for example, objects of consistent representations to the government. (51) But revenue in the railways was severely hit by the crisis, while the relatively handsome customs yields were the effective support to the Treasury. It was not surprising, in the circumstances, that Sidqi's responsibilities as Minister of Finance attenuated his protectionist zeal so that the tariff policies retained a strong fiscal character. It was his official responsibility, too, that dictated a wider recourse to public enterprise than he supported in principle, as a measure of economy and social expediency. The abolition of the octroi (a municipal duty imposed on the movement of goods) in April 1931 was accompanied by a decree raising the duties on tobacco from PT 20 to PT 100 and part of the proceeds went to local councils to compensate them for a loss of an important source of revenue. Business voiced its protests in vain, for Sidqi was, in fact, involved in an intricate process of balancing interests as much as one of balancing economies.

In the meantime, Sidqi set up the "general interest" (al-ṣāliḥ al-ʿāmi) as the standard by which interests could be reconciled. This standard at times inclined more towards one group than the other, and at other times, it condoned hard values. (52) For the first time, however, the interests of business, merchants, landowners and tenants tended to be considered on an

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(51) By January 1932, 30 reports had been submitted by the Federation to different departments. See also appeals in editorials of January 1931 and February 1932. During 1932 pressure for reducing ESR freight rates was echoed in Parliament by interested deputies like Mahmud el-Alfi, Mohamed Amin Mashali and Abdel-Meguid Mashwadi.

(52) See below p.218. Sometimes the budget stood for the "general interest" and the grievances of the landowners were dismissed for sentimentalism. See, for example, Sidqi on retention of cotton tax in Chamber in MMN, 5.7.1932.

equal footing. Its measure was the criticism, or the diminished enthusiasm, the Sidqi Administration eventually elicited from all quarters. To Sidqi plurality and diversity in the economy, as in the polity, were admissible and even desirable, while compromise constituted a fundamental principle of social association. It inspired that co-operative ethic which he deemed to be essential for promoting industry and commerce in Egypt. As far back as 1917, Sidqi had distinguished between two key concepts, al-infirād (individualism) and al-ishtirāk (cooperation/participation), and he attributed Egypt's problems to the prevalence of the former trait. He also believed that Egypt's belated arrival on the industrial scene transformed the task of modernising the economy into a joint responsibility - 'ib'mushtarak. In developing national resources generally, and in laying the foundations of industry and commerce, in particular, there was ample scope for Egyptians, foreigners and government alike to join hands in a common effort. (53) He had further conceived in organisation and management, (al-tartīb w'al-tadbīr) basic skills requisite for industry. Without them, the physical and natural elements meant little. (54) The general interest, itself, acquired its substance and relevance in the course of partnership and organisation. This ethos was embodied in the emerging pattern of contractual relationships between the government and private enterprise and it inspired the regulation of certain sectors of the economy.

The formalisation of the Cotton Exchange (1930-31), the Agreement with the Sucreries (February 1931) and the formation of the Crédit Agricole (June 1930/August 1931) were all aspects of institutionalising the responsibility of government towards the national economy. Other arrangements that followed confirmed the general pattern. (55) The Minet el-Bassal Bourse Statute provided the standard model for regulating mutual rights and obligations. Cotton dealings were placed under government control. The Government was represented on the Board of Exchange by one member,

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(53) TLTS, pp. 120-121; 94, 26.

(54) Ibid., pp. 72, 73.

(55) Among the earliest such Agreements was that with the Alex. Navigation Co. See note presented to Council of Ministers on 8.1.1931- found in Bourse Egyptienne 24.1.1931. Another subvention and contract followed with Misrair which began its operations in June, 1932.

a Commissaire, who was entitled to attend all meetings and to be present on the sub-committees. Although he could not take an active part in the deliberations, he possessed a veto right. At the same time, an arbitration clause was included for settling differences between the Government and the merchants.

A somewhat different situation is provided in the case of the Crédit Agricole. Here the Government contributed 50 per cent of the capital, with the remainder largely subscribed by private banks. (56) The new Bank was set up in order to principally advance short term loans for financing crop cultivation and harvest and supply select seeds and fertilisers on behalf of the Government. It was provided with certain administrative facilities and privileges, like the priority of lien in respect to advances, and guaranteed a minimum profit of 5 per cent in its operations. In return, the Government became an effective partner entitled to representation and control. The Director of the Bank, styled the "Administrateur Délégué", was appointed by the Council of Ministers, while two representatives sat on its four-member strong board (proportionate to its contribution in capital). The Bank was run as a Société Anonyme whose autonomy was circumscribed only by its commitments to the Government.

The terms of the Sugar régie provides yet another illustration. If, in the previous instance, the claims of a partnership were based on the founding initiative of the government, action here was taken in response to an urgent appeal from the largest industry in the country for protection against foreign dumping. An agreement was concluded that secured the industry a practical monopoly of the local market and regulated its terms. (57) In return for its privileged position, the Company undertook to be bound by certain obligations. Fixing the price of the sugar at both

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(56) See Royal Decree No. 50/1930. The Bank was launched with an initial capital of £E 1,000,000 with a limit of £E 2,000,000 set for Government contribution. This was partly to ensure that its dealings were restricted to its original purpose and that it did not compete with existing institutions. See terms and objectives, NCMPB (1931-1932) Copy in FO 371/15409.

(57) See memorandum by Minister of Finance of 15.12.1930. For study of the new regime for sugar see Dr. Abdel Hakim el Rifai in MIQ, Vol. 1 (No.4), June, 1931.



ends of production was left to the government, who was also given an auditing right and a voice in the allocation of profits. A Sugar Consultative Council was stipulated for, with representatives of the cane cultivators, the industry and the government, in order to determine prices and discuss all questions related to the production and marketing of sugar. (58)

In all three instances the Government proved an active agent in promoting the national economy. The proclamation of the principle of joint responsibility formalised and systematised intervention, expanded the scope of government action and consolidated its authority over the economy. The Agreements also recognised the plurality of interests and legitimised their conflict, but, at the same time, they provided the channels for compromise to the benefit of the national economy (or, the "general interest"). By institutionalising a form of equilibrium among the different interests, the source of potential conflict was reduced and an optimal allocation of resources was made possible. Furthermore, in these instances of government intervention, and in its assumption of a limited form of responsibility, traces of a mixed economy can be detected. The relationship between public authority and private enterprise was institutionalised so as to give a positive role to government in the administration and control of the economy, while the legitimacy acknowledged to private enterprise made it eligible for consultation and active consideration in the formulation of policies. Public money, too, was invested in economic enterprise in varying forms, such as subsidies and capital. The terms of the partnership here, however, clearly favoured private enterprise.

C. Rationalisation.<sup>(59)</sup>

The immediate impact of the organisational impulse was seen in the general trend to rationalise the social and economic structure. The

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(58) See Decree Law of 11.2.1931 instituting Sugar Consultative Council.

(59) On the trend to rationalise see article by Prof. Dubois Richard, "L'Organisation technique de l'Etat" in MIQ Vol. 1 (No. 1) 1931. This review, which appeared in 1930, provided a timely forum for some intellectual echoes of the period. See above. Ch. IV, note 24.

commercial infra-structure was the first to benefit. Studies had established a direct relationship between the prevailing disorganisation and poor commercial practice in certain sectors and low exports. (60) Export control bureaux were set up at Alexandria and Port Said and control was first introduced in 1931 on an optional and restricted basis for one year. Having proved effective and practicable, it was generalised and rendered obligatory. (61) Priority was given to rationalising commercial transactions in the staple crop, cotton and cotton seed. Minet el Bassal ... was duly transformed into an official exchange and government control was established to put an end to the chaos that had previously prevailed. (62) Similar action was soon taken against the Stock Exchange, although the general statute was only finally promulgated at the end of 1933, after the Mixed Courts had endorsed it. (63)

With the emphasis on diversification, the official boon given such cultures as fruits, vegetables and cereals was accompanied by an earnest attempt to organise their markets and to enhance efficiency as well as to improve the standards of commercial practice. The wholesale markets in Cairo, despite the quantity and value of the produce they handled, entirely lacked any public control, apart from some elementary form of sanitary supervision. (64) By centralising and unifying the exchange

(60) Egyptian eggs, for example, declined sharply on the British market between 1925 and 1931, falling from 86.2% of British total egg imports to a mere 10%. Following the experimental application of control they registered a record rise from 98,266 in 1930 to 125,256,000 in the next year. See explanatory memorandum on control of exports in STS September 1931. The law itself was based on a compromise between free trade and public interest.

(61) The decrees instituting compulsory control on eggs and onions were passed on 15th December 1932 and 8th March 1933. The extension of supervision and control was not always welcome. See Bourse Egyptienne, 28.2.1933

(62) The Alexandria General Produce Association, a private body of individuals come together by mutual consent, without legal status, used to administer all cotton business before then. It disappeared in November 1931, as the Bourse was legalised and a Government Commissaire presided over a Commission of exporters, bankers, producers and merchants. Relevant Ministerial Decrees were issued successively on 13.11.1930, 27.1.1931, 25.8.1931 and 1.11.1932.

(63) By Royal Decree of 31.12.1933.

(64) See memorandum on Wholesale Fruit and Vegetable Markets accompanying Law No. 115/1931 and Ministerial Decrees No. 96 and 97/1931.

process and subjecting it to a uniform statute, the control of supply and demand was effected, and a fairer price ascertained, ensuring thereby the interests of producers and consumers alike. (65) The inauguration of the crop exchange at Rod el-Farag a year later, on the 7th November, 1932, was a celebrated occasion in the business world. (66) Sidqi aptly marked it by delivering a "discours-programme" in which he outlined the achievements and ambitions of his government in the light of a detailed framework of its general policy. (67) Protectionism and rationalisation were vividly shown to be complementary aspects of the same policy.

The financial base of the economy was equally consolidated and expanded. The nucleus for a much needed agricultural credit system was laid on a regular and stable basis and assured of government backing. (68) Meanwhile, the efforts to stimulate local industry stumbled across the difficulty of industrial credit. New legislation providing for the mortgage of machinery for credit, extended the security base for industry and rendered it more flexible. (69) A further decree passed on 4th November, 1931, authorised the Minister of Finance to guarantee credits by Bank Misr up to £E 15,000 (raising the recently instituted £E 10,000 ceiling). Sums in excess of that amount were left for a decision of the Council of Ministers. This amendment was particularly introduced to encourage joint-stock companies and large scale enterprise. (70) But these were only interim measures pending the study of a scheme for an industrial bank modelled on the new agricultural bank. At the same time, active measures were taken to promote small industry, which was acknowledged as the corner-

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(65) See article by Dr. Hussein Aly Rifai, "Internal Egyptian Markets" in STS, November, 1932.

(66) See Ministerial Decree No. 70/1932.

(67) See text in Economic Documents section in STS, November, 1932. For commentary see editorial in L'EI No. 15, December 1932 and Sha'b, 8.11.1932.

(68) See above, p<sup>204</sup> and note (96) below.

(69) See Decree promulgated on 20.3.1931 governing pledges on commercial funds, plants, etc., which was inspired by Greek sources.

(70) See article by Mahmud Saleh el-Falaki "Industrial Credit in Egypt" in STS February, 1932 and by Dr. Hussein Rifai on "Industrial Credit" Ibid., May 1932.

stone for large industry and was, moreover, seen to represent "worthy social theories and values" the Regime was anxious to promote. (71) Technical guidance and credit were organised for craftsmen and technical graduates as an initial amount of £E 30,000 was set aside for the purpose. (72) Trade, too, received its share of attention as the government made subventions depend on their activity in establishing permanent exhibitions.

An effort to stimulate professionalism went together with the consolidation of credit structures. Up till then, Egyptian Chambers of Commerce were voluntary associations that tended to wither away through lack of control, poor finances and the absence of the necessary corporate spirit among its members. This inclined Sidqi to reverse his earlier tentative attitude towards the role of government on that score and opt for action. (73) Accordingly, a new law organising the Chambers appeared in 1933. (74) Its aims were to achieve "cooperation and cohesion among those employed in the trades and industry... to stimulate the growth of a strong and coherent commercial opinion" and to provide for reliable intermediary institutions that could supply government with "the knowledge and counsel it needs to draw up its policies in economic, commercial, financial and industrial questions." (75) The stipulation for professional representation on the consultative, executive and arbitration committees in the reorganised markets could also be seen in this perspective.

The mainspring of the rationalising impulse stemmed from the vitality of the central executive machinery responsible for promoting the business sectors of the economy. The Department of Trade and Industry,

(71) STS (editorial) November, 1934.

(72) See Memorandum by Ministry of Ma'āref of 25.11.1931 and Decree Law of 2.3.1932. Cf. Six-point programme for coordinating a practical system of education suggested in TLTS pp. 111-112.

(73) Ibid. p. 26.

(74) The decree was promulgated on 3rd August 1933. Successive decrees founding Chambers in Cairo, Port Said and Fayoum followed towards the end of the year. See Decree Laws Nos. 81, 82 and 97 for 1933.

(75) For Memorandum accompanying Bill of Chamber of Commerce submitted by Sidqi to the Council of Ministers on 21.1.1932. See STS February, 1933.

founded in early 1920 as a direct result of the recommendations of the 1916 Commission, was now further consolidated. Already by early 1930, it had undergone a wide measure of reorganisation, which led to the introduction of new sections, more than doubled its credits and increased its staff. (76) In February, 1931, a Director General was appointed to preside over it. Its growing stature was reflected in its mouthpiece, which changed from a quarterly to a monthly issue, marking the "inauguration of a new era in the economic revival of the country". (77) Despite the general drive for economy throughout the government departments, a supplementary credit in the 1932-1933 budget for a model tannery was justified by the eventually remunerative nature of the nascent projects which could hardly be counted as liabilities on the budget. (78) The section of agricultural industries was effectively developed to the advantage of the Balance of Trade while the system of model industries was activated. Apart from the tannery, a dyeing factory, a carpet factory, and an experimental mechanised textile station, created during 1931 and 1932, set the pace in this direction. Sidqi explained its purpose:-

"The aim of the Ministry of Finance is to erect model factories for instruction and guidance because it is up to individuals and (private) companies to found the original industries. By setting up its teinturerie... and glass factory... the Government wishes to encourage capitalists to establish industries of this nature. It is not for the Government to take risks and subscribe in spheres not properly its own... Yet, it does not hesitate to extend a hand wherever new industries it conceives to be viable and beneficial need it... it can extend direct support to industry without actually supplanting it." (79)

(76) An attempt was undertaken in 1929 to revive the Department on the lines of the 1917 recommendations. New sections launched included agricultural industries, industrial research, labour affairs, and chambers of commerce. Credits rose from £35,000 to £90,000. Ahram (supplement) 28.2.1931.

(77) STS May 1930. An improvement in quality of research and a growth in scope of readership is noted between 1930-1934. The organ, originally appearing in 249 pages, rose from 1761 pages in 1931 to 1950 pages and 2167 pages in 1932 and 1933 respectively. Italy and Japan provided the main models for study in its leaders during the period and to a lesser extent Russia, Turkey and Iran.

(78) See NCMPB (1933-34) p. 8. Copy encl. in FO 371/17012. Cf. Report of Finance Committee on the supplementary credit. MMN 2.1.1933. The drop in leather imports suggests more than the obvious decline in the volume of trade. See study on "Commerce Exterieur et Production Locale" in EI (no.14) November, 1933. Similar studies follow for 1934 & 1935.

(79) MMN 2.1.1933.

With the growing activity and importance of the Department under the Regime, interest in its organisation and role grew and the restrictions of its purpose to guidance, instruction and encouragement tended to be questioned. (80) Its transformation into a Ministry in 1934 was inevitable; it did not occur earlier only on account of the budgetary situation.

The rationalising trend seemed imminent in view of the methodical and systemic orientation under the Regime to current problems, the intensity of these problems and, above all, the policy objectives of the Regime. Statesmanship committed the government to provide the legislative, administrative, fiscal and general economic framework that ensured the pace and direction of economic activity. It was no more tolerant of anarchy in the national economy than it was towards political anarchy. The reinstatement of its authority in the field of production and exchange secured for the economic environment those elements of stability and continuity that were as essential for institutionalisation in the economy as they were in the polity.

#### D. Protectionism

The provisional measures taken towards the sugar and textile industries were integral to a strategy of stimulating local production, in the same way as the wheat policy was more than an expensive innovation or improvisation. In April, 1930, the 'Filature Nationale' launched an appeal to impress upon the authorities the urgency of its plight. (81) The Misr textiles complex at Mehalla el Kobra was only just being born in the same unpromising circumstances that threatened its older rival. (82) Yet here was an industry which early

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(80) Ibid. 18.5.1933. The dissenting view here was led by two Sha'ibists, Amin Amer and Abdel Aziz Nazmy.

(81) See L'EI, (No. 5) 1930. Compare Annual Report for 1930 with counterpart in 1935 where net profit for company was over 58,000 and modernisation of plant is recorded. By the end of 1934 an agreement with Misr Spinning Co. saw emerge a joint bureau for marketing textiles. See MGTQ (No.1) January 1936 for 1934 Annual Report. For a concise history of textile industry in Egypt see article in L'EI (No.2) February, 1930.

(82) The Misr Textile Company was officially inaugurated at Mehalla on 21st April, 1931. One week later reports were leaked of the government examining a project to encourage and protect textile industry. Sha'ib 29.4.1931. See also Ch. 1 for Sidqi's connections with the Filature Nationale. p.47

investigation had established as one in which Egypt enjoyed a relative advantage and which was, accordingly, singled out for encouraging as potentially viable. (83) In May 1931, negotiations with the two Companies terminated in a contract by which the Government promised to sell them a total of 350,000 kentars of raw cotton, over a period of three years, on favourable terms, on condition they continued to purchase the usual quota off the market. A subsidy of 200 mms. per kantar cotton used in their factories was also promised them, until their net profit attained the margin of 5 per cent of paid capital (the subvention was later reduced to 150 mms.). Expansion was the objective of the agreement and, apart from providing for favourable conditions, such growth was explicitly ensured by obliging the Companies to utilise the quantities made available to them to the full, and to modernise their equipment within a prescribed period. (84)

The Agreement provided the Government with a productive means of disposing of its heavy stocks, secured an embarrassed market a convenient outlet, partly relieved a stricken class of agriculturalists and, above all, ensured a threatened nascent industry a steady supply of its raw material on terms it would not have normally obtained.

That the purpose of the Agreement was not simply to give a boost to the textile industry but to benefit the national economy by ensuring its expansion, is perhaps more readily appreciated by a look at another aspect of the controversial agreement with the Sucreries. (85) The area under cane cultivation in Upper Egypt was 50,000 feddans and, by virtue of the Agreement and the subsequent ban on sugar imports, it was expected to rise eventually, by a further 15,000 feddans. (86) One of the first undertakings of the Sugar Company was to provide for the total supply of the local market and to modernise its equipment, so as to allow for the proportionate expansion of

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(83) TLTS, pp. 90 ff.

(84) Decree Law of 27.5.1931. See accompanying memorandum presented to the Council of Ministers on 5.5.1931.

(85) See above, p. 204

(86) See Memorandum presented to the Council of Ministers on 7.2.1931. Despite fall in local consumption during 1932-33, exports kept the area under cultivation undiminished. Revue d'Egypte Economique et Financière, 29.10.1933.

of sugar cane cultivation. (87) The general emphasis on growth was common to the Agreement with both industries, but the terms of securing the common objective varied. First, the sugar industry was an old, established one and could reasonably be expected to, at least, satisfy local demand in a manner neither expected nor demanded of a new-born one. In further promoting it, the Government had at stake the interests of sugar cane cultivation, as well as the principle of diversification. Moreover, the crop was an important source of revenue that benefited the Treasury as well as manufacturers and cultivators. These considerations were reflected in the prohibitive tariff on sugar imports which contrasted with its moderate counterpart imposed on textiles. (88)

Despite its marked moderation, the tariff policy under the Regime was sufficiently effective due to its flexibility. Duties on imports ranged between 12 per cent and 25 per cent and they were constantly subject to revision to cope with the fluctuations in world prices. (89) An example of this flexibility is provided in each of wheat and fruit tariff policies. The first was eventually put on a sliding-scale by which it automatically changed, in inverse proportion, to prevailing world prices, while the tariff on imported fruit was put on a seasonal basis to reconcile the interests of local citrus production with Levantine imports. (90) The promotion of the cultivation of both was part of the drive to diversify, but the relative position of each in

(87) For rise in production and modernised installations effected in 1931 and 1932, see account in the "Compte Rendu" of the Société Général des Sucreries presented to its General Assembly on 27.2.1933, extract in L'EI (No. 8) 1933.

(88) Sugar was the first to benefit from the tariff modifications in July, 1930 (Decree Law 24.7.1930). It was put on a specific basis instead of ad valorem. In May, 1932, a sharper rise from £E 9 to £E 12 was introduced to render the régie effective.

(89) A series of important Acts modifying the tariffs since the revised customs regime came into force in February 1930 (Law No. 2), included those issued on 24.7.1930, 20.12.1930, 16.2.1931, 31.2.1932, 13.9.1932 and 29.4.1933. A concise study of the significant changes introduced to the tariff policy under the Regime is found in STS October, 1933.

(90) Representations from Levantine interests hit by the fruit tariff were made repeatedly, especially during Sidqi's winter visit to the Levant. His reaction was typical of the motto, 'interest above sentiment', as he reminded Egypt's brotherly neighbours that interest was the basis of their relationship. Sha'b, 14.2.1932 and 11.3.1932.



the economy, here again, conditioned the difference in the tariff policy maintained towards it. Although the duties on fruits were decisive in promoting the emergent fruit cultivation, they were not intended to bar the local fruit market to imports. (91) In contrast, as a result of the tariff on wheat and flour, imports in both items witnessed a spectacular decline between 1930 and 1933, falling from 30,021 tons to 185 tons in the one and from 80,855 tons to 2,993 tons in the other. (92) Like sugar, wheat was an established winter crop, and its promotion effectively benefited agriculture, relieved a portion of afflicted landowners by securing them a reasonably remunerative crop and improved the Balance of Trade.

The tariff barrier was part of a general policy which included extending credit facilities, providing export incentives and rationalising the crop exchange. The consolidation of the milling industry and the formation of the Chamber of Millers in 1935 was among the direct results of the current wheat policy. (93) At the same time, the integrated effort in stimulating the cultivation of fruit was seen in the distribution of select breeds in the Delta and Western Desert, the engagement of a Spanish packaging expert in the Department of Trade to train Egyptians in the skills for export, the regulation of the fruit and vegetable market and the formation of a Fruit and Vegetable Company in which the Government was a founding partner. (94) The protective measures were happily more than isolated incursions or palliatives to relieve the immediate distress. They were integral to the strategic offensive under the Regime to institute the principle of diversification and to promote local production.

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(91) The area under fruit cultivation rose from 11,286 feddans in 1929-1930 to 33,000 feddans in 1932-1933. Govt. measures stimulated trend for diversification among landowners. See article by Dr. Hussein Rifai, "Egyptian Dried and Preserved Vegetables", in STS, October, 1933 pp. 1589-1608. Compare with another article by Jan Schatz, "Most important Agricultural Crops..." where different figures are given. Ibid., p. 211. Government assumed greater share in marketing production. See STS November 1932, pp. 1729-1732. For rise in fruit exports between 1930-1935 see MGTQ (No. 6), 1936.

(92) See tables in "Commerce Extérieur et Production Locale, 1933-1934" - EI (No.14) Nov. 1934.

(93) An account of the milling industry in Egypt is given in EI (No. 10) May, 1936.

(94) The Company was formed on 25th August 1932 with a capital of £E 10,000 - £E 15,000 effectively aided by the government. First news of project appeared in STS (Econ. bulletin) June, 1931. The Department of Trade undertook to study external markets and propaganda and set up the first fruit and vegetable marketing station at Benha. See Econ. Bulletin, Ibid., October, 1932.

### E. Relief Policies.

The summer of 1931 witnessed in Egypt the worsening conditions resulting from the Depression as cotton prices dropped by over 43 per cent since 1929 compared to the average fall of 26.9 per cent in other primary products. It was at about this time, too, that the new Constitution came into effect as Parliament convoked. With insurrection contained, and the disruption of elections over, an era of comparative stability was begun and statesmanship could be devoted to handling the deteriorating economy. Sidqi summed up the situation firmly to his advantage:-

"The Government considers that enough time has been spent in partisan wrangling (al-taṭṭāḥum al-hizbī) and it is now determined to consecrate its efforts to the affairs of the nation which has given it its confidence."(95)

A series of relief measures was inaugurated with the promulgation of a decree on 12th August, 1931, by which payment of Government agricultural loans and advances on seeds and fertilisers amounting to £E 2,000,000 due that year were postponed. The debt was divided in installments payable over a five year period, interest free. This was followed by the expeditious launching of operations of the new Crédit Agricole in time for the October 1931 cotton harvest. Supplemented by Government funds, it intervened on behalf of debtors to stay the course of foreclosures.(96) By the end of 1931 it had intervened in 874 cases pending before the Courts and spared 34,426 feddans the fate that attended them. Before the year was out, the Government concluded another Agreement with the Land Company (al-sharika al-'iqāriya) in November, to take on from where the Crédit Agricole's role proscribed it to act.(97) It stepped

(95) Ahram, 20.9.1931.

(96) This was an additional role the Bank undertook, on top of its original functions, and a further credit of £E 1,000,000 was advanced to it for the purpose. See correspondence between Sidqi and M. Shukri of 13.8.1931 and 16.8.1931 in STS, August 1931 (Documents). For objectives and terms see MMN 7.7.1931 (Annex). For critical assessment, see debate on supplementary credit in February, 1933. MMN, 21.2.1933 (& Annex.) Cf. note 56 above.

(97) By the end of 1932, the Land Company (presided over by Tal'at Harb) had bought 8,320 feddans for £E 551,580 and by the end of the following exercise it bought a further 17,780 feddans for £E 1,228,000. See Minister of Finance statement on the operations of the Company. MMN, 26.6.1934. The debate on the supplementary credit of £E 1,000,000 provisionally given to the Company at the beginning of its operations was the occasion for vehement criticism of the terms of the Agreement. See MMN, 19.4.1933 and references in interpellation debate of 5.6.1933.

in to buy land upon which foreclosure could not be halted and to temporarily administer it on behalf of the Government in anticipation of its eventual recovery by its original owners (see below). Another gap in the credit structure was filled by instituting a land mortgage bank to provide long term credit for the same class of small and medium holders (essentially 10-150 feddans) for whom the Cr dit Agricole's short-term credit services were originally intended. A gesture of solidarity with the stricken class of large landowners remained to be taken. Although relatively few, the severity of their plight and the fact that a majority of Deputies were among them and that, generally, they possessed some education, made them vocal. They were also the clients of established mortgage and credit foreign institutions whose own base was now equally threatened by the crisis.

During 1932, statesmanship was devoted to exploring avenues for balancing conflicting menaced interests, and the preliminary result appeared in the package deal concluded with the three major mortgage and credit institutions, The Cr dit Foncier Egyptien, the Cr dit Hypoth caire and the Land Bank. (98) Its substance was to consolidate the outstanding debts into a new loan and to extend payment over a period of 30-35 years (instead of the average 16 years), while a limited amortisation was made of the interests due from 8 per cent and 9 per cent to 7 and 6.5 per cent. The Banks abandoned their claims for 1932 and, in return, the Government issued Treasury Bonds to the value of 3.5 million pounds to pay out 2/3 of outstanding debts to the Banks. (99) It substituted itself, thereby, as creditor in place of the foreign institutions.

Emphasis on the economic aspect, generally, characterised the measures taken to relieve landowners. The stimulation of alternative crops to cotton supplemented private revenue, enabled landowners to meet their pending obligations and helped to restore a modicum of vitality to the slump-ridden

(98) For terms and history see NCMPB (1933-1934) pp. 16-19.

(99) The issue of ten-year 4½% interest Treasury bonds to the value of £E 2½ million, closed in February, 1933 - thrice over-subscribed. The Government favoured small investors (£E 100 - £E 500) among individual applicants, the majority of whom were Egyptians. Campbell to Simon, 7.3.1933 in FO 371/17012.

economy.(100) Export bounties, drawbacks on imports, subsidies to local produce, the extension of the service of the new Agricultural Bank to different crops and sectors of the agricultural population, were all among the measures taken to counter-check the deflatory trend, prop up prices and above all to maintain threatened land values.(101)

Land was the basis of national wealth and about 10 per cent of it was mortgaged to foreign lending institutions.(102) In the face of defaulting debtors, seizures advanced progressively and, however reluctant creditors were in effecting foreclosures, they would not forego their rights. Credit operations had almost come to a standstill owing to their equal unwillingness to commit funds in uncertain circumstances. Meanwhile, the ability of landowners to meet their obligations was rendered physically impossible as in many cases they were reported to be living off their capital.(103) With the meagre liquid reserves, there was little room for effective government manoeuvre on the wide scale needed. The purpose of the initial sum of one million pounds, put at the disposal of the Crédit Agricole in its supplementary relief role, was mainly to enable intervention on behalf of landowners so as to effect a compromise solution with creditors, or to pay a portion of the

(100) For bird's eye view of deflatory cycle see Annual Reports for 1931 and 1932 in FO 371/16124/17015, also NCMPB (1931-1932) p.7. For limited but instructive survey, see Introduction in RECE (July, 1931). The Financial Adviser, who held different views, qualified Sidqi's approach as more that of a psychologist. See Note by H.Jones on 7.8.1932. FO 371/16114

(101) A surplus of the bean crop, for example, exported at a cost of £E 14,000 brought in £E 250,000 in return and was quoted to typify the idea of economic expenditure under the Regime. See explanatory note accompanying 1932-1933 budget. Upper Egyptian interests warmly supported the supplementary credit. See MMN 2.5.1933.

(102) See Abdel Wahab's lecture in Victoria College on "The Economic Situation in Egypt" on 10th June, 1931 - i.e. out of an estimated total value of £E 500/600,000,000 about £E 35,000,000 was mortgaged.

(103) E.g. the Abu Husseins of Menufia, whose land, in one of the most fertile provinces, barely gave a crop yield of £E 9,000 while their amīrī (government) commitments alone stood at £E 12,000. See interpellation debate. MMN, 5.6.1922. See also RECE (July 1933), p.9.

interest due. The key to relief lay in providing debtors with the means by which they could help themselves. Where, however, no payment was possible and foreclosures were inevitable, the land was sold at ludicrous prices. It was here that the Agreement with the Land Company was instrumental in upholding the value of distrained land. (104) Its intervention in the market raised the value of land on forced sale even where it did not purchase it directly.

There were other dimensions to the economic perspective in the relief measures. The Agreements with the Credit institutions were less notable for their immediate effect on the debtors than for the endeavour they embodied to narrow the margin between the value at which the land was bought in the years of boom and their real values. At the same time, the payment of 2/3 of the outstanding arrears to the Banks, which came in fact as a generous boon to the embarrassed institutions, was regarded by its critics as an exorbitant price paid by the Government. Although the charge was not unjustified, the gesture could have been calculated. The injection of the unexpected sum into a strategic institution in the economy and its availability for circulation was part of Sidqi's strategy to bolster value. While the three interested institutions were foreign, their location and the scope of their operations rendered them a part of the fiscal structure of the national economy and their collapse could only further undermine the latter. Similarly, their foreclosure on land which they were not equipped to administer and whose disposal they were ready to effect, regardless of the price paid, was no more likely to benefit the economy. Furthermore, the Depression had hit morale together with material stability, and the Banks abstained from their operations to the detriment of their clients. The Agreements were a means of rehabilitating lost confidence in the financial establishments, inspiring hope in destitute landowners and restoring an element of vitality to a deflated economy. The psycho-economist went hand in hand with the nationalist as the implications of replacing foreign creditors in a national debt can hardly be overlooked.

The economic axis of the relief measures was a source of public grievance in another respect. The mortgage institutions which the government launched with public money and provided with administrative facilities to

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(104) According to official statistics provided by the finance committee, 9,387 feddans on sale for £E 445,450 (average £E 47.449 per feddan) landed on the Company for £E 679,330 (i.e. £E 72,362 per feddan). See MMN, 19.4.1933.

meet the long-term needs of small and medium owners was bitterly criticised in the Chamber for its interest rates. In view of its purpose, its clientele, and its origins, the 7-8 per cent rate it charged seemed exorbitant. Yet Sidqi defended his point, maintaining that foundations had to be solid and flexible in order to enable the emergent institutions to withstand competition in a commercial setting. The Government was unwilling to expose a pioneer experiment in national banking to set-backs; in time, when the bank had established itself, high rates could be reduced.<sup>(105)</sup> Characteristically, he had his eyes on the future. This detachment and apparent indifference to the social plight simply confirmed the frequent theme of 'interest above sentiment' which was not a popular expedient in the circumstances.

There were other considerations which prompted the relief measures and conditioned the form they assumed. The preservation of landownership was among the fundamental objectives of statesmanship. Sidqi saw the backbone of Egyptian society in that strata of middle-landowners who were badly hit by the crisis.<sup>106</sup> Owners of less than 30 feddans amounted to 99 per cent and they owned about 54 per cent of the total land.<sup>107</sup> Never quite secure in the absence of adequate institutions in the country-side to meet their needs, they often became the victims of moneylenders.<sup>108</sup> It was this class which the *Crédit Agricole* came to support. The record of its actual dealings tended to favour smallholders of 10 feddans or less.<sup>109</sup> The *Crédit*

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(105) See the debate on the *Crédit Hypothécaire* in the Chamber, *Ibid*, 22.6.1932

(106) The Consular Reports enclosed in 2nd June, 1932 despatch FO 371/16114 refer to the stringency among "middle and small landowners"; "middle class farmers (50-150 feddans)", "proprietors of middle and large estates". Elsewhere it is the large landowners who are reportedly the worst afflicted, (see Annual Report for 1932 FO 371/17015) and the least able to meet their commitments. See Report in assessing 'the worst hit elements' probably underlines the central assumption, namely, that it was a general affliction which hit the rural social classes on the whole.

(107) See Sidqi's memoranda on the *Crédit Hypothécaire* on 15.11.1931 and 16.3.1932. Again in Parliament, he defended the retention of the £E 50 tax ceiling to limit the scope of the bank's operations to smallholdings. *MMN* 22.6.1932.

(108) See Vivian Cornelius's Report on "Usury and Moneylending" of 22nd July 1931 (file 2414) in FO 371/15429. The *Credit Agricole* and the *Credit Hypothécaire* were explicitly launched to combat the practice as the explanatory memos in both point out.

(109) See Report on Bank activity in *STS*, May 1932. This comes out more clearly in later reports. The first address of the Director to the General Assembly on 30.4.1934 stressed this point.

Agricole was also originally conceived as a nucleus for a Bank of Cooperatives, (see art. 5 of its Statute). The development of the cooperative movement, which was necessary for strengthening the middle classes in the rural areas, had already set in with the 1927 legislation on cooperatives and now it was further promoted.(110) But large landowners equally had their claims on the attention of the Government. A margin of one fifth of the resources of the Agricultural Bank was duly retained for them. Moreover, the instructions in the correspondence exchanged in August 1931, between Sidqi and its Director, Mahmud Shukri, stipulated the need to stay the course of forced sales on their individual merit, while Sidqi intervened personally on behalf of non-partisans and even opponents. The gesture was not entirely disinterested. He realised that responsiveness on the part of the Government was necessary to secure the social fabric in the provinces and to maintain political stability.

The Agreement with the Land Company aptly illustrates the desire to reconcile social and political stability with nationalist objectives.(111) The menace to the social structure was confounded by a threat of political dimensions as the issue of forced sales was reportedly being bought by a company of foreigners who had specifically organised for the purpose.(112) and The sum advanced by the Government to the Land Company to buy up mortgaged land

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(110) Between 1929-1930 the number of cooperatives more than doubled. Members increased from 22,336 to 48,317 and the number of societies rose from 217 to 514. See study by Jan Schatz on the development of the cooperative movement in Egypt between 1925 and 1931 in STS January, 1933. The encouragement of the trend was a primary objective of government agricultural policy, MMN 7.7.1931 and Menzalawi on government measures, ibid., 16.5.1934.

(111) These terms are explicitly laid out in the memorandum prepared by Sidqi on 25.11.1931. The nationalist purpose was spelled out in the Chamber by Menzalawi speaking for the government. MMN, 5.6.1933. The Agreement was inspired by the Turkish law prohibiting foreign land ownership, with the difference emphasised as in Egypt, the purpose was to fight speculators and induce banks to hold their hands. Sha'b 19.11.1931 - Turkish law was a source of active inspiration for other nationalist propositions. See, e.g. Abdel Aziz Nazmy's references to Company Law, MMN 12.3.1934.

(112) This seems to have been first authoritatively reported in the report presented by the economic parliamentary committee to Sidqi on 7.9.1931. See also references in the Chamber, MMN 19.4.1933

administer it temporarily was the solution. The terms on which the land was to be resold throw light on the political criteria of the Regime. The immediate concern was to retain property in the hands of its original owners. Where this was impossible in the course of the five year period set for recovery, priority was given to his relatives, to members of his locality and, ultimately, to his compatriots. The consolidation of the sovereign base of the economy was thus as important, under the Regime, as the preservation of the social structure and of political stability.

The conception of the nature and the limits of government responsibility equally influenced the form and extent of relief policies. While the principle of moratorium on government loans and an interest free repayment in installments was stipulated in 1931, the Government further accepted the installments due, in kind, (barley) in the following year. In doing so, it resorted to a practice not seen for the previous fifty years. Beyond that, however, it possessed neither the means nor, more significantly, the will to relieve debtors of their responsibility. Effective relief, it emphasised, was being extended to those who showed an active disposition to meet a part of their commitments. Meanwhile, it preached the work ethic, the virtues of frugality and a return to the land, and it provided landowners with the means to rehabilitate their situation. At the same time, the limitation of the capital of the Crédit Agricole and the restriction of its scope and clientele were as much the result of the prevailing stringency and the desire to serve those sectors deprived of credit facilities, as that of an anxiety not to compete with (or offend) existing Banks. There was a legitimate scope of activity and, here as in industry, public intervention was only an ultimate resort to supplement, and not to supplant, private resources.(113) The principle of limited responsibility was consistent with the doctrine of partnership, and together they paved the way for political institutions and values statesmanship wished to promote.

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Protectionism provided a fresh momentum which transformed a period of stagnation and despondency into an era where new structures were consolidated and nascent trends developed. Industries on the verge of collapse were given

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(113) Cf. above p. 209.



a new lease of life while others were consolidated or begun.(114) The improving balance of trade under the Regime reflected more than a gross depreciation in the volume of trade as it registered an active substitution of imports by local production and a rise in certain exports. In 1931-32 the excise duty almost doubled its counterpart in the previous year and by the end of 1934 it amounted to £E 1,500,000 with the sum collected on local produce equalling twice that collected on imports.(115) An incipient change in the structure of imports similarly pointed in the direction of development, with a relative shift occurring to primary material and to intermediate products. This trend persisted beyond the immediate years of crisis as cotton revived and the volume of trade grew. Another area, the Bank Misr complex, conveys a confident picture of consolidation and augmentation which contrasted with the previous decade of faltering moves and uncertainty. A steady rise in industrial loans and net profits is registered, while the annual reports of its textile companies record an "undreamed of success", with revenue unexpectedly exceeding expenditure in the first year of the new cotton industry in Mehalla and with the budget of the Flax Company, which benefited from drawbacks under the Regime, achieving a surplus, for the first time since its formation. At the same time, the Misr Airworks, launched in 1932 with a government subvention, set the pace for a pattern of enterprise, later confirmed by the Misr Assurance Company in 1934. The pattern was one where Egyptian capital and administration participated in a majority with foreign capital and expertise, in contrast to the generally 'pure' Egyptian initiatives of the past. It presented a variation on the theme of partnership.

The relative success of Bank Misr was only a measure of the dawning prosperity of business and industry, of which the greater proportion was

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(114) See above p. 210 ff.

The local press teemed with isolated accounts of successful national enterprises launched. eg. Ahram, 14.2.1932 & Balagh, 8.11.1932. For progress of Bank Misr and its companies see Times (Supplement) 26.1.1937.

(115) STS, October 1932 (p.1568) and July, 1934 respectively. The trend continues in 1935. See MGTQ, (No.2) 1936. See also Abdel Wahab's talk on "Egypt's Balance of Trade" on 26th May, 1932 in STS. For comment on figures for 1932 quoted from the Report of Customs Dept. on Foreign Trade, see STS, July, 1933.

foreign. (116) The Depression brought into sharp contrast the hardship of the afflicted majority with the comparative well-being of the predominantly foreign minority, and the situation was compounded by the active policies of the Regime. The inequity of the prevailing system of taxation heightened as the immediate benefits of these policies accrued to the wealthy minority while the burden of direct taxation continued to fall on the classes least able to meet it. Conversely, Sidqi was committed to rectifying the lopsidedness in the economy at large, and the imbalance in its fiscal base commanded priority. It provided the occasion to advance another political objective. Even though the burden of these efforts often remained behind closed doors, between government departments and the lobbies of diplomacy, the persistent encroachment upon existing Capitulatory privileges was another landmark of the Sidqi Regime.

#### F. Fiscal Legislation

The recovery by Egypt of her sovereignty in matters of tariff legislation potentially undermined the existing Capitulations. To counter this effect, the new Tariff was introduced as a provisional measure enjoying formal British consent and subject to denunciation at any time by a year's notice. "If at any time the Egyptians were to introduce objectionable modifications in their tariff, HMG could denounce the Convention. By agreeing to the new régime provisionally for one year, HMG would be gaining time without in any way weakening their capitulatory position". (117) With its coming into effect, the likelihood of such objectionable proposals materialising increased. Sidqi did not disappoint them. For all his tact,

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(116) Out of the 21 companies that emerged between January and April 1930, only one was Egyptian in capital, formation and administration. The new tariff rendered Egypt a fertile ground for investment and increased the need for a national industrial bank. This was the theme of a series of lectures given by Abdel Halim Nosseir in early 1931. See Ahram, 11.5.1931. The census of the Statistics Depts. on Joint Stock Cos. for 1931 underlines local foreign preponderance and comparative solidarity of their enterprise. A summary is given in Ahram, 27.10.1933. Alternatively, a trend of growing enterprise among nationals is seen from the demands of the Department for industrial loans. In January-February 1932 out of seven such requests only one was a foreigner. STS, March, 1932.

(117) The Minute by the Judicial Adviser on 29.12.1929 dwells on the Capitulatory breaches involved. The conditions on which HMG accepted the application of the customs tariff are found in FO despatches of 30.5.1929, 31.12.1929 & 16.2.1930. See File 13 in FO 371/14624 and FO 407/210.

the practical conduct of the Egyptian Government soon gave grounds for apprehension. (118) In 1932, the excise laws were passed in Parliament authorising the Government to raise duties and modify tariffs at will without consulting the Chambers. The Government was vested with these exceptional fiscal powers for a period of one year (instead of the three it had originally requested) subject to renewal. (119) The nature of the excise laws and the manner in which they were promulgated, without consulting the Mixed Courts, aroused British anxiety. (120) While the British played for time, Sidqi astutely seized opportunities to raise the issue of the fiscal Capitulations.

A preliminary characterisation of his fiscal offensive may be summed up in the following points:-

- (1) It was essentially subtle and pervasive.
- (2) It was recurrent as it was intimately bound to the annual preparation of the budget.
- (3) It was integrally bound to the policy direction under the Regime. The expansion and diversification of the base of fiscal resources was part of a comprehensive drive to consolidate and rationalise the fiscal structure of the economy.
- (4) It was heightened to coincide with peripheral developments which provided the occasion for pressing forth with an intrinsic policy objective.
- (5) It was conducted with a deceptive complacency and a deliberate tactfulness which blunted its public effect.

The rational approach to fiscal policy and the institutionalisation of the distinction between the types of expenditure resulted in an incipient tradition of planning. A policy of retrenchment was the negative dimension to balancing the budget, but with the execution of a programme of public

(118) Cf. note 130. By the end of 1932, the Commercial Secretary was drafting a statement on the cumulative effect of various changes in the tariff, at the request of the Board of Trade. See Residency despatch of 17.12.1932 in FO 371/16124 and Memo enc. in BT despatch to FO on 25.4.1934.

(119) See MMN, 17.2.1932.

(120) Campbell to Simon, 20.7.1933 and 8.6.1933 in FO 371/17109.

works relegated to coming years, growth was intrinsic to the budgetary policy and the search for new sources of revenue was inevitable. (121) Contrary to current assumptions, this quest was more bound up to future anticipation than to immediate needs. While the pecuniary factor had a significant bearing in the circumstances, and while Sidqi himself implied it in his conduct progressively, it was not insurmountable. (122) He was able, with considerable dexterity, to balance the budget from available sources by manipulating the tariff (notably the match and tobacco duties) to the extent that, in a difficult year (1932-1933), he effected a surplus of over £E 2,000,000, much to his financial credit, but to his more immediate social censure. (123) The far-sighted perspective in which the quest for new resources was conducted can be more adequately appreciated by a look at his priorities in pressing with fiscal legislation.

The patente tax provides an apt example of a strategic tax which had more in view than its immediate anticipated pecuniary benefit. (124) This was a tax of Continental inspiration imposed on the trades, industry and the

(121) "... it is difficult, even impossible, to reverse our steps ... as this will imply a loss of a considerable number of advantages which have become indispensable for the progressive onward march of the country ..." Note from Sidqi to the Financial Adviser on 7.8.1932 in FO 371/16115. For Van Zeeland's findings, see below.

(122) See adjournment debate in MMN, 11.7.1932. See also statements to Reuter (Bourse Egyptienne, 24.5.1932) and, following the Mixed Courts verdict, on 21.1.1933 in the Ahram and the Times. For resurgence of tax diplomacy in Residency circles see despatch of 12.1.1933 and enclosures in FO 371/17011.

(123) Revenue was at £E 37,139,881 and expenditure at £E 35,946,856 apart from an unused balance of credits for £E 875,307 credited for the following year. See note on Final Budget for 1932-1933 in FO 371/17014. "The result as far as the stability of the budget is concerned is satisfactory, but it is hard to justify the extraction from the people in so difficult a year of £E 2,000,000 more than the government needed to pay its way." The surplus was eventually equally split between reinforcing the Reserve and relief measures.

(124) This was a tax inspired by Continental sources and has nothing to do with a patent duty. A copy of the draft law of 22 articles together with the explanatory note is enclosed in the 12.1.1933 despatch. It proposes a sliding scale tax of 10% to 25% of the value of the premises and doubles the rates for the companies, etc. The professions are taxed on a proportionate base and those for commerce and industry are estimated on a progressive scale. A critical review is found in Treasury Note (T.2044/5B/1932) and in FO despatch of 22.4.1933. See also critical note by Financial Adviser of 25.5.1932, furnished on Sidqi's request.

professions and assessed on the basis of the rental value of the premises. It was the nearest approach to an income tax practicable in the circumstances and Sidqi pressed forth with it to the exclusion of the other imminent taxes projected like the entertainment tax and the stamp duty which stood a greater chance of being accepted by the Powers on account of their "minor" scale. (125) He persistently solicited British approval and discreetly sounded foreign powers for their reaction, basing his argument on equity and reinforcing it by the incidence of the Depression. (126) French commercial interests outwardly maintained an attitude of demonstrable reasonableness on the grounds that, "if the Capitulations are to be maintained they must be elastic and that industry and commerce must be willing to pay a fair share of taxation". But when faced with the prospect of its realisation, the draft was typically found "inopportune" and "excessive". (127) In contrast, the British reaction was ambivalent as it did not wish to stand in the face of a reasonable fiscal reform and, at the same time, it wished to keep the Capitulatory regime unimpaired in order to enhance its bargaining power in negotiations. Eventually, however, the initial conciliatory disposition and the hesitation gave way to a determination to resist the proposals before the unfavourable response they evoked from interested British quarters the Foreign Office consulted.

Sidqi, however, did not despair. If the rental base was an unfair premise for taxing wealth, he readily consented to any alternative the British could suggest, provided that "the alternative would achieve a fairer distribution of the incidence of taxation aimed at by effecting an adjustment of the proportionate burden borne respectively by the owners of real property

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(125) The British distinguished between "minor" and "major" taxation on the basis of the scale and nature of a tax. See FO despatch of 16.12.1931 in FO 371/15417. The patente tax was considered to be the "thin end of the wedge" that could not be permitted. (FO Minutes in 12.1.1933 op cit.) Cf. with FO Minutes 2.1.1932 despatch in FO 371/16113.

(126) See exchanges between Sidqi and F. Watson on 24.11.1932 and with Loraine on 12.1.1933 (cf. note 122) His conversation of 10th March, 1932 with Loraine should be viewed in context of his later approaches. At the same time, Abdel Fattah Yahia was authorised to approach foreign powers, (especially the American and the French). See also Hafez Afifi in London, FO Minute on 16.6.1932 in FO 371/16109.

(127) French attitudes/interests in the Caisse de la Dette were also embarrassingly rigid. See J.A. Gallop to M. Peterson, 19.11.1931 in FO 371/15411. For views of French Minister see enc. in Residency despatch of 27.2.1933. FO 371 /17012.

and the non-landowning classes." (128) With the principle maintained, the revised draft resorted to graduation in taxing the trades by subjecting business to a sliding scale of taxation on the basis of their "bénéfices réalisables"(art.3). This was met acidly by the British Chamber of Commerce who saw in it a discriminatory wedge aimed at European businesses. On another stipulation it protested:-

"We consider that it is entirely unjust that Companies should be subjected to a higher rate than individuals and we can only surmise that the object of the provision is to make foreign capital pay a specially enhanced rate seeing that the majority of incorporated societies consist mainly of such capital." (129)

The urgency of the patente tax derived from its political appeal. Its manifest purpose of spreading the fiscal burden to classes hitherto exempt from direct taxation rendered it a radical innovation. In the same gesture it extended the sovereign power of legislation to a sector of the population claiming, in principle, the privilege of extra-territorial jurisdiction. By 1933, the growing tendency of the Egyptian Government to override the Capitulatory privilege called for separate representations. (130) While the proposed patente continued during 1932 to be the subject of Sidqi's private parleys, the impending confrontation was localised over another fiscal issue.

The subjection of the growing motor traffic to State regulation and control was dictated by the depreciating revenues of its conventional rival the Egyptian State Railways, and by the new responsibilities which the motor car entailed for the Government. Sidqi presided over a Motor Commission formed

(128) Loraine to Simon, 12.1.1933, FO 371/17011

(129) See enc. in Residency despatch of 17.3.1933. FO 371/17012.

(130) FO Minutes on 11.4.1933, ibid.

"Sidqi is inclined to override the assent of the Powers in an unprecedented manner". Minutes in 23.1.1932 despatch (file 132)FO 371/16113. This was particularly the case in the new tariff where representations against modifications were unsuccessful. See file 13 in FO 371/14626/14627. See also Minutes in Residency Archives, "Sidqi and the Capitulations", (12.11.1931) and "The Fiscal aspect of the Capitulatory Regime"(3.12.1931) in FO 141/769 (file 443) cf "The agitation regarding the existing fiscal regime is... largely the result of an assiduous campaign initiated by Ismail Pasha Sidqi", (Sir Bertram Hornsby, 16.5.1929). See above Ch.I- note 80.

in December 1931 to lay down a fiscal and administrative regime for motor vehicles, but its application to foreign subjects involved Capitulatory breaches. In the face of repeated representations, the Government agreed to suspend the restrictions without, however, abolishing the machinery under which they were practised.(131) Convinced of the legality of its case, it continued to elaborate its motor tax legislation.(132) Although Sidqi was personally anxious to speed up this legislation, he strove to avoid a head-long clash with the Residency. The institution of a special commission to enquire into the question of motor transport, upon his return from Europe in 1932, was an active gesture to placate the tensions which were aggravated by the tactlessness of his colleagues during his absence.(133)

The crisis which arose over the payment of the Public Debt coupons provided an opportunity to press forth with the tax legislation pending. With the defection of sterling from the gold standard in September 1931, bondholders expected the Egyptian Government to make payments at gold parity and, thereby, aroused the deepest instincts of injustice among public and official opinion throughout the country.(134) The Government challenged an adverse decision by the Mixed Courts and carried the issue over to the diplomatic field in a two-pronged offensive. At one point it sought to manoeuvre the Powers into a situation where a unilateral renunciation of the Court's decision appeared justified. Public opinion unanimously backed

(131) Notice on 9.2.1933 suspending application of provisions of Council of Ministers' Decision of 29.2.1932. See protest note to Egyptian Government of December, 1932 and reply enc. in FO 371/17003. (p. 13)

(132) See Residency despatches of 9.6.1933 and 3.8.1933 and earlier FO Minute in 4.1.1933, ibid. On Sidqi's personal concern in getting the legislation through, see Residency Archives. FO 141/769.

(133) See Campbell to Simon, 8.10.1932 (Confid.)

(134) See correspondence between Sir Edward Cook and Sir F.W. Leith Ross of 24.2.1933 enc. in FO 371/17011. See also Council of Ministers' Note (prepared by Sidqi in convalescence) setting forth view of government on 13.3.1933. At the same time resolutions were passed by the political parties at the beginning of February and by syndical bodies (doctors, officials,) refusing payment in gold. See denunciation in Chamber of Deputies, 23.1.1933. Bill denouncing Mixed Courts was presented during the session in both Chambers (see Annex. in MMN, 6.6.1933) and in MMS, 4.1.1934. "For once in the recent history of this country, all Egyptian parties are united on a point of vital interest to every Egyptian." Loraine to Simon, 18.2.1933 - FO 371/17012.

this course. The less popular expedient at which Sidqi hedged was to use the issue as a bargaining counter to secure the Government a free hand in its fiscal legislation. He led the diplomatic initiative himself and sent Badawi Pasha, the chief Legal Adviser, to Paris and Rome to follow up the case from the "judicial aspect". His statements in public invoked the two issues simultaneously, while his private exchanges in Residency circles saw this synchronisation increase pressure for passing the patente tax. In practice, the budget for 1932-1933 was drawn up without making provisions for the gold payment. (135) The British feared that as a result of the procrastination and time-gaining tactics of the Egyptian Government a practical infringement would occur. But Sidqi was resolved to uphold national rights without clashing with the Powers. In a Cabinet meeting he reminded his colleagues of the priority Egypt placed on its financial reputation and expressed the substance of his preoccupations.

"Egypt will take into due consideration every legitimate contention of its creditors, but it asks for no more than that it should not be thwarted in its ambition to keep abreast with progress and development." (136)

Meanwhile, the provisional Anglo-Egyptian Agreement regulating Egyptian currency was due for revision at the end of December 1932. Sidqi perceived in it another opportunity to advance his policy objectives. A neutral foreign expert, M. van Zeeland (to whom the British somewhat grudgingly consented) was invited to advise the Egyptian Government on the most efficient method to re-organise its monetary structure. (137) The mission entailed comprehensive investigation into the financial situation and its findings reinforced the objectives of the Regime. For Egypt to weather through the international financial stringency, budgetary equilibrium was maintained to be imperative. While economy and a reduction of taxation in real values were both recommended to secure the necessary equilibrium, fresh taxation more

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(135) This was an instance of the de-facto approach conceived under the Regime to by-pass the restrictions of the Capitulations.

(136) MMN, 23.5.1932.

(137) Originally the mission was invited to advise the Government on the liability to pay the public debt coupon in gold. Egypt's charges were estimated to increase by 40% as a result of the gold payment, i.e. at least £E 2,000,000 was required to pay the debt. See MMS, 24.1.1933.



evenly distributed was found to be essential.(138) As a sequence to the mission, Sidqi headed a committee which included the Under-Secretary of State, Abdel Wahab Pasha, the Governor of the National Bank and the Governor of the Bank of England, to study its recommendations. Foremost among these was the establishment of a Central Bank of Issue. In the meantime, in June 1932, the Government intervened in the gold market and by the end of the year it had effected purchases for the value of £E 7,000,000.(139) One of the results of this action was to render the Government in a position to sell the equivalent value of British Treasury Bonds used as cover for £E banknotes. In reinforcing the Reserve Fund, the Government had, in the same gesture, put the Egyptian pound on a more solid and independent base. Thus the foundations of an autonomous monetary base substantiated the efforts underway to protect and strengthen a threatened monetary structure.

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The balancing principle to which statesmanship adhered in its economic policies was a double-edged weapon which alienated landowners without securing an alternative reliable support from others. Sidqi's appeal to the business community to be more realistic towards their outdated privileges was met with ambivalence. "If the Government secured aid and protection for the industrialists," his argument ran, "it expected from them in return a precise understanding of the new necessities of the country". (140) In

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(138) See Loraine to Oliphant, 13.1.1932 (Private and V. Confid.) in FO 371/16113. See also despatch of 11.12.1931. in FO 371/15411. M. Paul van Zeeland, however, was optimistic for "L'Egypte est entre des mains surs et énergiques," and it was under a statesmanship of prudence and foresight as well. See interview in La Bourse Egyptienne, 13.2.1932.

(139) See Ministry of Finance, Note on Proposed Budget, 1933-1934, p.23. The intervention on the gold market was a measure both to consolidate banknote cover and to control smuggling. See Sidqi's announcement of 18.2.1932. This followed rumours of vast gold exports at end of 1931, (which particularly worried Sidqi at the time as his son, Dr. Amin, recalls) and the decision followed investigations the government launched. See R. Turner's despatch of 5.2.1932 (enc.) in FO 371/16113. For purchase of French and Belgian securities see despatch of 3.2.1933 in FO 371/17011.

(140) See his address in the annual meeting of the EFI in April, 1938. By then the Treaty of Montreux had been signed and Egypt could launch its income tax, which Sidqi elaborated in his next term as Minister of Finance, although it came into effect under his successor, Ahmad Maher. For ambivalent reactions, see ex. of I. Meyer, Temps correspondent protesting at the "grignotement" of the Capitulations. Minute by Oriental Sec. of 10.1.1933 in FO 141/769.

rectifying and reinforcing the national economy, everyone would benefit, bondholders included. (141) To the British, while Sidqi's budgetary husbanding was handsomely acknowledged, his protectionist policies were pronounced to be "regrettable". (142) Sometimes, as in the case of the shipping subsidy, they were viewed with positive alarm. (143) Their more general effect, however, was to launch the country into an era with a distinctly utilitarian fervour.

A shift of diplomacy to the economic plane occurred, as the quest for economic independence inspired the drive to diversify economic relations and, at the same time, encouraged rival European Powers to develop their commercial relations with Egypt. The development of Anglo-Egyptian relations, themselves, on a more commercial footing, set the pace. (144) The visit of the Balfour Trade Mission, in February/March 1931, was followed by the formation of an Anglo-Egyptian Finance Corporation. (145) Egypt's relative standing in the eyes of the Board of Trade grew, while an interesting pattern can be detected as new British interests connected with emerging Egyptian enterprises, clashed with vested British interests opposed to developments in progress. (146) This trend was precipitated by the growing responsibility which

(141) La Bourse Egyptienne, 24.5.1932.

(142) FO Minutes in Residency despatch of 15.1.1931 - file 162 in FO 371/15417

(143) In reply to Mr. Hoare's representations, Sidqi told him that "the moral advantages" of the Egyptian flag hoisted on the High Seas was worth some "pecuniary loss". See despatch of 29.1.1931 - ibid. The spectacle of Egypt, a maritime state, without a fleet evoked special bitterness. See TITS, p. 22.

(144) See Lampson to Simon, 7.1.1935 (Confid.) and 17.5.1934 (Confid.); see also FO communication to Board of Trade on 28.9.1934 and Cabinet meeting of 25.9.1934, considering inter alia, priority to be given to economic relations in Anglo-Egyptian diplomacy. By the end of 1934, a Treaty settlement had, for all practical purposes, "receded into an indefinite future", (Peterson to Simon, 27.10.1934/Secret); while Lampson advanced his theory of "promoting a 'practical and direct' community of interests".

(145) For Confidential Report of UK Trade Mission see DOT enc. in 17.4.1931 despatch in FO 371/15398 and Crowe to Oliphant, 15.8.1931 in FO 371/15399. The British Financial Consortium was one of these recommendations. See DOT files 27260 and 25740/1931 in FO 371/15426.

(146) See statement of policy in DOT communication to Commercial Secretary on 24.2.1933 (enc.) in FO 371/17020. For conflicting British interests, see DOT despatch of 17.1.1931 (file 162 above); 17.2.1931 & 14.3.1931 (file 357)- See also memorandum by DOT on 31.12.1932 in FO 371/17003.

the Government assumed for promoting the economy, and by its active negotiations of partnerships and transactions with foreign institutions, as well as by the extension of its authority over the economy in general. The government was transformed into an interested agent with a vital stake in the evolving economic structure and, in this capacity, it commanded the attention of organised and official concerns abroad.(147)

In the more immediate context of the enquiry, the economic policies of the Regime, that originally aimed at promoting stability and political institutionalisation, produced the reverse effect. Rival business factions backed rival political factions and undermined the cohesion of the executive. (148) On another level of the political battlefield, business politics provided ammunition with which to slander opponents and impugn the integrity of the Administration.(149) Sidqi's defence of local production was often attributed to meaner motives and turned against him and the Regime together.(150)

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(147) e.g. the rivalry between Imperial Chemical Industries and a German firm over the hydro-electric dam at Aswan. See enc.in 27 .9.1933 in FO 371/17003 and Minutes of 27.11.1933. In his memo, on the formation of an Anglo-Egyptian Finance Corporation, the Commercial Secretary maintains its necessity to offset waning British influence in the face of successful Continental efforts. 29.5.1931 (V. Confid.) op cit.( FO 371/15426)

(148) See Ch. IV. pp. 172,173.

(149) Among the first such 'scandals' was the award of the Aswan Dam contract to Topham, Jones and Railton against its rival Ms. Lindsay. See letter of Minister of Public Works in Egyptian Gazette, 2.12.1930. The cause celebre pending before the Courts at the end of 1933 had originated in charges brought against the Ministers of Public Works and Agriculture, Fahmy Karim and Menzalawi by the Siyāsa editors. The latter won the day and the Ministers resigned. Apart from the controversy over the Cairo Bus Concession (see file 429 in FO 371/16123 ) another prominent issue involved the Alex Ramleh Concession (see file 546 in FO 371/15423). For business politics see file 254 in FO 141/759. For Press polemics over scandals and Government contracts, see representative samples in press memoranda of November, 1933 and March 1934 in files 11 & 13 respectively. FO 371/17003 /17982.

(150) His previous connections with the Komombo Sugar Complex and with Egyptian cement concerns, drew the attention of his critics to his personal stake in their advance, e.g. he was rumoured to have lined his pocket with £E 100,000 from the deal with the Sucreries. See Grafftey-Smith's diary on a tour to Upper Egypt, 2.4.1931., in FO 371/15404. The classic example is perhaps the Alex. Corniche Scandal, which was the subject of vicious political warfare in the Press and in Parliament in 1934, (esp. April and May). See MMN 26.4.1934, 1.5.1934 and 21.5.1934. Sidqi took al-Jihād to court for libel in early April. Also see Ahram, 25.5.1934. See conversation with Heathcote-Smith, enc. in Residency despatch of 28.4.1934 in FO 371/17977.

One of the foremost obstacles to institutionalising emergent interests within existing political structures lay in the intrinsic weaknesses of these interests. Local business circles exploited nationalist and personal themes as they vied with each other to advance their private concerns. An impaired corporative ethic impeded their social cohesion and reflected adversely on the course of political institutionalisation. Above all, the predominance of the foreign element introduced an external factor to the situation which undermined both the national economy and the parliamentary regime. The autonomous social and economic base which parliamentary institutions assume was absent in the Egyptian setting. Local business interests could hardly emerge as a solid bloc to promote their cause through Parliament. The Capitulations complicated the issue as they emphasised the nationalist question and weakened the case for any partnership between Egyptians and foreigners. (151) Moreover, compelled through necessity and a combination of realism and self-interest to associate with their foreign counterparts, Egyptians developed ambiguous attitudes to their own position which left them politically weak and on the defensive. Conversely, in seeking to promote the national economy, statesmanship was incriminated in dubious pursuits and received for its endeavours censure instead of commendation. To the extent that protectionism profited local industry, it incurred Sidqi the wrath of the nationalist movement and of the afflicted landowners whose social grievances were duly translated into political issues.

The connection between the economic policies of the Regime and its political objectives was, ultimately, confirmed. National sovereignty on one plane, was inextricably bound up with Egyptian claims in the Sudan and the political aspect of certain policy pursuits, like the Gebel Aulia

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(151) See above. p.203.

The eventual resolution of the Capitulations strengthened the case for the doctrine of partnership. See Sidqi's speech on "La politique industrielle d'après guerre de L'Egypte" at the Royal Club of Commerce on 12.4.1945. The imperative of collaboration which he spelled out on this occasion, was summed up in another talk given a few days later at the Rotary Club, in Alexandria, thus:- "...l'intensification de cette collaboration harmonieuse, appuyée sur la science et la technique qui sont le bien commun de l'humanité..."

project, can hardly be overlooked. On another plane, the consolidation of the national economy was generally devised to promote political independence. The particular steps taken to enhance the national infrastructure and to advance social and fiscal legislation constituted the brickwork in the edifice of Independence.

## CONCLUSION

Sidqi's foremost concern was to lay foundations for compatible political, economic and social institutions in order to strengthen the basis of a sovereign and independent Egypt. His awareness that such a task was complex and indivisible conditioned his approach and endowed it with an element of realism. Thus, while he saw how closely related the internal and external aspects of Egyptian sovereignty were, he realised that the consolidation of this sovereignty was essentially an internal question. To him independence was only the beginning of a long hard road; its measure lay in Egypt's ability to live up to its aspirations. The consolidation of the national economy, finances and administration, and the creation of effective representative institutions which could plan, direct and protect national interests constituted the substance of this measure. This institutional urge on Sidqi's part reflected his quest for a symmetrical type of growth and reinforced his basic conviction that progress implied a steady and orderly process of evolution.

There was more to Sidqi's statesmanship however, than a mature sense of awareness of political realities. He was, above all, a man of action as well as of practical common sense. He realised that a problem was not resolved by suppressing it and that its solution lay in the search for alternatives. The choice between alternatives in itself was governed by other considerations. In his words,

" The difficulty does not lie in the choice of remedies, but in reconciling the various means with their side-effects. In treating one problem we do not wish to land ourselves in another. "

The abrogation of one constitution was thus accompanied by the promulgation of another, the suppression of the Wafd was attended by the creation of the Sha'b and the encouragement of other associations; the denigration of one system of values and beliefs was paralleled by the propagation of an alternative system. He had no illusions about the nature of the task he assumed. In order to build he had to destroy, to ensure healthy growth he had to rectify and, to cure the disease, he had to go to its roots. His real challenge did not lie in his ability to suppress existing structures and impose new one, but, rather, in the initiative he took

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\* Address to an audience of Deputies and Senators on 2nd November, 1932.

to consolidate the alternatives he had to offer. One aspect of this initiative was his bid for public consent and his attempt to cultivate a reinforcing ethos of reform and action, reason and moderation. Another aspect lay in the economic policies he launched and in the measures he took with a view to developing and strengthening the middle classes in Egyptian society. Throughout, Sidqi realised that institutions were more than formal structures and that their growth demanded both a suitable climate of opinion and a conducive social and economic base. It was this dual thrust which underlay and influenced his architectonic statesmanship.

In his search for a solution to the political impasse of the 'twenties Sidqi turned towards the economy. Perceiving the connection between the economic, social and political structures in society, he sought a remedy to the excesses which constrained parliamentary life in rectifying the economy and stimulating a measure of social differentiation. In his view, the predominantly monolithic social structure of agricultural Egypt encouraged the perpetuation of an autocratic form of government, whereas pluralism seemed more conducive to a parliamentary system. The practical route to a steady pace of political development ultimately lay in promoting the economy. Sidqi's conception of the value of the economic weapon for promoting political ends was not new. Originally he had conceived of it as a means for reinforcing Egypt's independence; now he resorted to it as a device to promote parliamentary institutions as well.

Sidqi's conception of the relationship between political and economic problems conditioned his outlook to their solution in other ways. He realised that social change required time and that institutions needed an 'incubation' period in which to take root and grow. So he resorted to a tutelary device. The formula he adopted here took into consideration this need for a transitional period in which parliamentary institutions could be fostered, economic diversification instituted and a measure of industrialisation launched. Trusteeship and protectionism each ensured that their respective wards were protected from undermining influences in their 'infancy' and were safely nurtured into maturity. To this extent they constituted two facets of the same interim policy. In view of his awareness of the realities independence entailed, it was perhaps no surprise for Sidqi both to have perceived the dynamic inter-relationship between the various problems Egypt faced and, to have assumed that a practical affinity characterised any approach to their resolution.

In practice however, Sidqi's achievements did not measure up to the level of his endeavour. In the short term he was able to contain insurrection, provide a measure of political stability at a critical moment and neutralise an immediate threat to the national economy. Altogether, he outlived any of his predecessors as Prime Minister and gave Egypt the longest period of stable government in the inter-War years and the longest parliament it had known. Under his government, Egypt enjoyed a relatively wider autonomy and saw its economic infra-structure consolidated. His statesmanship was instrumental in both, as in the one it confirmed and strengthened a provisional stance of British policy and, in the other, it actively benefited from the economic depression. Likewise, he demonstrated considerable acumen in steering the political institutions which he had launched. In the long run however, his political regime did not take root and his desire to lay those foundations which would continue into the future did, not materialise.

This failure to institutionalise may be attributed to a number of factors, some of which lay in the situation itself at that moment, while others were of a more general character. Sidqi sought to lay the bases of parliamentary government in the middle of a general crisis which militated against such an attempt. The growing power of the Administration under the Regime was a corollary both of the repercussions of the Depression and of the conduct of the power struggle. More generally, the concentration of power at the time was a function of the political and economic crisis. Egypt was not alone in this trend. In the international setting, the critical situation on the eve of the 'thirties fostered a counter-parliamentary tendency which entailed "unparalleled departures" even in England, the home of parliamentary government.\* In Egypt the historical situation was complicated by the country's status as a polity in transition where the effectiveness of the executive was necessary in order to cope with the immediate difficulties at hand as well as with those inherent in a developmental situation. Such conditions rendered it difficult for the bid for stability implied in Sidqi's institutional quest to succeed.

Sidqi's attempt to adapt the parliamentary form of government to the Egyptian setting was ill-timed and clashed with the uncongenial circumstances of the day in other ways. Here indeed, Hamlet's lamentation about the time being "out of joint" might echo Sidqi's misfortune. He came to

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\* See for example the debate on the emergency powers granted to the President of the Board of Trade on 17.11.1931. H.C. (vol.259) p.691 ff.



institute a middle ground variety of politics the watchwords of which were moderation and rationalism, at a time when the ground for it was practically eroded. Towards the end of the twenties, Egypt was at the juncture of a series of social, economic, cultural and political crises which, together, encouraged a drift towards radicalism. By the 'thirties it was questionable whether an attempt to create institutions could succeed given the weakness of its social backbone. The middle classes, never very strong were now further demoralised by the Depression. Nor was the cultural climate propitious, as an incipient crisis in national identity seems to have provoked a reversion away from liberal ideals. Among politicians and statesmen, the advocates of moderation and rationalism hitherto a supine force, were on the wane. The death, in 1933, of the leading representative of the moderate faction in its quarrel with the Zaghlulists, Adly Pasha, (himself an image of that supinity) was symbolic of the end of a generation and of an era.\* Ironically, the Sidqi Regime precipitated instead the polarisation of issues and stances which was already in progress during that period.

The manner of the inception of the political institutions under the Regime was possibly a more cogent factor which impeded their consolidation. The new institutions were born out of the pinnacle of administrative power and the circumstances in which the Constitution itself was launched constituted its weakest point. Once again the critical situation seems to have brought the coercive dimension to the fore and, in retrospect, it would seem to have been the height of folly for Sidqi to have attempted to impose an order which postulated consent. Nor was he blind to such folly. His bid for leadership was launched to counteract such an effect and to switch the emphasis in his regime from coercion to volition and from imposition to consensus. Here, however, he laboured at a disadvantage.

If Sidqi steered the fortunes of the State at a critical moment with demonstrable competence, it was indicative of his qualities as a statesman but not as a leader. Sidqi was a frustrated leader having made a bid for public consent and failed. In this bid he had striven to depersonalise power and to modify popular conceptions of it in a manner which collided with the Egyptian national temperament. The latter, essentially emotive, personal and individualist, rejected an alien quest and Sidqi found himself engaged in an uncongenial exercise which further alienated the public from him. Where creativity, rationality and temperance had enhanced his

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\* See biography in O.M. Vol. 13, November, 1933. pp. 590-591.

statesmanship, these very qualities undermined his prospects of being proclaimed leader in the Egyptian setting. At the same time he had neither of the virtues of representativeness which would bind people to him in a gesture of recognition, nor of that charisma which could command popular affections. The result was that the leadership vacuum persisted.

This gulf between Sidqi as a statesman and as a leader undermined his architectonic endeavour and defeated his effort to lay foundations for durable political institutions. Its origins lay in his formative years; the sequel to the non-communicability syndrome was found in its consequences for his regime. The 1930 Regime showed how the skills required for statecraft needed to be complemented by a willing and committed following, sufficiently influential and competent to ensure continuity and make institution-building possible. Unless statesmanship and leadership are integrated political engineering falters.

The Sidqi Regime itself epitomises the predicament of the attempt to found institutions in the first decades of this century. It came as a reaction to the falterings of the preceding decade and, rather than blaming it for the failure of the parliamentary experiment in Egypt, it would be more apt to view it merely as another episode in this failure. This episode however, possessed a particular significance as it isolated more sharply some of the inherent difficulties for success. The negative implications of the protrusion of the Palace, in particular King Fuad, and the rampant individualism of Egyptian politicians were both emphasised in discussing the trend away from institutions. Other obstacles which emerged from the study suggest wider applications, which could be relevant to a colonial or a pseudo-colonial situation.

The Regime demonstrated how the absence of a basic political autonomy created a 'leak' in the political system and deprived it of the necessary initiative to maintain its own momentum. The interchangeability of the two principal issues in the 'twenties, the Treaty and the Constitution, had given a formalistic turn to Egyptian politics which was aggravated under the Sidqi Regime. Instead of the sovereign and the people constituting the principal contestants for power in a self-contained setting, an alien element with an ambiguous but integral role was introduced into it. This destroyed the fundamental premise for the operation of parliamentary politics. To confirm the point still further, no positive action

was possible nor was any change conceivable to the political players who had outmanoeuvred themselves from the legal system, without the effective intervention of the Residency to bring it about. Here British neutrality merely accentuated objective realities and pointed to the extraneous obstacles to founding viable political institutions.

Another such impediment which undermined the parliamentary experiment was suggested towards the end of the study. If it is accepted that historically the growth of parliamentary government in Europe was partly a function of the developing commercial and industrial middle classes there, then it would be reasonable to assume, as Sidqi did, that the social and economic structures were equally important considerations in laying the foundations of parliamentary government in Egypt. However, here again, the presence of a strong foreign enclave which comprised the backbone of, the business and manufacturing community and was vested with extra-territorial privileges merely complicated the situation. It obstructed the development of a cohesive and coherent Egyptian bourgeoisie and fed nationalist strains to the disadvantage both of parliamentary politics and of the kind of social and economic setting which would support it. From the outset, these factors converged with the absence of political autonomy to undermine the conditions for parliamentary government in Egypt. Under Sidqi, the policies and priorities of the Regime brought these external obstacles to the fore.

The radicalisation of Egyptian politics to the right was one of the characteristic developments of the inter-War years. It would be interesting to assess the Regime in the light of this development and to consider in retrospect, its possible implications for it. First, however, a sequel to the preliminary classification of regimes suggested in the Introduction seems in order. As the enquiry itself has shown, the Sidqi Regime emerged as a reaction to its Wafdist predecessor and, to all intents and purposes, it constituted its 'antithesis'. If the two currents of the nationalist movement in the 'twenties are juxtaposed, the Wafd could be seen to have represented the romantics who were traditionally rooted, and to a certain extent, they constituted a variant of the Nationalists ( the Watanist Party) The Liberals, on the other hand, represented the rationalists and they

were an extension of the pre-War Umma Party. Seen in this context, the Wafdist regime which emerged in January 1930 was the culmination of the secular romantics whereas the Sidqi regime which restricted the form of liberal institutions in an effort to protect them, was the culmination of the rationalist tradition. In this sense both regimes failed.

Meanwhile, at the turn of the 'thirties, there was a resurgence of Watanist trends, in which process the Sidqi regime seems to have been instrumental. A Sha'ibist deputy once contended that if Sidqi Pasha's sole merit lay in destroying the Wafdist claim to an exclusive monopoly of nationalism and in restoring a legitimacy and an equality to other political groups and views, then that in itself was a historical mission.\* In effect, the political levelling afforded the Watanists an opportunity to revive after the post-War lapse when they had fallen into the background and left the field for their counterparts who were more attuned to a secular decade. The trend they represented however, remained dormant, not dead, and it was easy for them to reassert it in the more confused era that followed. They did so, not through their party organisation, which was morbid, but, essentially through raising their voice loud and clear. In his wish to establish his claims to the constitutionalist spirit, Sidqi went to lengths to extend his tolerance to the Watanist Party which officially constituted the Opposition in his Chamber. Hafez Ramadan, their leader, was invited by Sidqi to address Deputies from its rostrum in its earliest sessions. Abdul Hamid Sa'ïd, who was a leading spirit in the YMMA, was an active parliamentarian who notably contributed in debating political and cultural issues. For the first time since the inception of parliamentary life, the ' Opposition ' was formally sanctioned and its views, though still contested, became legitimate. After the Watanists had been the object of persistent scorn and denigration under the Wafd, they were now meted respect and opportunity. In addition, they provided the Regime with the populist dimension it lacked and, at the same time, they became the recruits and mainsprings for political movements which were gathering momentum under the Regime.

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\* Hassan Hosni is reported to have said this in an anniversary gathering of the Sha'ibist Parliamentary Body to which other MPs were invited. Sha'ib , 23.6.1932

Politically, the Regime provided a model of government characterised by firmness, intolerant towards the excesses of extreme partisanship, upholding an example in national unity and emphatic on the relevance of economic priorities for national independence. In exposing the hypocrisy of politicians and the futility and meaninglessness of political parties in Egypt in its day, it contributed to the development of a national consciousness hostile and distrustful of both. By implication, too, it impressed on the public the value of a leader, who was strong, wise and able, preaching morality and reform, instead of politics, and exhorting all men of reason and integrity to judge modern institutions in terms of their own traditions and their historical contingency. From here it was only a short step to applauding the virtues of tradition and condemning the travesties of modernity. At the same time, a call for action, utility and thrift under the Regime combined with an appeal to landlords to return to the land, not simply as a means of economy, but as an act of social virtue. From here too, it was but another short step to invoking the virtues of the country-side (al-'aṣāla) and condemning the evils and immorality of the city. Indeed, one of the regular columnists in the Sha'fī Party organ, al-Faruqī, contributed, in 1931 and 1932, front-page articles in this sense with a growing frequency.

In the more immediate context of the power struggle, it is possible to consider the situation under the Regime in terms of a psychology of mass rejection and imposition. Rejection and protest however, were not confined to political issues, but, through the progressive politicisation of every aspect of national life, the political rejection of the Regime became symbolic of a deeper convulsion. As the Sidqī Regime eventually passed away, the political manifestations might have waned, but they left behind an ambivalent mood - partly articulate, partly critical, but grossly emotional - which constituted the substance of an irrational rejection. Similarly, if the politics of imposition eventually expired, they also left in their trail a conviction in their superiority to the politics of persuasion and compromise. They seemed more effective and more impressive.

While it lasted, the Regime fostered a deep mood of frustration through its policies and the themes it propounded as well as through its more general conduct. Dismissals and transfers from official posts, particularly in educational establishments throughout the country, accompanied the modification in the staffing cadre which was then in progress, and it was difficult

in those times to isolate measures of economy and efficiency from political motives associated with such moves. Although in another category, the wholesale dismissal of workers from the government workshops during the electoral agitation in 1931 provided one of the more obvious examples of such ambiguity; its sequel lay in the series of political crimes that ensued. Elsewhere, the closing off of the civil service to new recruits in principle was among the surest inducements to mounting frustration. Nor should the effect of invoking the virtues of individual initiative and free enterprise in a field objectively closed to the purpose, be underestimated. Of a similar effect, was the exaltation of an ethos of interest and reason and its juxtaposition with a defamatory emotionalism which in practice, bred keen tensions and provoked an emotive challenge. The latter was aggravated by the exactions of the Administration which was, in its pursuits, among the effective catalysts to evolving trends.

The anti-foreign sentiment and opinion which was crystallising in the latter phases of the Regime were possibly among these prominent trends which the Regime unwittingly fostered. Here, the pursuit of certain policies seems to have been instrumental. The exemption from the general ban on rises and promotions granted foreigners in the Egyptian service, or those on government contracts, exacerbated the effect of denying the privilege to their Egyptian counterparts. Similarly, the settlement with the foreign credit and mortgage institutions which might ultimately have benefited the landowners and preserved intact the principle of national ownership, aroused much bitterness in the financially-stricken milieu in which it was concluded. The protectionist policies which were calculated to benefit the national economy and the producing sectors in general, had their negative effects insofar as they actually benefited a particular sector, local industry, which was dominated by foreigners (many of whom were local jews) Concessionary Companies embodied most visibly the notion of profiteering foreigners thriving on the misfortunes of the nation, so that by 1934, they constituted the butt for the anti-foreign offensive in the press and in Parliament.

Nor can the effect of the administration of fiscal policies be left out of account in considering the catalytic implications of the Regime. The promptitude and ruthlessness with which taxes were exacted might have preserved Egypt's financial reputation, but it exacerbated social tensions which were ultimately echoed in a nationalist strain. Constrained by the

Capitulations and pressed for revenue, the Government could not afford to spare whatever opportunity it could seize. The effect of moratoriums and temporary expedients of relief did not prevent the hard-pressed population, which was generally compelled to meet its standing obligations, from being embittered at the spectacle of its local foreign counterpart, apparently, escaping scot-free from its share of contributions. Here, the agitation against the Mixed Courts in 1933-1934, which was another manifestation of the gathering anti-foreign movement, was directly sparked off by this notion when foreign judges claimed their right to receive their salaries at gold parity and a Mixed Court verdict justified their claims on legal grounds.

At this point, it might appear that the situation in which the Regime found itself, namely the Depression, was the overpowering factor which was in itself, sui generis, producing its radicalising impact. While the Depression in Egypt as elsewhere was certainly a powerful agent in the political setting, the effect of the administrative 'diligence' which the Regime maintained was instrumental in crystallising frustrations. To illustrate the point, it was doubtful whether people went hungry at the time considering the abundance of basic food-stuffs and the amount of meat reported in butchers' stocks. Admittedly, some account should be taken of discrepancies between the country and urban centres and of reported shortages and abuse of retail merchants. It was, however, precisely the scale of slaughters which was indicative of the measure of humiliation to which the hard-pressed fellah was driven as he was compelled to part with his cherished gamoussa to stave off his honour. More often than not, he was deprived of it against his will by the seizures and exactions of the Administration.

Indeed, the immediate effect of the Depression may have induced a state of wretched resignation among the people. But it was possibly the measures taken to counter it which provoked a profound sense of grievance and resentment. The belief that God's will be done might be accepted, but the deliberate commissions of man against man can hardly be regarded with the same forbearance. It was here that the impact of the hostile politicisation under an unpopular government contributed to the whipping up of a consciousness of injustice which inspired the trend towards radicalism.

The Regime contributed to the radicalisation of Egyptian politics in other ways. It harboured two conflicting currents which were simultaneously contending for supremacy: the one was a country-wide campaign towards political demobilisation, the other was an equally extensive, although, possibly, a more intense campaign to politicise. The first was conducted by the Administration and it coincided with a political code which preached pragmatism, while the other was a desperate reaction which emanated from the opponents of the Regime and it paved the ground for an ideological variant of politics. Here the tensions between the themes of interest and reason advocated by the Regime and the emotive strain which characterised the campaign of the Opposition converged in practice to produce an irrational cult. Both conflicting processes: political demobilisation and political mobilisation were leading away from secular politics, as the one was giving way to a pre-eminence of morality while the other was politicising the moral issues and, in the course of its exercise, it was abandoning the political idiom. The drift from politics to religion was underway.

Meanwhile, the prevailing state of political frustration was intensified by the breakdown in the political process as it had developed in the 'twenties. As the happy circulation of governments came to an abrupt and baffling end, before the unprecedented departure in British policy and the dispiriting prolongation of the Sidqi Regime, a breach occurred in the 'rules' of the political game. In considering the Anglo-Egyptian relationship it is possible to conceive its 'rules' or principles both in an implicit convention drawing on historical precedent and political experience, and in a formal 'constitution', comprised in the 1922 unilateral declaration of independence. The one set conflicted with the other and, in practice, the Declaration had been vitiated from the outset. The belated act of its assertion under the policy of the second Labour Government, and the pursuits of Sir Percy Loraine in particular, perplexed, confused and frustrated the political actors. It led them to overplay their parts in a pathetic attempt to invoke the political reality which they had once known. Sidqi's own obdurate persistence in power defied the norms of political conduct and equally provoked the unparalleled scale of opposition which was embodied in the proclamation drawn up in May 1931 by the abortive National Congress. The national press of the day aptly reflected the measure of this despair as, time and again, the political barometer was misread: signs, auguries, omens were all feverishly ferretted in a vain attempt to bring back familiar political patterns.



This political frustration occurred at a moment of an acute and complex crisis which threatened the nation. People sensed a real threat to their livelihood in the face of the falling value of their crops and assets, and in the scale of administrative seizures, while the campaign against the missionaries, the concessionary companies and the gold payment of the public debt coupons, all reflected a deep awareness of a threat to their identity and security. Moreover, with the emphasis under the Regime on such values as interest and reason, together with the progressive rationalisation of public life, and more generally, with the onslaught of a utilitarian era, a compulsive search for a sense of community became imminent.

In the absence of regular outlets in the political process at a moment of heightened crisis, an alternative structure and idiom had to be sought outside the realm of politics. As indigenous forms and patterns surfaced and a more familiar social and historical pattern came to assert itself, an element of continuity was maintained. The dominum politicum came to signify the religious reality, not as a theological or spiritual concern, but as a social and political and a culturally familiar locus, or point of reference. This provided the 'Egyptian dimension' of the solution to a crisis situation. Here, it may be relevant to sound a more general note and question the compensatory function of politics within the social system. It would appear that when the struggles and tensions within society cannot be resolved at the political level, they transpire beyond it and at this point, inter-human relations come to assume an intra-human dimension. The Sidqi Regime in Egypt in 1930 unwittingly underlined the centrality of politics to the social system and brought to bear the importance of a modicum of political integration and consensus to a balanced society. Insofar as it presided over a critical era of transition, it promoted certain trends and obstructed the development of others. On balance, it sharpened political frustrations and, despite its rationally orientated statesmanship, it contributed to an evolving irrational cult.

As both the Sidqi Regime and the economic depression were challenging factors in the situation in Egypt on the eve of the thirties, it would be legitimate to assume that both were catalysts in their own way, to evolving trends. Some of the possible implications of the Regime for the course of Egyptian political evolution could thus perhaps be considered

to advantage against some of those of the Depression. This exercise provides the sequel to the postulate on the creativity of politics which was posed at the outset of the enquiry.

The Depression itself adversely affected all the sectors of production. While agricultural interests were the immediate victims of the slump in world demand for agricultural products, other interests gravitated in the orbit of the cotton economy and the deflation of business was a natural reflex. Within the producing sectors, local industry stood to suffer equally, if not irrevocably, from the dumping policies of other countries at the time. Alternatively, the service classes, or the stable income groups, were likely to have maintained a comparative ascendancy.

This suggests that while the Depression may have generally led to a state of insecurity among major sectors of society, it left others relatively intact. The tendency to fall back on traditional culture and values, which was one aspect of a radicalism to the right, seems to have developed as a reaction to the stagnating influence among the conventional sectors of production. It was in the nature of a survival mechanism which was partly a counter to mass deflation and demoralisation and partly a device of protest. In substance, it constituted a revulsion against material values and a bid for a communal solidarity: a call for 'Gemeinschaft' rather than 'Gesellschaft', which was duly expressed in a resurgence of religion. The leaders came from the comparatively secure sectors of the middle classes, particularly from the more articulate exponents of traditional values. The vitality of such organisations as the YMMA in the capital and similar cultural offshoots in the provinces, like the schools for learning the Qur'an, were cases in point. This tendency was more than a negative response to hold together a tottering society; its exponents saw in it a means of regeneration - and in this respect, it represented the contribution of an ascending leadership.

The role of the Sidqi Regime may be seen against this background. Generally, it provoked a challenge of a peculiar order which intensified the prevailing sense of insecurity. While it may have been instrumental in bringing about certain developments, its influence does not appear to have been uniform or in total congruence with that of the Depression. In some cases it coincided with it and reinforced emerging trends - in others it conflicted with it and deflected from such trends; while in a third set of cases it stimulated developments that were not necessarily a function of

the Depression itself. Through some of its policies and its orientation, it enhanced the role of the administrators who were engaged in combating political adversaries and in communicating to the public the values of the Regime. Religion was encouraged as a corrective to the 'immorality' of the politicians, and it is perhaps worth noting here, in this context, how the Administration lent a special prominence to religious festivals throughout the provinces and authorised lengthy moulids (anniversaries of holy men and local saints). At critical moments too, the Government resorted to the ulama of the Azhar in order to invoke a legitimacy which it never completely secured and to invite public cooperation when it needed it most. The first such appeal was made in July 1930 to secure political tranquillity during the summer agitation which followed the advent of Sidqi, while another similar appeal was made in June 1932 in an effort to reinforce a rather ineffective campaign to curb the cost of living.

Insofar as the Regime might have averted the total demoralisation of the agricultural classes, it attenuated some of the attendant effects of the Depression. Politically, it reinforced a traditional pattern of authority. While Parliament and the provincial councils admitted emergent mercantile interests, representation on them basically favoured the traditional structure of the country-side. The new credit and mortgage institutions were equally means for reinforcing a threatened social and economic structure in the country and they paved the way for the diminution of the role of the usurer and middle-man at a time when they might have reasonably been expected to thrive. Conversely, the consolidation of an emergent urban middle-class or bourgeoisie, among the trading and manufacturing sectors was, conceivably, the result of the deliberate protectionist pursuits of the Regime. At a moment of general slump, prosperity was constructively channelled and not left solely to profiteers.

The effect of the Regime on politicians was ambiguous. It detracted from their worth and strove to decimate their influence, yet, indirectly, it enhanced their opportunity for action. At the same time, in view of the abstention of the Wafdists, who constituted the nationalist secular politicians, fresh recruits were sought in the fringes of society. These were given the opportunity to assume a political role through the formations of the Sha'f' Party, while the crackdown on the influence of the professional politicians, left the field open for more traditional elements

to emerge in the country-side. Moreover, in the circumstances of the day, the same policies which fed the anti-foreign current paved the way for the rising strata of neo-traditional leaders to take the place of the discredited politicians. On a slightly different, though complementary, note the Regime stimulated the growing youth cult observable in the early thirties, through the ideals and example of its leadership.

Apart from the trend towards a radical variant of politics, the 'thirties were also notable in Egypt for an evolving economic nationalism. Here it may be questioned whether the Depression in itself did anything to reveal the deformities of the Egyptian economy and to infuse a corresponding zeal to rectify it. Rather, it was the interpretation given the event and the imputation of its consequences to an 'unbalanced' economy which drove home to the public its implications. By expounding its ideals and taking an active initiative to realise them, the Regime provided the tangible consciousness of the Depression. On the other hand, the Regime challenged its opponents to adopt new ways which were eventually reflected in their conduct of the power struggle and which added an emotive dimension to that developing economic consciousness. The theme of economic nationalism could be regarded as the direct product of the Sidqi Regime: the joint offspring of the 'idea' (and practice) of its leadership and the reaction it evoked among the opposition to the Regime.

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The Sidqi Regime constituted a radical attempt to resolve the Egyptian national question by seeking to lay foundations for viable national institutions. Significantly, this attempt was conducted within the framework of a conventional western liberalism. So, the Regime was neither a protest against that philosophy nor a revulsion from its ways. On the contrary, it presented an authentic endeavour to accommodate the fundamental tenets of this philosophy to the exigencies of the Egyptian situation.

" Liberalism ... cannot afford to be conservative in its methods and instruments. It has to move with the times and alter its strategy and tactics to meet the demands of changed conditions. The sentimental casualness of 19th century liberalism is no good in this harder and more exacting age."\*

It was this " sentimental casualness " which the Sidqi Regime denounced.

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\* H.G.Wells, After Democracy( 1932) p.24; Sidqi generally believed that sentimentalism, "une tendresse irréfléchie" would not serve the interests of Egypt. Cf. opening of his address to an audience of lawyers on 26.3.1926.

Its ideal was a strong government which could reconcile the requirements of representation and deliberation with those of action and effectiveness. It sought it in consolidating the powers of the executive at the nucleus of a parliamentary form of government which it set out to preserve. Likewise, in asserting the principle of government intervention in the economy while, at the same time acknowledging the legitimacy of the private sector and upholding its primacy, it sought the means by which it could coordinate the interests of the State and those of the individual. The institutions which emerged at the time consecrated the fragile boundaries between the two kinds of interests to the advantage of the latter.

This stress on the liberal frame of reference of the Regime is significant in view of the tendency to generalise on the reaction against liberalism in the 'thirties. Viewed in the perspective of later developments, this stress acquires a further relevance.

Here, a somewhat crude analogy between the Sidqi Regime in 1930 and the Egyptian Officer junta in 1952 may be interesting. Both had strong administrative priorities and an executive penchant, both reacted to party politics and deprecated the spirit of partisanship; on a more positive scale, their common ethos included the slogans of action, order and unity. Under both regimes, the nationalist question assumed a more concrete form, as the economic aspect was emphasised in the one and the social in the other. Alternatively, both orders were variants of a reaction to liberal democracy and parliamentary institutions as they had been practised in Egypt in preceding years. While Sidqi however, was at pains to assert his fundamental constitutionalism and while his retractions from the 1923 Constitution were designed to give a new lease of life to parliamentary government in Egypt, the idiom in 1952 differed. The key concept shifted away from 'constitutionalism' and 'parliamentary government' to that of 'democracy' which acquired social connotations. This social dimension which was only at its inception in 1930, when the Sidqi Regime itself effectively contributed to its growth, had by 1952 crystallised. The immediate implication of shifting paradigms lay in the solutions sought for questions of internal development. Where Sidqi advocated economic liberalism, the army junta opted for an alternative route. The social background of the leadership concerned and the respective historical experience behind each governed these options.

Viewed in the spectrum of the contemporary nationalist movement, it may be tentatively suggested that the Sidqi Regime provides the missing link between 1919 and 1952. If a historical continuity is sought in the nationalist movement, the domination of the political dimension may be found in the 1919 uprising and its immediate sequel; that of the economic dimension may be found in the Sidqi Regime and its aftermath; while, in 1952, it was the social dimension which came to the fore. It took a span of over three decades for the different aspects of the Egyptian Question to mature and crystallise. Conversely, the generation which presided over the fortunes of the country on the eve of 1919 was a generation of 'elders' which belonged to a different era - it was rooted in the nineteenth century. The paternalistic, charismatic leadership of Zaghlul had its enigmatic protrusions which combined elements of both worlds: that of a society of tradition and elders and that of the rising society of the masses. The generation which came to lead the nationalist movement in 1952 was an offspring of the youth cult which had been nurtured in the 'thirties. Between 1919 and 1952 there was a generation gap which was reflected in the crisis of leadership and in the dearth of political figures of high calibre.

Sidqi protruded on the political setting without belonging to either world. Ostensibly, he grew up with the generation of elders and patricians, but at some early stage, he by-passed, or outgrew them, and became something of an anachronism in a dragging age. Out of tune with the times, he was rejected by one set and suspected by the other. These tensions were reflected in his predicament as a frustrated leader.

If the Sidqi Regime presided over an era of transition, it is perhaps ironic that it should have been presided over by a statesman who was himself an embodiment of transition. This attribute was consecrated in his solitary stance on the Egyptian political stage - not merely in 1930, but until his death twenty years later.

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- Political and Public addresses between 1930 and 1935
- Addresses in the annual General Assembly of the Federation of Egyptian Industries for 1930, 1931, 1932, 1933(letter) and 1938
- Miscellaneous contributions outside the period 1930-35, notably:
  - "Le Régime fiscal égyptien et les Capitulations" - ( talk) rep. in L'Egypte Contemporaine, Feb -March, 1926 pp. 81-92
  - " Mustaqbal Miṣr al-Ṣina<sup>c</sup>iya" (article) - in al-Siyāsa al-'Isbou<sup>c</sup>iya, 29.3. 1929
  - " La Question Industrielle dans ses Rapports avec le Standard de Vie des Classes Pauvres." Talk given at the Rotary Club, Alexandria in April, 1945
  - "L'Essor de L'Industrie Egyptienne" Talk given at the Royal Geographical Society on 4th January 1940
  - " La Politique Industrielle d'après Guerre" Talk given at the Royal Club of Commerce on 12th April 1945

#### Unpublished Material

##### 1 British Archives

Public Record Office.

Foreign Office archives and Cabinet Papers with emphasis on the former, which comprise a range of sources, the following of which were the most important for the study:

- a. The general correspondence between the Residency and the the Foreign Office between 1920 & 1938 generally with stress on certain periods like 1922/1923 (exchanges between Lord Allenby and and Lord Curzon); 1925; 1930 -1936 - Some of the correspondence consulted outside this period has been relevant eg. 1917/18/19 & 1942)
- b. Foreign Office Memoranda on the Egyptian Situation or on Anglo-Egyptian relations between 1930 & 1936
- c. The Annual Reports of the High Commissioner ( 1930-1935; 1925; 1922 : & . 1921) and Personality Lists .
- d. Reports by Alexander Keown-Boyd, Director of the European Department, Ministry of Interior (Cairo) on the Administration and the 1931 Elections -
- e. Reports by the Judicial Adviser, Judge G. A. W. Booth on the Constitution and legislation under the Regime generally.; Equivalent reports by the Financial Adviser, FP Watson ( or Hugh Jones) on the Budget -on fiscal legislation & conversations with Sidqi.

f. Correspondence from the Commercial Secretary R.M. Turner ( & L.B. Larkins) to the Department of Overseas Trade.

g. Memoranda on the Egyptian Press (weekly) and Reports on the situation in the Provinces - prepared in the Chancery, esp. contributions from the Oriental Secretaries, W. Smart and L. Grafftey-Smith.

h. Consular Reports on the economic and political situation in the Provinces for 1931, 1932 and 1933 ( This practice of consuls reporting on the situation in their localities was only revived in late 1931 on the recommendation of the Egyptian Dept. The reports are summarised and integrated in memoranda form; some of the original reports survive in the Residency Archives.)

i. The Residency Archives (FO 141) were consulted for odd years between 1919 and 1934. Their relevance in the later period lie in the Minutes they contain and the exchanges between the High Commissioner, Sir Percy Loraine and his staff.

j. The Cabinet Minutes and Conclusions as well as Cabinet memoranda for the period under review ( 1930 - 1935 ) were of restricted value in this study.

## 2. Egyptian Archives.

### a. Abdin Palace Archives.

i. A miscellaneous collection of intelligence reports on the political activities of local politicians, among other topics of interest to the King between 1925 and 1935 - (odd and discontinued)

ii. Collections of press cuttings, both arabic and foreign.  
(Invaluable guide due to balance, comprehensiveness and accessibility)

### b. Dar al-Mahfuzāt, the Citadel.

Sidqi's personal files and those belonging to other senior officials and Ministers. These are officially preserved records with details of qualifications, promotions, transfers, awards, etc...

### c. Dar ul-Qadā'al-<sup>C</sup>ālī. (Musée Juridique)

Political crime cases: notably, the Bombs Case 1931/32 and the abortive assassination attempt against Isma<sup>C</sup>il Sidqi Pasha, 1932.

( A well compiled synopsis of these cases is found in the Centre of Contemporary Egyptian History and Documentation, while the original files have recently been reproduced on micro-film by the Council for the Protection of the Arts and Crafts )

Unpublished SourcesEgyptian Archives. (continued)

## d. The Presidency of the Council of Ministers

i. Mahādir Majlis al-Wuzarā' (1930 - 1933 & 1946)  
( Minutes and Resolutions inc. some memoranda)

ii. Official files containing background and details on subjects brought before the Council of Ministers.

iii. The Private Papers of Isma<sup>c</sup>il Sidqi during both periods of his premiership (esp. for 1932 & 1933) (2 files)

iv. A miscellaneous collection of suspended newspapers and periodicals. ( mostly in decrepitude)

3. Private Papers and Memoirs.

a. The Private Papers of Mr. Arthur Henderson. (PRO)

b. The Private Papers of Sir John Simon. (PRO)

c. The Malta Memoirs. (March - April, 1919)  
Reflections and observations recorded by Sidqi during internment.

d. The Waterfield Papers.

Notes made by Gordon Waterfield on the Loraine Papers when preparing his biography of Sir Percy Loraine. St. Antony's, Oxford.

Newspapers and Periodicals.

al-Ahram ( 1919; 1921/22; 1930-1935)

al-Balāgh ( 1931, 1932, 1934)

L'Egypte Contemporaine 1920 -

Le Journal Officiel du Gouvernement Egyptien (1930 - 1934)

Majallat Ghurfat Tijārat al-Qāhira (1936)

Majallat al-Iqtisād w'al-Qanun (1930 - 1935 )

Majallat al-Iqtisād w'al-mohāsaba ( 1951 - 1954) (biographies)

Misr (1931 esp )

al-Muqattam ( 1930, 1931)

al- Muṣṣawar (1948)

Oriente Moderno ( Rome, 1930 - 1938 generally) invaluable for checking and perspectives)

Rose al Yusuf ( weekly: 1930 -1933) ( odd issues appearing under different names during the period)

Rose al-Yusuf ( daily : 1935)

al-Ṣarīh ( weekly, 1932, 1933)

al-Sha<sup>c</sup>b ( December 1930 - 1935)

Survey of International Affairs ( RIIA) ( 1929 - 1933)

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