

MUHAMMAD 'ABDUH AND AL-WAQĀ'Ī AL-MISRIYAH

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Aḥmad Ḥusayn al-Ṣāwī

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INTRODUCTION

Muhammad 'Abduh (1849-1905) is known throughout the Arab and Muslim worlds, and to Western scholars, as the greatest religious thinker and reformer of Islam in the nineteenth century. His efforts to reconcile the fundamental beliefs of Islam with the modern scientific thought of the West have been of the utmost importance in the Islamic revival of recent times.

This fame has largely overshadowed 'Abduh's achievements in other fields, which in degree, if not in kind, were no less important; especially his achievements in the field of journalism. 'Abduh was a social, political and literary, as well as religious, reformer; and newspapers were the means by which he made public all his ideas on non-religious subjects, and many of his ideas on religious subjects also. He began contributing to the press before completing his courses as a theological student, and never gave up his interest and activity in journalism till the end of his days. The varied contacts and experience which he thus acquired broadened and enlightened his religious thought, giving to it the great appeal which it has had for the modern generations everywhere in the world of Islam.

In the development of modern Egypt, the part played by the press was much more important than in most Western countries, and it is a remarkable fact that most of the Egyptian leaders and reformers began their careers as writers in newspapers.¹ 'Abduh was no except-

1. E.g. in politics, Muṣṭafā Kāmil (1874-1908), Sa'ad Zaghlūl (1859-1927) and Aḥmad Māhir (d. 1945); in letters, Ṭāhā Ḥusayn (b.1889), 'Abbās al-'Aqqād (b.1889) and Muḥammad Ḥusayn Haykal (b. 1888).

ion, and his technical journalistic achievements alone were sufficient to make him still memorable as one of the great pioneers in the development of the Egyptian press.

* * * *

The most important period of 'Abduh's journalistic career was that during which he was Editor-in-Chief of the Egyptian official gazette "al-Waqā'i' al-Miṣrīyah" (October 1880-September 1882).

Besides writing articles on various subjects numerous enough to fill a fair-sized book, he held ex-officio the post of Head of the Press Bureau, in charge of the supervision and censorship of Arabic and Turkish publications, and made the fullest possible use of his powers to raise the standards of their style and contents. It was extraordinary to see in this double function "a turbaned Azharī¹ participating in the affairs of a Government whose activities were far removed from the world of scholars and men of religion, looking out from a window of his editorial office onto the Ministries and Law-Courts and Services of the Government, reforming the literary style of their servants and directing them to improve their work; then looking from another window onto the Egyptian nation, rectifying its morals and reforming its corrupted customs . . . ; then looking from a third window onto the Arabic press, teaching it a refined editorial style and training it to write the truth." ²

Since his incumbency as Editor-in-Chief of "al-Waqā'i' al-Miṣrīyah" coincided with the period of the Nationalist movement led by Aḥmad 'Arābī, and since anyone who dealt with public affairs at that

1. A student or graduate of al-Azhar, the great Islamic University of Cairo, founded in 361 A.H. (972).

2. Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā, Tārīkh al-Ustādh al-Imām al-Shaykh Muḥammad 'Abduh, I, Cairo, 1350 A. H. (1931), p. 139.

time could not fail to be absorbed in political activity, 'Abduh came to the centre of the stage of national affairs, where he played a significant part.

Since the nineteenth century, Egypt has been the undisputed centre of Arab thought and culture, and its Arabic press has had a great influence on literary, social and political development in all the Arab lands. The first Egyptian newspaper, under the all-embracing autocracy of Muḥammad 'Alī, was established as Government organ, as were also the first newspapers in the Arab territories under direct Ottoman rule. Later, however, an independent press grew up in Egypt, in conditions of ^{comparative} ~~considerable~~ freedom, while in the Ottoman territories no such freedom of the press was allowed.

"Al-Waqā'i' al-Miṣrīyah" was the first Arabic newspaper in the world. Established by Muḥammad 'Alī in 1828, it remained for about forty years the only newspaper in Egypt, serving as a historical record and as a school for training writers and guiding readers. After a period of decline and stagnation during which independent newspapers successfully grew up and outrivalled it, "al-Waqā'i'" gained a new lease of life and reached the summit of its fame and prosperity under the editorship of 'Abduh. Thereafter, in the changed political circumstances, it reverted to its normal position as an official gazette.

Bibliographical Note.

The essential materials for this study have been mainly derived from three excellent Arabic volumes totalling more than two thousand large pages by 'Abduh's greatest disciple Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā, entitled "Tārīkh al-Ustādh al-Imām al-Shaykh Muḥammad 'Abduh" (Biography of the

Great Teacher and Religious Leader, Shaykh Muḥammad 'Abduh). The first volume is the best and fullest source of information about 'Abduh's life and work; the second contains his articles and briefer writings; and the third incorporates obituary notices and eulogies which appeared at the time of his death. For political reasons connected with some of its historical details, the first volume appeared only in 1931,¹ while the second volume first appeared in 1908 and the third in 1909. Riḍā's close relationship to his master gave him access to valuable sources of information and to 'Abduh's unpublished works which he included in his "Tārīkh".

In addition to this enormous source of reference, use has been made of some photostat sheets of "al-Waqā'i'" which were supplied by the National Library in Cairo, and which include a few of 'Abduh's articles not reproduced by Riḍā, as well as important domestic news published during the critical days of the 'Arābī movement.

'Abduh's main works "Risālat al-Tawḥīd" and "al-Islām wa al-Naṣrānīyah", and a number of other sources in Arabic, English and French, have been of great help for the clarification of 'Abduh's ideas and their background. The two works of Dr. 'Uthmān Amīn in Arabic and French on "Muḥammad 'Abduh", and Dr. C. C. Adams's study of "Islam and Modernism in Egypt", have been of particular value.

For the history of the Egyptian press, and in particular that of "al-Waqā'i' al-Miṣrīyah", the Arabic works of Dr. Ibrāhīm 'Abduh have been most useful. One of these is a study of the introduction of the printing press into Egypt and of the journalistic accomplishments of

1. Ibid., pp. 3-4.

Bonaparte's expedition;¹ another deals with "al-Waqā'i";² and a third traces the development of the Egyptian press from its beginnings till the present time.³

Nearly all the above-mentioned source material has been available in the Library of the Institute of Islamic Studies at McGill University, Montreal.

Names of Arabic books, persons, places etc., have been transliterated in accordance with the system used by the Institute of Islamic Studies;⁴ but the titles of English and French books written by Western or Arab authors, and the authors' names, have been quoted as they appear on these books. For example, "Uthmān Amīn" and "Osman Amin", or "Muṣṭafā 'Abd al-Rāziq" and "Moustapha 'Abdel Razik" are used for the same authors in reference to their Arabic and French works respectively.

1. "Tārīkh al-Ṭibā'ah wa al-Ṣaḥāfah fī Miṣr Khilāl al-Ḥamlah al-Faransīyah", 3rd edition, Cairo, 1949.

2. "Tārīkh al-Waqā'i' al-Miṣriyah", 3rd edition, Cairo, 1946.

3. "Taṭawwur al-Ṣaḥāfah al-Miṣriyah", 3rd edition, Cairo, 1951.

4. As set out on p. 114.

CHAPTER I

THE RISE OF THE EGYPTIAN PRESS
AND THE IMPORTANCE OF "AL-WAQA'I' AL-MISRIYAH"

The beginnings of the Egyptian press, as of much else in the modern renaissance of Egypt, date from the occupation of the country by Bonaparte's expedition in 1798. Egypt had been in decline ever since the discovery of the Cape of Good Hope route to the East by Vasco da Gama in 1498. This, by depriving Egypt of the transit trade between Europe and the East, had so weakened her as to render her an easy victim to the Ottoman Sultan Salīm in 1517. Thereafter, she had been cut off from the current of European events, and for three hundred years had been sunk in a death-like slumber, from which she was rudely awakened by the sound of French cannon and the bitter smell of powder.

The French expedition was not only military; it had also a scientific side. Bonaparte was accompanied by a group of French savants, who formed the "Institut d'Egypte" and accomplished a large number of interesting studies and researches on various aspects of Egyptian life and history.

With this learned entourage, Bonaparte introduced into Egypt a force hitherto unknown there, that of the printing press. He brought with him printing machines with French, Greek and Arabic types.¹ Bonaparte relied much on the press as an instrument of propaganda, both in Europe and Egypt, and showed a particular interest in Arabic printing.

1. Ibrāhīm 'Abduh, Tārīkh al-Ṭibā'ah, p. 26.

There is doubt as to the origin of the printing press brought by Bonaparte to Egypt. One historian has stated that it was confiscated from the College of the Propaganda in Rome¹, another that it was brought from Paris². Actually it was obtained from both sources. The French Government of the "Directory" found the printing machines and types which Bonaparte had demanded for his expedition in both Paris and Rome. In addition, on his order, "citoyen" Cafarelli purchased from Paris various implements for those presses at a cost of more than ten thousand francs³. There was also in Cairo during the French occupation, besides the printing press of the army, a private press owned by one Marc Aurel; and this latter printed most of the publications of the French authorities, until it was bought by the army⁴. The existence of two Arabic printing presses was referred to by Bonaparte in a letter sent to Kléber on August 26, 1798: "Une des choses dont nous avons le plus grand besoin, c'est une des deux imprimeries arabes"⁵.

In addition to various books and proclamations, the French exped-

1. J. Heyworth-Dunne, An Introduction to the History of Education in Modern Egypt, London, 1938, p. 99.

2. Vicomte Philippe de Tarrāzī, Tārīkh al-Ṣaḥāfah al-‘Arabīyah, Bayrūt, 1913, I, p.45.

3. Ibrāhīm ‘Abduh, op. cit., p.27.

4. N. R. D. Desgenettes, Souvenir d'un Médecin de l'Expédition d'Egypte, Paris, 1892, III, p.17. Heyworth-Dunne also refers to this press, op.cit., p.99. But he does not clear up whether it was owned by Marc Aurel, or just directed by him.

5. Correspondance de Napoléon 1^{er}, Paris, 1860, IV, No. 3113, p.560.

ition published in 1798 two French newspapers, "Le Courrier de l'Egypte" and "La Décade Egyptienne". The first was for the French Army and community, and included literary, descriptive and biographical articles, as well as domestic and foreign news. "La Décade" was a purely scientific review, in which were published essays and reports by the members of the "Institut d'Egypte".¹

This was Egypt's first introduction to the press. Although the only newspapers published by the expedition were those in French mentioned above, some printing was also done in Arabic, mainly of proclamations addressed to the Egyptian people, and of pamphlets, handbooks, etc., most of which were for the use of the French themselves.²

Egypt was soon deprived of this important new instrument of circulation when the French were evacuated in 1801 after their defeat by the Anglo-Turkish expedition, and took their printing presses with them.³ Printing press was not re-introduced until some twenty years later.

The second stage in the development of newspapers in Egypt had began in the reign of Muḥammad 'Alī, who set up in 1235 A. H. (1819-20) the celebrated Būlāq printing press in Cairo.⁴ In 1828, Muḥammad 'Alī

1. Cf. Ibrāhīm 'Abduh, op. cit., pp. 59-88.

2. Heyworth-Dunne, op. cit., p. 99.

3. The French agreed to leave Egypt with their arms and materials and the results of their researches. See: M. Rifaat, The Awakening of Modern Egypt, London, 1947, p.15. Among these materials were all the printing presses and the Arabic types which had been brought from Paris and Rome. See: Ibrāhīm 'Abduh, Waqā'i', p. 14.

4. This date is inscribed on a memorial monument in the entrance of the present "Government Press" at Būlāq. On this point Ṭarrāzī errs, in mentioning that Muḥammad 'Alī bought the printing press left by the French, then improved it, (op. cit., I, p. 49). This contradicts the statement that the French left Egypt with all their materials, including the printing presses.

founded the first Arabic newspaper in Egypt and in the world, "al-Waqā'i' al-Miṣrīyah" (Egyptian Events).

"Al-Waqā'i'" is considered by several writers to have been the second Arabic newspaper, and to have been preceded by an Arabic bulletin published by the French expedition. The belief that such a bulletin was published has arisen out of a misinterpretation of two references: a description given by the contemporary Egyptian chronicler, al-Jabartī, of the job of his friend Shaykh Ismā'īl al-Khashshāb¹, and an order issued by General Menou, third leader of the French expedition, on November 26, 1800, announcing the forthcoming publication of an Arabic newspaper, "al-Tanbīh" (l'Avertissement), which would be edited by the same Shaykh al-Khashshāb.²

Al-Jabartī does not mention that al-Khashshāb had anything to do with any Arabic paper; he simply says, "When the French established a 'Dīwān'³ (Council) for the affairs of the Muslims, he was appointed to record what went on in its meetings . . .". Al-Jabartī then refers to the deep interest of the French in "recording the daily events (al-ḥawāḍith al-yawmīyah) in all their Dīwāns and administrations", abridged reports of which were announced to the army. It is clear that al-Khashshāb's function was not that of editing or writing in a newspaper. The events he recorded formed only a part of the reports which were abridged for circulation to

1. 'Abd al-Rahmān al-Jabartī, 'Ajā'ib al-Athār fī al-Tarājim wa al-Akhhār, Cairo, 1322 A. H. (1904), IV, pp. 254-58.

2. See text in: M. F. Rousseau, Kléber et Menou en Egypte depuis le départ de Bonaparte, Paris, 1900, pp. 375-77.

3. It was a sort of consultative council, composed of 9 'ulamā' of al-Azhar.

the army, apparently in "Le Courrier de l'Egypte", after being translated from Arabic into French. The historian Ṭarrāzī therefore errs in stating that al-Khashshāb edited "al-Ḥawādith al-Yawmīyah" (The Daily Events), and that this was an Arabic newspaper published by the French expedition.¹ Many other writers have followed Ṭarrāzī in that error until the present.² As for "al-Tanbīh", which Menou intended to publish, it is certain that it never came into existence. Copies of anything so important as the first Arabic newspaper in the world would certainly have been preserved by the French, who took back to France all the documents of ^{their} expedition; these, including many trivial items in Arabic can still be found in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, and among them there is no reference to "al-Tanbīh" except for General Menou's announcement.³ The time was so short and the circumstances were too difficult for the French to be able to put into practice their intention of publishing an Arabic newspaper in Egypt. The only means of communication in Arabic between the French Army and the Egyptian people consisted of the proclamations which the French Command issued from time to time and "stuck up at crossroads and corners of lanes, and on mosque doors".⁴

1. op. cit., pp. 45, 48-9.

2. Cf. Tom J. McFadden, Daily Journalism in the Arab States, Columbus, Ohio, 1953, p.1, where he asserts that "the very first Arabic newspaper . . . was established in 1800 as a propaganda medium to further Napoléon's designs on Egypt. . . . It had a prophetic name, 'al-Tanbīh'." Thus he complicates his mistake by giving to a paper which never existed the name adopted by Menou for his unrealized project. Heyworth-Dunne, op. cit., p. 101, refers cautiously to an Arabic paper published by the French and points out that "no specimen of any such bulletin" has been preserved.

3. Ibrāhīm 'Abduh, Tārīkh al-Ṭibā'ah, p. 97.

4. Jabartī, op. cit., III, p. 20.

The Būlāq Press (the nucleus of the present Government Press) was an indispensable instrument for Muḥammad 'Alī in the task of carrying out his immense programme of reform and development, and it made possible the establishment of "al-Waqā'i' al-Miṣriyah" as the official gazette of the Government. Although Egypt was not the first eastern land to possess the printing press, "al-Waqā'i'" was the first newspaper not only in the Arab world, but also in the entire Islamic east; "genre de fondation qui jusqu'ici n'a pas eu d'autre exemple dans les contrées musulmanes".¹

The establishment of an Arabic newspaper in any part of the Arab world at that time was an event of the greatest importance. After three centuries of Ottoman rule, during which Turkish had been the dominant official language, it was a significant early symptom of the revival of Arabic culture. Such attention to ~~the~~ Arabic ^{language} was something entirely new in the history of the Arab provinces of the Ottoman Empire. The revival of the Arabic language and literature through journalism was to be one of the principal factors contributing to the Arab awakening and to the growth of Egyptian and Arab nationalism.

The first number of "al-Waqā'i'" appeared in both Arabic and Turkish on Tuesday, Jumādā I, 1344 A. H. (December 3, 1828).² The leading article is an important document. Explaining the purpose of the publication of "al-Waqā'i'", it stresses the value of acquaintance with

1. [Joseph] Reinaud, "De la Gazette arabe et turque imprimée en Egypte", Nouveau Journal Asiatique, 2^e Série, Tome VIII, Septembre, 1831, p.245.

2. Ibrāhīm 'Abduh, Waqā'i', p. 61. A photo-copy of the front page of the first number is on p. 39.

current events, such as, for instance, the reforms accomplished by Muḥammad 'Alī "The Benefactor" (Walī al-Ni'am)¹ in various fields, and the extent of the Egyptian conquests in Arabia and the Sūdān. It also refers to a Government office which had previously existed called the "Dīwān al-Jurnāl", whose function had been to receive reports from the Government Departments in all Egyptian Provinces and summarize them for the Walī al-Ni'am and his high officials in the form of a special bulletin (jurnāl)², and states that in view of the expansion of Egyptian interests and the consequent insufficiency of such a bulletin, the Walī al-Ni'am had thought fit to make it available to the public by founding a newspaper.³

The circumstances of Egypt in 1828 had led Muḥammad 'Alī to feel an immediate need to create a link between his Government and the people. After strengthening his authority and successfully carrying out his economic reconstructive plans, the Pasha had turned his attention to other reforms. In 1826 he had founded Dīwāns (similar to Ministries) and a Supreme Council⁴; and in the same year he had established many

1. This surname of Muḥammad 'Alī is used in nearly all documents of his era, sometimes preceded by "Afandīnā" (our Lord).

2. The maximum circulation of this bulletin which was printed at first in Turkish, then in Arabic and Turkish, was 100 copies. It is thought to have been started by Muḥammad 'Alī for the purpose of keeping a record of the progress of the administrative and economic reforms on which he embarked after 1813. Cf. Ibrāhīm 'Abduh, Waqā'i', pp.32-34. On the other hand, it is an

3. Ibid., pp. 63-6.

4. Ibrāhīm 'Abduh, Tatawwur, p.35.

exaggeration to consider, as Dr. Ibrāhīm 'Abduh did, that this bulletin was the "first" Egyptian newspaper, and to go further in giving it the name "Jurnāl al-Khidīwī" which in fact means nothing more than "the Governor's bulletin".

schools and sent the first mission of civilian students to Europe.¹

After the foundation of "al-Waqā'i", the "Dīwān al-Jurnāl" was transformed into an editorial office called "Qalam al-Waqā'i".² Each page of "al-Waqā'i" was divided into two columns, the right hand containing material in Turkish, and the left its Arabic translation.³ The character of the paper was thus that of an official messenger from the Turkish-speaking Government to the Arabic-speaking population.

This character of "al-Waqā'i" should not lead to any under-estimation of its historical importance. The circumstances of Egypt at that time were such that it would have been impossible for newspapers to be established through native efforts. The prevailing ignorance, the lack of any sort of public opinion and the autocratic nature of the régime restricted all initiative for progress and reform to the ruling authorities. In the other parts of the Ottoman Empire in the 19th century, including Turkey itself, the origins of the press were similar.⁴

Muhammad 'Alī took a deep personal interest in "al-Waqā'i". In his opinion, it was something more than a mere official gazette. He

1. M. Rifaat, op. cit., p. 41. Among members of this mission sent to Paris was Rifā'ah al-Taḥṭāwī, who became Editor-in-Chief of "al-Waqā'i" later on (vide infra pp. 14-17).

2. Ibrāhīm 'Abduh, Waqā'i, p. 37.

3. Ibid., pp. 62-3.

4. Martin Hartmann in "Djarida", Encyclopaedia of Islām, London, 1913, I, p. 108, and Ṭarrāzī, op. cit., pp. 51-78, give accounts of the official gazettes established as the first papers in the Ottoman Empire. They all appeared after "al-Waqā'i", beginning with "Taḡvīmī Waḡai" in Istanbul in 1831. For this latter organ see also: Carl Brockelmann, History of the Islamic Peoples, p. 398.

regarded it as the mouthpiece of his new régime, which would explain his plans and defend his policy to the people, and also as a means of guidance and education. He therefore committed its supervision to the Education Department (Dīwān al-Madāris).¹ But, in accordance with his autocratic policy, he kept a close eye on it, and personally supervised every detail of its affairs.²

The circulation of "al-Waqā'i'" gradually increased. At first it was distributed to the ruling family, high officials, religious leaders ('ulamā'), and army officers. Later, on Muḥammad 'Alī's personal instructions, it was also distributed to schoolboys and ordinary government officials.³ Subscription to "al-Waqā'i'" was obligatory for high officials⁴ and free for students.⁵

At first, the young "al-Waqā'i'" crawled slowly; it appeared irregularly, its material was poor, its style weak, its atmosphere strictly official. In 1841, however, new regulations were laid down for the paper, which entered a fresh period under the editorship of the

1. Ibrāhīm 'Abduh, Waqā'i', p.66.

2. Ibid., pp.52-60. In these pages the writer, quoting from the Archives of 'Abidīn Palace, shows how Muḥammad 'Alī, in spite of his illiteracy, interfered in editing, printing, and circulating "al-Waqā'i'".

3. Ibid., p.40.

4. Those whose monthly salary was one thousand piastres and upwards.

5. Ibid., pp. 40-42.

enlightened Shaykh Rifā'ah al-Taḥṭāwī.¹

In that period, the paper underwent remarkable changes in both form and substance. The Arabic language was given the first place, the material being written in Arabic and then translated into Turkish, and the Arabic was printed in the right hand columns.² The paper appeared regularly every week containing, not only up-to-date domestic news, but also selections of foreign news translated from the European press.³ To

1. Rifā'ah Rāfi' al-Taḥṭāwī (1801-73). He was the first of the line of progressive Azharīs who, influenced by Western science and culture, played leading rôles in the development of modern Egypt. His master at al-Azhar was Shaykh Ḥasan al-'Aṭṭār, an enlightened 'ālim who had learnt much from travel in the East and from contacts with the French scholars of Bonaparte's expedition, and was also in close touch with Muḥammad 'Alī. On the recommendation of his master, al-Taḥṭāwī was appointed imām (chaplain) to the first civil educational mission sent to Paris in 1826, and there he proved to be its most industrious student. After five years of successful study, he returned to Egypt where he was appointed Director of the School of Languages, and then Editor of "al-Waqā'i'". In the reign of Ismā'īl he became Director of the Translation Bureau and Editor-in-Chief of the educational review "Rawḍat al-Madāris".

Together with his pupils he accomplished the miracle of popularizing European science and enlightening the minds of his contemporaries. As leader of the translation movement, he laid the foundation of a renaissance in two main intellectual fields in modern Egypt, namely Education and Journalism.

See: 1. Maurice Chemoul, "Rifa'a Bey", Encycl. Islam, III, pp. 1155-56.

2. 'Abd al-Latīf Ḥamzah, Adab al-Maḥālah al-Shaḥafīyah fī Miṣr, I, Cairo, 1950, pp. 103-57.

3. Jamāl al-Dīn al-Shayyāl, Rifā'ah al-Taḥṭāwī, Cairo, 1945.

2. Ibrāhīm 'Abduh, Waqā'i', pp. 83, 95.

3. Ibid., p. 83.

this al-Ṭaḥṭāwī added a new literary section in which he published selections of classical Arabic literature.¹ He was assisted by sub-editors, for whom "al-Waqā'i'" was a training school for later brilliant journalistic careers.²

In short, "al-Waqā'i'" achieved a high standard for a paper of that period, and became a well managed, popular journal, very different from a dry, official gazette.

Al-Ṭaḥṭāwī in "al-Waqā'i'" was in many ways a forerunner of Muḥammad 'Abduh, his successor some forty years later. Both were Azharīs, enlightened, and influenced by modern science and culture. Each edited "al-Waqā'i'", raised its standard and left his clear intellectual mark on it.

Unfortunately this brilliant period of the history of "al-Waqā'i'" lasted only a short time. After the settlement of the diplomatic crisis in 1841 between Muḥammad 'Alī on the one hand, and the Porte and the European Powers on the other, Muḥammad 'Alī, discouraged by the failure of his territorial ambitions, gradually lost his impetus for reform. In nearly every field Egypt came to a standstill, and many of the new establishments which had flourished in the past fifteen years were now closed down one after the other. "Al-Waqā'i'" was one of the victims of this retrogression. By an order issued by Muḥammad 'Alī in 1260 A. H. (1844), it was prevented from publishing any political material.³ Gradually various of its features were neglected, and it became limited to routine domestic

1. Ḥamzah, op.cit., I, p.125.

2. Among these was Aḥmad Fāris al-Shidiāq, who established and edited in Istanbul in 1860 "al-Jawā'ib", which had great influence in the Muslim world. See Ṭarrāzī, op.cit., I, pp.61-3.

3. Ibrāhīm 'Abduh, Waqā'i', p. 101.

news. Al-Ṭaḥṭāwī lost interest in it and apparently preferred to concentrate on his other intellectual activities.

Such was the situation of "al-Waqā'i" during the last few years of Muḥammad 'Alī's reign and the short period of Ibrāhīm's¹ rule. During the reigns of 'Abbās I and Sa'īd, it decayed further and then ceased to exist until it was revived by Khedive Ismā'il.

'Abbās I,² who was a selfish, sullen and severe ruler, gave "al-Waqā'i" its first fatal blow. He was incapable of adapting himself to the state of affairs created by his grandfather. During his reign, schools were shut, academic institutions abolished and factories abandoned.³ He, too, turned his attention to "al-Waqā'i" which, strangely enough, "he saw as something very humiliating" for his Government and himself, because it was read by common people; he therefore restricted its circulation to the highest officials!⁴ It was by his order also that al-Ṭaḥṭāwī was sent to the Sūdān.

The moribund paper received its death blow during Sa'īd's⁵ reign.⁵ This capricious ruler had a sort of anti-education complex. He closed

1. Son of Muḥammad 'Alī. When the physical and mental health of his father declined seriously, he replaced him (July-November 1848). Ibrāhīm died 9 months before his father, and was succeeded by 'Abbās I.

2. Son of Ṭusūn, son of Muḥammad 'Alī.

3. M. Rifaat, op. cit., p. 94.

4. Ibrāhīm 'Abduh, Tatawwur . . ., pp. 42-3, quoting from the Archives of 'Abidīn Palace.

5. Son of Muḥammad 'Alī. He succeeded his nephew 'Abbās after his murder in 1854.

the remaining Egyptian schools which 'Abbās had not already done away with, and also the "Dīwān al-Madāris" itself.¹ His culminating act against the intellectual life of Egypt was to bestow the Būlāq Press upon one of his favourite officials, 'Abd al-Rahmān Rushdī.²

During the reign of Ismā'īl (1863-79), however, the Egyptian press developed with rapid strides. Less than one month after his accession, and at his instigation, the new proprietor of the Būlāq Press resumed the publication of "al-Waqā'i".³ In 1865 Ismā'īl recovered the press from Rushdī who received generous compensation.⁴ Thus "al-Waqā'i" belonged again to the Government.

Ismā'īl's policy towards the paper is illustrated in a letter which he wrote to the Minister (Nāzir) of Finance about its repurchase. In this letter he said, "It is indisputable that newspapers are something advantageous to the population as well as to the Government. Therefore, I wish to include "al-Waqā'i" al-Miṣrīyah" among the respected newspapers . . .".⁵ And in fact, during Ismā'īl's reign, "al-Waqā'i" became one of the most respected newspapers, and in quality incomparably better than it had ever been before.

1. Muḥammad Rif'at, Tārīkh Miṣr fī al-Azminah al-Hadīthah, Cairo, 1951, p. 133.

2. Ibrāhīm 'Abduh, Waqā'i, p. 106, quoting from the Citadel Archives.

3. Ismā'īl succeeded his uncle Sa'īd who died on January 18, 1863, and the first number of the new "al-Waqā'i" appeared on February 9. Ibid., p. 107.

4. Amīn Sāmī Pasha, Taqwīm al-Nīl, III, Cairo, 1936, p. 598.

5. Ibrāhīm 'Abduh, Tatawwur, p. 45.

An independent office (Qalam) was established to direct "al-Waqā'i'", which was published, first weekly, then twice a week, in Arabic. At first there was a supplement in Turkish, but this was soon dropped.¹ New sections were added, and particular attention was paid to the choice of its editor and staff from among the highest ranking scholars of al-Azhar.² For the first time, "al-Waqā'i'" was sold to the general public instead of to subscribers only, and contained a section for advertisements, which became a major source of its revenue.³

In addition to "al-Waqā'i'", Ismā'īl established four other official papers; two were military reviews, one a medical magazine, "Ya'sūb al-Ṭibb", and one an educational magazine, "Rawḍat al-Madāris".⁴ ✓

Ismā'īl's reign also witnessed the beginning of the non-Governmental press in Egypt.⁵ This remarkable phenomenon was the expression of the new public opinion which had come into being in Egypt as the outcome of several interacting factors. The most important of these was the development of intellectual life; Egyptians were beginning to reap the harvest of the reforms of the French expedition and of Muḥammad 'Alī. Another was Ismā'īl's personal interest in encouraging education. Another

1. Ibrāhīm 'Abduh, Waqā'i', p. 122.

2. The Editor-in-Chief of "al-Waqā'i'" in that period was Shaykh Aḥmad 'Abd al-Raḥīm, a well qualified Azharī.

3. Ibrāhīm 'Abduh, Waqā'i', p. 131.

4. M. Sabry, L'Empire Egyptienne sous Ismaïl, Paris, 1933, p. 327.

5. The first independent paper was "Wādī al-Nīl" established by 'Abdullāh Abū al-Su'ūd in 1866 by encouragement of Ismā'īl. Cf. Ḥamzah, op. cit., I, p. 159.

was the influence of the Syrian intellectuals who migrated to Egypt in this period and played a considerable part in its intellectual revival through journalism.

Ismā'īl believed that it would be in his interest to encourage the establishment of privately owned newspapers, some of which he personally sponsored. He gave them complete liberty, thinking that they would help him to work up popular feeling against European interference, and not foreseeing that they would soon criticize his extravagance and methods of government.¹ It was natural that the growth of this independent press should affect the official papers, and particularly "al-Waqā'i"², which in the later years of Ismā'īl's reign could not keep pace with the rapid progress of its new rivals.

This was the standing of "al-Waqā'i" when a sudden shift occurred on the stage of Egyptian politics. Ismā'īl was deposed by the Ottoman Sultan and replaced by his son Tawfīq in June 1879.

Riyāḍ Pasha, who became Prime Minister in September of the same year, contemplated reforming "al-Waqā'i" and raising its standard. In the course of his efforts, he sought a capable writer to rejuvenate the paper. One name, suggested to him by some of his friends, was that of Shaykh Muḥammad 'Abduh, a young Azharī. Riyāḍ accepted the suggestion and appointed 'Abduh sub-editor of "al-Waqā'i" in September 1880. As a result of a report containing a plan to reform the paper which Muḥammad 'Abduh submitted to Riyāḍ, a committee with 'Abduh as member was formed to study the question, and he was appointed Editor-in-Chief to put his

1. M. Sabry, op. cit., p. 333.

2. Ibrāhīm 'Abduh, Tatawwur, p. 54.

proposals into execution.¹

Though lasting for less than two years, the period of 'Abduh's editorship was the Golden Age of "al-Waqā'i". It saw a revolutionary transformation in the character of the official journal. Under 'Abduh's direction, and through his writings, "al-Waqā'i", now issued daily, became the most influential Egyptian paper of its time. He made it a tribune from which he taught the people, criticized the Government itself, and led a great reform movement. During this period, which coincided with the national uprising against foreign intervention and Khedivial despotism associated with the name of Aḥmad 'Arābī, "al-Waqā'i" assumed the position of mediator between the Government and the people. It "addressed the people in the tongue of the Government, and addressed the Government in the tongue of the people".² This most interesting period in the history of "al-Waqā'i" ended with the British occupation of Egypt in September 1882. Muḥammad 'Abduh was arrested and exiled with the leaders of the 'Arābī movement, and Egypt entered a new phase of her life.

Henceforth, "al-Waqā'i" continued publication, but declined until it became what it was supposed to be, an official gazette. Gradually non-official items were dropped, until only Government announcements remained. It is still published to-day by the Government Press in Cairo, with a separate French translation,³ and contains the Parliamentary minutes, texts of laws, Cabinet orders, official resolutions, results of the general examinations, and so forth.⁴

1. Riḍā, op. cit., I, pp. 137-38. See also: Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, Secret History of the English Occupation of Egypt, New York, 1922, pp. 378-79.

2. Muḥammad 'Abduh in his autobiography, reproduced by Riḍā, op. cit., I, p. 180.

3. This supplement is called "Le Journal Officiel".

4. Ibrāhīm 'Abduh, Waqā'i, pp. 174-98.

CHAPTER II

MUHAMMAD 'ABDUH, THE JOURNALIST

Muhammad 'Abduh's work as a journalist had a decisive influence on the course of his career. Journalism not only first gave him fame and led him to the centre of the political stage; it also broadened his horizon. It acquainted him with the needs of the Egyptian people in every field of life, and brought his profound mind into direct contact with the minds of leading political and literary men in Egypt and Europe. True to his vocation as an Azharī, 'Abduh remained primarily a religious thinker; but, without the experience which journalism gave him, his thought would not have attained its unique breadth of insight.

Purely as a journalist, 'Abduh's achievements were of great importance. Confining himself in his books to restrictions of higher subjects,¹ he used the newspaper and periodical as vehicles of his ideas on current topics and immediately needed reforms; and these ideas had a remarkable influence on Egyptian affairs. He developed a style of writing newspaper articles which was clear, simple and expressive. As a practical newspaper man, he made a success of the papers which he edited or with which he was associated.

Muhammad 'Abduh was born in 1849 to an Egyptian peasant family and spent his childhood in a small village of Lower Egypt.² After learning the Qur'ān by heart, he was sent in 1862 to study theology at

1. 'Abduh wrote works on theology, mysticism, logic, rhetoric etc. A complete list of 'Abduh's books is given in: Osman Amin, Muhammad 'Abduh [in French], Cairo, 1944, pp. 267-69.

2. Maḥallat Naṣr in the Province of Buḥayrah. See: J. Schacht, "Muhammad 'Abduh", article in Encycl. Islām, III, pp. 678-80.

the Aḥmadī Mosque in the town of Tanṭā,¹ where he was so discouraged by the method of instruction that he fled from his studies and went back to his village. He would have become a peasant like most of his family but for the influence of his great uncle, Shaykh Darwīsh Khadr,² who aroused in him an interest in mysticism and in knowledge generally, and thus changed the whole tenour of his life. 'Abduh resumed his studies in Tanṭā, and in 1866 entered al-Azhar, where he at first gave himself over to mysticism and asceticism. Again his great uncle dissuaded him therefrom and also trained him to give public addresses to the small society at the village and to use his knowledge for the benefit of the people.³ In 1871, while still at al-Azhar, he came into contact with Sayyid Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī (1839-1897), the great Muslim reformer and revolutionary who, after being expelled from Istanbul, had recently come to live in Cairo.

Al-Afghānī dreamed of the re-unification of the entire Muslim world into a single state or block strong enough to withstand European encroachment. The weakness of the Muslims, he thought, was due to their

1. Students were prepared there for entering al-Azhar.

2. A good-hearted Sūfī (mystic) of penetrating insight and genuine piety. He had memorized the Qur'ān and was proficient in understanding it, and studied the Ḥadīth (Prophet Traditions) as well as other Islamic sciences. He had also travelled in the Libyan desert as far as Tripoli, where he had taken up studies with Sayyid Muḥammad al-Madanī, who inducted him into the Shādhālī Sūfī order. Returning to his village, he engaged in agriculture, and used his knowledge in guiding spiritually his small society.

See: Charles C. Adams, Islam and Modernism in Egypt, London, 1933, p. 23; 'Uthmān Amīn, Muḥammad 'Abduh, Cairo, 1944, pp. 11-12; Aḥmad Amīn, Zu'amā' al-Islāh fī al-'Asr al-Ḥadīth, Cairo, 1948, pp. 83-84.

3. During his summer vacations, 'Abduh used to meet his great uncle who would demand an account of his scholarly accomplishments at al-Azhar during the year, and urged 'Abduh to learn new subjects such as logic and geometry. See: 'Uthmān Amīn, op. cit., p. 19; Aḥmad Amīn, op. cit., p. 290.

own dissensions; to the despotism of their native rulers; and to their backwardness in science and material power, due to the rigid traditionalism and superstition of their present religious thinking. Gifted with brilliant powers as a speaker and organizer, al-Afghānī called on the Muslims to cast off despotic or European rule and establish in its place constitutional and parliamentary government; to overcome their sectarian differences; to make use of European techniques; and by freely exercising their minds, to regain their old eminence in the world of science. A sincere believer, though not primarily a theologian, al-Afghānī put forward reasoned arguments to show that none of these things would be incompatible with the teachings of Islam.¹

Al-Afghānī was received with much honour by the Egyptian authorities. The Prime Minister Riyāḍ Pasha encouraged him to reside in Egypt and granted him an allowance from official funds.² At first sight, this hospitable attitude of the Egyptian Government towards a man who had been expelled by the Sublime Porte as a dangerous revolutionary, seems strange. It is to be explained by two things: Ismā'īl's policy of giving refuge to intellectuals who sought shelter in Egypt, and his under-estimation of the danger to his Government of al-Afghānī's teachings. Probably also Ismā'īl was glad of the opportunity to go against the policy of the Porte, as he liked to show himself as independent of the Ottoman Empire as possible.³

The arrival of al-Afghānī in Egypt coincided with a period of tension and transformation in the national life. The misery which Ismā'īl

1. See: I. Goldziher, "Djamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī", Encycl. Islām, I, pp. 1008-1011; Ahmad Amīn, op. cit., pp. 59-120; Qadrī Qal'ajī, Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī, Bayrūt, 1952.

2. Muḥammad Pasha al-Makhzūmī, Khāṭirāt Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī, Bayrūt, 1931, p. 39.

3. Qal'ajī, op. cit., p. 35.

had brought to the country, the increasing foreign intervention, the impact of Western ideas and the intellectual revival of the nation, had all led to a general feeling of discontent with the existing order. Al-Afghānī arrived just in time to mould this feeling into some kind of shape. He poured his activity into various channels; lectures in his house,¹ speeches in the cafés and participation in the Masonic organization.² His most important achievement was the creation of a group of disciples who "caught from him, not only learning and philosophy, but also a living spirit which caused them to see the state of the people as it really was, after the veil of false ideas had been rent from their minds".³ For these disciples, al-Afghānī cast a new light on the traditional learning; he called their attention to European works accessible in Arabic translations, and interested them in the practical problems of the day in Egypt and other Muslim and Eastern countries. The most ardent of these pupils and the closest of them to their master was the Azhar student Muḥammad 'Abduh.⁴

Al-Afghānī encouraged his pupils to try to influence public opinion through the press, and trained them in the art of writing articles

1. He never taught at al-Azhar. The allowance he obtained from the Government had no obligation of any kind. Cf. Makhzūmī, op. cit., p. 39; Jurjī Zaydān, Tarājim Mashāhīr al-Sharq, II, Cairo, 1922, p. 56.

2. Cf. Aḥmad Amīn, op. cit., p. 64; Makhzūmī, op. cit., p. 41. Al-Afghānī later founded a new Lodge in Egypt. 'Abduh became a Freemason in this Lodge, of which many leading Egyptians were also members. The embryo of the Egyptian National Party was formed there. See: Sabry, op. cit., p. 349.

3. Zaydān, op. cit., I, p. 281.

4. Aḥmad Amīn, op. cit., p. 292.

on literary, social and political subjects.¹ He also encouraged and helped some of them to establish new journals, in which he himself wrote articles.² A new school of journalists thus arose, who took the lead in progressive movements in many fields.³ Inspired by al-Afghānī, Muḥammad 'Abduh eagerly entered the path of journalism.



The first published works of 'Abduh were five articles⁴ which he wrote between September 1876 and his graduation from al-Azhar in May 1877, for the paper "al-Ahrām".⁵ Some of these were long and appeared serially in successive issues. They are of great interest, because they express some of the basic ideas of the reform mission to which 'Abduh devoted his life.

1. Edward G. Browne, The Persian Revolution of 1905-1909, Cambridge, 1910, p. 8.

2. Ibrāhīm 'Abduh, Jarīdat al-Ahrām, Cairo, 1951, pp. 104-5. Muḥammad 'Abduh himself stresses this point in his autobiography, reproduced by Riḍā, op. cit., I, p. 38.

3. Among the members of this school were the famous journalists: Ibrāhīm al-Laḡānī, 'Abd Allāh al-Nadīm, Ibrāhīm al-Muwayliḥī, the Syrians Adīb Ishaq and Salīm al-Naqqāsh, and Ya'qūb Sanū' (James Sanoua). See Ṭarrāzī, op. cit., II, pp. 247, 256, 262, 264, 273, 277, 288; Ḥamzah, op. cit., III, 1951; Qal'ajī, op. cit., pp. 41-42.

4. Reproduced by Riḍā, op. cit., II, pp. 15-48.

5. Established in Alexandria by the Syrians Salīm and Bashārah Taqlā in 1876; at first published weekly, then daily, and later moved to Cairo. At present it is the leading daily in the Arab world. See Ibrāhīm 'Abduh, al-Ahrām.

The first of these articles which appeared in "al-Ahrām" on September 3, 1876, was a message of congratulation and welcome from the young Azharī to the new journal. In it 'Abduh recalls the glory of Egypt in past ages and expresses confidence that still greater attainments can be expected from her in present times. The second article stresses the value of newspapers as a means of guidance and reform in both religious and political affairs. The third is ethical and philosophical, dealing with the organization of human society and the factors which bring it about, and also containing an appeal for co-operative fraternity between all Egyptians despite differences of creed.

The fourth of these articles is the most important. It shows 'Abduh's basic ideas on educational reform, to which he gave detailed attention later on in "al-Waqā'i'". Referring to the progress achieved by the European nations through science and technique, he criticizes the 'ulamā' of al-Azhar for their negative attitude towards the modern sciences and draws evidence from the past of Islam to demonstrate that the acquisition of scientific knowledge is an individual duty (farḍ 'ayn).

The fifth article is a review of the Arabic translation of Guizot's "Histoire de la Civilisation en Europe et en France" by Ḥunayn Ni'mat Allāh Khūrī, in the course of which 'Abduh points out the inadequacy of the Arabic language as it then was and the need for its reform.

Two more articles, which 'Abduh wrote after his graduation and which were published in "Miṣr",¹ are also of interest.² They summarize

1. A newspaper established by Adīb Ishāq in Cairo in 1877, then transferred to Alexandria. See Ṭarrāzī, op. cit., II, p. 107.

2. Reproduced by Ridā, op. cit., II, pp. 2-15.

two of his master al-Afghānī's philosophical lectures, but do not include any comment by 'Abduh.

The articles which 'Abduh wrote in this first stage of his journalistic career reflect the influence of al-Afghānī's teachings on his thought and the strength of his effort to escape from the narrow dogmatism of al-Azhar.

From the literary point of view, 'Abduh's style in this period still shows the influence of classical Arabic prose with its traditions and rules. His writing is full of rhymes and fanciful similes. In the articles summarizing al-Afghānī's two lectures, however, he tried to report honestly the substance of what his master had said, without adding any embellishments. A steady development can be noticed in the style and structure of these early articles, from simple compositions to polished and well-arranged essays.

'Abduh's articles in "al-Ahrām" drew attention to him as a promising essayist and paved the way for his later appointment to the staff of "al-Waqā'i'". They also increased the anger of the conservative 'ulamā' against this young Azharī, whom they had already suspected of heresy as an ardent disciple of al-Afghānī.¹

Having received his degree as an 'Ālim, 'Abduh became a lecturer at al-Azhar, and at the end of 1878 was also appointed teacher in both Dār al-'Ulūm² and the School of Languages.³ It seems that the pressure of his teaching work affected his journalistic activity for, apart

1. Muṣṭafā 'Abd al-Rāziq, a biographical address given at "The Egyptian University" on July 11, 1922, on the occasion of the 17th anniversary of 'Abduh's decease, and published in "al-Ihtifāl bi Ihyā' Dhikrā al-Ustādh al-Imām", Cairo, 1922.

2. A higher training school, founded in 1872 through the efforts of 'Alī Mubārak Pasha, then Minister of Education, to produce teachers trained in both modern and Islamic sciences. See Heyworth-Dunne, op. cit., pp. 376-77.

3. 'Uthmān Amīn, op. cit., pp. 33-5.

from the two above-mentioned summaries of al-Afghānī's lectures, no contributions from his pen can be found in the press of this period.

In 1876, Khedive Ismā'īl had agreed to the demands of the European bond-holders for a Dual (Anglo-French) Control of Egypt's finances; and at the behest of the British and French Governments he was deposed by the Ottoman Sultan and succeeded by his son Tawfīq on June 26, 1879. The liberal group who by this time, under al-Afghānī's inspiring leadership, had acquired remarkable influence, expected great deeds of the young Khedive. Tawfīq had already assured al-Afghānī and his group that, when he had attained power, he would aid their efforts for reform. He soon disappointed their hopes, however, when in September 1879¹ he expelled al-Afghānī from Egypt, and dismissed Muḥammad 'Abduh from his teaching posts and ordered him to retire to his village. The order also prohibited 'Abduh from addressing the public, whether by making speeches or by writing in papers.² This drastic measure which ended the first stage of 'Abduh's journalistic career, was no doubt taken in view of his connection with al-Afghānī and of the advanced ideas expressed in his teaching and press contributions.³

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On September 21, 1879 Riyāḍ Pasha was recalled by Tawfīq to form

1. At that time Tawfīq was exercising absolute power over Egypt. For about a month (August 18-September 21, 1879), he himself was Prime Minister as well as Khedive. Cf. 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Rāfi'ī, al-Thawrah al-'Arābiyah wa al-Iḥtilāl al-Injlīzī, 2nd ed., Cairo, 1949, p. 35.

2. Cf. Adams, op. cit., p. 7; B. Michel and Moustapha Abdel Razik, La Vie du Cheikh Mohammed Abdou, Introduction to "Rissalat Al Tawhid", a French translation of "Risālat al-Tawḥīd" by Muḥammad 'Abduh, Paris, 1925, pp. xxviii-xxix; Browne, op. cit., p. 8.

3. Adams, op. cit., p. 46.

a new Cabinet. Riyāḍ had his own ideas about reform. His opinion was that constitutional life was not suitable for Egypt, since the people were not mature enough to make a good use of it; they should first be trained and guided till they come of age politically.¹ On these grounds, he encouraged educational and journalistic efforts, and turned his attention to reforming the official gazette, which had been suffering from the growing competition of the non-governmental press.

The reputation gained by Muḥammad 'Abduh as a promising journalist led the two distinguished men whom Riyāḍ consulted to propose him as the right man for "al-Waqā'i".² Riyāḍ accordingly urged Tawfīq to pardon 'Abduh and approve his appointment to its staff; and as already mentioned³, 'Abduh, on the strength of his report concerning the reform of the journal, was shortly afterwards (in October 1880) made Editor-in-Chief, and at the same time Head of the Press Bureau (Qalam al-Maṭbū'āt).⁴

In this capacity, from October 1880 to September 1882, 'Abduh proved his outstanding ability as a journalist and became famous as one of the eminent personalities of Egypt. He profited from the free hand given to him in his duties by Riyāḍ to make "al-waqā'i" the mouthpiece of his reforming ideas and of the sentiments of the people during the national movement. A detailed discussion of his work and writings as Editor of "al-Waqā'i" will be given in the following chapters.

1. Cf. Aḥmad Amīn, op. cit., pp. 221-95.

2. They were Maḥmud Sāmī al-Bārūdī Pasha (1839-1904), Minister of Waqfs (endowments) at that time, a famous poet and one of the leaders of the 'Arābī movement; and Shaykh Ḥusayn al-Marṣafī (d.1889), an enlightened professor of Arabic literature. See: 'Uthmān Amīn, op. cit., p. 28.

3. Vide supra, p. 20.

4. Riḍā, op. cit., I, pp. 137-38; Ibrāhīm 'Abduh, Waqā'i, p. 156.

It seems appropriate, however, to describe here the development of Abduh's literary style during this period. In the pages of "al-Waqā'i'", his diction is liberated from the classical fetters which hamper his first articles in "al-Ahrām", and becomes clear and direct. His purpose is to affect his reader's mind, and he gives up the old-fashioned display of literary art and pride of knowledge. Occasionally, however, in the enthusiasm of his writings, he reverts spontaneously to rhyming prose and highly coloured metaphors.

In spite of being a Government functionary, 'Abduh, as mentioned, freely criticized actions of the Government which in his judgement deserved criticism. The ideas which he expressed were at first those of an evolutionary reformer; he drew attention to the defects of society and suggested practical ways of improvement and progress. As circumstances developed, he played, through his writings in "al-Waqā'i'" and other activities, an important role in the contemporary national movement. This political activity ended with his arrest after the British occupation of Egypt in September 1882, and the suppression of the national movement.

By an administrative decree issued on December 29, 1882, 'Abduh, who had spent nearly three months in prison, was banished from Egypt along with other leaders of the national movement. The term of his banishment was set at three years;¹ and significantly, he was cited in the proceedings as a journalist.² In January 1883 he left Egypt for his exile in Bayrūt.

1. A. M. Broadley, How We Defended Arabi and His Friends, London, 1884, p. 422.

2. Even the label on his cell door described him as journalist (jurnālji), Ibid., p. 111.



After a stay of a year in Bayrūt, 'Abduh was invited by al-Afghānī to join him in Paris, and readily accepted. In Paris the two men collaborated in founding an Islamic political society called "al-'Urwah al-Wuthqā" (in French "Le Lien Indissoluble") and in publishing and writing an Arabic organ of the Society with the same name.¹ The purposes of the paper as declared in its first number which appeared on March 13, 1884,² were to awaken the Eastern peoples and arouse their national spirit against both imperialism and native despotism; to unite the public opinion of all Muslim countries; and to dispel the false accusation laid to Muslims that they were incapable of understanding and making use of modern science and civilization. Al-Afghānī was stated to be its political director and 'Abduh its Editor-in-Chief.

"Al-'Urwah" had to cease publication after only seven months; but it achieved a good measure of its declared objects, as it was to exercise a profound influence on the minds of the Muslim peoples, and especially on the rise of constitutionalist and nationalist movements among them.

The articles of "al-'Urwah"³ were composed by 'Abduh as he was more capable of writing clearly in modern Arabic than al-Afghānī. They

1. Adams, op. cit., p. 58. It was a secret society with branches in the different Muslim lands. The paper was financed by the members' contributions and sent free to readers. See: Aḥmad Amīn, op. cit., pp. 81-2.

2. Reproduced by Riḍā, op. cit., II, pp. 215-23.

3. Reproduced by Riḍā, op. cit., I, pp. 290-389, II, pp. 215-337.

bear the obvious stamp of al-Afghānī's enthusiastic ideas, which 'Abduh at this time shared to the full. Such ardour is not to be found in his previous and subsequent writings. "The tone and spirit of the journal was [sic] much more radical and aggressive than that [sic] of the ideas advocated by 'Abduh in his previous editorial experience in Egypt".¹ This was mainly due to the overwhelming spirit of al-Afghānī, to whom most of the ideas in the articles are attributed.² The universal scope of "al-'Urwah", and 'Abduh's bitter reaction to his sufferings and the effect on him of living in a European liberal atmosphere, may also have contributed to his enthusiasm.

'Abduh's style in "al-'Urwah" also shows a remarkable change. It is eloquent and oratorical, in harmony with the enthusiasm of the ideas; archaisms have almost entirely disappeared.

In addition to Islamic and Eastern problems in general, a good number of the articles deal in particular with the Egyptian question and Sudanese affairs.³ This was natural after the British occupation of Egypt and the rebellion of Muḥammad Aḥmad, who claimed to be the Mahdī,⁴ in the Sūdān.

In July 1884, 'Abduh visited London, where his friend W. S. Blunt⁵

1. Adams, op. cit., p. 61

2. Cf. Riḍā, op. cit., I, p. 289; Qal'ajī, op. cit., p. 65; Ḥamzah, op. cit., II, p. 91.

3. Reproduced by Riḍā, op. cit., I, pp. 332-82.

4. The promised Messiah of Islamic mythology.

5. Wilfrid Scawen Blunt (1840-1922). English writer and poet. After travels in the Near East and India, he became an ardent anti-imperialist and supporter of Muslim aspirations and of nationalism in Egypt, Ireland and India. He met 'Abduh first in Egypt before the 'Arābī movement, and the two men became firm friends. He defended the Egyptian cause before the British public opinion verbally and in his writings, the most important of which are: "Secret History of the English Occupation of Egypt" and "Gordon at Khartoum".

See: Webster Biographical Dictionary, Mass., U.S.A., 1948, p. 161; 'Uthmān Amīn, op. cit., p. 74.

introduced him to Lord Hartington, Secretary of State for War, and to a number of British journalists and members of Parliament.¹ As Editor of "al-'Urwah", he discussed with them the Egyptian question; and his interviews were published both in "al-'Urwah" and in some English newspapers, such as "The Pall Mall Gazette", "Truth" and "The Times".²

Both in his articles about Egypt and in his interviews in London, 'Abduh attacked the rule of Tawfīq and the policy of the British Government so vehemently that his friend Blunt advised him to moderate his language.³ This may have been the reason why the Egyptian authorities delayed his return to Egypt after the expiration of the prescribed period of his exile.

The eighteenth and last number of "al-'Urwah" appeared on October 17, 1884. This early and sudden demise was mainly due to the obstacles put in its way by the British Government which, alarmed by the fierceness of its tone and the extent of its influence, refused to allow its importation into India and Egypt,⁴ though many copies were smuggled into these countries.

'Abduh and al-Afghānī now separated, and 'Abduh returned at the beginning of 1885 to Bayrūt, where he remained for three years.⁵

1. Among these personalities were Lord Randolph Churchill and Sir Wilfrid Lawson. Cf. Blunt, Gordon at Khartoum, London, 1911, pp. 271-75.

2. 'Uthmān Amīn, op. cit., pp. 83-95.

3. Blunt, Gordon at Khartoum, pp. 270-75, 540.

4. Browne, op. cit., p. 9.

5. Adams, op. cit., p. 64.

* * *

Being no longer under the influence of al-Afghānī's dynamic personality and revolutionary ideas, 'Abduh, though still above all a reformer, now reverted to his original evolutionary outlook on life, as is apparent in all his subsequent activities and writings. Moreover, Bayrūt was in Ottoman territory directly controlled by Sultan 'Abd al-Hamīd's despotic Government and permeated by his powerful espionage system. 'Abduh in Bayrūt remained far from the political struggle and devoted himself mainly to scholarship and teaching, which were, indeed, more congenial to his temperament, especially to the intellectual problems of religious and educational reform. He taught theology and Arabic literature at "al-Madrasah al-Sultānīyah", lectured in the mosques and in his house, and wrote on religious and literary subjects.¹

He only contributed seven articles to the press,² six to the Lebanese magazine "Thamarāt al-Funūm"³ and one to "al-Ahrām". In the three of these articles which are on political subjects -- one on the situation in Egypt,⁴ another on the Sūdān⁵ and a third on India⁶ -- 'Abduh opposes British policy in a moderate tone, while stressing his loyalty as an Egyptian Muslim to the sovereignty of the Ottoman Caliph-

1. Cf. 'Uthmān Amīn, op. cit., pp. 96-102; Ridā, op. cit., I, pp. 390-98. His great theological work "Risālat al-Tawhīd", is a collection of some of his lectures delivered there.

2. Reproduced by Ridā, op. cit., II, pp. 342-79.

3. An Islamic literary and political magazine, established in Bayrūt in 1875. See Ṭarrāzī, op. cit., II, pp. 25-7.

4. Ridā, op. cit., II, pp. 342-46.

5. Ibid., pp. 355-60.

6. Published unsigned in "al-Ahrām", ibid., pp. 374-79.

Sultan; and, what is more striking, he shows towards Khedive Tawfiq a willingness to compromise which is in complete contradiction with the harsh attacks of his articles in "al-'Urwah" and interviews in London. This moderate and pacific attitude indicates his despair of revolutionary political struggle and his eagerness to obtain the Khedive's pardon and permission to return to Egypt.¹

The style of these articles is fluent, but smooth and calm, without any of the emotional vehemence and revolutionary tone which characterize 'Abduh's writings in "al-'Urwah".

From his return to Egypt in 1888 till his death in 1905, 'Abduh concentrated his efforts on religious, educational and social reform, for which he strove unceasingly both in his successive official capacities and through his personal efforts. In politics he surrendered to the "fait accompli" and co-operated with the authorities. He even criticized his former master al-Afghānī for "wasting" his brilliant talents in politics;² and in his book "al-Islām wa al-Naṣrānīyah" (Islam and Christianity), he damns the term "politics" and all that it connotes.³ His newspaper articles of this period are almost entirely on religious and social subjects.

The most outstanding of 'Abduh's contributions to the press during his later life were in two celebrated controversies concerning Islam. In

1. Though exiled only for three years (in 1883), he did not receive permission to return home until the latter part of 1888; this was obtained through the mediation of a number of influential persons, including Sir Evelyn Baring (later Lord Cromer), British representative in Egypt. See Adams, op. cit., p. 66; Riḍā, op. cit., I, pp. 894-95; Earl of Cromer, Modern Egypt, London, 1908, II, p. 179.

2. Cf. Riḍā, op. cit., I, p. 895.

3. See the seventh edition, Cairo, 1367 A. H. (1948), p. 144.

six articles published in "al-Mu'ayyad"¹ in 1900, he replied to what the French Cabinet Minister Gabriel Hanotaux had written about "the fatalistic Muslim mentality" in the "Journal de Paris" under the title "Face to Face with Islam and the Muslim Question".² The second controversy started in 1903 when Farah Antūn, in an article in his magazine "al-Jāmi'ah"³, on the great Muslim philosopher Ibn Rushd, alleged that Islam was less tolerant of philosophers than Christianity. 'Abduh replied effectively to this allegation in a series of articles which were first published in "al-Manār", and later collected in his book "al-Islām wa al-Naṣrānīyah".

In his last years, 'Abduh also wrote some articles of an entirely different kind. In a series published in "al-Manār",⁴ he described a journey which he made to Sicily in the summer of 1902. His narrative is simply and attractively written, and imparts knowledge and wisdom with much good humour.

It was through 'Abduh's inspiration and encouragement that his devoted disciple Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā (1863-1935), was able to found the celebrated Islamic review "al-Manār". Influenced by the Islamic teachings of al-Afghānī and 'Abduh, Riḍā migrated from Syria to Egypt in 1898 to rejoin 'Abduh whom he had earlier met in Syria, and conceived the project of establishing a review for propagating 'Abduh's Islamic doctrines.

1. A daily newspaper established in Cairo in 1889 by Shaykh 'Alī Yūsuf (1863-1913). See Ibrāhīm 'Abduh, Tatawwur, p. 151.

2. Cf. Riḍā, op. cit., II, pp. 400-468; Adams, op. cit., pp. 86-9.

3. Established in Alexandria in 1888. See: Ṭarrāzī, op. cit., II, pp. 171-72.

4. Vols. 6 and 7, reproduced by Riḍā, op. cit., II, pp. 473-504.

'Abduh welcomed the project in spite of its difficulties, and chose the name "al-Manār" (The Lighthouse) from among a number suggested by Riḍā. In the plan which 'Abduh outlined for the review, he laid down that it should avoid answering criticisms or insults from other newspapers and should not be the mouthpiece of any specific person. For the rest of his life, 'Abduh guided Riḍā in deciding the policy of the review, which began publication on March 17, 1898; and he did all he could to promote its circulation.

"Al-Manār" continued until Riḍā's death in 1935,¹ and although its ideas became less advanced than those of 'Abduh, it gained a wide influence in the whole Muslim world as the leading exponent of the attempt to combine rationalism and puritanism. Besides articles from 'Abduh's pen and texts of his lectures at al-Azhar, "al-Manār" published from 1901 onwards the text of his Commentary on the Qur'ān. This was not finished at the time of his death, but was completed by Riḍā, and the complete work known as "Tafsīr al-Manār", is everywhere recognized as the most valuable Commentary written in modern times.²

Two years before his death, 'Abduh prepared a detailed plan for establishing a daily newspaper of a model character in Cairo, with a carefully chosen board of directors and staff of editors and contributors. "The chief emphasis was to be upon purposes of general reform and the correct and truthful reporting of news items, and attention to political

1. After Riḍā's death, his sons failed to continue publishing "al-Manār". Ḥasan al-Bannā, the late leader of the Muslim Brotherhood, was also unsuccessful in his attempt to revive it in 1936-37.

2. See: Riḍā, op. cit., I, pp. 998-1005; Adams, op. cit., pp. 180-81; H. A. R. Gibb, Modern Trends in Islam, Chicago, 1945, pp. 34-5.

matters was to be limited and restricted".¹ He and his disciple Riḍā had completed all preliminary arrangements, when 'Abduh's illness and unexpected death at the age of 56, put an end to the project.²

Such was Muḥammad 'Abduh's career as a journalist. From his student days at al-Azhar till the end of his life, and when teacher or judge, or even when Grand Muftī of Egypt, he never abandoned his work for the press. Although his attitudes towards current politics varied in the course of his life, his basic principles of religious, intellectual and social reform did not change; and at all times, he expressed his ideas clearly and fearlessly.

1. Adams, op. cit., p. 91.

2. Cf. Riḍā, op. cit., I, p. 949.

CHAPTER III

MUHAMMAD 'ABDUH,
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF OF "AL-WAQĀ'I' AL-MISRIYAH"

The decline of "al-Waqā'i'" before 'Abduh's appointment to its staff had been due partly to the competition of the independent newspapers, and partly to its predominantly official character. As 'Abduh himself wrote, "it used to be distributed among the officials and country notables like an obligatory tax . . . Apart from Government decrees and orders, it contained nothing but unattractive praises of the Khedive and senior officials. This deterred people from reading it".¹

On October 9, 1880, however, under the editorship of the thirty-one year old 'Abduh, "al-Waqā'i'" entered a new period as a daily paper with a printing press of its own. The editorial of its first number as a daily included the text of the new regulation which 'Abduh had laid down for it ~~xx~~ in his dual capacity as its Editor-in-Chief and as Head of the "Press Bureau", and which the Prime Minister Riyāḍ Pasha had approved.² This regulation stipulated that:

- 1) All Government Departments must regularly inform "al-Waqā'i'" of their news, including schemes initiated or completed by them. The Law Courts must also report to it their decisions and rulings. Important provincial news must be sent by telegraph.

1. Autobiography, Riḍā, op. cit., I, p. 175.

2. Ibrāhīm 'Abduh, Waqā'i', p. 143.

- 2) "Al-Waqā'i'" will criticize whatever actions of the various Departments deserve criticism, including even those of the Ministry of Interior to which as the official journal it belongs.¹
- 3) Departments will be asked for explanations of charges brought against them by any newspaper. If a charge is true, it will be published, together with the punishment inflicted on the responsible official, in "al-Waqā'i'"; but if a charge is untrue, the newspaper which made the libel must publish a denial.
- 4) The Editor-in-Chief has the right to arbitrate between disputing newspapers. He is also empowered to supervise all Arabic newspapers published in Egypt, to issue warnings to them and to punish them by suspending their publication for prescribed periods or even permanently; but will allow "every possible freedom for the dissemination of truth and the evaluation of both right and wrong without fear".
- 5) Besides ordinary features of domestic and foreign news, and advertisements, the paper will include a new feature of articles on general subjects, written either by its staff or by outside contributors.²

This ambitious programme was whole-heartedly supported by Premier Riyāḍ, as it suited his autocratic temperament and might help him to organize and reform Egyptian affairs on his own lines.³ For his part,

1. The Minister of Interior was Riyāḍ himself.

2. Cf. Riḍā, op. cit., I, p. 138; Ibrāhīm 'Abduh, Waqā'i', pp. 144-46; 'Uthmān Amīn, op. cit., p. 40-41.

3. Cf. Aḥmad Amīn, op. cit., p. 296.

'Abduh made full use of the *carte blanche* which had been granted to him; he showed no hesitation whatever in criticizing acts of officials, and did his utmost to direct their energies and those of the entire nation towards reform. He also set new standards of truthfulness and literary excellence for the rising Arabic press of Egypt.¹

In pursuance of his programme, 'Abduh began by changing the staff of "*al-Waqā'i*", and chose as his assistants some of al-Afghānī's pupils who had been trained in writing and editing and in whom he had confidence. They were all enlightened young Azharīs, and 'Abduh's foresight in choosing them was confirmed by their work on "*al-Waqā'i*" and by their brilliant later careers as leading figures in the modern development of Egypt. Among them were 'Abd al-Karīm Salmān, who succeeded 'Abduh as Editor of "*al-Waqā'i*" and remained to the end one of his sincere friends and an ardent supporter of his reforms on the Administrative Council of al-Azhar; Sa'd Zaghlūl, then only twenty-one years of age, who became the national leader of the Egyptian movement for political independence after the first World War; and Ibrāhīm al-Hilbāwī, who was to become one of the greatest lawyers of Egypt.²

★ ★ ★

One of 'Abduh's first undertakings as Editor of "*al-Waqā'i*" was to foster the Arabic literary revival by publishing in it articles from his own and his assistants' pens which would serve as examples of good

1. Adams, *op. cit.*, p. 51.

2. Cf. 'Uthmān Amīm, *op. cit.*, p. 39; Adams, *op. cit.*, pp. 46-7.

style. He also criticized the manner of writing Arabic used in the various Government Departments, and insisted upon higher literary standards in official reports. "Before many months had passed, the superiority of these who had a good knowledge of Arabic became apparent ... and they were urged to write for the official journal ... Those who were ignorant of correct language were forced to look for instructors or to attend night schools."¹ The Editor of the official journal himself volunteered to give lessons in these schools.²

A similar effort was directed towards raising the level of the independent press. Exercising his authority as Head of the Press Bureau, 'Abduh encouraged -- and even obliged -- the Arabic newspapers to improve their style and use correct language. On one occasion, the director of a well-known paper was warned that within a specified period he must hire an editor with literary ability, or his paper would be suspended.³ This policy gave rise to competition among the newspapers to improve their editorial standards, and in consequence a group of outstanding writers and journalists who had hitherto been unknown or obscure began to emerge.⁴ The efforts of 'Abduh and his assistants in "al-Waqā'i'" thus made an important contribution to the literary renaissance of Egypt in the late 19th century. Hitherto, literary excellence had been considered to depend on rhetorical effect rather than on meaning, and sometimes meaning was over-

1. 'Abduh's autobiography, *Riḍā*, op. cit., I, 177.

2. Adams, op. cit., p. 47.

3. *Riḍā*, op. cit., I, pp. 139-40.

4. 'Uthmān Amīn, op. cit., p. 41.

looked altogether. "Writers saw nothing wrong with their work as long as their inventiveness made it easy for them to compose their edifices of rhymed prose in characteristically balanced and symmetrical style." In this milieu, 'Abduh and his assistants rose to teach both editors and readers that "the art of writing consists of expressing one's aim well, not of making it enigmatic; and that eloquence is giving desirable clearness and simplicity to linguistic expression".¹

'Abduh's interest in literary reform can be traced back to his lectures in al-Azhar, Dār al-'Ulūm and the School of Languages,² and to his last article in "al-Ahrām" before his graduation, in which he affirmed the necessity of bringing the Arabic language up-to-date.³ Till the end of his life this was one of his favourite ideas, and he did all that he could to put it into effect. As part of this effort, he sought to revive interest in classical Arabic literature.

At Bayrūt, after his separation from al-Afghānī, he lectured to his students at "al-Madrasah al-Sultānīyah" on the Sayings of 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib "Nahj al-Balāghat", and the "Assemblies" (Maqāmāt) of Baqī al-Zamān al-Hamadhānī, both of which he edited and published with commentaries.⁴ In 1900, he established in Egypt the "Society for Reviving Arabic

1. 'Abd al-Qādir Ḥamzah Pasha, "Sa'd wa al-Saḥāfah", article in "al-Thaqāfah", No. 87, August 27, 1940, p. 12.

2. In these seats of learning, 'Abduh showed initiative not only in his choice of subjects, but also in his method of teaching them. He sought to bring into being a new Egyptian generation, who would revive the Arabic language and the Islamic sciences. See: Adams, *op. cit.*, p. 45; 'Uthmān Amīn, *op. cit.*, p. 35; Aḥmad Amīn, *op. cit.*, p. 293.

3. Vide supra p. 27.

4. Aḥmad Amīn, *op. cit.*, p. 333.

Books", to undertake the printing and publishing of critical editions of Arabic classical masterpieces, most of which were still only accessible in manuscript.¹ As the result of these and other efforts, the literary movement began to influence increasingly wide popular circles.



"Al-Waqā'i'"s criticisms of the Government Departments, and its Editor's accurate observation of their activities, aroused the deepest concern in the hearts of the officials; and many of them were inspired or driven to improve their work and to understand the urgency of reform.² On one occasion "al-Waqā'i'" sharply criticized the Governor (Mudīr) of Banī Suwayf, who took it ill and banned the paper from circulation in his Province. He then reported his action to the Ministry of Interior, claiming that criticism of his conduct would humble the Government in the eyes of the people; but the Ministry rejected this point of view and annulled his action. This decision was announced in a general proclamation and also published in "al-Waqā'i'". The Governor thus learnt that the authority of the official journal was greater than his own.³

A suggestion, for those days very controversial, which 'Abduh made in "al-Waqā'i'", was acted on by the Ministry of Waqfs (religious endowments). "Instead of wasting such money in building mosques for a few worshippers",⁴ the Ministry settled a considerable allowance on Dār

1. Riḍā, op. cit., I, p. 753. Among the works edited by this society are: "al-Mukhaṣṣaṣ" of Ibn Sīdah, a philological work in 17 vols.; "Asrār al-Balāghah", and "Dalā'il al I'jāz" of 'Abd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī. See Osman Amin, op. cit., [French], pp. 18, 268, 269.

2. Cf. 'Uthmān Amīn, op. cit., p. 41; Adams, op. cit., p. 47.

3. Riḍā, op. cit., I, 140, 179.

4. Ibid., pp. 180-81 (from 'Abduh's autobiography).

Chief had ex officio held this post, while the Director of al-Waqā'i'" held ex officio that of Director of Administration of the Press.¹ Some writers are mistaken in describing 'Abduh as Director of Administration of the Press.² The Press Bureau which 'Abduh headed by virtue of his appointment as Editor-in-Chief of "al-Waqā'i'" was concerned only with Arabic and Turkish publications. Publications in other languages came under a separate Bureau, which was brought under the supervision of the same Administration by the Publication Law enacted by Sharīf Pāshā's Government on November 26, 1881.³

'Abduh made full use of the opportunities accorded to him by this office, which was, in effect, the Censorship of the Arabic press, both in his efforts to raise its standards and in the endeavour "to create a united public opinion and promote the sounder purposes which he hoped would be accomplished".⁴ By warning and suspending newspapers which published unproved charges against Government Departments or officials, he gave a needed lesson in morality to the Egyptian press. His enlightened censorship extended also to books, and he did not permit the publication of mean or dishonourable writings.⁵ 'Abduh exercised his powers with notable shrewd-

1. Ibrāhīm 'Abduh, Tatawwur, p. 270.

2. Adams, op. cit., for example, describes him on one occasion (p. 47) as "Chief of the Department of Publication", and on another (p. 53) as "General Director of the Press".

3. Cf. Ibrāhīm 'Abduh, Tatawwur, p. 272, Waqā'i', p. 157; Rāfi'ī, op. cit., p. 161. During the trials of 'Arābī's associates and supporters Ahmad Rif'at was interrogated as the "Director of the Press" responsible for what had been published against the Khedive during the last days of the Nationalist movement. The official actually responsible was 'Abduh. See Broadley, op. cit., pp. 240-244.

4. Adams, op. cit., p. 53.

5. Ridā, op. cit., I, p. 140.

ness. In the period following the victory of the Nationalists and the formation of Sharīf's Ministry in September 1881, he encouraged the newspapers to free themselves from their old trammels and to spread the news rapidly.¹ As long as the course of events went well, the press remained moderate; but as the national struggle became more violent and the political situation more tense, the tone of some of the nationalist papers became aggressive, and they violently attacked the Khedive and the European intervention. The Censorship then had to intervene. Sharīf's Government circulated a public admonition to the newspapers, asking them to modify their language and be more circumspect in regard to Egypt's relations with the European Powers.² "Al-Ḥijāz", which did not comply with the Government's warning, was suppressed on November 8, 1881.³ During the eventful period preceding the British occupation, the Censorship, in consideration of the critical situation of the Government, suspended various other papers, such as "al-Ṭā'if",⁴ whose tone was too sharp.

★ II ★

The high standard to which 'Abduh succeeded in raising "al-Waqā'i'" from its previous low level was unique for that time. The few foreign news items which "al-Waqā'i'" had previously included were presented without any system and were not up-to-date. As soon as 'Abduh took charge, he subscribed

1. Cf. Blunt, Secret History, pp. 116-117; Rāfi'ī, op. cit., pp. 188-189.

2. Ibrāhīm 'Abduh, Tatawwur, pp. 110-11.

3. "Al-Waqā'i'", November 8, 1881. "Al-Ḥijāz" was established by Ibrāhīm Sirāj al-Madanī in Cairo in 1881, and distinguished itself by the violence of its language in support of Pan-Islamic views. Cf. Cromer, op. cit., I, p. 211; Rāfi'ī, op. cit., p. 159.

4. Cf. Ibrāhīm 'Abduh, Tatawwur, p. 126; Rāfi'ī, op. cit., p. 283. "Al-Ṭā'if" was established in Cairo in 1881 by al-Afghānī's pupil, 'Abd Allāh al-Nadīm, the revolutionary spokesman and orator of the 'Arābī movement.

to the international news agencies "Reuter" and "Havas", so as to obtain regular telegraphed foreign news for the paper;¹ and systematically quoted interesting news and other items from the European press, especially the influential French "Le Temps".² The domestic news items were also methodically presented, and were obtained only from special correspondents appointed in the different Egyptian Provinces and towns.³

Important new features were added to "al-Waqā'i'" under 'Abduh's editorship, such as serial instalments of carefully selected books and biographies of great Egyptians who had served their country well.⁴

As Editor-in-Chief of "al-Waqā'i'", 'Abduh established a close relationship between the newspaper and the public which was something new in Egypt. Readers were encouraged to write Letters to the Editor making complaints and suggestions, and these were published, if necessary with editorial comments.⁵ Above all, 'Abduh fulfilled the promise made in his programme, that he and his collaborators and the outside contributors to the paper would write on subjects which were actually engaging, or in their opinion should engage, the public interest. This gave the paper immediate popularity and secured a wide hearing for 'Abduh's reforming views. Thus "al-Waqā'i'", as the organ both of the Government and of the people, left a deeper impression on the minds of Egyptians than any other newspaper had

1. "Al-Waqā'i'" began to publish Reuter's telegrams from the second number of this period, and Havas's from the fourth. See "al-Waqā'i'", No. 934, October 10; and No. 936, October 12, 1880.

2. Cf. Ibrāhīm 'Abduh, Waqā'i', p. 166.

3. Ibid., p. 165.

4. Ibid., p. 169.

5. Ibid., pp. 176-79.

done;¹ and the position which 'Abduh thereby acquired made it inevitable that he should take an actual part in the political events of that critical time.

"Al-Waqā'i'" could now not only withstand the competition of the independent papers; it surpassed them and took the lead. It acquired such an unprecedented circulation that three agents had to be employed to undertake its distribution in Cairo alone.²

During the last troubled days of the 'Arābī movement, however, "al-Waqā'i'" had to confine itself to national news and military subjects. Then these two glorious years of its history came to an end with the failure of the Nationalist movement and the British occupation of Egypt.



The articles which 'Abduh wrote in "al-Waqā'i'" number about forty, and express his ideas on political, educational, religious, social and moral questions. By the standards of to-day, some of them seem long, but this was the general type of the Arabic newspaper article in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The article as the main item in the Egyptian press has gradually been displaced by the news, which nowadays constitutes by far the most important feature.

The literary importance of 'Abduh's articles has already been discussed, but certain other characteristics of them deserve notice.

1. Cf. 'Uthmān Amīn, op. cit., p. 47.

2. Ibrāhīm 'Abduh, Waqā'i', p. 172.

The writer often follows a didactic method; he clarifies his ideas by using synonyms, giving examples and quoting texts. Some of the articles consist entirely of lessons on learned subjects expounded in simple terms ¹ and some are in the form of questions from imaginary readers or hearers and answers to them .

Not only is the literary style clear and precise, but the thought is also clear. Each article is made up of logical syllogisms, consisting of premises, discussion and conclusion. This doubtless resulted from 'Abduh's study of philosophy and logic at al-Azhar and under the direction of al-Afghānī.

To illustrate his ideas and beautify his writing, 'Abduh frequently makes good use of texts from the Qur'ān, and from the Traditions of the Prophet and classical Arabic literature of which he knew an abundant store by heart.

The articles also reveal 'Abduh's exceptionally rich background of general knowledge, especially history and current world events. ²

In his articles on political and social questions, 'Abduh often shows the influence of the philosophical interpretation of history of the great Arab historian Ibn Khaldūn. ³ This influence can be traced back to the days of 'Abduh's teaching at Dār al-'Ulūm, when he gave a course

1. See his articles: "Knowledge and its Effect on Will and Option", *Riḍā*, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 176-81, and "Characters and Habits", pp. 181-93. They both deal with psychological topics.

2. E.g. in his article "Our Associations and their Talks", *ibid.*, pp. 103-08, he gives examples of the ancient Greeks and their scientific atmosphere. In "Attainment of Eminence by Virtue", pp. 172-75, he speaks of the self-made President of the United States, General Garfield (1831-81). In "Political Life", pp. 194-96, he quotes the Roman definition of the "fatherland" (*patria*), refers to the French Revolution and mentions Voltaire, Thièrs and Gambetta.

3. 732-808 A. H. (1332-1406).

of lectures on the political and social theories of Ibn Khaldūn as revealed in his "Prolegomena".

The ideas expressed in 'Abduh's articles in "al-Waqā'i'", and his public activity outside the scope of his editorial duties, form the subject of the two following chapters.

CHAPTER IV

'ABDUH'S POLITICAL WRITINGS AND ACTIVITIES

'Abduh's career as a whole, and the general trend of his writings, show that, fundamentally, he was an evolutionary religious, educational and social reformer, and that his temperament was the reverse of revolutionary. Reformers of this kind do not as a rule develop powerful political personalities; and this may explain why 'Abduh, in respect of politics, was easily affected by pressure of events and by more forceful personalities with whom he came in contact. At times, he was drawn by circumstances or by the influence of other men to adopt revolutionary attitudes; he was, for example, during al-Afghānī's sojourn in Egypt, so much influenced by the revolutionary teachings of his master that he admitted having "strongly approved of" al-Afghānī's idea of assassinating Khedive Ismā'īl.¹ But 'Abduh could never keep up revolutionary attitudes for long, and always soon reverted to his normal pacific and even passive outlook. The circumstances of Egypt in the late eighteen-seventies and early eighteen-eighties were such that no public figure could or would avoid involvement in politics; and 'Abduh was very deeply involved through "al-Waqā'i'" and through all his public activities. His political thought developed with the development of the circumstances; he was conservative with Riyāḍ, moderately Constitutionalist with Sharīf and revolutionary with 'Arābī.

This apparent inconstancy was in keeping with 'Abduh's character as manifested in all the different stages of his career. It has already

1. Blunt, Secret History, p. 375, from 'Abduh's own account to the author in 1903, confirming what 'Arābī also had told Blunt. Al-Afghānī was ready to use political assassination in pursuit of his goals, and one of his followers assassinated Nāṣir al-Dīn, Shāh of Persia, in 1896.

been remarked that his journalistic activity in Paris, under the renewed influence of al-Afghānī, was fiery and revolutionary, but that after their separation he passed to the most prudent moderation.¹ In his later career in Egypt, he not only washed his hands of politics, but even contracted the enmity of the Nationalists led by Muṣṭafā Kāmil;² and while he now broke off all relations with al-Afghānī,³ he became a friend and confidant of Sir Evelyn Baring (later Lord Cromer),⁴ the British representative and virtual ruler of Egypt, to whom -- and not to the legal authorities -- he submitted his report on educational reform in 1889.⁵ It is remarkable that both in his autobiography and in the book on the "Arābī Revolution"⁶ (al-Thawrah al-'Arābīyah), which he wrote in his last days, 'Abduh makes no reference to his own former active parts in politics, either with al-Afghānī or with the Egyptian Nationalists; on the contrary, he denies that 'Arābī was a nationalistic thinker and accuses him of cowardice and personal ambition.⁷

1. Vide supra pp. 32-9.

2. The brilliant young lawyer who led the revival of the Nationalist Party (1874-1908). Cf. Aḥmad Amīn, op. cit., pp. 313-14; Qal'ajī, Muḥammad 'Abduh, Bayrūt, 1948, pp. 70-71.

3. It seems that 'Abduh was so anxious to keep on good terms with the authorities in Egypt that he never made mention of his former master or tried to contact him, except for sending an ambiguous and unsigned letter to him in Istanbul, which evoked a violently reproachful answer. See Aḥmad Amīn, op. cit., pp. 107-08; Rāfi'ī, op. cit., p. 525.

4. Cf. Cromer, op. cit., II, pp. 179-80.

5. Riḍā, op. cit., I, p. 419. For the text of this report see vol. II, pp. 533-51.

6. Uncompleted work, summarized and reproduced by Riḍā, op. cit., I, pp. 157-224.

7. Cf. Rāfi'ī, op. cit., pp. 39-41; Aḥmad Amīn, op. cit., p. 221.

The Period of Riyāḍ's Ministry (October 1880-September 1881).

As already mentioned, Riyāḍ Pasha represented the conservative ideas of his time and believed in reform by bureaucratic means, until the people should become fit for democratic rule; but he was an honest, incorruptible and watchful administrator who never forgave negligent officials. His policy accorded readily with 'Abduh's evolutionary ideas on reform; and this could explain the intimacy between the two men and the free hand given by Riyāḍ to 'Abduh in "al-Waqā'i'" and the Press Bureau. 'Abduh's political articles and activity in this period revolved round the policy of Riyāḍ's Government.

'Abduh called on the Egyptian people to respect the law, and on the authorities to apply it in a spirit of justice and equity. Exhorting the Government and the people to co-operate for the common good, and to make the welfare of all their goal, he writes in "al-Waqā'i'": "The country will be prosperous and well ordered only if the principle of law occupies a high place, and if the rulers as well as the ruled hold it in reverence". He speaks for Riyāḍ when he says: "The country will lead a proper life if the officials use the utmost precision in interpreting the texts and limitations of the law, and in understanding its real intention. They must be wide awake in adjusting their actions, in general and in particular cases, to the actual letter and spirit of the law!" 'Abduh then extols the lead given in this respect by Riyāḍ's policy, quoting as evidence a public circular of the Ministry of Interior concerning the execution of the law for the abolition of forced labour (the corvée).¹

1. From his article "Reverence for Government Laws and Regulations Necessary for the Prosperity of the Nation", "al-Waqā'i'", October 13, 1880. See Riḍā, op. cit., II, pp. 52-55.

In another article,¹ 'Abduh compares the barbarism of primitive man, whose only rule was force, with the glorious results achieved by modern civilized man through organizing his life on the basis of law.

Laws, in 'Abduh's opinion, should differ according to the circumstances of peoples; they should be applicable to existing conditions, and known and understood by the people. The freedom granted by the laws should be limited by the degree of civilization of the people; otherwise it might be a curse rather than a blessing.²

The most significant of 'Abduh's political articles in this period is one entitled "The Error of the Intellectuals", which appeared serially in three issues of "al-Waqā'i".³ He condemns the few intellectuals who, obsessed by modern progressive ideas, try to enforce them abruptly on the ignorant majority of their compatriots. A mature nation consists of mature individuals, and reform must start from this point; the uplift of the nation can only be accomplished through the gradual uplift of individuals, which is a long process requiring time. It would be impossible, for example, to apply the democratic republican system of the United States to a country like Afghānistān, which needs ages to develop a public opinion worthy of a democracy. "Only a few improvements not too far removed from the current level of the people should be introduced. When they have grown accustomed to these, others can be attempted on a higher plane . . . If the latitude given to the people exceeds their horizon, or if obligations which they are

1. "Force and Law", February 7, 1881, ibid., pp. 92-98.

2. From "Laws Differ According to Circumstances", June 19, 1881, ibid., pp. 157-63.

3. April 4, 7 and 19, 1881, ibid., pp. 119-32.

incapable of fulfilling are imposed on them and powers are granted to them when they lack experience of ruling, they will be misled by ideas strange to them and will fall into confusion."¹ Intellectuals who "want our country, being what it is, to become like the countries of Europe, being what they are, will fail to attain their aims ... and do injury to the country by trying to impose on it innovations with no sound basis Before long, such novelties will be worthless and conditions will become worse than before".²

In the second part of this article, 'Abduh asserts that European nations have reached their present degree of freedom after a long process of suffering and hard endeavour since the Middle Ages. They have shed much blood during their struggles against the nobles and in the course of establishing their civilization. A real sense of freedom with a clear distinction between rights and obligations has thus become ingrained in the minds of their individual citizens.

'Abduh concludes his article by saying that it is not natural to start by reaping the fruits for which European nations have paid such high prices over such long stretches of time. People should be trained gradually for democratic life by means of municipal and provincial councils, as was done in Italy and France. Political awareness can be created by means of newspapers and local organizations. At the same time, "distinctive limitations on personal conduct and actions should be laid down".³

1. Ibid., P. 121.

2. Ibid., pp. 122-23.

3. Ibid., p. 132.

Twelve days before the fall of Riyāḍ's Government, 'Abduh had a discussion on the question of an Egyptian constitution with 'Arābī¹ and other officers. When paying a visit to his friend Ṭulbah 'Iṣmat² on the third day of the lesser Bayram of 1298 A. H. (August 28, 1881), 'Abduh found 'Arābī and a group of officers in the house. An account of this meeting has been preserved by 'Abduh,³ who says: "They were talking of freedom and despotism, and of limiting the powers of the Government by means of a parliament. They were of the opinion that the only way to make life and property secure was to change the Government to one which would be bound by a constitution ... We kept up the discussion for three hours, during which 'Arābī and another officer took one side and I the other. They said that the time was ripe for getting rid of despotism and

1. Ahmad 'Arābī was born in 1841. He entered the Egyptian Army as a private soldier in Sa'īd's reign, and was soon promoted to Lieutenant. Under Tawfīq, he rose to the rank of Colonel. The occasion which first gave him political prominence arose out of the difficult relationship which had long existed between the Egyptian officers and the Turco-Circassian officers favoured by the Turkish Pashas in authority. The conflict became acute and led in January 1881 to a complaint by 'Arābī and some other Colonels against the Minister of War, 'Uthmān Rifqī Pasha. The Ministry secretly arrested the complainants with the intention of having them courtmartialled. This caused a mutiny of the troops, who freed the Colonels and demanded from the Khedive the dismissal of Rifqī. Tawfīq was forced to give way, and at the desire of the troops Maḥmūd Sāmī al-Barūdī was appointed in his place. The Army now became the exponent of national aspirations. On September 9, 1881, 'Arābī led a great military demonstration in front of 'Abidīn Palace, as a result of which the Khedive was forced to change his Cabinet and summon the Chamber of Deputies. Events then followed in quick succession, culminating in the British military intervention in the summer of 1882. The Egyptian Army under 'Arābī was defeated by the British troops led by Lord Wolseley at al-Tall al-Kabīr on September 13, 1882. 'Arābī was tried and exiled to Ceylon, whence he received permission to return home in 1901. He died in 1911.

See: C. H. Becker, "'Arābī Pasha", Encyclopaedia of Islām, Vol. I, pp. 416-17; Rāfi'ī, op. cit.; Broadley, op. cit.

2. One of the leaders of the 'Arābī movement. He was dismissed from his civilian post because of his connections with the 'Arābists, and joined the army as an officer at the end of 1881. See Rāfi'ī, op. cit., p. 527.

3. Ridā, op. cit., I, pp. 217-18, from 'Abduh's unpublished book "al-Thawrah al-'Arābiyah".

establishing a parliamentary government. I said that we must for some years concern ourselves with education and training, and do our best to influence the Government to rule justly. We ought to seek our goal by starting with provincial and town councils to act as advisory bodies for the people. This would pave the way towards our objective of placing restrictions on the Government. It would be unreasonable to surprise the country with something for which it was not prepared. This would be like handing property over to a minor." 'Abduh concluded the discussion by stating: "If the nation is prepared to take part in the Government's administration of its affairs, it will be meaningless to seek that end by military force. Therefore what the Army leaders demand is illegitimate; for if the country obtains a Parliament, this will then be neither a sign of its maturity nor the fulfilment of its aims; and it will not take long for this acquisition to collapse and vanish . . .". 'Arābī answered: "It is not the Army that is demanding the establishment of a parliament; the Army is only supporting the demands of the notables and distinguished men of the country . . .".

The Period of Sharīf's Ministry, (September 1881-February 1882).

The national feeling described by 'Arābī in his discussion with 'Abduh found its culminating expression in the military demonstration which he led at 'Abidīn Palace on September 9, 1881. On this day, 'Arābī in the name of the Egyptians demanded from the Khedive the dismissal of Riyāḍ's Government, the convocation of a parliament, and the raising of the Army to 18,000 men in accordance with the decrees of the Ottoman Sultan. All these demands were granted, and at the request of 'Arābī

Sharīf Pasha was summoned to form his third Ministry.¹ He was a Constitutional and a member of the National Party (al-Ḥizb al-Waṭanī), founded as a result of al-Afghānī's teachings. He had presented the resignation of his previous Ministry (which was succeeded by Riyāḍ's) because Tawfīq had refused to consent to a draft decree granting a constitution. Describing the popular reaction to the 'Abidīn demonstration and the events which followed it, a foreign eyewitness wrote:² "Throughout Egypt a cry of jubilation arose such as for hundreds of years had not been heard upon the Nile . . . In the streets of Cairo men stopped each other . . . to embrace and rejoice together at the astonishing new reign of liberty which had suddenly begun for them, like the dawn of day after a long night of fear."

In response to this change of atmosphere, the tone of 'Abduh's political writing and activity underwent an equally considerable change, and now harmonized with the prevalent progressive ideas which he had so recently opposed. Only three months after his discussion with 'Arābī, he wrote a strongly patriotic article³ in which he optimistically took the liberal side. In this he appeals for patriotism and stresses that there are three cogent reasons for love of the homeland. "Firstly, the homeland is the abode of sustenance and security, family and children. Secondly, the homeland is the place in respect of which we have both rights and obligations, the pivot of political life. Thirdly, it is in relation to their homeland that people are raised to dignity or lowered to humility." He goes on to castigate those "who have tried to strip their compatriots

1. Cf. Rāfi'ī, op. cit., pp. 127-30; Blunt, op. cit., p. 372; Cromer, op. cit., I, p. 186.

2. Blunt, op. cit., pp. 116-17.

3. "Political Life", November 28, 1881, Riḍā, op. cit., II, pp. 194-96.

of their national identity and humiliate them"; but asserts that "events have proved that we have a national awareness and public opinion". "Yet, there are some persons who still hurt our hearing by repeating their platitudes, such as that of our being so accustomed to oppression and injustice that we shall not come upon the path of liberty . . . They seem to ignore the fact that Western nations lived in similar conditions for ages. Were there not once in France thousands of serfs . . . who were sold like animals? . . . Why, then, did such conditions not prevent the French from attaining their present high position?" 'Abduh in this article makes his plea for love of the homeland so enthusiastically that he adds colour to his eloquence with quotations from romantic love poems.

On December 26, 1881, the new Chamber of Deputies, which was to be at the same time a Constituent Assembly was formally opened with a reassuring speech by the Khedive in person.¹ On the two preceding days, 'Abduh had written two important articles in favour of constitutional government.

His theme in the first article² is the necessity of national representation for both rulers and ruled. As human beings, rulers have personal propensities which can be restrained only by the public opinion of the community. Moreover, it is impossible for one individual to carry on alone the affairs of a whole nation; he needs to consult and to receive co-operation. For the people, a representative system is no less necessary. It is unfair that the community should lay the burden of its government on one person without advising him, and be satisfied with merely criti-

1. Rāfi'ī, op. cit., pp. 176-85.

2. December 24, 1881, Ridā, op. cit., II, pp. 197-200. He uses as the title the Islamic term "Shūrā", meaning literally "Consultation", and in politics "Representative System".

cizing him if he errs. Evidence for this proposition can be found in the early history of Islam. "The great Caliph 'Umar asked the people one day to set him straight if he walked crookedly. A man answered him that he had indeed walked straightly, and if he had not, they would have straightened him with their swords . . . This example has been followed by our Honoured Khedive, who has found it necessary that his country should have a constitutional system . . . The old Islamic way of consultation is no longer fit for the present time. The modern representative system is more practical and suitable."

Commenting in the second article¹ on the constitutional function of the Chamber of Deputies, 'Abduh discusses the basis of Law in general². For the maintenance of the social organization of the community it is necessary that a Law(or constitution) be enacted. The ideal Law is one which would be an expression of public opinion and based on consultation. Since one person alone cannot introduce a Law which will secure the interests of all the individual members of the community, they choose delegates representing every class to collaborate in drawing up the Law. Since each country has its own circumstances, Laws should not be transcribed from other countries; they must conform to local needs and traditions. 'Abduh concludes this article by stating that the Egyptians have become ready for constitutional life, since they have proved that they have a public opinion and aspire to improve their condition.

During this period, 'Abduh took part in an important political act. The constitutional development of Egypt attracted the attention of

1. "Representative System and Law", December 25, 1881, ibid., pp. 200-205.

2. He uses the term "Qānūn" (Law), in its wide sense as "Constitution". The term now used for "Constitution" in Arabic is "Dustūr".

the European Governments, especially those of Britain and France, which, after Ismā'īl's bankruptcy, had since 1876 been exercising a "Dual Control" over Egyptian finances in the interest of the foreign bond-holders;¹ and the situation needed clarification. In response to a suggestion by his friend Blunt, 'Abduh in conjunction with some other civilian leaders drew up a manifesto summarizing the programme of the National Party. Having gained the approval of 'Arābī and Maḥmūd Sāmī al-Bārūdī (the War Minister), as representatives of the Army, Blunt sent this manifesto on December 18, 1881 to the British Prime Minister, Gladstone, and to the London "Times" in which it was published on January 1, 1882.² The main points of this important national document are as follows:³

- 1) The National Party accept the existing relations of Egypt with the Porte. At the same time, they are firmly determined to oppose by every means in their power any attempts to reduce Egypt again to the condition of a Turkish Pashalik (Province).
- 2) The Party express their loyal allegiance to the Khedive. They will continue to support his authority as long as he rules in accordance with justice and the law, and fulfils the promises which he made to the Egyptians in September 1881. They declare, however, their intention of permitting no renewal of the despotic reign of injustice

1. Vide supra p. 29.

2. Blunt, opv cit., pp. 132, 138.

3. For the full text see: ibid., pp. 383-85.

which Egypt has so often witnessed. They also warn the Khedive against listening to those who would persuade him to continue his despotic power, to betray the national rights of the Egyptians, or to elude his promises.

3) The Party fully recognize the services rendered to Egypt by the Governments of England and France, and the European Control as a necessity of Egypt's present financial position and the best guarantee of her prosperity. Nevertheless, they look upon the existing order of things as in its nature temporary, and avow their hope of gradually redeeming the country out of the hands of its creditors. They cannot understand why Europeans living in the land should remain forever exempt from the general taxation, or from obedience to the general law;¹ but they do not propose to remedy these evils by any violent action.

4) The Party have at the present time entrusted their objectives to the Army, believing it to be the only power in Egypt able and willing to protect the country's growing liberties; but they do not plan that this state of affairs shall continue. As soon as the people shall have set their life on a sound basis, the Army will abandon its political rôle.

5) The National Party of Egypt is a political, not a religious party. It includes within its ranks men of various races and creeds, and holds that all citizens have equal rights, both politically and before the law.

For four months, all went well in the political situation in

1. Capitulations in Egypt were abolished by Montreux Convention, concluded between Egypt and the privileged European countries in 1937.

Egypt. There was a good understanding between all circles; the Army was quiescent; the press (thanks to 'Abduh's censorship) was moderate; and the Government were preparing the draft of the Organic Law which was to give the country its new Constitution.¹ In the field of foreign affairs, a message of peace was expected from the Liberal Gladstone in answer to the National Party's programme. Suddenly, however, on January 8, 1882, a Joint Note was delivered to the Khedive by the British and French Consuls-General at Cairo.² The language of menace in which it was written upset the hopes of the Nationalists and threw Egypt back into a sea of troubles.³ The Note stressed the determination of Britain and France to support the Khedive's Government "against the difficulties of various kinds", and referred to the convocation of the Chamber of Deputies as having given the two Powers an opportunity "for^a/further exchange of views". It declared to the Khedive that "the English and French Governments consider the maintenance of His Highness on the throne . . . as alone able to guarantee . . . the good order and development of general prosperity in Egypt". The two Powers gave an assurance that they would guard by their united efforts against all causes of complication, and expressed their conviction that "His Highness will draw from this assurance the confidence and strength which he requires to direct the destinies of Egypt and his people".

1. Cf. Rāfi'ī, op. cit., pp. 176 et. seq.; Blunt, op. cit., pp. 136-37.

2. This step was taken at the insistence of Gambetta, who was then the Prime Minister of France but not long afterwards resigned. Cf. Rāfi'ī, p. 191.

3. See full text in Cromer, op. cit., I, p. 223.

The effect of the Note on Egyptian public opinion was disastrous; and Sharīf's Ministry, placed as it was between the Anglo-French pressure on the one hand, and the expectations of the Army and Nationalists on the other, found itself in a tight corner. A second and fatal blow was delivered in a Memorandum communicated by the two Consuls-General to Sharīf on January 26, declaring that "the Chamber could not vote the Budget without infringing the Decrees establishing the [Dual] Control, and that an innovation of the nature proposed by the Chamber could not be introduced without the assent of the English and French Governments."¹ This aroused the anger of the Deputies, who insisted on having the right to examine the Budget. After trying unsuccessfully to compromise between the two sides, Sharīf resigned on February 2, 1882.²

Sharīf was a moderate Nationalist, and 'Abduh's attitude during these days was in harmony with that of the Prime Minister. 'Abduh showed his moderation by his part in Blunt's effort to mediate between the National Party and Britain, and again when he said of the promised Constitution: "We have waited so many hundred years for our freedom that we can well afford now to wait for some months".³ On another occasion, he acted as mediator between the Deputies and Blunt, who was trying in vain to convince them that the Budget procedure was an international affair which neither the Government nor the Parliament had any right to touch without first gaining the consent of the two Controlling

1. Cromer, op. cit., I, p. 242.

2. Cf. Rāfi'ī, op. cit., pp. 193-200.

3. Blunt, op. cit., p. 137

The Days of Storm (February-September 1881).

On February 4, Maḥmūd Sāmī al-Barūdī was chosen by the Deputies to succeed Sharīf as Prime Minister, with 'Arābī as Minister of War.² The first act of the new Nationalist Government was to promulgate the promised Constitution by Decree on February 7.³ This tremendous victory of the Nationalists was greeted with unanimous rejoicing, demonstrations of which were given in various public meetings held by societies, Deputies and notables, and attended by Ministers, Army leaders and other prominent national figures.

'Abduh was one of the leading participants in these celebrations, and he conveyed full details of them to the public through the columns of "al-Waqā'i".⁴ At the first meeting which was held,⁵ he made an important speech explaining the merits of constitutional rule, and demanding the spread of education and the grant of freedom of speech and writing. He delivered similar addresses at other meetings, speaking highly of democracy, equality and freedom.⁶

1. Ibid., p. 147.

2. Cf. Cromer, op. cit., I, p. 243.

3. Rāfi'ī, op. cit., p. 213.

4. Most of the speakers on these occasions were disciples of al-Afghānī, such as al-Nadīm, al-Laḡānī and Adīb Ishāq.

5. Held by the Charitable Society, "al-Maqāṣid al-Khayrīyah". See "al-Waqā'i", February 15, 1882.

6. See "al-Waqā'i", February 21, for the meeting held by the Deputies Aḥmad Maḥmūd and Ibrāhīm al-Wakīl; March 5, for the meeting held by Aḥmad Abāzah.

This enthusiastic spirit of patriotism is equally evident in "al-Waqā'i", and particularly in 'Abduh's writings in it at this time. Commenting on the arrival in Cairo of a delegation of students from Alexandria to congratulate the leaders of the new Government on their victory,¹ he fervently advocates and expounds the principles of nationalism and democracy. In another article,² he asserts that ideas should be associated with action, just as action should depend on ideas, and urges his compatriots to unite in action as they had in opinion. He maintains unhesitatingly that "national representation is based on public opinion and its main advantage is that it must follow whatever public opinion decides".

The road ahead of the Nationalist Government was full of obstacles. The Khedive, the Turco-Circassians, and some of the European Consular representatives, all intrigued to get rid of the new régime. When a Circassian conspiracy against the lives of 'Arābī and his chief officers was discovered in April and the conspirators³ were courtmartialled, the Khedive refused to sign the sentence;⁴ and his attitude gave to European diplomacy "the opportunity it had been waiting for of setting the Khedive in open quarrel with his Ministers".⁵ 'Abduh during these events never flinched from his ardent support of the Nationalists. In a long letter

1. "Al-Waqā'i", February 7, 1882.

2. "Union of Opinion and Union of Action", April 23, 1882.

3. Most of them were Army officers, including the former Minister of War, 'Uthmān Rifqī Pasha.

4. For members of the armed forces, this was exile for life to the Sūdān. Cf. Cromer, op. cit., I, p. 262; Rāfi'ī, op. cit., p. 260.

5. Blunt, op. cit., pp. 189-90.

which he sent on April 25 to his friend Blunt,¹ he strongly defends the Government and their measures, and refutes the rumours spread in Europe that the leaders were seeking personal advantage. "As to the promotions of the officers, of which European newspapers are making so much talk," he writes, "allow me to explain the facts. In the first place, the promotions were not made by 'Arābī Pasha's sole will and pleasure, nor were they a bribe to gain the officer's affections towards 'Arābī. They were made in consequence of the new military law." "Every Egyptian . . .," he continues, "hates the Turks and detests their infamous memory . . . The Turks are tyrants, who have left calamities behind them in Egypt which still make our hearts sore . . . [They] have footings enough with their firmans in Egypt. They must stop there and try nothing further. But if any attempt of this kind comes to our knowledge, we shall hail it as a not altogether unwelcome accident . . . We shall make use of the event if it happens to recover our full independence. Our clearest minded statesmen are now watching every movement of Turkish policy in this country to check it the moment it oversteps its limits." 'Abduh accuses the ex-Khedive Ismā'īl of being the author of the Circassian conspiracy, and describes him as "the greatest enemy Egypt ever had, and one still envious of her happiness". Of the conspiracy itself, he says: "Every one knows that 'Arābī's life is exposed, as other men's, to dangers daily . . . But we should only laugh if it were stated publicly that England was on the verge of anarchy because a madman, soldier or civilian, had tried to shoot your Queen".

Tawfīq's refusal to sign the sentence against the conspirators, and the British Consul-General's support for his refusal, brought the

1. Ibid., pp. 190-94.

political situation in Egypt to a high pitch of tension. The Nationalists were so angered that they began to talk in their meetings of deposing the Khedive; and the Government recalled the Deputies to consider the situation.¹ Efforts by some Deputies to reconcile the Khedive and the Ministry ended in a compromise, namely that the sentences should be commuted to simple exile. Reporting this in "al-Waqā'i'", 'Abduh warned the Egyptian press to desist from further discussion of the details of the question.² Shortly afterwards he published in a prominent place the Khedivial Decree giving the final sentences.³ During these days also, he first warned and then suspended some extremist newspapers, such as "al-ṭā'if"⁴ and "al-Mufīd".⁵

Meanwhile, Britain and France had unexpectedly decided to intervene more actively in Egyptian affairs, by despatching a joint naval squadron to Alexandria on the pretext of securing the lives of foreigners.⁶ The real purpose of this move was to overthrow the Nationalist Government by urging the Khedive to take advantage of the occasion and dismiss the Ministry.⁷ After the arrival of the warships at Alexandria, the British and French Consuls-General on May 25 handed an ultimatum to the Egyptian

1. Ibid., pp. 202-04; Rāfi'ī, op. cit., p. 264.

2. "Al-Waqā'i'", May 16, 1882.

3. "Al-Waqā'i'", May 22, 1882.

4. Vide supra p. 48.

5. Rāfi'ī, op. cit., p. 266. "Al-Mufīd" was established in Cairo by Ḥasan al-Shamsī in 1881. See Ibrāhīm 'Abduh, Taṭawwur, pp. 113, 295.

6. Cf. Cromer, op. cit., I, pp. 266-71; Blunt, op. cit., pp. 205, 209; Rāfi'ī, op. cit., pp. 268-69.

7. Cf. Cromer, op. cit., I, p. 270-71.

Government, demanding:

- "1. The temporary retirement from Egypt of 'Arābī Pasha, with the maintenance of his rank and pay.
2. The retirement into the interior of Egypt of 'Alī Fahmī Pasha and 'Abd al-'Al [Hilmī] Pasha,¹ who will also retain their rank and pay.
3. The resignation of the present Ministry."²

The Anglo-French demands were accepted by Tawfīq, and the Nationalist Ministry resigned on May 26. As a result of the ultimatum, the Nationalist Army officers could only choose between surrender and preparation for a clash with the Khedive and the European Powers which supported him. They chose the latter course. A few hours before the resignation of the Ministry, the leading Army officers, including 'Arābī and al-Bārūdī, held a meeting at 'Abidīn Barracks in which they swore on the Qur'ān to be as one man in defending their country against any aggression. This oath was drawn up and administered to the officers by 'Abduh.³

Through all these eventful days, 'Abduh devoted the pages of "al-Waqā'i'" and his own untiring energy entirely to the national cause. He became an active participant in the resistance movement, and "al-Waqā'i'" its mouthpiece and the record of its events.

After the resignation of al-Bārūdī's Ministry, no other Cabinet was formed till June 20; but public opinion forced Tawfīq to reinstate

1. Commanders of regiments, and closest associates of 'Arābī.
2. Cromer, op. cit., I, pp. 273-74.
3. Rāfi'ī, op. cit., pp. 273-74.

'Arābī on May 28 as Minister of War,¹ with even wider responsibilities than before. This step was also "backed by the German and Austrian consuls, who saw in 'Arābī the man best capable in Egypt to maintain order".² But events were conspiring against any peaceful hopes. On June 6, "al-Waqā'i" published on its front page two important documents. One was a Khedivial order to 'Arābī, stating that, in accordance with a telegram from the Porte, the construction of batteries at Alexandria by the Egyptian Army must cease. The order explains that this telegram was the result of a declaration made to the Ottoman Ambassador in London by the British Foreign Minister, who had considered such construction as an act hostile to the allied fleet. The other document was 'Arābī's answer complying with the order, after first stating that the alleged construction of fortifications was no more than ordinary repair work and maintaining that it was the presence of the Anglo-French fleet in Egyptian waters which should be considered as a menacing act.

The tension in Alexandria led on June 11 to riots in which a number of Egyptians and Europeans were killed. This unfortunate event upset the Nationalists and obliged the Khedive to fill the political vacuum with a new Cabinet. On June 20, a Ministry was formed by Ismā'īl Rāghib Pasha, who kept 'Arābī as Minister of War; and 'Arābī sent a letter to the Khedive in which he expressed his satisfaction and appreciation of the new Government.³

A few days after the riots in Alexandria, both 'Arābī and 'Abduh

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1. "Al-Waqā'i", May 31, 1882.
 2. Blunt, op. cit., p. 237.
 3. "Al-Waqā'i", June 20, 1882.

addressed a meeting of the Italian community in Cairo.¹ 'Arābī, in his speech, appealed for the brotherhood of all inhabitants of Egypt, and 'Abduh, following him, likewise stated that Europeans resident in Egypt were fellow-citizens of the same country together with the natives; and he appealed to the European communities to unite with the Egyptians in one block and to have confidence in the National leaders in those critical days.

At a meeting of the Egyptian leaders held on June 18 to discuss the best means of tiding over the difficult situation resulting from the Alexandria riots, 'Abduh proposed that he should personally "get together all the documents he had in his possession, with others concerning Egyptian affairs, and go to England and depose them himself before Mr. Gladstone and the English Parliament". This idea was approved, and 'Abduh began preparing for the journey.² After the British Admiral Beauchamp Seymour had sent, on July 6, an ultimatum to Ṭulbah 'Iṣmat Pasha, the Commandant of the Egyptian garrison in Alexandria, Blunt telegraphed to his agent Sābūnjī urging him to send 'Abduh as a messenger from the Nationalists to Gladstone.³ But apparently circumstances did not allow 'Abduh to carry out this plan on either occasion.

On July 10, a special Council of State presided over by Tawfīq and including the Cabinet Ministers, the Ottoman envoy, and some notables, decided to reject the ultimatum but still hoped for conciliation. The

1. "Al-Waḡā'i", June 18, 1882.

2. Blunt, op. cit., p. 261, quoting from a letter received from his secretary Sābūnjī, whom he had sent to Egypt in June 1882, as a messenger to his Nationalist friends. Ibid., p. 227.

3. Ibid., p. 276.

British representative then broke off official relations with the Egyptian Government, and after the French fleet had withdrawn, the British warships in the early morning of the next day began to bombard Alexandria.¹ Egypt was now in a state of war with Britain, and the Government declared Martial Law.

On the same day as the bombardment, 'Abduh wrote a concise and effective editorial in "al-Waqā'i".² He begins by quoting the Qur'ānic verse: "Allah hath bought from the believers their lives and their wealth, because Paradise will be theirs: they shall fight in the way of Allah and shall slay and be slain. It is a promise which is binding on Him in the Torah and the Gospel and the Qur'ān. Who fulfilleth His covenant better than Allah? Rejoice then in your bargain that ye have made, for that is the supreme triumph".³ 'Abduh then urges his compatriots to join and support the Army, which is defending their country against the aggressor enemy; and concludes by enjoining them to give good treatment to foreign residents, including even British.

Up till the defeat of 'Arābī at al-Tall al-Kabīr on September 13, 1882, "al-Waqā'i" was the mouthpiece of the fighting Egyptian Army. Besides recording the events of the war, it published fervent articles from 'Abduh's pen supporting the Army and calling on the people to aid the troops.

On July 13, 'Abduh wrote a moving editorial in two parts. He first

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1. Cromer, op. cit., I, p. 296; Rāfi'ī, op. cit., pp. 333, 345.
 2. "Al-Waqā'i", July 11, 1882.
 3. Qur'ān, 9: 111.

exhorts the Egyptians and especially the inhabitants of Cairo to offer all that they can to help the fugitives from Alexandria who have had to abandon their town after its burning on the previous day. In the second part, he extols those who have responded to his previous appeals for volunteers in the Army and contributions in its aid, and ends by giving a list of the contributors.

The pages of "al-Waqā'i'" during the rest of July are the most valuable source of information about the story of those eventful days. The Khedive who was at Alexandria and in touch with British naval authorities, sent at their behest on July 17 a cable to 'Arābī in his nearby camp at Kafr al-Dawwār, in which, after stating that the bombardment of the city was the consequence of the Government's refusal to comply with the English Admiral's demand for the dismantling of the forts, and that the British had no intention of imposing a state of war on Egypt, he instructed 'Arābī to return at once to Alexandria and to suspend all warlike preparations.¹ 'Arābī in his reply² reminded Tawfīq that it was His Highness who had urged that the Admiral's demands should be rejected,³ and the British threats, if followed by acts, should be answered with war; and finally he declared that he would not move to Alexandria unless the British fleet left the port.

On July 18, at night, a National Assembly met in Cairo. It had been convoked by 'Arābī, and consisted of four hundred representatives of

1. "Al-Waqā'i'", July 18, 1882.

2. Published in the same number.

3. 'Arābī was referring to the decision of the Egyptian Council of State held on July 10 under the presidency of the Khedive. Vide supra p. 73.

all Egyptian classes, including Princes of the Khedivial family and the religious leaders of the Muslims, Christians and Jews. This Assembly unanimously supported 'Arābī against Tawfīq.¹ By its decision, a Council of War was formed to handle the affairs of Egypt in place of the Cabinet, whose members (except 'Arābī) were with Tawfīq in Alexandria.²

On July 22, the Assembly formally countermanded Tawfīq's order dismissing 'Arābī and voted a resolution that his orders should no longer be obeyed. Its secretary in this memorable meeting was 'Abduh, who read to the representatives a "fatwā" issued by some 'ulamā' of al-Azhar, ruling that, since the Khedive had gone over to the enemies of his country, there was no longer any obligation to obey him.³

"Al-Waqā'i", under 'Abduh's editorship, redoubled its efforts in support of the national struggle, and did all that it could to raise the morale of the Egyptians. In its news columns, it quoted reports and comments from the European press which favoured the Egyptian cause against the British,⁴ and published the communiqués and proclamations of the Egyptian Command.⁵

'Abduh's last contribution to "al-Waqā'i" was a long article published on September 9.⁶ It begins with references to the discovery of

1. "Al-Waqā'i", July 20, 1882. As a result of this decision, Tawfīq dismissed 'Arābī. Rāfi'ī, op. cit., pp. 386-87.

2. "Al-Waqā'i", July 23, 1882.

3. "Al-Waqā'i", July 31, 1882. "Fatwā": a ruling on a matter of religion or religious law.

4. A good number of these items are published on August 30, 1882.

5. See "Al-Waqā'i" of August 8, 10, 13, and 20, 1882.

6. Entitled "Sultān Pasha's Intrigues and their Failure, and the Fairness of their Punishment".

some secret communications from Sultān Pasha, the President of the Chamber of Deputies, who had thrown in his lot with the Court party and the British against his former associates, to certain Beduin chiefs residing west of the Suez Canal whom he had induced to side with the British against the Egyptian Army.¹ Casting scorn on this dishonourable betrayal, 'Abduh says that its perpetrator has proved himself inferior to the animals, which always defend their young and their homes against aggressors. In peace time, the people of a country may differ in regard to politics, but when facing external dangers they must unite in one block against their enemy. 'Abduh then refutes the illusion that the British were invading Egypt simply to support the authority of the Khedive or that of the Porte, and notes that they had had the ambition of occupying the country ever since the time of Bonaparte's expedition. He concludes his article by branding Sultān Pasha as a traitor and praising the Government's decision to confiscate his properties for the benefit of the national objectives.

After the defeat of the Egyptian Army at al-Tall al-Kabīr and the occupation of Cairo two days later, on September 15, by the British troops, "al-Waqā'i'" ceased publication. It reappeared a week later, no longer as a newspaper and mouthpiece of public opinion, but as the official gazette of the new régime. 'Abduh was arrested with the leaders of the Nationalist movement. Thus ended his remarkable journalistic efforts as

1. The British infantry led by General Wolsely, entered Egypt from the Suez Canal across the Province of Sharqīyah. Sultān Pasha accompanied the British Army as representative of the Khedive. The money which he distributed among the Beduin in the name of Tawfīq played an important part in the betrayal of 'Arābī. After the British occupation, his services were rewarded by Tawfīq with a gift of ten thousand pounds, and by the British Government with the title of "Sir". Cf. Blunt, *op. cit.*, pp. 313-314; Riḍā, *op. cit.*, I, pp. 258-60 (from 'Abduh's memoirs); Rāfi'ī, *op. cit.*, pp. 418, 459.

Editor-in-Chief of "al-Waqā'i'", and the Golden Age of the paper's eventful history.

During 'Abduh's imprisonment, which lasted three months until he was exiled, his fears affected him so much that it was difficult for his English lawyer Broadley to recognize in him "the patriotic writer and the most militant speaker at the meeting of the council¹ which ruled in Cairo during the sixty days' war";² or to realize that he had been "the author of the bold and picturesque expositions of the aims and objects of the Egyptian Nationalists, forwarded barely six months before to Mr. Blunt".³

While in prison, 'Abduh wrote a memorandum in defence of his conduct. This Broadley regarded as "too much akin to an apology". 'Abduh's defence was that, as Editor-in-Chief of "al-Waqā'i'", he had from first to last only "obeyed the orders of his lawful superiors as they succeeded one another on the stage", and that in the discharge of all his public duties he had given "passive obedience to competent authority".⁴

Such pleas could not conceal the obvious importance of 'Abduh's rôle during the 'Arābī movement, and he was exiled from Egypt along with the other Nationalist leaders.

1. The writer means the National Assembly.

2. Broadley, op. cit., p. lll.

3. Ibid., p. 228. The programme of the National Party to which the writer refers was sent to Blunt in December 1881, almost nine months before 'Abduh's imprisonment. Vide supra pp. 62-4.

4. Ibid., p. 229.

CHAPTER V

'ABDUH'S IDEAS ON SPIRITUAL AND SOCIAL REFORM

'Abduh used "al-Waqā'i'", not only as a political organ, but also as a vehicle for conveying to the public his ideas on every aspect of the problem which was his real concern; namely the reform of Muslim society, and particularly of Egyptian society. These ideas were not merely academic or theoretical; on the contrary, nearly all of them have been put into practice, either by 'Abduh himself whenever he could, or by others who have succeeded him up to the present time. He was deeply conscious of the then existing backwardness of the Muslim peoples and of their deplorable political, social, moral and intellectual condition. These ills, in his opinion, could be remedied only by a gradual and evolutionary course of transformation, starting with the simplest changes. The fundamental need was for reform of the character, thought and conduct of the people; and this could be achieved through the spreading of education, and through the improvement of morality,¹ on the basis of a purified Islamic faith. 'Abduh's firmest conviction was that Islam, if truly understood and stated, is not incompatible with the spirit of modern civilization and science; and he believed that the Muslim peoples had urgent need of such a restatement in order to recover the essential and abiding values of their religion, which were so much obscured by temporary

1. Cf. Adams, op. cit., p. 49; Osman Amin, op. cit., pp. 115, 195; J. Schacht, "Muhammad 'Abduh," Encycl. Islām, III, p. 678.

or local applications of it.¹ These ideas are expressed in certain specific articles and are intermingled with some of his purely political writings and sayings.²

Education.

'Abduh considered education to be the backbone of all reform, as without it there could be no improvement of morality and purification of religious faith, and no scientific and technical progress. Besides concerning himself with the promotion of education, he showed the deep interest of a pedagogue in its techniques. This originated from his experience as a student at the Ahmadi Mosque and at al-Azhar. The method of instruction at the Ahmadi Mosque was arduous and inconsistent with any intelligent view of the purposes of education; the shaykhs surprised the beginner with technical terms and definitions of which he was totally ignorant, and required him to commit them to memory without caring the least whether or not he understood their meaning. At al-Azhar in those days, the system was no better; the course of instruction was devoid either of anything which might be of practical use or of anything which might inspire a desire for learning.³ In this darkness two personalities guided 'Abduh to the light. His great uncle, Shaykh Darwish Khadr, inspired him with a desire for learning and persuaded him to resume his studies at the Ahmadi Mosque after he had become discouraged; and his

1. Cf. Adams, op. cit., p. 109; Gibb, op. cit., p. 33.

2. Vide supra pp. 56-7, 59, 67.

3. 'Abduh's autobiography, Riḍā, op. cit., I, pp. 20-25.

master al-Afghānī opened new horizons of knowledge and thought before him.

'Abduh's interest in the reform of educational methods was enhanced by his practical teaching experience¹ before his appointment to "al-Waqā'i". One of his first articles in "al-Ahrām" was on this subject. In the pages of "al-Waqā'i", he gave proof of his continuing interest, and repeatedly urged a wider diffusion of education as the way to the realization of all desirable reforms.

In the first of his three articles in "al-Waqā'i" criticizing the Ministry of Education,² 'Abduh advocates night schools as the best means of combatting ignorance among adults. "People often talk", he says, "of something which might give them a proper life and bring about the growth of their society. That thing is useful knowledge, by which we have seen some countries outdistance others . . . During Muḥammad 'Alī's reign, people were driven to schools as if they were being driven to military service or even to death. But in our own days, [people's] minds have woken up, and realizing the advantages and benefits of knowledge, they have begun educating their children . . . Young men who have now passed the school age . . . have been hoping that night schools might be opened . . . in which they could make up for what they have missed . . . They were therefore happy when the Ministry of Education decided to open a school of this kind; but their spirits sank when they learnt that French would be the medium

1. Vide supra p. 28.

2. Vide supra p. 46; Riḍā, op. cit., II, 69-72.

of instruction." 'Abduh strongly opposes such a step, and insists on the instruction in the school being given in simple Arabic, so that the sciences may be made accessible to the majority of seekers for knowledge. He also stresses the importance of night schools for diverting the attention of the youth from useless leisure activities into beneficial channels, and suggests that night courses "should be made compulsory for every Government servant who has not acquired the standard of knowledge needed for his work."¹

In the second article,² 'Abduh outlines a general plan for raising the standard of education. He criticizes the Ministry for contenting itself with issuing circulars rebuking lazy and unsuccessful teachers and thanking the successful ones. The reward for industrious teachers, 'Abduh maintains, must be tangible if definite improvement is to result. The work of teachers must be checked so that the inefficient may be eliminated and only the efficient retained. It is the duty of the Ministry to arrange for periodic inspection of schools, and for vigilance over the moral character of teachers. Text-books must also be revised and purged.

Returning in the third article³ to the subject of night schools, 'Abduh mentions that the Ministry of Education has agreed to his proposal and decided that Arabic would be the medium of instruction, with French to be kept only as a separate subject. He takes this opportunity to express his view on the question of learning foreign languages.

1. The Egyptian Government have to a great extent realized the aims set forth in this article. By Law No. 46 of 1933, Elementary Education was made compulsory; and by Law No. 110 of 1944 a project for combatting illiteracy among adults was put into execution. In 1945 the "Popular Education Foundation" was established to promote education in all subjects by means of night courses among both men and women; it now has 18 branches all over Egypt.

2. Riḍā, op. cit., II, pp. 73-77.

3. Ibid., pp. 78-79.

"Some people," he says, "believe that the mere learning of foreign languages is a superior accomplishment worth striving for. No language is in itself a superior thing, nor should it be considered as in itself an end to be aimed at. A language is only a means to acquiring the science, literature and thought which it contains . . .".¹

In another article in "al-Waqā'i",² commenting on a Ministry of Education circular, the text of which he published alongside, 'Abduh expresses his ideas on religious education in the schools. The circular urged teachers to take greater interest in this. 'Abduh considered its ultimate purpose. Education in general aims at "training minds and souls . . . so that they may be able to attain happiness in this life and after death". The training of minds consists of "extricating them from the atmosphere of simplicity, ignorance and evil thoughts . . . and purifying them with true knowledge and ideas which will create a capacity to distinguish between good and evil, and between the beneficial and harmful". The training of souls consists of "accustoming them to noble qualities and capacities . . . No knowledge

1. 'Abduh applied this idea to himself. When past forty years of age, he learnt French (which he had not had time to acquire in Paris), for two reasons. Being then a judge of the National Courts, where most of the laws dealt with were based on the French Code, he found it necessary to know French so that his understanding of the laws in their origins might be not less firmly grounded than that of his colleagues. He was also eager after reading Arabic translations of works by European scholars, to acquaint himself with the originals. Later, 'Abduh several times travelled to France and Switzerland and attended summer courses at the University of Geneva, and read a large number of French works on sociology, ethics, history, philosophy and education. His knowledge of French became so good that he translated into Arabic Herbert Spencer's book on "Education" from a French version. During his final illness, he dictated in French a paper which De Guerville published in 1905, in his work "La Nouvelle Egypte", under the title "Un Testament Politique du Feu Grand Mufti". See: 'Abduh's autobiography, *Riḍā*, *op. cit.*, I, pp. 104-05; Adams, *op. cit.*, p. 95; 'Uthmān Amīn, *op. cit.*, pp. 107-09. The "Testament Politique" is reproduced by Osman Amin, *op. cit.*, [French], pp. 247-51.

2. "Education in Government Schools", November 29, 1880, *Riḍā*, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 80-83.

can be attained unless souls are characterized by these fine qualities, the greatest of which is love of perfection . . . The corner-stone of this is . . . religious instruction, which paves the way to the highest moral virtues." 'Abduh quotes in support of this principle the Tradition of the Prophet, "I have been sent in order to realize the moral perfection [of mankind]" and mentions that "it has been adopted by all civilized countries. Education in European countries begins with religious instruction, which continues to be part of the curricula for several years."

In another article,¹ 'Abduh turns his attention to the Arabic books circulating in Egypt in his day, and calls for a purge of books on magic, alchemy and astrology. Such books are no less harmful than those which are proscribed by the Government as heretic, immoral or seditious. "Nay, these books are like contagious diseases . . . They are of the most important factors hindering the progress of the country."

In lucid words, free from any kind of prejudice or fanaticism, 'Abduh describes how the beliefs of children are affected by what they learn in schools conducted by people of faiths or religious bodies other than their own.² People generally, he says, hold their belief to be sacred and enthusiastically defend it; and the diversity of religions further encourages every believer to reject other beliefs and to propagate his own. The most successful means of religious

1. "Books of Knowledge and Others", May 11, 1881, *Riḍā*, op. cit., II, pp. 153-57.

2. "Effect of Education on Beliefs", August 9, 1881, *Riḍā*, op. cit., II, pp. 164-68.

propaganda is the establishment of schools. "For in childhood, intellects are pliant and minds are prepared for the reception of ideas conveyed to them. They are extremely sensitive to external influences . . . particularly those which come from teachers or tutors . . . Therefore, in a school run by missionaries, the beliefs of the children are bound to be influenced, and this influence grows stronger with the passage of time and with kind treatment . . . But for all this, the missionary is not to blame, since his motive is either to seek security for his religion by spreading it wider, or to save fellow-beings according to his belief, which he considers to be certainly true." 'Abduh applies this argument not only to Christian -- Catholic or Protestant -- schools, but also to Islamic schools. "Anyone, therefore, whether Muslim or Christian or Jewish, who wants to maintain his faith, should not send his children to a missionary school run by people who have a different belief from his own."

Educational reform and reform through education continued to be one of 'Abduh's deepest interests till his last days. In fact, "the manner in which he, in his later public life, turned every position of influence which he ever held into the channel for the dissemination of his ideas and the education of the public, shows how deep-seated within him was the inclination to instruct and educate".¹

In Bayrūt after separating from al-Afghānī, 'Abduh reformed the curriculum of al-Madrasah al-Sultānīyah and wrote two detailed reports, one to the "Shaykh al-Islām" in Istanbul on the reform of religious education, and the other to the Governor of Bayrūt on "Reform in Syria" from

1. Adams, op. cit., p. 44.

the educational standpoint.¹

On his return to Egypt, 'Abduh hoped to regain his teaching post at Dār al-'Ulūm. This was one of the reasons for which he wrote his report on education to Sir Evelyn Baring (later Lord Cromer).² But, fearing that he might take part in politics and influence his students, the Government did not approve his request and instead appointed him a judge in the National Courts. Receiving the news of his appointment he said, "I was not created to be anything but teacher".³

The judicial posts which 'Abduh held in the National Courts and the Court of Appeal, and his appointment as Grand Muftī of Egypt, never made him forget his interest in education. For a reform of Islam, he believed that the most needed first step was a reform of the educational system of al-Azhar, the chief seat of Islamic learning in the world; and on this task he concentrated his energy. He succeeded in securing from Khedive 'Abbās II⁴ the issue of a decree which provided for the direction of the affairs of al-Azhar by an Administrative Council, consisting of leading shaykhs, two of whom were to be appointed by the Government. This Council was established on January 15, 1895, and 'Abduh and his friend 'Abd al-Karīm Salmān were appointed the Government representatives. Through

1. Ridā, op. cit., I, pp. 391-92. See full text of the two reports in Vol. II, pp. 505-32.

2. Vide supra p. 54.

3. 'Uthmān Amīn, op. cit., p. 107.

4. 'Abbās was born in 1874 and succeeded his father, Tawfīq, after the latter's death in 1892. When the first World War broke out, he was in Turkey. The British, after declaring their protectorate over Egypt, deposed him in December 1914. He died in Europe in 1944.

it and in other ways, 'Abduh endeavoured to improve the methods of instruction at al-Azhar and widen its curriculum to include some of the modern sciences.¹ He also himself took part in teaching at al-Azhar, and his lectures were attended by many celebrated professors, writers and journalists, including the British orientalist Wilfrid Scawen Blunt and Edward Granville Browne.²

In 1892, 'Abduh took a leading part in the foundation of the "Muslim Benevolent Society", whose principal purpose was to found free schools for poor children. His membership and later chairmanship of this Society gave him an opportunity to put into effect the ideas on education which he had expressed in "al-Waqā'i". Under his leadership, the Society made it their aim to impart to the children in their schools sufficient training and education to enable them to be good citizens, fulfilling the sound precepts of their religion and imbued with the best elements of their culture. Particular emphasis was placed on the need for them to grow up with a love for their work and a desire to perfect it.³

In the "Testament Politique" which he dictated during his final illness, 'Abduh suggested that public education should be free,⁴ and criticized the rich who, in spite of their wealth, do not contribute to promote education. He also reiterated the idea, which he had already expressed in "al-Waqā'i", that it is better to build schools than to build

1. So strong was the opposition of the reactionary forces at al-Azhar to 'Abduh's modern ideas that he and Salmān resigned in March 1905 without having accomplished many of his reforms. After 'Abduh's death, however, many of his ideas were gradually put into effect, especially during the rectorships of Shaykh Muḥammad Muṣṭafā al-Marāghī. See: Adams, op. cit., pp. 70-78; Michel and Abdel Razik, op. cit., pp. xxxvii-xxxviii.

2. 'Uthmān 'Amīn, op. cit., pp. 122-25.

3. Ibid., pp. 119-20; Riḍā, op. cit., I, pp. 726-29.

4. Primary education in Egypt became free in 1942, and Secondary in 1950.

mosques without worshippers.¹

It would not be fair to 'Abduh to leave this subject without mention of his part, which is usually forgotten, in the creation of the first Egyptian University. He was the first to conceive this idea, which he put forward in the same "Testament Politique".² He went beyond the conception to the actual task; he persuaded his wealthy friend Ahmad al-Manshāwī Pasha to make an endowment of a plot of land near Cairo as a site for the University building. But al-Manshāwī's death brought the plan to a standstill.³ Three years after 'Abduh's death, the Egyptian National University⁴ was established in 1908, through the efforts of a private group consisting mostly of his followers, such as Sa'd Zaghlūl, Qāsim Amīn and Ahmad Luṭfī al-Sayyid.⁵

Religion.

'Abduh's conception of religious reform was based on two main principles: the purification of Islam from corrupting influences and practices, and the liberation of Islamic thought from the chains of uncritical acceptance of traditional authorities (taqlīd). These principles had been conceived and preached by Ibn Taymīyah of Damascus (661-728 A.H.: 1263-

1. Vide supra pp. 45-46.

2. Osman Amin, op. cit., pp. 248-49

3. Riḍā, op. cit., I, pp. 946-47.

4. It was transformed into the "Egyptian University" and taken over by the Government in 1925. In 1937 it was named after Fu'ād I, and in 1952 was renamed "Cairo University". There are now two other universities in Egypt, Alexandria University (est. 1942) and Heliopolis University (est. 1951), and a fourth is in process of establishment at Asīūt.

5. Adams, op. cit., p. 225.

1328) and by his follower of four centuries later, Muḥammad Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb of Najd; (1115-1201 A.H.: 1703-1787); but their intent had been narrowly puritan and fundamentalist. 'Abduh gave to these same two principles a rationalistic and modernistic trend, resulting from the influence of western science and ideas on his thought; and he made them the pillars of his scheme for reviving Islam. Since, in his opinion, Islam is essentially a rational religion, there can be no conflict between it and science, which is also based on reason;¹ and Islam can therefore be adapted to the demands of modern life.

The first outlines of this rationalistic and modernistic attitude towards Islam, which 'Abduh later defined in detail in his Commentary on the Qur'ān and rulings as Grand Muftī, are sketched in some of his articles in "al-Waqā'i".

After asserting the necessity of independent investigation (ijtihād) of the Divine Law (Sharī'ah), 'Abduh discusses in one of his articles² the permissibility of polygamy in Islam. He interprets, from a hitherto unprecedented critical standpoint, the Qur'ānic verse: "Marry of the women who seem good to you, two or three or four; and if ye fear that ye cannot deal equitably and justly with all, ye shall marry only one."³ Giving examples from the Prophet's life and the principles laid down by the authoritative early Doctors of Law, 'Abduh demonstrates that real "justice" in

1. Cf. Muḥammad 'Abduh, Risālat al-Tawhīd, Cairo, 1361 A.H. (1942), pp. 15, 27, 77, 195; Gibb, op. cit., pp. 33, 43-44; Adams, op. cit., pp. 1, 128, 134.

2. "The Sharī'ah's View on Polygamy", March 8, 1881, Riḍā, op. cit., II, pp. 113-18.

3. Qur'ān, 4: 3.

all respects cannot normally be realized among numerous wives. He then turns to his own day and finds clear evidence from actual Muslim social life, especially in Egypt, of the misuse of the right of polygamy allowed to men, and of its danger to the family and social institutions. He concludes that polygamy, although permitted by Islam, is a concession to inevitable social imperfections, given with the greatest reluctance inasmuch as it is accompanied by the stipulation that a man may marry more than one wife only when he is able to give each wife all her rights with impartiality and justice. Since such ability is shown by the Qur'ānic qualification to be almost non-existent, and has been proved in practice to be so, the real meaning of the Shari'ah is in favour of monogamy as the ideal state of marriage.

This attitude towards polygamy may perhaps have been partly determined by 'Abduh's memories of his childhood environment. He grew up in a polygamous household among children of separate mothers, his father having had two wives with children by each; and the defects of such a family life made a deep impression on him.¹

The same standpoint regarding polygamy was later adopted by a number of other Muslim reformers, such as the Indian Sayyid Amīr 'Alī in his book "The Spirit of Islam".²

'Abduh's sympathetic ideas on the situation of Muslim women were clarified and elaborated in his Commentary on the Qur'ān. He, and the

1. Cf. Muṣṭafā 'Abd al-Rāziq, "Athar al-Mar'ah fī Ḥayāt al-Shaykh Muḥammad 'Abduh", art. in the Review "al-Shabāb", Cairo, February 17, 1936.

2. Cf. Gibb, op. cit., pp. 95-97. The limitation of polygamy was also much discussed in the Egyptian press during the winter of 1953-54, as the result of a campaign by the feminist organizations; and the matter is under study in the competent judicial circles in Egypt.

school of "al-Manār" following him, called for the education and training of girls, and for many reforms affecting the social conditions of Muslim women. "It is essential," they asserted, "that these conditions should be corrected, if necessary by appropriate changes in the canon law of Islam [Sharī'ah], certainly by improved opportunities for education, that the women may be raised to the level originally contemplated in the religion of Islam".¹ 'Abduh maintains in his Qur'ān Commentary, that in no way does Islam show its fitness to be considered a modern world religion more than in the high position of honour which it accords to woman.² He interprets the verse "And they [women] have rights similar to those [of men] over them in kindness, and men are a degree above them",³ as meaning two things: the equality in rights and duties of men and women, and the obligation of men by virtue of their superior "degree" to educate and train women.⁴ Thus, on the basis of religion, 'Abduh was the pioneer in Egypt, and in the whole Muslim world, of the movement for the emancipation of women. One of 'Abduh's followers, Qāsim Amīn,⁵ made this field particularly his own; and his writings, the first

1. Adams, op. cit., pp. 230-231.

2. Ibid., p. 230.

3. Qur'ān, 2: 228.

4. 'Abd al-Rāziq, loc. cit..

5. Qāsim Amīn (1865-1908) was a friend and follower of 'Abduh. He studied law in France and became Counsellor in the Court of Appeal. In 1900, he published his first book "Tahrīr al-Mar'ah" (The Emancipation of Woman), which was followed in 1903 by "al-Mar'ah al-Jadīdah" (The New Woman), a defence of his earlier work against the attacks of its critics.

which strongly aroused Egyptian and Muslim public opinion on the subject, became the text-books of the feminist awakening in Egypt, the greater part of whose goals have now been won.

Several of 'Abduh's articles in "al-Waqā'i'" deal with the need for purging Muslim religious life of heretical and vicious innovations (bida') which have permeated it. In one of these articles,¹ 'Abduh mentions the prohibition by the Egyptian authorities of beating drums in mosques during "mawlid" (festivals on the birthdays of saints), a custom which was practised by some of the Sūfī (mystic) orders. He urges the Government to go further and abolish all other innovations and distortions which are contrary to the principles of Islam, and which give rise to many immoral and irregular practices.

In two other articles,² 'Abduh turns his criticism to a strange custom called the "dawsah" (treading), which was practised by the followers of a certain Sūfī order. This was for men to lie down on the ground in a line while a shaykh rode on a horse over their backs. It originated in a legend that Shaykh Yūnus, during whose mawlid this custom was practised, had one day performed a miracle by making the horse on which he rode tread over some glass vessels without damaging them. On grounds of both religion and reason, 'Abduh denounces this innovation. The Qur'ān honours human beings, in the words "Verily We have honoured the descendants of Adam",³ therefore man should not be humiliated in such a way.

1. "Abolition of Innovations by the Ministry of Waqfs", November 7, 1880, *Riḍā*, op. cit., II, pp. 133-36.

2. "Treading", February 15, April 3, 1881, *Riḍā*, op. cit., II, pp. 136-142.

3. Qur'ān, 17: 70.

Moreover, the horse's hooves in all probability seriously injure the men whose backs are trodden on. Even if the original miracle were true, this would not justify the substitution of men for glass vessels, and the re-enactment of the event as a custom. Since there is nothing in the Qur'ān or the Traditions of the Prophet which would justify such an innovation, and since exposing one's self to unnecessary dangers is illicit, the "dawsah" and similar practices must be stopped. Muslims should be rescued from the false guidance of impostors, who live on the credulity of simple minded people and viciously distort the true Islam.

As most religious innovations are outgrowths of the cult of saints, 'Abduh later discusses this subject at length in his theological treatise "Risālat al-Tawhīd". "All Muslims, orthodox or otherwise," he states, "are agreed that no one is required to believe in the occurrence of any specified miracle at the hands of any specified saint since the appearance of Islam. Any Muslim, then, according to the common consensus (ijmā'), can deny the occurrence of any miracle of any saint, without doing violence to any fundamental doctrine of Islam."¹

'Abduh continued his efforts to purify Islam from innovations till the end of his life. In his lectures at al-Azhar commenting on the Qur'ān, he made the interpretation of every verse on the subject of polytheism an occasion for reiterating his attack against the cult of saints and its resultant evils. He supported his argument by pointing out the psychological and moral effects of such innovations in abasing people's

1. "Risālat al-Tawhīd", p. 238.

spirit and making them disregard the natural law of cause and effect.¹

This attitude, which was the main part of 'Abduh's broad view of the purification of Islam, fortunately won ready and widespread approval, including that of the orthodox 'ulamā'.²

Social Questions.

'Abduh shows in "al-Waqā'i'" a deep interest in social questions. He criticizes the defects of Egyptian social life, and calls for practical reforms in arguments which are often tinged by his views on other subjects, such as religion and education.

The earliest important article which 'Abduh wrote in "al-Waqā'i'"³ is devoted to a social question.⁴ On the occasion of the establishment of a benevolent society in Cairo and of another in Alexandria, he emphasizes the great value of such institutions. "It is very pleasing and most promising and hopeful," he writes, ". . . to see our compatriots interested in philanthropic work . . . and zealous in co-operating for the sake of Egypt's progress . . . One of the most effective means of reform and progress is the establishment of benevolent societies . . . which has enabled the civilized peoples to realize various achievements." He thanks the Government for having settled an annual subsidy for the two societies, and the Khedive for having agreed that they should be under

1. Cf. Ahmad Amīn, op. cit., pp. 23-24.

2. Cf. Gibb, op. cit., pp. 33-34.

3. After his announcement of his plans for the paper. Vide supra pp. 40-41.

4. "Our Government and Benevolent Societies", October 19, 1880, Riḍā, op. cit., II, pp. 49-52.

the patronage of the Crown Prince.

'Abduh's interest in social welfare work was later increased by his visits to European countries, where much greater importance was attached than in Egypt at that time to charitable institutions and to co-operation in practical benevolence. "Here, he came to believe, was one of the directions in which Muslim peoples might commendably follow the lead of Christian nations. While the religion of Islam enjoins private giving of alms and inculcates concern for the poor, organized and co-operate effort on behalf of the needy and unfortunate has never flourished to any great extent in the Muslim countries."¹ In order to implant a spirit of unity in the people and to bring about their co-operation in social service, 'Abduh led the formation in 1892 of the "Muslim Benevolent Society" which has already been mentioned.² He did his utmost to secure for this Society the support and assistance of wealthy and influential persons, and to organize and direct its activities on wise lines. He was elected chairman in 1900 and held the position until his death, during which time he brought about a remarkable increase in the income and property of the Society, and in the number of its schools and students.³

In a long article ⁴ which appeared in two issues of "al-Waqā'i", 'Abduh attacks the spirit of selfish individualism prevailing among the

1. Adams, op. cit., p. 84.

2. Vide supra p. 87.

3. Cf. Riḍā, op. cit., I, p. 726; the eulogy addressed by Ḥaṣan 'Asīn Pasha, the vice-chairman of the Society, after 'Abduh's decease, reproduced by Riḍā, op. cit., III, pp. 237-44. This Society is still the best-endowed and most active of its kind in Egypt.

4. "What is Real Poverty in the Country?", March 28 and 31, 1881, pp. 143-50.

Egyptians, and attributes to it the lack of any real impetus on their part for the progress of their country. This was the first plea by any modern Egyptian for harmony between the various classes of society, and for the essentials of social justice. Another novel idea expressed in the article is that people should not expect the Government to take charge of all their affairs, but that they must undertake their own share themselves. People generally, 'Abduh writes, have not had any training which might make them feel the same feelings about the advantages and disadvantages of the community as they feel about their own. The Government have done their best on behalf of the people, but this is not enough. The rich, who live in opulence and felicity and spend much money on futile luxuries, are not aware that the more their country progresses, the greater will be their own profit, and conversely. They do not recognize how the world has changed and how the old-fashioned way of life has given place to a new one. These people must know their real responsibility for the prosperity of their nation. Many of them, for example, wish to see education spreading all over the country, but they never put their wish into action. The only proper path of progress for a nation to follow is that of co-operation between its various classes for the sake of the community as a whole. A good lesson can be drawn, he says, from societies formed by farmers and artisans in Europe. The income of some of these amounts to millions of pounds, and is spent on promoting education, improving the conditions of the particular trade and raising the standard of their people. The Government is intended only to give sufficient opportunities for the people's useful efforts; not to be burdened with all the affairs of the nation.

'Abduh's article in "al-Waqā'i'" on polygamy¹ in Islam had been preceded by one in which he discussed the importance of marriage as a social institution.² After observing that the sexual instinct is the necessary means for the preservation of the species, he continues: "But man is distinguished from animals by his intellect . . . which leads him to take unto himself a female whom he passionately protects from other men". Human life in societies necessitates the limitation and control of the sexual relationship between man and woman; and such limitation and control give rise to the institution of the family based on marriage. Accordingly, all Divine Laws have laid down regulations to control marriage as the pivot of a proper family life, which leads to a sound social structure. "Thus," 'Abduh concludes, "the sexual instinct implanted in mankind is not an end in itself. It is a means without which man could not realize the aims of his human life . . . Since co-operation and unity between human beings are among the advantages of marriage, Divine Laws have not permitted man to marry his own sister, aunt or daughter, for this would narrow the circle of such advantages." "Moreover," he adds, "physicians consider such marriages to be sterile".

'Abduh came of pure Egyptian stock, of a family of the "fallāḥ" or peasant class; and he was brought up in a village of the Delta after the manner of life common to the majority of Egyptian villages. He made his career by his own efforts, and his success was due to his qualifications, not to his connections. This explains his sympathetic understanding

1. Vide supra pp. 89-90.

2. "The Necessity of Marriage for Mankind", March 7, 1881, Riḍā, op. cit., II, pp. 109-12.

of the common people and his appreciation of self-made men. Having been deeply impressed by a biography of the President of the United States, General Garfield, which he had read in "al-Muqtataf",¹ 'Abduh wrote in "al-Waqā'i'" an article entitled "Attainment of Eminence by Virtue".² In this he praises highly the democratic life of the United States, which enables self-made individuals to hold the highest positions through their own efforts and on the strength of their own qualities. "This biography," he says, "is a testimony to Garfield's abundant knowledge and experience, and to his accomplishment of many deeds in the service of his country. It is also a testimony to the high degree of civilization reached by America, where a man's merits are recognized, and no handicap, such as his humble stock or poverty, can hinder him from attaining what he is fit for. . . . Non-essential qualities which have nothing to do with the substance of men are not taken into consideration . . . nor are they reckoned as merits for the promotion of men to the most honoured ranks." It is in such a society that individuals find an urge to acquire those real virtues which will bring personal happiness through work for the good of the community. 'Abduh concludes by comparing such a democratic society with others where noble origin, servile flattery or mere chance are the usual qualifications for attaining eminence and where, in consequence, the common people live in degradation, with neither impetus nor scope for self-made careers.

1. A literary and scientific monthly review, established by Ya'qūb Ṣarrūf and Fāris Nimr in Bayrūt in 1876. Unable to support the severe Ottoman censorship, Ṣarrūf and Nimr migrated with their review in 1884 to Cairo, where they published also the daily "al-Muqattam". See Ṭarrāzi, op. cit., II, pp. 52-57, 125.

2. October 1, 1881, Riḍā, op. cit., II, pp. 172-75. Vide supra p. 51.

Moral Problems.

'Abduh's early life in his village, and his long sojourns in Cairo, brought him into contact with the customs of both villagers and townsfolk. His practical study of Egyptian social life and precise observations of its moral defects filled him with a passionate desire to uplift his compatriots by reforming their customs, ideas and behaviour. He believed that such reforms must be realized primarily by the spreading of education and the revival and purification of religious faith, but also wrote a number of articles dealing specifically with some of the moral problems of his day.

In a series of three articles in "al-Waqā'i",¹ 'Abduh criticizes the prodigality and folly of the Egyptian peasants, which lead them into poverty. He first² reviews the financial situation of the peasants during Ismā'il's time, when they were burdened with unfair and irregular taxes. To be able to pay such taxes punctually, they had to borrow from the Banks, or from usurers at excessive rates of interest. When this nightmare was got rid of by the regularization of the taxes and the reduction of their burden, the peasants might have been expected to keep away from mortgages and loans, to which they had formerly been obliged to resort. On the contrary, "they have opened before themselves another door of poverty through which they enter willingly, namely that of extravagance in luxurious and superfluous things". To satisfy such demands and to maintain false appearances, they were impoverishing

1. All are entitled "Tendency to Poverty or Foolishness of Peasants", Riḍā, op. cit., II, pp. 56 et seq.

2. November 25, 1880, ibid., pp. 56-59.

themselves by again putting their properties at the mercy of the same Banks and usurers.

The theme of the second article¹ is frugality as a virtue midway between the two vices of extravagance and parsimony. Such frugality is enjoined by the Qur'ān and the Traditions of the Prophet, as well as by the present situation of the Egyptian peasantry. 'Abduh quotes and interprets the Qur'ānic verse, "And let not thy hand be chained to thy neck nor open it with a complete opening, lest thou sit down rebuked, denuded,"² and the Tradition, "Frugality is one half of livelihood". He then gives examples from the actual life of Egyptian peasants to show that, though their financial situation has become much more prosperous, some of them, who are avaricious, hoard money without using or investing it, while others, who are prodigal, waste their substances foolishly, 'Abduh deplores aberration onto either of these two roads to poverty.

The third article of the series³ deals with another characteristic of the Egyptian peasants, which also leads to their poverty. Egypt being a dry country, whose agriculture depends entirely on irrigation by the Nile water, co-operative efforts by the peasants are necessary for the sake of their common benefit. Small irrigation channels need to be dredged and their banks to be consolidated, so that every field may easily and regularly receive its requirement of water. Although the peasants have been delivered from the corvée, they are too lazy and selfish to devote a part of their effort to the common benefit of the whole village. Instead of being forced by the Government to undertake such common works, peasants should be aware of the advantage of co-operation and the disadvan-

1. December 18, 1880, ibid., pp. 59-63.

2. Qur'ān, 17: 29.

3. January 29, 1881, Ridā, op. cit., II, pp. 63-8

tages of negligence and selfishness, which lead to poverty.

With the same principle in mind, 'Abduh in another article¹ condemns those who hold the idea that to be civilized means to squander money on ostentation. He attacks the wealthy who exaggerate in imitating the Europeans and compete with them in their customs, dress, buildings, furniture and expensive luxuries. They are mistaken if they imagine that civilization means nothing more than obtaining all sorts of pleasure and securing the means of luxurious living. Being unable to pay the cost of such demands or to maintain their appearances continuously, they resort to borrowing, which results in the loss of their fortunes and paves the way for foreign intervention in the national finances.

Another article is devoted to the subject of bribery, one of the most vicious practices prevalent in Egypt.² 'Abduh condemns those who bribe Government servants in order to conceal an offence or to gain an advantage, even in the most trifling cases. All employees are paid their salaries to perform their duty honestly; and bribery spoils them and spoils governmental discipline. If people insist on conducting their affairs legally and correctly, the practice of bribery will soon cease and everyone will obtain his due.

1. "Civilization", January 20, 1881, ibid., pp. 210-14.

2. "Untoward Consequences of Bribery", December 13, 1880, ibid., pp. 84-86. One of the vices which most corrupted Egyptian political, administrative and social life before the Army Revolution of 1952 was bribery, and indignation against it was one of the main reasons for the Revolution. See the Army declaration of July 23, and their ultimatum to the ex-King Farūq on July 26, 1952. Drastic measures have been taken by the new régime to put an end to this evil.

Some days later, 'Abduh returns to the same subject, but looks at it from another angle.¹ He recalls that both the taker and giver of bribes are condemned by the Divine Law and by modern criminal codes alike. The Prophet has said that illicit gains lead to Hell; and the Egyptian Criminal Code incriminates bribed officials. 'Abduh appeals to Government servants to be incorruptible and to stop bribery by immediately reporting any such attempt to the authorities, so that the criminals may be punished. God says, "And there is life for you in retaliation";² and this means that punishing wrongdoers will restrain others from committing the same crime. If some officials behave according to this principle, the rest will be disposed to follow them; and people will thus no longer find any opportunity to practise bribery.

Another target of 'Abduh's criticism in an article in "al-Waqā'i"³ is a type common in all human societies, namely the self-satisfied hypocrite who talks, criticizes and suggests much, but does nothing. Such men attribute to themselves merits of which they are devoid, and criticize other men's defects instead of first remedying their own. Some of them speak of public benefits and express ideal views on matters such as justice, equality and national rights, but in practice contradict these views and go to the other extreme. Words unsupported by deeds never deceive people; on the contrary, hypocrites only show up their own ignorance, bad faith and inferiority.⁴

1. "Integrity and its Requirements", December 26, 1880, Riḍā, op. cit., II, pp. 87-91.

2. Qur'ān, 2: 179.

3. "Much Ado About Nothing", January 18, 1881, Riḍā, op. cit., II, pp. 98-103.

4. 'Abduh's words recall the Qur'anic verse: "O ye who believe! Why say ye that which ye do not? It is most hateful in the sight of Allah that ye say that which ye do not.", Qur'ān, 61: 2, 3.

Among 'Abduh's best articles on a subject of this kind is one in which he criticizes the talk current in his time in Egyptian homes and public gatherings.¹ People's conversations, he remarks, reflect the ideas prevailing in their society. The talk of the Arabs in their early days turned round courage, glory and manliness; but after they had come to lead an easy and comfortable life as a result of their conquests, the pivot of their talk and literature changed to love and flirtation. The ancient Greeks reflected in their talk the scientific atmosphere of their nation; and the Europeans today talk about colonizing backward countries where they might invest their fortunes and apply up-to-date methods and techniques. Egyptians, on the other hand, hold jovial gatherings in which they chat about women and wine, and make witty remarks or taunt one another; the more dignified of them play backgammon and make small-talk. Sometimes, particularly in the villages, conversations are tinged with covetousness and spite. It is deplorable that Egyptians do not in general talk about serious topics of science, religion or public interests. This alone would show that Egyptian society has woken up to keep pace with the progress of the advanced nations.

The last of 'Abduh's articles in "al-Waqā'i'" on a moral subject is one entitled "Misplacement",² in which he deplores the misuse by some men of their genius and intellect. Instead of using such talents for useful purposes, they wrongfully abuse them to plot or intrigue for low aims. Some of them not only misuse their talents; they do away with them by addicting themselves to alcoholic drinks or narcotic drugs. Such people lose their dignity, dishonour their reputation and miss the train

1. "Our Associations and their Talks", February 9, 1881, Riḍā, op. cit., II, pp. 103-08.

2. March 7, 1881, ibid., pp. 150-53.

of progress and prosperity. God, 'Abduh says, endows people with intelligence in order that they may use it wisely and properly, in discovering the unknown and in thinking logically how to attain that which would benefit themselves as well as all humanity. It is a deviation from the right path to use intellectual gifts for evil and harmful ends.

The high estimation of intellectual powers revealed in this article is in keeping with the rationalistic views which 'Abduh later expressed in his theological works. He gives precedence to reason over the literal meaning of the Sharī'ah;¹ and, more than this, he accords to reason a principal part in religious faith. He says, for instance, that the Qur'ān has raised reason to a place of the highest importance "in that it has the final decision on the question of happiness, and in the distinction between truth and untruth and between harmful and useful things".² Elsewhere he maintains that man can by his intellect arrive at a knowledge of God.³

'Abduh's preaching of his conviction that rational thought and Islamic faith are compatible, and his pioneer work in the intelligent treatment of religious, educational, social and moral problems in his newspaper articles and theological writings, have been one of the most important single influences contributing towards the modern revival of the spiritual, cultural and social life of the Egyptian and Muslim peoples, and towards their liberation from the dead hand of tradition.

1. Cf. "al-Islām wa al-Naṣrānīyah", p. 73.

2. "Risālat al-Tawḥīd", p. 23.

3. Cf. "al-Islām wa al-Naṣrānīyah", p. 65.

CONCLUSION

It was in the latter part of the reign of Khedive Ismā'īl and in the first years of that of his successor, Tawfīq, that public opinion developed and made itself felt as a force in Egyptian affairs. This was the result of several interacting factors: the Western impact, since Bonaparte's expedition and especially since the opening of the Suez Canal; the disastrous financial policy of Ismā'īl, and the resultant foreign pressure on Egypt; the immigration of a number of Syrian intellectuals, and their valuable contribution to the rising Egyptian cultural movement; the inspiring teachings of Sayyid Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī; and the spread of education. But perhaps the most important single factor was the growth of the Arabic press.

This public opinion crystallized in a national and constitutional movement, directed against Khedivial despotism and foreign intervention, in the years 1880-82.

After a period of retrogression, "al-Waqā'i' al-Miṣrīyah", the first Arabic newspaper, had its Golden Age in the same two years, 1880-82, during which it was under the editorship of Shaykh Muḥammad 'Abduh. Not only did these years prove to be the most important in modern Egyptian history, witnessing fundamental changes in the life of the nation; but the Editor of "al-Waqā'i'" revealed himself to be one

of the greatest Egyptian thinkers, and also one of the greatest Egyptian journalists of modern times.

'Abduh represented the trend towards a synthesis between the orthodox Islamic outlook and modern civilization. A faithful and devout Muslim at all times, and a learned scholar of the ultra-conservative al-Azhar University, he became the outstanding liberal thinker on the subject of the Islamic doctrines. This liberalism derived from two sources: the early mystic experience opened to him by his great uncle, Shaykh Darwīsh Khadr, who brought him forth "from the prison of ignorance into the open spaces of knowledge";¹ and the wide horizons of knowledge and free thought revealed to him by his master al-Afghānī.

'Abduh expressed his ideas on reform in the pages of newspapers, confining his books to learned subjects. Journalistic activity was an important part of his whole career, from his student days till the end of his life. With the free hand allowed to him as Editor-in-Chief of "al-Waqā'i", he was able to make public his constructive -- and, for those days, frequently novel -- ideas on a wide range of subjects, and to effect a number of improvements in the paper which raised it from the decaying state in which he had taken it over to a standard ahead of any other contemporary Arabic newspaper. 'Abduh was, moreover, led by his position as Editor-in-Chief of "al-Waqā'i" to play an important part in the critical political events of the time, more particularly by his newspaper articles but also by other activities.

'Abduh was a practical rather than an ideal thinker, and the ideas which he conceived and advocated in the pages of "al-Waqā'i" class him as

1. 'Abduh's autobiography, *Riḍā*, *op. cit.*, I, p. 23. It is significant that several Muslim revivalists and reformers were influenced by mystic experiences in their early years, such as al-Ghazzālī, al-Afghānī, Iqbāl, and Ḥasan al-Bannā.

one of the most eminent reformers of modern Egypt and, indeed, the Muslim world. Most of these ideas were later elaborated and put into effect, a few by 'Abduh himself in his subsequent career, and others by his followers. Even in very recent times in Egypt, the ideas of many of the reforms which have been accomplished or initiated by the present leaders can be traced back in their origin to what 'Abduh first expressed in "al-Waqā'i".

The political rôles played by 'Abduh during his editorship of "al-Waqā'i", as also during other periods of his career, show that he was susceptible to the influences of prevailing circumstances and of powerful personalities with whom he came in contact, and that these influences modified his political attitudes. The events in Egypt from the accession of Tawfīq till the British occupation, and also perhaps the exuberance of youth, made him at first an ardent nationalist, while later he went to the extreme of caution in politics.

This lack of political originality, resulting from 'Abduh's essentially peaceful character as an evolutionary reformer, does not detract from the importance of his religious, cultural and social ideas, which were indeed original, and on which he based his efforts to revive the Islamic faith, and to remedy the defects of Muslim, and particularly Egyptian, society. In this respect, his character somewhat resembles those of the Indian Muslim revivalists of the nineteenth century, such as Sayyid Ahmad Khan, whose plans were primarily cultural and whose fundamental belief was that a synthesis between Islam and modern civilization must be the prerequisite of all reform.

The awakening which has taken place in every field of Egyptian

spiritual and social life since the beginning of this century cannot be fully explained without reference to the reform ideas first expressed by Muḥammad 'Abduh in the pages of "al-Waqā'i" "al-Miṣrīyah".

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System of Transliteration
from the Arabic Alphabet to the Latin
Used in this Work

<u>Arabic</u>	<u>Latin</u>	contd.	<u>Arabic</u>	<u>Latin</u>
	initial: un- expressed, medial and final: '			
ب	b		ط	t
ت	t		ظ	z
ث	th		ع	'
ج	j		غ	gh
ح	h		ف	f
خ	kh		ق	q
د	d		ك	k
ذ	dh		ل	l
ر	r		م	m
ز	z		ن	n
س	s		ه	h
ش	sh		و	w
ص	ṣ		ي	y
ض	ḍ			

Vowels, Diphthongs, etc.

Short Vowels: a, i, u.

Long Vowels: ā, ī, ū.

Long with "tashdid" : īya . . .

Diphthongs: aw, ay.

ة (tā' marbūṭah): ah; in "idāfah" : at.