

**"THE ROLE OF MILITARY IN POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT
OF
EGYPT DURING NASSER PERIOD"**

Dissertation submitted to the Jawaharlal Nehru University

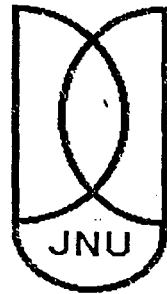
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Master of Philosophy

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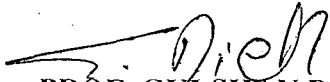
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**DEDICATED TO
MY TEACHER AND SUPERVISOR**

DR. ANWAR ALAM

Without whose guidance and assistance
This work would not have been possible

And

TO MY BELOVED PARENTS

*Smt. Dharma Kanwar
Shri Hukmee Singhjee*

PREFACE

We seem to have many to many general theoretical devices to assess the capability and effectiveness of a military regime. But it's bit difficult to examine the role played by military under Nasser in Egypt in the light of these theories; since its definitive features were too specific to the Egyptian situation. This work tries to uncover how the general approaches have been failed to understand the particular Egyptian case of military intervention under Gamal Abdel Nasser. At the same time from its level this work tries to illustrate the situation, which made the intervention, institutionalization consolidation and perpetuation of military regime inevitable.

The first chapter (introduction) forms the conceptual framework of the whole study. It also analyses the faulty assumptions came attached with general theories. The Chapter II Rise of Military Regime in Egypt un-earths the history of Intervention and provides the background information. The Chapter III Institutionalization and consolidation of Nasser's Regime all along the length discusses about the decade long process undertaken by Nasser definitely with a view to consolidate his power. While Chapter IV deals with the Policies and Programme options of Nasser to build a strong nation along the line of Arab Nationalist Ideology, the conclusion part sums up the role

played by military in Egypt and suggest some new possibilities to the study of military intervention.

To Dr. Anwar Alam my supervisor perhaps may be the major contributor of this work, more thanks are due than can be conveyed here. I thank respected madam Prof. Gulshan Dietl, Chairperson of CWAAS, SIS, JNU, New Delhi and all faculties of the centre for their various kinds of assistances and encouragements. At a more personal level I thank my friend Ilias Hussain, PhD student of the centre for his motivation all along the course of writing. I am indebted my room mate Himanshu Gautam for his patience and willingness to create a favorable environment for this study. I am also extremely grateful to my brothers and sister Kanchan Kanwar for their kind support and encouragement during my studies. Finally I do know very little how to thank Kanika who has been and will remain the inspiration in me.

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CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS

1. July 23, 1952 free Army officer's *camp d'etat*.
2. Ali Maher resumes the Premiership.
3. September 7, 1952 General Mohammad Neguib becomes Prime Minister.
4. September 1952 Agrarian Reforms introduction.
5. December, 1952 Abolition of Constitution.
6. January 16, 1953 Dissolution of All Political Parties.
7. June 18, 1953 Abolition of Monarchy and declaration of Egyptian Republic.
8. February 25, 1954 General Neguib relieves the post of President, Prime Minister and the Chairman of RCC.
9. October 1954, bid on the life of Nasser.
10. November 14, 1954 Arrest of General Naguib and Nasser becomes the Head of The State.
11. October 19, 1954, Anglo-Egyptian Agreement on Suez.
12. 1956 Introduction of New Constitution.
13. 1956 Suez Crisis.
14. February 1958 Union of Egypt and Syria (UAR)
15. September 28, 1961 Syrian withdrawal From the UAR.
16. June 1967 War with Israel,
17. September, 1970 Death of Nasser.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction: A Conceptual Framework

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Introduction: A Conceptual Framework

Political process refers to the activities of people in various groups as they struggle for and use of power to achieve personal and group purposes. In other words, its development comprises the elements of the political system itself, its institutions and organized structures. Broadly, it refers to informal political and semi-political institutions that provide the means for popular participation in decision-making process. They include elections, political parties, religious and social organizations, businessmen's and producer's organizations, youth organizations and other voluntary organizations exerting political influence on the system. Development in this area is measured by the extent and depth of popular participation, depending upon the adoption of methods, such as party, competitions for making participation effective. Military's identification of their role as "nation-builders" and their participation in nations political process involves the larger confusion over the existence of democracy in its proper sense. In general, the notion of political development essentially include the elements of political system, its institution and organized structures, free election, independent parties and party competition for making participation effective.

More specifically the notion of political development refers to the strengthening of state institutions in terms of its capacities to deliver the goods and to maintain integrative order in the society.

According to F.W. Freg: "Political Development refers to changes in the direction of greater distribution and reciprocity of power."¹

The other crucial aspect of notion of political development is the factor of legitimacy. It refers to process and the capacity of a political system to convert into authority to secure the popular acceptance of its acts as legitimate and to channel order through the political machines, and subjecting them to constitutional restraints. Moreover, legitimacy factor is the ability of the system to provide for peaceful and orderly transfer of power. Political development is the prerequisite of the overall nation building process of the country.

However, the most comprehensive objective and rational explanation of notion of political development has been given by S.P. Huntington in his article entitled "Political Development and Political Decay". He says "whether political and governmental structures are formal or informal, incorporated in the legal structure or not, it is of greatest importance that they should be institutionalized

¹ Frederick W. Freg, Political Development, Power and Communication in Turkey in Lucian Pye (ed.): Communications and Political Development, (Princeton:1963), p.301

and process of institutionalization is a surely part of development as are specialization of function and differentiation of structure. It is when certain forms and procedures become the accepted ways of doing things that they become effective instruments of stability and of legitimization.²

As a Perlmutter in his book entitled: *The Military and Politics in Modern Times*. (1977), argued that the most important causes of military intervention in politics are not military, but political and this reflect not the social and organizational characteristics of the military establishment, but the political and institutional structure of society.³ Hence, there is the need to understand the complex relationship between the military as an organization the civilian bureaucracy and the dominant economic elite of the society concerned.

The powerful rationalization, the military drive while overthrowing the existing rule (civilian or non-civilian) from their "legitimate" identification of their role as guardian of national welfare. In other words, their reasons rested on two premises that the former "guardian of the national welfare" had betrayed their trust; and that is why the army serve the nation (the state) but not the government or the regime of the day. Though the pattern of military take over of

² S.P. Huntington in "Political Development and Political Decay" *World Politics*, XVII (April 1995). pp386-430

³ A. Perlmutter *The Military And Politics In Modern Times* (New Haven, 1977) on recent trends see also S.E. Finer, *The Statesmanship Of Arms Times Literary Supplement* 17.2. 1978 p. 217

the nation appears to be uniform in many cases, yet they widely differ with each other in terms of policies and programmes.

The military led political system can be classified into two categories: First, Military republic i.e., total domination of military personnel without sharing power with civilian, and second, military-civilian coalition regime in which dominant role in the decision making process belongs to military. The military will want to maintain maximum control over its own internal affairs while the civilian will try to prevent the military from seeking political allies outside the cabinet. This has the advantage of preserving their institutional integrity from interference by the other. Besides, this both institutions will seek to influence a whole variety of working practices governing their relationship. For example the method by which budgets are drawn up resources allocated and rules established. The military should perform internal security duty with armed paramilitary forces over which it has no control. The development process is actually an interrelated one, which involves different sorts of transformation-economic, social, political and technological. According to A.R. Luckham;⁴ the interaction between the two spheres (military-civil) and the degree to which the

⁴ A.R. Luckham, A Comparative Typology of Civil-Military Relations: Government and Opposition (1971) pp 5-35.

boundaries are open to penetration from outside. Hence, the result of various grids is to be capable of accommodating all type of countries whole civil power, military power, and their receptive boundaries are analyzed. E.g. Egypt comes in the combination of military-civil grid power system in which military plays the dominant role. The difference in policies and programmes owes to their difference in terms of their ideological learning, their location in the society and their relationship with the dominant elite of the nation concerned.

The military may feel that it has a legitimate concern in shaping developments in the wider environment such as the educational system; the economy and the relation between people of different classes groups or sects.

If the function of any army is to train, prepare, and organize for war or the possibility of war, for defence of the nation against invaders and maintenance of national security, there should be little scope left for its participation in domestic power struggles. Why then does an army seek or fell compelled to participate actively in such power struggles? One possible explanation has been put forward by Lucian Pye. He argues that the army is the modern type institution in disorganized traditional societies and that there is a role the army can play in

shaping attitudes towards modernity in other sphere of society.⁵ He further argues that an army regime get interested once it accedes to political power in modernizing the disintegrating traditional society, and there is a necessary and essential relationship between a military coup *d'etat* and a regulation.

The politicization of officers before and during their army careers helped to provide them with a new role, not at all inconsistent with historical precedents and culture norms: that of leading a regulation and that of governing. In western society, the army officer, together with the politician, bureaucrat and intellectual have often formed integral part of the ruling class or political elite.

But in many of the developing countries, particularly in the Arab region one has to ask a question:" Is the army a professional class or group? Without indulging in sociological distinctions between class and group the army in the Arab states is not necessarily a class in the socio-economic sense sharing similar social backgrounds and economic interests." It may not be even a professional group in the sense of the German, British, or American regular army officer's class. Rather, the army officer corps represents the most cohesive elite of younger enthusiasts linked together by vague nationalist aspirations and by concern for the socio economic frustrations of their fellow citizens. They do

⁵ Lucian Pye, "Armies in the Process of Political Moderation." in J.J. Johnson, ed., The Role of Military in Underdeveloped Countries, (Princeton: 1968) p 66.

share a common educational background; secondary school, military academy and some even staff college. Their hatred for professional politicians of the old school is complemented by their sympathy for their politically inactive countrymen. Army officers in many West Asian countries think of themselves as saviors and regenerators of national existence. This self-image also serves as a strong political symbol that invoked constantly by military rulers when they accede to political power, in order to legitimate their authority. But army officers reject the slow moving machinery of representative political institutions, which in their view are impediments to quick regeneration. They favour populist and authoritarian regimes what they sometimes refer to as plebiscitary democracies.⁶

The British political scientist Samuel E. Finer has examined the importance of the level of political culture as well as the societal milieu in which military operated and proposed to distinguished four stages: “minimal, low, developed and mature political culture⁷. According to him the intervention of military in Third World politics to be more likely in countries where the political institutions are weak and lacking in legitimacy. A.R. Luckham constructed a grid, which he claimed, removed some of the deficiency of the scheme provided

⁶ P.J Vatikiotis: Egyptian Army in Politics (Bloomington, 1961)

⁷ S.E. Finer; The Man on Horse back (London 1962)

by Finer and others.⁸ He tried to relate several variables to each other as shown in the table.

A.R. Lackham's Power Grid Table:

Civil Power	Military Power	Boundaries		
		Integrated	Fragmented	Permeated
High	High	a. Objective Control	c. Apparent Control	f. Subjective control
	Medium	b. Constabulary Control	d. Nation-in-Arms	
	Low		e. Revolutionary Nation-in-Arms	
Not high	High	g. Garrison State		
	Medium	h. Guardian State i. Post Colonial Guardian State		
	Low	j. Political Vacuum		

a) eg. Western Europe and North America.

b) e.g. present day Japan, Ireland, Sweden.

⁸ A.R. Luckham, op.cit, pp 5-35

- c) e.g. Erstwhile USSR, Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy, China, Erstwhile Yugoslavkia.
- d) e.g. Israel.
- e) e.g. Cuba, Vietnam, Algeria.
- f) Traditional societies of Africa or eighteenth century Europe.
- g) to Lasswells original conceptuation.
- h) e.g. Egypt in 1952, Ghana in 1966.
- i) e.g. Mali 1968.
- j) e.g. Latin American, West Asia.
- k) Congo prior to Mobutu..

The revolution in military technology has also matured the army leaders of the newly emergent societies to intervene in countries affairs. To be extreme sensitive to the extent to which their countries are economically and technologically underdeveloped called upon roles basic to advanced societies, the more politically conscious officers can hardly avoid being aware of the need for

substantial change in their own societies.⁹ The Third World Armies such as in Turkey J.J. Thomson believed, are best equipped to initiate and channel social and political change.

In this context Sociologist Morris Janowitz in his book: *The Military in the Political Development of New Nations*¹⁰, raised the following questions about the position of the army in developing countries and the role of the military in political change. What characteristics of the military establishment of a new nation facilitate its involvement in domestic politics? And what are the capabilities of the military to supply effective political leadership for a new nation striving for rapid economic development and social modernization? The answers to these questions, according to Janowitz, were in many ways very similar. For those organizational and professional qualities, which make it possible for the military of a new nation to accumulate political power, and even to take over political power, are the same as those, which limit its ability to rule effectively. Thus once political power has been achieved, the military must develop mass political organizations of a civilian type, or it must work out viable relations with civilian political groups. In other word, it is relatively easy for the military to seize power in a new nation, but it is much more difficult for it them

⁹ J.J. Johnson ed., *The Role Of The Military In Underdeveloped Countries* (Princeton, 1968), p. 69

¹⁰ M. Janowitz, *The Military In The Political Development Of New Nations*, (Chicago, 1964), p.1

to govern. These statements led him to ask two further questions, namely why are military officers of new nations, as compared with those in Western industrialized societies more influential in domestic politics? Secondly why does the capacity of the military to act in politics differ from country to country? As to the first question, Janowitz had no doubt that it was the social structure of their countries, which predisposed them to political activism. The answer to the second question, he felt, was more dependent upon the characteristic of the military profession in the nations concerned. It seems fair to say that Janowitz in the final analysis would wish to attach as much weight to societal forces defining the position of the military as he would give to military influence on politics, even if in 1964 he showed a slight analytical preference for the later. If he concluded one aims to "give more concrete meaning to the forms of militarism in the new nations", the task would be to clarify the contribution made by the professional military to "different patterns of domestic politics".

It is easy to make too much of above statement and of the opposite position which Samuel Huntington took up in 1968¹¹. As Finer has pointed out

¹¹ S.P Huntington, Political Order In Changing Societies, (New Haven, 1968)

Huntington was as sensitive to the importance of social and organizational characteristics of the military as Janowitz was to those of the society.¹²

In this connection we must now take a closer look at Huntington's work. His contribution is important for two interrelated reasons. Firstly even if we accept Finer's conciliatory remark that Huntington and Janowitz are not that far apart, the fact remains that Huntington has stated quite unceremoniously that it would be "fallacious to attempt to explain military interventions in politics primarily by reference to the internal structure of the military or the social background of the officers doing the intervening".¹³ Although he admits that there is some evidence to support the kind of connections, which Janowitz is presumed to have drawn, there is also contradicting evidence. Hence, the question "what characteristics of the military establishment of a new nation facilitate its involvement in domestic politics?" is misdirected, because the most important causes of military intervention in politics are not military, but political and reflect not the social and organizational characteristics of the military establishment but the political and institutional structure of society.¹⁴

¹² S.E Finer, The Statesmanship of Arms , p. 217

¹³ S.P. Huntington Political Order, Op. Cit. P. 193

¹⁴ ibid. p 194

Secondly, although, he too operated within the broad framework of modernization theory and saw military intervention in politics as a striking aspect of it, he did not see Third World development as an evolution towards a better state of affairs. Rather he puts forward an interpretation of 'political decay', which leads him to take up a politically conservative position. What then is the process affecting underdeveloped societies which Huntington tries to tackle with the tools of a sociologist?

He starts from the basic assumption that 'the general politicization of social forces and institutions' is the most important feature of all developing societies. He called this type of politicized society 'praetorian' on the understanding 'that this refers to the participation not only of the military but of other social forces as well'. Thus trade unions, businessmen, students and religious organizations may all be involved in politics. However, what is special about the praetorian society is the absence of effective political institutions capable of mediating refining and moderating group political action. It is the ineffectiveness of political institutions, which allows the military for the cohesive and organized forces. In Third World countries including West Asia, to seize power. In fact the political role of military have been defined from either one of two perspectives: either an attempt to explain the occurrence of military coups,

or a discussion of the larger question of the place of the military within the whole process of state or nation building.¹⁵ In this context Owen Roger points out that by and large, writers on Middle Eastern coups have tended to base their explanations on the simple premise that an army's only way to exercise political power is by means of the overthrow of a civilian regime.¹⁶ However Hurewitz has rightly argued that "many factors mould a military regime; the structure of society, the nature of the replaced civil-political system, the prior absence or presence of military rule, the rate of social and economic change, the degree of military regime's sponsorship of such change, and the character of the military establishment before and after the seizure of political power." Each of the Military Republics in the post-war West Asia reflected its own mixture of the contributory factors and the particular combination must be borne in mind as we try to ascertain the general pattern.¹⁷

In most of the West Asian countries political system in one way or in another suffer from an inherent tension of militarisation of political sphere though the magnitude differs from one country to another.

¹⁵ Owen, Roger, The Making of the Middle East, op. cit. p. 197

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 197

¹⁷ Hurewitz, J.C; Middle East politics: The Military Dimension (Colorado, 1982) p. 123

A military intervention in politics had become commonplace in many Arab States actually with a much higher frequency than in most Third world countries during the 1950s and 1960s. Various factors account for the persistence of dominant role of military in the political process of West Asian countries. Important among them are: 'alleged' militaristic nature of Islam,¹⁸ Arab culture, rentier economy tradition of non-accountability of state, legacy of colonization, strategic importance of the territory and the absence of epoch making social-political change. The constant awareness of the "the external threat" (mostly projected) have helped pushing the military and defence establishment into a position of centrally special status of it in shaping political culture. Hence the tension between the militaristic values of authoritarian regimes and civil values of political society is unavoidable in most of the west Asian countries. Unlike in the democratic states, the military as a state apparatus in most of the West Asian countries is not confined to its own frame work, permitted in its own values within, so as to prevent from influencing the society as whole. In the particular context of West Asia, some common feelings of community belongingness

¹⁸ Owen, Roger, The Making of the Middle East: State, Power and Politics in Making of the Modern Middle East. (London, 1994), p.197

whether it is of Islamism or Pan-Arabism, have largely contributed to the formation of authoritarian values in the respective societies. Arab armies in Arab politics appeared even more controlled on account of their growing concern for civilian affairs and their various involvements in the governmental process.¹⁹ In most of the Arab countries, in their attempt to build modern armies, western technologies were introduced. But the other sectors were untouched by the technological advancement. Western technology was extended neither to bureaucratic nor to the social institutions. Consequently, the army not only became the technologically most advanced institution in the Arab world, but also acquired a special role in the political evolution of these countries.”²⁰ Army officers became conscious of their access to physical force, and of their importance as a highly organised and stable group in spearheading national movements.

Due to relative stability, organizational cohesiveness and discipline, the military emerged as a significant force in spearheading national movement in the countries of West Asia. In addition to the specific physical attributes of military,

¹⁹ Picardo, Elizabeth. Arab Military in Politics: From Revolutionary Plot To Authoritarian State in The Modern Middle East: A Reader (ed) Hounari Albert (London. 1993) p. 551

²⁰ Vatikiotis, P.J The Egyptian Army in politics (Bloomington, 1961) pp. Xii-xiii

technological, educational and administrative resources have also been highlighted to accounts for its overt political role in many countries of Third World. The military has had a feeling that it has a legitimate concern over the shaping of education, economy and the social relations. It happens to be the binding force of people of different sects, in the absence of other similar structure of bureaucracy. It was supposed to be the rallying point in many of the West Asian states for the assertion of anti-colonial aspirations. In Egypt's case, the army in 1952 was the only national institution able to provide order in a politically disorganized society.²¹

Most of the military rulers of the West Asia have been faced with the difficult task of devising a secular formula for national identification and orientation, to replace the traditional one of Islam.²² The military regimes in fact were swinging between the modern nationalist secular institutions which they brought forth and the religious institutions. The officers continue to use Islam and the traditional ethos as instruments to legitimate their authority and to command the allegiance of all classes. Their use of traditional symbols in Arab countries had permitted the army rulers to attain a certain degree of political

²¹ Ibid., pp. 242-243

²² Ibid., pp. 190-191

consensus among the masses without however conceding to them any great measure of participation in the political process and making of policy.²³ They had also recognised the importance of Arab nationalism as a link between their movement and the majority of public who were emotionally attached with the tradition and culture.

The military establishment in many West Asia states have taken over the power with a gamut of socio-political agendas. In Egypt and Iraq, they have taken the initiative to claim a pre-eminent role in the revolution against the old order though they began without particular idea about political system. Examining the role of military in the social-political transformation of the country, Lucian Pye says “military in the Third World nations are best equipped to initiate and enhanced social and political change.”²⁴ The Egyptian coup took place in the name of “freedom, abolition of corruption, defending the independence of the state, the safety of its borders, the protection of constitutional legitimacy.”

²³ Ibid., pp. 191

²⁴ Lucian Pye, "Armies in the Process of Political Moderation", in J. J. Thomson (ed.) The Role of Military in Under Develop Countries, (Princeton, 1968), p.69

The Arab armies can be divided into a number of models. These include: the modern professional (for e.g. Algeria, Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Jordan, Morocco, Sudan, Tunisia and the former North Yemen) the modern professional that coexists with tribal based military organization (Saudi Arabia and Oman) the experiment in a revolutionary people's army (Libya in the early 1980s and the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen of Yemen). The confessional (Lebanon); the largely mercenary (the UAE before the Gulf crisis); and the Guerrilla (the Palestine resistance). The two West Asian regimes that rely most heavily on the support of a professional army for survival are the monarchies in Jordan and Morocco. Perhaps the best example of the second type of military organization the one that combines tribal forces with a small professional army is Saudi Arabia. In post-second world war period, the military overthrew many of the civilian regime in the West-Asia such as Syria (1949); Egypt (1952), Iraq, Sudan (1958); Turkey (1960); and Algeria and Yemen (1962). In Syria and Iraq the regimes of the military were plagued in turn with recurrent coups mounted by their colleagues. Although the military regimes in Sudan after six years of role was itself overthrown by a civilian uprising, Sudan enjoyed the further distinction of being the only military republic in the Arab world that did not become an erstwhile Soviet military client; it become one only after the resumption of civilian rule. In none of the eight countries could it be said at the

start of 1968 that the soldiers had carried out their vowed political programmes, reinstated civilian rule, and returned to the barracks-not even in Sudan, where civilians literally drove the soldiers back. The two non Arab military regimes Turkey and Pakistan, framed new constitution and placed the routine operations of government in civilian hands; yet the military leaders retained a custodian responsibility for the republican institution that they had fashioned. Military officers, in brief, have found it simply to seize political power that to relinquish it or to use it effectively.

The techniques of the Military seizure of power in the West Asia in post-second World War were relatively uniform. In each typical instance the military conspirators, in advance of the overturn of the regime, key officers of elite garrisons posted in the capital or its outskirts. With the help of such garrisons, or after their neutralization if the help were withheld, the plotting officers entered the capital with armoured units in the predawn hours. They placed the head of state and the members of the cabinet in custody. Stationed troops and tanks at strategic points throughout the city while mobile forces in battle Regalia policed its principal streets, took over the broadcasting station and other communication centres. And announced the end of the regime, the establishment of a new one, and the temporary imposition of martial law. These were bloodless seizures of

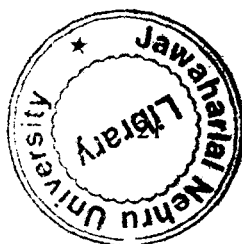
government Even the savagery that ended the Hashimite dynasty of Iraq in July 1958 did not cost many lives, despite the riotous demonstrations and the murder of the King, the Regent, and the Prime Minister.

The joint civilian-military coup *de'ctat* in Algeria in 1962 was the slowest motion coup in the post-war West Asia against the French regime. In Yemen, too a civilian-military alliance tried at the end of the same month to overthrow the inmates. The conspirators captured Sana, destroyed the Imam's palace and killed many of its royal inmates and their attendants. The incomplete coup d'ctat grew into a full-scale insurrection, thanks to the indispensable military, technical and administrative assistance of Egypt.²⁵ In the case of Libya the overthrow of king Idris in 1969 was the work of a small group of Western trained young officers. The number of soldiers was then greatly expanded and for over a decade, they were protected from the experiments in people's and revolution committee by which Colonel Qadhafi and his colleagues attempted to mobilize popular support. Military power should not be left in the hands of professional armies, he said least they use it to dominate the people.²⁶ This had an immediate effect on military morale and may have both one of the reasons for the various attempts on

²⁵ *ibid.*, p110

²⁶ Quoted from *Jamahariya Review in Libya* Colin Legum. H. Shakel and D. Dishonleds, Middle East contemporary Survey. VI 1981-2 (New York, 1984). P.736

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Qadhafi's life in 1984 and 1985.²⁷ The last type of small Arab army, the confessional is peculiar to Lebanon. It owed its special forms of organization and its role within the political system to two main factors. One was the way in which the sectarian balance was reflected not only in the attempt to recruit roughly equal numbers of Christians and Muslims but also in the division of the army into units composed largely of one sector or another, the second was the consensus among most of the leading politicians that the army should be kept small. This was supposed to prevent the army from becoming involved in domestic political as well as to inhibit the country from being drawn into military conflicts with its neighbours especially Israel. Analysis of the role of the Israeli-military in state and society presents other kind of problems. To begin with it is a very unusual form of organization, established in 1949, on the assumption that as the country did not possess the resources to maintain a large standing army what was required was a militia of civilians trained and equipped for combat, capable of being mobilized at short notice.²⁸

²⁷ Yehudit Ronen, Libya in I. Rabinovitch and H. Shakel (eds) Middle East Contemporary Survey IX, 1984-85. (Tel. Aviv: The Moshe Dayan Center for Middle East Eastern and African studies the Shiloh Inst. Tel Aviv University, 1987) pp.561-2

²⁸ Edward Luttwak and Dan Horowitz The Israeli Army (London: Allen Lane 1975) p.76

The result was the creation of something that many observers have chosen to call a citizen's army with its strength based largely on reserve formations. This has significance as far as civil/military relations are concerned. Horowitz has characterized it as a civilized military in a partially militarized society.²⁹ Analysis of the role of the military in Turkey, Iran presents a number of special problems. Whereas in Turkey the army has occupied a very public position in the political system, with major interventions in 1960, 1971 1980 and as far Iran is concern more recently in 1999. The major problem is to define the very different position of the army under the Shah and then under the Islamic revolutionary regime after 1979.

The modern Egyptian army was created after the independence and this led to a considerable expansion in the number of young officers for training. The successive regime used army in highly politicized activities such as putting down strikes and as their officers became the target of recruitment by small, radical, nationalist groups which sought to increase their strength, with military support.³⁰ In Egypt's case the army was the only national institution able to provide order in a politically disorganized society. Hence, this is a perfect

²⁹ Dan Harowitz *the Israeli Defence Forces: A civilized military in a partially militarised society* in R. Kolkowicz & A. Korbaniski (eds) *soldiers peasants and Bureaucrats* (London: 1982)

³⁰ Owen, Roger., *The Making of the Middle East*: (London, 1994) p200

example of the new type of military intervention. The establishment of a military regime in Egypt paved the way for yet another shift in the balance between the army and the state. Three features of the new situation were of particular importance.³¹ First the army was enlarged re-equipped with more sophisticated Russian weapons, given better educated recruits and in general turned into more professional organizations whose main purpose was defending the country against its external enemies. Second, various types of other paramilitary organization were developed to take over the major responsibility for internal security. Third the regime was much more successful in establishing their control over the military. Egypt spent more GDP on its armed forces than any other west Asian country shown in table 2. In Table 2 present the armed forces in relation to population and the allocation in relations national income in Egypt, Iraq and Syria and others 1989.

	Armed forces	Population (Million)	Defence Expenditure (\$bn)	GDP (\$bn)
Egypt	450,000	54.774	6.81	102.01
Iraq	1,000,000	19.086	12.87(1988)	46.09(1981)
Syria	400,000	12.983	2.49	20.26

Source: International Institute for Strategic Studies,

³¹ *ibid.*, pp201-202

The Military balance (1990-91), (London, 1990)

At the same time, military expenditures took up at least 30 percent of the annual budget (1990) and were the equivalent of 15 to 16 percent of the GDP. General Abu Ghazzaleh had expanded the role of the military into so many new areas of Egyptian life.³² The expansion of the role of the Egyptian army after 1981, affected three major areas. The first is internal security. Second is that of military industry where the army used its control over the national organization for military production and the Arab organization for industry to launch ambitious programme of manufacturing and re-building equipment, either for its own use or for export the third and last, is of expansion into public works, through the national service products organization founded in 1978, and then into numerous other sectors of the economy most notable those concerned with land reclamation and food production. Egypt had pushed the army into a position that necessitated huge new demands on national resources and brought it into contact with almost every area of economic and political.

³² *ibid.*, p204

CHAPTER II

Rise of Military Regime in Egypt

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Rise of Military Regime in Egypt

For its wide range ramifications the Revolution in Egypt (1952) was a classical text for that kind of political change in West Asia. The coup had its origin in political as well as social crisis of the pre-1952 system. It, in one sense, had been offered a wide platform for political action for the dissatisfied Egyptians. In the pre-1952 period the politics was fixed only by the changing relations among three main actors; the king, the Wafd (the then Ruling Party) and the imperialist power, Britain. As 1940s progressed the polity was characterised by some new phenomenon.

According to P.J Vatikiotis “the sharpest characteristic” of the period were these: (1) terrorism by extremist political, religious groups increased, despite the governments efforts to stifle it, (2) by insisting on absolute rule, the king dragged existing political parties into a struggle for survival ending in catastrophe, (3) the political vicissitudes of this period impressed on the people the idea that only revolution could bring about change¹.

¹ Vatikiotis, PJ The Egyptian army in politics (Bloomington, 1961 Indian University Press;) p. 29.

A political crisis was engulfing Egypt. The weak, narrow-based monarchy proved incapable of coping with the rising social discontent. A protractile national struggle kept Egypt in ferment while the failure of established leaders to dislodge the imperialist presence gradually robbed them of legitimacy in the eyes of masses.²

The Ikhwan al-Muslimin (Muslim Brethren) was not a political party but a politico-religious movement. It represented, under the monarchy, a long run threat to the Wafd. In every election held between 1924 and 1950, the Wafd party won resounding victories. The contour and agenda of politics in these years was fixed, finally, by the changing relations among the three main actors-the king, the Wafd and the imperial power Britain.³

The king always felt that so long as he controlled army command, he had the trump card for pre-dominance over the Wafd and other parties. No doubt until 1945, the king exerted a great measure of control over the armed forces.⁴ It is to be noted here that the status and position of the armed forces witnessed a

² . Hinnebusch Jr, R.A. Egyptian Politics under Sadat: The Post Populist Development Of An Authoritarian Modernizing State. (Cambridge, Pess, 1985) p.p 11-22.

³ Hurewitz, J.C. Middle East Politics: The Military Dimension (Colorado, 1982) p.125

⁴ Vitikiotis, P.J. The Egyptian Army, op.cit.p.40

number of parallel changes. For example the Egyptian army was disbanded in the aftermath of the British take over of the country and replaced by a weaker one. In the ensuing period the army was no longer the symbolic guardian of national unity. The leadership was drawn from the agrarian aristocracy of Turkish origin which the sons of the middle class tried to avoid joining up through the payment of bribes and mainly peasants blinded their own right eyes to escape conscription. The country nominal independence in 1922 did not drastically alter the situation since Britain reserved the right to manage the defence of Egypt. It was not until 1936, the date of the Anglo-Egyptian treaty, that the Egyptian army was reorganized and its esteem was raised.⁵

Background to the rise of Military Regime:

At the close of World War-II, King Farouq tighten his control over Egyptian politics. He was encouraged to do so by the inability of the various parties to agree on a United National Policy, especially over the resumption of negotiations with the United Kingdom early in 1946. His humiliation by the

⁵ Abdalla. A., Armed Forces and the Democratic Process in Egypt. Third World Quarterly.

Vol. 10, No. 4, Oct. 1988. p-1452

British ultimatum on February 1942, without a public stir in his support convinced him further that he could not depend on popular support.

From 1946, until the return of the Wafd to power in January 1950, Egyptian politics was plagued with violence. These new groups Socialist or Green Shirts of Ahmad Hussein, Communists and Muslim Brethren declared war on the politicians of the old school in February 1945 by murdering the Prime Minister, Dr. Ahmad Maher, leader of the Saadist party. Another prominent figure in Egyptian political life, Arnin Osama Pasha, Minister of Finance met the same fate at the hands of an assassin in January 1946 for his alleged proBritish sympathy⁶. By the spring of 1948 the Muslim Brethren had completely terrorized Egyptian society by a series of political assassinations. Among their victims were the president of the court of appeals, followed by the Cairo, chief of police, General Salim Zaki, and later Prime Minister Mahmud Mahmud Nuqrashi. Bombing of court houses and presidencies of political leaders became common in the capital, until the government itself had to resort to the violent elimination of Sheikh Hasan-al-Banna, Supreme Guide of the Brethren, in February 1949. The strict application of Marital Law under Saadist government led to the

⁶ Vatikiotis; *op. cit.*, p.34

persecution of many Egyptians on suspicion alone, especially since the Brethren had been outlawed in December 1948.⁷

Finally, the crisis was inadequately met by the formation of a Coalition Cabinet under the Chairmanship of Hussein Sirry, an independent, which included four Wafdist, four Saadist, four constitutional liberals, two national party members, and four independent. A primary task facing the new coalition government was again that of security planning for new elections was likely to create problems in any discussion of electoral laws. The king was therefore only too happy to accept the reorganization of the coalition cabinet, and immediately requested Hussein Sirry to form an independent caretaker government to prepare for general elections.

The Wafd surprised everyone in January 1950 by winning the election with a crushing majority.⁸ The public expected the Wafd now that it was back in power to respond to pressing demands. Restoration of civil liberties seemed paramount. The failure of Anglo-Egyptian negotiations since 1946 clearly required the evolution by the Wafd of a general anti-British policy acceptable to

⁷ *ibid.*, pp-34-35

⁸ *ibid.*, p-36

public opinion. Finally, the public considered the Wafd the only group capable of curbing the King's proclivity to absolute rule and expected it to do so.

In June 1950 the press and specially the *Rose el-Youssef* magazine, began to uncover many improprieties in the king's behaviour as well as in that of persons influential with the palace. For example the issue of defective arm purchased by Egyptian in Europe to supply fighting forces in the Palestine war was publically aired.⁹ In 1950 May Senator Mustafa Marie questioned the resignation of Mohammad Mahmud, chief of government's accounting office. In June, the cabinet issued three decrees, which affected the composition of the senate. One decree ousted all senators appointed during the Sirry cabinet. The second dismissed Muhammad H. Hatkal, head of the Liberal Constitutional Party, as president of the senate and appointed Ali Zaki Orabi, a Wafdist in his place. Public reaction to this clearly dictatorial action by the government reflected in the press. More important was the reversal of political party alignments.

Worse, was the Wafd's complicity in the king's attempt to temper with the institutions of justice? In September 1951, the king, who had been used to sending verbal and written directives to the cabinet through his courtiers, wanted

⁹ *ibid.*, p-36

to have the council of state reconstituted or, preferably, abolished. More irresponsible was the blunt intervention of the King in the appointment of ministers to the royal cabinet-a matter clearly requiring cabinet approval. At the height of the Anglo-Egyptian dispute in December 1951, he appointed Hafiz Afifi to head it. Most Egyptians considered this as a direct insult to their cause as Hafiz Afifi was considered to be more British than the Britishers.¹⁰

These highly improper actions of king Farouq did not go unnoticed by the general public. During December 1951 violent demonstrations against the king spread in Cairo; Alexandria, and all the provincial capitals, forcing the government to close all universities including al-Azhar, and secondary schools in the major cities in December 1951. Fierce outbreaks protesting the king's conduct occurred in Mid-January 1952, led once again by students. Some days later, reacting to the Manshiya incident the armed clash between British forces and Egyptian Auxiliary police, politically disaffected groups-the Communist Party, Socialists and the Muslim Brethren led to mob the burn the Cairo town. The six months following the riots of January 1952 saw the total collapse of political leadership in the country and the vacuum created by its utter defeat at the hands of an absolute ruler, king Forouq.

¹⁰ *ibid.*, p-39

The four cabinets between the fall of the Wafd and the army coup in July 1952, those of Ali Maher, General Nagib, Hiloli, Hussein Sirry and Nagib, Hilaili again were desperate attempts by highly qualified civil servants to salvage the situation. Being non-partisan and largely palace appointed, the cabinets were not assured of the cooperation of the constitutional political parties.¹¹ As recently as 1952 the conflict for leadership involved a very small percentage of the Egyptian people. Nor were the central government or the new institutions of the state viewed by the average Egyptian as instruments of social control. Indeed they had no positive role or function.

Inevitably these new institutions were used by the privilege few for the promotion of their own ends. Gradually, the category of the privilege increased in number and the ensuing struggle for admission into the political arena brought the whole structure down.¹²

Among the new groups that achieved any measure of success in Egyptian politics one may single out the Muslim Brothers. As a mass movement it introduced into Egyptian politics a dynamism, which the traditional old-style

¹¹ *ibid.*, p-40

¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 42-43

political parties lacked. To be sure, there was political opposition to the Wafd between 1923 and 1951, especially from Constitutional Liberals. But, neither the King nor any group in politics could really offer participation and political integration demanded by the new elements in society. Since both parties were already discredited because they cooperated with an absolute monarch in his efforts to rule, and their structure and composition were similar to the Wafd's. This situation was successfully exploited by the Muslim Brethren between 1936 and 1952¹³

According to P.J Vatikiotis, Egyptian politics from 1923 to 1952 may be summarized as; the adoption of Modern Constitutional forms and Parliamentary government; the emergence of political parties which unfortunately were the instruments of a socially conservative upper class; the continuation of a national struggle directed chiefly against the privileged position of Britain in Egypt; the re-opening of the question of secular nationalism versus Political Islam; the intensification of economic and social unrest; and the search for a new formula for salvation in violent mass eruption. Indeed national frustration, compounded by the absence of a satisfactory accommodation with Britain, and aggravated by the humiliating fiasco in Palestine and by the subsequent economic plight of the

¹³ . Ibid., p. 29

Egyptian masses pushed the average Egyptian by January 1952 into a ferocious explosion against organised authority. Any movement which satisfied or at least sympathetically responded to, its position was welcome".¹⁴

The Free Officer's movement began in the early 1940's as an informed "fraternity of friends among junior officers. The common factor behind their involvement in politics was frustration with the "truncated" liberal democratic system imposed by the British Empire, which could not handle the question of Anglo-Egyptian relations. A series of bitter experiences between 1948-51 alienated the young officers' loyalty to the monarchy. The Arab-Israel War of 1948 was one of the worst experiences the area had passed into. The defeat of Arabs in the war was humiliating for military in general and its officers in particular. Subsequent exposure of defective arms scandal, the levity with which the King and Cabinet Committed the army to battle, together with the widespread publicity of both of these facts, provided a sympathetic though unofficial link between radical and extremist organisations, such as the Muslim Brethren and the Socialist Party. Meanwhile the period 1937-45 was one of the great social and ideological ferment as well as economic development. There was rise of new groups in Egyptian society outside the triangular struggle between the King, Wafd and the British. The military establishment particularly low ranking

¹⁴ Vitikiotis, P.J. The Egyptian Army. Op.cit. pp. 40-41

officers, was already getting politicized during the course of nationalist struggle against British control.

The origin of the organization of Free Officer's is obscure. But, Rashed al-Barawi claimed in 'The Military Coup in Egypt' that as early as 1945 a group of officers issued secret circulars under the general heading. These circulars were allegedly concerned with evacuation of British troops from Egyptian soil and demanded vigorous action by the Egyptian Government to achieve this end. But the real circular an appeal and a warning were issued by the Free Officers early in 1950. The latter is most probably true for it has been established that the first executive committee of the Society of Free Officers was constituted late in 1949. Other circumstances support the view that after returning from the Palestine campaign in March 1949, Gamal Abdul Nasser, Kamal al-Din. Hussein, Salah Salem, Abdel Hakim Amer, and other Free Officers received assignments as instructors in both, the military academy and the staff college. Favoured by the prestige attached to heroism in the seize at Faluja they were in a position to infiltrate a large section of the student body in both institutions.

Many of them were known members of the Muslim Brethren, an organization outlawed since December 1948 for its terrorist acts. Although, an Egyptian army officer linked with the Brotherhood claimed that a large number

of army officers were associated with the secret apparatus of the Brotherhood in 1946,¹⁵ it was during the 1948-49 Palestine war that the two sides appear to have developed intimate contact. But considering that these officers represented various shades of public opinion and ideologies, including communism, it would ~~be more appropriate to conclude that their movement was not bound by any specific ideological consideration, except their commitment to what they considered the restoration of Egypt's national dignity, and to some vague ideas of social justice.~~

It seems that although Nasser himself had some links with the Brotherhood, his movement of Free Officers was started independent of it. Whether Nasser associated with the Brotherhood out of conviction in its religio-political programmes and then changed his mind, or whether he established links with it only for reasons of convenience, he left not doubt in anyone's mind about his independence in decision making. Indicative of the independence of the Free Officers' movement was the fact that even the officers of the Brotherhood could participate in the revolution of 23rd July 1952 not as Brothers but only as army officers¹⁶. The Brotherhood welcomed the fall of the old regime, although not

¹⁵ Hamonda, Hussein Ahmad, Secrets of Movements of Free Officers and Muslim Brotherhood (Cairo, 1987), pp 31-43

¹⁶ Adil, Kamal Ahmed, Between the lines: The Muslim Brothers and The Special System, (Cairo, 1987), p.304

certain about its own actual connection with the revolution.¹⁷ The revolutionary Government on its part dissolved all political parties after taking over charge but did not touch the Brotherhood.

The prime concern of their relationship was confined to their shared approach to the socio-economic problems in particular and to the other national issues in general. The Brotherhood's neglect of these issues under the new leadership not only estranged some Free Officers who were earlier connected with it, but also eroded its social base. In the ensuing conflict between the two contenders for power the army officers and the Brotherhood the latter stood by a weaker wicket because of this enervation. Indeed a substantial section of the Muslim Brotherhood was only waiting for the right opportunity to get rid of the king, and provided the popular support for the revolution.¹⁸

Middle class "Counter-elites" – the Muslim Brotherhood, radical nationalists, and secular leftists-entered the political, arena demanding greater nationalist militancy and a redistribution of wealth and power. The failure of the regime to respond gradually alienated the middle class. By the late 1940s anti-

¹⁷ *ibid.*, p. 305

¹⁸ Hamouda, *op. cit.*, p.123

regime violence was making Egypt ungovernable. Yet Counter elites, due to its internal division, were unable to fill the growing political vacuum.¹⁹

The certain developments inside and outside Egypt set the scene for the army to play a more active part in politics. These included the military coups in neighboring Iraq and Syria. Britain continued the policy of disregarding the Egyptian army and its role as a force to influence political developments inside Egypt. This progress gained impetus with the onset of the Palestine war of 1948 and scandal over the defective arms with which the Egyptian army in Palestine had been provided. But more important was the intensification of the political and social crisis of the pre-1952 system that led the ailing civilian authorities to call in the military in order to help to relieve the problems of supply of goods, transportation and public health. This encouraged the low ranking officers to seize power on behalf of the turbulent middle class whose political organs had succeeded in indoctrinating the officer corps with the politics of change.²⁰

The disaster of Palestine war, which brutally exposed the bankruptcy of establishment, made them determined to act. On 23 July, 1952, a Committee of Free Officers overthrew the Monarchy and forced king Farouq to abdicate in favour of his son and go into exile. The Egyptian Monarchy was abolished the

¹⁹ Hinnebusch, *op. cit.*, p.12

²⁰ Abdalla. A., *op. cit.*, p. 1453

following year when Egypt was declared as Republic. The *coup d'états* led by Gamal Abdel Nasser and a dozen or so other officers, was a little more than an a motion-changed protest movement of young officers, directed against corruption, abuse and inequalities of the royalist-oligarchical regime.²¹ The Free Officers wanted to break the domination of imperialism, the foreign minorities and the landed upper class over the country; open up opportunities for the Egyptian middle class, do something for the peasants and create a strong modernized Egypt. They were convinced that they were the only “untarnished or competent force” in the political arena, which could lead their project of national renaissance and social reforms.²²

The problem of government faced the leaders of the revolution immediately after they came to power. On the night of the king's expulsion, July 26, 1952, the Revolutionary Command Council (RCC) met and discussed the problem of governance. The RCC consisted of the original members of the Free Officers Executive in addition to one or two others. Of the eight members who were present, Nasser was alone in his plea for democratic government; all the

²¹ George Leuczowski, 'The Object and Methods of Nasserism' in Jack H. Thomson and Robert D. Reischauer (eds.) Modernization of the Arab World. (Princeton: 1966), p. 167

²² Abdalla: op. cit., p.1452.

others advocated a military dictatorship as the quickest way to achieve the revolution's aims.

Its members were as follows:

General Muhammad Nagib, Colonel Ahmad Shawqi, (associated with RCC), Lt. Colonel Gamel Abdel Nasser, Major Abdel Hakim Amer, Major Sorab Salwem, Major Kamal al-Din Hussein, Sq. Leader Hasan Ibrahim, Wing commander Abdel Latif al-Boghdadi, Wing commander Gamal Salem, Lt. Colonel Anwar al-Sadat, Major Zakariyya Muhieddin, Lt. Colonel Hussein Shafei, Major Khaled Muhieddin, Colonel Abdel Moneim Abdel Rauf, Colonel Kamal Rifaat, Colonel Ruft Wahid, Captain Ahmad Anwar and Captain Yusuf Sadiq.

Gamal Abdel Nasser warned: "Should we take this course, ours will be a worse dictatorship than the one we have overthrown. Under the monarchy, power was diffuse. One center was the king, another the political parties, and all had to take the British present into account. The proposed dictatorship in the absence of checks will inevitably lead to same situation".²³

²³ President Anwar-al-Sadat said in interview to Nejla m. Abuizzeddin, Nasser of Arabs, (Beruit, 1975).

The question was put to the vote and the result was seven in favour of military dictatorship; the dissenting vote was Nasser's alone, the atmosphere was tensed as the discussion was resumed, and when a second vote produced the same result, Nasser put away his papers, announced his resignation from leadership of the revolution and from the army, wished his comrades well, and left them with the final warning that the course which they proposed to follow would lead to the country's ruin.

Nasser's dissociation from them left his fellow officers bewildered. They knew they could not go on without him. So they followed him to his house and they said that with him they can settle on the right way. That night the character of the revolution was stamped: it was to be moderate, peaceful, and non-vindictive. A White Revolution.

The Free Officers were handicapped, upon assuming the responsibilities of government by two deficiencies: they lacked a political and social theory and

had no organized popular support or political party.²⁴ In his booklet "The Philosophy of the Revolution" published in 1954, Nasser wrote "our revolution must be sustained by our having the courage to embark on whatever is deemed necessary, no matter what loss of popularity and applause and cheers such action may cost. Otherwise we will have failed in our trust as leaders of the revolution. The revolution in divesting its enemies of the power to thwart the process of socio, economic and political reconstruction did so humanely. It has been a moderate revolution remarkably sparing of life"²⁵.

The Aims and Goals of The Revolution:

The young officers came with ideals but there was no ideology to begin with, only aims and aspirations. These were epitomized in the six principles of the revolution, which served as guide lines for action and were the seeds from which a comprehensive ideological system was later developed. They are:

1. The termination of the British presence and elimination of the agents of imperialism.
2. The eradication of feudalism

²⁴ Nejla M. op. cit., p. 115

²⁵ Nasser, G.A. Egypt's Liberation: The Philosophy of the Revolution. (Washington D.C., 1955), p. 74

3. The liquidation of monopolies and of capitalistic control over the govt.
4. The achievement of social justice.
5. The creation of a strong national army
6. The establishment of a sound democracy

Within a few weeks after the revolution, the new regime adopted several reforms. The details will be discussed in chapter 4. General Naguib, it will be recalled, had been brought in to be the figurehead of the new regime. Actual power was in the hands of the RCC headed by Nasser. But General Naguib had become extremely popular among the Egyptians and was recognized as the real leader of the revolution. He wanted more power as prime minister of the country than the single vote allotted to him in the 13-man RCC would allow. The most important factor which caused a rift between Naguib and the RCC was age. The young officers of the RCC believed that the politicians were old, corrupt, and unimaginative. The 51-year old Naguib, however remembered the same politicians when they were young firebrands with initiative and imagination. Naguib respected these men of his own generation and it is possible that these men encouraged Naguib to seek more power. In any case, Naguib demanded more power in order to establish parliamentary democracy, which meant that

most of the same old politicians would come to power.²⁶ The inner power struggle between RCC and Naguib will be discussed in detail in next chapter. Sufficient here to say in that Having succeeded in seizing power and putting down civilian resistance to military rule, the Free-Officers anticipated threats to their regime from their own institution-the army. While, it took Nasser two years to push back the civilian threat to his authority it took him some five years to defuse opposition within the army. But soldiers remained one of the five social categories defined by Nasser as the base of his political ideology of an alliance of working people's forces. What happened in effect is that the army continued to be a power parallel to Nasser's own civilian power even after he took off his uniform.²⁷

²⁶ Yahya, A., Middle East: Past and Present (New Jersey, 1970), p. 386

²⁷ Abdalla. A., Armed Forces and The Democratic Process in Egypt, op. cit. p. 1454.

CHAPTER III

Institutionalization and Consolidation of Nasser's Regime

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As early as February, 1952, it was obvious that the army was the only national institution in Egypt that could provide law and order, and the only dynamic element in a disrupted Egyptian State that could assume the role of political arbiter.¹ Between July 1952 and October 1954 the Free Officers Executive succeeded in transforming itself from a conspirational group to the most effective ruling elite in the Arab region. With its hold over Egyptian army, the Military Junta evolved techniques, of political control as well as distinguishable political ideology and programme. How it had exercised political control, formulated and executed public policy, recruited followers, and responded to public demands are the essential queries in any assessment of the military regime in the then united Arab Republic. But, more fundamental question is that: how the army elite had consolidated its power and legitimized its authority?

Military rule was, not however, established without a struggle, first in the streets and, when several free officers joined the civilian opposition, inside

¹ Vatikiotis, P.J. The Egyptian Army in Politics: Pattern for New Nations? (Bloomington; 1961), pp.72-73

the army as well. The decisive factor in conflict was Nasser's forceful leadership inside Free-Officers Council, his ability to keep the core of the officer movement together and through it control of the army. Step by step all dissident political forces were repressed: a blanket - ban on all kind of political parties was imposed, left wing movements were crushed and finally the Muslim - Brotherhood was crippled. Freedom of expression and activity was curbed, overt opposition went underground. Officers who had put their connections to political forces above loyalty to the victorious Free Officers were purged and cohesion among the new leadership reestablished. But this was achieved at the cost of people's wish politically active so; if the new regime was to survive it had to break out of this political isolation and forge a base of popular support.²

The secrecy surrounding the Free - Officers movement within the army confused public speculation over its immediate plans once the coup occurred. When coup occurred all groups rushed to influence its political direction and orientation. The Muslim Brotherhood hoped to control the junta in favour of a traditional fundamentalist orientation. The Liberal Constitutionalist on the other hand, expected that by forcing a return to constitutional forms they

² Hennebusch, Jr., R.A. Egyptian Politics Under Sadat: The Populist Development of an Authoritarian Modernizing State. (Cambridge, 1985), p-13.

could find their way back to power. The communists, socialists, and other radical leftist groups within and outside the army viewed the coup only as the first phase of more radical revolutions. But Nasser apparently was not prepared to commit himself or his movement in any one group, at the end rejecting their terms by suppressing every one of them.

This initial message proposed one negative and one positive action. As it returned out, neither the public nor the junta knew at the time exactly what this meant. But the expectations of civilian political leaders were heightened. When the junta asked Ali Maher to form a government. They were not apprehensive over the deposition of the king so long as Ali Maher headed a cabinet of civilians; However the speed with which army leaders, then proceeded to neutralize the political groups was a refraction of the latter's weakness, unrealistic optimism, and unpopularity, as well as of the army's evolving indication to assume total power.

The civilian government by Ali Maher in the first days of the coup desired their appointment as well as their authority from the revolutionary officers. Their appointment was a matter of convenience enabling the Junta to gain time for its next move. It did not reflect any tests of the army to encourage a civilian government. to rule the country. Actual authority rested

with the Free Officers Executive Council, now constituted as the Revolutionary Command Council (RCC).³

Infect the swift abolition of the monarchy, the order to political parties to purge and reorganize their ranks, and the promulgation of the Agrarian Reform however were all indications of the Free officers aspirations to political leadership and control.⁴

In September 1952, the Agrarian Reform Law was put into effect by a new all civilian cabinet of political technocrat under the “leader of the Revolution”, General Mohammad Naguib.⁵ It gave the Free Officers their first political link with the peasant masses.

But premier Ali Maher opposed it because it was difficult for a civilian cabinet to accept the drastic measures imposed by RCC whom they considered totally inexperienced in politics. Naturally Maher was reluctant to encourage Agrarian Reform, reduction in land rents and changes in Waqf legislation. Thus, early in September it became apparent that his cabinet could not withstand the radicalism of the RCC. Ali Maher resigned and in September 1952 General. Mohammad. Naguib formed a new government,

³ Vatikiotis, op.cit., p.74

⁴ Dekmejian, R, H. Egyptian Under Nasser: A Study in Political Dynamics (London,1972), p.24

⁵ Vatikiotis, op.cit. p.76

which was still a cabinet of civilian. It included mainly technocrats and administrators, who hoped, were concerned about the revolutionary changes desired by the RCC.

Meanwhile as early as July 1953 the RCC through General Naguib, issued a call to all political parties and associations to purge themselves of undesirable elements and declare publicly their reconstituted hierarchies and platforms. RCC members argued that “If the primary objective of the army was the destruction of undesirable elements in the country, the government and civilian groups should proceed to purge such elements from among their ranks.” By August 10, it was obvious, that the RCC was not satisfied with the fake reorganization of such party as the Wafd, and Naguib went so far as to announce that after the warning period “the army might use force”.⁶

Among the political groups in Egypt the Free Officers had to contents seriously with the two: the Wafd and the Muslim Brethren. The leadership of both groups believed in their ability to command the support of many Egyptians, Mustafa Nahas, head of the Wafd, for instance, continued to claim that his party represented the nation while the Supreme Guidance Council of the Brotherhood, headed by Hudaybi, contended for pre-eminence in any

⁶ *ibid.*, p.76

remaking of the Egyptian political system.⁷ The latter group was a more dangerous rival of the RCC than the Wafd, as they presumably had direct access to active sympathizers among the Free Officers.⁸

The Brethren emerged from the January - July 1952 chaos as the strongest political organization in Egypt. It is difficult to say whether Free Officers offered the Brethren share in government because of fear or genuine desire to cooperate.

The invitation to participate in the government extended to the Supreme Council of the Brethren was minister extended by Hadaybi, Supreme Guide, and Ashmanis, his second-in-command, as a desire on the part of the free officers to embrace the Brethren's causes of an Islamic state. The three members nominated by the Brethren in Aug. 1952 to serve in the cabinet came with the proposal that their supreme council should also have the right to pass on legislation by the new regime to assure its Islamic orientation.⁹ This proposal was unacceptable to the RCC, and the proposal was flatly refused. One of the Brethren nominees, Sherin Hasan at Baquri, was accepted by RCC

⁷ *ibid.*, p.77

⁸ *ibid.*, p.77

⁹ *ibid.*, p.78

to serve in the government a minister of Waqfs. Baquiri's acceptance however, terminated his association with the Brethren.¹⁰

The RCC realized that a campaign to legitimate their authority and leadership was urgently required. Three things were essential for legitimacy. First, army laid to dissociate from previous nationalist agitation and political development led by discredited civilian politician seconds the army had to connect its movement somehow with the Islamic ethos but distinguish it from the Muslim Brethren. Finally, it had to seek acceptance by the economically less privileged. Classes-workers, peasants, farmers and students by preaching a vision of an equitable society with higher standards of living for all. In short, the RCC had the difficult task of asserting effectively that the army represented the nation.¹¹

Between Sept. 1952 and June 1953, the RCC concentrated its efforts on a campaign to secure public acceptance of its undisputed leadership. As a part of strategy, RCC members including General Naguib and Nasser toured to countryside and establish direct contact with people. During campaign. The RCC members stressed that the army in the array of people, and insisted that the army did not aim

¹⁰ *ibid.*, p.78

¹¹ *ibid.*, p.78

or aspire to political power, but only planned to purge the country of undesirable elements and re-establish genuine constitutional government.

The RCC recognized from the beginning the importance of winning the support of students in the urban centers, for it was among this group that the Wafd and Muslim -Brethren had their best-organized followings. Both Naguib and Nasser frequently addressed university students in Cairo and Alexandria during November 1952. The RCC was in no mood to permit labour unrest or any type of revolutionary activity so soon after its own coup, neither did it wish to appear unresponsive to labour demands. From Sept. to Nov. 1952 both Naguib and Nasser, in addressing labour groups in Cairo, stressed the army's concern with labour conditions and emphasized the importance of second labour legislation. An apology for the Kafr-al-Dawr hangings is detected in Naguib's plea with the working at Embabad November 1952 for more time to device progressive labour laws. To counter the Muslim Brethren the RCC sought to associate the movement it led with the promotion Islamic ideal of justice and equity. Thus in May and June 1953, Husein Safer, Anwar al-Saiat and Kamil-al-Din Hussain took to the public to preach Friday sermons at various mosques and to plead the basically Islamic character of their planned reforms. They remind the believers, more over, that fanaticism was not the only variety of devotion.

It needs to be mentioned here that the Free- Officers leadership understood from the beginning the importance of Islam as a link between their movement and the majority of tradition bound Public In the absence of any strong or fully developed political link the religious national bond of Islam appeared to the army rulers the most an instruments to efficient tool communicate with the masses¹². Hence the military junta extensively made use of Islam, its doctrine, symbols and institutions to legitimize and consolidate its regime. As a matter of fact, the regime harnessed the hierarchy (in terms of its manipulation and selective use) of the religious institutions like Al-Azhar, Waqf, Mosque, organization like Sufi Orders and making other voluntary benevolent societies to legitimize it policies and programme and to eliminate its position mainly Muslim Brotherhood. It is to be noted here that Sykh, Al-Azhar, Mahmud, Shalfur, issued many fatwas justifying the socialise and other progressive policies of regime including family planning and increased role of women in society as in accordance with Islam. The number of mosques increased by 20,000 in 1970. In 1962, 53,000 religious functionaries Imams, Koran-readers, were appointed. This was done by ministry of Waqf and the budget of the Ministry was 13.3 million LE in 1969-70, which was 0.55 percent of the state government budget and was equal to the budget of the

¹² Vatikiotis, P.J's article in Recent Developments in Islam in Tension in the Middle East (ed) R.W. Thayer; (Baltimore, 1958) p. 165-80

Ministry of Culture of Ministry of Information. Nasser and his associates usually began and concluded their articles or public speeches with quotations from *Koran* referred to historic social and cultural significance of Islam with great respect and left it undisturbed in cultural and moral sphere.

There was a separate ministry, which was responsible for implementation of religious policies, like radio and television broadcasting of *Koranic* prayers, by publishing religious text books. The social role of Islam is more closely scrutinized through family planning and women's emancipation.

In 1959 September, Islamic conference was inaugurated to further consolidate the power in a different way. The aims of the Islamic congress were outlined by the decree as the educational and social welfare of all Muslims; the translation of the compendiums of Islamic tradition into Asian and African language; the initiation of studies on the economic problems of the various Muslim countries predatory to the increase of commercial and trade relations between them, the propagation of the message of Islam in African and Asia; teaching of Arabic and the Publication of the Holy Koran for wider distribution among Muslims everywhere: the establishment of cultural centers in Jerusalem, Indonesia, Somalia and Northern Nigeria, and the creation of a central office for the guidance of Islamic youth. Legally, the Islamic congress was designed by the 1954 degree as an agency of the presidency of the Republic. And hence under the supervision of president.

Administratively the Islamic Congress was headed by ex-colonel. Anwar al - Sadat, who was appointed Secretary General. The other Muslim rulers have feared that the congress was basically an instrument devised by revolutionary officers in Egypt for political action abroad.

It helped to promote the idea in the minds of the people that defence of faith is not the exclusive prerogative of conservative religious leaders (*Sheikhs and Ulemas*); army officers can also perform this role. In more practical terms, the concern of an army junta with Islamic welfare represented a broad-gauged measure to placate fundamentalist fellow travellers of the Muslim-Brethren when the later organization was dissolved in October 1954 following its implication in a plot to assassinate Gamal Abdel Nasser in Alexandria.

This RCC campaign on all fronts must be viewed only as a general appeal for mass acceptance of the coup. It was by no means the Free Officers secured consolidation of their power. The RCC was not only seeking votes of confidence or popularity. Rather it was gradually preparing te people for full submission to the new regime. In order to arrest their undisputed authority the Free Officers had to destroy the existing organized political activity, on the one hand and to achieve absolute control over the military establishment on

the other. Regimentation of the Egyptian population could follow only after these two objectives had been accomplished.¹³

Along the side its countrywide appeal for support the RCC made changes in all aspects of government which eventually led to total political control on a new basis. This institutionalization of control was as through as the measures for all vestiges of civilian authority and influence by the appointment of military personnel to the cabinet and other posts. The RCC as the policy making group for the revolution necessarily extended its authority over the execution of policy as well.

Although the purge within the army was still in its first stages, the RCC instituted a general purge of organized political parties in January 1953. The parties were formally dissolved, their properties and funds confiscated and a military dictatorship announced for the next three years. Military tribunals established in January the same year to try defaulting officers were supplemented later in the year by the court of the revolution to try leading politician of the previous regime. Extreme right as well as extreme left publications were suppressed and press censorship was imposed.

By January 1953, when the Liberation Rally was inaugurated and mass oaths of loyalty to the regime were taken by civilian and members of the

¹³ Vatikiotis, *op. cit.*, p.p.80-81

armed forces alike the RCC showed unmistakably its intention to rule without accommodating existing civilian political groups. Gamal Abdel Nasser became Secretary General of the Rally on February 6, 1953. A fifty-member commission was appointed to draft a new constitution. All the members of the RCC automatically became members of this committee in addition to a select number of former senators, premiers, and ministers.¹⁴

The manifesto of the Liberation Rally published on January 16, 1953, outlined the national interest of the Revolution, among them the determination of the regime to “drive out occupiers from the Nile Valley unconditionally”, other were to “establish a sound community, to rid the country of all elements of retrogression and weakness, to set up an economic system based on social justice, to create industry on a large scale, to protect citizens against unemployment, and to enlighten citizens in their duties through unity and cooperation in productive work.”¹⁵

Defence of the revolution was now linked with a complete change of administration regime. “The Liberation Rally is not a political party”, declared Gamal Abdel Nasser. “It is a means to organize population for the

¹⁴ *ibid.*, p.82

¹⁵ Rizvi N. H; “Political organizations of a Revolutionary Regime : The case of Egypt” The Journal of the Indian Political Science Review, Volume 17 No.1, January 1982 p. 100

reconstruction of a society over a sound new basis.” He further said that the revolution the political system for the benefit of the people. It is therefore necessary to defend the revolution against those who try to deter it from its course and prevent it from all achieving its ultimate goals”.¹⁶ In reality RCC was more interested in creating a vehicle through which it could forestall political agitation by the Wafd, the Muslim Brotherhood and other elements.¹⁷

No doubt Liberation Rally served the RCC in helping clear labour unions, trade federations, and student organizations of antagonistic elements.¹⁸ This pattern became evident when Nasser formed his first cabinet in April 1954. The key ministry of Social Affairs and Labour for instance, went to a member of the Free

Officers inner circle, Kamal al-Din Hussein. The latter systematically purged trade unions and Labour Organizations of possible opposition. He performed the same operation successfully among student organizations after he became minister of Education in June 1956; That the purpose of the Liberation Rally was one of regimentation was asserted by Major Sahah Salem- the hardest member of the RCC when in April 1953, he informed an

¹⁶ *ibid.*, p. 100

¹⁷ Vatikiotis, *op.cit.*, p. 83

¹⁸ Binder, Leonard. “Political Recruitment and Political Participation” in Joseph Porombara and Myron Weiner, (eds) Political Parties and Political Development (Princeton; Princeton University Press, 1966) p. 227

audience at Alrt Ghamr, “We did not come to you for votes, because we do not aspire to rule, or to become members of Parliament we came to seek your cooperation and wishes”¹⁹

The appointment of leading RCC members to key ministers implied three things. First, it reflected tighter control by the RCC over the army as well as the civilian population., Second, it indicated the pre-eminence of Gamal Abdel Nasser in making policy for regime. Third, it was a preventive measure against the possible political accommodation of General Naguib with civilian personnel in government Salih Salem and Nasser made it clear, however, that the army was until then the only major source of power for the regime. General. Naguib emphasized this fact during a ceremony in which a man out of allegiance to the new Republic was taken by army officers. “The Army Officers, exclaimed Naguib on that occasions, are the pillar of the revolution. The whole movement was initiated by you, the nation looks to you for leadership. ---- Do not ever forget that the army is the vertebral column of this movement in the country, even though all citizens have blessed it.”²⁰

¹⁹ Vate kiotis., op. cit., pp. 83-84

²⁰ *ibid.*, p 85

In January 1954 the Brethren's tightly organized cadre precipitated disorders of some magnitude in Cairo University and among workers. They interpreted the moderation of the RCC in concluding an agreement with Britain over Sudan in February 1953, and the initiation of negotiations over the Suez Canal Base as a betrayal of national aspirations. They agitated for a holy war against British troops still stationed establishment of national ownership on Canal Zone. These disturbances caused by the agitation of the Muslim Brethren afforded the RCC sufficient cause to seek the dissolution of that group on January 1954. Lt. Col. Husein Shefei, a member of the RCC, accused the Brethren of being a subversive political party. "Islam is not an industrial enterprise or monopoly for the Brethren; neither is it idolatry," he said Lt. Colonel Lakariyya Muhieddin, Chief of the Military Intelligence-wing announced the arrest of more than 400 Muslim Brothers, including the Supreme Guide, Hudaybi. But the leading members of the Supreme Council were left free to arrange a 'United-Front' with Wafdist, Communists. And Socialist elements and that precipitated a crisis in February-March, 1954.²¹

The opposition United Front that was active from June 1953 until March 1954, cannot be assessed, separately from the opposition to the RCC within the Army Officers Corps. General Naguib encouraged some officers to seek

²¹ *ibid.*, p 88

greater autonomy in the RCC, but he was not in a position to claim with Revolutionary Free Officers, because, the leading free Officers were already, committed to the leader of the army movement, Gamal Abdel Nasser.²²

The struggle for power within the Army Officers Corps between Nasser and Naguib cost later to his position and freedom. Despite this, RCC was not in a position to assess its real strength within the army until the “Manshiya Incident” of October 1954 (Called after the site in Alexandria) in which one Muslim Brother and member of the secret organization attempted to assassinate Nasser while he was addressing some 10,000 workers in Alexandria.²³

Before making him Prime Minister the Junta appointed Nasser Military Governor of Egypt, a measure intended to obstruct the possible alignment of Naguib with the civilian political forces. It also permitted the RCC to institute sweeping purges of the Armed Forces. Publically , though, Nasser employed ingenious tactics to disarm his enemies sensing the national outcry to resignation of General Naguib. He announced a decision to restore parliamentary form beginning with a constituent assembly to be erected in June of that year. Under this scheme the RCC was supposed to disband,

²² *ibid.*, p89

²³ *ibid.*, p90

permitting political parties to contest the elections in the absence of Marital Law. To confuse its enemies further, the Junta ordered the release of certain political prisoners, especially members of the Muslim Brothers who had been arrested earlier in the year.²⁴ Hence, Wafdists, Socialists, Communists Muslim Brothers, and left-wing journalists were taking measures to align themselves with Naguib. The Liberation Rally, controlled by its Secretary General Nasser and Loyal Free-officers were able to organize Students and trade union members into mass. Demonstration against the proposed return of constitutional of life because the rally was an arm of the RCC elite.²⁵

In March 1954 the Military Junta announced the indefinite cancellation of the proposed June elections for a constitutional assembly and ousted General Naguib from the premiership and the RCC. Soon Manshiya Crisis provided a golden opportunity to get-rid of General Naguib and give a deathblow to Muslin Brotherhood. The Junta moved easily to crush the organization and knock out of political running. The trail of the conspirators in November, 1954 implicated president Naguib.

With the destruction of the Muslim Brotherhood, the elimination of Gen. Naguib, and the virtual suppression of all organized political parties and

²⁴ *ibid.*, p.91

²⁵ *ibid.*, p.91

all kind of opposition, the Junta emerged by the end of 1954 as the undisputed ruling elite of Egypt.²⁶

By December 1954, Nasser was able to appoint trusted Army officers in key bureaucratic offices to supervise the work of civilian departments. Despite the use of civilian economic and other experts in cabinet posts (Finance, Economy, Commerce, Industry, Justice, Foreign Affairs and Agriculture), Nasser was able through the device of committees and commissions directly responsible to him for coordination of policy, to impose effective control of the State.

Within the RCC and the Free Officers group, personal loyalty to Nasser soon became the criterion for political longevity. Colonels Ahmad Shawgi and Hufti Wahid of the infantry for example, were rejected early for their leftist tendencies. Khaled Muhieddin paid the price for his defection and exiled to Europe. Although Anwar al-Sadat and Kamal al-Din Hussein may have been just as far right in political spectrum as Muslim Brethren, Colonel Abdel Moneim Abdel Rauf, only the latter was expelled from the officers Executive Council.. Colonel Rashad Mehanna, who tried to use his position on the Regency Council to bid for power in alliance with Brethren leaders with the support of artillery and cavalry officers, was dismissed from Regency on

²⁶ *ibid.*, p.94

October 1952. When a rival group of army officers sought to elect him president of the officers club in December 1952. Colonel Rashad Mehanna was evicted from the army, placed under house arrest, and his fellow conspirators were subjected to trial by a military tribunal.²⁷

To the credit of Nasser and his Junta were already such popular measures regardless of their effectiveness as agrarian reforms, labour and social registration. (The detail of which will be mentioned in next chapter) and the Suez crisis. The Suez Crises owes its origin in Nasser's decision to nationalize the Canal. As a result British, French and Israel declared a war on Egypt. The bold defence of Nasser against this imperialism made him hero of the Arab world. He used toe crisis to the maximum possible extent to consolidate his position and to embark on implementation of his socialistic union. The attempt on Nasser's life in October 1954 further enhanced his popularity and rendered all opposition groups by definition" enemies of the Revolution" and therefore of desirable change. In Egypt at the time, as well as in most other Arab countries, such mass popularity frequently replaced the need for more formalized institutional legitimacy. The lack of organized political expression and experience among the masses help them to overlook the institutional aspect of legitimate authority.

²⁷ *ibid.*, p. 94

The Liberation Rally did not last long and was allowed to die after the announcement that another political organization National Union would be founded under the constitution of 1956.²⁸ The Liberation Rally was a formless body contrived to fulfill the void created by the dissolution of political parties. The Rally failed because it could not perform many functions like the support of the government and the control of all political activity. A more fundamental cause of its failure was the reluctance to allow genuine involvement and responsibility on the part of any but the ruling group.²⁹

Though, Nasser's role in Egyptian Politics was central and he had his own ideas about the socio-economic and Political ills of Egypt yet he wanted to achieve the goals of the revolution through institutions which were created from the top and were controlled from there to ensure his authoritarian rule. He also knew that he had to create an environment, which could motivate the people to accept change, his leadership and the necessity of continuing revolution. This concept of leadership was first to motivate the people make them want some things and secondary show them how to achieve the goals³⁰

²⁸ Binder; op. cit p.230

²⁹ Horton, Alan.W., "Political Problem of the UAR" First Report North East Affricca series (UAR). Volume IX (4). p.9

³⁰ Rizvi, N.H; op. cit., p.99

For this he had vast resources - a propaganda machine, a single political organization and the “myth” of the state³¹

According to J. Heaphy,³² “Nasser knows in functional terms why he needs a political party, he needs it to levitate what is going on in the country by providing a more permanent vanguard than now exists in the persons of Nasser and his associates. Therefore the first political organization formed by the new regime was Hayat al-Tahir (The Liberation Rally). finally paved the way to National Union.³³

The Constitution of 1956: Prelude To The National - Union

Exactly, three years after the transitional period of rule by the RCC, on January 16, 1956, Nasser announced the constitution, which was adopted by a plebiscite held on June 23. It was a “synthesis of reformist ideas - in the direction of a welfare state with Islamic and nationalist concepts³⁴ . Its preambles reaffirmed the six objectives of the revolution: the abolition of imperialism and its agents (presumably achieved by the Anglo-Egyptian agreement in October 1954. and banning of “Muslim Brethren” as a “Political

³¹ Copeland, Miles; The Games of Nations: The Amoralty of the world Politics. (London: 1969). pp.99-110

³² Heaphy. J. “The Organization of Egypt: Inadequacies of a Non-Political Model for Nation-Building,” World Politics .“ Volume XVIII (January, 1966). p.191.

³³ Rizvi., N.H., op. cit. p.99

³⁴ *ibid.*, p.101

Party”), the destruction of feudalism; the eradication of monopolies as well as the control of capitalistic influence over the system of government (Presumably struck down by the establishment of the Permanent Council for National Production in January 1953, the establishment of a strong National Army (to have began with the arms purchase agreement with the Czechoslovakia then the Soviet Block in 1955, and the promulgation of a new uniform military service law in the same year); and the achievement of social justice in a “democratic socialist cooperative”.

The constitutions of 1956 featured a system bearing a strong executive. The President with his ministers laid down and executed the general policy of the government. He has the right to propose laws to the National Assembly and to veto any law within 30 days. Article 192 of the said constitution provided for the formation of a new organization al-Ittihaad al-Qawami (the National Union 1956-61), which replaced the Liberation Rally and through which” the people would realize the aims of the Revolution.³⁵ It also gave inviolable right like franchise and the right to criticize the government. A National Assembly was to be freely elected, although consultative in

³⁵ *ibid.*, p.99

character, would approve the bills and budget presented by the government, the president had the power to dissolve the Assembly.³⁶

The National Unions (1956-61), as envisaged by the constitution of 1956, was established in May 1957. This Union was a “non-party” organization and it was designed “to represent” a revolutionary concept in the political development of the country.³⁷ It was a device to organize the masses so that they may acquire the means for achieving the goals of revolution,³⁸ i.e. a socialist, democratic, cooperative society.³⁹

The National Union was an comprehensive organization controlling aspects of public activity, students, labours, agriculture economic and occupational association.⁴⁰ The organizational structure of National Union was pyramidal in character with Secretary General as “the supreme authority of the Republic of Egypt”. At the top and area committee at its base on the principle of indirect representation. However Supreme Executive Committee, which acted as the highest supervisory and executive body for all aspects of the National Union all Egyptians over eighteen years of age were given voting rights.⁴¹

³⁶ Rodison , Makima, “The Political System” in P.J. Vatikiotis (ed.) Egypt since Revolution (New York, 1968)

³⁷ Vatikiotis, P.J. The Egyptian Army. op. cit, p. 103

³⁸ *ibid.*, p. 103

³⁹ *ibid.*, p.104

⁴⁰ *ibid.*, p. 105

⁴¹ Rizvi, N.H. op. cit. p. 103

The way National Union was organized and worked in Egypt showed close resemblance to the many-tiered structure of the communist party of the then erstwhile USSR.⁴² The National Union tried to control intellectual endeavor and education and also entered into the fields of social, economic and industrial endeavor. It was an all-comprehensive organization covering every the aspects of national life.⁴³ During the life of the Union between Egypt and Syria was formed in 1958. It necessitated the organization of the National Union in Syria too.⁴⁴ However, for various reasons the Union between Egypt and Syria did not last long and came to end in 1961.⁴⁵

In November 1961, Nasser dissolved the National Union. This was promoted by several reasons. The fact that everyone had been permitted to join, the lack of screening had let to its penetration by bourgeoisie, and that the National Union had not established a vanguard of revolutionary leadership.⁴⁶ it achieved little in terms of educating the masses the principles of the revolution, organizing the masses for rapid social change and fostering social solidarity⁴⁷. With the secession of Syria from the United Arab Republic the opposition to the socialization decrees, and the dissolution of both the

⁴² Wilber, Donald. N. United Arab Republic: Egypt (Now Haren, 1969) pp.79-96

⁴³ Vatikiotis; op. cit., p.91

⁴⁴ *ibid.* pp.113-120

⁴⁵ *ibid.* pp. 140-186

⁴⁶ Wilber, op. cit., p.197

⁴⁷ Horton, Alan W. op. cit. p.237

National Union and National Assembly led Nasser to work towards the establishment of another National Political Organization free from bourgeois influence and consisting of only working forces.⁴⁸

The Congress of Popular Forces (C.P.F.): -

“In the spring of 1962, Nasser inaugurated Congress of Popular Forces of 1500 members of the congress; 25 percent were workers; 25 percent rural middle class; 22 percent professionals and the rest were managerial and government employees.⁴⁹

The Congress of Popular Forces adopted the National Charter in July 1962, a document setting forth the ideas and principles of Arab Socialism. The National Character prescribed a “Socialist Solution” for the “socio-political ills” of Egypt. In chapter six of the charter it was claimed that, “the socialist solution to the problems of economic and social underdevelopment in Egypt, to achieve progress in a revolutionary way - was never a question of free choice. The socialist solution was a historical inevitability imposed by reality the broad aspirations of the people and the changing nature of the world in the second part of the 20th century”.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Rizvi, N.H. op. cit. p.105

⁴⁹ Binder, op. cit; p.237

⁵⁰ Rizvi, N.H.,op. cit. p.105

The National charter provided a basic framework for the creation of the new society of Nasser's vision and its main objectives were freedom, socialism and unity. It rejected the idea of the dictatorship of any single class and sought unity and social harmony on the basis of an alliance of the working forces". This was to be achieved through an all-embracing organization, the Arab Socialist Union.⁵¹

The Arab Socialist Union (ASU)

In order to achieve the goals of the National Charter a statute was promulgated on December, 1962, creating the Arab Socialist Union which was to be "a coalition of workers, peasant intellectual soldiers, and state capitalists."⁵² It was organized to prevent the "enemies of the people from infiltrating the Egyptian Society." Nasser speaking before the members of the National Assembly on March 26, 1964 said,

"The Arab Socialist Union is the political organization of the working forces of the people through which they work to ensure that authority shall at all times remain in their hands and not move in to other hands."

The government made determined efforts to popularize the principles of the Arab Socialist Union and work towards the establishment of a new

⁵¹ *ibid.*, pp. 105-106

⁵² Lenezowski, *op. cit.* pp.204

Society". Three vice-presidents devoted themselves almost exclusively to the Arab Socialist Union's affairs during 1963 and 1964. Hussein Shafei was responsible for its organization in the country as a whole Zakaryya M. in Cairo; and Hasan Ibrahim in Alexandria.⁵³

The ASU's ideology represented a combination of idealism and pragmatism. It was anchored on in act, the new regime, was not interested in broadening of the political participation. It was interested in merely in its perpetuation and seeking legitimacy through mass organizations.

The National Assembly elected in 1964 had been charged with drafting a permanent constitution but the provisional was still in force.⁵⁴ The March 30, 1968 programme was an affirmation of the principles embodied in the 1962 charter in the context of the new circumstances brought about by the June war (1967) and its aftermath. The programme all along the length was dealt with economic development; its methods and purposes on the socialist solution to the problem of social disequalibrium and on the inseparability of social justice from democratic freedom.⁵⁵

⁵³ Mansfield. N. Nasser's Egypt (Penguin 1967) p.232

⁵⁴ Abu Izzeddin, Nejla, M. Nasser of The Arabs (Beirut, 1975) p.136

⁵⁵ *ibid.* p.137

Nasser followed up the promulgation of the March Programme with successive meetings with the working people, intelligentsia, university students, peasants, Labours and soldiers. He sought the support of other democratic forces in chasing their active commitment to patient work and sacrifices required. The March Programme was expressed by a popular referendum in May 1968.⁵⁶

In January 1969, a new National Assembly was elected, composed of 350 members of whom three fourths were elected first time. The large turnover was in part due to the stricter definition of peasants and workers than was applied to their two categories in elections for the 1964 Assembly. An elected mass political, organization and a national Assembly provided the structure for political participation by the people. The effectiveness of the structure is the measure of the people's assurances of their political responsibility and willingness to exercise their political rights and duties. Hence, despite the sudden death of Nasser in 1970's, the emerging structure of political participation helped in consolidating the power of the new leadership.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ *ibid*; p.137

⁵⁷ *ibid.*, p.137

CHAPTER IV

Programmes and Policies of Nasser's Regime

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The Free-officers lacked a fixed ideological doctrine and political programme. What we wanted, said Nasser in an interview in 1953; “was to purge the army, get-rid the country out of foreign occupation and establish clean fair government which would sincerely work for the good of the people. Once in power, we found ourselves faced with different problem of establishing political, social and economic. It was necessary to improve”.¹

But they did possess a set of shared belief, goals and methods and a commitment to fundamental change in Egypt. Nasserist programme was above all nationalism which essentially implied an end to Egypt’s political-economic subordination to the West, to restore its Arab-Islamic identity diluted by a century of Westernization and to replace Western imperialism and to establish Egyptian leadership of a non-aligned Arab world.

The Nasserist modernization strategy was essentially a populist form of etatism. Etatism assumed that a powerful state was needed to lead

¹ Nasser, G.A. Egypt's Liberation: The Philosophy of the Revolution, (Washington, D.C 1955), p. 74

modernization and sought to fashion a mixed economy under state tutelage.² Resting on Coercion and charismatic legitimacy between leader and mass the Nasser's regime developed a huge authoritarian- bureaucratic state. Hence, Nasser constructed his power based on the country's two most impressive and massive, though manageable and controllable, institutions: the Army and the Bureaucracy.

Around Nasser was a core elite whose members served as vice presidents, premiers or strategic ministerial or party posts. Except for a handful of outstanding civilians this group was exclusively military, recruited and replenished from the Free Officer Movement. Another circle of the elite was made up of relatively apolitical civilian professionals and technocrats. The Military, scattered across the heights of the state system apparently functioned as a relatively cohesive political cadre, which decided and enforced the regime's policies, the civilian experts provided them with the technical competence needed to do the job.³ This new team at the top represented a major social transformation in the composition of the elite from the upper class, mainly King's men and landlord lawyers of the old regimes.⁴ The civilian technocrats and professionals were recruited chiefly from upper

² Hinnebusch Jr., R.A. Egyptian Politics Under Sadat: The Post Populist development of an Authoritarian Modernizing state. (Cambridge, 1985). p.14

³ *ibid.*,p.15

⁴ *ibid.*,p.16

and middle class families, but rose to the top, not as before through wealth and family name, but through the bureaucracy and the universities on the basis of education, skills experience or the patronage of a Free Officer. They made up a new technocratic breed skilled in the tasks of modernization.⁵ The participation in the policy process was, in this authoritarian bureaucratic state, barely institutionalized, largely taking the form of intra-elite bureaucratic and personal rivalries. Nasser dominated the process.⁶

Military and Civil Relations were not cordial in the beginning but later on it became very smooth and functioned very well. In purely quantitative terms the precise degree of the military's presence at the very top of the power structure is reflected in the table 1. Out of this an aggregate of 131 leaders, 44 (36 percent) had been military officers of various types, in contrast of 87 (66.4 percent) who had no civilian background. Since each lacked an independent power base, none of the 87 emerged as a political leader in his own right, not even during the turn of the post war (1967) period. This, coupled with Nasser's persistence in playing ex-officers in many ministries, made the military the virtual master of the system.⁷

⁵ *ibid.*,p.16

⁶ *ibid.*,p.16

⁷ *ibid.*,pp170-171

Table⁸:

Aggregate Break Down : Military v/s civilian

Officer	Military officer	Technocrat Officer	Total	Civilian	Total
N	27	17	44	87	131
%	20.3	13	33.6	66.4	100

Ministries with an interrupted civilian leadership included justice, public works, housing and utilities, irrigation, commerce, agriculture, treasury and higher education. These are highly technical areas generally unsuitable for individuals of military backgrounds; to appoint an officer as minister of higher education would have been incongruous at the very least, yet in the final analysis various means were revised to assure military control over these "civilian" ministries as well.⁹

The military's most ingenious methods to mention control centered on the appointment of a new breed of officers identified here as officer technocrats. Most of these men began to appear in the leading position in the late 1950's and soon achieved cabinet or higher status, after displacing civilians and other military men.¹⁰

⁸ *ibid*, p171

⁹ *ibid*; p 172

¹⁰ *ibid*; p 173

In essence, rise of the officer - technocrats was the military's answer to its civilian critic.¹¹

Taking the aggregate of multilevel leadership (president, vice-president, central and regional ministers), the military registered a less than two percent increase in the March 1956, government; in the October 1958 cabinet, however, the total number of officers went up by 48.5 percent. In both cabinets the president and all vice presidents were ex-officers. At the central cabinet level, the military predominated with 60 percent in March 1956 and 58.8 percent in October 1958 respectively. Only in the regional cabinet did the officer representation reach a low of 19.9 percent in March 1956 only to climb to 37.5 percent in October 1958. With the abolition of the regional cabinet system in August 1961, the ministry component climbed up further from 48.5 percent to 51.5 percent, a level that remained constant (October 1961).¹² The regime's new commitment to etatism and rapid industrialization could not be achieved without a greater reliance on civilian expertise; hence the progressive decline of the military component to 47.1 percent in September 1962 and 36.3 percent in March 1964. Not since, June 1956 had the military's presence dropped to 36.3 percent also at no time since

¹¹ *ibid*; p 173

¹² Dekmejian, R.H. Egypt Under Nasser : A Study In Political Dynamics (London, 1972) p. 175

1964 has this low level been reached despite the strong civilianizing trends of 1968.¹³

In the first decade the regime pursued a kind of regulated capitalism, which stressed growth over equality. Redistribution measures were largely limited to Land Reform as the part of policy. Private entrepreneurs were considered partners in the development effort. The state largely confirmed itself to regulating and guiding the private sector effort and to investment in the Dam and Iron and Steel Industry. But it was also during the initial years in power the Free Officers did not restrict the inflow of foreign capital rather they encouraged it. The Law No.120 of 1952 reduced the minimum compulsory Egyptian share in companies from 51 percent final in 1947, to 49 percent. In 1952, a series of laws were adopted offering favourable condition for investment, taxation and repatriation of foreign capital. However, Foreign policy conflict with the West and Egypt's rejection of World Bank conditions resulted in Western refusal to finance the High Dam and kept foreign investment away.¹⁴

Thus, Military Junta embarked on a series of policy and structural changes, which went under the name of " Arab Socialism. They height of the

¹³ Ibid, p.175

¹⁴ Hinnebusch, op. cit., pp. 22-23

modern economy were nationalized, namely, banking, foreign trade, parts of internal trade, larger and medium, industry. A multitude of egalitarian measures aimed to broaden opportunities and narrow class gaps were implemented: Open University education, guarantee state employment for

Graduates, maximization of employment in state firms, rent reductions and price controls, subsidization of popularly consumed commodities, ceiling on incomes and a steeply progressive income tax and arrangements for workers “profit-making” and “profit-sharing” plus participation in management. In the village, further land reform increased the ceilings on land ownership and tightened enforcement of tenancy and rent limitation laws. The property of the wealthiest families was confiscated. “The private sector, however, was still considered be a legitimate participant in the new order and small industry, agriculture and much of the trade and construction sector remained under its control. These changes, resulting from pragmatic considerations rather than ideological convictions, promulgated by Presidential decrees from above and unaccompanied by popular struggle, represented an intensification of the etatism populist character of the regime rather than a choice of socialism over capitalism”¹⁵

¹⁵ *ibid*; p -24

These policy initiatives resulted in a major structural transformation, which decisively entrenched state dominance of the heights of the economy. This greatly enhanced the regime's capacity to reshape the socio-economic system according to its objectives namely, to redress growing inequalities and to channel the economic surplus into priority investment sectors. The private sector still controlled half of the GNP, it accounted for only a tenth of total investment.¹⁶

These policies did result in durable advances in economic modernization, although not without high costs and enduring negative side effects. Industrialization advanced at an average annual rate (1952-70) of 5.7 percent and was diversified and shifted away from purely light industry. The industry's share of GDP increased from 15.3 percent to 23.2 percent between 1952 and 1970 while that of the tertiary sector remained relatively constant. Education expanded at about eight percent per year roughly equally at all levels.

The Agrarian Reform Law promulgated in September 1952 was one of the first in a series of political measures aimed at consolidation of power by the Free Officers.¹⁷ It gave the Free Officers their first political link with the

¹⁶ *ibid.*, p- 25

¹⁷ *ibid.*; p.26

peasant masses.¹⁸ The basic components of the land Reforms law No. 178 are: land distribution, tenancy regulation, and cooperative farming.

Although, it limited land ownership to 200 acres, the Agrarian Reform Law did not amount to economic hardship by any standards for the small percent of big landowners in Egypt.¹⁹

The disparity is iniquities when 35.4 percent of the land is divided among 93.3 percent of owners leaving the remaining 5.7 percent of in possession of two thirds of all the cultivated land.²⁰ The annual installment per feddan paid by beneficiaries towards a title of ownership was 50 to 60 percent less than the annual rent which as tenants they had paid to the former landowner. The beneficiaries financial obligations were subsequently twice reduced: in 1961 when the Second Land Reform Law fixed the purchase twice at half the values of the land as assessed for compensation to expropriated land owners; and in 1964 when the purchase price was reduced to one forth of the compensation value of the land. Under Law No. 104 March 1964 compensation to expropriated landowners ceased.

Under the 1952 land Reform Law and the 1953 Law for the Confiscation of Estates belonging to the Former Royal family, about 6,00,000

¹⁸ *ibid*; p -75

¹⁹ *ibid*; pp. 75-76.

feddans were subjected to expropriation. The Land Reform Law had far-reaching consequences. It narrowed the class gaps; it was the initial stage toward social and political changes of a fundamental character.²¹ The 1962 Land Reform Law liquidated feudalism and so eliminated the power, which could obstruct serious social changes. It narrowed the disparities in ownership and consequent gap in income from the land and so was a first step towards an egalitarian society. And the peasant who became landowner or holder of a tenancy secured by the law acquired thereby an incentive to increase productivity and was endowed with a vested interest in a stable society.

The scope of the 1952 Land Reform Law was widened by subsequent legislation to include land held in Waqf, Plural, awqaf of which there were two categories: ahla Wakf and khairs Wakf. The awqaf, amounting to 11 percent of the cultivable land in Egypt, were the first semi-autonomous religious institutions to be brought under state control. According to Baer, on the eve of reform the Waqf property constituted 600,000 feddans.²² As a part of Land Reform Programme, all types of *Awaqaf* (personal, public and mixed)

²⁰ Abu izzeddin. Nejia M. "Nasser of the Arabs (Beirut, 1975) p 36.

²¹ ibid; p. 38

²² Baer, Gabriel, Studies in the Social History of Modern Egypt. (Chicago, 1969), p-18

were either abolished or nationalized or brought under the control of the Ministry of Awaqf.²³

The second Land Reform Law No127 of July 25, 1961, reduced the limit on individual holdings from 200 to 100 feddans. Excess property amounting to 214, 000 feddans came under the Ministry of Agrarian Reform for redistribution. By 1967, 754,500 Agrarian Reform Lands were distributed to 317,400 families comprising over 1.5 million inhabitants. Land Reform transferred about, 150 percent of the surface to 11 percent of the agrarian population; destroyed the giant estates and helped reduce the landless population from 59 percent to 43 percent.

At the heart of the Land Reform was system of cooperative societies to which all recipients of redistributed land and tenants are required to belong. Each society served 1000 to 1500 around three hundred farmers. The cooperative provided beneficiaries with farming requirements: seed, fertilizers, and pesticides, tools and farm equipment, poultry and livestock, storage and transport facilities cooperatives were primarily concerned with efficient cultivation, but they also look after the fellah's general welfare. They promoted cottage industries to increase the peasant's income.²⁴

²³ *ibid.*, pp-88-92.

²⁴ *ibid*; p. 42

Hence, cooperative farming resulted in substantial increase in productivity and a tangible rise in the living standard of the land reform beneficiaries. The Five-Year plan, recognizing that “agriculture is the corner stone of the economic structure” allotted 23 percent of total investment to this sector.

In 1952, a modest industrial sector came into existence. It employed 273,000 persons and reduced 11 percent of national Income.²⁵ Small establishments employing minimum member of workers proliferated. There were few large companies owned and directed by tycoons, which produced under monopoly conditions. Middle size firms were rare.

The economic policy pursued after 1952 aimed at the structural transformation of the economy. This involved the organized and accelerated expansion of the industrialization of the objectives of the Industrial plan, import substitution was given preference over export promotion. Resources were abundant locally for the production of chemical fertilizers, limestone, rock, Phosphate and elective power from the Aswan High Dam.

New joint stock companies in industry, mining, motive power, land reclamation & tourism, activities which promoted economic development-

²⁵ *ibid*; p. 74

and existing companies which expanded their establishments, were exempted from taxes on profits for seven and two years respectively

Law was enacted to protect shareholder's interests and improve management. Too big a share of profits had been appropriated by unduly large company boards with members holding concurrent directorships. The number of directors on company board was limited to seven: no person could hold more than two directorships the remunerations of managing directors fixed, and the retirement was set at sixty.

In 1957 Egypt adhered to the metric systems. The Egyptian Organization for Standardization was established for the unification of Weight and measures for raw materials and industrial products and coordination with international standardization work, the Pharmaceutical Industry hardly existed before 1952. In 1960, the value of output by industry was LE 3 Billion.²⁶ The production of power had increased manifold. The High Dam power station was installed capacity of 21,000 MW'S and generated 10,000 million Kwh annually from twelve units. The last generator was turned on in July 1970.²⁷

“The construction sector nearly doubled its output, thereby deviating widely from the plan which projected a slight decrease in GDP from this sector. The

²⁶ *ibid*; p. 79

²⁷ *ibid*; p.80

High Dam accounted for the major part of the expansion".²⁸ The transport sector also surpassed the plan target due to the large expansion in Suez Canal traffic

A pipeline for transmitting crude oil from Suez to the Mediterranean (SUMED), was built with the help of Arab capital.

The establishment of the Permanent Council for the Development of National Production in October 1952 reflected the regime's awareness of the need for coordinated planning of development projects. In August 1953, a joint Congress of the Revolutionary Command Council and Cabinet Ministers adopted a resolution to create a preparatory committee composed of five officers and five civilians under Nasser's chairmanship to prepare an economic and social development policy.²⁹

The outstanding developments in this phase from the second half of 1956 till mid 1960 when the comprehensive development plan was put into effect were:-

1. The nationalization of the Suez Canal Company, an act which transferred the Canal. Revenues from a foreign Company to the Egyptian people:

²⁸ *ibid*; p. 81

²⁹ *ibid*; p. 16

2. the areas of the economy which had been under foreign control were freed.
3. Private enterprises were kept under the States control by 1959.
4. During this period the whole banking system was reorganized with the government policies. ³⁰

The Third phase, in Egypt's economic development began in mid 1960 with the launching of the five-year plan for Economic and Social Development. The National Planning Committee, set up in 1957, under the President of the Republic and later transferred to the newly created Ministry of Planning, which was the primary planning body and consisted of a group of highly qualified Egyptian economists.³¹

The July 1961 Laws fall under two categories: one enlarged the public sector, the other redistributed income.³² To the former category belong laws 117, 118 and 119, all issued on July 20, They first nationalized the Banking system, insurance business, basic and heavy industries, mining, transport, and large reclamation. The second brought light in industries under semi public

³⁰ O, Brien The Revolution of Egypt's Economic System p-100

³¹ Abu, izzeddin, Nejla. M. " op. cit., p.29

³² *ibid*; p. 25

ownership through government participation in 50 percent of the capital. The third limited share holding in some 150 comers to LE 10,000 per person.

The Military Junta created so many programmes for the social welfare through legislation; institutions and public services. The Permanent Council for Public Welfare Services was created in October 1953 to promote education, health, rural welfare centers, the availability of pure drinking water and constructional and other services like insurance scheme³³.

Various forms of social insurance have brought security to urban labour. The Workers Insurance and Provident Fund Law of 1955 was made more flexible and by an especially clause Egypt had put into effect employment insurance scheme. The government ensured provision of adequate housing in the cities.

The cultural upliftment of the masses was considered to be the main agenda of the leadership as an important task from the very beginning. As the charter stated, every citizen has the right, "to receive education, which suit his abilities and talents... Curriculum had to be evaluated and their target should be to enable the individual to transform his life". The task of the new culture

³³ *ibid*; p. 87

is “to awaken creative human energy and to get it reflected in the practice of democracy.

Though the results fell short of the objectives in the cultural field the government did a remarkable job in creating the political, organizational and personal conditions for education, mass culture and scientific research. Elementary education became homogenized. Compulsory and free school network was enlarged. The importance of education, judged by the proportion of public expenditure allotted to its development through annual budget was secondary to national defence.

By 1959-60 new enrolment in the primary schools rose to 65 percent of the children at the compulsory school age, compared to 45 percent six year earlier. The Five-year plan proposed to provide primary schooling for 87.5 percent of all children at the compulsory school age by 1964-65 taking into account a 2.1 percent of population growth per annum.

A significant development was the ruralization of the primary teachers training schools, placing more emphasis on village-based systems. The shortage of Engineers was a handicap when the entire Industrial Plan was framed in 1957. Since then, two new Engineering colleges were founded.

The government succeeded in reducing illiteracy and in advancing agricultural and industrial vocational education. In literature the traditional dominance of translations and adaptations was replaced with new socially oriented, realistic tendencies.

One of the first measures of the revolutionary government's policy was to reduce the jurisdiction of the Shari'a courts over civil matters. But the civil courts declared competent in civil cases continued their jurisdiction. Therefore Nasser abolished the rigid Shari'a Court.

Therefore the law, which had established one judicial authority in matters of personal status for all citizens including women and minorities, was one aspect of the process of bringing the various communities close together. It was a new step towards unifying and secularizing the family law.³⁴ Therefore the Supreme Council for family planning formulated the new policy to uplift the women. Women have reaped essential gains from the revolution. They have fully acquired their citizen rights through the development plans, education, health, family planning, social security, freedom etc. The reform of 1961 placed Al-Azhar's various departments and administration under the men from outside the ranks of the ulema reformed its curriculum and reduced the rector, Syaykh Al-Azhar, to the position of figurehead. In short, Al-Azhar, had been nationalized.³⁵

³⁴ Abu izzeddin, Nejla, M. op. cit., p. 93

³⁵ Crecelius, Deniel, Al-Azhar in Revolution (Berkley, 1972) pp-31-49

CHAPTER V

Conclusion

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CONCLUSION

THE ROLE OF ARMY IN POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT

The army in Egypt since July 1952 had achieved a political revolution from the top by a swift seizure and consolidation of power, quickly followed by the elimination of all possible opposition. Its accession to power was not accompanied by extensive persuasion, negotiation, or political compromise, which might have ensured a political climate of voluntary discipline and support. There was, dissatisfaction and unrest among the masses below, but they were not permitted to develop into a mass revolutionary movement. Instead, the junta chose to regiment a mass following under a plan of its own choice.

Having easily destroyed the super structure of state institutions (Parties, Parliament, the Monarchy and its Courts) that permitted the political forces of the old regime to exercise power, the military regime, contrary to popular assumption, deliberately refrained from and actually avoided creating new ones, instead, constructed its power base on the country's two most impressive and massive, though manageable and controllable, institutions, the Army and the Bureaucracy. The regime set itself on a course of depoliticizing the public together the brief flirtation with popular participation", in the

political process of the period from 1923 to 1957 was abandoned. Instead of participation, however limited or inadequate, there was now popular acceptance.

Despite the mass orientation of the regime in its early days (1952-1956) it was never serious about any scheme of popular political organization. Thus, the political objective of Agrarian Reform was not the creation of some mass Agrarian populist movement in the country. Rather, the intention was to destroy the economic base of the political power of the elites both in the city and in the countryside. Nor were any of its political mobilization schemes (e.g. the Liberation Rally, the National Union, and the Arab Socialist Union) aimed at creating and organization of policy or the making of national and local decisions. On the contrary, these schemes were explicitly intended to facilitate the implementation of policies and decisions determined exclusively by the new military ruling power group or elite.

One can therefore assume that an oligarchy (stratiateocracy) formulated societal goals. Without having resolved the legitimacy variable of political order, Nasser claimed it for his rule by virtue of his central, initiating, innovative role. He continued to maintain it because he had been able to retain his control over the two institutions of command that constituted the essential structure of his power base: The Military (with its access to the means of

violence and to the ultimate sanction of force and the Bureaucracy, which transmitted his command to the public and extracted obedience from them. This bureaucracy also included the elaborate institutions (or institution) of the secret and security services of the state. Since the government had the consensus of the governed at large as expressed in institutional and procedure structures or mechanisms, the ideological concurrence of the public was therefore not of the essence. But the orderly involvement of the military and the bureaucracy in these policies was crucial and satisfactory to both these powerful institutions.

The civil-bureaucracy was not allowed to involve into political institutions. But their expanded role and functions in the implementations of a state policy of industrialization and modernization became more important. This agency was in the favour of strictly state initiated, formulated and implemented change.

Though, the Nasser regime was essentially personalistic and bureaucratic it could not only dispense with a political infrastructure. If it was to control opposition, maintain a popular base, and provide some channel of elite - mass linkage, several such structures. Where created, but they never achieved much autonomy of the government, or, given its ability to change the rules of political participation at will, a significant level of institutionalization.

The military regime in Egypt was making serious efforts to develop more broadly based political institutions, the crucial problem of agreeing on some idea of national identity, a concept of uniform loyalty and peaceful (non-violent) basis for legitimate power remains unresolved. A leading Egyptian historian put it to P.J. Vatikiotis, "It is immaterial whether the Corps of Army Officers constitutes a distinct ruling elite or not. The masses must somehow adjust. They never understood the significance of even incipient representative institutions.¹

That the new regimes in the West Asia including Egypt rested on a combination of army officers, officials who have mastered the technique of modern administration, and educated nationalists. The army remained the only instrument of popular aspiration in Arab World that is capable of bringing about social democracy. By accepting this role of innovators, developers, and guardians of the national conscience during the 1950's the Army Officer Corps in Egypt, elsewhere in Asia has introduced an image of the future to which masses who seek emancipation must aspire. But in doing this, the Army Officer Corps has endangered its chances of continuing to rule without some proof of effective performance toward these professed goals.

¹ See Vatikiotis; P.J. The Egyptian Army in Politics. (Bloomington, 1961), p. 256

President Nasser had claimed:

Our ultimate aim is to provide Egypt with a truly democratic and representative government, not the type of parliamentary dictatorship, which the Palace and corrupt "pasha" class imposed on the people.... We want to make sure that in the future senators and deputies will serve all the Egyptians rather than a few².

Meanwhile the military rulers had demanded that the people sacrifice personal freedom during a transition period until conditions for a truly representative and equitable political system-industrialization, economic and social reform, higher standards of living-should be achieved. The ruling Free Officers had partially legitimated their centralized authority and power by the use of plebiscites.

Not only had the Military Junta in Egypt been conscious of its progressive role in the political and economic evolution of the Arab world, but it had proposed to impose change on the members of a society who had long lacked organization and civic spirit. It had sought to create a new society, more or less by command from the top. There was every reason for these

² Quoted from Vatikiotis; op.ct., p. 240. originally quoted in "*The Egyptian Revolution*," *Foreign Affairs*, XXXIII, No. 2 (January 1955), p. 208.

governments to fail, because representative institutions were mere transplanted without the necessary social or economic base. It was obvious to honest observers that these representative institutions were mere forms at best, and at worst means for the usurpation of authority. Such systems in the Arab states did not expand the political experience or participation of the public, nor did they provide any organizational strength in the political structure of their societies.

As noted in Chapter 3 the army in 1952 was the only national institution in Egypt which was able to assume the voice of society where as other institutions failed to do so. Provide order in a politically disorganized society. It is proposed here, then, that the Army Officer Corps was at that time the only group in Egyptian society, with the exception perhaps of the Muslim Brethren, that had sufficient organizational strength, discipline, and highly motivated leadership to conduct the affairs of the state. The members of the Army as individuals, and the army itself as an organizational structure, appeared in Egypt then as the group best equipped to resolve political chaos.

The failure of parliamentary systems before the military came to power indicated to them that genuine representative government in the Arab countries was not feasible. It is this realization which today presents the politically sophisticated members of the Arab community with a choice between two alternatives: the regimented political tutelage of a military power

elite with the hope of future development in political integration and possibly free institutions; or the probability of political instability, disintegration, and confusion.

At the same time Nasserist forces had not been unaware of the necessity of a strong, broadly based organization, which provided continuity and stability to any new order. They recognized that the lack of organizational depth rendered all previous parliamentary regimes in the Arab world and led to their downfall. No one will deny, however, the difficulty of building such an organization, for it is the central problem of contemporary Arab politics. Lacking a tradition of infrastructure for representative government, Egypt and other Arab states had suffered from an institutional weakness which could not be remedied easily. More difficult for any Arab government to master will be the process of social communication that is essential to the proper functioning of representative government. On the other hand, the Nasser-led power elite in the Egypt may choose to continue to forcefully mobilize the masses, as it appears to be doing at present.

When the cadre of political leadership in the army appeared to come from a younger age group, belonging to the nationalist generation, it was easily identified with the aspiring masses. The Army Officer Corps has thus easily assumed national leadership for reform and, together with other emerging professional and educational groups; it has become the new power

elite. In Egypt the army regime has, moreover, a good record at least in the field of independence from foreign control: the Sudan agreement in 1953, the British evacuation agreement in 1954, and the arms deal with the erstwhile Soviet bloc in 1955. It also survived the concerted attack of Britain, France, and Israel in 1956, and continued to block the Suez Canal against Israeli shipping, and managed to hang on to the Syrian Region of the Republic in Iraq.

The regime in Egypt was largely army-supported. The increased number of army officers in the Cabinet, diplomatic corps, administration, and other executive positions, as well as in the National Union, supports this statement. The regime, tried to broaden the base of its support through such devices as the National Union, National Cooperative Unions, education, and military service. The method followed in these institutional devices continues to be one of absolute control and direction from the highest authority. It carried the seeds of its own possible failure, because the rigid supervision of these institutional devices caused revulsion and a recurrence of "silent conspiracy." A similarly situation prevailed in Iraq before the July 14, 1958, army coup, in Jordan after 1951, and in Syria after 1949. The military leaders of Egypt had meanwhile transformed themselves into a political interest group.

A final analysis about the army in politics in the West Asia including Egypt is in order because it may be also applicable to Pakistan and Southeast Asia. The politically conscious members of Arab societies felt during the past years the need for change and failed. Gradually the politically minded Arabs came to view the Corps of Army Officers the army in general as the most modern, least traditional, and most cohesive institution. The army, at the same time, acquired a similar image itself. The public, therefore, expected it to perform more efficiently than the previous regimes. Considering the situation between Israel and the Arab countries, the public felt, moreover, that in a time of military threat the army would be the most competent group to lead and defend Arab society. Members of the Army Officer Corps, on the other hand, shared the intensified public feeling of nationalism and desire for change and modernization. At the same time, their acquisition of a political role was not repugnant to the Islamic environment. The competence of the army officers in dealing with the leaders of the previous regimes, their versatility in communicating with the public, and their apparent seriousness of purpose helped them further to impress the public favourably.

As we have seen, the accession of the military to political power in Egypt was not a particularly revolutionary phenomenon in the annals of that country. National or foreign armies, especially when serving as arms of a ruling monarch or class, have always influenced and sanctioned the making of

policy. The events of 1952 did not introduce a drastic change as regards the relationship between the average Egyptian and the decision-making process. It has also been suggested that this development was not alien to the Islamic tradition in the Arab countries. It may not be wrong, therefore, to conclude that citizens of Egypt settled for an improvement within the existing order. And since the existing order has shown a greater inclination toward social improvement than any other previous order in Egypt or Syria.

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