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'ABD AL-RAHMAN AL-RAFI 'I
AND THE 'URABI REVOLUTION:
A CRITICAL APPRAISAL

BY
WALID A. ATTALLAH

1987

‘ABD AL-RAḤMĀN AL-RĀFI‘Ī
AND
THE ‘URĀBĪ REVOLUTION:
A CRITICAL APPRAISAL

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By
WALID A. ATTALLAH

January, 1987

This Thesis for the Master of Arts Degree

By

Walid A. Attallah

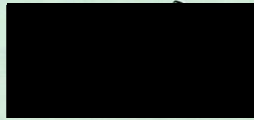
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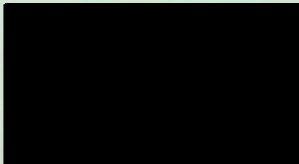
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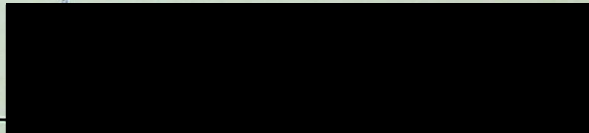
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I wish to express my gratitude to Professor Marsden Jones without whose guidance and supervision this work would have not been possible. I would also like to express my gratitude to Mrs. Tadros who patiently typed this thesis. Last but not least, I would like to lovingly give special thanks to my wife Randa for her continuous encouragement and support.

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INTRODUCTION

The significance of ʿAbd al-Raḥman al-Rāfiʿī as a historian cannot be gainsaid. His work on the national history of Egypt is justly famous not only as a guide for specialists but also as an inspirational interpretation of history for all educated Egyptians.

However, al-Rāfiʿī's negative attitude towards the ʿUrābī revolution has been a topic for debate and a source of disquiet for many and has created its own partisanship. The question has never been examined in detail. Most of the studies devoted to it are in articles in journals and newspapers which are not enough to gain fuller understanding of al-Rāfiʿī's work.

This thesis will attempt to discuss in detail one of al-Rāfiʿī's major books, "Al-Thawrat al-ʿUrābīya wa'l-Iḥtilāl al-Inglīsī", which was first published in 1937. It sets out to provide a critical analysis of al-Rāfiʿī's attitudes towards the ʿUrābī revolution. In doing so I have used both primary and secondary sources and, in light of these sources, some hypotheses in regard to al-Rāfiʿī's book will be tested. The study will include references to data which al-Rāfiʿī either chose not to mention intentionally, or were not available when he wrote his book.

In chapter one I propose to deal with the life and thought of al-Rāfiʿī and concentrate here on his role as a member of the National Party and his participation in Egyptian Parliamentary affairs from 1908 to 1952. The development of al-Rāfiʿī's thought and how it was shaped will also be discussed. This chapter will, it is hoped, help in understanding the motives behind al-Rāfiʿī's attitudes in regard to the

‘Urābī revolution and his methodological approaches in the writing of history.

In chapter two, a review of some of the famous works written on the ‘Urābī revolution will be given, such as those of Muḥammad ‘Abduḥ, Wilfrid Blunt, Lord Cromer, Maḥmūd al-Kḥafīf and Salāḥ ‘Issa. In making any choice, I have taken into consideration the need to select writers who have different and sometimes contradictory attitudes and approaches in dealing with the ‘Urābī revolution.

In chapter three, which is the main chapter, I propose to deal in detail with al-Rāfi‘ī's book. A study of the origins of his thought will essayed through an examination of the attitudes of Muṣṭafa Kāmil and the National Party in regard to the ‘Urābī revolution. The objective here is to test the hypothesis that al-Rāfi‘ī discusses the events of the ‘Urābī revolution from the standpoint of his own political convictions and those of the National Party.

The major part of this chapter will deal with the significant events of the revolution, its emergence and failure and the governments that came to power directly before the first stage of the revolution and up to its defeat. An attempt will be made also to discuss how and why al-Rāfi‘ī dealt with the ‘Urābī revolution in the way he did? What information did he ignore and why? What is erroneous or correct in his evaluation of the different events of the revolution and of the motives of the different parties that interacted during it?

In the last chapter an attempt will be made to discuss al-Rāfi‘ī's view of history and his methodological approach to its study, concentrating firstly on his work on the ‘Urābī revolution and secondly on his other books and articles. I will try at this point to answer some

important questions, such as the extent to which al-Rāfi'ī's work was affected by his political convictions and by the political circumstances he took part in and witnessed? Was he able to write history as he viewed it and to what extent was his theoretical perception of history as a science affected by the period in which he lived?

the resistance to the British occupation and the achievement of independence. As a member and one of the leaders of the National Party he played a significant role in the Egyptian political arena. In addition, he recorded the events of Egyptian politics he witnessed and also wrote about the history of the Egyptian national movement from the French invasion of Egypt in 1798 onwards. His books became not only famous but highly influential in shaping the thoughts of Egyptians in regard to their own modern history. Such was his renown, that he has been called "The Jabarti of Modern Egypt."

This chapter will be divided into two parts. In the first part I propose to deal with the life of al-Rāfi'ī, his role in the different Egyptian institutions and in the National Party. In the second part I will deal with his major political, economic and social ideas.

I. HIS LIFE

Al-Rāfi'ī was born in Cairo on February 3, 1889. He was from a very well known family that goes back to the Caliph Umar bin al-Khattāb.¹ His father, al-Shaykh 'Abd al-Latif al-Rāfi'ī was a Shaykh in al-Azhar who occupied high positions as a judge in several

1. 'Abd al-Ramān al-Rāfi'ī, *Mudhakkirāt*, Cairo, 1952, pp. 5-6.

CHAPTER ONE

AL-RĀFI^ʿĪ: HIS LIFE AND THOUGHT

The period during which al-Rāfi^ʿĪ lived (1889-1966) witnessed the development of the Egyptian national movement and its role in the resistance to the British occupation and the achievement of independence. As a member and one of the leaders of the National Party he played a significant role in the Egyptian political arena. In addition, he recorded the events of Egyptian politics he witnessed and also wrote about the history of the Egyptian national movement from the French invasion of Egypt in 1798 onwards. His books became not only famous but highly influential in shaping the thoughts of Egyptians in regard to their own modern history. Such was his renown, that he has been called "The Jabartī of Modern Egypt."

This chapter will be divided into two parts. In the first part I propose to deal with the life of al-Rāfi^ʿĪ, his role in the different Egyptian institutions and in the National Party. In the second part I will deal with his major political, economic and social ideas.

I. HIS LIFE

Al-Rāfi^ʿĪ was born in Cairo on February 8, 1889. He was from a very well known family that goes back to the Calif^ʿ Umar ibn al-Khattāb.¹ His father, al-Shaykh^ʿ Abd al-Latīf al-Rāfi^ʿī was a Shaykh in al-Azhar who occupied high positions as a judge in several

1. ^ʿAbd al-Rahmān al-Rāfi^ʿĪ, Mudhakkirātī, Cairo, 1952, pp.5-6.

districts in Egypt until he became the Muftī of Alexandria in 1898.¹ This religious environment in which al-Rāfi^ʿī was raised had affected his personality. According to his son-in-law al-Mustachār Ḥilmī Shahīn, al-Rāfi^ʿī used to practice his religious duties regularly.²

He completed his elementary and secondary studies in Alexandria. He was fifteen years of age when for the first time he read the newspaper al-Liwā', which was owned by Muṣṭafa Kāmil. Al-Rāfi^ʿī's father insisted on his continuing his studies at al-Azhar, but with the help of some friends he was able to persuade his father to allow him to study at the School of Law in Cairo.³ From that time onwards, al-Rāfi^ʿī began to be more and more familiar with the ideas of Muṣṭafa Kāmil and met him for the first time in 1906. He also read and followed al-Liwā', like most of the students at the School of Law.

Al-Rāfi^ʿī wrote his first article and gave it to Muṣṭafa Kāmil in order to publish it in al-Liwā'. Although the latter expressed his appreciation of it, he refused to publish it because he thought that it would expose al-Rāfi^ʿī to trouble with the British.⁴

Al-Rāfi^ʿī was very much influenced by the character of Muṣṭafa Kāmil, to the extent that he considered him his spiritual father. Muṣṭafa Kāmil offered al-Rāfi^ʿī a scholarship to go to France and study journalism but unfortunately Muṣṭafa Kāmil died in February 1908 before the idea was put into practice.⁵

1. Ibid., pp.6-7.

2. At meeting held in April 1986.

3. Al-Rāfi^ʿī, Mudhakkirātī, p.9.

4. Ibid., p.12.

5. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Rāfi^ʿī, Kayfa ʿarift Muṣṭafa Kāmil, al-Hilāl, February 1958, pp.14-17.

Al-Rāfi^ʿī graduated from the School of Law in 1908, but did not work long in this field. After only one month working as a lawyer in Asyūṭ, Muḥammad Farīd - one of the leaders of the National Party - offered him a job as a journalist on al-Liwā' and he accepted it happily. During his first few years as a journalist he wrote many articles concerning the political and economical situation in Egypt.¹ In 1910 al-Rāfi^ʿī opened with his friend Aḥmad Wajdī an office for practicing law in al-Zaqāzīq and in the same year they opened another office in al-Manṣūra, where al-Rāfi^ʿī moved in 1913 and remained for about twenty years.² Beside his career as a lawyer al-Rāfi^ʿī continued to be a journalist, a historian and a politician.

During his stay in al-Manṣūra, al-Rāfi^ʿī was very active in public work. He took part in establishing a people's school, like those which were established in Cairo by the National Party. He also participated in establishing cooperative charitable institutions for the purpose of facing the rise of prices after the first World War.³ As a lawyer also, al-Rāfi^ʿī always took the side of the oppressed and took very low fees from his clients and sometimes accepted cases without any fee at all.⁴

1. Bahā' al-Dīn ʿIlwān, al-Rāfi^ʿī wa Kitābātuh al-Ṣaḥāfiyah al-ʿUlā, al-Thaqāfa, December 1977. pp.68-71.

2. Al-Rāfi^ʿī, Mudhakkirātī, p.17.

3. Bahā' al-Dīn ʿIlwān, Al-Rāfi^ʿī fī'l-Manṣūra, al-Thaqāfa, August 1977, pp.68-71

4. Ḥamādah Maḥmūd Ismāʿīl, al-Rāfi^ʿī Ḥayātuh wa Fikruh, Cairo, ʿAyn Shams University, unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, February, 1986.

Al-Rāfi^ʿ devoted all his life to serve his country through his membership of the National Party, the Chamber of Deputies, the Senate and many other governmental and non-governmental committees and institutions. After the death of Muṣṭafa Kāmil, al-Rāfi^ʿ strengthened his relation with Muḥammad Farīd, who was chosen as the new leader of the National Party. Al-Rāfi^ʿ participated in the different conferences of the Party in 1908, 1910 and 1911. He was chosen as a member of the committee which took responsibility for the re-examination of the laws of the Party and preparing a project for modifying them.¹ In 1911, he was elected as a member of the Administrative Committee of the party. In the same year he went with Muḥammad Farīd to Rome to attend the Peace Conference there and they visited together France, Austria and Germany.³ Even after Farīd's voluntary exile in 1912 al-Rāfi^ʿ kept his connections with his leader until his death in 1919. He also stood at his side when the members of the party disagreed on whether to keep Farīd as its head or not.⁵ This disagreement which was the beginning of the weakness of the party and which opened the way to the Wafd Party to take over its role and popularity among Egyptians.

The few years before and after the 1919 revolution, al-Rāfi^ʿ became very active in politics. In 1915, he was arrested in al-Manṣūra and remained in prison for about ten months.⁵ Later on, he

1. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Rāfi^ʿ, Muḥammad Farīd, 4th ed., Cairo, 1984. pp.103-104.

2. Ibid., p.254.

3. Al-Rāfi^ʿ, Mudhakkirātī, p.18.

4. Ḥamādah M. Ismāʿīl, Op.cit., p.17.

5. Al-Rāfi^ʿ, Mudhakkirātī, pp.27-29.

he took part in the secret association which practiced armed struggle against the British presence in Egypt. They assassinated several Egyptian and British officials.¹ During the same period al-Rāfi^ʿī was a great supporter of Sa^ʿd Zaghlūl and of great help to him in al-Manṣūra. His private papers indicate clearly his support for the Wafd, which made Sa^ʿd Zaghlūl choose him and his brother Amīn as members of the delegation to the Peace Conference representing the National Party. However, the Administrative Committee of the Party rejected this idea.²

Al-Rāfi^ʿī's participation in the Chamber of Deputies began when he nominated himself as representing al-Manṣūra district in 1923. He was successful in the elections against the Wafdist candidate by only one vote. He was one of the four members of the National Party who became members of the new Chamber of Deputies and stood as the opposition to the Wafdist government which constituted the majority.³ In 1925 he was elected once more to the Chamber of Deputies which was dissolved the first day it met for about one year.⁴

Al Rāfi^ʿī spent the following years between 1925 and 1939 with no governmental position. In addition to his work as a lawyer he worked hard at writing the national history of Egypt.⁵ In this period

1. Muṣṭafa Amīn, Al-Kitāb al-Mamnūʿ, 2nd. Vol. Cairo, 1975, p.215.

2. Tāriq al-Bishrī, al-Rāfi^ʿī Mu'arrikh wa Siyāsī, al-Jalīʿa, December 1971, p.95.

3. Al-Rāfi^ʿī, Mudhakkirātī, pp.46-47.

4. Ibid., p.56.

5. Faṭḥī Radwān, al-Rāfi^ʿī: Faṣl Fī Tarīkhina al-Waṭanī, al-Majallah, January 1967, p.39.

of his life he was busy in matters related to the National Party. He had put a lot of effort into uniting the different Egyptian parties. Although he played a great role in the achieving of the unity of 1925 and 1935, he was excluded, both times from entering Parliament when the parties distributed the positions between them and this made him feel very bitter.¹ He was also busy with the differences inside the National Party - these al-Rāfi^ʿī does not discuss in detail in his books - which led to the weakness of the party. Al-Rāfi^ʿī played a major role in these differences, especially after he was appointed as a secretary of the party in December 1932. The major difference that took place after the death of Muḥammad Farīd concerned the election of a new leader for the party. It was settled by choosing Ḥāfiẓ Ramaḍān as the new leader in 1923.² The second major issue which caused disagreement between leaders of the party was whether the party should take up any position in the Egyptian government before total withdrawal of the British. Al-Rāfi^ʿī criticized Ḥāfiẓ Ramaḍān concerning his agreement to participate in the second government of Muḥammad Maḥmūd in December 1937 and in the government of Ḥassan Sabrī in 1940. As a result, the Administrative Committee of the party was divided into two and did not regain its unity until 1946.³ After this date, it seems that the policy of the party had changed, for al-Rāfi^ʿī himself agreed to participate in

1. Al-Rāfi^ʿī, Mudhakkirātī, p.89.

2. A.E. Goldschmidt, The Egyptian National Party, Translated by Fou'ād Duwārah, Cairo, 1983, p.310.

3. Ḥamādah M. Ismā^ʿīl, Op.cit., pp.26-33.

the government of Hussayn Sirrī in 1949.¹ This participation brought him into direct conflict with the young members of the Party headed by Faṭḥī Raḍwān who established the New National Party.²

It was not an easy achievement for al-Rāfi'ī to enter the Senate. In 1938, he was rejected by the Palace, but tried once more in 1939 and succeeded.³ Al-Rāfi'ī confessed that his success in entering the Senate was because his supporters were able to convince the "Moslem Brothers" that they should vote for him.⁴ Al-Rāfi'ī attributed his failure in the elections for the Senate in 1951 to the Wafd Party and he accused Fu'ād Sarāj al-Dīn, who was the Minister of Interior in the Wafd government at that time, of interfering in the elections in the interests of the Wafdist candidate.⁵

After the revolution of 1952 the parties were dissolved and al-Rāfi'ī concentrated most of his work on the Lawyers Union. Al-Rāfi'ī had been for a long time - since 1919 - a member of the Union's Council. In 1954, he was appointed as the head of the Union which exposed him to a great deal of criticism from his colleagues by accepting this position.⁶ Other responsibilities were assigned to

1. Al-Rāfi'ī, Mudhakkirātī, p.132.

2. Ḥamādah M. Ismā'īl, Op.cit., pp.36-40.

3. Ibid., p.51.

4. Ibid., p.54.

5. Al-Rāfi'ī, Mudhakkirātī, pp.140-141.

6. Ḥamādah M. Ismā'īl, Op.cit., pp.94-95.

al-Rāfi^ʿī after 1952. In 1953 he was chosen as a member of the committee for preparing a constitution. Between 1958 and 1962 he was the recorder of the History and Archeology Committee in the Higher Council of Arts and Literature.¹

Al-Rāfi^ʿī was honoured twice by the government after 1952. In 1953 he was awarded the state prize in social sciences for the second and third part of his book "Fī A^ʿqāb al-Thawrat al-Miṣrīya". In 1961 he was also awarded the state appreciation prize for social sciences.²

Al-Rāfi^ʿī died in December 1966, when he was 77 years of age, leaving behind him a detailed record of Egyptian National history covering a period of about a hundred and fifty years and tens of articles on the Egyptian political, economic and social situation covering more than half a century. In addition to this he played an important political role which needs further study.

II. AL-RĀFI^ʿĪ'S POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL THOUGHT

A. Al-Rāfi^ʿī's Political Thought

Al-Rāfi^ʿī is considered by the new generation as a historian, first and foremost, but for those who knew him, he was primarily a politician. The political ideas of al-Rāfi^ʿī were many. He had a point of view on every single issue in Egyptian political, economic and social life during his life time, which makes it difficult to discuss them all. In the section which follows I propose to concentrate on his main political ideas

1. Jalāl al-Sayyid, al-Rāfi^ʿī Fī Risalat Ductūrah, al-Jumhūrīyah, February 13, 1986, p.7.

2. Ibid., p.7.

which represent mainly those of the National Party. One can trace al-Rāfi^ʿī's ideas through the leaflets of the National Party, his discussions in the Chamber of Deputies and Senate and through the books and articles he wrote.

The start will be with the most important idea which coloured his political convictions - this was the total and unconditional withdrawal of all British troops and government officials from Egypt. Al-Rāfi^ʿī spent all his life struggling against any form of economic, military or political power for Britain in Egypt. He found in the press of the National Party a channel to express his ideas. For example, he explained in a series of articles in al-Liwā' the disadvantages of the British occupation in all aspects of Egyptian life. Al-Rāfi^ʿī also explained the factors which led to this situation and the role of some Egyptian and governments in helping the British to gain full control of the country.¹

Al-Rāfi^ʿī did not just attack the British occupation and explain the reasons behind its existence, but more than that he specified the way to resist it. His early participation in the secret associations for armed struggle was a clear indication of his support for the use of force against the British occupation and those Egyptians who worked with them. His early writings also indicate his preference for the use of force, in addition to other methods of struggle. As he put it: "Justice always is in need of power, it does not survive except beside it..."²

1. Ḥamādah M. Ismā^ʿīl, Op.cit., pp.106-107.

2. Abd al-Rahmān al-Rāfi^ʿī, Huqūq al-Sha^ʿb, Cairo, 1912, Introduction.

Although al-Rāfi^ع believed - like his leaders Muṣṭafa Kāmil and Muḥammad Farīd - that they should appeal internationally to explain the Egyptian case, at certain times he found that there was nothing to be gained from this method and that big powers work only for their own benefit.¹

Al-Rāfi^ع was one of the national figures who rejected totally any kind of negotiations with the British government before total withdrawal. He apposed the negotiations that took place with Milner's Committee which came to Egypt after the 1919 revolution² and he wrote several articles in al-Ahrām and al-Akhbār criticizing the report issued by this committee.³ Al-Rāfi^ع's rejection of any kind of negotiation reached its peak with the 1936 treaty signed by Britain and Egypt. He said:

"The treaty of the 26th of August 1936 affirms the British protectorate and confirms the legality of the British occupation of Egypt to serve its military purposes. Britain also adds financial burdens that the resources of Egypt cannot afford."⁴

This position in regard to the treaty brought him into direct conflict with the Wafd government which signed it. Throughout his membership of the Senate al-Rāfi^ع continued when possible to criticize the treaty.⁵

1. Ḥamādah M. Ismā^ع ʿīl, Op.cit., p.107.

2. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Rāfi^ع ʿī, Thawrat 1919, 2nd. Vol., 2nd. ed., Cairo, October 1968, p.65.

3. Ḥamādah M. Ismā^ع ʿīl, Op.cit., p.110.

4. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Rāfi^ع ʿī, Qawā'id al-Mu'āhadat, Cairo, 1936.

5. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Rāfi^ع ʿī, Arba'at 'ashar 'ām fī'l-Barlamān, Cairo, 1955. In the following sessions: Dec. 11, 1939, Feb. 17, 1941, June 3, 1942, Dec. 8, 1942 and Dec. 29, 1943.

In relation to the Second World War and the role of Egypt, al-Rāfi^ʿī advocated the idea that Egypt should be neutral in this war and he predicted that it would help the Eastern peoples to develop because the Western countries would be busy fighting each other.¹

When the four big powers invited Egypt to participate in the San Francisco conference, which was held in April 1945 to prepare for the United Nations, al-Rāfi^ʿī criticized the report of the government concerning this issue on the basis that it did not include the major demands of Egypt. He also expressed his doubts concerning the motives of the big powers in their discussion of the fate of the peoples of the world. He said:

"I hoped that the report prepared for this conference could have clarified Egypt's position and demands, because this conference and the ones to follow, which are known as peace-making conferences, are the ones - so they claim - to decide the fate of peoples. I say, 'they claim' because I believe that the fate of nations is in the hands of the people. As we are going to participate in this conference, it is our main interest that the government presents a report on Egypt's basic demands. But unfortunately the report excluded these demands."²

After the conference, al-Rāfi^ʿī advocated for not signing the Charter because, according to him, it did not change the status-quo. After a long discussion in the Senate he failed to convince the members and the Charter was signed.³

1. Ḥamādah M. Ismā^ʿīl, Op.cit., pp.111-112.

2. Al-Rāfi^ʿī, Arba^ʿat ^ʿashar ^ʿām fī'l Barlamān, p.393.

3. Ibid., pp.403-441.

Furthermore, al-Rāfi^ʿī condemned the negotiations that took place between Britain and Egypt after the end of the Second World War. He accused Sidqi's government of giving up the rights of the country.¹ The failure of the negotiations resulted in the resignation of the government and a new one headed by Maḥmūd Fahmī al-Nuqrāshī came to power, which worked towards presenting the Egyptian case in the United Nations. This time al-Rāfi^ʿī accepted the idea, but he was sceptical about the ability of the Nuqrāshī government to achieve anything in this respect. The failure of the government to achieve anything by the end of the meetings in September 1947 gave al-Rāfi^ʿī the opportunity to blame the government for this failure because, according to him, they did not present the case at the right time when discussions concerning other countries such as Lebanon and Syria took place.²

One of the basic political convictions of al-Rāfi^ʿī was the unity of the Nile Valley (Egypt and Sudan). He expressed his support for this by every possible means - through writing in the newspapers and in discussions in Parliament. Al-Rāfi^ʿī attacked the 1899 agreement concerning the Sudan and considered it illegal because it was signed by a government that had no control over the affairs of the country. He also attacked all the British projects in Sudan, such as the irrigation project, which he considered as being done for the benefit of Britain.³

1. Ḥamādah M. Ismā^ʿīl, Op.cit., p.116.

2. Ibid., pp.116-118.

3. Ibid., pp.122-123.

When al-Rāfi^ʿī criticized the 1936 treaty he gave special attention to the terms concerning the Sudan. He believed that by this treaty the Sudan would become a British colony, guarded by Egyptian soldiers under the command of the British Governor General.¹

Within the same concern of defending the unity of the Nile Valley, al-Rāfi^ʿī supported the case of a Sudanese who nominated himself for elections representing the ʿAbdīn district in Cairo. The British authorities rejected his nomination on the basis that he was originally a Sudanese.² Al-Rāfi^ʿī also rejected the proposal of the British authorities for holding a plebiscite in the Sudan, on the basis that the Sudan was not free and the plebiscite would be illegal.³ He also rejected the idea of the autonomy of the Sudan and called for establishing a committee for its liberation.⁴ Al-Rāfi^ʿī accused the Egyptian government of not working hard enough to solve the question of the Sudan whilst busying themselves with the Palestinian question which was, according to him, less important to Egypt.⁵

After the 1952 revolution al-Rāfi^ʿī continued to support the idea that the Sudan was a part of Egypt just like Alexandria

1. Al-Rāfi^ʿī, Qawāʿid al-Muʿāhadat, pp.39-40.

2. Ḥamādah M. Ismāʿīl, Op.cit., pp.123-124.

3. Ibid., p.124.

4. Ibid., pp.124-125.

5. Ibid., p.126.

When al-Rāfi^ʿī criticized the 1936 treaty he gave special attention to the terms concerning the Sudan. He believed that by this treaty the Sudan would become a British colony, guarded by Egyptian soldiers under the command of the British Governor General.¹

Within the same concern of defending the unity of the Nile Valley, al-Rāfi^ʿī supported the case of a Sudanese who nominated himself for elections representing the ʿAbdīn district in Cairo. The British authorities rejected his nomination on the basis that he was originally a Sudanese.² Al-Rāfi^ʿī also rejected the proposal of the British authorities for holding a plebiscite in the Sudan, on the basis that the Sudan was not free and the plebiscite would be illegal.³ He also rejected the idea of the autonomy of the Sudan and called for establishing a committee for its liberation.⁴ Al-Rāfi^ʿī accused the Egyptian government of not working hard enough to solve the question of the Sudan whilst busying themselves with the Palestinian question which was, according to him, less important to Egypt.⁵

After the 1952 revolution al-Rāfi^ʿī continued to support the idea that the Sudan was a part of Egypt just like Alexandria

1. Al-Rāfi^ʿī, Qawāʿid al-Muʿāhadat, pp.39-40.

2. Hamādah M. Ismāʿīl, Op.cit., pp.123-124.

3. Ibid., p.124.

4. Ibid., pp.124-125.

5. Ibid., p.126.

and he rejected - in a leaflet of the National Party - the agreement between the Egyptian and the British governments giving the Sudan the right of self determination.¹

In time, some political convictions of al-Rāfi^c ṭ had developed and others had changed. One of the most basic idea that had changed with time was the relation of Egypt with the Islamic and Arab World. At the beginning of his life and when the National Party was strong and influential Islamic unity under the leadership of the Ottoman Caliph was one of al-Rāfi^c ṭ's basic political convictions. He supported the Ottoman state in its war against Italy in 1911 by collecting money to help it and he was granted medals and honours for his help. He also supported the Ottomans and the Germans in World War I against the Allies.²

In the course of time, however, and after the abolishment of the Caliphate in 1925 and the emergence of the idea of Arab Nationalism, al-Rāfi^c ṭ's Islamic tendencies diminished and his interest in the Arab World increased. This change became obvious in the greater attention given to the Palestinian question in the publications of the National Party, especially after al-Rāfi^c ṭ became the Secretary of the Party. He also called for the holding of a conference in Egypt on this issue in order that the Arab governments put forward a plan to face Britain.³

1. Ibid., p.126.

2. Ibid., p.108.

3. Ibid., p.136.

Although al-Rāfi^عī called for an Arab unity, his convictions concerning this were different from the Arab nationalists. He insisted in his articles that every Arab state should be first of all independent from any foreign domination in order to be able to unite. Until then, he advised that the economic and political relations should develop by holding conferences to exchange ideas on all aspects of life.¹ After the defeat of the Arab states in 1948, which resulted in the establishment of the "state of Israel", al-Rāfi^عī criticized the Arab League on the basis that it consisted of governments and not peoples, which resulted in this defeat. He added that every Arab state should liberate itself first of all from the control of the colonial powers in order to be able to cooperate with the other members of the League.²

After the 1952 revolution al-Rāfi^عī became more involved with issues concerning Arab unity and problems of the Arabs. He also took part in the conferences of the Arab Lawyers which mainly discussed questions related to Arab problems.³ One cannot say that al-Rāfi^عī was an Arab Nationalist propagandist. In fact, until the late forties he used the term nations (Umam) and not nation (Umah) to identify those who speak Arabic. According to his son-in-law Ḥilmī Shāhīn, al-Rāfi^عī never really believed in Arab Unity. Being brought up during the rise of the Egyptian

1. Ibid., p.137.

2. Ḥamādah M. Ismā^عīl, Op.cit., pp.137-138.

3. Ibid., pp.138-139.

Nationalism, it was natural that his ideas were greatly influenced by this atmosphere.

Al-Rāfi^ʿī's attitude towards the use of force against the occupation also altered during his life time. Although he never mentioned explicitly his participation in the armed struggle, yet, he confessed in his book "Mudhakkirātī" his attitude on this issue. He said:

"In 1919, when I was only thirty years of age and was practicing my career as a lawyer in al-Manṣūra, attitudes of youth were overwhelming me and made me believe that the nation should adopt violence in its struggle. But now I am pronon-violence and find it the best as well as the nearest way to success. In other words, I am not in favour of revolution and prefer development through progress."¹

In an article al-Rāfi^ʿī wrote in 1948, he called the youth to fulfill their duties to their country but not in violent way.² He also said that unarmed struggle was more effective than armed struggle.³ Even after the 1952 revolution al-Rāfi^ʿī rejected the use of force. When the nationalization of the Suez Canal took place, he sent a letter to the Egyptian President Jamāl ʿAbd al-Nāssir saying that it was not the right time to go to war because of the nationalization of the Suez Canal.⁴

The change in al-Rāfi^ʿī's attitude away from the use of force was consistent with that of the National party. In the

1. Al-Rāfi^ʿī, Mudhakkirātī, p.30.

2. ʿAbd al-Rahmān al-Rāfi^ʿī, al-Shabāb wa'l Waṭan, al-Hilāl, January 1948, pp.7-9.

3. Hamādah M. Ismāʿīl, Op.cit., p.118.

4. Ibid., pp.121-122.

first quarter of this century the National Party realized, at times and to limited extent, that violence and the use of force were necessary if their aims were to be achieved. But afterwards they gave up these beliefs and called for legal means of resistance, through making use of existing institutions, thereby losing their popularity and effectiveness on the political map of Egypt. This was disastrous for them at a time when the Wafd Party was more pragmatic and able to mobilize the people.

The Political convictions of al-Rāfi^ʿī were not simply limited to the national questions. His early books, such as "Huqūq al-Sha^ʿb" are indicative of his other political ideas. Al-Rafi i writes about the type of government he preferred and the way in which the government should rule. He considered any government if it is to be representative of the people must work for the benefit of the people and not for their own ends. He also believed that governments are inclined to take full control over the affairs of the people and that if the people do not pursue their rights they will lose what they have achieved.¹ The safeguarding of rights could not be achieved without a constitution, written by the representative of the people. The aim behind a constitution is to organize the relationship between the people and the government in order that every one knows his limits and works for the general cause.²

1. Al-Rāfi^ʿī, Huqūq al-Sha^ʿb, pp.10-18.

2. Ibid., p.15.

He added that there can be no liberty without a constitution.¹ But he also believed that no nation could attain perfection in applying a constitutional system in one year or two. It is a process that calls for time and needs from the people a high degree of political consciousness.²

In general, al-Rāfi^ʿī called for a democratic and constitutionalist political system, just like those existing in Europe,³ although it did not seem to matter for him whether it was a kingdom or a republic; only important thing was that it should be a constitutionalist government.

Al-Rāfi^ʿī described how the Parliament and other councils should be elected and the role they should play as representatives of the people in formulating laws and changing them in accordance with the interests of the people. It is also their role to supervise the government in order to execute the laws correctly.⁴

Al-Rāfi^ʿī criticized parliamentary councils which were established after the British occupation and he described them as having no authority. Being always in the opposition al-Rāfi^ʿī used to push these councils towards acquiring more control and more authority over governments. He also criticized all the

1. Ḥamādah M. Ismā^ʿīl, Op.cit., pp.128-129.

2. Al-Rāfi^ʿī, Arba^ʿat ^ʿashar ^ʿām fī'l-Barlamān, p.314.

3. Al-Rāfi^ʿī, Huqūq al-Sha^ʿb, p.12.

4. Ibid., pp.15 and 130.

Egyptian governments during the British occupation for not presenting laws and projects to the Parliament before putting them into practice.¹

Al-Rāfi^ʿ believed in the multi-party system, but he preferred that there should only be three parties.² He criticized the existing state of Egyptian parties, after 1919 because, according to him, they had no specific and clear programs. He added that the differences between these parties helped in breaking up the unity of the nation.³

Al-Rāfi^ʿ's book "Ḥuqūq al-Sha^ʿb," which was published in 1912, may be considered as the best source for understanding his political thought. In it, the influence of the European political system is clear. Private freedom, freedom of press, the right of private ownership, the freedom to work, the right of elections for all the people - all these and others are issues discussed by al-Rāfi^ʿ in this book.

B. Al-Rāfi^ʿ's Economic and Social Thought

Al-Rāfi^ʿ realized that political independence needed also economic and social independence. Although he was mainly a politician, and his struggle against the British occupation and the Egyptian governments that cooperated with it was mainly on political issues, he did not neglect the economic and social issues.

1. Ibid., pp.83-105.

2. Al-Rāfi^ʿ, Mudhakkirātī, p.144.

3. Hamādah M. Ismā^ʿīl, Op.cit., p.133.

He believed that there is a relation between political and economic independence. He said:

"I was and still believe that there is a strong relationship between politics and economics and the economic part of the national movement is not less significant than its political one."¹

However, this did not prevent him from saying that politicians and not economists should rule.²

Al-Rāfi^ʿī considered the British occupation and the successive Egyptian governments to be responsible for the bad economic situation in the country. He opposed and attacked several economic projects and laws put out by the government which, he thought, served British interests. Beginning with the irrigation system in the Sudan, which was done with the help of British experience, al-Rāfi^ʿī rejected this project on the basis that it would reduce the quantity of water needed for Egyptian agriculture but he failed to stop the work on this project.³

Concerning the compensation for British officials who left Egypt after 1919 revolution, al-Rāfi^ʿī tried to convince the members of the Chamber of Deputies in one of its sessions in June 24, 1924 of the illegality of paying this large amount of money (1,300,000 pounds) to the British officials. However, his demand was also rejected.⁴ On the same basis, he refused the proposal to pay half a

1. Al-Rāfi^ʿī, Mudhakirātī, p.39.

2. ^ʿAbd al-Rahmān al-Rāfi^ʿī, Liman Takūn al-Za^ʿāmah, al-Hilāl, December, 1947, p.25.

3. Al-Rāfi^ʿī, Arba^ʿat ^ʿashar ^ʿām fī'l-Barlamān, pp.24-38.

4. Ibid., pp.46-56.

million pounds for foreign officials, during abd al-Khāliq Tharwat government, as compensation for being away from their homeland.¹ Al-Rāfi^ʿī also rejected any kind of foreign work or ownership, or even the use of foreign experts. He rejected the decision taken by the Wafd government in May 1943 to employ a British financial expert. He also rejected the permission given to foreign companies to dig for oil.²

In 1948 al-Rāfi^ʿī presented to the Senate one of the most significant draft laws which called for the prohibition of foreigners from owing agricultural land and other real estate. A law on those lines was not actually issued until March 1951.³ Al-Rāfi^ʿī opposed many other issues involving the relations between the Egyptian government and the British occupation, such as the decision taken by the Mixed Courts, binding Egypt to pay its debts in gold. He also expressed his objection to extending the privileges of al-Ahlī Bank - which was a British bank - for a further forty years.⁴ As a reaction to British economic control, al-Rāfi^ʿī called upon the government to abolish foreign concessions and liberate the Egyptian economy from its dependence on the British currency which resulted in the increase in prices and economic inflation.⁵

Al-Rāfi^ʿī also defended the rights of the lower cleases, especially the peasants, who had small ownerships. He called for

1. Ḥamādah M. Ismā^ʿīl, Op.cit., p.142.

2. Ibid., p.142.

3. Al-Rāfi^ʿī, Mudhakkirātī, pp.128-131.

4. Ḥamādah M. Ismā^ʿīl, Op.cit., pp.142-143.

5. Ibid., p.144.

the protection of these small holders and the reduction of taxes on them.¹ The peasants, their problems and the solution to these problems were of great interest for al-Rāfi^ʿī. He often discussed them in the sessions of the Parliament. Al-Rāfi^ʿī also took the side of the workers on several occasions and defended their right to establish their unions, which ended in the issuing of the law relating to workers trade unions of 1947.² He also asked the government to look to the welfare of the peasants and workers and to train them and take care of their health, shelter and nutrition. He added:

"The government should protect both the agricultural and industrial workers. It should also organize their relationship with the business men and land owners based on justice, love and humanity. The government should also determine wages...It should also provide the workers with jobs in order to prevent them from the evils of unemployment. The worker and the farmer have the right to be protected by the government through an insurance system in times of need, sickness, unemployment, disablement and old age."³

Al-Rāfi^ʿī took part in establishing several committees, co-operatives and unions as a way of implementing his social and economic thought. In 1919, he took part in establishing an association in al-Manṣūra for the generalization of agricultural cooperatives all over the country. In 1920, he established the

1. Al-Rāfi^ʿī, Arab^ʿat ʿashar^ʿām fī'l-Barlamān, pp.130-135.

2. Bahā' al-Dīn^ʿ Ilwān, al-Rāfi^ʿī Za^ʿīm li'l Mu^ʿārada, al-Mawqef al-Arabī, May 1979, p.101.

3. Al-Rāfi^ʿī, Fī A^ʿqāb al-Thawrat al-Misriya - 1919, 2nd. Vol., 2nd. ed., Cairo, 1966, pp.412-413.

first Food Supply Cooperative in al-Manṣūra. Other cooperatives were established in other cities on the same principle.¹ During his membership of the Chamber of Deputies in 1924, he succeeded in establishing the cooperative and Social Welfare Committee.² In 1939, al-Rāfi^cī was chosen by the Ministry of Social Welfare as a member of a special committee established for the purpose of promoting cooperative work.³ In 1944, they were able to issue a new law for cooperative work and to the establishing of a cooperative bank.⁴ Al-Rāfi^cī wrote a book in 1914 on cooperative unions which was considered as one of the pioneering publications in this field.

Al-Rāfi^cī did not simply criticize the economic policy of the government but he participated in suggesting solution to overcome these economic problems. In his book, "Fī A^cqāb al-Thawrat al-Misrīya", al-Rāfi^cī allocates two chapters to a discussion of the economic and social situation in Egypt after the 1919 Revolution. He suggested that the government should reclaim more lands and look for other resources, such as animal and mineral resources.⁵ He also suggested the establishing of new industries based on totally Egyptian capital and the building of

1. Al-Rāfi^cī, Mudhakkirātī, pp.39-41.

2. Hamādah M. Ismā^cīl, Op.cit., p.152.

3. Al-Rāfi^cī, Mudhakkirātī, pp.105-106.

4. Al-Rāfi^cī, Arba^cat ^cashar ^cām fī'l-Barlamān, pp.379-381.

5. Al-Rāfi^cī, Fī A^cqāb al-Thawrat al-Misrīya, Vol.II, Chapter. 4.

the necessary infra-structure such as roads, ports...etc. He also advised the establishment of industrial banks. It was the latter concern which was behind his enthusiasm in encouraging Bank Misr. He considered Ṭalʿat Ḥarb, the founder of the Bank, as one of the ten greatest men in modern Egyptian history.¹ This economic development, he added, should not only be concentrated in urban areas; villages should be given more attention. He says:

"The government should work on improving the villages in order to be at the same level of villages in the developed countries...The improvement of villages is the basis for all social and economical reform".²

Out of his believe in social justice, al-Rāfiʿī called for certain economic and social improvements. He called on the government to interfere and promulgate laws in order to ensure social justice and to decrease the differences between the social classes. Some of these laws suggested were the following:

1. To set taxes in relation to the income and to exempt the poor classes from paying.
2. To put a limit to the private ownership of agricultural land and increase ownership by lower and middle classes.
3. To set a limit to the profit of big industrial and commercial companies and prevent them from increasing prices as they wished.
4. To define the relationship between owners and renters, especially in regard to agricultural land.

1. Ḥamādah M. Ismāʿīl, Op.cit., p.152.

2. Al-Rāfiʿī, Fī Aqāb al-Thawrat al-Miṣrīya, 2nd. Vol., p.411.

5. To encourage and supervise the cooperatives.
6. To build orphanages and homes for the aged.
7. To create a proper system of social welfare.¹

Al-Rāfi^ʿ tried to put some of these ideas into practice when he was the Minister of Supply, but this brought him into direct conflict with the big companies such as the Sugar Company and the owners of the textile companies.²

Although al-Rāfi^ʿ defended the rights of the lower classes yet he believed in reconciliation of the different social classes in Egypt. He advised the youth not to adopt communist ideas because, according to him, these ideas would destroy the existing social and economic system (private ownership and free industrial and commercial enterprise) and destroy the national spirit of the people.³ Al-Rāfi^ʿ was pleased when the government, after the 1952 revolution, issued laws in regard to the welfare of the workers and peasants and considered this as a means of preventing communist ideas penetrating amongst the peasants and workers.⁴ He called on all classes to work in implementing these laws.⁵

1. Al-Rāfi^ʿ, Fi A^ʿqāb al-Thawrat al-Miṣrīya, 2nd. Vol. pp.400-418.

2. Al-Rāfi^ʿ, Mudhakkirātī, pp.137-139.

3. Al-Rāfi^ʿ, Fi A^ʿqāb al-Thawrat al-Miṣrīya, 2nd. Vol. pp.318-321.

4. Ḥamādah M. Ismā^ʿīl, Op.cit., pp.145-146.

5. Ibid., pp.166-167.

It is clear that al-Rāfi^عī was influenced by European liberal bourgeoisie thinkers in this as in other respects. He expressed his admiration, in several places in his books, for the European political system and hoped Egypt would one day attain something similar to it.

Al-Rāfi^عī wrote about many other social issues related to marriage, the role of women in society, to birth control and education. In spite of his support for the rights, the people he criticized their behaviour in certain matters such as the consumption of luxurious foreign goods instead of the encouragement of local products. He also rejected their imitation of Europeans and advised the youth to preserve their own values. Al-Rāfi^عī also criticized the spread of alcohol and drugs.¹ He participated in several governmental and non-governmental social committees as a means towards solving social problems such as the Association for the Prohibition of Alcohol, the Social Reform League, the Young Men Muslim Association.²

1. Ibid., pp.158-170.

2. Ibid., pp.170-171.

CHAPTER TWO

THE ʿURĀBĪ REVOLUTION AND ITS LITERATURE

The ʿUrābī revolution is one of the most important events in the modern history of Egyptian nationalism. A number of historians, representing different trends of thought, have written about it and it has generated a considerable debate about its aims, achievements and results. The different attitudes in regard to the ʿUrābī revolution have varied from describing it as an illegitimate uprising perpetrated by unqualified military officers and politicians for private ambitions, to describing it as a national uprising and a very significant phase in Egyptian national history.

If we begin by examining the literature emanating from those who witnessed or took part in the revolution, it becomes clear that many of them became sceptical about the motives and aims of its leaders.

Muḥammad ʿAbduḥ, the famous Islamic reformer, wrote at some length about the revolution and the events leading up to it. Although he was one of its leaders, he did not always come down on the side of the revolution. His incomplete book on the ʿUrābī revolution may well have had an immoderate influence on later writings on the subject. The official British position can be seen through the reports of British officials who served in Egypt at the time, Malet and Colvin, and later, in the writings of Lord Cromer who devoted a part of his book on Egypt to the ʿUrābī revolution. Some Egyptian writers were influenced by the British material in regard to the revolution and wrote describing ʿUrābī and his friends as puppets in the hands of Britain and Ismāʿīl, the former Khedive of Egypt, or described the revolutionaries as a group of traitors. Even in Egyptian school

books during the British occupation, the 'Urābī revolution was described as a mutiny.¹ Not all English commentators were against the revolution. Wilfrid S. Blunt, in his book, "The Secret History of the English Occupation of Egypt", defended the 'Urābī revolution and its leaders.

It is not surprising to see the effect of the official British view of the revolution on later historians. What is more puzzling is the position of the National Party which was led by Muṣṭafa Kāmīl. The latter wrote an article in the newspaper al-Liwā' accusing 'Urābī of being an ignorant leader who led the country into British occupation.² As we shall see, 'Abd al-Rahmān al-Rāfi'ī and other writers of similar persuasion took the same position in blaming 'Urābī for the British occupation of Egypt. In contrast, other historians have defended the 'Urābī revolution. One of the best known of these is Maḥmūd al-Khafīf, his book "Aḥmad 'Urābī al-Za'īm al-Muftara 'Alayh" may be considered as a response to the accusations brought against the 'Urābī revolution.

From 1952 onwards - that is, after Nasser's revolution - the 'Urābī revolution begins to take its real place in the history of Egyptian nationalism. Although many writers, influenced by earlier writings, continued to blame 'Urābī for the British occupation of Egypt, a new generation of nationalist and socialist commentators began to defend 'Urābī, portraying him as a national hero. Many of these socialist voices are of importance such as Rifa'at al-Sa'īd, Ṣalāḥ 'Issa and many others. They have given the 'Urābī revolution a new and rehabilitated status in the history of Egyptian nationalism.

1. Ṣalāḥ 'Issa, al-Thawrat al-'Urābīya, 2nd. ed., Cairo, 1982, pp.40-41.

2. Ibid., pp.46-47.

In the section which follows a representative review of the literature written on the 'Urābī revolution will be undertaken.

Muḥammad 'Abduh's book and articles written on the political situation in Egypt during the 'Urābī revolution are of great importance in understanding the political life of the period. His position in regard to the revolution is far from consistent. It changed according to circumstances and this process can be detected in his articles and the incomplete book he began to write on the 'Urābī revolution, when asked to do so by Khedive 'Abbās Ḥilmī. This work was not completed due to the differences between him and the Khedive.¹ The articles 'Abduh wrote in al-Waqā'i' al-Miṣrīyah are also of great help in understanding the change in his position in regard to the revolution.

After the first clash between the army under the leadership of 'Urābī and the government at the Qasr al-Nīl barracks in February 1881 and which ended by the replacement of the Minister of War, the Circassian Rifqī Pāshā, 'Abduh wrote a series of articles in al-Waqā'i'² in which he showed his dissatisfaction and disagreement with the way 'Urābī and his friends acted and also to their demand for a Chamber of Deputies. He called for a gradualist approach:

"Only a few improvements not too far removed from the current level of the people should be introduced. When they have grown accustomed to these, others can be attempted on a higher plane...If the latitude given to the people exceeds their horizon, or if obligations which they are incapable of fulfilling are imposed on them and powers are granted to them when they

1. Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍa, Tarīkh al-Ustāz al-Imām al-Shaykh Muḥammad 'Abdu, Cairo, 1931, Vol. I, p. 157.

lack experience of ruling, they will be misled by ideas strange to them and will fall into confusion.¹

He adds: "They said that the time was ripe for getting rid of despotism and establishing a parliamentary government. I said that we must for some years concern ourselves with education and training, and do our best to influence the government to rule justly."²

‘Abduh considered the Egyptians as not ready for a constitutional system. He says that it was not natural for the country to start by reaping, with little effort, the fruits for which European nations had paid such a high price over such long stretches of time. People, he maintained, should be trained gradually for democratic life by means of municipal and provincial councils. At the same time, distinctive limitations on personal conduct and action should be laid down.³ ‘Abduh's direct referent to his refusal of the use of force comes when he met ‘Urābī in the house of Ṭulba Pāshā, one of the leaders of the revolution, where he stated in a direct fashion: "If the nation is prepared to take part in the government's administrative affairs, it will be meaningless to seek that end by military force. Therefore what the army leaders demand is illegitimate."⁴ The articles

1. Muḥammad ‘Abduh, Khata' al-‘uqalā', al-Waqā'i' al-Miṣrīyah, Issue 1079, April 4, 1881, in Muḥammad ‘Imāra, al-A‘māl al-Kāmilah li'l-Imām Muḥammad ‘Abduh, Cairo, 1979, Vol.I, p.298.

2. Riḍa, Op.cit., Vol.I, pp.217-218. From ‘Abduh's unpublished book "al-Thawrah al-‘Urābīyah."

3. Muḥammad ‘Abdu, op.cit., Vol.I, pp.304-308, from al-Waqā'i' al-Miṣrīyah, Issue 1092, April 19, 1881.

4. Riḍa, Op.cit., Vol.I, pp.217-218.

that Muḥammad ʿAbduh wrote after the ʿAbdīn event, in September 9, 1881, and which ended by the resignation of Riyāḍ Pāshā and the appointment of Sharīf Pāshā at the head of the new ministry, were totally different. It is amazing to see the change in his view in such very short time. Not only were his writings a vivid example of this change, but his participation in events reflects it also. He became one of the leaders of the revolution and a strong supporter of the constitutional system. ʿAbduh now claimed that the Egyptians had become ready for constitutional life, since they had proved that they have a public opinion and aspire to improve their conditions.¹

During the celebrations of the victory of the nationalists, when Maḥmūd Sāmī al-Bārūdī succeeded Sharīf as Prime Minister, ʿAbduh made an important speech explaining the merits of constitutional rule and demanding the spread of education and the grant of freedom of speech and writing.²

In his letters to his friend Blunt, ʿAbduh strongly defended the government and their measures and refuted the rumours being spread in Europe that the leaders of the revolution were seeking personal advantage.³

It was not until his imprisonment after the failure of the revolution that ʿAbduh changed his position for the second time. His uncompleted and unpublished book written on the ʿUrābī revolution proved to be a great retreat from his previous radical position. In

1. Muḥammad ʿAbduh, *al-Shūra wa'l-Qānūn*, *al-Waqā'i' al-Miṣrīyah*, Issue 1290, December 25, 1881, p.366.

2. *Ibid.*, Issue 1334, April 15, 1882, pp.380-383.

3. Wilfrid Blunt, *Secret History of the English Occupation of Egypt*, New York, 1967, pp.191-194.

his book 'Abduh states that 'Urābī had no real intentions for reform, but his main aim was revenge upon the Circassians and to gain the power and benefits they had for himself.¹ He also criticized 'Urābī for practices which were against the laws of the government.² 'Abduh said that the weakness of the government, from the beginning, in dealing with 'Urābī and the other rebels gave them the chance to acquire more power.³ He also claimed that 'Urābī demanded the establishing of a constitutional system so as to dominate the country.⁴ Throughout the book 'Abduh defended Riyāḍ Pāshā and his administrative policies which led to the beginning of reform in Egypt. He said that these policies were against the interests of the Khedive and the Egyptian landlords which explains why they worked to get rid of him.⁵ Muḥammad 'Abduh's book and articles created a considerable debate and influenced the views of many writers, because his was not an ordinary voice, but that of a great reformer with many followers. Many writers have differed in their judgement of the reasons behind the change in 'Abduh's position. Aḥmad Ḥusayn affirms that 'Abduh used to change his position according to the times and that his political thought developed with the development of the circumstances from conservative to moderate to revolutionary.⁶ Others like 'Abbās Maḥmūd al-'Aqqād maintained that

1. Rida, Op.cit., p.198.

2. Ibid., p.202.

3. Ibid., p.208

4. Ibid., p.208.

5. Ibid., pp.184-196.

6. Aḥmad Ḥusayn al-Ṣāwī, Muḥammad 'Abduh and al-Waq'i' al-Miṣrīyah, A Master's Thesis, McGill University, 1954, pp.53-54.

‘Abduh was not against the ‘Urābī revolution, but was against the way ‘Urābī worked to achieve his goals of reform.¹ On the other hand Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍa, ‘Abduh's faithful follower, used all the information he had to hand to prove that ‘Abduh was against the revolution and rejected its ideas.²

Lord Cromer can, perhaps, be regarded as the ideal writer to represent the view of the Colonial powers in general, and Britain in particular, concerning the ‘Urābī revolution. In his review of the events of the revolution, Cromer claimed that Egypt needed help to solve its financial problems and Britain offered this help for the benefit of Egypt and the Egyptians.³ He also emphasized several times the fact that the Egyptians could not rule themselves. For him, the Egyptians were an ignorant people and it was not in their interest or the interests of the civilized world that they should rule themselves.⁴ It was inevitable that this kind of colonial mentality could not accept or defend the ‘Urābī revolution. Consequently, to Cromer the revolution was a movement that had to be crushed.⁵ Cromer did his best to distort the real picture of the revolution and portrayed many lies concerning the aims of its leaders. He quoted from ‘Urābī to the effect, that the real reason behind the revolution was "fear".⁶ He described ‘Urābī and the other leaders as fanatical

1. ‘Abbās Maḥmūd al-‘Aqqād, ‘Abqarī al-Islāh wa'l-Ta‘līm, al-Ustāz al-Imām Muḥammad ‘Abduh, Cairo, pp.146-147.

2. Riḍa, *Op.cit.*, pp.261-265.

3. Lord Cromer, *The ‘Urābī Revolution*, Translated by ‘Abd al-‘Azīz ‘Urābī, Cairo, 1958, p.14 and p.40.

4. *Ibid.*, p.231

5. *Ibid.*, p.67.

6. *Ibid.*, p.67.

Moslems who worked to revive Islam against Christianity.¹

Although Cromer criticized some of the British policies in Egypt, yet he searched avidly for every piece of evidence to prove that Britain was forced to occupy Egypt. France's policy, he said, had put Britain in a situation that did not enable her to retreat from direct interference in Egypt.² He insisted that occupying Egypt was the only solution left for Britain, although this was very dangerous to its position in the world.³ Although Cromer tried in a circumlocutory way to convince his readers of the good intentions of Britain, yet he was not able to hide certain important facts concerning the English and French conspiracies aimed at weakening the army and its leaders and using the disagreements between the Egyptians for their own benefit. In addition, Cromer throws light on the relations between the British politicians and some important political figures like Sharīf Pāshā, the first Prime Minister after the September 9th revolution.⁴ Theodore Rothstein, in his book "Egypt's Ruin", has suggested that Cromer was not scientific in dealing with the ʿUrābī revolution, and that he did not use, or ignored, a number of important documents from the British Foreign Office which proved the intention of Britain to occupy Egypt.⁵

1. Ibid., pp.230-231.

2. Ibid., p.119.

3. Ibid., pp.233-234.

4. Ibid., pp.93, 118, 125 and 130.

5. Theodore Rothstein, Egypt's Ruin, translated by ʿAbd al-Hamīd al-ʿAbādī and Muḥammad Badrān, 2nd ed., Beirut, 1981, pp.119-134.

If Lord Cromer's book can be taken to represent the British official view of the ʿUrābī revolution, that does not imply that there were no British voices raised in defence of the revolution; Wilfrid Blunt's was such. Blunt was not just a historian; he was a close friend of some of the leaders of the revolution, such as Muḥammad ʿAbduh and Aḥmad ʿUrābī himself. Blunt took part in some of the events of the revolution, mainly in conveying what he considered to be the true picture of the revolution to the British government and people through the articles he wrote defending the revolution and its leaders. He also took a major role during the trial of the leaders of the revolution, in which he appointed two English lawyers to defend them.¹ Blunt's book may be more of an autobiography than a history, because he relates all the events that occurred during his own presence in Egypt, or depends on letters from his friends. However, he clearly and strongly defended the leaders of the revolution from all accusations directed against them by their European critics, especially concerning the status of the Europeans in Egypt. Throughout his book Blunt criticized ʿUrābī once only:

"ʿUrābī, if he had been a strong ruler, which unfortunately he was not, and if he had been a better judge of men and judge of opportunity in a word, if he had been a man of action and not what he was, a dreamer, he might have won the diplomatic game against his unscrupulous opponents...He was absolutely ignorant of Europe or of the common arts and crafts of its diplomacy."²

In his book Blunt shed light on a number of important facts which help in understanding the policies of the European countries towards

1. ʿAbd al-Qāder Ḥamza, In Blunt, The Secret History of the English Occupation of Egypt, (Arabic Text) Cairo, 1981, pp.5-7.

2. Blunt, Op.cit., p.240.

Egypt and the Egyptian political figures they manipulated to achieve their aims. Unlike Muḥammad ʿAbduḥ, Blunt was nearer the truth in describing Riyāḍ Pāshā as a dictator and he was closer to truth than many Egyptian writers of the Nationalist persuasion in understanding the real character of Sharīf Pāshā:

"Sherif was an Europeanized Turk of good breeding and excellent manners, but with all that arrogant contempt of the fellahin which distinguished his class in Egypt." ¹

Blunt also says of him: "Sherif's house had become a center of the diplomatic intrigue against the Ministry inspired by Colvin."²

In spite of the fact that Blunt removed the veil from some of the contemporary conspiracies - especially those of Malet, the British Consul, and Colvin, the British Financial Controller - he becomes more naive when it comes to the real aims of the British government in regard to direct interference in Egypt and blames France for entangling Britain in the occupation of Egypt.

Being himself a liberal, Blunt tried to defend the British Liberal government and its Prime Minister Gladstone and hoped that the liberal politicians like Gladstone would help him in preventing direct British interference in Egypt. But unfortunately his hopes were ruined when he discovered a part of the truth:

"Such was the Gladstone I saw unveiled for moment that day, a man of infinite private sympathy with good...But, alas, there was another Gladstone, the opportunist statesman, who was very different from the first."³

¹. Ibid., p.149.

². Ibid., p.190.

³. Ibid., p.180.

Besides Blunt, who was a committed participant, others have taken up the cause of vindicating the revolution. Maḥmūd al-Kḥafīf, in his book "Aḥmad ʿUrābī al-Zaʿīm al-Muftara ʿalayh" takes up the cudgel in defence of ʿUrābī and argues against the accusations which were directed against him by some writers and politicians such as, Muṣṭafa Kāmil, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Rāfiʿī, Muḥammad ʿAbduh and Lord Cromer. Relying upon primary material and documents for this purpose his findings were first published as a series of articles in al-Risāla magazine. These angered King Faruq and his government and caused many problems for al-Kḥafīf.¹ In his support ʿUrābī, he hints at a malign intent behind the attacks on him:

"It is rarely that one sees a man whose good qualities were (so overlain) by his bad ones. ʿUrābī's (good) qualities disappeared because of evil accusations so greatly hated by his people to the extent that all his deeds were disapproved of, and many actions incorrectly ascribed to him. This is evidence that history can wrong people on purpose."²

Al-Kḥafīf goes on to claim that the real picture of ʿUrābī as a national hero was distorted. He was described as being hasty, ignorant, a fanatical Muslim and a leader looking to his private interests. In his defence against those who accused ʿUrābī of being leader looking for to his own interests, al-Kḥafīf affirmed that ʿUrābī was not looking towards leadership or the control of the country. In fact, after the ʿAbdīn incident in September 1881, he was in a position that enabled him to take the highest governmental positions and yet he refrained from doing so. Concerning this point al-Kḥafīf writes:

1. Amāl Asʿad, Maktabat al-Thawrat al-ʿUrābīya, al-Siyāsa al-Dawliya, Issue No.64, April 1981, p.218.

2. Maḥmūd al-Kḥfīf, Op.cit., Introduction, p.1.

"This man was the hero of the Revolution and through him Egypt reached out to what it became, but without any gains for the man (himself). If he had any personal ambitions we would have seen him reach the position of a minister, for he was in a position whereby he controlled the Khedive and imposed on him the person that ought to form the ministry. This is a position that implies overweeningness and so, if 'Urābī was anxious for wealth and position at that time, no one would have been able to prevent him from doing so."¹

Al-Khafīf added that 'Urābī was a national leader in his own right and that his revolution was a national revolution which was supported by the people from the very beginning. He emphasizes the popular nature of 'Urābī's appeal and that he became a focus for those who needed help, or wanted to complain. He states:

"The peasants were astonished when they saw a man from amongst them who had the courage to challenge the Khedive and the Circassians. They (the peasants) became attached to him even without seeing him. Many of them came to Cairo carrying gifts and showing their admiration for his principles which led to the equal treatment of the peasants in the Army."²

In an attempt to defend 'Urābī against the accusations of being hasty and strict, al-Khafīf refers to a letter sent by 'Urābī to Blunt after the 'Abdīn incident in which he states that all treaties would be respected and the Europeans would not be hurt.³

I am quoting here a few examples only to indicate the general substance of al-Khafīf's defence of 'Urābī and the revolution. But he reaches the climax in his support of 'Urābī's position when he criticizes the newspaper al-Liwā' for its opposition to 'Urābī when he returned from exile. Al-Khafīf writes: "The newspaper al-Liwā' supported

1. Ibid., p.100.

2. Ibid., pp.48-49.

3. Al-Khafīf, Op.cit., pp.190-191.

ʿAbbās and saw the need for slandering ʿUrābī in order to please the Prince."¹ On the other hand al-Khafīf is prepared to admit that ʿUrābī made some mistakes, especially in refusing to leave with his regiment in September unless the Khedive called for a meeting of the Chamber of Deputies. He also criticizes ʿUrābī's interference in the affairs of the government in regard to the increase in the budget of the army and states:

"ʿUrābī took an oath on himself not to interfere in issues concerning the existing government and on this basis Sharīf accepted the headship of the ministry. This is why ʿUrābī should be blamed for interfering in the issues mentioned above, even if he had good intentions. Blame should not also be minimized, because he agreed in the end and caused no trouble for the government; these issues are the concern of the government and do not touch the core of the national question."²

Al-Khafīf's point of view was that ʿUrābī had good intentions even when he committed mistakes and that his errors of judgement were not the real reasons behind the failure of the revolution. He affirms that Britain had the intention to occupy Egypt, in any case; thus it invented and exaggerated the events of the revolution - especially the danger facing European citizens in Egypt - in order to occupy the country.³

For al-Khafīf, the main reasons behind the defeat of the Egyptian army were treason, the neglecting of the eastern front and the Khedives' joining the side of the enemies. He said:

"We do not intend to state the betrayal was the only factor behind the defeat of the revolution, for there were two other significant factors.

1. Ibid., p552.

2. Ibid., p.108.

3. Ibid., 135,156,120.

These were the neglect of the Eastern front and the Khedive's alliance with the British from the beginning. What must be said is that betrayal was the fundamental factor behind the defeat."¹

As indicated earlier, al-Khafīf considered the 'Urābī revolution as a national revolution and one which was continued by Sa'd Zaghlūl. Al-Khafīf does not explain why he passes over Muṣṭafa Kāmil as one of the National leaders. Neither does he, in his interpretation of the 'Urābī revolution, explain the contradictions between the different parties who took part in the revolution, although it is clear that these contradictions were one of the major reasons in weakening the national front. We notice, also, that that he does not criticize Sharīf Pāshā when the latter insisted on complying with the demand of the Europeans in not discussing the budget in the Chamber of Deputies at a time when the deputies themselves wanted to do so.²

Turning to Ṣalāḥ 'Issa's analysis of the 'Urābī revolution, one must acknowledge that this is one of the major studies undertaken during the past three decades. He has given a deep interpretation of the reasons and the results of the revolution, using the approach of historical materialism as a framework of analysis. In his book "al-Thawrat al-'Urābīya", Issa considered the revolution as a stage in the struggle of the Egyptian bourgeoisie against foreign control of all the resources of Egypt. He declared:

"This research is a part of several attempts to reach to a general and comprehensive idea concerning the development of Egyptian society. The viewpoint (here) is (that) the basis of the movement

1. Ibid., p.441.

2. Ibid., p.112.

of Egyptian history during the last hundred and fifty years has been the attempts of the Egyptian bourgeoisie to achieve its revolution."¹

In his discussion of the role of each class of Egyptian society in the revolution, the writer has analysed the reason of each class in taking part in it and the reasons behind their betrayal, retreat, or resistance at different times during it. The 'Urābī revolution was in the main an alliance between several social groups which had different and contradictory objectives, but worked together because they faced the same danger. This danger which threatened their own existence, was due to the interference of Europe and foreigners in general in the economic and political life of Egypt. He states:

"It was natural that the reasons behind the support of all power groups for the revolution were different and even contradictory. There was a continuous attempt by each power group to dominate the leadership of the revolution in order to use it for its own interests."²

When some elements in the revolution front failed to control it and when they saw that they were losing what they originally had, they went over to the side of the enemy. The Egyptian rural aristocracy can be taken as a vivid example, as Ṣalāḥ 'Issa explains:

"The rural aristocracy was the least revolutionary stratum of the Egyptian rural bourgeoisie and the most moderate. It also entered the national front under the slogan of "participation in political power," and it was ready to accept the least from the ruling powers. But when it got this little, the rural aristocracy tried to control its partness in the front and to limit their revolutionary actions. However, when these partners rejected this control, Sharīf's ministry resigned, thus announcing the withdrawal of the rural aristocracy from the national front. After a while, it returned to the front where it faced, with the other participants,

1. Ṣalāḥ 'Issa, Op.cit., p.10.

2. Ibid., p.119.

the first attempts at foreign interference, which almost led to the loss of any gains it had accomplished by its participation in power. That was when the foreigners wanted to deny the Chamber of Deputies any right in dealing with the issues concerning the budget. After this limited participation the rural aristocracy returned to its passive position. With the complication that took place after the Circassian conspiracy the rural aristocracy announced its alliance with the Khedive and his colonial allies, thus completely withdrawing to the side of the betrayers."¹

It is clear that Ṣalāḥ ʿIssa has used the analytical approach based upon class in his discussion of the ʿUrābī revolution. He considers the objective factors much more important than the subjective ones in his explanation of the historical facts. In fact, ʿIssa criticized all the writers who depended on the role of individuals in explaining history, such as Abd al-Raḥmān al-Rāfiʿī and said of the latter:

"Al Rāfiʿī's concern and exaggeration of the individual's role in shaping history is a case which is continuously repeated in many of his studies."²

The methodologic approach adopted by Ṣalāḥ ʿIssa prompted him to take an entirely line from other writers in answering questions relating to the ʿUrābī revolution.

He attempted the study of the ʿUrābī revolution by setting it in the context of world economic and political forces. Thus, he connects the Egyptian case from the time of Muḥammad ʿAlī with the development of capitalism in Europe. In his first chapter, he discusses the intentions of the European countries in seeking the control of Egypt, especially Britain, the change of their policy from the peaceful control of Egypt to military occupation. This change, he says, was due to

1. Ibid., p.321.

2. Ibid., p.43.

the development of the national movement which endangered their position in the country, in addition to the struggle between the colonial powers themselves.¹

Ṣalāḥ ʿIssa has designated a part of his book to discussing the intellectual sources of the ʿUrābī revolution and the influence of liberal, radical and Islamic ideas on the revolution. He considers that these ideas were of great help in determining the way in which the revolution developed, which in turn had an effect on the development of Egyptian thought. He adds that:

"The ʿUrābī revolution can be considered as the first Egyptian revolutionary movement that had a high degree of consciousness of itself and had clearly identified its goals. It had also the abilities to organize itself in order to reach its goals. It would have been impossible to have all these characteristics if the revolution had not developed in an intellectual atmosphere, conscious of the revolutionary paths and affected by intellectual stimuli. Even the experiences of the whole world in political organization and the means for gaining the people's support were not far from the consciousness of the revolution."²

In his last chapter Ṣalāḥ ʿIssa discusses the circumstances which led to the failure of the revolution which can be summarized as follows:

1. The power of the colonial powers and their attempts to control Egypt.
2. The negative attitude of the Ottoman Empire, especially when it announced the declaration of the disobedience of ʿUrābī.
3. The Khedive and the rural aristocracy, who betrayed the revolution at a very critical time.
4. The failure of the leadership in gathering together the people, especially the peasants.
5. The non-existence of a conscious and revolutionary leadership that knew the nature of the colonial powers.³

1. Ibid., p.75.

2. Ibid., p.165,

3. Ibid., pp.317-435.

CHAPTER THREE

‘ABD AL-RAḤMĀN AL-RĀFI‘Ī AND THE ‘URĀBĪ REVOLUTION

There is no doubt that ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Rāfi‘ī's book on the ‘Urābī revolution, and his position in regard to it, is of central importance for all those who study the history of the Egyptian national movement. Indeed, this applies to the sequence of his works on the history of the national movement. However, the question must be asked: was he, consciously or unconsciously, fitting the narrative and interpretive history of these events into a personal mould of political conviction? His account of the ‘Urābī revolution will be used here as a means of testing this and other hypotheses.

A. A Review of al-Rāfi‘ī's Book "al-Thawrat al-‘Urabiya wa'l Ihtilāl al-Inglīzī"

Before going into detail in discussing the ideas and the material which this book on the revolution contains, it will be helpful to review al-Rāfi‘ī's main ideas concerning the ‘Urābī revolution.

Put in the simplest terms, al-Rāfi‘ī considers the ‘Urābī revolution as a national movement in which the army officers aimed at getting their rights and that this movement subsequently developed into a general one. He states it in these terms:

"The ‘Urābī revolution is the national movement which appeared at the beginning of the year 1881 and continued until the end of 1882. At the beginning it aimed at demanding justice for the national officers and giving them their legitimate rights in (regard to) military positions and ranks, and put an end to the oppression they were facing from their Turkish and Circassian leaders in the army. Then it developed into a

general movement where all the classes of the nation took part to get rid of despotic rule."¹

Al-Rāfi'ī, then, obviously considers the 'Urābī revolution as a continuation of the national movement that appeared in a more nascent form during the reign of Khedive Ismā'īl and states so: "The 'Urābī revolution is without any doubt a continuation of the national movement that appeared during the reign of Ismā'īl like the continuation of a tree in its growing."²

According to al-Rāfi'ī, he approached the study of the revolution without any bias and declares that he intended to state first the facts and then add his own opinion, since he had noticed that the 'Urābī revolution had acquired its own groups of partisans and that those who wrote about it were either biased in favour of the revolution or against it. He goes on:

"When I began studying the revolution I was filled with sympathy towards it, inspite of the way it ended. But basically it emerged for a noble reason, which was to save the nation from despotism and build the basis for a constitutional system and liberate the country from the foreign interference. However, this feeling did not prevent me from seeing its faults, especially those of its leaders."³

In his analysis of the reasons behind the revolution, al-Rāfi'ī divides them into two; the immediate and special reasons and the general reasons. He considers the special reasons as having stronger effect on the emergence and development of the revolution.⁴ The

1. 'Abd al-Rahmān al-Rāfi'ī, al-Thawrat al-'Urābīya wa'l Iḥtilāl al-Inglīzī, 4th ed., Cairo, 1983, p.19.

2. Ibid., p.20.

3. Ibid., p.21.

4. Ibid., p.69.

special reasons were as follows:

1. The complaints of the national officers at the unfair treatment of their leaders.
2. The emergence of Aḥmad ʿUrābī as a leader whose character attracted other Egyptian officers to him.
3. The weak and indecisive character of the Khedive Tawfīq, who was unable either to treat the officers firmly from the beginning, or fulfill their demands.
4. The different and contradictory opinions of the members of Riyāḍ's ministry on how to deal with the revolution. This helped in the emergence and success of the revolution.¹

As for the general reasons al-Rāfiʿī divides them into three main categories:

1. The political reasons, where al-Rāfiʿī mentions the complaints of the Egyptians in regard to the existing political system and their desire to get rid of despotic rule, which rejected the concept of the establishment of a constitutional system and worked to suppress opposition groups.
2. The economic reasons - and here al-Rāfiʿī concentrates on the debts of the government which had become such a heavy burden on the people. He goes on to explain the reasons behind the complaints of each class of the people at the economic situation, which was inimical to their own interests and of benefit to the foreigners.

¹. Ibid., pp.69-72.

3. The social reasons, whereby the spread of education and science in Egypt had helped in the growth of the national feelings of the people. He adds to this the influence of the opposition press in the education of the people through their propagating of liberal ideas.¹

He divides the revolution into two stages. The first stage began during Riyād's ministry, in February 1881, and lasted until the resignation of Sharīf Pāshā in February 1882. In discussing this stage al-Rāfi'ī supports the revolution, its aim and achievements - especially the establishment of a constitutional ministry headed by Sharīf Pāshā and the opening of the Chamber of Deputies on December 26, 1881.² At the same time, his writings contain a number of indications of disagreement at the way the leaders of the revolution acted, even at this early stage. A number of examples can be given to support this statement. In his analysis of the meeting between the three leaders of the revolution, 'Urābī, Alī Fahmī and 'Abd al-'Āl Hilmī before the Qasr al-Nīl incident, al-Rāfi'ī says:

"Their choice of 'Urābī as their leader and their oath of solidarity with him to sacrifice their lives for his and the country's sake - all this meant mutiny, a breaking of the rules, challenge to the government and humiliation of its dignity and power."³

In connection with the orders of the government despatching some regiments of the army to the Sudan, or be assigned to public works, al-Rāfi'ī blames 'Urābī for not obeying the orders. He says: 'Urābī

1. Ibid., pp.72-81.

2. Ibid., p.21.

3. Ibid., p.91.

and his colleagues went beyond bounds in their contempt of any order issued by the government, to the point that they exposed the interests of the country to danger."¹

According to al-Rāfi'ī the revolution began to make mistakes from the time of the resignation of Sharīf Pāshā:

"The second stage of the revolution began and it is my opinion that the revolution began to meet with failure from the beginning of this stage. Its leaders were wrong in the removal of Sharīf Pāshā from rule, because he was more capable than the others in handling the problems and in failing conspiracies which were devised by English Colonial Policy."²

From this point onward, al-Rāfi'ī disagrees and criticizes many of the actions of the leaders of the revolution. I will take the most important events as evidence of this new and antagonistic position adopted by al-Rāfi'ī.

Concerning the Circassian conspiracy which occurred in April 1882 and created problems between the ministry of al-Bārūdī and Khedive Tawfīq on the penalty to be meted out to the conspirators, al-Rāfi'ī took side of the Khedive and blamed 'Urābī for rejecting the solution the Khedive offered, which was changing the sentence from exile to the Sudan to exile outside Egypt. He says:

"The 'Urabis should have accepted this change from the beginning without the need for creating the problem. It would have been much better for them - since they accepted the change in the end - not to create a war between themselves and the Khedive."³

¹. Ibid., p.113.

². Ibid., p.23.

³. Ibid., p.247.

France and England tried to use the differences between the Khedive and the ministry of the Circassian conspiracy, sending a note in May 1882, asking for the departation of 'Urābī temporarily, the sending of 'Ā lī Fahmī and 'Abd al-'Āl Ḥilmī somewhere else inside Egypt and the resignation of al-Bārūdī's ministry. Al-Rāfi'ī very clearly favoured the idea of the departa-
tion of 'Urābī for he says:

"If 'Urābī had accepted these suggestions and left the country, it would have been a sacrifice from him for the sake of keeping away foreign military interference, and at least he would have left the country in better condition and more honourably than the time he left it after the defeat of al-Tall al-Kabīr."¹

Al-Rāfi'ī also considers the intention of the 'Urābis to overthrow the Khedive as a reckless and thoughtless idea.²

In discussing the war with Britain and the reasons behind the failure of the Egyptian army, one can see clearly the real attitude of al-Rāfi'ī in regard to the 'Urābī revolution. He divides these reasons into two major ones the internal and the external reasons. As for the internal reasons, they can be summarized as follows:

1. The split which occurred between the 'Urābis and Khedive Tawfīq weakened the internal front and gave the opportunity for the British to use it to serve their own colonial interests. For this reason al-Rāfi'ī blames both parties for the occupation of Egypt.

1. Ibid., p.249.

2. Ibid., p.247.

2. The second, although of lesser importance for al-Rāfi'ī, was "the effect of the leadership" on the course of the revolution. He claims that the leadership of the revolution was neither efficient nor loyal in both political and military spheres.
3. A related cause was the lack of heroism and insufficient sacrifices on the part of the leaders of the revolution.

He claims that:

"The leaders did not fulfill their obligations in times of danger and preferred to yield and surrender rather than to resist and fight. Their moral defeat was more significant and harmful than the military defeat on the battle field."¹

4. The policy of Khedive Tawfīq which was weak and indecisive. Not only did he not believe in the right of the people to have a constitution, but in addition he took refuge with the British.
5. The position of the Khedive in regard to the revolution affected negatively a number of offices, notables and bedouins, who betrayed the revolution.²

There are three main reasons which al-Rāfi'ī considers as the external causes for the failure of the 'Urābī revolution:

1. The desire of the European colonial powers, especially Britain, to dominate Egypt.
2. The passivity of Europe towards the British attack on Egypt. In addition to the malign intentions of Turkey towards Egypt from the beginning of the revolution - especially when they announced the declaration of disobedience of 'Urābī.

1. Ibid., p.483.

2. Ibid., pp.474-484.

3. The weakness of French policy in regard to the Egyptian question, by leaving Britain to interfere alone in the affairs of the country.¹

Although al-Rāfi'ī considers that both the external and internal reasons had resulted in the failure of the revolution, he places more emphasis on the internal ones.

This same attitude of al-Rāfi'ī in regard to the leaders of the revolution can be seen when he talks about the personalities and subsequent trial of its leaders. Although al-Rāfi'ī admits that 'Urābī had an attractive personality which influenced people, at the same time he describes him as an inefficient military and political leader with limited intelligence and little education. Al-Rāfi'ī also says that 'Urābī was self-deluded and that he looked to his own personal ambitions.² Al-Rāfi'ī ends his case against 'Urābī by saying: "The personality of 'Urābī did not help towards the success of the revolution. It had weak and deficient aspects that made it one of the most important factors in its failure."³

B. The Origins of al-Rāfi'ī's Thought

In order to understand this slanted attitude of al-Rāfi'ī in regard to the 'Urābī revolution, it is necessary to discuss the origins of such an attitude in the thought of Muṣṭafa Kāmil and the National Party. Al-Rāfi'ī was a very devoted member of the National Party, which was established by Muṣṭafa Kāmil in 1907,

1. Ibid., pp.484-485.

2. Ibid., pp.447-450.

3. Ibid., p.452.

headed by him until his death in 1908, when he was succeeded by Muḥammad Farīd. Al-Rāfiʿī was very much influenced by both these leaders, and his interest is reflected in the books he wrote on each of them. To him, they were exemplars whose model he tried to follow throughout his entire life. He dedicated his book, "Muṣṭafa Kāmil" to the subject himself, saying:

"For the one whose life was a national resurrection of this nation, the one who was my spiritual father. I will stay a loyal disciple of his, the one who taught me that life without high ideals is a short-lived demonstration and a wasted game. I dedicate the book Muṣṭafa Kāmil to Muṣṭafa Kāmil, a dedication of loyalty to his great spirit."¹

If we compare the ideas of Muṣṭafa Kāmil in regard to the Egyptian national cause and the ʿUrābī revolution with those of al-Rāfiʿī, some change can be noticed mainly due to the change of time and circumstances. Muṣṭafa Kāmil called for the unity of all forces in order to face Britain. He considered that the main reason behind the weakness of the internal front was the struggle between the Khedive, the Circassians, the Ottoman government and the nationalists, and that they were deceived by British policy which worked for their separation. He says:

"If these had not been the split between the ʿUrābī and the Circassians, then the ʿUrābī episode would not have occurred. If these had not been a split between the ʿUrābī faction and the late Tawfīq Pasha, then the events would not have grown out of proportion, nor would Britain have intended in the affair. If these had not been a split between His Majesty the Sultan and the former Khedive, then the High Porte would not have put its trust in Britain and would not have encouraged the ʿUrābī faction, nor

1. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Rāfiʿī, Muṣṭafa Kāmil, 5th ed., Cairo, 1984, p.8.

would the late Tawfīq Pāshā have asked Britain for protection. In summary, if there had not been that split, then the British would not have occupied our beloved Egypt."¹

In discussing the events of the 'Urābī revolution Muṣṭafa Kāmil commented that it was sufficient for the National Party to establish an Egyptian Chamber of Deputies,² whilst the 'Urābists wished to extend its power and discuss the budget. In other words, he supported Sharīf Pāshā's position, when the latter accepted the demand of the European powers not to discuss the budget in the Chamber of Deputies. The inference is that 'Urābī and his supporters were wrong in insisting on their right to discuss the budget.

In connection with the revolution in the Sudan and the unity of the Nile Valley, Muṣṭafa Kāmil considered this revolution as an insurrectionist movement, which emerged at the time of the 'Urābī revolution. When circumstances in Egypt helped them to rebel, their action in doing so accorded with the desire of British policy for the separation of the Sudan from Egypt.³

In regard to 'Urābī's actions, Muṣṭafa Kāmil blames 'Urābī for his refusal to leave the country when the European countries demanded that he should do so, as a solution for the problem created by the Circassian conspiracy.⁴

1. Muṣṭafa Kāmil, al-Mas'ala al-Sharqiya, 2nd. ed., part 2, Cairo, 1909, pp.113-114.

2. Ibid., p.66.

3. Ibid., p.24.

4. Ibid., pp.70-71.

He also takes up the statement made by 'Urābī at the time of the British occupation of Cairo that there was no occasion to fear for the safety of the populace, since the British were humanitarian and moderate in their policies. Muṣṭafa Kāmil expresses his astonishment in regard to this statement of 'Urābī and in the trust he showed towards Britain inspite of their bombardment of Alexandria.¹ Inspite of his criticisms of 'Urābī's behaviour, Muṣṭafa Kāmil denies the accusation that 'Urābī was a traitor. He says: "The man had good intentions and the utmost blame that can be put on him is that he was very rash and was deceived a great deal."²

Muṣṭafa Kāmil took up his criticism of 'Urābī once again when the latter was allowed to return from exile. In a series of articles in the newspaper "al-Liwā'" beginning on June 2, 1901 he lists the mistakes of 'Urābī which he had mentioned in his book, "al Mas'alah al-Sharqiyah", adding to his old mistakes a new one which was his return to Egypt.³ In another article in al-Liwā' written after 'Urābī's arrival, Muṣṭafa Kāmil attacked him even more violently than ever, when he discribed him as an ignorant taitor in a violent denunciation, He says:

" ill-omened arrival, (shame) is your medal, so walk with it in the streets of the cities and villages so that the young may read the lesson and see the example of ignorance, foolishness and treason."⁴

1. Ibid., p.107.

2. Ibid., p.112.

3. Ṣalāḥ 'Issa, "al-Ṣirā' Bayn Muṣṭafa Kāmil wa Aḥmad 'Urābī". Āfāq Arabiya, Baghdad, March, 1977, pp.12-15.

4. Ibid., p.18. quoted from al-Liwā' newspaper on 16-6-1901.

This is not the place here to discuss in detail the reasons behind this attitude of Muṣṭafa Kāmil. What is very clear, however, is that the return of ʿUrābī from exile had put Muṣṭafa Kāmil in a critical position since it resurrected sensitive episodes in his own past. His own political stance in regard to the relationship with the Khedive and the Ottoman government were different from those of ʿUrābī - at least during the ʿUrābī revolution. Muṣṭafa Kāmil believed in the unity of all powers, including the Ottoman government, against the British occupation of Egypt and even considered the Circassians as Egyptians.¹ Meanwhile, ʿUrābī's domestic enemies during the revolution were the very same people whom Muṣṭafa Kāmil was trying to unite against the British.

Muṣṭafa Kāmil's contention that Egypt should remain under Ottoman suzerainty has generated a considerable debate among historians. Al-Rāfiʿī, supported by other writers like Muḥammad Imāra, consider Muṣṭafa Kāmil's position in regard to the Ottoman state as just a matter of political tactics and that Muṣṭafa Kāmil was totally averse to Egypt staying under Ottoman sovereignty.² The explanation given is that it would be difficult to attain the two goals at one time the eviction of the British and getting rid of Ottoman sovereignty.³ On the other hand, other writers are of

1. Muṣṭafa Kāmil, op.cit., p.50.

2. Muḥammad ʿUmara, "Muṣṭafa Kāmil wa'l Jāmiʿa al-Islāmīya," al-Majalla al-Tarīkhīya al-Miṣrīya, Cairo, 1976, p.120.

3. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Rāfiʿī, Muṣṭafa Kāmil, pp.358-360.

the opinion that Muṣṭafa Kāmil was deeply committed to Islamic unity and that it was this and not a digital political advantage taking which lay behind his attitude, to the extent that he called for the recruitment of Egyptians into the Turkish army.¹

Muṣṭafa Kāmil was afraid that the return of ʿUrābī would ruin what he was trying to establish, or that he might revive the old National Party at a time when Muṣṭafa Kāmil considered all the people constituted a national party. It is significant that he did not establish a real national party until 1907.

In general, the return of ʿUrābī had created political tensions between the different parties at that time and they used him for their own political goals - either by defending him or attacking him. The only recorded response of ʿUrābī to these attacks by Muṣṭafa Kāmil was contained in his autobiography, where he stigmatises Muṣṭafa Kāmil's father as a being a mere soldier under his command when he was the Minister of War. This section was not included in the published texts.²

There can be no doubt that these political convictions of Muṣṭafa Kāmil were reflected in the attitudes and policies of the National Party for several decades. Al-Rāfiʿī, as one of the leaders of the National Party, worked to achieve the goals of the party in

1. Muḥammad al-Surjī, "al-Fikr al-Siyāsī l-Muṣṭafa Kāmil", al-Majalla al-Tārīkhīya al-Miṣrīya, Cairo, 1976, p.53.

2. Ṣalāh ʿIssā, al-Ṣiraʿ Bayn Muṣṭafa Kāmil wa Aḥmad ʿUrābī, pp.33-35.

Egyptian politics for some forty years and this explains his opposition to successive Wafd ministries and to the other Egyptian parties that existed in the first half of the twentieth century. It is not unfair to hypothesize that these convictions affected his work as a historian and that his book on the 'Urābī revolution, in particular, was very much influenced by his personal convictions.

C. A Critique To al-Rāfi'ī's Analysis of the 'Urābī Revolution

a. Riyāḍ's Ministry

In order to better understand and be able to appraise the ideas and attitudes of al-Rāfi'ī in regard to the 'Urābī revolution, I have found it appropriate to analyse his position on the basis of the successive ministries that came to power during the period which he discusses in his book.

In discussing the situation in Egypt during Riyāḍ's ministry, which began in September 1879, al-Rāfi'ī indicates his rejection of the way that Riyāḍ acted. He believes that this ministry, with the help of the Khedive, opened the way for more European control of the country. Al-Rāfi'ī, as a nationalist writer, believed that any European interference in the country's affairs would lead to more and more of a dependency on foreign powers and would retard the development of the country. It was on these bases that al-Rāfi'ī criticized Riyāḍ Pāshā and the Khedive Tawfīq. As he puts it:

"The Khedive chose Riyāḍ Pāshā due to the fact that he agreed with him in favouring authoritarian rule and the desire (not to establish) a constitutional system and submissiveness to

foreign interference. In this respect he was well regarded in foreign circles."¹

From the previous quotation it is clear that al-Rāfi'ī rejected the partiality shown by Riyāḍ Pāshā and the Khedive towards foreign interference. Al-Rāfi'ī was also a strong supporter of the constitutional system of government. Both of these were deeply held convictions to which al-Rāfi'ī adhered all life.

At the same time that he criticized Riyāḍ Pāshā, however, he also acknowledges his achievements in other areas, such as in the abolishing of the corvee labour, the fair distribution of water to the people, the abolishing of thirty kinds of taxes and many other achievements.² He continues:

"From an administrative standpoint Riyāḍ Pāshā was an excellent ruler and, in truth, he had considerable qualities in this field. He was decisive and strong-minded and possessed a singular character and an iron-will. There were also additional qualities: his integrity, diligence, and impeniousness to bribery".³

Here al-Rāfi'ī seems to be contradicting himself, for how can a ruler who accepts foreign power domination over the affairs of his country, be at the same time, an excellent administrator and a decent and just ruler? The two would seem to be irreconcilable.

Al-Rāfi'ī sees European interference as permeating the Riyāḍ ministry's economic policy, which accepted the dicta of the dual British/French supervision under which the financial affairs of Egypt

1. Al-Rāfi'ī, al-Thawrat al-'Urābīya, p.48.

2. Ibid., pp.64-68.

3. Ibid., p.49.

had been placed.¹ Other economic decisions of the government such as selling all the Egyptian shares in the Suez Canal to the French government, the abolishing of the exchange law and issuing of the settlement law, were not in the interests of the Egyptian people and helped, according to al-Rāfi'ī, to bring about more control by the European powers of the affairs of the country.²

In spite of the fact that al-Rāfi'ī discusses the economic situation during Riyād's ministry, he fails to explain how the laws enacted affected the normal Egyptian peasant. The point calls for much more explanation than al-Rāfi'ī has given it. This question of the Egyptian peasant was one which exercised contemporary British commentators who affirmed that the revenues of the country had increased and that the economic situation of the Egyptian peasant was better after the dual supervision and the settlement law than it had been before. Rothstein has cited these reports and demonstrated their tendentiousness, quoting from The Times report of August 1881, saying that the peasant had more debts than at any other time and that the agricultural land was passing to the Europeans.³ Although the revenues had increased they went to the servicing of the debts and the people did not benefit. On the contrary, public works decreased considerably and education almost came to an end. Bribery and usury increased and the money registered in the mortgage list increased between 1876 to 1882 from five hundred thousand pounds to seven million pounds, five million of them to the

1. Ibid., p.50.

2. Ibid., pp.51-63.

3. Rothstein, Op.cit., pp.92-95.

peasant, in addition to three million pounds they owed to the village creditors.¹

In his discussions as to the reasons behind the revolution, al-Rāfi'ī gives more importance to what he called the direct reasons, in which individuals like 'Urābī, Khedive Tawfīq or Riyāḍ Pāshā were very prominent. No one can deny that these individuals influenced the course of the revolution, but they were a part of the total circumstances that resulted not only from Egyptian, but world political and economic factors. The special reasons al-Rāfi'ī talked about were enmeshed with the general reasons - the political, economical and social - and it is difficult to draw a line separating them. His approach seems to be both naive and over simplistic.

In his discussion on the general reasons for the revolution al-Rāfi'ī shows his support for the people and their right to revolt because of the intolerable economic and social circumstances they existed under. He mentions the motive behind each class of Egyptian society prompting them to revolt. However, here again he is far from being precise or detailed in his analysis - although there are points which require both detailed treatment and analysis. How else can one begin to understand why the representatives of these classes betrayed the revolution?

It is true to say that different classes of Egyptian society took part in the revolution, motivated by their own particular reasons. Sometimes they had different and even contradictory aims. But at a certain point they all worked to achieve one goal - which was to destroy

¹. Ibid., pp.94-95.

European power in Egypt and to secure control over their own country. The question that should be asked, and which al-Rāfi'ī neglected, is why did each class and social group join the revolution? The revolution was not just a matter of an uprising without any premonitory indications. Every class in society faced its own problems and it were these which prompted them to join.

Beginning with the Army, al-Rāfi'ī explained the discrimination the Egyptian elements faced in the army during Riyād's ministry. However, there was much more to it than this. The problem began much earlier, indeed from the time when Muḥammad 'Alī conscripted Egyptians into the army. He did that for the purpose of building a strong and large dynastic state. As time went on, the army became more and more an Egyptian institution. However, Egyptians resented the fact that they were appointed only to the lowest positions.

"Muḥammad 'Alī continued to conduct his government and administration in Turkish language and to appoint to high civilian administrative and military command positions only those among his Albanians and Turks who were most loyal to him as well as white Mamluk slaves. The Arabised natives were not favoured for such positions."¹

Not until Khedive Sa'īd came to power was it allowable for Egyptian officers to be promoted to higher ranks.² But with Khedive Ismā'īl the Circassian element regained its control over the army and began to oppress the Egyptian soldiers.³ They were also honoured after the war in Abyssinia in spite of their defeat.⁴

1. P.J. Vatikiotis, The Modern History of Egypt, 2nd. ed., Baltimore 1980, p.67.

2. Aḥmad 'Urābī, Kashf al-Sitār 'an Sir al-Asrār, p.47.

3. Latīfah Salem, al-Quwa al-Igtimā'īya fi 'l Thawrat al-'Urābīya, Cairo, 1981, p.101.

4. Ibid., p.103.

This situation resulted in the establishment of a secret association by some Egyptian officers in 1872, which was called Miṣr al-Fatā, in which ʿUrābī was one of the members and in one course he became its leader. Later on, non-military intellectuals joined the association.¹ The first attempt by the Egyptian officers to show their rejection of the way they were treated was in February 1879, when 2500 officers revolted against the decision taken by Nubar's ministry to dismiss them.² In July 1879 the officers submitted a petition demanding the dismissal of the Minister of War.³ Other petitions were submitted by the Egyptian officers on several occasions for the purpose of improving their conditions and against the discrimination they were facing. All this was a preface for what happened later on when all the army stood at the side of ʿUrābī in his revolt.

Al-Rāfiʿī has mentioned much of the information I have referred to above in his other works, such as, ʿAṣr Muḥammad ʿAlī and ʿAṣr Ismāʿīl, but in a scattered state. He does not bring them together in his book al-Thawrat al-ʿUrābīya where reference to it would have been apposite. His failure to provide information on the situation in the army - a vital factor in bringing about the revolt - makes the immediate reason which he mentions (the behaviour and discrimination of the Minister of War Rifqī Pāshā) an insufficient cause for the revolt itself. In fact, the anger in the army which culminated in the revolt was an accumulation of several decades of bad treatment, discrimination, low salaries...etc.

1. Ibid., p.104.

2. Ṣalāḥ ʿIssā, al-Thawrat al-ʿUrābīya, p.114.

3. Laṭīfah Salem, Op.cit., pp.112-113.

It is a methodological weakness of al-Rāfi'ī in his writings that he tends to structure the presentation of events on a strictly temporal basis, without going back to the past in search of the seeds from which they grew. In the following chapter, I propose to discuss this point in more detail and explain what made him write Egyptian history in this fashion.

The same criticisms can be levelled against him when dealing with the response of the intellectuals. Indeed, the basic question needing to be asked - and which al-Rāfi'ī neither poses nor answers - is, how this group was constituted and how identified? From our vantage point in time we can hypothesize that a new social group came into being as the result of the new schools and the missions program of Muḥammad 'Alī earlier in the century. Although their number was small (around 300) we have enough biographical material in Tūsūn, 'Alī Mubārak, Amīn Sāmī and al-Waqā'i' al-Miṣrīya to attempt some assessment of their role in intellectual life and in government. They constituted both a new technocracy and beurocracy and their new-found professional pride would have bridled against the restrictions being placed on their own advancement. There can be no doubt that the higher positions were occupied by European officials.¹ When Riyād Pāshā established, in March 1881, the High Council for Cultural Affairs, most of its members were Europeans.²

Al-Rāfi'ī's reference to this intellectual group is, as previously suggested, lacking in specificity and once again we find him guilty of making easy generalizations unsupported by analysis or factual backing.

1. Rothstein, Op.cit., pp.95-96.

2. Al-Rāfi'ī, al-Thawrat al-'Urābīya, pp.66-67.

An appraisal of the reactions and social aspirations of this class is essential to the understanding of the part they played in the revolution. If we add to all this the influence of Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī on many of the Egyptian intellectuals by his rejection of all sorts of European control over eastern peoples, we can see why many of them joined the revolution.

Both Khedive Ismā'īl and afterwards Khedive Tawfīq were conscious of the danger this alliance of al-Afghānī and the intellectuals posed. The latter, after coming to power, ordered the banishment of Jāmāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī, on the grounds that he was creating political agitation and heresy. The Khedive also sent back Muḥammad 'Abduh to his native village Buhayra.¹ The other disciples of al-Afghānī attracted the hostility of the authorities because of the propagation of their views in contemporary newspapers and the formation of new ones. Riyād Pāshā responded to their rejection of European interference and their support for a constitution by prohibiting or warning several of their newspapers.²

As in the case of the army and the intellectuals al-Rāfi'ī gives only the immediate reasons for the class of landowners joining the Egyptian army in their revolution. Although other information about the landowners is given when al-Rāfi'ī discusses the general reasons for the revolution, this information does not throw light on the real reasons for this class joining the revolution. As was the case in the genesis of a new class of intellectuals, it is important to know how

1. Alexander Scholch, Egypt for the Egyptians!, London, 1981, pp.106-107.

2. Ibid., pp.108-111. Such as Mir'āt al-Sharq, al-Tijāra, Miṣr, al-Iskandarīya, al-Maḥrūsa.

this class was established and developed in order to be able to understand its motives, aims and nascent policies.

In 1809 Muḥammad ʿAlī had established the Iltizam and a new system in the relations between the state and the peasants was inaugurated. In 1818 he distributed the land to his relatives, high officials and military men, the village Shaykhs and to the peasants; but it remained under his control, whereby he prohibited the sale of land and its inheritance.¹ But in 1846 new rules were issued in which private property was affirmed and in 1858 Khedive Saʿīd issued more laws by which the owner of the land had the right to sell his land or to use it in any way he preferred. However, should any peasant leave his land for more than five years he would not be able to use it any more.² By this legislation a number of Egyptians, especially the village Shaikhs and ʿUmdas, became owners of large areas of land and a new class of landowners was created.

In 1871, during Ismāʿīl's rule, the Muqābala law was issued according to which those benefiting from the land had to pay six times the taxes they used to pay in one year and in return they would be given full ownership of the land; they would be exempt, also, from paying half of their taxes in perpetuo.³ This law affirmed, more and more, the principle of private property. Of course, Ismāʿīl issued this law in order to collect a large amount of money to pay his debts. Whatever desperate measures Ismāʿīl undertook after this - such as the issue of a compulsory internal loan of five million pounds

1. Ibrāhīm ʿAmir, al-Ard wa'l Fallāh, Cairo, 1958, pp.78-79.

2. Ibid., pp.83-84.

3. Ibid., pp.86-87.

(Ruznāma) in 1874 or; in 1875 the sale of his Suez Canal shares to England for four million pounds - they constituted mere drops in the ocean. Egypt was moving irresistibly towards the day when it would have to declare itself bankrupt.¹ But the creditors were still not satisfied with this, so they intervened more and more in the internal affairs of Egypt. In 1876, the Dual Control and Mixed Courts were established and Egypt was subjected to a veiled European colonial rule. The land tax of the May 1878 Coupon had to be collected in advance for a whole year.² More taxes were forced on the land until the price of a feddan dropped from sixty pounds to twenty eight pounds. At the same time, Europeans were exempt from paying taxes and invested their capital in agriculture.³ The village Shaikhs and ʿUmdas came to Cairo to indicate their rejection of the increase in taxes and many were put in prison because of their refusal to pay the taxes.⁴ The European interference in the financial affairs of Egypt and their policies for "reconstructing" its economy resulted in a great loss for the Egyptian landowners (Shaykhs and ʿUmdas) and to a lesser extent to the Turkish aristocracy.

In January 1881, the Muqābala law was abolished, which meant that the landowners and peasants who had paid nearly 23 million⁵ pounds could

1. Alexander Scholch, Op.cit., p.47.

2. Ibid., p.48.

3. Laṭīfah Sālem, Op.cit., pp.130-131.

4. Ibid., pp.144-145.

5. Ṣalāḥ ʿIssa, al-Thawrat al-ʿUrābīya, p.123.

not regain their money and would not be exempted from half of the land tax.

The Egyptian landowners were much more affected than the Turko-Circassian landowners, due to the increase of taxes on the Kharāj land - which was mainly owned by Egyptians - but a lesser increase was put on the Ushrīya land which was owned mainly by the Turko-Circassians. The latter were mainly harmed by the abolishment of Corvee labour - although not totally abolished - because they depended on cheap labour. By 1881, the tax on the Kharāj land became 125 piasters and 52 piasters on the Ushrīya land.¹

It was for the reasons outlined above that the class of landowners joined the revolution. Their first attempt to take a stand against European interference was during Ismā'īl's reign when they called for the dismissal of the two European ministers and the establishing of a national ministry and a Chamber of Deputies that would have full freedom in all financial and interior affairs.²

They joined, later, in the other moves against the government, which will be discussed subsequently. These landowners organized themselves by means of the establishment of a secret party in Hulwān, called the National Party. The most important figures of this party were Muḥammad Sulṭān and Sharīf Pāshā who were to play major roles in the revolution. This party published, in November 1879, a leaflet which announced that the party would work to save Egypt from foreign exploitation.³ The unity that was generated between the Egyptian landowners,

1. Rif'at al-Sa'īd, al-Asās al-Ijtimā'ī li'l Thawrat al-'Urābīya, Cairo, 1966, p.61.

2. Ṣalāḥ 'Issa, al-Thawrat al-'Urābīya, p.327.

3. Muḥammad Anīs, "al-Ḥaraka al-Waṭanīya fī Muwājahat al-Istīmār al-'Urūbī", al-Kātib, March 1966, p.17.

the village shaykhs, supported by the intellectuals, and the army in addition to some Turkish constitutionalists such as Sharīf Pāshā succeeded in forcing the fall of the two European ministries and the establishing of their own ministry, headed by Sharīf Pāshā. On the economic level they suggested the establishment of a National Bank in order to control the financial affairs of Egypt.¹ But the Europeans were too strong. Khedive Ismā'īl was deposed and the Chamber of Deputies - which consisted mainly of the representatives of the Egyptian landowners - was suspended. Riyāḍ Pāshā headed the new ministry and the same policy of European interference continued.

This background is very important in order to understand why the landowners rejected European interference and it explains also how they reacted when the 'Urābī revolution occurred. They could not readily submit to the idea of losing their power, after all the years of effort in order to affirm that the land was their land and that they would not allow any one to take it from them. They worked for unity with all groups so as to increase and affirm their power and not decrease it. The Chamber of Deputies and the Constitution were their way to power and a means of limiting the control of the Khedive and the Europeans.

As I have suggested earlier, al-Rāfi'ī failed to explain the effect of economic policy during Riyāḍ Pāshā's ministry on the ordinary Egyptian peasant. In the following pages I propose to discuss the conditions of the Egyptian peasant during the few decades before the 'Urābī revolution in order to achieve a deeper understanding of the motives of the peasants in joining that revolution.

1. Laṭīfah Sālim, Op.cit., p.135.

Al-Rāfi'ī has noted that the peasants were in a very bad circumstances but he does not elaborate or discuss their situation. This is a shortcoming in his book on the 'Urābī Revolution.

The Egyptian peasants suffered greater harm than any other class of Egyptian society from the Europeans in particular and foreigners in general. They were even exploited by their fellow Egyptians, the Shaykhs and 'Umdas.

When Muḥammad 'Alī distributed the agricultural land he gave the ordinary peasants from three to five feddans to cultivate. But this land remained in his hands and he promulgated taxes which were very difficult for the peasants to pay.¹

Corvee Labour was practiced a great deal at the time and continued during the reign of 'Abbās, Sa'īd and Ismā'īl. It is amazing to note the sheer volume of work that was done by the peasants in twelve years (1863 to 1875) under Corvee Labour. They dug 112 canals, 8400 miles long, built 910 miles of railways and 5000 miles of telegraph wires. They built 430 bridges and 64 mills for sugar production, in addition to digging the Suez Canal.²

During the period of Ismā'īl, the government used to collect a total of 4.5 million pounds out of the taxes, which was not sufficient for paying the debts. When the European Minister of Finance arrived he increased the taxes and issued many new ones, such as the Irrigation Tax, the Stamp Tax, Defence Tax, Salt Tax, Personal Tax and others.³

1. Ibid., p.16.

2. Rif'at al-Sa'īd, Op.cit., pp.57-58.

3. Latīfah Sālim, Op.cit., pp.20-21.

Although landowners suffered from the increase in taxes, this could not be compared with what the peasants suffered. The big landowners were able to find a way to evade paying all the taxes by giving bribes to government officials, but the peasants, who had no money, were forced to pay.

The first European ministry also ordered the collection of the unpaid taxes for the years 1876-1877 and 1878 and if the peasants had no money to pay they should sell what they owned of land or cattle. The order was given also that force should be used to apply these measures.¹ On many occasions, the peasants were asked to pay the taxes in advance and not at the time of the harvest.²

This taxation policy of the government forced the peasants to take out loans and fall into debt; they thought that in this way their problems would be solved. What happened was that they were not able to pay back these loans; consequently they were tortured and brought to the courts and in the end they lost their land.³ On the other hand, the foreigners benefited from this policy and used their capital in making loans; they even opened banks to give loans to the peasants. At certain times the interest on loans reached as much as 400%.⁴ Not only foreigners were involved in giving loans to the peasants, but also the village Shaykhs and 'Umdas who gained much from this policy and enlarged their property.⁵

1. Ibid., pp.24-25.

2. Ibid., p.27.

3. Ibid., p.32.

4. Ibid., p.32.

5. Ibid., pp.32-36.

In courts, whether the Mixed Courts or the Local Courts, the peasants faced exploitation. In the Mixed Courts, they worked by European law which the Egyptian peasant had no idea about and most of the cases usually ended with the peasants losing their land.¹ This policy resulted in disaster for them. Most of the peasants did not own the land they cultivated and nine tenths of the land was owned by other classes of the society.² During Tawfīq's rule the situation became worse, to the extent that some village Shaykhs actually brought some peasants to the market in order to sell them.³

Other problems faced the peasants, such as the distribution of water. They used to pay considerable sums of money in order to get water, even in times of flood. The rich landowners built dams in order to stop the water from reaching the peasants' land, so that they were forced to pay them money in order to get it.⁴

In addition to all this, the Egyptian peasant faced the customary natural catastrophies such as diseases, floods and famine. In 1878, 10,000 persons died from famine.⁵ This is not to mention the amount of suffering the peasants faced due to conscription into the army.

The important question is how did the peasants respond to this whole situation before the 'Urābī Revolution? They were convinced that the courts would not give them their rights and they had no money to

1. Ibid., pp.37-40.

2. Rif'at al-Sa'īd, Op.cit., p.60.

3. Laṭīfah Sālim, Op.cit., p.31.

4. Ibid., pp.44-46.

5. Rif'at al-Sa'īd, Op.cit., p.65.

pay their debts. Accordingly, many peasants simply left their land and ran away. In 1855 the land which was left by the peasants in al-Daqahlīya and al-Sharqīya provinces alone amounted to around 46,866 feddans and it increased with time.¹ If we take into consideration the area of the piece of land each peasant used to own, we can assess the number of peasants who left their land in one year, in one part of the country only.

Not in all cases did the peasants run away. In the first few years of Ismā'īl's rule, Upper Egypt witnessed a number of disturbances to the extent that it became an armed revolt; which needed to be suppressed. Other disturbances took place in other parts of the country, such as Suhaj and Jirja, between 1877 and 1878 and in the north of the Delta in 1880.² Delegations of peasants used to come to Cairo to protest against the increase in taxes, but were faced by torture and imprisonment.³

These then were the causes which prompted the peasants to support the 'Urābī revolution which al-Rāfi'ī neglected to take into account in his book al-Thawrat al-'Urābīya.

The Egyptian merchants and craftsmen, as social groups, were also adversely affected by the control foreigners exercised over their country. Since the time of Muḥammed 'Alī and his economic policy of monopoly, these two groups had not had the chance to develop and establish themselves strongly. By the treaty of 1838 between Britain and the Ottomans,

1. Ibid., p.33

2. Laṭīfah Sālīm, Op.cit., pp.51-53.

3. Ibid., p.53.

the British had the privilege of trading all over the Ottoman lands - including Egypt - without any conditions.¹ This was the beginning of the European control of trade vis-a-vis Egypt.

Although trade and industry developed in later years (during the rule of Khedive Sa'īd and Ismā'īl) by the increase of cotton production - and the Egyptians took part in this development - the Europeans were much stronger in terms of capital backing and experience and their products were better in quality. The Europeans did not encounter any national competition, either in trade or in industry. Egyptians who had the economic capability to work in trade and industry, preferred to invest their money by buying more land, such as Ḥasan Mūsa al-'Aqqād.² This open market attracted more and more Europeans to invest their money. Their number increased from 3000 in 1836 to 68,000 in 1878. Ninety six percent of the capital of the trade and agricultural companies that were established during Ismā'īl's rule were European and the rest was divided between the Khedive and the Turks.³

The same preferential taxation policy and the privileges the Europeans enjoyed, which affected other classes and social groups, also affected the Egyptian merchants and craftsmen. Many kinds of taxes were introduced. They paid taxes when they sold or bought goods, on imports and exports. They even paid an entrance tax to Alexandria and other cities.⁴ Taxes increased with the increase in the spending of Khedive Ismā'īl. The amount which was collected from the merchants per year

1. Ibid., p.55.

2. Ṣalāḥ 'Issa, al-Thawrat al-'Urābīya, p.144.

3. Rif'at al-Sa'īd, Op.cit., pp.77-78.

4. Ibid., p.78.

was 430,000 pounds, which was an additional impediment for the Egyptian merchants who had to compete with European merchants who were exempted from these taxes.¹ In addition, the Europeans had one more important privilege, the European government officials, who held high positions, helped them in controlling Egyptian trade.

This led to a situation where the European merchants used to sell their goods at a cheaper price than those of the Egyptians and the result was the bankruptcy of the Egyptian merchants. The same thing applied to the Egyptian craftsmen who failed to compete with the Europeans who succeeded in taking over and monopolizing some crafts.² These social groups were ready to join the revolution when it would begin.

To sum up the discussion of al-Rāfi'ī's treatment of the 'Urābī revolution during Riyāḍ's ministry, al-Rāfi'ī comes out on the side of support for the revolution, but at the same time has a number of indications of disagreement at the way the leaders of the revolution acted. His presentation of the most important events of the revolution during the period from February to September 1881 and the information he mentions are quite enough to provide the reader with an understanding of what happened during the period. However, there are certain points which al-Rāfi'ī does not discuss and which are very important for a better understanding and deeper appraisal of the revolution and its causes.

The first of these is connected with 'Urābī himself. When reading al-Rāfi'ī's book al-Thawrat al-'Urābīya one has the impression that Aḥmad 'Urābī emerged suddenly as its leader, shortly before the Qasr

1. Ibid., p.78.

2. Laṭīfah Sālim, Op.cit., p.63.

al-Nīl incident. There is no preliminary inkling as to his participation in any revolutionary action against the Khedive or the government. On the contrary, al-Rāfi'ī affirms that Aḥmad 'Urābī was an ordinary man and that nothing in his past was in any way impressive.¹ But the question that should be asked is, how did the officers come to put their confidence in 'Urābī and appoint him as their leader before the Qasr al-Nīl event? Al-Rāfi'ī ignores the part of 'Urābī and the hatred that both he and the other fallah officers, to use Blunt's phrase, harboured towards the Circassian and Turkish officers who controlled the army.

According to Maḥmūd al-Khafīf, 'Urābī was renowned in the army for his hatred of this group and that he used to draw comparisons between the lot of the Circassians and the Egyptian officers in the army.² 'Urābī's good relations with Sa'īd, of which 'Urābī makes so much in his memoirs,³ stemmed from Sa'īd's concern over the welfare of the Egyptian officers. He gave the Egyptian soldiers the opportunity to achieve promotion up to the rank of colonel - a dispensation from which 'Urābī himself benefited.

The first clash between 'Urābī and the Circassians in the army occurred during Ismā'īl's rule and ended by 'Urābī's suspension for three years.⁴ During the whole of Ismā'īl's reign, 'Urābī was not promoted due to the Circassian conspiracies against him. In fact, he remained nineteen years without any promotion, during which other

1. Al-Rāfi'ī, al-Thawrat al-'Urābīya, p.85.

2. Maḥmūd al-Khafīf, Op.cit., p.7.

3. 'Urābī, Kashf al-Sitār, Vol.1, pp.12-18.

4. Maḥmūd al-Khafīf, Op.cit., pp.12-13.

officers who had been under his command were promoted.¹

During the Abyssinian expedition 'Urābī became more and more imbued with anger against his Circassian leadership for their ineffectuality and he accused the American General Loring, who was chief of staff of the expedition, of being a traitor.²

In February 1878 an attempt at revolt was carried out by the military officers. 'Urābī and two other officers - Nadī and 'Alī al-Rūbī - were accused of preparing this demonstration. They were brought before a military tribunal and were censured and detached from their regiments; 'Urābī was sent to Alexandria.³ Although 'Urābī denied this accusation, whatever the truth was 'Urābī was looked upon as an agitator who should be kept under strict supervision. 'Urābī himself confessed to Blunt his desire to depose the Khedive Ismā'īl, saying: "But before we separated we had a meeting at which I proposed that we should join together and depose Ismā'īl Pāshā."⁴ His comments on the deposal of Ismā'īl were even more forthright:

"The deposition of Ismā'īl lifted a heavy load from our shoulders and all the world rejoiced, but it would have been better if we had done it ourselves as we could then have got rid of the whole family of Moḥammad 'Alī, who were none of them, except Said, fit to rule and we could have proclaimed a republic."⁵

1. Aḥmad 'Urābī, Kashf al Sitār, Vol.1, p.49.

2. Ibid., pp.38-43.

3. Mahmūd al-Khafīf, Op.cit., p.16.

4. Wilfrid Blunt, Op.cit., p.369.

5. Ibid., p.369.

In his book "The Secret History of the English Occupation of Egypt", Blunt states that 'Urābī was one of the officers who took part in the events of the 20th of May, 1880:

"There were questions too of pay with held which called for redress, and on the 20th of May, 1880, a first petition was sent in by the fellah officers, of whom Arabi was one, setting forth their grievances".¹

All the above events and the information relating to them indicate that 'Urābī participated in one way or another in the different movements against the government that took place before the major revolution in 1881. This participation brought 'Urābī to the position where he emerged as the natural leader of the revolt.

The second and important point which al-Rāfi'ī does not mention is connected with the relation between 'Urābī and his military comrades on one side and the other classes and social groups of Egyptian society (peasants, Turo-Circassian landowners, Egyptian notables, intellectuals) on the other. Al-Rāfi'ī is very sketchy concerning the events of the seven months period between the Qasr al-Nīl and 'Abdīn incidents. He mentions that all classes among the Egyptian people had supported 'Urābī after Qasr al-Nīl and that 'Urābī continued with the revolution when he was confident that the nation would support his cause.² But nothing is mentioned about how this support was elicited and translated into practical action and much more needs to be said on this issue.

All writers on the subject affirm that without the support of the people 'Urābī would not have been able to succeed in his revolt. Between

1. Ibid., p.102.

2. Al-Rāfi'ī, al-Thawrat al-'Urābīya, p.120.

February and September 1881 a number of meetings between the army officers and landowners took place to prepare for the next move.

Muḥammad ʿAbduh in his statement to Blunt confirms this:

"The seven months between the affair of Kasr al-Nīl and the demonstration of September were months of great political activity, which pervaded all classes. Arabi's action gained him much popularity and put him into communication with the civilian members of the National party, such as Sultan Pasha, Suliman Abaza, Hassain Sherei and myself, and it was we who put forward the idea of renewing the demand for a Constitution".¹

In his report to his lawyer Broadley, later, ʿUrābī affirms on the relation between him and the notables, saying:

"With this malaise became widespread among the upper classes of the Egyptian people, those who are our brothers, the heads of our families, gathered in Cairo. They decided that the only way to restore hope and confidence was to create a Chamber of Deputies".²

In another letter from ʿUrābī to his lawyer Broadley he says; "As for Sulṭān Pāshā, at his place the officers used to meet secretly before the ʿAbdīn incident to find a way to get rid of Riyāḍ."³ And he continues:

"He (Sulṭān Pāshā) used to help the officers with all his strength and he it was who called for some notables to unite with him in demanding the establishment of a Chamber of Deputies according to the wish of the officers".⁴

From the beginning, the landowners tried to use the victory of ʿUrābī in the Qasr al-Nīl incident for their own purposes. They

1. Wilfred Blunt, *Op.cit.*, p.376.

2. Aḥmad ʿUrābī, *The Defense Statement of Ahmad Urabi the Egyptian*, translated and edited by Trevor Le Gassick, Cairo, 1982, p.23.

3. Laṭīfah Sālim, *Op.cit.*, p.165.

4. *Ibid.*, p.165.

presumably thought that it would perhaps be possible to advance behind the shield of the army into the centre of political power. Sharīf Pāshā wanted to replace Riyāḍ as Prime Minister and Sulṭān Pāshā, the rich Egyptian landowner, looked to a high position in the government. All this could not be achieved without making common cause with the army. For his part, ʿUrābī was looking for support at that time, since he did not feel safe. The Khedive and the government were trying desperately to get rid of him. In addition to the actual conspiracies against the nationalist officers, which numbered according to ʿUrābī thirteen,¹ Khedive Tawfīq frequently affirmed his intention to get rid of them. As early as February 2, 1881, Tawfīq informed the German Consul-General that he would remove the rebels from the army, slowly and unobtrusively.² In June 1881, the Khedive told Cookson, the British plenipotentiary, that he was only waiting for an opportunity to make an example of one of the colonels.³

ʿUrābī also made contacts with other groups of the Egyptian society. According to Muḥammad ʿAbduh he made contacts with the religious Shaykhs⁴ in order to obtain their support in any future action.

Many leaflets were distributed to the army in order to obtain their support. Other leaflets against the government and calling for its downfall were distributed to the people throughout the country, especially the one which urged them to appoint ʿUrābī as their representative.⁵

1. Aḥmad ʿUrābī, Kaṣṣf al-Sitār, Vol.1, pp.221-228.

2. Alexander Scholch, Op.cit., p.150.

3. Ibid., p.151.

4. Muḥammad ʿAbduh, Op.cit., p.545.

5. Laṭīfah Sālim, Op.cit., p.167.

This leaflet called for the downfall of Riyāḍ's ministry and the establishment of a Chamber of Deputies and called on the people to put their confidence in the army.¹ The person who played a vital role in collecting the signatures of the Egyptian notables and Shaykhs was ʿAbdallah al-Nadīm who travelled all over Egypt calling on the people to support the army. Al-Nadīm returned to Cairo carrying petitions signed by the people appointing Urabi as their representative.²

During the same period and subsequent to the Qasr al-Nīl incident people all over the country came to ʿUrābī's house carrying gifts and showing their support and at the same time complaining of their distressed circumstances.³ If we add to all this the support ʿUrābī got from the intellectuals through the press we can see clearly that ʿUrābī's success was due to the support he elicited from all classes and social groups of the society. Blunt's comment is not an exaggeration when he describes him as "being talked of through the length and breadth of Egypt as "El Wahīd," the only one."⁴ The demands of the revolution at the time of the ʿAbdīn incident (that is, the dismissal of Riyāḍ Pāshā; the establishment of a Chamber of Deputies; the increase of the army to 18,000.) were not simply the demands of the officers, but the demands of all the people. ʿUrābī himself maintained at ʿAbdīn, that the army had come as a representative of the entire Egyptian people and withdrew only after promising that the

1. Salīm al-Naqqāsh, Miṣr li' l-Miṣriyīn, Vol.4, Cairo, 1884, p.90.

2. ʿAbd al-Munʿim al-Jimīʿī, ʿAbdallah al-Nadīm, Cairo, 1980, pp.70-71.

3. Maḥmud al-Khafīf, Op.cit., pp.49-52.

4. Blunt, Op.cit., p.169.

demands would be met.¹ If we compare these demands with those relating to the Qasr al-Nīl incident, seven months earlier, we can see the difference in substance between the two sets of demands. At Qasr al-Nīl, the demands were related to the army but at ʿAbdīn more general demands were added.

Al-Rāfiʿī accuses ʿUrābī of having, behind the demand for the establishing of a Chamber of Deputies, a primary concern with his own and his friends safety.² Even if ʿUrābī had this intention in mind, it is difficult to see how he would have been able to impose it. ʿUrābī as a person was not alone able to fashion what all the classes of the society wanted. Besides, at that time these demands were a shared common denominator between all social groups in the country, not excluding even the ladies of the court.³ ʿUrābī was a part of a whole movement. Al-Rāfiʿī's negative attitude in regard to ʿUrābī is clear even during his account of the first stage of the revolution, which he supports. Throughout his treatment of this stage of the revolution al-Rāfiʿī insidiously raises doubts as to whether the conspiracies against the army officers were real or imaginery.

b. Sharīf's Ministry

In the ʿAbdīn barracks, on September 9, 1881, the army accepted Sharīf Pāshā as head of the new government. Al-Rāfiʿī considers this new government as the best and most suitable leadership for rescuing the country from all its problems. He defends the different political positions of Sharīf, to the extent that he ignores a number of

1. ʿUrābī, Kashf al-Sitār, Vol.I, pp.236-237.

2. Al-Rāfiʿī, al-Thawrat al-ʿUrābīya, p.19.

3. Broadley, How We Defended Arabi and His Friends, Cairo, 1980, p.373.

facts concerning his motives and his relations with the European powers which are easily come upon in several accessible sources, such as the books of Blunt, Rosentein and Cromer. (The evidence will be discussed later.) Al-Rāfi^ʿī ascribes all the differences which arose between Sharīf and ʿUrābī as being due to personal ambitions on the part of ʿUrābī and the other officers in order to control the government, in which as military men they had no right to interfere. For al-Rāfi^ʿī, Sharif was a perfect constitutionalist who worked for the welfare of Egypt against European intervention. This being so, any opposition to him was not acceptable to al-Rāfi^ʿī because Sharīf had to be right all the time in whatever he did. Al-Rāfi^ʿī criticizes Sharīf on one occasion only - that is the issuing by Sharīf of a new press law by which more restrictions were put on the freedom of expression in the newspapers. Even then this objections seem to be somewhat pusillanimous: "It is without any doubt a law which ristricts the freedom of the press, but we do not know what was behind its issuance."¹

Al-Rāfi^ʿī's attitude towards Sharīf is both erroneous and partisan. From the time Sharīf undertook to form a new government he was trying to eliminate the role of the army from government. He refused to return to power as the candidate of a rebellious army; his first condition was that the army now place itself under his control. In all the speeches Sharīf insisted on this point. He did not form the new government until he recieved petitions from the Egyptian notables and ʿUmdas and also from the army asking him to form the government and promising

¹. Al-Rāfi^ʿī, al-Thawrat al-ʿUrābīya, p.154.

that the army would not interfere any more in the government's work.¹ This was less an indication of a deep seated sense of constitutionalism than an indication of his intentions to curb the army's defiance in order to act freely later on. Another attempt by Sharīf to gain control of the army was when he suggested that he take himself the position of the Minister of War and refused to accept al-Barudī and Maḥmūd Fahmī in his ministry. ʿUrābī rejected this and insisted that they should be in the new government and he told Sharīf that this was the desire of the army.

The new government was not a great success for ʿUrābī and his supporters. Apart from the appointment of his two supporters to the new ministry ʿUrābī failed to impose more radical reforms on the government. The other members of the new government were loyal to the Khedive and Sharīf.² Sharīf insisted on the departure of ʿUrābī and ʿAbd al-ʿĀl with their regiments to al-Sharqīya and Damietta. In addition, ʿUrābī was not able to increase the number of the army to 18,000 as he had demanded. The Dual Control representatives in Egypt rejected this increase because it would cost 600,000 and the budget could afford only 522,000 pounds which was enough to increase the army to 15,000.³

The important point which Sharīf imposed on ʿUrābī, and which al-Rāfiʿī ignores, was connected with the elections to the Chamber of Deputies. Sharīf insisted that they should work according to the election law of the old constitution of 1866 - which was established during the time of Ismāʿīl - and by which those who could elect were limited

1. Ibid., p.131.

2. Alexander Scholch, Op.cit., pp.167-168.

3. Rothstein, Op.cit., p.112.

to the Shaykhs and ʿUmdas. On the other hand, ʿUrābī wanted to broaden the base of elections. However, when Sharīf threatened to resign ʿUrābī gave way.¹ All this and other conditions were put by Sharīf in order to break the power of ʿUrābī, who was the most radical voice to be heard at that time.

Sharīf and ʿUrābī had, by the very nature of things, to disagree because they represented different classes with contradictory motives and aims. Although Sharīf was a constitutionalist - and this was the main cause for choosing him as the head of the new government - he wanted all the powers in his own hands and wanted also a constitution that would serve the interests of the Turco-Circassian landowners and not of the people as a whole.

Sharīf Pāshā declared several times that he had the intention of getting rid of army control. On September 21, 1881 he told Malet, the British Consul that he intended to bring together around him the members of the Chamber of Deputies in order that they become later on the real power in the country, so as to deprive the army of the privilege they had obtained through the revolution.² If we add to this the pressure of the British and French representatives on Sharīf to accept the headship of the new government and the support he got from them,³ we can see clearly that Sharīf was a very different person from the one that al-Rāfiʿī tries to glorify. Even the Khēdive Tawfīq was happy with Sharīf and told Nizāmī Pāshā, the envoy of the Ottoman Sultan, that he trusted Sharīf because under his leadership the work of the Chamber of

1. Ibid., p.112.

2. Cromer, Op.cit., pp.84-85.

3. Ibid., p.60, and Laṭīfah Sālim, Op.cit., p.176.

Deputies would not go beyond the general projects.¹ Sharīf's attitude towards the military officers had coincided with the attitude of the European powers who also wanted to destroy the role of the army in Egyptian political life.

Furthermore, being originally Turkish, Sharīf had a low opinion of Egyptians in general and the peasants in particular. Blunt, who witnessed the revolution, wrote about Sharīf in the following terms: "Sharīf was a Europeanized Turk of good breeding and excellent manners, but with all that arrogant contempt of the fellahin which distinguished his class in Egypt."²

Yet, it was this same Sharīf Pāshā whose ministry was considered by al-Rāfi'ī as representing the best interests of the nation. Al-Rāfi'ī also sings the praises of Sharīf in his book ʿAṣr Ismāʿīl and relates Sharīf's achievements in the context of the great events of Egyptian national history. He says: "The personality of Sharīf Pāshā is related to three roles, the greatest roles of the national movement."³ Al-Rāfi'ī defends the positions taken up by Sharīf Pāshā on two grounds. The first is that Sharīf, according to al-Rāfi'ī, was working to avoid the occupation of Egypt by Britain. On the other hand, it was ʿUrābī who was the one to bring about this occupation according to the belief of the National Party, which had been established by Muṣṭafa Kāmil and of which al-Rāfi'ī was one of the leaders. This negative attitude towards ʿUrābī clearly stems from al-Rāfi'ī's own political convictions. Secondly, Sharīf believed in a political system where a king and a constitution should work

1. Laṭīfah Sālim, Op.cit., p.180.

2. Wilfrid Blunt, Op.cit., p.149.

3. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Rāfi'ī, ʿAṣr Ismāʿīl, 3rd. ed., Vol.II, Cairo, 1982, p.227.

together. Al-Rāfi'ī also believes in the same political system. This is clear when reading his books "Mudhakhirātī" and "Arba'at 'Ashr 'Ām fi 'l-Barlamān."

The events that took place during the period between the establishment of the Chamber of Deputies in December 26, 1881, and the resignation of Sharīf Pāshā in February 1882 were very important because they provided the excuse for the European powers to operate directly, at a later stage, against Egypt. That period witnessed the complete divorce of Sharīf and those who supported him from 'Urābī and his party.

The differences on the issue of whether the Chamber of Deputies had the right to discuss the budget or not were the direct cause of the split between 'Urābī and Sharīf. But even before the problem of the budget and after the events of September 1881, the British and French governments had become afraid for their position in Egypt and had sent a joint note on January 7, 1882 in which the Khedive was officially informed that both governments would support him in any internal and external difficulties.¹ Another note was given to Sharīf by the British and French representatives on January 26, 1882 which indicated their rejection of the idea of the right of the Chamber of Deputies to discuss the budget.² Al-Rāfi'ī considers this intervention of the European powers as the main reason behind the split between Sharīf and 'Urābī.³ However, what actually happened was different. The notes were sent with the aim of supporting Sharīf and the Khedive against 'Urābī. Sharīf depended on this support in rejecting the Chamber's wish to discuss the

1. Al-Rāfi'ī, al-Thawrat al-'Urābīya, p.180.

2. Ibid., p.182.

3. Ibid., p.178.

budget. Indirectly, however, the result of the European interference was a positive one so far as the Egyptian national front was concerned because it helped to reveal those who were not willing to undertake radical reforms - amongst them Sharīf Pāshā. It helped also in bringing about unity between the members of the Chamber of Deputies and ʿUrābī, because they saw in European interference a portent of more European control, which they rejected. Those members, who had supported Sharīf before by signing a petition ensuring that ʿUrābī would not interfere any more in the affairs of the government and to whom Sharīf was looking for support against ʿUrābī once more, now stood beside ʿUrābī against him. Sharīf makes a typically authoritarian response to this situation, believing that the members of the Chamber of Deputies would not be able to discuss him. Blunt records:

"The Egyptians, he told me, are children and must be treated like children. I have offered them a Constitution which is good enough for them, and if they are not content with it they must do without one. It was I who created the National Party, and they will find that they cannot get on without me. These peasants want guidance."¹

Al-Rāfiʿī considers Sharīf's position in relation to the budget as a practical and pragmatic one which would avoid the direct occupation of Egypt.² He also considers the position of ʿUrābī and most of the members of the Chamber, in insisting on discussing the budget, as an incorrect position which would lead to the occupation of Egypt. He goes further and accuses ʿUrābī, al-Bārūdī and the other officers of having the intension to overthrow Sharīf even before the problem of the budget arose and of appointing one of their own men instead. Al-Rāfiʿī accuses

1. Wilfrid Blunt, Op.cit., p.149.

2. Al-Rāfiʿī, al-Thawrat al-ʿUrābīya, p.184.

al-Bārūdī of being ambitious and planning to take over the position¹ of the head of the government. But al-Rāfiʿī ignores a very important fact concerning this issue. He does not mention anything about the accommodation agreed to by the Chamber of Deputies and ʿUrābī in accepting the limitation of their right to control only to that half of state expenditure which was not allocated to the servicing of the debt or for the tribute, but for the internal needs of the country. However, the European powers and Sharīf rejected this offer.

It may well be asked, what would remain from the demands of the revolution if the Chamber and ʿUrābī yielded to the demand of the European powers that they should not discuss even the Egyptian half of the budget? What kind of independent state or aspiring revolution could abdicate the right to discuss its own budget? The European powers insisted on full control over Egypt. They would never allow anything to disturb their goals. If the Chamber had submitted to their demands in relation to the budget, as al-Rāfiʿī suggests, then they would have lost what they had tried to achieve through the revolution and the same problem would occur again whenever they tried to act independently. The clash between the European powers and the revolution was inevitable, unless one of the two parties capitulated to the other.

c. Al-Bārūdī's Ministry

When he turned his attention to the period after the resignation of Sharīf Pāshā, al-Rāfiʿī increased his accusations and criticism against ʿUrābī and the new government and considered this stage as

1.

Ibid., pp.184-185.

the beginning of the failure of the revolution.

The new government was headed by al-Bārūdī and ʿUrābī headed the Ministry of War. According to al-Rāfiʿī, the Khedive and the Chamber of Deputies had submitted to the will of the "Military Party" by allowing the formation of the new government.¹ This is a correct assumption when applied to the Khedive because he was particularly weak at this stage and was not able to destroy the revolution. But it is not enough to limit the examination of the relations between ʿUrābī and the Khedive to this one idea. There was an in-built conflict between the interests of the revolution and those of the Khedive which was neither easy to solve in a peaceful way nor to avoid; al-Rāfiʿī however failed to see this contradiction. In regard to the Chamber of Deputies, there was no need for ʿUrābī to force its members to approve the resignation of Sharīf Pāshā and form a new government because it was in their own interest to limit the power of the Europeans, which Sharīf had failed to do, when he rejected the demand that the budget should be under the control of the Chamber. During this stage of the revolution the conflict between the Turco-Circassian landowners supported by the Khedive on one side and all the classes of the Egyptian society on the other side became obvious.

Although al-Rāfiʿī confesses that al-Bārūdī's ministry was greeted with great joy by the people, yet he explains this support grudgingly:

"The general feeling is inclined to the side of the one who hangs on to the entire rights of the country, because public opinion, and specifically during periods of revolution and agitation, has no time or enough elements to think and evaluate the outcome rationally."²

1. Al-Rāfiʿī, al-Thawrat al-ʿUrābīya, p.191.

2. Ibid., p.193.

This explanation seems to be not only grudging but weak and in no more than a further justification of his former attitude towards the revolution. It even contradicts what happened later on within the National Party, when he himself was one of its leaders. Although the National Party held firmly in its advocacy of the rights of the country (i.e. total withdrawal, etc...), it failed to gain the popularity of the Wafd Party. The only valid explanation of the support given by the people to the ministry of the revolution was their feeling and conviction that this ministry represented them and would improve their unfortunate conditions.

Al-Rāfi'ī's criticism of Bārūdī's ministry accords with those of the Khedive and Sharīf Pāshā. Al-Rāfi'ī accuses 'Urābī of taking an extremist position and acting as a dictator by imposing his opinions on the government. He states: "Not only in the Ministry of War had he absolute authority but also in all other governmental ministries and he became a mere dictator."¹ When studying the letters of the European Consuls in Egypt at the time - and these al-Rāfi'ī did not discuss in detail - one can find the same accusations against 'Urābī and the new ministry, although al-Rāfi'ī had different objectives in making them. The European feared losing their sinecures and this led them to raise a campaign of defamation against the Chamber and the new government. This propaganda was based on the claim that the members of the Chamber of Deputies were totally under the influence of the army and were doing only what the officers demanded of them under threat. This hostile attitude was fostered by endless memoranda from the Controllers-General who, having lost their dominating position in the Council of Ministers,

1. Ibid., p.195.

aimed at destroying the new government. In a letter, Malet wrote:

"The Egyptians were not in a position to rule themselves, it would, therefore, be necessary, if it be determined that the present state of things cannot be allowed to continue, that an occupation of the country should precede its re-organization".¹

Other letters were sent describing the new government as a totalitarian military rule which had replaced the legitimate one. Still other rumors were spread in Europe, describing Egypt as being in a chaotic situation and that bribery among government officials had revived. They also added that the country was losing its security once more and that the economic situation was deteriorating and would lead to financial chaos.² What should be noted here, is that the motive behind all these reports was clear; they were preparing the way for an invasion. The reality of the situation is not difficult to discover. There had been no such ambitious work undertaken for the benefit of the Egyptian people during previous governments as was accomplished during the few months of the ministry of the revolution. All contemporary writers such as Blunt, Rothstein and Muḥammad ʿAbduḥ affirm this fact. Although al-Rāfiʿī was aware of this fact, yet he explains it by trying to make a separation between the government and the Chamber of Deputies and attributing the achievements gained to the latter. Moreover, al-Rāfiʿī accuses ʿUrābī and his supporters of working for their private interests and that they had the degree of control necessary to force their will on the country. The concept of the separation between the government and the Chamber of Deputies only

1. Alexander Scholch, Op.cit., p.220.

2. Rothstein, Op.cit., pp.122-131.

existed in the mind of al-Rāfi'ī himself. Indeed, the record shows that when the government and the Chamber of Deputies disagreed, there was no possibility of achieving anything. Furthermore, if 'Urābī and his supporters were simply serving their own private interests, it would not have been possible for them to achieve on behalf of the Egyptian people the benefits which unquestionably accrued to them.

It is obvious that all those who were deprived of their power by the revolution were endeavouring to regain this power through any means possible. To achieve that end, they started to prepare plots and conspiracies in order to get rid of the leaders of the revolution. In order to validate his initial judgment of 'Urābī and his supporters, al-Rāfi'ī has of necessity to deny that any of these plots occurred. Concerning the attempt to kill 'Abd al-'Āl Ḥilmī - one of the leaders of the revolution - al-Rāfi'ī considered it as a mere private crime which had nothing to do with him as a leader of the revolution and that 'Urābī used this incident in order to dethrone the Khedive. He says:

"This incident shows you the degree of self-delusion of the leaders of the revolution after the fall of Sharīf's ministry and the formation of the Bārūdī ministry. The talk about the dethronement of the Khedive for such an insignificant personal incident like the incident of Colonel 'Abd al-'Āl Ḥilmī, is an action remote from wisdom and rational thinking and a sign of a decline of the revolution from its proper levels."¹

What is really surprising here is that al-Rāfi'ī has fallen into line with the European propaganda against the revolution. To prove his point of view he depends only on a letter sent from Sienkiewicz - the French Consul General - to his Prime Minister on March 13, 1882.²

1. Al-Rāfi'ī, al-Thawrat al-'Urābīya, p.196.

2. Ibid., p.196.

If the Ḥilmī affair was considered by al-Rāfi'ī as a private incident, what is there to say about the Circassian conspiracy which I consider as the beginning of the end for the revolution? Let us begin with al-Rāfi'ī's own words:

"The Circassian officers refused to submit to orders and refrained from traveling to the Sudan and some of them, in thoughtlessness moments, responded with terms of threat. This was explained by the supporters of 'Urābī as a conspiracy prepared for his assassination. However, in reality there was no conspiracy and we are inclined to believe this because it is nearer to logic and rationality and because it was known about 'Urābī that he feared greatly for his life."¹

Although al-Rāfi'ī admits that the Egyptian and Circassian officers were treated equally by 'Urābī in their promotion and in their appointment to the Sudan, he cannot see his way to accepting the idea that those Circassians who refused to obey orders to go to the Sudan wanted to create trouble for the new government and could possibly have engaged themselves in a conspiracy against the revolution - this in spite of the fact that he himself mentions that one of the conspirators had confessed during investigations.²

The result of this conspiracy was a trial of those involved and on April 30, 1882 the court passed judgement. Its ruling was that the officers, among them 'Uthmān Rifqī, were to be reduced to the ranks, to lose their military privileges and honours and to be exiled to the Sudan. Others were simply put under police supervision.³ The Khedive and Malet opposed the implementation of this verdict and the Khedive refused to sign the judgement and began to make contacts with

1. Ibid., p.240.

2. Ibid., p.240.

3. Alexander Scholch, Op.cit., pp.230-231.

the European officials and the Sultan in order to use the incident to overthrow the government. By the end of March 1882 - even before the occurrence of the Circassian conspiracy - the Khedive had confined to the French Consul-General that "he wanted to retire as soon as possible to Alexandria and await the day when an (European) intervention would free them from this nightmare."¹ To the German Consul-General the Khedive confided that he saw a serious crisis approaching, but he hoped the problem would have to come to an end. To Malet he confessed that he would willingly sacrifice some of Egypt's privileges if the Porte, in return, would re-establish his authority.² Although al-Rāfi^ʿī was of the opinion that the Khedive was wrong in consulting the European officials and the Porte on internal affairs, yet he ignored the negative effects of this on the independence of Egypt. His over-riding aim was to criticise al-Bārūdī's government because they called for the Chamber of Deputies to meet when they failed to reach to an agreement with the Khedive on punitive measures against the Circassians. Being a lawyer, he discusses the illegality of such an action and affirms that only the Khedive had the right to call the Chamber of Deputies into session. Here, an important question must be raised: what was more important in the context, the legality of calling the Chamber of Deputies to meet, or the danger to which the Khedive was exposing Egypt through the interference of foreigners? Even when al-Rāfi^ʿī discusses the reasons which made the government call the Chamber of Deputies into session he ignores the most important reason for doing so, which was the submission of the Khedive to

1. Ibid., p.231.

2. Ibid., p.232.

the European officials. Al-Rāfi¹ does not consider the submission of the government in regard to punitive measures against the Circassians - even before the calling of the Chamber of Deputies - as a sign of the government's good intentions.

Members of the Chamber of Deputies supported 'Urābī only to a certain extent. Being mostly notables (landowners and big merchants), their interests sometimes contradicted those of 'Urābī. Hence, when a problem emerged between the government and the Khedive, the members of the Chamber of Deputies were not always ready to take a radical position and tried to find a legal way out of the crisis.

At the time when the members of the Chamber of Deputies were pushing the government for a reconciliation with the Khedive, the latter, under the direction of the European Consuls, was preparing to get rid of the government. On May 15, Malet and Sienkiewicz officially informed the Khedive of the arrival of the fleet.¹

Al-Rāfi¹ at this point also blames 'Urābī for not accepting from the beginning the terms of the Khedive in regard to the Circassians without enlarging and exacerbating the issue:

"What the leaders should be blamed for during this crisis was that they declared publicly in their meetings their desire to dethrone the Khedive and appoint Prince Halim in his place and they did not listen to the advice of the moderates who warned them of the outcome of this thoughtlessness."²

Later on, events moved very quickly. The effort made by the European officials to create a public opinion in their own countries against

1. Ibid., Op.cit., p.236.

2. Al-Rāfi¹, al-Thawrat al-'Urābīya, pp.246-247.

the government of the revolution had been effective. Between May 19 and 21 British, French and Greek warship reached Alexandria and on May 25, they sent a note to the government demanding its resignation, the departure of 'Urābī from Egypt and the return of the remaining prominent officers to their homes. The government rejected the note but it was accepted by the Khedive and this resulted in the resignation of the government.

Al-Rāfi'ī clearly accepts the demands of the European countries that 'Urābī should be deported and he criticizes the army officers for their demand that the Khedive be overthrown. This point of view of al-Rāfi'ī accords with that of the Khedive and that of the Europeans and Circassians. A closer look will provide an explanation for this paradox. Al-Rāfi'ī was a nationalist politician and there is no doubt that in his analysis of the 'Urābī revolution he was taking a predetermined attitude, that of the National Party under Muṣṭafa Kāmil's leadership. What al-Rāfi'ī failed to do was to study historical events in relation to the circumstances that surrounded them. It was expected of 'Urābī that he reject the note and even call for the dethronement of the Khedive, which al-Rāfi'ī considers as a crime. There was no way by which he could keep good relations with the Khedive and as time passed reconciliation between the two became manifestly impossible.

Although al-Bārūdī's government resigned, yet 'Urābī remained as a leader of the revolution. The people throughout the country rejected his resignation and demanded his reinstatement. As Scholch states:

"The population flocked together around Urabi. Daily he received innumerable letters from all of Egypt against the Franco-British fleet and the demands of the powers. The Khedive was accused of having sided with the unbelievers and having

shown himself thus unworthy of his office...
Many petitions implored the Sultan to depose
Tawfiq."¹

On May 27, Tawfiq received a telegram from officers of all the military and police units stationed in Alexandria demanding 'Urābī's reinstatement and allowing the Khedive twelve hours to take a position. After this time limit they could no longer guarantee the preservation of law and order.² To the populace, 'Urābī was a protector of the fatherland and religion. The members of the Chamber of Deputies tried to find a way of avoiding both the dethronement of the Khedive or the departure of Urabi and they finally persuaded the Khedive to reinstate 'Urābī.

In regard to the role of the Porte during the revolution, al-Rāfi'ī was correct in analysing the aims of the Porte and describing its policies as inefficient. In relation to the delegation sent by the Porte on June 7, 1882 and headed by Darwīsh Pāshā, al-Rāfi'ī says: "The plan of the delegation was to appear as if they supported both adversaries (the Khedive and the 'Urābis)".³ But al-Rāfi'ī ignored a great deal of evidence in support of his point of view and which can be traced through the letters of both 'Urābī and those of Khedive Tawfiq with the Porte.⁴ Both sides complained of the behaviour of each other and both sides also received letters from the Sultan encouraging each of them to take more measures in his interest. He telegraphed to Tawfiq and congratulated him on the resignation of al-Bārūdī's government and declared that

1. Alexander Scholch, Op.cit., p.238.

2. Ibid., p.239.

3. Al-Rāfi'ī, al-Thawrat al-'Urābiya, p.264.

4. Alexander Scholch, Op.cit., pp.244-258.

the Porte was prepared to send a commissioner to Egypt should the Khedive request it.¹ In February 1882, a few months prior to the resignation of al-Barudi, two of the most influential Shaykhs in the Sultan's retinue wrote of the satisfaction with which the Sultan had learnt of 'Urābī's attitude towards the Porte, and assured 'Urābī of the Caliph's especial favour and trust:

"They stressed that it was immaterial who the Khedive of Egypt was; the Sultan put no trust in Isma'il, Tawfiq or Halim. His benevolence was enjoyed only by those who remained loyal and defended the integrity of the Empire."²

Aḥmad As'ad, the intermediery between the Sultan and 'Urābī, came to Egypt four times to deliver and collect letters. During May 1882, he was in Cairo giving moral support to al-Bārūdī and 'Urābī against Tawfīq and the powers.³ It was clear from these policies that the Porte wanted to regain its position in Egypt and to prevent any direct intervention of the European powers in Egypt. To achieve this aim they were ready to get rid of any leader or ruler of Egypt. This lay behind the attempt by Darwīsh Pāshā to induce 'Urābī to make a visit to Constantinople to give thanks for the Grand Ribbon of the Majīdī Order which the Sultan had bestowed on him, but 'Urābī refused when he realized that it was a plan to get rid of him.

d. The War With Britain And the Failure Of The Revolution

At this stage al-Rāfi'ī gives a detailed study of the war between Britain and Egypt. Although his negative attitude in regard to 'Urābī

1. Ibid., p.243.

2. Ibid., p.244.

3. Ibid., p.246.

did not change, yet some of his criticisms hold up. His emphasis on the role of the individual in shaping the events of history is clear here also, when he blames ʿUrābī and the Khedive for the British occupation of Egypt.

After the resignation of al-Bārūdī the political situation became unstable. Two weeks later, on June 11, 1882 a massacre occurred in Alexandria during which forty-nine Egyptians and Europeans were killed.¹ Al-Rāfiʿī affirms that the coming of the British fleet and the encouragement the Europeans received from the British Consular officials to carry guns in order to "protect" themselves was behind this massacre. Al-Rāfiʿī affirms the improbability of any connection of the Khedive and ʿUmar Luṭfī - the governor of Alexandria - in instigating the massacre. Al-Rāfiʿī was not convinced by the evidences given by Blunt and ʿUrābī, who blamed the Khedive and ʿUmar Luṭfī for instigating the massacre. Blunt depended on a telegram sent on June 5, 1882 by the Khedive to ʿUmar Luṭfī which said:

"Arabi has guaranteed public order, and published it in the newspapers, and has made himself responsible to the Consuls; and if he succeeds in his guarantee the Powers will trust him, and our consideration will be lost. Also the fleets of the Powers are in Alexandria waters, and men's mind are excited, and quarrels are not far off between Europeans and others. Now, therefore, choose for yourself whether you will serve Arabi in his guarantee or whether you will serve us."²

Muḥammad ʿAbduh's comments on the massacre are of great importance here. He described what he saw and heard of the people of Alexandria:

1.

Salīm al-Naqqāsh, Op.cit., Vol.V., p.17.

2.

Blunt, Op.cit., p.237. For more proofs see the Appendix of the Arabic translation of Blunt's book, al-Markaz al-ʿArabī lil-Baḥṭh Wa'l-Nashr, 1981, pp.373-377.

I heard also from them that he (ʿUmar Luṭfī) incited some of the people during the massacre with encouragement and made signs to the police (mustaphezīn) not to take any notice, saying, "let them die, the sons of dogs."¹

Other evidences accusing the Khedive and ʿUmar Luṭfī are mentioned by other writers. One should not forget that ʿUmar Luṭfī was appointed by the Khedive the Minister of War after the defeat of the revolution.² Defending the Khedive, al-Rāfiʿī states that if he had any complicity in the massacre the European lawyers of ʿUrābī would have mentioned it during the trial of ʿUrābī. Al-Rāfiʿī seems to ignore the fact that the lawyers could never accuse the Khedive of such a thing because he represented authority and had become in a strong position after the defeat of the revolution. To defend ʿUmar Luṭfī, al-Rāfiʿī accuses some Egyptian officers who were known for their support of ʿUrābī, such as Muṣṭafa ʿAbd al-Raḥīm and Suleimān Daoūd, and blames them for being late in carrying out the orders of ʿUmar Luṭfī to prevent the massacre.³ No one can prove conclusively the involvement of any side in the massacre, but certainly one should not exclude the Khedive and his supporters as possible suspects.

On June 20, 1882 a new ministry was appointed by the Khedive headed by Ismāʿīl Rāghib Pāshā and ʿUrābī was appointed once more as Minister of War. This new government was viewed as a kind of coalition between the Khedive's supporters and ʿUrābī. However, contrary to what al-Rāfiʿī

1. A.M. Broadley, Op.cit., pp.235-236.

2. ʿAbd al-Munʿim al-Jimīʿi, "Waḳāʿi al-Thawrat al-ʿUrābīya", Miṣr li'l-Miṣriyīn, Markaz al-Dirāsāt al-Siyāsīya wa'l Istrāṭījīya, 1981, p.94.

3. Louīs ʿAwad, Tarīkh al-Fikr al-Miṣrī al-Hadīth, Vol.1., Cairo, 1980, pp.229-230.

says, 'Urābī showed signs of flexibility when he accepted the new government, although the previous government which was headed by al-Bārūdī would have been more helpful in achieving his goals. He also accepted, at the beginning of July, the Khedive and the Porte's order to stop any work on the fortifications in accordance with the demands of the commander of the British fleet, Admiral Seymour. But all the evidence indicates, as al-Rāfi'ī explained, that the British were intending to interfere and occupy Egypt. The threats of the British Adminral to bombard Alexandria were carried out. He needed a pretext for this action and found his excuse when he insisted that the coastal fortifications were still being reinforced. Although Seymour on 6 July confessed to Catwright, the British Vice-Consul, that in fact no work was being done on the fortifications, nevertheless he demanded that the commander in-chief stop this imaginary work.¹

From the beginning of the war on July 11, 1882, and for almost two months, the leaders of the revolution were trying to defend their country. Al-Rāfi'ī is totally convinced that they were unqualified, ignorant men with none or little experience in political and military affairs and this made them fall into major errors and culminated in their defeat.

Some examples of how al-Rāfi'ī describes the revolution are very revealing. Al-Rāfi'ī depicts the position of the leaders of the revolution during the meetings of the European powers in the Conference of Constantinople in the following terms:

1. Alexander Scholch, Op.cit., pp257-258.

"Its meetings made the 'Urābis believe that the Egyptian question will be solved through the negotiations among the states and that holding the conference will restrain British or any other country from a separate military intervention in Egypt. This was an excessiveness in optimism or ignorance of the British intention. In reality the Urabists lacked judicious opinion and political sense and were depending on illusions and fabricated news from some Europeans. They did not have in Egypt or abroad a news office to inform them of the real political situation and its development...They imagined that they were able to repel the British or any other country's attack without any serious preparation for war. They did not estimate the strength of their enemies.... They imagined that the British would not dare to declare war and fight on land (Troups)."¹

Al-Rāfi'ī also accuses 'Urābī of not supervising the fortifications, a work that he should have undertaken.²

During the first day of the war, Alexandria was set fire to. Much has been said and written about responsibility for this act. Al-Rāfi'ī considers that Alexandria was burnt by Suleimān Daoūd, one of the leaders of the army, and that this was a clear evidence of the weak leadership and the existence of different and contradictory convictions among the leaders of the revolution. He says:

"And this shows you the diverse opinions of the 'Urābists and the non-existence of unity in their leadership, because a dangerous work such as burning Alexandria should not have occurred except through orders from the head of the army."³

This and other accusation are repeated by al-Rāfi'ī through his description of the war with Britain, especially concerning the issue of the Suez Canal.

1. Al-Rāfi'ī, al-Thawrat al-'Urābiya, p.293.

2. Ibid., p.325

3. Ibid., p.331.

Al-Rāfiʿī believed that ʿUrābī's decision not to block the Canal was a very big mistake, which resulted in the defeat of the revolution. He blames ʿUrābī mainly in this matter and describes him as being a coward and that he should not have listened to the persuasion of de Lessyys in not destroying the Canal. Al-Rāfiʿī is clearly inputting not only ʿUrābī's wisdom but even his patriotism. Al-Rāfiʿī believes that if the leaders of the revolution had been more courageous and showed heroism on the battlefield they could have changed the result of the war, or at least minimized the effect of the defeat.¹

Al-Rāfiʿī affirms and proves that Britain was intending to interfere and control Egypt and that it was simply looking for an excuse to do so. He also acknowledges that Britain was more powerful than Egypt. One wonders, how given this, that he can so readily blame ʿUrābī and hold him responsible for the occupation of Egypt and the defeat. Furthermore, why did he agree with the idea that ʿUrābī should resign and leave the country when he knew well the intentions of Britain. It seems that there was no other course for the leaders of the revolution other than to fight or surrender and leave the country. They decided to fight or to put it more accurately, fighting was imposed on them since there was no other course open.

The emphasizing of the personality and lack of ability, as al-Rāfiʿī does, and burdening him and his supporters among the army officers with the responsibility of defeat in the war is irrelevant. Attributing also the event of history to the actions of an individual is a misguided approach. Many more important factors lay behind the defeat in the war

1. Al-Rāfiʿī, Al-Thawrat al-ʿUrābīya, p. 394.

and the failure of the revolution. At the same time one cannot neglect 'Urābī's misunderstanding of the political situation in Europe. He believed that Britain would never occupy Egypt and that France and the other European countries would prevent it from doing so. Certain assurances which 'Urābī got from his friends might have helped in the formulating of such an opinion. Blunt, for example, assured 'Urābī¹ that there would be no intervention. Ninet, the Swiss friend of 'Urābī and one of the Europeans who defended and was a witness of the 'Urābī revolution wrote that the 'Urābīs had never seriously believed in an attack or in the outbreak of war.² In addition, 'Urābī placed his hopes in the Constantinople conference and the Port to help him. The hope was demolished when on September 6, 1882, the Port declared 'Urābī to be an outlaw. The entire responsibility for the defeat cannot be put on the shoulders of Urabi alone. Contrary to what al-Rāfi'ī says, he was not the one who took the decisive decisions during the war. The issue concerning the Suez Canal is a good example of this. From the beginning 'Urābī had calculated on a possible attack from the Canal and had therefore, requested his 'wakīl' to station a strong fighting force in Ra's al-Wādī and Salihīya for the defence of the Suez-Port Sa'īd line. The Majlis al-'Urfī³ rejected this demand on July 22, on the basis that this action would be seen as a threat to the free transit of ships along the Canal. They decided that the support unit should be set up, but would be stationed in the Abbasīya Barracks ready to move at any

1. Alexander Scholch, Op.cit., p.299.

2. Ibid., p.299.

3. After that the Khedive and most of the members of the government moved to Alexandria, al-Majlis al-'Urfī headed by Ya'qūb Sāmī, one of the leaders of the revolution, replaced the government in Cairo as responsible for the safety and welfare of Egypt.

time needed.¹ Obviously, when these units were needed they could not reach the Canal on time and the British forces occupied it before them. Clearly the plan of 'Urābī to safeguard the Canal flank was correct, but he was not given permission to do so. This fact also does not accord with the accusations of al-Rāfi'ī that 'Urābī was a coward and a dictator.²

Other requests from 'Urābī were also turned down by the Majlis al-'Urfī. For example, his plan for total mobilization. Although this was partly followed in Daqahlīya and Sharqīya, it was rejected by the Majlis in Cairo as inefficient.³ The examples mentioned above show that 'Urābī was not dictatorial in his conduct of the war and that the ultimate decisions were taken by al-Majlis al-'Urfī.

The relation between the Khedive and 'Urābī during the war deteriorated and culminated on July 20, 1882 by the dismissal of 'Urābī from his position as a result of his refusal to stop the preparation of war. However, al-Jam'īya al-'Umūmiya - which consisted of the notable, shaykhs and princes who met to deal with the situation in the country after the beginning of the war - decided in July 22, to keep 'Urābī in his position and to continue the preparations for war. At this critical time, a clear division among Egyptians took place. In support of Britain stood the Khedive, the Turco-Circassian landowners, some big Egyptian landowners and the Bedouin. The other side consisted of the supporters

1. Abu'l Ma'ātī Abu'l Najā, "Limātha Lam Yughliq 'Urābī Qanāt al-Suez", al-Hilāl, 1969, pp.72-73; Scholch, Op.cit., p.292; Ṣalāḥ 'Issa, al-Thawrat al-'Urābīya, pp.416-417.

2. Al-Rāfi'ī, al-Thawrat al-'Urābīya, pp.362-372.

3. Alexander Scholch, Op.cit., pp.292-293.

of the revolution from the different classes of the Egyptian society.

According to al-Rāfi'ī the Khedive did not join the British until July 13, after the occupation of Alexandria, and he blames 'Urābī because on the previous day he sent some troops to lay siege to the Palace of the Khedive in Alexandria. He adds that it was not wise from 'Urābī to perpetuate such an act of enmity against the Khedive at that critical time.¹ Whether 'Urābī planned the siege or not ('Urābī denied any connection with it)² is not the question. Al-Rāfi'ī seems incapable of recognizing the fact that there was no possibility of any kind of unity between the two parties, as I have explained earlier. Al-Rāfi'ī's primary aim seems to be the addhering of more proofs in order to accuse 'Urābī of being responsible for the occupation of Egypt. He intentionally ignores the Khedive's cooperation with the European powers in order to get rid of 'Urābī. In previous discussions I have established this and there is still more evidence. The Khedive revealed his fear at the possibility that the revolution might win when on June 13, a month before the beginning of the war, he moved to Alexandria to be closer to the British fleet so that it might protect him. On June 7, he suggested that the British forces should make a landing immediately after the bombardment of Alexandria.³ During the first day of the fighting, the Khedive used to look out on the fleet to reassure himself that it had not sunk. He also showed his disregard for the burning of Alexandria

1. Al-Rāfi'ī, al-Thawrat al-'Urābīya, p.330.

2. Ahmad 'Urābī, Kashf al-Sitār, Nuṣūṣ wa wathā'iq fī al-Tarikh al-Mu'āsir, ed. Fu'ād Shukrī and others, Cairo, 1960, p.273.

3. Cromer, Op.cit., p.195.

if this would lead to the defeat of ʿUrābī and his supporters.¹ The Khedive's treason was clear but al-Rāfiʿī never mentions this word in this connection.

The war ended with the defeat of the revolution and ʿUrābī surrendered on September 13, 1882. The declaration of mutiny by ʿUrābī by the Porte had a disastrous effect on the revolution. The Khedive entered Cairo guarded by British troops who occupied the country in his name. On August 20, 1882, Sharīf Pāshā was appointed for the fourth time as the head of a new government. Throughout his book, al-Rāfiʿī keeps defending the political position of Sharīf Pāshā but he does not comment on the latter's appointment at the head of a new ministry guarded by foreign troops. I believe that the acceptance by Sharīf Pāshā of the responsibility for forming a new government destroys the very basis of al-Rāfiʿī attempt to defend him; it also contradicts one of al-Rāfiʿī's main political convictions, that any governmental position under the occupation should be rejected.

The trial of the leaders began and with the help of Blunt, two British lawyers (Broadley and Napier) were appointed for the defence of ʿUrābī and his supporters. Al-Rāfiʿī agrees with the British government's demand that Urabi should be brought to trial as being disobedient to the Khedive's authority and seems to find the accusation true and just. He also sees in ʿUrābī's acceptance of his being defended by British lawyers and the defence statement he wrote to them as a kind of moral defeat which was not proper in a leader.² When one reads

1. Ṣalāḥ ʿIssa, al-Thawrat al-ʿUrābīya, p.385.

2. Al-Rāfiʿī, al-Thawrat al-ʿUrābīya, pp.417-421.

what al-Rāfi'ī wrote concerning the trial of 'Urābī one gets the impression that 'Urābī abdicated all his political convictions and yielded to the Khedive and the British in order to save his neck. What al-Rāfi'ī says can be applied to many of the leaders of the revolution such as 'Alī Pāshā Fahmī, but it is very far from reality when it comes to 'Urābī himself. His position and the position of a few others such as Aḥmad Rif'at and al-Shaykh Ḥasan al-'Adawī during the trial was a very resolute one and showed a deep belief in their convictions.¹ The report of the investigation of the leaders of the revolution were published in 1886 and it was clear that 'Urābī stood firmly in defence of the revolution in spite of the bitter circumstances of defeat. But al-Rāfi'ī ignores all this. He expresses his astonishment about the motives of Britain in "helping" 'Urābī by putting some pressure on the Khedive to minimize the penalty from death to exile and casts doubts about the motives of 'Urābī himself. Al Rāfi'ī does not seem able to see that Britain benefited from this move. Britain and the Khedive wanted as little discussion as possible on the matter so as to prevent any kind of agitation by the people. The British government sent a letter to Cairo on October 13, expressing the opinion that "no arguments or evidence as to the political motives or reasons in justification of the offence charged should be admitted, but only such as go to establish or disprove the charges made."² The Egyptian government even feared more

1. For more details see al-Talī'a, January 1966 - March 1966; Al-Khafīf, *Op.cit.*, pp.486; Salīm al-Naqqāsh, *Op.cit.*, Vol.7, pp.5-52. For more evidence see the letter 'Urābī sent to the Editor of the Times in A.M. Broadely, *Op.cit.*, pp.150-151.

2. A.M. Broadley, *Op.cit.*, p.45.

than Britain the revelation of anything related to the revolution and tried to make the lawyer's work as difficult as possible.¹ The British government knew well that by executing 'Urābī the Egyptian people would react strongly and this would not serve their interests and the interests of the Khedive. The detailed history of the trial is found in many sources and it is not the place to discuss it here. The point which I am anxious to demonstrate is that al-Rāfi'ī's offensive attitude towards 'Urābī continued right up to the sad end of the final chapter.

In the last chapter of his book al-Rāfi'ī discusses the reasons behind the failure of the revolution. This represents a summary of his attitude in regard to the 'Urābī revolution as a whole. His emphasis, once again, on the subjective factor is an issue which will be discussed in the following chapter. My concern here lies with the reasons which al-Rāfi'ī did not mention rather than those which he does; these were of great importance in explaining the failure of the revolution.

I think it can be fairly stated that the leadership of the revolution failed to mobilize the masses when they most needed them. Throughout the whole period of the revolution the demands made were mostly political and only little importance was attached to social issues and to the economic difficulties of the peasants. The leadership concentrated, on an appeal to traditional values and religion in order to mobilize the masses, such as the 'Jihād' against the unbelievers. It is obvious that this religious element could not be excluded in Egypt at that time, but they were guilty of giving it more importance than was necessary at the expense of the economic and social needs of the peasant.

1. Al-Khafīf, Op.cit., pp.508-509.

The leadership of the revolution depended mainly on the support of the Egyptian notables and the Chamber of Deputies and most of them at the time of real crisis abandoned it. It is significant that only ten of the eighty three members of the Chamber of Deputies were imprisoned after the defeat of the revolution.¹

The leadership of the revolution was also unconscious of the danger in keeping the Khedive on his throne, and this, I believe, was one of the main reasons behind its failure.

It can also be argued that the reasons behind the fact that the leadership committed many errors during the revolution can be attributed to the lack of a cogent revolutionary program in order to achieve their goals. This can be clearly seen in their weak response to the traitors inside the army, the Khedive and even to the British threat. The leadership simply did not realize the real motives of Britain and their overriding need to control Egypt.

1.

Alexander Scholch, Op.cit., p.297.

CHAPTER FOUR

AL-RĀFI'Ī'S VIEW OF HISTORY AND HIS METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

Al-Rāfi'ī's historical work is unquestionably a great contribution to the writing of Egyptian national history. His writings were most effective in making Egyptians get acquainted with their own history. This chapter is an attempt to understand al-Rāfi'ī's own view of what is history and how it should be written. It is also an attempt to study the methodological weaknesses of al-Rāfi'ī and the reasons and results of these weaknesses through referring to his work in general and the 'Urābī revolution in particular.

To be able to understand these issues one must study the life of al-Rāfi'ī and his role in the period during which he lived and its effect on him. As Carr put it:

"You cannot fully understand or appreciate the work of the historian unless you have first grasped the standpoint from which he himself approached it; secondly, that that standpoint is itself rooted in a social and historical background...The historian, before he begins to write history, is the product of history."¹

When discussing the methodology of al-Rāfi'ī in writing history, there are major points that we must deal with. The first and most important of these is that al-Rāfi'ī attaches much more importance to the subjective factors than the objective ones in explaining history. It was this tendency which made him emphasize the role of the individual in the revolution and the weaknesses and personal motives of the leaders involved whilst neglecting the role of the people. I have

1.

E.H. Carr, What is History? 2nd. ed., London: Penguin Books, 1964, p.40.

pointed to this failing several times in previous chapters but a more detailed study is apposite at this point.

Theoretically, at least, al-Rāfiʿī was aware of the role of the people and dealt with it briefly. For example when he says: "By the national movement I mean the efforts made by all classes of Egyptian people in building an independent Egypt."¹ He also declares that "the real history is the history of the people and not the history of kings..."² In discussing different historical approaches al-Rāfiʿī says:

"The best explanation for Egyptian historical events is to look at them from the popular side, which is no doubt the most reliable and just viewpoint and nearer to reality...It is on the peoples' efforts that human progress is founded and to it the merit of the emergence and development of civilization is attributed."³

But a deeper look at his work makes one realize that he failed to practice what he preached. Examples of this from his book on the ʿUrābī revolution are many. Al-Rāfiʿī considers that the ʿUrābī revolution began to fail when the officers "forced" Sharīf Pāshā to resign. His antipopulist feelings came through also when he talks about Khedive Tawfīq:

"If he had in addition to his natural qualities the courage and daring of his father, then the country would have been saved from the disasters that took place during his reign and the course of national history would have been changed for the better and more appropriately."⁴

His concept weighting of the scales in favour of the dominating role of

1. Al-Rāfiʿī, Tarīkh al-Ḥaraka al-Qawmīya, Vol.I., 5th ed., Cairo, 1981, p.19.

2. Ḥamādah M. Ismāʿīl, Op.cit., p.173.

3. Ibid., p.174.

4. Al-Rāfiʿī, al-Thawrat al-ʿUrābīya, p.34.

the individual in shapings events is also clearly seen when he discusses the reasons behind the revolution. He considers what he calls the special reason (al-Asbāb al-Khāsah) such as the complaints of the national officers, the emergence of Aḥmad ʿUrābī and the weak and indecisive character of Khedive Tawfīq as very important and have a strong determining effect on the emergence and development of the revolution.¹ Al-Rāfiʿī's emphasis on this approach in interpreting history in terms of individual determinism made him attribute the reason for the revolution to the unfair treatment of the soldiers by Khedive Ismāʿīl and Tawfīq. He maintains that "if the spirit of equality which Saʿīd had spread in the army had prevailed during the reign of Ismāʿīl and Tawfīq, the ʿUrābī revolution would not have occurred."² Elsewhere, he says that he was filled with sympathy for the revolution but that his feelings did not prevent him from seeing its faults, especially those of its leaders, because these faults, he claims, had a dominant role in leading to the defeat of the revolution.³ A plethora of such interpretations are given by al-Rāfiʿī throughout his book. For him, the actions of great men as individuals can change the course of history. He believes, simplistically, that if Sharīf Pāshā had been in the place of ʿUrābī or al-Bārūdī results would have been different. This interpretation leads to the naive view that history is a series of successive actions by individual heroes without attaching any importance to the social and economic circumstances which shape events.⁴

1. Ibid., pp.69-72.

2. Ibid., p.70.

3. Ibid., p.21.

4. Aḥmad ʿAbd al-Raḥīm Muṣṭafa, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Rāfiʿī (1889-1966), al-Hilāl, January 1967, p.46.

The subjective factors which, even giving that they are true, are of minor significance. The character of 'Urābī, the other officers and the Khedive could not have been the most important factors in the failure of the revolution. In many ways the opposite is true and a leader of a revolution usually has his role and his character shaped by events themselves. In other words a leader does not shape history as he wishes; he is himself shaped by the forces of his age and in a sense actualizes it.¹ This approach of al-Rāfi'ī's resulted inevitably in diminishing the importance of such factors as the economic and political motives of Britain and the other European power as capitalist countries in controlling Egypt and the Middle East. Al-Rāfi'ī also sees the differences between the Khedive and the 'Urābis as a reflection of their own private interests and weak characters. It is this essentially superficial analyses which makes al-Rāfi'ī believe in the possibility of reconciliation between both sides. His interpretation did not take into account the fact that each of them (the Khedive and 'Urābī) represented different classes of Egyptian society with different and contradictory interests and aspirations. It was within this context only that their own private interests could be achieved or jeopardised.

The same approach in dealing with historical events is also found in his other works such as "Aṣr Ismā'īl". At the end of this book al-Rāfi'ī puts all Egypt's fate in the hands of Khedive Ismā'īl. If he had been a better ruler then everything would have worked out for the best:

1.

Carr, Op.cit., pp.54-55.

"If the personality of Ismā'īl were strapped of its faults, he would have made from Egypt another Japan and it would have become the strongest independent state."¹

This same weakness of approach is also clear in his books on Muṣṭafa Kāmil and Muḥammad Farīd. Al-Rāfi'ī puts Muṣṭafa Kāmil at the core of the history of Egypt from 1882 until 1908. The same thing is clear when he wrote on Muḥammad Farīd, and called the book "Muḥammad Farīd - The Symbol of Loyalty and Sacrifice - (the history of Egypt from 1908 to 1919)".

The second point I propose to discuss is related to al-Rāfi'ī on one side and his convictions as a politician and a leader of the National Party on the other. It is a truism to say that historians defend the ideas they believe in and these in turn reflect the period in which they live. To quote Carr:

"The facts of history never come to us pure since they do not and cannot exist in pure forms: they are always refracted through the mind of the recorder."²

But al-Rāfi'ī goes far beyond what is permitted in this context. He judges all historical facts from the standpoint of his political convictions, without taking into consideration the gap in time between the period he is living in and the period he is writing about. This applies to a degree to that which he wrote on the 'Urābī revolution, as I have previously indicated. More evidence of this, is to be found in his other works. In his book about Muṣṭafa Kāmil, al-Rāfi'ī defends all his positions and makes him appear as the stereotype of the great hero. This adulatory stand in relation to Muṣṭafa Kāmil makes al-Rāfi'ī

1. Al-Rāfi'ī, 'Aṣr Ismā'īl, p.312.

2. Carr, Op.cit., p.22.

intentionally neglect a number of facts. For example, he omits certain parts of the letters between Muṣṭafa Kāmil and Muḥammad Farīd connected with the financial assistance given by the latter to the former.¹ Al-Rāfi'ī also neglected some facts about Muṣṭafa Kāmil which were mentioned in the biography of Muḥammad Farīd, such as the financial relations between Muṣṭafa Kāmil and Khedive 'Abbās Ḥilmī and Muṣṭafa Kāmil's stock-exchange transactions.² Such selective handling of facts contradict what al-Rāfi'ī has himself said that the historian should not include the element of flattery in his writings.³

The participation of al-Rāfi'ī in political affairs during the 1919 revolution onwards and his being one of the leaders of the National Party had put him in direct competition with the other Egyptian parties especially the Wafd. Accordingly, his criticism and Judgement of the parties of that period lacks objectivity. Al-Rāfi'ī sees the Wafd Party as responsible for the division which occurred in the national movement in Egypt after the 1919 revolution. He also affirms that the Wafd Party showed mildness in demands for the total withdrawal of the British force from Egypt⁴ and that the members of the Wafd lacked loyalty and determination.⁵ Al-Rāfi'ī continue to blame the Wafd Party and its leaders

1. Ḥamadah M. Ismā'īl, Op.cit., p.195.

2. Muḥammad Sbeih, Kifāh Sha'b Miṣr Fī al-Qarnyn al-Tāsi' 'Ashr wa'l 'Ishrīn, 2nd. ed., Cairo, 1966, pp.13-16.

3. Aḥmad 'Abd al-Raḥim Muṣṭafa, Op.cit., p.45.

4. Al-Rāfi'ī, al-Tha'irūn al-Aḥrār al-Thalāthat, al-Hilāl, January 1952, p.10; Thawrat 1919,

5. Al-Rāfi'ī, Muḥammad Farīd, p.404.

Ṣaʿd Zaghlūl and Muṣṭafa al-Naḥās for every action they performed irrespective of its merits or otherwise. On the establishment of the Arab League, for example, he says that it would have been better if Naḥās had worked to achieve unity on the internal front rather than to establish an Arab league.¹ It is his loyalty to his leaders and party that has always controls and fashions his view on events.

The third and related point to be discussed is the impact of the historical period in which al-Rāfiʿī lived, on the content of his writings. Al-Rāfiʿī believes that it is better to record the events of history directly from the people who witnessed them, even after the elapse of five or six years.² He also believes that he could do this job without showing any bias because his aim is to find the truth.³ This confident belief goes alongside an awareness on his part of the difficulty of writing and judging people who were still alive or still have supporters.⁴ His awareness of this problem and his insistence on being neutral and just in writing history did not prevent him from falling into errors when he wrote his books. No one can deny that he criticized the Khedives who came to power, whether Ismāʿīl or Tawfīq, but this criticism was limited because of the existence of their successors in the throne at the time when he was writing. When he began writing his book "ʿAṣr Ismāʿīl," he refused the documents offered by the Palace in order not to be affected by their own view.⁵

1. Ḥamādah M. Ismāʿīl, Op.cit., p.192.

2. Ibid., p.200.

3. Al-Rāfiʿī, Fī Aʿqāb Thawrat 1919, Vol.I, p.5.

4. Al-Rāfiʿī, Mudhakkirātī, p.71.

5. Aḥmad ʿAbd al-Raḥīm Muṣṭafa, Op.cit., p.47.

Accordingly, his book came out criticizing Ismā'īl on certain policies and at the same time admiring his achievements. The acceptance by the government of the use of this book in the libraries of the schools - even after a refusal for about three years¹ - is evidence that the attitude of al-Rāfi'ī against Ismā'īl was not so strong as to make him and it unacceptable.

The same thing can be said of his book on the 'Urābī revolution. Although he criticizes Khedive Tawfīq and sees him as a weak ruler, yet he considers any attempt at his dethronement as an irrational action. He also never accuses him of treason, although his relations with the British were clearly portrayable in such a light. When the simplified book on 'Urābī "al-Za'īm Aḥmad 'Urābī" was confiscated in March 1952, al-Rāfi'ī sent a letter to the Minister of Interior Aḥmad al-Marāghī explaining that throughout his book he made 'Urābī responsible for the British occupation. He maintained that for that reason the book should not be confiscated.² This is a clear evidence of al-Rāfi'ī's readiness to trim his sails to suit the times.

Moving to his books on the 1919 revolution and the period which followed it, the same attitude ambivalent towards the Palace is visible. A comparison between al-Rāfi'ī's attitude towards the ruling family before the 1952 revolution and after it is revealing. Before 1952 he never called for the dethronement of the family of Muḥammad 'Alī. On the contrary, he expressed admiration for their achievements and his criticism was weak and superficial.³ But when reading his books and

1. Al-Rāfi'ī, Mudhakkirātī, pp.75-77.

2. Ḥamadāh M. Ismā'īl, Op.cit., p.190.

3. Al-Rāfi'ī, al-Hilāl, November 1933 and February 1938.

articles after the 1952 revolution a very noticeable change can be detected. In one of these articles he says: "The downfall of the family of Muḥammad ʿAlī and the establishment of the Egyptian Republic is a natural development in the political and social life of Egypt."¹

When al-Rāfiʿī wrote about the marriage of King Farūq, when he was still in the throne, he stresses that the country was happy with this marriage and how people showed feelings of loyalty to the King. After the revolution of 1952, he wrote a whole chapter in his book "Muqaddimāt Thawrat 23 Yūlya 1952," in which he portrays the corruption of King Farūq.² Al-Rāfiʿī did the same thing in regard to his shortened book on the ʿUrābī revolution. After the 1952 revolution he added the word revolutionary "Tha'ir" to the title and it became "al Zaʿīm al-Tha'ir Aḥmad ʿUrābī".³ Al-Rāfiʿī also added a sentence at the end of the new edition of the book - when discussing the reasons behind the failure of the revolution - in which he says that the external factors were stronger in effect than the internal factors in the failure of the revolution.⁴ This sentence contradicts all that he had in the original book about the responsibility of ʿUrābī for the failure of the revolution and the occupation of Egypt. By this sentence al-Rāfiʿī meant to minimize his attack on ʿUrābī, clearly adjusting to the new atmosphere created after 1952 in support of ʿUrābī. Al-Rāfiʿī's

1. Al-Rāfiʿī, al-Hilāl, September 1952, May 1953 and August 1953.

2. Al-Rāfiʿī, Muqaddimāt Thawrat 23 Yūlya 1952, 2nd. ed., 1964, pp.174-212.

3. Al-Rāfiʿī, al-Zaʿīm al-Tha'ir Aḥmad ʿUrābī, 3rd. ed., 1968.

4. Ibid., p.222.

article in al-Hilāl on September 1952, is also evidence for this change of attitude towards ʿUrābī. In a comparison between ʿUrābī and Muḥammad Najīb, the leader of the 1952 revolution, al-Rāfiʿī tempered his earlier accusations of Urabi by praising him and the other officers.¹

The previous examples are an indication of the way of al-Rāfiʿī's work was affected by the period in which he wrote - inspite of his insistence in all the introductions of his books of his noble intention and resolve to be neutral and only look for the truth. In spite of the shifts in al-Rāfiʿī's position on a number of issues he still insists that historical facts should not be changed.² He seems to believe that the national history of Egypt has been written definitively by him and that there is no need to write it once again. The issue of re-writing the history of Egypt comes to the surface after the 1952 revolution and became a topic for debate in the newspapers. Although al-Rāfiʿī accepted membership on the High Committee for Writing the National History - which was established in 1963 - he insisted several times in his talks that only topics which he had not covered should be written about.³ When reading the introductions to the second or third editions of al-Rāfiʿī's books he mentions that there was nothing new that needed to be added. He also stresses that he had looked at other sources on the subject and had not found anything contradictory to what he had written. He therefore published the new editions without any

1. Al-Rāfiʿī, ʿUrābī wa Muḥammad Najīb, al-Hilāl, September 1952, pp.9-12.

2. Al-Rāfiʿī, Thawrat 1919, Vol.I, p.5.

3. Ḥamādah M. Ismāʿīl, Op.cit., pp.197-199.

change.¹ This view of the writing of history as something static is naive in the extreme. There are always new facts and studies that appear and which throw light on different aspects of any given issue.

There is more evidence for the way in which al-Rāfi'ī was affected by the period he lived in. The period that witnessed the attempt of the Egyptian people to achieve their independence from Britain. The different Egyptian parties at that time played a major role in arousing the national feelings of the people. Within this context al-Rāfi'ī articulates his understanding of history:

"I became more attached to it (history) because I saw in it a useful way for cultivating the minds and raising the standard of national consciousness in the spirit. I found that history is a way by which the most civilized nations refer to in cultivating morals and minds and implanting the national spirit in people. From this, I became attached to history. I wanted to make of it a school for the advancement of the society...I found that the minds of the youth and old people do not understand facts unless national consciousness develops and the citizens know the reality of the circumstances of their country and how it developed in its different stages."²

Al-Rāfi'ī's views of the historian's role are also affected by his professions as a lawyer. He connects the writing of history with his professions in the following way:

"I think that being a lawyer served me well in my historical studies because when I understood the reality of human nature during the several cases I took, the facts that I obtained helped me in explaining the historical facts."³

He continues:

"The errors of modern Egyptian history are many-sided. But these errors do not veil the facts for the one who wants to look for it. Historical

1. Al-Rāfi'ī, ʿAṣr Ismāʿīl, Vol.I, p.7; ʿAṣr Muḥammad ʿAlī, 4th ed., 1982, p.7.

2. Aḥmad ʿAbd al-Raḥīm Muṣṭafa, Op.cit., p.43.

3. An interview with al-Rāfi'ī, al-Hilāl, November 1958, p.23.

events are like legal cases between individuals. Everyone who is doing research on history should investigate the facts and extract them from contradictory stories."¹

Al-Rāfi'ī's attitude in regard to other subjects such as unity between the different political parties and with the Palace is also a product of the total circumstances of the period he lived in. During that period, Egypt was under British control. There was also a serious conflict between the different political parties. This situation prompted al-Rāfi'ī to call always for unity, under all circumstances. If we add to this the good relations of Muṣṭafa Kāmil - the spiritual father of al-Rāfi'ī - with the Palace and the Porte, we can understand better al-Rāfi'ī's insistence on unity. Al-Rāfi'ī believes that this 'magic medicine' is applicable in all situations beginning with the French invasion in 1798, through the 'Urābī and 1919 revolution and onwards. To this belief one may attribute his conviction that the achievements of the 1919 revolution should be the basis for future development and that all classes of the Egyptian people should not reject it.² This view is consistent with that of the National Party in maintaining to constitutional monarchy system.

The final issue I propose to discuss is the way al-Rāfi'ī deals with the facts he collects. He says on this point:

"The duty of the historian is to record the important incidents in history and to explain its causes because without this explanation history loses its benefit and spirit and it becomes rigid and closed and does not serve its purpose which is

1. Al-Rāfi'ī, Akhṭa' al-Tārīkh al-Miṣrī al-Hadīth, al-Hilāl, March 1944, p.185.

2. Faṭḥī Khalīl, al-Rāfi'ī wa Thawrat Miṣṭ al Thalathat, al-Ṭalī'a, February 1967, p.70.

the broadening of the scientific mind of the reader of history."¹

As I have attempted to demonstrate, frequently, al-Rāfi^ʿī does not stick to these noble sentiments. The result is history which is frequently far from scientific.

A related point has to do with the sources of information draws on. Although al-Rāfi^ʿī refers to numerous documents and primary sources, in many cases he just write down the information without refering to any source whatsoever. When he published the first volume of his book "Tārīkh al-Ḥaraka al-Qawmīya", in 1929, he was accused of using the work of Aḥmad^ʿAwad "Fath Miṣr", without refering to him. A great deal of debate took place in the newspapers of the time on this issue but finally, the matter was dropped by mutual agreement.²

However, it must not be assumed from the foregoing critical view of al-Rāfi^ʿī's historical approach that there are no positive aspects on this work. The books of al-Rāfi^ʿī remain major sources of information on the political history of Egypt over about one hundred and fifty years. His work is justly considered as the most popular series on the Egyptian history. As Louīs^ʿAwad has said:

"The work of al-Rāfi^ʿī affected and is still affecting successive generations of Egyptians on all levels from the forties...We find it as major source in the footnotes of specialists... We also find it as a part of the historical culture of the educated class since the forties".³

1. Al-Rāfi^ʿī, Fī A^ʿqāb Thawrat 1919, Vol.I, p.59.

2. Ḥamādah M. Ismā^ʿīl, Op.cit., pp.194-195.

3. Louīs^ʿAwad, al-Tārīkh Bayn al-Thāt wa'l Mawdū^ʿ, al-Muṣawwir, May 18, 1984, p.35.

Al-Rāfi'ī wrote several other books on other subjects other than the modern national history of Egypt, such as Huqūq al-Sha'b, al-Jam'iyāt al-Waṭanīya, Shu'arā' al-Waṭanīya Fī Miṣr, Tārīkh al-Ḥaraka al-Waṭanīya Fī Miṣr al-Qadīma and others. But they did not meet with the same success and popularity and it will be by his works on the history of the national movement that he will be remembered.

CONCLUSION

The above study has been at pains to point out that al-Rāfiʿī's negative attitude in regard to the ʿUrābī revolution can only be understood in the light of the following factors: Firstly, most of the writings on the revolution after 1882 were deeply affected by the prevailing atmosphere of defeat and pessimism and the negative impact of the British occupation on Egyptians. Not unaturally, they came out blaming the leadership of the revolution as being responsible for this occupation. The works of Muḥammad ʿAbduḥ and Salīm al-Naqqāsh are a good example of this tendency. Even those who took part in it and were themselves leaders of the revolution, such as Maḥmūd Fahmī, criticized the behaviour of its leadership.

Secondly, the National Movement, of which al-Rāfiʿī was one of its leaders, had at that time good relations with the Palace - especially during the reign of ʿAbbās Ḥilmī II. No doubt, al-Rāfiʿī was affected by this amicable relationship when he wrote his book on the ʿUrābī revolution.

Thirdly, the negative attitude of the National Party and Muṣṭafa Kāmil towards the revolution had affected al-Rāfiʿī. Furthermore, al-Rāfiʿī's approach to the writing history and his emphasis on the subjective factors and individual determinism involved in shaping the events of history undoubtedly influenced his interpretation of the events of the revolution. To the above factors one can attribute al-Rāfiʿī's attitude in regard to the revolution. Although he accepts the fact that the revolution was a national movement, yet he was unjust when he makes ʿUrābī as responsible as the Khedive Tawfīq for the British occupation.

Besides al-Rāfi'ī's emphasis on the role of individuals, his discussion of the events is superficial. He fails to explain why each class of the Egyptian people joined the revolution and how this support was elicited and translated into practical action. This becomes clear, also, when he fails to give any information as to 'Urābī's participation in any revolutionary action against the Khedive and the government before Qasr al-Nīl incident in February 1881 - this participation which brought 'Urābī to the point where he emerged as the natural leader of the revolution.

Al-Rāfi'ī was not able to recognize the clash of interests and aspirations of the different classes of the Egyptian society. Thus, he keeps calling for unity between the different parties without differentiating the supporters of the revolution from its enemies. For this reason he ignores important facts concerning the correspondence of the Khedive with the British officials and the help they gave him in order to suppress the revolution. Inexplicably, he considers the Khedive as a part of the national front. For the same reason he does not believe that any conspiracy by the Circassians against the leadership of the revolution had actually occurred.

Al-Rāfi'ī's defence of the political motives of Sharīf Pāshā is one of the major errors in his discussion of the 'Urābī revolution. He believes that if Sharīf had remained in power and in control of the situation, then everything would have worked out better. However, Sharīf's intention of getting rid of the revolution when he failed to control it, was perfectly clear.

Al-Rāfi'ī's main purpose seems to have been to look for the errors in 'Urābī and the other leaders of the revolution. He accuses Urabi of being a dictator looking to his own private interests. He believes that 'Urābī's extremist position and policies resulted in the British occupation - such as when he insisted on discussing the budget in the Chamber of Deputies, when he refused to leave the country when he was told to do so by the British officials and when he called the Chamber of Deputies into session without informing the Khedive.

The same position is taken by al-Rāfi'ī when the war with the British forces took place. He believes that 'Urābī lacked political and military experience and that this resulted in the defeat. He was unable to see clearly the over-riding priority attached by Britain to the occupation of Egypt.

Contrary to the truth, al-Rāfi'ī accuses 'Urābī of going back on his convictions and of exposing himself to moral defeat during his trial.

However, inspite of all these critical views, al-Rāfi'ī's work on the 'Urābī revolution expressed here, remains one of the major sources of information on this significant period in Egyptian history.

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