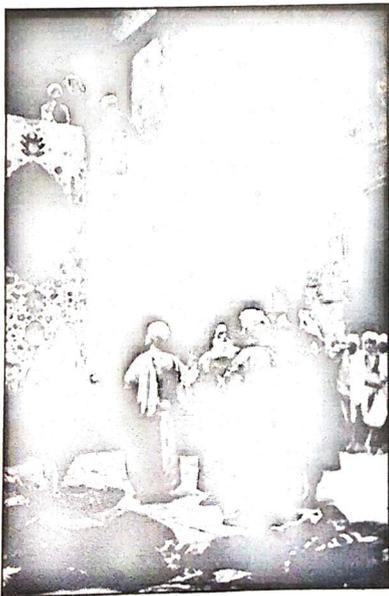
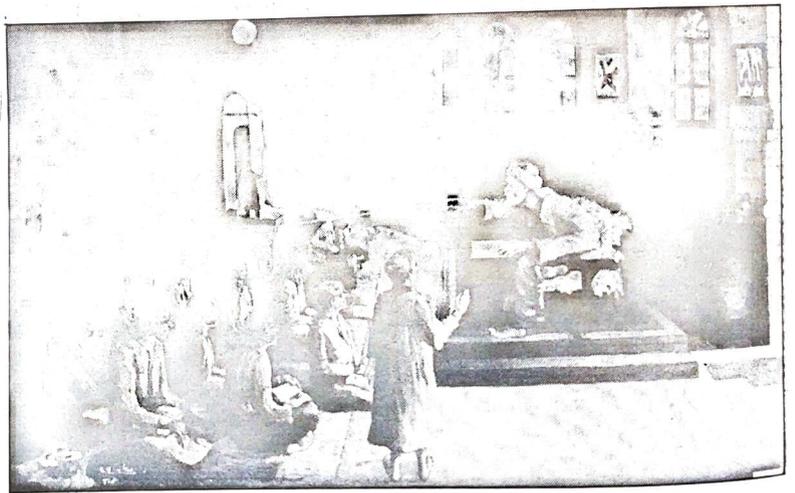
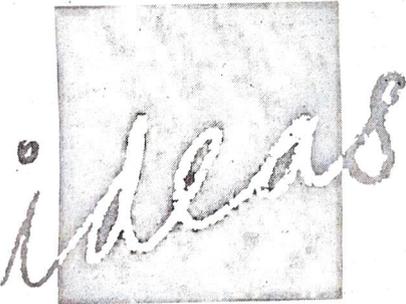


# Conflicting Trends



Egypt has for long been pulled towards both the traditions of Socratic Europe and those of Islam. **Karim Alrawi** reviews and discusses the conflicting intellectual trends

TO know where to start any discussion of the various contending ideas on the Egyptian scene is like trying to fish in murky waters. You can see the waters swirling, but you can never be sure where to first cast your net. You just have to take a chance and try to catch the first fish that pops up. What

ever happens, though, you know you are not going to catch all the fish in a net the size of this article, but here goes.

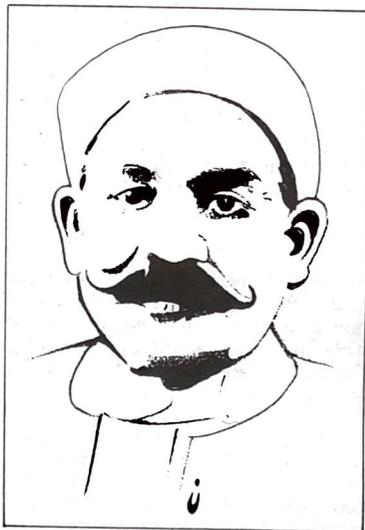
In 1948 Taha Hussain, the writer and critic, visited the ancient ruins of Athens and there declared that: "For three centuries, on this strip of land...

Mankind discovered that it possessed a mind, emotions and a conscience, and for that reason has a right to freedom and dignity...During those three centuries and on this tight little piece of land, democracy took root, and so Mankind discovered that the right to rule was not divinely bestowed from heaven, but that it rose up from the earth binding the ruler and the ruled with a social contract...that set all as equal before the law." These views were as controversial then as they are now, representing what Dr Ali Aumleel has called a "migration to the source" and which he opposes to Sayed Qutb's own "migration" which we will look at later.

Taha Hussain was born in 1889 in a small village called Izbit al-Kilo on the outskirts of the Upper Egyptian town of Maghagha. He came from a large and impoverished family. He was blinded in childhood by the incompetence of the local barber-cum-surgeon, a common feature of the Egyptian village scene in those days. He took up a traditional religious education, and despite the severe physical handicap of blindness he was able to break new ground by becoming the first graduate of Egypt's first modern university. Later he was to become the first Egyptian Dean of its Faculty of Arts and the first Egyptian to be nominated for the Nobel Prize for literature.

Over a number of years he was to move from a defender of traditionalism, condemning in the most uncompromising terms and proscribing, contrary to the Qur'an and the Sunna, mixed marriages between Muslim men and Christian or Jewish women, to being a harbinger of modernism in all its guise. His youthful writing, just prior to the outbreak of the First World War, was strident and impassioned. One of his favourite targets was the leading prose-writer of the day al-Manfaluti, another was the government's lax attitude to sexual mores which included its willingness to licence prostitution. By the time of the upsurge in Egyptian nationalist activity, which culminated in the 1919 revolution against British rule, he had changed his call from one of Innovation to that of Renovation. He had become convinced that early Muslim civilization had been strong and vigorous because it had been willing to confront the challenge of Hellenism and adapt freely from it, secure in the belief that the acquisition of knowledge was in conformity with the will of God.

He held secure to the belief that the intellect was capable of reshaping society, and that if Muslim society was weak that was because it was too insecure to absorb and digest what other cultures had to offer. In this quest for modernism he was to set out to test the Arabic language and Muslim culture, as a process of re-discovery that would enable them to confront the challenges of the contemporary world. With particular zeal he threw himself into a range of arguments that were about some of the



**Al Manfaluti: Early Egyptian novelist**

most vital issues of the day. Feeling himself to be engaged often in fierce polemic he was prone to state his case in uncompromising terms, so that a moment in an ongoing debate would take on a sense of stating an eternal truth. In the rapid fire of an intellectual give-and-take some of his ideas, stated with an air of certainty, were sometimes ill-formed and poorly thoughtout. Yet, for all that, he became a central figure on the intellectual scene for at least three decades, writing over sixty books on political, literary and educational subjects.

Taha Hussain believed that there was only one Civilization and that it was a World Civilization; in the same way as there is only one race the Human Race. At the same time, this was not to deny the existence of many civilizations within this broad umbrella; just as there are many races. This plurality within the singular allowed him to identify key moments in the development of World Civilization and see them as pertaining to the

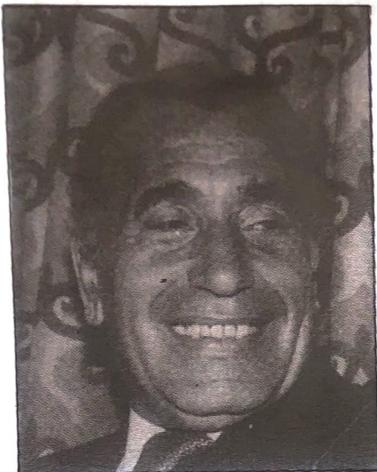
whole of the human Race. In that way, he claimed, the achievements of ancient Athens are as much part of a Muslim's heritage, or a Chinaman's as it is of a modern Western European. These seminal moments within the broad unity of Human history are also moments of intellectual liberation, so that it was in Athens that philosophy and religion parted ways and for the first time were free of each other. It was also in Athens that power and leadership were separated through a process of legitimacy that was called democracy.

Several times Taha Hussain erred, through force of argument or through poor reasoning, into making Egypt appear a part of the West rather than making Egypt and the West be a part of that great, unified Civilization. It would be easy to excuse him on the grounds of his being a polemicist writing for an immediate debate, but it is undoubtedly a lack of intellectual rigor on his part that has led some to dismiss him as an apologist for the West rather than see him as a Muslim modernist.



**Taha Hussain: Manfaluti's fierce critic**

If Taha Hussain represents one pole of the argument then Sayed Qutb represents a very different line of argument. Qutb was born in 1906 in the town of Musha in the central Egyptian province of Asyut. His father was a member of Mutafa Kamil's *Hezb el-Ummah*, or National Party, and was a regular subscriber to their journal *al-Liwa'*. His was a fami-



**Mohammed H Haikal: In the one world tradition**

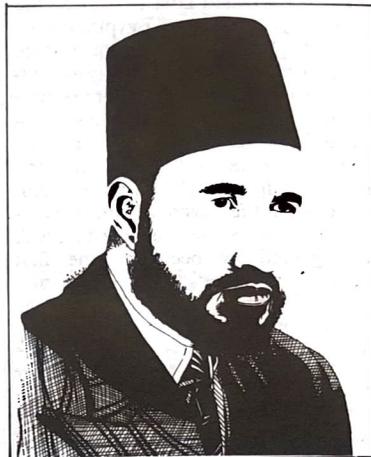
ly of local notables going through hard times. He was brought up in a political environment with strong anti-British sentiments. After graduating from the local state school he was sent to Cairo to complete his education at *Dar el-Ulum*, the city's modern teacher-training college. This was the college that Hassan el-Banna, the founder of the Muslim Brotherhood, had attended almost ten years earlier. For sixteen years he was employed by the Ministry of Education. He eventually settled in Helwan, a town on the outskirts of Greater Cairo. For a very brief period one of his superiors at the Ministry was Taha Hussain. But it was not towards the ideals of modernism that Qutb was drawn. On the contrary, it was to the ideas of one of the other major intellectual figures of the time that he was initially attracted.

Mahmud 'Abbas el-Aqad was a journalist, essayist and novelist who

He had drifted away from the party when Nahas Pasha succeeded to the leadership. Growing increasingly disillusioned with the party political scene and with the broad mass of Egyptian people, Mahmud el-Aqad devoted himself to writing a series of books about the prophets, including the Blessed Prophet Muhammad, and works on the leading companions. It is this "migration to the source", as Dr Ali Aumleel has already referred to it, that was to have a profound effect on Sayid Qutb.

Like el-Aqad, Qutb was a journalist, whom el-Aqad had helped get his first work published. He was a poet, a short story writer and an author of several semi-autobiographical novels. He was also a good polemicist, frequently attacking the views of Taha Hussain and other modernists. He was a little too good for his own welfare, upsetting King Farouk in the late forties and only escaping arrest due to his old, though largely defunct, ties with the Wafd. Partly as a means of winning him over, partly as a gentle form of exile, he was sent off to the United States, in 1948, to conduct a study on the American educational system. It was on the liner going over, leaving his world behind, that Sayid Qutb rediscovered Islam. In America it was, what he perceived to be, the promiscuity of the West that most appalled him. He was particularly, and justifiably, disgusted by the pleasure that many Americans expressed over the assassination of Hassan el-Banna. On his return to Egypt in 1951 he denounced the American way of life and promptly got the sack from his ministry job. That year he joined the Muslim Brotherhood. In 1952 he was elected to the Brotherhood's Guidance Council and nominated head of the organisa-

tion in jail. During his period of incarceration Qutb wrote the two works for which he is best known, *Fi Zil al-Qur'an* and *Ma'alim Fil Tariq*. The first is his extensive commentary on the Qur'an and the second has been described as the "What Is To Be Done?" (Tariq el-Bishri in *Al-Arabi* 1982) of the radical Islamic movement. It would be fair to say that by 1951 Qutb had established himself as the Muslim Brotherhood's leading intellectual figure with a broad range of titles to his credit, from a book on Artistic Imagery in the Qur'an through to works on Aspects of The Resurrection and Islamic doctrine. With *Ma'alim* he developed a language that was culturally consistent and with which he castigated modern



**Hassan el-Banna: Founder of the Muslim Brotherhood**

society and set out a blue print for change. He was briefly released in 1964 only to be re-arrested and charged with responsibility for another attempt on Nasser's life. On the 29th of August 1966 Sayed Qutb was executed. To this day it is unclear whether such a plot ever existed, or whether Qutb had any knowledge of any such attempts to destabilise the regime.

*Ma'alim* is rich with resonances, which explain much of the work's interest for radical Muslim groups. The death of Sayed Qutb, so soon after the publication of this book, has meant that some of the more ambiguous sections remain without the necessary explication that would resolve these uncertainties. Some of the subsequent tensions between the Muslim Brotherhood and the other more radical groups owe something to differences of interpretation of their political role in the light of *Ma'alim*.

## **Syed Qutb was disgusted by the pleasure that many Americans expressed over the assassination of Hassan el-Banna**

had established a considerable reputation for himself. He was a self-taught man whose impact extended beyond the literary salons that many of his contemporaries frequented. He had been a loyal supporter of the Wafd party, the major nationalist force in the country during the twenties and thirties, and its leader Saad Zaghloul.

ation's department of da'wa. Over the next couple of years he moved to positions of greater prominence, before being arrested by the new regime of Free Officers. Nasser, their leader, had accused the Brotherhood of attempting to assassinate him.

In 1955 Qutb was tortured, put on trial and sentenced to twenty five

In some respects Qutb could be said to be more radical in some of his perceptions than say Al-Afghani, or Sheikh Abduh or Iqbal for unlike them he rejected completely the concept of the nation state. For Qutb, calls to apply the Islamic Shari'a or to institute an Islamic constitution are a recognition of the sufficiency of the nation state and therefore a betrayal of the more truly Islamic concept of the Umma. The source, for Qutb, had to be the Islamic society of the Blessed Prophet and his companions. The further away from that source one moved in time the greater was the corruption in society. Present day society, according to Qutb, is in a state of *Jahalaya* (ignorance or barbarism), as it was before the advent of

Hijra. The struggle for change is itself, therefore, an act of *Jihad*. These concepts were to have an explosive impact during the seventies and in the period up to the assassination of President Sadat in 1981.

The response from the Muslim establishment was immediate and predictable. Sheikh Sibki of Al-Azhar accused Qutb of being a Kharijite and blasphemous. Even the Muslim Brotherhood were hesitant in endorsing his views. The General Guide of the Brotherhood, Hidaybi, was careful in his book *Du'ah la Qudah*, (Preachers not Judges), to draw short of the term *Jahalaya*, preferring the similar word *Jahl*, ignorance, which is devoid of historical resonances and the broader, more controversial, connotations. People were simply ignor-

Islamic struggle, but had also remained as its most radical advocate.

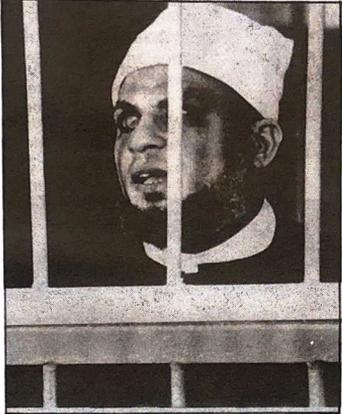
If Taha Hussain and Sayed Qutb represent two of the major poles around which cluster many of the combatants in the cultural debate, it is also true to say that there is much open ground between them which is illuminated by many lesser lights. If Sayed Qutb stands for a revolutionary interpretation of the Islamic message then Sheikh Sha'rawi's is the most respected of the conservatives.

Sheikh Sha'rawi is a man whose undoubted piety and humility have won him many supporters. His complete *fatwas* have been published in two modest volumes and his articles have appeared in the press. His interviews are often broadcast on television. His popularity has been, to a degree, bestowed upon him unasked for and is largely due to his unassuming character, more than to the intellectual originality of his ideas. Those who take issue with him find themselves having to face a storm of protest.

This was the case when Zaki Naguib Mahmud and Yusif Idriss expressed their disagreement, separately and with some caution, with Sheikh Sha'rawi's views. Yusif Idriss's specific complaint was that Sheikh Sha'rawi was, in his opinion, an obscurantist who had little respect for modern education. It should be said that the need for the revival of the highest standards of education in the Muslim World is a favourite theme of Yusif Idriss. The education of the broadest mass of the people to the greatest possible level is, for him, an essential condition for the revival of Egypt and its ability to confront the imperialist powers. The result was a concerted attack on both these writers in the Egyptian press



Sayed Qutb: The major ideologue

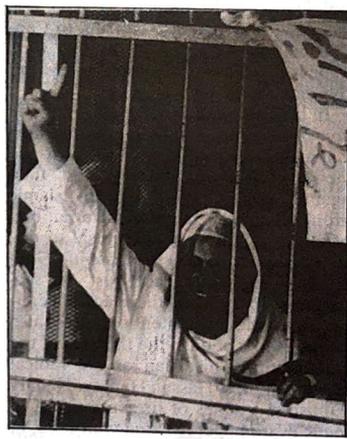


Umar Abdul Rahman: The spiritual leader of al-Jihad Group

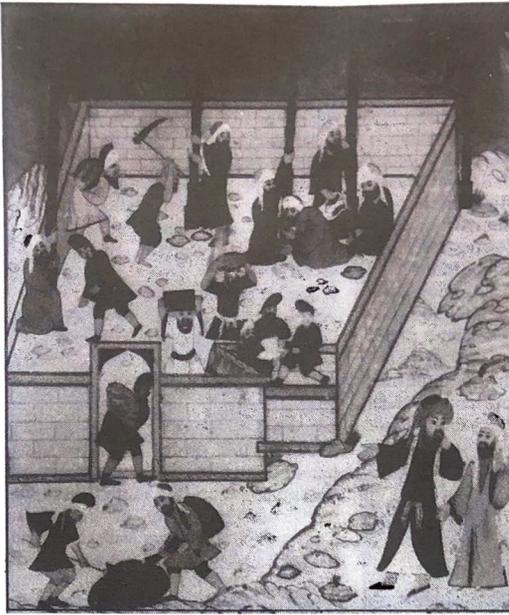
the Blessed Prophet and his message. It is this concept that is the most controversial of Qutb's ideas. The exact emphasis that he wished that word to carry is not altogether clear, but it is the interpretation chosen that has marked the difference between the radical groups and the Muslim Brotherhood. The idea that a whole society is in a state of *Jahalaya*, regardless of whether its individuals pray, fast and carry out their own, strictly personal, religious obligations is one that can lead to a number of conclusions. It is, in effect, an excommunication of the whole of society and a call for revolutionary change. It also carries with it the implication that a vanguard that sought to change that society needs to set itself up as a separate society so as not to be a part of this general state of barbarism. Thus, we have the logical development of the concepts of Takfir and

ant of Islam and, for Hidaybi, this was to be remedied by preaching and not by passing judgment. It is this difference between the exponents of social salvation through preaching and those who advocate revolution that divides, to this day, the Islamic movement in Egypt. The distancing of the Muslim Brotherhood from the ideas of Sayed Qutb continue to the present. It was not until 1982 that the third General Guide of the Brotherhood, Omar Tilmisani, declared: "Sayed Qutb represents himself alone and not the Muslim Brotherhood."

During the late seventies and early eighties a process of 'revising' and 'interpreting' Qutb was got underway by the reformist wing of the Islamic movement in an attempt to cut the theoretical ground from under the more revolutionary groups. It is a measure of Sayed Qutb's stature that he had not just defined the intellectual terrain of the



Islamboll: Sadat's assassin



Egypt has built the house of Islam on the site of one of the oldest of civilisations

that eventually led Yusif Idrisi to issue a muddled retraction and a poor explanation of what he is supposed to have said.

Sheikh Sha'rawi stirred up another storm when he stated on Egyptian television that the inventors of the Kleenex tissue and the matchstick had benefited mankind immeasurably more than the inventors of the space satellite. This was seen to be an attempt at disparaging the value of technology and the rational mind. Battle was joined when Fu'ad Zakarya, a rising star of the left, published a book indicting what he calls the "da'wa to ignorance". Sheikh Sha'rawi's resort to describing the contemporary political scene in terms of Romans versus Ancient Persians, referring to Capitalism and Communism in this way, appears to have incensed Zakarya all the more.

In his book *Truth and Fantasy In The contemporary Islamic Movement* Zakarya takes up cudgels against the views of Sheikh Sha'rawi and then against the Egyptian radical Islamic groups, accusing them of sectarian bigotry. He points to their refusal to distribute Imam Khomeini's *Islamic Government* as proof, not just of sectarianism, but also of their lack of genuine revolutionary intentions. He also attempts to demolish the theories of the contemporary historian of the radical Muslim groups, Hassan Hanafy. Hanafy published a series of fifteen articles, in the Kuwaiti paper *Al-Wattan* in 1982, in which he described the outcome of his detailed study of the Jihad group, that



had assassinated President Sadat in 1981. The ideas he set out have been generally accepted as being an accurate reflection of the group's self-image and revolutionary aims. It should be said that the broad outlines of his position are not very far from those arrived at by Adil Hamuda, author of two best selling books on the Jihad group. His first *The Killing of The President* sold out in forty-eight hours of hitting the bookshops. Incredibly enough, its publication was met with a total absence of any critical reviews and a total silence in the state

press. Fu'ad Zakarya is disparaging of these views because he believes that they attribute to the contemporary radical groups a greater political awareness than they really possess. He is firmly of the opinion that they are dupes of the establishment and that, in the final analysis, they do not challenge its injustices. As regards the application of the Shari'a, he argues that for it to be made relevant to the modern age it needs to be revised thoroughly through an interpretation of the sacred texts. The Shari'ah, therefore, can only be as good as the contemporary interpreters of the Qur'an and Sunna, whom he considers to be hopelessly inadequate to perform the task. He accuses them of being stuck in an archaic world that has hardly changed since the day of the Khalifa Umar.

These are harsh words, but Fu'ad Zakarya is no less sparing of a favourite target of the Islamic groups, the writer Muhammad Hassanien Heikal, the one time associate of President Nasser. Heikal has built up a considerable reputation for himself, first during the Nasser era, as editor of the highly influential newspaper *Al-Ahram*, and then as a wri-

ter of books about the Nasser and Sadat presidencies. Much of his writing has been translated into English and French, which has given him an audience far beyond the confines of the Arab World. The main bone of contention between Heikal and his critics is over his role during the Sadat years. In his book *Autumn of Fury* he paints a picture of himself as being close to the ex-president during the first four years of his rule, then gradually drifting further away from him as their aims became different. Fu'ad Zakarya castigates him for

what he sees as his bad faith in writing a book aimed primarily for the American reader. It was first written in English then translated into Arabic and as a result is full of odd anachronisms for the Egyptian reader. Zakarya's charge is not just one of intellectual dishonesty, it is also that Heikal was trying to further ingratiate himself with the Americans. There are times when the arguments become a little too contorted and disingenuous, as with his attack on Sha'rawi, but at the end he does present a strong case.

A similar attack against Heikal, for *Autumn of Fury*, was launched, from an Islamic perspective, by Muhamad Moro. His is a slim volume of forty eight pages of self-righteous fury, not wholly without justification, as Moro's arguments show. Heikal is portrayed as being the sharp edge of the wedge of intellectual dependency, that aims to split the Muslim people of Egypt and weaken their resolve in facing the imperialist onslaught. On page twenty-three Moro makes interesting use of the concept of contradictions to substantiate his claim. This is a more well reasoned book than the one Moro wrote about Sheikh Salama and the civilian resistance to the Israelis in the 1973 war. In that work Moro resorted more to the magical than the credible in explaining the events of that struggle. Nevertheless, Heikal appears to be getting it from both sides, but not without good reason.

The whole issue of dependency is one that has exercised the minds of a large number of Egypt's intellectuals. The issue is a large and complex one. The increased dependency on U.S. food supplies will pose a thorny problem for any regime that aims to guide Egypt into a position of independence and self-determination. One of the most consistent contributors to this discussion is the quarterly journal *Fikr* which is edited by Tahir Abdel Hakim and to which Fu'ad Zakarya is a regular contributor.

al-Zayad and edited by Radwa 'Ashoor whose avowed aim is to defend national culture against the western onslaught. Less heavy weight than *Fikr*, it is, nevertheless, packed with articles that cover a wide range of topics: from conference reports to analyses of the American cultural machine. It appears irregularly, roughly every three or four months and is generally quickly bought out.

*Fikr* is a journal of an exceptionally consistent high standard that publishes some excellent articles. A recently published, critique of Orientalism entitled *Orientalism And The Crisis In Arab Culture*, by Fu'ad Zakarya is an extension of the Taha Hussain position, set out earlier, in which the author sees Orientalism as a two edged threat generating a sense of insufficiency and a desire for dependency in the cultures that are subject to its biased descriptions. As with some of Zakarya's other works it seems to delight sometimes in stating the obvious and meandering for a while before yielding up its real insights. Other articles on *The Strategy of Development*, by Ramsey Zaki, and *Food Deficiency in Egypt*, by Muhamad Abu Mandor, are lucid and detailed descriptions of key national problems. The editor of *Fikr*, Tahir Abdel Hakim, has recently published a history of the country through the development of the Egyptian national character. The book is well written and fascinating in many places, but the conclusions are based on very dubious premises about the introduction of private property into Egypt and, dare I say it, Marx's definition of the decidedly fictitious Asiatic Mode of Production. The book does correctly identify the Urabi revolution against the semi-feudal order and foreign interference in the internal affairs of Egypt in 1882, as being a genuine revolution inspired by the ideas of Jamal Al-Din Al-Afghani. A revolution that was thwarted by Britain's invasion of the country.

A recent bumper edition, of over



Now it is ideas that are bartered in place of cloth

political question, 'Who Rules Egypt?' The issue on dependency was the strongest so far.

The existence of these new magazines and journals is a testament to the intellectual turbulence that has beset Egypt. Despite the proliferation of views and stand points, what does appear to be lacking is a proper base for dialogue between the exponents of different solutions.

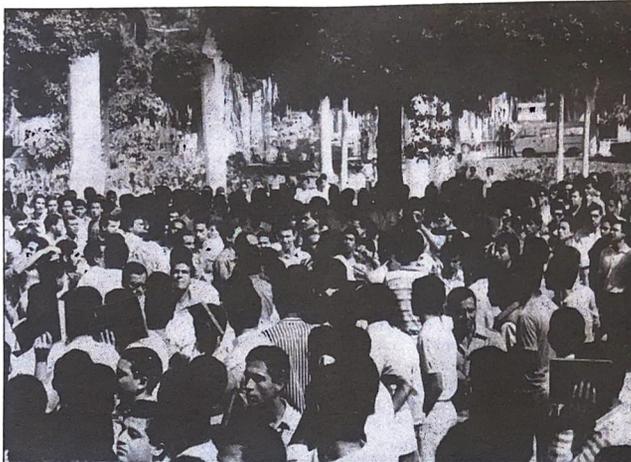
Closely related to the subject of dependency is that of Nasserism. The key period is that of 1957 to 1965 when Egypt gained a great deal of independence in the face of a hostile West. The objective of the various analyses is not just to come to terms with the recent past, but also to see if it is at all possible to plot out an alternative future to the one that Egypt appears set to follow. This is clearly the aim of Kamal Ahmad as well as other Nasserists. He has now published a book titled *Nasserism And The Third World*. There is actually precious little of the Third World in the book. The social ideology that Kamal Ahmad propounds is, unfortunately, vacuous and the economics nonexistent. If there is anything to be said for the book it has to be that it is strikingly bound in a dazzling white cover.

Much more pertinent to the subject are the well considered arguments presented by Galal Amin, the economics professor from the American University

### Sheikh Sha'awi stirred up a storm when he stated on television that the inventors of the Kleenex tissue and the match stick had benefited mankind more than those of the space satellite

But dependency also has an intellectual and cultural dimension, which in the short term may be of modest significance, but in the long term can be even more damaging to any attempt at self-determination. *Al-Muwajaha* is a journal published on behalf of the Unionist Party by a committee chaired by Latifah

three hundred tightly printed pages, of *Qadaya Fikrayah*, a quarterly journal, was devoted to the subject of dependency. It would be impossible to even begin to outline the scope of the twenty articles that made up the issue. Previous issues have been on 'The Crisis in the Egyptian Economy' and the sensitive



of Cairo. His analysis is too detailed to present here, but broadly he argues that the failure of Nasserism was largely a function of the changing world economic situation. Nasserism, with its non-aligned policies and its aim of economic independence, could only survive in a special environment. By the early seventies the conditions had greatly changed making a policy of separate development almost impossible. Galal Amin has also contributed to the dependency debate by publishing various papers on the post 1965 period as well as a book on the Arabs and the West. His views are not easy to dismiss given the weight of his arguments and his detailed reasoning.

Adopting quite a different approach is Muhamad Duweydar who considers the failure of Nasserism to be attributable to internal circumstances within Egypt. The argument is basically that Nasserism did not go far enough in its social transformations so as to secure itself against a reversion to dependency capitalism. He particularly signals out the countryside as a repository of reactionary resistance to change. Nasserism, he maintains, by failing to extend its agricultural reforms far enough effectively left the real power in the hands of the middle and rich peasantry. These were classes that were bound to resist state intervention and guidance in the economy. With the implementation of the Five Year Plan, between 1959 and 1964/5, they perceived the scale of the threat to their privileged position. They then formed an alliance with the big traders to thwart further state involvement in the economy. From 1965 onwards, argues Duweydar, Nasserism was on the retreat. The 1967 war simply accelerated the inevitable.

It is instructive to compare the views of both these economists. They both argue for the necessity of the demise of Nasserism, but for almost opposite reasons. This, of course, does not refute either view-point, as the arguments are not mutually exclusive. What it does is to put on the defensive anyone arguing either for Nasserism, or Egyptian self-determination, the two terms being virtually synonymous in the context of non-Marxist development. But this is precisely the challenge taken up by the controversial Muslim economist Adil Hus-sain. Through the course of two books he sets out his case with clarity and intel-

ligence. The first of the books *The Egyptian Economy from Independence to Dependency* is a carefully argued analysis of the Sadat years, while *Towards a New Arab Ideology* is an analysis of Nasserism, Socialism and Liberal Capitalism.

Hussain tackles the crises in both Marxist economic theory and Liberal Capitalism by showing where both theories are deficient. He adopts an interesting perspective on Marxism by arguing that the crisis in Marxist general theory is due to its considering all wealth as being generated by social labour and ignoring the value of natural resources. This assumption could have only, he argues, taken root in an imperialist society where the resources of the Third World were taken for granted. It is also in contradiction to the Islamic concept of man's vice-regency of the earth. He also points out that this factor was well known to Ibn Khaldun who allowed for it in his social analyses. The Capitalist theoretical crisis arises, maintains Hussain, out of the assumptions held concerning the workings of the Free Market, that favourite fiction of the monetarist economists. He shows that world markets are not free but manipulated, and by analysing the capitalist economies during of war, shows that the 'organising' of market forces is necessary for the normal working of the market.

He also takes on the praise of Athenian civilization, as in Taha Hus-sain's quotation that starts this article, by showing the democracy that prevailed there was based on the most



Egypt's new generation: Between the university and the mosque

subject forms of slavery and disenfranchisement of the majority of the city's population. He then sets out a counter-argument to demonstrate that both Egypt and China had civilizations far in advance, both structurally and institutionally, as well as being more genuinely humane, than that of Ancient Greece. It is an argument he executes with great skill and conviction. Hussain's books, especially the latter, range far and wide over a broad range of subjects. This is consistent with his view that the breaking down of the social sciences into separate topics is a symptom of the growing intellectual crisis in the West. He, therefore, refuses to confine himself to the purely economic as this, he believes, has no validity on its own. The key to his analysis is the study of state institutions as interacting units. In this way the significance of the economic can be observed as it impinges on the social. This approach dispenses with the problems of defining the meaning of classes in a Third World context and allows for an analysis of power through its instruments and manifestations.

Adil Hussain has been attacked strongly by the left who accuse him of confusing complex issues. They are also disparaging about his dismissal of class categories, especially the catch-all term 'petit bourgeoisie'. It is not that Hussain denies that classes exist. It is just that in situations where class structures are blurred an analysis based on such imprecise categories are label themselves to be imprecise. But also class analysis is yet another case of the splitting of the economic and the social that Hussain sees as symptomatic of the western perception of society. Hussain also believes that there is a need for a dialogue between what he calls West-educated intellectuals and Muslim-minded intellectuals. The need for a dialogue is something that Samir Amin, the Marxist economist is also calling for.

Samir Amin's position is an interesting one as he has recently, in his book *The Crisis in Arab Society*, admitted a debt to Sayid Qutb's ideas, and to having been stimulated by them into a rethink on what he calls the 'Tributary Mode of Production'. He has also made a plea for a rapprochement between radical Muslims and Marxists. He argues that Marxists must recognise the importance of the contribution of Muslim revolutionaries, such as Jallal Al-Din Al-Afghani and Sheikh Abdud, and that they need to accept that Marxism has its limits of applicability. He discusses Marx's concepts of alienation as defining the heart as well as the boundaries of the theory. Marx's views on religion were conditioned by a specific

form of Christianity in nineteenth century Europe. But religion has a necessary role, which is largely ignored by Marxists as, simply, 'Man's alienation from Nature.' For Samir Amin, Marxism is a method of social analysis, a tool to be used to arrive at a solution. It is not, and should never be, a substitute for religion. His new book is a radical and honest rethink by a major contemporary thinker, and as such is very refreshing. What is interesting, if not a little amusing, is the disclaimer on the book's cover by the publishing house. Clearly, they find Samir Amin's conciliatory moves towards the Islamic movement too disturbing to allow themselves to be openly associated with.

Zakarya is a sharp and incisive critic of ideas and ideologies and Gallal Amin is unquestionably an exceptional and perceptive economist, but it is Adel Hussain and Samir Amin who appear to try to marry both of those faculties to the messy practicalities of real politik. Though, they are more heavy weight than most of the other writers referred

to. The ideology was simply a dressing up of practical politics. But if ideology has such a secondary role to play how can he call for a return to Islamic values as a way of achieving a degree of national regeneration? Ideology is either critical or superfluous. It cannot be both.

Similar doubts hang over some of Samir Amin's arguments on the role of ideology in changing from one mode of production to another. If ideology played a crucial part in the transition from feudal to capitalist modes of production in Europe why should it play a less crucial role in the Muslim World? Surely, it is through developing an ideology that a class acquires an image of itself and its mission in history. In that case the consciousness raising quality of ideologies is always necessary for rational, collective action, and genuine revolutionary change. The other major question that Samir Amin's latest book raises but does not answer adequately is: why Egypt's attempts to industrialise at the beginning of the last century

**Marx's views on religion were conditioned by a specific form of Christianity in nineteenth century Europe. But religion has a necessary role to play which is largely ignored**

to in this article there is much in their writings that appears questionable and inconclusive.

Hussain's analysis of Egypt through its institutions is a method that can not be easily extended to other Third World countries in which the state is not as centralised and fixed. How different are his studies from those on bureaucracy conducted by Max Weber over fifty years ago? The class structure may be fluid in a country that has not achieved a high level of industrialisation, but does a rudimentary form of class consciousness, or worker solidarity not form at critical moments of struggle? If so then it must be wrong to ignore completely such a phenomenon. Class concepts may be incorrectly used by the ignorant, or the opportunistic, but does that negate their validity? But probably the most serious criticism of Hussain's arguments have to do with his presentation of the evolution of the Russian and Chinese revolutions.

Hussain is undoubtedly right to point out that much of the social and economic reorganisation of both China and the Soviet Union, after the socialist revolutions, was not dependent on ideology but on economic and political nec-

ness. A failure while Japan's was such a success? Japanese society appears to have been just as centralised and as different from European society as Egypt's, yet, it was able to accomplish what Egypt failed to do. Japan effected the critical transition to a major industrial power in just over a century. Is it not, therefore, relevant to suppose that the proximity to Europe was a factor that affected the fate of the two eastern countries, and how would such a consideration affect any social analysis of these societies.

What is clear is that between Adil Hussain and Samir Amin there is much common ground. At times their studies appear to overlap and at others to be complimentary. Their proffering of the olive branch to each other's camps is in itself an interesting development. The question has to be, will others follow suit or will the Egyptian opposition remain split and ineffectual? And is the present period one of intellectual ferment leading to a national and cultural resurgence or the beginnings of a fragmentation that can only lead to sterility and decadence? The question must remain open for, though, the immediate future appears bleak hope springs eternal. ■