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OF ISLAMIC THOUGHT

Academic Dissertations Series (I)
(Issues in Contemporary Islamic Thought)

Through Muslim Eyes:

M. Rashīd Riḍā and the West

Emad Eldin Shahin

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

الحمد لله رب العالمين

والصلاة والسلام على خاتم الأنبياء والمرسلين

وقل رب زدني علما

In the Name of Allah,
the Compassionate, the Merciful,
Praise be to Allah, Lord of the Universe,
and Peace and Prayers be upon
His Final Prophet and Messenger.

"... and say: My Lord!
Cause Me to Grow in Knowledge."

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

اقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ ﴿١﴾ خَلَقَ الْإِنسَانَ مِنْ عَلَقٍ ﴿٢﴾
اقْرَأْ وَرَبُّكَ الْأَكْرَمُ ﴿٣﴾ الَّذِي عَلَّمَ بِالْقَلَمِ ﴿٤﴾ عَلَّمَ الْإِنسَانَ
مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمْ ﴿٥﴾

(العلق: ١ ـ ٥)

Read in the name of your Sustainer, Who has Created man out of a germ cell. Read – for your Sustainer is the Most bountiful One. Who has taught (man) the use of the pen. Taught Man what he did not know.
(Qur'an 96:1-5)

وَاللَّهُ أَخْرَجَكُم مِّن بُطُونِ أُمَّهَاتِكُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ شَيْئًا
وَجَعَلَ لَكُمُ السَّمْعَ وَالْأَبْصَارَ وَالْأَفْئِدَةَ
لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ ﴿٧٨﴾

(النحل: ٧٨)

And Allah has brought you forth from your mother's womb knowing nothing – but He has endowed you with hearing, and sight, and minds, so that you might have cause to be grateful.
(Qur'an 16:78)

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FISRT EDITION
(1414 - 1993)
REPRINT
(1415 - 1994)

The International Institute of Islamic Thought
Herndon – Virginia – The United States of America

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Academic Dissertations Series (1)
(Issues in Contemporary Islamic Thought)

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Shahin, Emad Eldin, 1957 / (1377-)
Through Muslim Eyes: M. Rashīd Ridā and the West / by Emad Eldin Shahin.
p. 104 cm. 22.5 x 15 (Academic Dissertations Series No. 1)
ISBN 1-56564-141-8 -- ISBN 1-56564-142-6 (pbk.)
1. Muhammad Rashīd Ridā--Views on Western civilization 2.Middle East--Relations--Europe. 3. Europe--relations--Middle East 4. Islamic countries--Civilization--Western influences. I. Title. II. Series: Academic Dissertations
(International Institute of Islamic Thought); 1.
BP80.M825S4712 1992b
303.48'21821017671 **93-24081**
CIP

IIIT In-house Desktop
Publishing by Y.T. DeLorenzo
and Jay Willoughby

نشر وتوزيع:
الدار العالمية للكتاب الإسلامي
نشر وتوزيع الكتاب والشريط الإسلامي بسبعين لغة
الإدارة العامة: ص.ب. ٥٥١٩٥ ـ الرياض ١١٥٣٤
هاتف ٤٦٥٠٨١٨ ـ ٤٦٤٧٢١٣ ـ فاكس ٤٦٣٣٤٨٩
المكتبات: الرياض ٤٦٢٩٣٤٧ ـ ١ / جدة ٦٨٧٣٧٥٢ ـ ٢ / الخبر ٨٩٤٥٨٢١ ـ ٣

INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC PUBLISHING HOUSE
I. I. P. H.
Publishing And Distributing Islamic Books And Tapes In 70 Languages
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE*

Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā was a prominent member of the reformist school of thought known as al Jāmi'ah al Islāmīyah, a school which had a profound effect on many of the issues confronting the Muslim mind nearly a century ago. If Jamāl al Dīn al Afghānī can be called the founder of this school, and Muḥammad 'Abduh its mentor, then Rashīd Riḍā may be called its articulator and third most important personality.

In attempting to describe this school of thought, it may be best to say that it was based on the idea of rapproachment or, more specifically, of bringing Islamic and Western thought closer together. This was to be done by minimizing or downplaying their differences. In this way, it was hoped that the Muslims would learn to be at ease with Western thought and to accept it as comprehensive and universal in nature, or at least as the logical outgrowth of ideas originating with Ibn Khaldūn, Ibn Rushd, or al Ghazzālī.

Many who subscribed to this school of thought were involved in the attempt to derive points of agreement from the two intellectual traditions. For the most part, however, these attempts were overly simplistic and insufficient to make the process of rapproachment an interactive one, or even one that could be appreciated by both sides. As it turned out, the loser in almost every case was Islamic thought, as many of the school's members believed its value was to lend legitimacy to the claims of universality made by Western thought. The objective of quite a few of the Jāmi'ah Islāmīyah thinkers was to prepare the Muslim mind to accept Western and, in particular, secular thought. Certain thinkers went so far as to interpret Islamic concepts and doctrines in a way that would make them acceptable to modern secularism.

It is not the intention of the author to undervalue this school of thought or the positive role it played in regard to several issues of importance. What he seeks to do is to explain that Riḍā

* This preface was prepared in Arabic by Dr. Ṭāhā Jābir al 'Alwānī and translated into English by Y. T. DeLorenzo, IIIT Research.

differed from the other adherents of this school of thought in that the ideas of rapproachment espoused by the others became for him ideas of reformation, including the attempt to revive the institution of ijtihad and his emphasis on the importance of culture in restructuring the Ummah. Thus he wrote an exhaustive commentary on the Qur'an, drawing heavily from the writings and teachings of 'Abduh. Likewise *al Manār*, the journal he edited for over thirty years, served as a forum from which he circulated those ideas he considered most important for Muslims to be acquainted with. Nonetheless, Riḍā's reformist thought never went much further than reconciliation, though it might be said to have been a step on the path to revival.

During his lifetime, Riḍā witnessed many significant political events in the region, including the collapse of the Ottoman caliphate and the subsequent rise of nation states from its rubble. In his political life, Riḍā established a number of secret and public political organizations, as he maintained relationships with political figures and parties both at home and abroad. In every case, however, his dealings grew out of an increasing trepidation of western colonial ambitions. Thus his fascination with some aspects of Western thought may be seen as an attempt to use, for the purpose of establishing a modern Arab and Islamic state, the same means used by the West in establishing itself as the dominant world power.

The theme of many of Riḍā's writings was to discover and analyze the reasons for the West's progress and to invite Muslims to adopt the same strategies for their own betterment. As the depredations of the West against the Muslims increased, however, he began to have doubts regarding his earlier admiration of Western thought and progress. It was a bitter experience for him and those who shared his views to see that the West's culture and civilization did not have the power to prevent it from committing the worst crimes against Muslims and Muslim countries.

In publishing this book, the first in a series of graduate dissertations,[1] the International Institute of Islamic Thought hopes to explain that the encounter with the West still poses serious challenges to the Muslims. Such challenges are dictated by the absence of a framework to guide the process of interaction between the Islamic and Western cultures. It also hopes to focus on Riḍās attempts to deal with the disorienting effects of the encroachment of alien values and institutions on the structure of Muslim society and to outline a framework that would enable Muslims to improve their conditions and assume their assigned role while preserving their indigenous values and national identity.

In closing, we thank Dr. Emad Eldin Shahin for his efforts in writing a book that may be taken as an example of how the past may be linked to the present. May this be another successful step on the long path of enlightening the Ummah, and may Dr. Shahin's example inspire others to make their own contributions towards this noble goal.

Ṭāhā Jābir al 'Alwānī
The International Institute of Islamic Thought
Rabī' al Ākhir 1414 / September 1993
Herndon, Virginia USA

[1] This book was originally presented to the American University at Cairo as a Master's dissertation in Political Science.

INTRODUCTION

In the nineteenth century, Arab and Muslim societies were forcefully drawn into direct contact with the vibrant civilization of the West with its advanced sciences and technological achievements, its political and economic institutions, its social and cultural values, and its philosophical and intellectual trends. These factors were the outcome of the long experimentation, conflict, and development which the West had undergone before it became an imperial power. When the West penetrated the Muslim world, profound and rapid changes occurred in almost every sphere of life. Since then, the Muslim world has been in a state of "transition" or "transformation." However, it has not had enough time to gradually absorb the new elements and work out a sound synthesis between the old and the new.

The introduction of foreign systems of education, administration, and legislation, as well as economic and political patterns, shook the bases of Muslim society. These changes did not produce the same results as they had in the West for several reasons. First of all, they were imposed from above and not through the interaction of the internal dynamics of Muslim society. Second, they were introduced by foreign forces and powers to whom resistance was the national duty of Arabs and Muslims. Third, they clashed with the dominant complex conditions of Muslim societies. They created structural imbalances as the gap between the indigenous Islamic belief system and the alien non-Islamic values began to widen.[1] Consequently, the Arab began to realize that he "lives in a world that he feels is not his own, that he can only partially understand, and certainly cannot control."[2]

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[1]Nadav Safran, *Egypt in Search of Political Community: 1804-1952* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1961), 245.

[2]Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *Islam in Modern History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957), 97.

From the late nineteenth century until 1924, the Ottoman state gradually disintegrated, and for the first time Muslims were directly controlled by non-Muslims. With disintegration came dualism. The most flagrant example was education. Two systems of education, traditional and modern or Western, existed side by side. The members of the second type, known as "the Westernized" by the traditionally educated, climbed the social ladder and gained dominance over the state apparatus. They found their place quite easily in the modern administration and the new economic and political institutions.

The encounter with the West, whose might was its most apparent feature, influenced Arab and Muslim intellectuals. They were strongly impressed by its material and military achievements. This encounter led them to compare their stagnant condition with that of the more dynamic West. Questions arose: What were the secrets behind the West's ascendance and the reasons for the East's decline? How could the East be revived? How could it emulate the West without losing its identity? Could it reconcile the prevailing values of the East and the West?[3]

Three major intellectual trends soon emerged. The first was Islamic orthodoxy (i.e., Wahhābīyah, Mahdīyah, and Sanūsīyah) that rejected the West, took refuge in the past, and protected itself behind tradition. The second was a liberal secular trend that rejected the traditional social heritage and stressed the liberal and secular aspects of modern Western civilization as models to follow. The third was Islamic revivalism or reform, led by Jamāl al Dīn al Afghānī, Muḥammad 'Abduh, and Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā, which sought to reconcile the two cultures.

It is this last trend which is the basis of this book. Thus, this book focuses on the encounter between the West and the East and how this cultural challenge was perceived by Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā, a leading Arab intellectual and Muslim reformer.[4]

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[3]Adīb Nassūr, "Muqaddimah li Dirāsat al Fikr al 'Arabī al Siyāsī," in *Al Fikr al 'Arabī fī Mi'at 'Ām: 1850-1945* (Beirut: AUB Press, 1966), 84-5.

[4]Excerpts from this book appeared earlier in Emad Eldin Shahin, "Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā's Perspectives on the West," *The Muslim World* 79, no. 2 (April 1989).

Chapter One

INTELLECTUAL FORMATION

There are several reasons behind the choice of Rashīd Riḍā (1865-1935) as the focus for this study. First of all, Riḍā was a member of the Islamic reform trend. This trend, based on the teachings and efforts of al Afghānī and 'Abduh, played a major role during the early years of the encounter with the West and is still highly significant and impressive in Muslim countries. Riḍā, throughout the years of his active participation, made great contributions to the preservation and the dissemination of this trend of thought.[1] He is also a connecting link between its early generation (al Afghānī and 'Abduh) and the succeeding generation that appeared in the 1930s. As 'Abduh was the stylist of al Afghānī's thoughts in the Paris-based journal *al 'Urwah al Wuthqà* (The Indissoluble Bond), Riḍā was the interpreter and defender of 'Abduh's thoughts in his Cairo-based journal *al Manār* (The Lighthouse). It was due to Riḍā that "the ideology of reformism reached wider circles throughout the world and kept alive the original impulse of al Afghānī and 'Abduh."[2] During his visit to Tunisia and Algeria in 1903, 'Abduh noted the influence of Riḍā and *al Manār* among the North Africans.[3]

Riḍā's efforts extended beyond the mere propagation of 'Abduh's and al Afghānī's ideas, for he managed to develop his own line of thinking.

> Riḍā devoted most of his career to propagating a revivalist interpretation of Islamic faith and institutions.... He wrote much more voluminously than his master. He elaborated a doctrine of Islamic law and politics much

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[1]Albert Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age: 1798-1939* (London: Oxford University Press, 1970), 224, 226.

[2]Hisham Sharabi, *Arab Intellectuals and the West, The Formative Years: 1875-1914* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1970), 51-5.

[3]Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā, *Tārīkh al Ustādh al Imām al Shaykh Muḥammad 'Abduh* (Cairo: Maṭba'at al Manār, 1931), 1, 872.

more systematic and specific than anything 'Abduh had attempted.[4]

Furthermore, Riḍā's ideas and style shaped religion with a national feature which later affected the political environment in Egypt. The efforts of "Riḍā and al Kawākibī laid the grounds of the Arab national movements."[5]

In 1902, Riḍā published 'Abd al Raḥmān al Kawākibī's book *Umm al Qurà* (Mother of the Villages) in his journal. He also wrote articles advocating Arab independence, among them "The Arabs and Turks" and "The Arab Question." His thought influenced the younger generation of intellectuals in Egypt,[6] marking in particular the growth and spread from 1927 of religious and political groups. The most important of these were the Muslim Youth Association and the Muslim Brothers, which played an increasingly political role among the urban middle and lower classes.[7]

The second reason for choosing Riḍā is that he and his journal *al Manār* witnessed the events of 1898 to 1935, a time of drastic and profound change in the Muslim world. After 'Abduh's death in 1905, Riḍā was one of the very few Egyptians who actively called for Islamic reform, defended its ideology, and articulated its views. His thought was formed during the period of the most vigorous Western imperialism in Arab and Muslim history, a period that saw continued Western expansion in the area, the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, the emergence of new Arab political entities under Western tutelage, and the crystallization of specific political, constitutional, and cultural patterns. This period also witnessed the growth of Western institutions, economic control, and changes in the education system, one parallel with the emergence of regional, ethnic, and sectarian communities, and the establishment of secular political parties.

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[4]Malcolm Kerr, *Islamic Reform: The Political and Legal Theories of Muhammad 'Abduh and Rashīd Riḍā* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1966), 153.

[5]Peter Mansfield, *The Arabs* (London: Penguin Books, Ltd., 1976), 169.

[6]Marcelle Colombe, *Taṭawwur Miṣr*, trans. Zuhair al Shāyib (Cairo: Maktabat Sa'īd Ra'fat, 1972), 167, 174.

[7]Ibid., 174-5.

Riḍā's contribution during this period was not limited to intellectual stimulation, for he also played an active political role. He was involved in the establishment of both secret and public political organizations which struggled for greater Arab participation in the Ottoman administration. He advocated a constitution and attempted to prepare the Arabs for self-rule and independence. He organized the *Jam'īyat al Shūrā al 'Uthmānīyah* (Society of Ottoman Consultation) in 1905 and, together with Shiblī Shumayyal and Iskandar Ammūn, founded the Decentralization party in 1912. During the First World War, he was contacted by the British, who wanted him to spread the idea of independence among the Arabs. Riḍā had good relations with both Sharīf Ḥusayn of Makkah and with 'Abd al 'Azīz ibn Sa'ūd, the latter of whom Riḍā believed would be able to create a new Arab state which would form the nucleus of an Islamic caliphate. Moreover, Riḍā was active in the Syrian political struggle during the First World War and served as the president of the Syrian Congress in 1920. In this capacity, he negotiated for Syria's independence with the British and the French. He was also a member of the Syrian delegation to Geneva and served on the political committee in Cairo during the Syrian revolt of 1925-26.[8]

Intellectually, Riḍā was a major defender of his society's values and an active opponent of Western encroachment and the westernizers who advocated the wholesale adoption of Western values. He was "passionately concerned with finding the reasons for the weakness and backwardness of the Muslim world in relation to the West"[9] and, more than anyone else, clearly perceived the challenges and forces which led to the disintegration of Islam. Specifically, "Riḍā was one of the few Muslim thinkers in Egypt who saw early and clearly the threat posed by the concept of nationalism on Islamic doctrine."[10] He realized that Islam could not be revitalized through the narrow conservatism of the traditional ulama or through the blind imitation of Westernizers. He criticized the former for their ignorance and submission to the rulers, and the latter for their unreasonable attempts to

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[8]Hourani, *Arabic Thought*, 227.

[9]Mansfield, *The Arabs*, 168.

[10]Safran, *Egypt*, 82.

substitute the indigenous characteristics of their society with those of another culture.[11] In 1922, Riḍā participated in the formation of the *Jam'īyat al Rābiṭah al Sharqīyah*, which had social and scientific objectives and sought progress through the development of education and science. It also worked for strengthening the bonds between Muslim peoples, reviving Islamic civilization, and drawing on those Western virtues that did not contradict Islamic values.[12]

Early Years

Rashīd Riḍā's personal character and intellectual orientation were formed by a variety of factors. He was born in a village near Tripoli, Lebanon, in 1865. Lebanon, at this time, was part of the Ottoman Empire and suffered from the repressive policies directed by Istanbul towards all who called for reform.

Riḍā's family claimed descent from the Prophet Muḥammad. This status meant that all male family members could claim the honorary title of *al Sayyid*, which gave them an elevated social position. It also allowed them to exercise influence in religious, judicial, social, and, sometimes, political matters and was a major determinant of the education which the young Riḍā would receive. In his case, he was sent to the village school to learn the Qur'an and acquire a basic education.[13]

Riḍā's early years witnessed the emergence of a new type of education, one based on the Western model and spread by European missionaries, the Ottoman government, individuals, and ethnic communities. Riḍā spent one year in a government school.[14] When "an enlightened and moderately progressive"[15]

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[11]*Al Manār*, 7 (1904): 51-2.

[12]Ibid., 23 (1921-22): 223.

[13]Wajīh Kawtharānī, *Mukhtārāt Siyāsīyah min Majallat al Manār* (Beirut: Dār al Ṭalī'ah, 1980), 5-6.

[14]Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā, *Al Manār wa al Azhar* (Cairo: Maṭba'at al Manār, 1934), 140.

[15]Kerr, *Islamic Reform*, 154.

scholar, Shaykh Ḥusayn al Jisr, opened an Islamic national school in Tripoli, Riḍā joined it as well.

Al Jisr believed that Muslims could progress by synthesizing traditional Islamic religious education and Europe's modern natural sciences and thus develop an Islamic system of education to rival the Western methods of teaching.[16] In this school, Riḍā studied logic, mathematics, natural sciences, Turkish, French, Arabic and the religious sciences. As Riḍā proved his high scholarly ability, his master introduced him to the world of journalism in Tripoli, where he wrote in several journals and acquired some fame.[17] Riḍā also frequented the missions and the liberal Christian intellectual communities and became acquainted with their discussions, books, and journals,[18] including *al Muqtaṭaf* and *al Ṭabīb*. These two journals had a profound impact on him, for they introduced him to modern knowledge and the new world of the West. In 1892, he obtained the degree of "scholar."

Al Ghazālī's *Iḥyā'* had a profound and permanent impact on Riḍā. Feeling the need to reform the declining conditions of the Muslims and the degenerating Sufi practices of the masses, he wrote *al Ḥikmah al Shar'īyah* (The Legal Wisdom), which criticized such practices. As he could not publish in Lebanon, he published it later in Egypt.

At this time, a broad-based reform movement inspired by the decadence of the Muslims and the challenges posed by the West was under way in Egypt. It sought to revive the Muslims by sweeping aside all of the degenerate practices that had brought about their decline. Al Afghānī was the first to agitate against indigenous despotism and Western imperialism while pointing out the differences between Islam and the West. According to Laroui, al Afghānī is important because he was the first reformer to consider the East and the West as two opposing historical entities. In Egypt, 'Abduh learnt from al Afghānī how

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[16]Aḥmad al Sharbāṣī, *Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā: 'Aṣruhu, Ḥayātuhu wa Maṣādir Thaqāfatihi* (Cairo: al Majlis al 'Alā li al Shu'ūn al Islāmīyah, 1970)), 1, 121.

[17]Ibrāhīm al 'Adawī, *Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā: al Imām al Mujtahid* (Cairo: al Hay'ah al Miṣrīyah al 'Āmmah li al Ta'līf wa al Nashr, 1964), 30.

[18]Riḍā, *Al Manār wa al Azhar*, 193.

to perceive issues concerning the future of the Muslims. In Istanbul, Luṭfī al Sayyid acquired from him the meaning of constitution and democracy, and Salāmah Mūsà learnt his favorite phrase "industry, science, and progress."[19] Smith had the same opinion about al Afghānī:

> [he] . . . seemed to have been the first Muslim revivalist to use the concepts 'Islam' and the 'West' as connoting correlative and of course antagonizing historical phenomena.[20]

In 1884, al Afghānī and 'Abduh founded *al 'Urwah al Wuthqà* in Paris and used it to introduce to the Arabs such new ideas as freedom, independence, unity, and the rights of the ruled. This publication had four main themes: reform of the state, agitation against despotism and repression, the struggle against imperialism, and Muslim solidarity and unity. It explained the reasons for the Muslim world's decline: ignorance, fatalism, disunity, and despotic and incapable rulers. In addition, it sought to understand why the West had achieved such a level of development. According to al Afghānī, the West had progressed because it had mastered science, technology, organization, and diplomacy.[21] If Muslims were to redeem themselves, they had to acquire these commendable values and develop them as much as possible. *Al 'Urwah* claimed that the Muslims had been betrayed by their rulers. These leaders, obsessed by greed and ignorance, had handed—and continued to hand—their countries over to foreigners who exploited their decline so as to destroy their solidarity.[22]

Al Afghānī's solution was not the wholesale adoption of Western institutions and values, but rather the purification of Islam from degenerate practices. He called upon Muslims to rise against tyrannical rulers and unite under the banner of pan-Islamism, essentially a nationalist manifestation, against the

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[19]Abdallah Laroui, *Al Īdiyūlūjīyah al 'Arabīyah al Mu 'āṣirah* (Beirut: Dār al Ḥaqīqah, 1981), 40.

[20]Smith, *Islam*, 49.

[21]Safran, *Egypt*, 44.

[22]'Afāf Luṭfī al Sayyid, *Egypt and Cromer: A Study in Anglo-Egyptian Relations* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1969), 88.

menacing threat of the West and foreign occupation. One result of its agitation against foreign occupation and despotic rulers was the banning of *al 'Urwah* in Egypt and India and its confiscation in the Ottoman Empire. After publishing eighteen issues in one year, it was discontinued. Thereafter, al Afghānī and 'Abduh went in two different directions. The first eventually ended up in Istanbul, where he spent the rest of his life, while 'Abduh went to Beirut, where he resided for five years. In Beirut, he seemed to tire of al Afghānī's revolutionary program and began to work for moderate goals like advocating religious and educational reforms.

Al 'Urwah had a considerable impact upon its readers, many of whom were students, intellectuals, and scholars. One of these readers was Riḍā, who heard about the movement and thoughts of al Afghānī and 'Abduh from the followers of the exiled Ahmad 'Urābī, who resided in Riḍā's house in Lebanon, and from reading *al 'Urwah*. This journal had a tremendous influence on him, for it completely altered his perceptions and introduced him to a new stage in his intellectual life. Riḍā wrote:

> All I wanted to do before I had read *al 'Urwah al Wuthqà* was to teach the tenets of Islam and the transitory nature of life on earth. Now I saw a new light: to work for the unification of the Muslims of the world. My duty I now knew lay in guiding the faithful to the ways of progress and modern civilization.[23]

As Riḍā's idea of reform had been broadened and the Ottoman Empire's repressive policies in Lebanon hindered his aims, Riḍā contacted al Afghānī to see if he could become his student in Istanbul. However, al Afghānī died before this goal could be realized. Riḍā therefore went to Egypt, for the British occupiers of Egypt were relatively more tolerant of personal expression, and because several intellectuals known to him had already fled there. Another factor in this decision was his desire to start his own journal, which would become known as *al Manār* (The Lighthouse). He had been offered the editorship of a well-

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[23]As quoted in Jamal Ahmad, *The Intellectual Origins of Egyptian Nationalism* (London: Oxford University Press, 1960), 29.

known Beirut journal *Thamarāt al Funūn*,[24] but this was not enough. He also wanted to be closer to 'Abduh.

Al Manār

In this book, *al Manār* is a major source of reference for Riḍā's political and intellectual views. Therefore, it is important to consider its content, the nature and extent of its readership, and its importance within the context of Egyptian intellectual and political life at that time. Riḍā's association with 'Abduh, which had a tremendous influence on *al Manār*'s objectives and circulation, will also be discussed.

Upon his arrival in Cairo, Riḍā was asked to write regularly for *al Ahrām*. He declined, however, and only contributed some articles from time to time, for he wanted to establish his own journal. He convinced 'Abduh of his project's validity and soon received his support. 'Abduh impressed on him the need to adopt definite guidelines for *al Manār*: not to side with any party, not to respond to critics, and not to serve high-ranking officials. He warned Riḍā against fusing politics with reform, for "whenever politics intervenes with an act, it disrupts it."[25] 'Abduh's compliant tone undoubtedly was related to his unforgettable experience in the 'Urābī uprising of 1882 that had, in his view, led to British occupation, his exile, and the failure to fulfill any of al Afghānī's objectives. As Riḍā had already decided to emulate *al 'Urwah al Wuthqà* by stressing social and religious reform, and that he would not provoke the British through political activities, this advice did not represent a problem. This remained his practice until 'Abduh's death in 1905, after which *al Manār*'s political tendency was plainly declared.[26]

Al Manār appeared in 1898 as a weekly and, after one year, as a monthly journal. Until Riḍā was able to build his own publishing house two years later, his journal was published in 'Alī

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[24]Riḍā, *Al Manār wa al Azhar*, 192.

[25]Riḍā, *Tārīkh*, 1, 1009. Unless otherwise indicated, the translation is mine.

[26]*Al Manār*, 12 (1909): 2.

Yūsuf al Mu'ayyad's publishing house.[27] The journal itself was divided into two parts. It began with 'Abduh's interpretation of the Qur'an, in which some of his political views were expressed, and was followed by a section dealing with *fatāwà* (binding religious opinions), in which Riḍā revealed his outstanding knowledge and independence of thought particularly with questions regarding modern issues. This made *al Manār* a source for the conciliation of Islam with contemporary conditions.[28] The next section contained different types of articles, namely, social, historical, literary, and religious. Important speeches which Riḍā or others had delivered or political documents (conventions, correspondence, agreements) were also published. After this came the letters to the editor on current literature, scientific developments, and important internal and cultural events, followed by Riḍā's comments on current publications and biographies of contemporary prominent figures.

Although Riḍā wrote most of the articles, some well-known figures like 'Abd al Raḥmān al Rāfi'ī, Muṣṭafā al Manfalūṭī, Ḥāfiẓ Ibrāhīm, Muḥammad Rawḥī al Khālidī, Ḥifnī Naṣīf, Shakīb Arsalān, 'Abd al Ḥamīd al Zahrāwī, Rafīq al 'Adhm, and others also contributed.[29] *Al Manār* republished articles appearing in local and foreign newspapers and journals. Riḍā also wrote in other newspapers and journals in Egypt, Syria, and Turkey such as *al Ahrām, al Mu'ayyad, al Jarīdah, al Hilāl, Thamarāt al Funūn,* and *al Ḥaḍārah.*

Riḍā, in explaining *al Manār*'s objectives, seemed aware of two facts: the current decadence of the Muslim world and the Western threat. As a result of the influx of modern education and institutions into India, the Ottoman Empire, and Egypt, Ridā explained, two trends had appeared. The first advocated, in the name of religion, the preservation of old customs and traditions and relied on the compliance of the masses. The second, a privileged minority which had acquired from modern education the ability to think freely, wanted a complete break with tradition.

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[27]Ibid., 16 (1913): 951.

[28]Shakīb Arsalān, *Al Sayyid Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā wa Ikhā' Arba'īn 'Āman* (Damascus: Maṭba'at Ibn Zaydūn, 1937), 7.

[29]Sharbāṣī, *Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā,* 2, 25-6.

Between these two trends, Riḍā claimed, existed a third trend, one that sought to purify and revive commendable traditions and to reconcile them with the modern world. He attempted, through his writings in *al Manār*,[30] to convince adherents of the other two views that Islam was not contradictory to modernity, science, reason, and civilization.

In the prologue of the first volume, Riḍā identified the objectives of *al Manār* as being centered on two main underlying themes: reform and unity. These themes permeated almost every article and page of *al Manār* and were reflected in Riḍā's own efforts to reconstruct the Muslim world through education and the spread of the Arabic language. They were elaborated in his attempts to discover the causes of decline and to stimulate agreement among Muslims in the hope that they would acquire such commendable aspects of Western civilization as science, technical skills, and wealth.[31]

Immediately after 'Abduh's death in 1905, Riḍā and *al Manār* began to be openly active in politics.[32] He started to write articles on despotism, the need for reform in the Ottoman Empire, and the need for *shūrā* (consultation), a constitution, and democracy. He also wrote on foreign occupation, imperialism, and the threat of foreign penetration. His interest in significant internal and external events and developments affecting both Egypt and the whole Muslim world continued right up until his death in 1935.

Due to Riḍā's own efforts as well as to his association with 'Abduh, *al Manār* developed a wide circulation in many Muslim countries, among them India, Indonesia, and several countries in northern and southern Africa as well as in Egypt.[33] Riḍā's articles energetically sought to rescue the Muslim world from its current stagnation and submission to the West. He was supported in this by the advocates of rationalism and the reconciliation of Islam

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[30]*Al Manār* 7 (1904): 51-2.

[31]Ibid., 1 (1898): 13, 898.

[32]Ibid., 12 (1909): 14.

[33]Colombe, *Taṭawwur*, 174.

with modern civilization.[34] As such people could be found all over the Muslim world, *al Manār* succeeded in creating a link between Egypt and the rest of the Muslim world through which Egyptian literary influence and views were transmitted.[35]

In Egypt, Riḍā benefited greatly from his association with 'Abduh, who introduced him to the intellectual circles and upper echelons of Egyptian society. He became a frequent visitor, with 'Abduh, of the salon of Princess Nāzlī,[36] which was also frequented by Sa'd Zaghlūl, Qāsim Amīn, Lord Cromer, Lord Kitchener, Harry Boyle (the British oriental secretary), and his successor Ronald Stores,[37] and to the houses of Sa'd Zaghlūl, Aḥmad Fatḥī Zaghlūl, Ḥusayn 'Abd al Rāziq, and others.[38] After 'Abduh's death, Riḍā maintained good relations with many of them, as they were all disciples of the same mentor.[39]

'Abduh's assistance to Riḍā took other forms as well. For example, he wrote to Niqūlah Shihādah, the editor of *al Rā'id al Miṣrī*, an Egyptian journal, to provide Riḍā with the names of high government officials, managers, notables, and other important people in the country who were subscribing to his journal.[40] *Al Manār*, it appears, was both known and read by many from the highest social classes in Egypt. Riḍā noted in particular that the number of judges and lawyers who subscribed to *al Manār* in its early years exceeded the number of intellectuals from other professional groups. This was attributed to Aḥmad Zaghlūl's lengthy quotations from Riḍā's writings in the introduction of Zaghlūl's translation of De Castrie's *Ideas and Importance of Islam*.

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[34]Tawfiq al Ṭa'wīl, "Al Fikr al Dīnī fī al 'Ālam al 'Arabī," in *Al Fikr al 'Arabī fī Mi'at 'Ām* (Beirut: AUB Press, 1966), 313.

[35]Ibrāhīm 'Abduh, *Taṭawwur al Ṣaḥāfah al Miṣrīyah: 1798-1951* (Cairo: Maktabat al Ādāb, 1951), 218.

[36]Riḍā, *Tārīkh*, 1, 896.

[37]Al Sayyid, *Egypt*, 95.

[38]Riḍā, *Tārīkh*, 1, 1013.

[39]Muḥammad 'Imārah, "Al Shaykh Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā," *Al Dawḥah* 69 (29 September 1981): 33.

[40]Riḍā, *Tārīkh* 1, 1003.

Al Manār was also admired by people who had occupied high positions in the judiciary. The minister of justice, Ibrāhīm al Manistayrlī, also an admirer of *al Manār*, entrusted Zaghlūl with the preparation of a project (which was however not to be realized) for the distribution of thousands of subsidized issues. Upon becoming the minister of education, Sa'd Zaghlūl ordered that a large number of copies be purchased and distributed in the ministry's schools.[41]

During its first three years, circulation did not exceed three or four hundred copies. This was due to Ottoman confiscation and also to Riḍā's use of technical argumentation and specialized documentation. But by the fifth year, subscriptions by middle-class officials, teachers, scholars, and students had increased greatly. This change of fortune was mainly due to 'Abduh's articles and the publication of al Kawākibī's book *Umm al Qurà*.[42] In 1912, Riḍā had to reprint the first issues to meet demand.[43]

The role and importance of *al Manār* was reflected in more than one sphere. It provided its own answers and reflections on crucial issues facing Arab and Muslim individuals, issues like the causes behind the ascendance of the West and decline of the Muslims, the struggle against imperialism and foreign penetration, and the requirements of the modern age.[44] Throughout its life span, *al Manār* stood against the various political, economic, and cultural attempts designed to bring about the disintegration of the Islamic world and worked for a synthesis and a reconciliation of Islam with modernism.

Al Manār played a significant role in shaping the Islamic reform movement with an Arab flavor and in propagating Arab nationalism, particularly in the inter-war period. Due to the Ottoman Empire's repressive policies in 1911, Riḍā held the Turks responsible for the declining and backward condition of the Muslim world. He amplified the role of the Arabs in the East's

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[41]Ibid., 1, 1006.

[42]Ibid., 1, 1008.

[43]*Al Manār*, 1, (1898): 4-5.

[44]Yūsuf Ibish, *Raḥalāt al Imām Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā* (Beirut: Dār al Nashr al 'Arabīyah, 1971), 7.

history and introduced them as the only possible core of a strong and revived Islamic state. The journal also had a recognizable influence on other Egyptian periodicals and societies.

After *al Manār*, many periodicals adopting its style and line of thought appeared.[45] Its influence extended to many Egyptian political, educational, and religious societies, the most significant of which were Jam'īyat al Shubbān al Muslimūn (Muslim Youth Association) and al Ikhwān al Muslimūn (the Muslim Brothers), both of which played an important political role in the 1930s. Safran saw the Brotherhood's ideology as

> essentially a version of the views of Rashīd Riḍā and the Manārists reduced to a simple creed, grounded more on faith than systematic thought, cast into the frame of a militant movement.[46]

The Brothers considered themselves the extension of the modern reform movement started and led by al Afghānī, 'Abduh, and Riḍā.[47] After Riḍā's death, Shaykh Ḥassan al Bannā, supreme guide of the Muslim Brothers, who knew Riḍā and frequented his circle, tried to prevent *al Manār*'s collapse by publishing six more issues of the thirty-fifth volume. However, in 1941 the government withdrew the Brothers' license to publish *al Manār*.[48]

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[45]For the names of these periodicals and societies, see Safran, *Egypt*, 75.

[46]Ibid., 231-2.

[47]Richard P. Mitchell, *The Society of Muslim Brothers* (London: Oxford University 1969), 321-2.

[48]Ḥassan al Bannā, *Mudhakkarāt al Da'wah wa al Dā'īyah* (Cairo: Dār al Shihāb, n.d.), 204. See also Mitchell, *Society*, 186.

Chapter Two

RIḌĀ AND HIS ENVIRONMENT

As this book deals primarily with thoughts, ideas, and value judgments, it presumes that ideas, values, and modes of thought do not emerge in a vacuum. There is a close relationship among different variables—political, economic, and social—and the formulation and adoption of particular modes of thought. Moreover, since the ascendance and/or decline of social forces usually bring about change, modification, propagation, or even rejection of certain values and ideas, this part is devoted to explaining and analyzing the socioeconomic conditions of Riḍā's time and their impact on the cultural and political environments. It is an attempt to place Riḍā's thought within the economic, political, social, and cultural contexts in which it developed.

To begin with, the British occupation force and the subsequent changes it engendered led to an increase in Egypt's contact with the outside world. Consequently, on the level of ideas, there emerged a strong perception of the West's marked supremacy and material superiority. On the level of society, new social forces with which Riḍā was associated had begun to advocate gradual societal regeneration through internal reform of the system.

Economic and Social Conditions

Egypt was participating in the international economy as a supplier of agricultural raw materials even before its occupation by Britain. The subsequent occupation did not initiate the closer integration, but rather intensified it through a process more of "consolidation and extension than of initiation."[1]

Egypt had become integrated into the world market following the abortive attempt by Muḥammad ʿAlī, who ruled the nation from 1805 to 1848, to build a complex and modern economy. With the reign of his successors, and particularly during that of Ismāʿīl (1863-1879), this trend was reversed, and Egypt

[1]Safran, *Egypt*, 56.

turned into a cash-crop and export-oriented country.[2] This period was characterized by a shift away from Muhammad 'Alī's policy of state monopoly and concentration on cotton for export. As a result, other sectors lagged behind, subordinated to export of cotton and the import of consumer goods. As there was no indigenous capitalist class, foreign capital and trade played an important economic role.[3] A number of structural changes in landownership, irrigation, and transportation were carried out to guarantee the new status quo. The British further extended this activity, claiming that it would help Egypt deal with the financial problems arising from fluctuating cotton prices and its increasing dependence on usurious foreign loans to cover government expenditures and the extravagant and conspicuous lifestyle of some members of the ruling family.

Rules related to landownership were changed. Restrictions prohibiting private ownership were eliminated, which allowed wealthy Egyptians to purchase large estates and form the nucleus of an indigenous landed class. In 1858, the tax system was changed and the collective responsibility of land taxes was abrogated. Landownership via inheritance was acknowledged, people were given the right to sell and mortgage land, and even foreigners were allowed to purchase and own land. All of this led to increased foreign intervention in Egyptian agriculture.[4]

Under the British, big landowners were allowed and were actually encouraged to increase their properties through taking advantage of payment concessions on the price of land, which enabled them to increase their estates.[5] Irrigation and drainage improvement projects were undertaken and eventually increased the amount of land under cultivation. Cromer, the British resident in Egypt during these years, sought to increase Egypt's agricultural produce. The expansion in cultivated land noted above

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[2]Charles Issawi, *The Economic History of the Middle East: 1800-1914* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966), 363.

[3]Roger Owen, *Cotton and the Egyptian Economy: 1820-1914* (London: Oxford University Press, 1969), 113-8.

[4]Issawi, *Economic History*, 364.

[5]Owen, *Cotton*, 239-40.

and the improvement of public works,[6] as well as the construction of the Aswan Dam, had the following results:

> the cultivated area increased from 4,161,000 feddan in 1862 to 4,743,000 in 1871, and to 5,283,000 in 1913. This made it possible not only to grow more crops, but also to concentrate more fully on such crops as cotton and sugar cane.[7]

The policy of developing Egypt's economy by improving public works connected with the agricultural sector was pursued by Cromer's successors. Kitchener's days saw the improvement of agricultural drainage and reclamation of some lands in the Delta and the governorate of Gharbīyah.

Transportation and communication networks were improved and expanded. Railways connected different parts of Egypt, telegraph lines covered the country, and internal transportation and external communication were enhanced greatly. In addition to the Suez Canal, which increased Egypt's contact with the outside world through the inflow of international traffic, the port of Alexandria was upgraded and expanded and two new ports, Suez and Port Said, were built.[8]

Financially, Egypt was increasingly linked to the international money market by currency reform, the shift from the gold standard to the sterling exchange, and the inflow and outflow of foreign funds. This was accompanied by an expansion of a wide variety of banking activities. These activities, as well as commerce, petty trade, and the professions, were manipulated by foreigners who, due to capitulation treaties forced on the Ottoman Empire and their links with European markets, enjoyed a more advantageous position than their Egyptian counterparts. This official policy of favoritism had the effect of delaying the appearance of an indigenous Egyptian bourgeois class until the 1920s and 1930s.

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[6]P. J. Vatikiotis, *The Modern History of Egypt* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980), 211.

[7]Issawi, *Economic History*, 364.

[8]Ibid., 366.

Most of these reforms enabled Egypt to recover from its fiscal problems by the 1890s.[9] The years of rapid growth continued until the First World War, which brought about material prosperity based on the expansion and intensification of the production and export of cotton. A rapid increase in the standard of living and consumption, particularly among the upper and middle classes, followed. Wealthy Egyptians purchased more land, some began to mechanize local agriculture, and educated and skilled professionals joined the administration and civil service.[10] These reforms were felt by the great majority of Egyptians, who saw both their per capita income and their standard of living rise sharply. These favorable developments led gradually to a great many Egyptians changing their views of the British and their occupation of Egypt.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the Egyptian social structure was dominated by an absentee Turco-Egyptian landed aristocracy. This elite enjoyed a degree of local political influence and was reluctant to see any social change.[11] However, it was undermined by the British, who were following a policy of balancing the influence of this aristocracy by means of forming an Egyptian propertied class in the provinces.

This class of provincial notables benefited from the economic stability enjoyed during Cromer's time and managed to consolidate its financial and administrative positions.[12] They welcomed the opportunity offered by the British to end the supremacy of the former elite class and undermine the power of the khedive, who was still Egypt's nominal ruler. This was manifested in the shift of local political power

> from the older Turco-Egyptian aristocracy, notables, and religious leaders to the new groups of professionals, rich

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[9]Vatikiotis, *Modern History*, 173.

[10]Issawi, *Economic History*, 366.

[11]'Alī al Dīn Hilāl, *Al Tajdīd fī al Fikr al Siyāsī al Miṣrī al Ḥadīth* (Cairo: Ma'had al Buḥūth wa al Dirāsāt al 'Arabīyah, 1975), 26.

[12]Walid Kazziha, *The Evolution of the Egyptian Political Elite, 1907-1921: A Case Study of the Role of Large Landlords in Politics*, Ph.D. diss., School of Oriental and African Studies (London), 1970, 9.

cultivators, and administrators, exhibiting the growing influence of the class of *a'yān* (notables).[13]

These notables were considered to be the main beneficiaries of the British administrative and economic reforms. Some of them were allowed to ascend the political hierarchy and occupy high administrative positions.[14] Thus their alliance with the British was not so much extraneous as it was a natural outcome of their economic and social status.[15] They further believed that they represented the real interest of the nation and, consequently, sought to secure a larger political role for themselves. In 1907, a leading group of notables formed the Ummah party and *al Jarīdah*, its mouthpiece.

Until the First World War, foreigners dominated commerce, industry, and finance. However, during the war Egypt suffered import shortages at a time when it was required to provide supplies for the British forces. To solve this problem, new local industries emerged and laid the ground for the formation of a national bourgeoisie.[16] There was also a growing urban middle class of Western-educated Egyptian lawyers, doctors, teachers, and officials who, after being exposed to modern Western values such as liberalism and nationalism, became dissatisfied with the economic and social injustice in their society. Such people would eventually lead the national anti-occupation movement.

The rest of the population consisted of a small industrial proletariat and peasants. After the First World War, a proletariat of more significant dimensions began to emerge. Some of them joined the labor movement of the National party, and those of foreign origin were attracted to leftist movements. The majority of peasants, on the other hand, suffered from difficult economic problems brought on by the usurious terms of loans. Many were

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[13]Walid Kazziha, "The Jarīdah-Ummah Group," *Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* (October 1977): 377.

[14]Kazziha, *The Evolution*, 288.

[15]Fawzī Girgis, *Dirāsāt fī Tārīkh Miṣr al Siyāsī* (Cairo: Dār al Nadīm, 1958), 115.

[16]Hilāl, *Al Tajdīd*, 27.

forced to mortgage and sell their lands to big landholders.[17] Their social conditions, health, and education had not improved, and their voice was hardly ever heard in the political arena.

Cultural and Intellectual Environments

As its links with the outside world grew, Egypt became more exposed to Western cultural and political developments. These began to penetrate and mold the intellectual orientation of a large portion of the newly emerging social forces and educated elites. There were also other elements that played a role in this process: a) the secularization of the education system; b) the increase in the number of translated Western literary works; and c) the growing role of journalism and the press.

There were several factors related to the development of modern education in Egypt before and after the British occupation. First, Egypt was exposed to Western secular education in addition to the traditional system. Second, during the occupation, British education policy was confined to producing civil servants. Third, two systems of education existed side by side, thus fostering duality in intellectual trends. Finally, the expansion of modern education prepared the ground for the adoption of various Western values and imported ideas.

Before the British occupation, Muḥammad ʿAlī had founded several modern schools and had sent students to Europe to study modern science and technology. Modern military, engineering, medical, and language schools had been established in order to provide competent and efficient personnel for the army. Students sent abroad came into direct contact with the West and acquired modern sciences and knowledge. They translated important works of literature and science into Arabic and, upon their return to Egypt, conveyed their own images and views of Europe to their countrymen.[18] The modernization of education produced a new type of intellectual, men such as Rifāʿah al Ṭahṭāwī in Egypt and Khayr al Dīn al Tūnisī in Tunisia, who were capable of assimilating modern liberal European ideas. It further intro-

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[17]Ibid., 28.

[18]Ibrahim Abu Lughod, *Arab Rediscovery of Europe: A Study in Cultural Encounter* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), 69.

duced secular patterns and ideas of learning which, in the second half of the nineteenth century, resulted in the emergence of a new political elite and a movement of Islamic revival in Egypt strongly influenced by newly acquired Western values.[19] Khedive Ismā'īl encouraged the spread of Western education by reopening these schools. The Dīwān of Schools was reorganized in 1863, and the first girls' school opened in 1873.

These measures increased the number of educated Egyptian teachers, officials, and intellectuals. This initiative was accompanied by a new view of education and scientific inquiry, one that saw education as a way to control nature and to discover new horizons. The growing number of schools increased the potential political role of students who participated in different cultural societies, political parties, and demonstrations.[20]

Under the British, education did not witness either rapid expansion or reform. Cromer explained this by saying that there was a shortage of funds. At the same time, he used the lack of education as a pretext to refrain from expanding liberal institutions.[21] Despite the fact that Riḍā described Cromer as one of the greatest politicians of his age, he shared the nationalists' view that Cromer's refusal to improve the quality of education meant that Egypt's independence would be delayed.[22]

Public education was supposed to provide the administration with qualified personnel. Despite the need and demand for education, manifested in the gradual appearance of 739 private and 329 missionary schools, the number of government sponsored schools was only sixty-eight in a population of more than nine million in 1914.[23] During British rule, free education was canceled, thus depriving the poor of a vital government service by making it available only in private institutions beyond their financial means.

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[19]Hilāl, *Al Tajdīd*, 18.

[20]'Alī al Dīn Hilāl, *Al Siyāsah wa al Ḥukm fī Miṣr* (Cairo: Maktabat Nahḍat al Sharq, 1971), 61.

[21]Al Sayyid, *Cromer*, 86.

[22]*Al Manār*, 10 (1907): 159.

[23]Safran, *Egypt*, 55.

In an attempt to erode growing nationalist sentiment among the youth, English was introduced as the major language of instruction in government schools and as the official language in government transactions.[24] Furthermore, the British closed the veterinary school, the schools of agriculture and archeology, and those for the handicapped. In 1895, the British financial advisor tried to end the student missions by claiming that the primary function of education was to provide administrators for the government and that the Egyptian schools already produced the required number of would-be officials.[25]

The number of students sent abroad did not show an increase over the number sent during Ismā'īl's reign. Before 1882, France had attracted eighty percent of these students and, out of that number, 96 percent studied technical subjects. After 1882, 75 percent were sent to Britain, where 65 percent of them studied the humanities and the social sciences.[26] From 1883 to 1919 there were 289 students, out of whom 231 were sent to Britain and fifty-seven to France.[27] Undoubtedly, Britain was stressing Anglo-Saxon education in the humanities and the social sciences to the detriment of Egypt's need for students trained in the natural and applied sciences.

The change in the education system and the introduction of modern secular education coincided with a rapid expansion in the translation of Western literature. Western texts and technical works had been translated in the days of Muḥammad 'Alī to provide the curriculum for his schools. It is reported that sometimes he personally chose the history and arts books to be translated.[28] By the end of the nineteenth century, as government sponsorship of translated works increased, books in sociology,

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[24]Girgis, *Dirāsāt*, 107.

[25]Aḥmad 'Abd al Raḥīm Muṣṭafà, *Tārīkh Miṣr al Siyāsī min al Iḥtilāl ilā al Mu'āhadah* (Cairo: Dār al Ma'ārif, 1967), 36-7.

[26]Safran, *Egypt*, 35.

[27]Girgis, *Dirāsāt*, 107.

[28]Abu Lughod, *Arab Rediscovery*, 46-8. See list of translations, 50-3.

jurisprudence, and politics became widely available.[29] In 1876, a disciple of al Afghānī translated Guizot's book, *Histoire de la Civilisation en Europe*, which played an important role in molding the political and social awareness of al Afghānī's disciples at that time. 'Abduh, who admired and praised the book, read it to his Azhari students in his house.[30]

The works and translations of the exchange students constituted a growing body of literature through which Arab readers could gain a knowledge of nineteenth-century Europe. This interest, almost absent before this time, was further reinforced by other direct contacts with Europe through the actual presence of European travelers and the development of commercial and military interests. Arabs and Muslims traveling to Europe for business, medical treatment, official missions, or seeking political refuge from Ottoman repression were also a bridge between the two cultures.[31] Many contributed to the Muslim world's intellectual and political life by sharing their own views and knowledge about Europe with their compatriots. They asserted that Europeans were not inherently superior to Muslims and that the latter could emulate the positive and commendable aspects of European progress. Moreover, they said Europe had surpassed the Muslim world in education and political organization, both of which were based on freedom and political justice. These two elements stimulated the search for knowledge, scientific inquiry, and the development of industries that stood behind Europe's advancement.[32]

This image greatly influenced the perception of Muslim intellectuals, among them Ridā, who began to stress one or more aspects of European progress. 'Abduh, who translated Spencer's

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[29]Ibid., 57.

[30]Muḥammad Yūsuf Najm, "Al 'Awāmil al Fa''ālaḥ fi Takwīn al Fikr al 'Arabī al Ḥadīth," in *Al Fikr al 'Arabī fī Mi'at Sanah* (Beirut: A.U.B. Press, 1966), 57.

[31]Abu Lughod, *Arab Rediscovery*, 69. For the nineteenth-century travelers' account, see 71-5.

[32]Ibid., 144.

On Education,[33] emphasized education as a condition for reform and progress. Riḍā, agreeing with him, added scientific achievement and technical skills to this formula. Luṭfī al Sayyid stressed political freedom in addition to education. Salāmah Mūsà insisted on the vital role of technology, science, and industry in the progress of society.[34]

Under the British, translation was completely free of government restrictions. The British also provided an atmosphere of relative freedom of expression which Riḍā considered to be one of the two advantages of British rule in Egypt (the second was Egypt's financial and economic recovery).[35] Western literature dealing with politics and sociology attracted many Egyptian intellectuals preoccupied with the issues of independence, freedom, and modernity. They sought solutions for various social problems in the growing corpus of translated European literature.

Egyptian and Syrian intellectuals were the major translators during these years. Fatḥī Zaghlūl, a prominent member of 'Abduh's group, translated several works on history and politics that had a major impact on many Egyptians.

> Zaghlūl's writings led to a cult of British education and a flood of books attempting to prescribe for a society that needed reform in nearly every respect.[36]

In his translation of Rousseau's *Social Contract* and Bentham's *Principles of Legislation*, Zaghlūl attempted to acquaint the Egyptian public with the relationship of the individual to its society and to other groups. With Le Bon's *Spirit of Society*, *Secret of the Evolution of Nations*, and *A Quoi tient la superiorité des Anglo-Saxons*, Zaghlūl tried to point out to his countrymen their

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[33] 'Abduh's translation of Spencer's *On Education* was revised by Qāsim Amīn, who received 'Abduh and Luṭfī al Sayyid's assistance in his book *Taḥrīr al Mar'ah (The Emancipation of Women)*. See *al Manār*, 31 (1930): 352.

[34] Laroui, al *Īdiyūlūjiyah*, 31-9.

[35] *Al Manār*, 12 (1909): 160.

[36] Ahmad, *Intellectual*, 46.

drawbacks, their points of weakness, and the means for reform.[37] He maintained that "personal education and self-improvement were the secret of the progress of England, and Egyptians should edu-cate themselves on the British model."[38]

There is ample evidence to show that Riḍā read and fully admired the ideas contained in most of these books. He summarized their contents in *al Manār* and often quoted parts of Zaghlūl's translation of Le Bon and De Castrie. During the 1920s and 1930s, Luṭfī al Sayyid translated some of Aristotle's works, such as *Ethics, On the Universe, On Nature,* and *Politics.* He believed that Egypt's revival was contingent on the spread of Western classics.[39] Ṭāhā Ḥusayn translated Aristotle's *Constitution of Athens,* several plays of Sophocles, and selections from other Greek works. Ḥusayn Haykal produced two volumes on Rousseau's life and works.[40] In *al Manār,* Riḍā introduced and reviewed other translations of Dumas, Tolstoy, Hugo, and Homer.

Syrian intellectuals also played a major role during the nineteenth century in introducing Egyptians to modern European scientific and liberal trends. Farah Antoun, who had fled to Cairo with Riḍā,[41] spread the ideas of eighteenth-century rationalism, anticlericalism, and revolution in his review *al Jāmi 'ah.*[42] Ya'qūb Ṣarrūf publicized the theories of Darwin and Spencer and the views of modern sciences in his journal *al Muqtaṭaf.* Shiblī al Shumayyal, Riḍā's close friend and a co-founder of his Decentralization party, founded a school of thought based on his own understanding of evolution and translated Buchner's interpretation of Darwinism. Riḍā defended his friend's intellectual and ideological position and stated that the theories of Darwin, even

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[37]Ibid., 44-5. See also Vatikiotis, *Modern History,* 231-2.

[38]Ibid., 46.

[39]Safran, *Egypt,* 92.

[40]Ibid., 130-2.

[41]*Riḍā, Tārīkh,* 1, 805.

[42]Hilāl, *Al Siyāsah,* 45-6.

if they proved to be true, did not contradict the Qur'an.[43]

During his lifetime, Riḍā witnessed the growing impact of the press in the Arab and the Muslim worlds (these years have often been described as "the era of journalism").[44] In 1898, the year in which *al Manār* was first published, there were about 169 papers and journals published in Egypt. By 1915, this number had increased to 282.[45]

The defeat of 'Urābī's uprising in 1882 had excluded the possibility of violent action for some time and had, moreover, undermined the Egyptian's national sentiment. But towards the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century, national feeling revived and began to find its outlet in the press. From this point on, it was to play a considerable role in propagating new ideas and different currents of thought. Under the British, the press enjoyed a relative degree of freedom, and discussions of contemporary social, economic, and political issues were publicly raised.[46] Journalists managed to influence public opinion in areas concerning Egypt's relationship with the Ottoman Empire and the occupation. Criticism of the Ottoman sultan and the Khedive was often expressed in addition to ideas of reform, nationalism, liberalism, and rationalism.[47]

Before the appearance of Shaykh 'Alī Yūsuf's *al Mu'ayyad* (1890-1900), the press had been to some extent controlled by Christian Syrians. Many Egyptians accepted their newspapers, with the exception of the pro-British *al Muqaṭṭam* which was backed by the occupation force.[48] Ṣarrūf and Nimr, in addition to their daily *al Muqaṭṭam*, published their periodical *al Muqtaṭaf* first in Beirut and then in Cairo. *Al Muqtaṭaf* contributed heavily to the introduction of new European currents of scientific and

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[43]*Al Manār*, 19 (1916): 625-32.

[44]Ibid., 17 (1914): 69. See also Al Sayyid, *Egypt*, 137, and Ahmad, *Intellectual*, 211.

[45]Safran, *Egypt*, 59. See list of papers and journals in 'Abduh, *Taṭawwur*, 259.

[46]Vatikiotis, *Modern History*, 179.

[47]Ibid., 182-3.

[48]*Al Manār*, 16 (1913): 875.

philosophical thought.[49]

In addition, Syrians ran other prominent papers and magazines, such as *al Ahrām*, *al Hilāl*, and *al Jāmi'ah al 'Uthmānīyah* to which Riḍā contributed. *Al Ahrām*'s political position was contrary to that of *al Muqaṭṭam*, for it criticized the politics of the British occupation and advocated continued Egyptian links with the Ottoman Empire. The founder of *al Hilāl*, Jurjī Zaydān, demonstrated a great interest in Arab and Islamic history, and his magazine became very popular. It was also successful in bridging the gap between Muslim reformists and secular modernists.[50] Antoun's *al Jāmi'ah*, to which Riḍā directed 'Abduh's attention and sought his help in getting his own followers to read it,[51] spread the ideas of French thinkers.[52] Syrian intellectuals were responsible for the dissemination of European scientism, Darwinism, pragmatism, liberalism, and nationalism. Riḍā, himself a Syrian, stated that the Syrians taught the ideas of nationalism to the Egyptians."[53]

On the Egyptian side, Shaykh 'Alī Yūsuf founded his own newspaper, *al Mu'ayyad*, to which Riḍā contributed some articles.[54] This publication served as a training ground for many young Egyptian journalists. Muṣṭafà Kāmil,[55] the most prominent of these men, later founded his own newspaper, *al Liwā'*, which was to become very successful at stirring up national feelings. Kāmil's fiery articles and speeches raised the idea of nationalism and called for the immediate evacuation of the British. Both *al Mu'ayyad* and *al Liwā'* advocated pan-Islamism and gained the support of Khedive 'Abbās II (1892-1914).[56]

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[49]Hilāl, *Al Tajdīd*, 48. See also *Al Manār*, 27 (1926): 768-91.

[50]Vatikiotis, *Modern History*, 186.

[51]Riḍā, *Tārīkh*, 1, 805.

[52]Hilāl, *Al Tajdīd*, 44-6.

[53]*Al Manār*, 7 (1904): 480.

[54]Sharabāṣī, *Rashīd Riḍā*, 2, 91-3.

[55]*Al Manār*, 16 (1913): 874. On the whole biography of 'Alī Yūsuf, see 873-8.

[56]Ibid., 17 (1914): 68.

Another prominent Egyptian newspaper, *al Jarīdah*, was founded by several of the landed gentry in 1907. Directed by Lutfī al Sayyid, it publicly raised various social, economic, and political issues and firmly supported Egyptian nationalism as opposed to pan-Islamism. It advocated liberalism, constitutional representation, and gradual independence. However, in terms of circulation and popularity, it fell behind both *al Mu'ayyad* and *al Liwā'*.

Political Developments

Through their occupation of Egypt, the British soon became the actual and dominant power in Egypt. Their administrative reforms and control undermined the khedive's political and economic power, for he could no longer control taxation or interfere in legislation. Khedive 'Abbās suffered greatly under Cromer, who persistently defied the former's authority over the choice and appointment of ministers. The only places left where the khedive had any real authority was in matters related to the *awqāf* (endowments), al Azhar, and the mosques.[57]

Seeing the decline of his powers, 'Abbās sought an alliance with various Egyptian political movements and their ideological support in order to reinforce his position vis-à-vis the British. He sponsored the activities of Muṣṭafā Kāmil's party and of 'Alī Yūsuf's pan-Islamic movement. The khedive managed to gain Kāmil's support. Kāmil's National party, which preached Egyptian patriotism and anti-British sentiments, attracted the student population, a wide section of the urban middle class, and the intelligentsia. In addition to Egyptian nationalism, Kāmil advocated pan-Islamism and even encouraged the Ottoman sultan to reassert his legitimate rights and sovereignty over Egypt. He advocated immediate independence, which he thought would be achieved through the expansion of national education and the formation of a united national party, considered cooperation with the British to be treachery, and accused the Ummah party of compromising with the British.

'Abduh's group suspected Kāmil's intentions as well as his relations with the Ottoman sultan and Khedive 'Abbās, and

[57]Kazziha, *The Evolution*, 14, 24.

regarded him as an empty demagogue.[58] Riḍā, who considered Kāmil to be both a protégé and a creation of 'Abbās, described his ideas of patriotism and pan-Islamism as both inconsistent and contradictory.[59] These criticisms clearly reflected Riḍā's association with 'Abduh's group, which sought to undermine the influence of Kāmil's nationalist movement. In fact, however, Kāmil was not a palace creation, for on many occasions he actively worked against the Khedive's policies. The Khedive is also on record as admitting that Kāmil belonged only to himself.[60]

The Khedive, annoyed with Kāmil's increasing independence, sponsored the formation of the Constitutional Reform party. This party was entirely dependent on the efforts and personality of its founder, 'Alī Yūsuf, who designed its program and organization and recruited its members.[61] Its founding members were landed gentry and court officials[62] who supported the Khedive's policies and defended him against his rivals. Its program called for pan-Islamism, the British evacuation of Egypt, and constitutional reforms designed to enhance the Khedive's authority and leadership. In reality, though, most of its principles fluctuated according to the nature of the relationship between the Khedive, the occupation force, and the Ottoman sultan of the moment. When 'Abbās established a rapport with Cromer's successor, Sir Eldon Gorst, 'Alī Yūsuf remained faithful to the Khedive and ceased to demand a constitution. He went so far as to attack those who were demanding the expansion of Egyptian parliamentary life. Moreover, when relations between Cairo and Istanbul suffered a setback, 'Alī Yūsuf allowed some exiled Young Turks to write in his newspaper *al Mu'ayyad*.[63]

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[58]Hourani, *Arabic*, 202.

[59]Riḍā, *Tārīkh*, 1, 593 and *Al Manār*, 15 (1912): 137.

[60]Kazziha, *The Evolution*, 67-8.

[61]Aḥmad, *Intellectual*, 81.

[62]Yunan L. Rizq, *Al Aḥzāb al Miṣrīyah qabl al Thawrah, 1952* (Cairo: Markaz al Dirāsāt al Siyāsīyah wa al Istrātijīyah bi al Ahrām, 1972), 31.

[63]'Abbās Mahmūd al 'Aqqād, "Qiṣṣat al Aḥzāb," *Akhbār al Yawm* (16 November 1946): 3, 7.

The Constitutional party, however, came to an end with the death of its founder. This was the result of Gorst's (the new British consul-general and Cromer's successor) changes in official British policy towards the Khedive, which, in 1908, successfully alienated the Khedive from his nationalist allies. Consequently, the Khedive turned against Kāmil and his party, thus forcing Kāmil to strengthen his links with the Ottoman sultan and insist on a constitutional government that would, in his opinion, undermine British authority. However, Kāmil's party started to decline after the death of its leader in 1908. By 1913, it had vanished. This may also have been due to the repressive measures taken against its members by the British authorities. Some of its followers resorted to underground activities while others joined other parties, notably Sa'd Zaghlūl's nationalist movement in 1919.

Cromer was irritated by the Khedive's attempts to restore his authority through patronizing the anti-British, pan-Islamic, and patriotic movements. He therefore retaliated by mobilizing pro-British local political forces: the provincial notables, the beneficiaries of British reforms, and 'Abduh's followers who were influenced by their leader's emphasis on reason and gradual reform. Cromer described these people as national allies of European reformers and as deserving of every possible encouragement. From a British point of view, they performed two important functions: they stood against the khedive's pan-Islamic and patriotic movements and they represented an indigenous elite through which the British could rule the country and continue to undermine the khedive's influence, especially in those matters related to religious institutions. Hence, Cromer was instrumental in bringing 'Abduh back from exile to hold the post of grand mufti as long as he was alive.

By the time 'Abduh returned from exile in 1888, his thought had undergone a major transformation due to his analysis of the failure of 'Urābī's revolt and Europe's growing military and political influences. He therefore abandoned al Afghānī's militant stand and adopted a conciliatory policy, based on gradual reform from within the system, towards the British. He was convinced that religious and educational reform represented the remedy for Egypt's malaise and that an independent and free will must be created among individuals in order to achieve social reform. In his view, a reformed society was a precondition for an independent nation.[64]

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[64] *Al Manār*, 28 (1927): 588.

'Abduh also believed that the reformation of Egypt rested on the regeneration of Islam[65] and thus sought to reform the religious institutions, the mosques, the Sharī'ah courts, and al Azhar. Another reason for his concentration in these areas was the continued undermining of the Khedive's influence.[66] During his tenure, changes were made in the methods of teaching, organization, administration, and finances at al Azhar. He called on the ulama and the Sharī'ah judges to abandon imitation (*taqlīd*) and pursue the essence of Islamic law. His proposals included placing al Azhar under the control of the Public Instruction Department and the Sharī'ah courts under the Ministry of Justice. Moreover, 'Abduh stood firmly against the Khedive's misuse of the *awqāf* funds. All of these measures threatened the conservative ulama class and the Khedive, who perceived these reforms to be directed against their traditional authority.[67]

The Khedive, suspecting 'Abduh's relationship with Cromer, eventually opposed these reforms and encouraged his supporters to launch political campaigns against 'Abduh that would destroy his reputation and discredit him. He approached Riḍā, an intimate disciple of 'Abduh, and encouraged him to participate in these campaigns. Riḍā refused to do so and instead joined 'Abduh in attacking the Khedive's family in *al Manār* and advocating the rights of the nation in choosing and restricting the ruler's, as well as the government's, authority through the enactment of more liberal laws and legislation.[68] Riḍā's stand so offended the Khedive that he tried to have him exiled. Riḍā, however, escaped the Khedive's wrath due to his relationship with the British undersecretary of finance, Mitchell Innes.[69] Relations between Riḍā and the Khedive were restored in 1912, when the latter gave both moral and financial support to Riḍā's newly established School of Guidance.

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[65]Kazziha, "The Jarīdah-Ummah Group," 374.

[66]Riḍā, *Tārīkh*, 1, 566.

[67]Kazziha, *The Evolution*, 72-4.

[68]*Al Manār*, 7 (1903): 358.

[69]Riḍā, *Tārīkh*, 1, 580-90. Riḍā was Innes' Arabic language tutor.

'Abduh's group, working for the extension of his liberal views and his policy of social reform, represented the center of moderate Egyptian political life. Riḍā, although a disciple of 'Abduh, was more concerned with the promotion of religious reform. While 'Abduh's other disciples and followers in the Ummah party defined themselves as the representatives of those who had real interests in the country, and therefore worked towards greater participation in the government, Riḍā perceived the Ummah party as an encouraging sign of Egypt's political and social development. The party wanted to stand between the two authorities, the official one represented by the khedive and the actual one represented by the British. Riḍā declared,

> If it [the party] succeeds as we hope, this will be a sign for the social evolution of the nation. But if it fails, it will be an evidence that the nation is still in the stage of childhood in its social affairs.[70]

The Ummah party opposed the autocratic and personal rule of the Khedive, whom they viewed as an impediment to reform. Its members believed that if they were conciliatory towards and cooperative with the British, the Khedive's powers would be checked, which would then lead to the realization of reforms. They therefore resented Kāmil's agitation, his "blind and emotional" nationalism and pan-Islamic calls, which for them meant submitting to Turkish influence and dividing the Muslims' loyalty. Their own concept of nationalism was based on interest and popular sovereignty.[71] Influenced by 'Abduh, they believed that independence had to be preceded by reform and education, which would lead to the formation of a national character and an independent will, both of which were necessary for self-rule.

The party endeavored to expand the membership and functions of the provincial councils and legislative assembly as a step toward self-government. Due to their social background, they were interested in rural problems and supported Cromer's policy of agricultural and administrative reform. Evaluating Cromer's

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[70] *Al Manār*, 10 (1907): 771.

[71] Muḥammad M. Ḥusayn, *Al Ittijāhāt al Waṭanīyah fī al Adab al Mu'āṣir* (Cairo: Maktabat al Ādāb,1962), 1, 78-9.

work in Egypt, *al Jarīdah* recognized his contributions to the national economy and praised his efforts in the areas of press protection and personal freedom.[72] The same appreciation for Cromer was shared by Riḍā, who believed that the virtue of British freedom had shown itself in Cromer.[73] 'Abduh's group had a major impact on the intellectual life of Egypt through the writings of Luṭfī al Sayyid, Faṭḥī Zaghlūl, and Qāsim Amīn. They also held some senior positions in the administration until one of them, Sa'd Zaghlūl, was able to champion the Egyptian national movement in 1919.

Many of Riḍā's views, at least before the outbreak of the First World War, bore some similarity to those of the Ummah party. This was evident in his adoption of the belief of working for reform through gradual and evolutionary means, his conciliatory attitude toward the British, and his appreciation of Cromer's role in Egypt. Moreover, he defended the Ummah party against accusations of subservience to the British by defending the idea that party members were the disciples of 'Abduh and the notables of the Egyptian nation. Riḍā published some social and political articles in *al Jarīdah* and often reprinted articles which had already appeared in its pages in *al Manār*. He further shared the Ummah party's desire to check the Khedive's powers and its enmity toward Muṣṭafà Kāmil. Riḍā's position could be attributed to the fact that he was a disciple of 'Abduh and a member of the latter's group. In fact, it took some time before his views diverged from those of the Ummah party. Furthermore, although *al Jarīdah* stressed the ideas of liberalism, it did not denounce Islam as a religion. Hence Riḍā's participation in *al Jarīdah*, in addition to his close personal relations with some of its members, was not altogether surprising.

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[72]Kazziha, *The Evolution*, 108.

[73]Riḍā, *Tārīkh*, 1, 551.

Chapter Three

THE WEST AS A CIVILIZATION

Riḍā drew his knowledge about the West from various sources. His earliest knowledge of modern progress and the new world of the West was acquired in Lebanon through discussions and personal contacts with liberal Christian intellectuals and American missionaries in Beirut. He read the former's books and journals, in particular *al Muqtaṭaf* and *al Ṭabīb*, which focused on recent developments in science and modern knowledge.[1] Moreover, during Riḍā's lifetime (1865-1935), the Arab world witnessed a rapid increase in the number of translated books in various fields of modern knowledge. As he was unable to read languages other than Arabic, this development was of vital importance to him.

In *al Manār*, Riḍā devoted one section to the review of new publications. Here, as well as in some of his treatises, he reviewed works by Le Bon, Demolins, Spencer, Tolstoy, Hugo, Shaw, and others. Those which seemed to have had a particularly profound impact on his thought and were frequently quoted in his journal were: Le Bon's *Secret of the Evolution of Nations* and *The Spirit of Society*, Demolins's *A Quoi tient la supériorité des Anglo-Saxons?*, and Spencer's *Education* and *The Principles of Sociology*. Riḍā was also in contact with such orientalists as Moritz and Margoliouth. The latter offered him a copy of his book on Abū al A'lā al Ma'arrī. Riḍā admired the organization of its index and bibliography and began to adopt the same technique in his journal and in most of his books.[2] In addition, books written by Arab and Muslim travelers, who recorded their observations, impressions, and experiences while in Europe, also provided Riḍā with another significant source of information. Among these books were Kurd 'Alī's *Gharā'ib al Gharb* (Wonders of the West), Muḥammad Bayram's *Ṣafwat al*

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[1]Riḍā, *Al Manār wa al Azhar*, 193.

[2]Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā, Al Waḥy al Muḥammadī (Cairo: Maṭba'at Dār Nahḍat Miṣr, 1956), 9. See also *al Manār*, 13 (1910): 396

I'tibār, Muwayliḥī's *Ḥadīth 'Īsà ibn Hishām*, and Arsalān's *Ḥāḍir al 'Ālam al Islāmī* (The Present State of the Muslim World).[3] More significantly, Riḍā came into direct personal contact with Europe when he traveled to Switzerland in 1922 to present, in his capacity as vice president of the Syrio-Palestinian Congress, the Arab cause for independence. While there, he met liberal Western intellectuals and members of the League of Nations with whom he discussed the question of independence and the relationship between the Muslim world and the West. Riḍā also toured in Germany, recording and later publishing his "European Journey" in *al Manār*.[4]

While the rigid classification and particular organization of *al Manār* possibly restricted Riḍā from producing special issues dealing with the West, he did devote articles to, among others "The Advantages and Disadvantages of Europeans in the East, "A Comparison between European and Eastern Civilization," "Fanaticism," "The Westerner in the East,"[5] and Consequence of the War of European Civilization." In these articles, Riḍā explained various Western historical, social, and political developments and linked them to conditions in the East. He selected those phenomena in which the West appeared to be in a commanding position—science, technical skill, and democracy—and argued that his society needed to acquire these while preserving its own moral and ethical values.

In his *Al Waḥy al Muḥammadī* (The Muhammadan Revelation, published in 1932), however, he seemed to go beyond synthesizing by demonstrating his concern about the negative side of Western civilization. As with many non-Western peoples, the First World War revealed to Riḍā the destructive and ruthless side of the West, a West which seemed to be lacking in spiritual elements and moral checks. Riḍā began to see that the West was in sore need of the guidance of Islam, the religion of

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[3]Al Manār, 25 (1924): 719; 11 (1908), 84; 10 (1907), 61; and 26 (1925), 223. See also Aḥmad al Sharabāṣī, *Amīr al Bayān* (Cairo: Dār al Kitāb al 'Arabī, 1963), 822, 834-5, 839.

[4]Ibish, *Raḥalāt*, 311-84; *al Manār*, 23 (1922), 114-20, 383-90, 411-59, 553-60, 635-40, and 696-702.

[5]This article was published first in *al Mu'ayyad*, no. 2748 (26 April 1899) and later in the first volume of *al Manār*.

brotherhood, mercy, and peace.[6] The book, though not focusing upon the West per se, thus attempted to use reason, along with logical and historical evidence, to prove that the Qur'an contained all necessary elements for modern reform. Addressing his book to liberal European and Japanese scholars of modern civilization, he explicitly called on them to adopt Islam in the hope that they would in turn transmit the message to their people.[7]

In dealing with topics that involved the West, Riḍā focused on the causes of Western progress, the process of acquiring Western civilization, some of its political and economic components, its moral and social values, and Western civilization as it emerged after the First World War. These themes will be discussed in the following sections.

Causes of Western Progress

Revealing the impetus behind Western supremacy was one of the major issues which occupied Riḍā's mind. Though the West was a source of pain and frustration, Western progress seemed almost irresistible. Like other intellectuals of his time, Riḍā was struck by the disparity between an advanced Europe and a backward East plagued by tyranny and stagnation. Riḍā sorely expressed this fact in one of his articles:

> Europe attacks us with the strength of its nations, sciences, industries, organization, wealth, shrewdness, and wisdom . . . so long as we remain in this state of ignorance, disorder, fragmentation, and paralysis, we will never be able to stand before Europe . . . We have to sacrifice money and unite to develop the nation, and then force our rulers to reform our conditions. For this age is the age of nations, not individuals; discipline and solidarity, not despotism.[8]

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[6]Riḍā, *Al Waḥy*, 11.

[7]Ibid., 38-9.

[8]*Al Manār*, 8 (1905): 759.

Riḍā's comparison revealed his awareness of the presence of a powerful, rich, and knowledgeable West on the one hand and an ignorant and backward East on the other. His proposed solution to correcting this imbalance, dictated by the presence of a West which seemed to have all of the elements needed for progress and modernity, did not conform to traditional models. Recognizing that the Muslims lacked such "modern" characteristics as unity, social cooperation, organization, and justice, he blamed his own society for its backwardness and viewed European dominance as the result of Muslim weakness. This weakness, in turn, he attributed to the Muslim rulers' predilection for disputes over power, the inability of the Muslim peoples to form organized political institutions, and their lack of control over their own governments. Furthermore, Riḍā believed that the Muslims' failure to create a regular and well-disciplined army, their ignorance of sociology and politics, and their lack of those technical skills necessary for national strength, were also responsible.[9]

It seemed that Riḍā's conception of the reasons for Western progress passed through two stages. In the early one, which lasted till 1907, he attributed Western progress to such factors as education, the moral habits of Europeans, their organizational ability, and the Reformation movement. When Riḍā wrote his article: "*Manāfi' al 'Urubbīyīn wa Maḍārruhum fī al Sharq*" (Advantages and Disadvantages of Europeans in the East), in 1907, he reduced all factors to one reason: the existence of associations.

At first, Riḍā believed that Europe's progress was based on education. With the development of science and knowledge, which the Europeans acquired from Islamic civilization, education spread and advanced in the West. It played a significant role in imparting to European generations the virtue of independence, which allowed them eventually to restrict their rulers' powers and establish republican systems.[10] He also expressed his admiration for the spread of educational institutions in Europe, the advancements made in the sciences and the arts, and the assistance given to European citizens by their governments and various philanthropists. Riḍā, trying to convince the Ottomans of

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[9]Ibid., 14 (1911): 771. See also *al Manār*, 8 (1905): 789.

[10]Ibid., 1 (1898): 869.

the indispensability of education in building a modern army, quoted Bismarck's belief that it was German education that had defeated France,[11] in several issues of his journal.

Attributing modern Western advancement to the influence of Islamic civilization on Europe was a recurring theme used by Riḍā and many other Muslim intellectuals in their writings. Proudly, he mentioned that

> some fair-minded European scholars and intellectuals had admitted that the beginning of modern European civilization had been a consequence of What the Europeans acquired from Islam in Spain at the hands of Averroes and his disciples, and during their wars against the Muslims.[12]

There were various motives behind the introduction of Islam into this type of argument. In many instances, this was done to compensate for feelings of inferiority among some contemporary Muslim intellectuals. In Riḍā's thought, however, it was frequently used in a positive way to justify the adoption of some commendable aspects of modern civilization while undermining the position of those who did not want to adopt any aspects. Their argument ran as follows: In the past, Muslims were more civilized and had contributed to the development of the West. Therefore, Muslims should not be ashamed to acquire some features of contemporary Western civilization. This argument tended to undermine the resistance of traditional sectors of the society vis-à-vis some aspects of Western culture.

In saying that these aspects had their roots in Islam,[13] Riḍā and others were seeking to legitimize their acceptance as part of the Muslim heritage. Equally important, this tactic sought to make it clear that backwardness was not inherent in Islam, but rather an accidental stage that could be overcome. In other words, civilization was not due to the intrinsic superiority of one race over another. In the past Muslims had been more civilized than Westerners; now the opposite was true. It was therefore

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[11]Ibid., 9 (1906): 58.

[12]Ibid., 1 (1898): 733.

[13]Ibid., 12 (1909): 541.

necessary that the Muslims should try to regain what they had lost.

Also noteworthy in Riḍā's view of the linkage between Western education and progress is the explicit link between education and political development. According to Riḍā, the spread of education among the Europeans enabled them to restrict the prerogatives of their rulers and to erect constitutional governments and republican systems. In other words, education provided Westerners with an independent will, freedom of thought, and recognition of their political rights. This link between education and political development was dictated by the repressive political conditions in the Muslim world, which continued to suffer from a lack of independence, the absolute powers of rulers, and the absence of any political role for the people. Envisaging education as a precondition for political reform and political independence was one of 'Abduh's principles to which Riḍā strongly adhered.

In a different context, the stress on education was also meant to be a criticism of Egypt's British overlords, who were consciously trying to scale down the spread of education. Riḍā's emphasis on education as a major element of Western progress was manifested in his deep interest in Zaghlūl's translation of Demolins's book and in the founding of his School of Guidance in 1912, in which he attempted to combine modern education with religious teachings.

According to Riḍā, another reason for Europe's progress was its peoples' moral values and ethical habits, their independence of thought, freedom of will and action, dedication, and self-reliance.[14] Riḍā found a direct relationship between these and the development and strength of Western nations:

> The personal freedom, independence, and dignity of the British people enabled them to conquer one-fifth of the world which lacked these values, though the British army was not the largest in number.[15]

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[14]Ibid., 1 (1898): 733.

[15]Ibid., 14 (1911): 408.

Riḍā's association between British moral habits and Britain's ability to dominate other nations reflected the impact of Demolins and Le Bon, both of whom linked British ethical habits to British military control and economic and political success. They, like Riḍā, attributed Britain's current status to its citizens' self-reliance and independence of thought and will.[16]

Riḍā found consolation in and drew inspiration from the reformation movement, which he considered to be one of the major factors contributing to the West's progress. In an article dealing with Islamic reform, he painted the following picture of medieval Europe: the people were dominated by their rulers and the Catholic church, both of which joined forces, in the interest of preserving the status quo, to oppose science, knowledge, innovation, discovery, freedom, justice, equality, and every other path leading to the independence of the will. In the name of religion, the clergy fought reason and science and enjoyed the support of the rulers. This alliance eventually allowed the two parties to enjoy absolute power and the total obedience of their people.[17] After the Crusades, individual Europeans grew aware of their weakness and began to defy both secular and Church authorities.[18] Riḍā believed that the real reformers of Europe were not its politicians, but those who were persecuted for trying to reform their peoples' convictions. The greatest reformer, in Riḍā's view, was Martin Luther, the reformer of religion and the eradicator of the most tremendous obstacle to progress: ignorance.[19]

Riḍā's detailed treatment of this historical transformation in Western history carried within it an implicit reference to similar conditions found in his own society: absolute rulers, stagnant scholars, and vulnerable advocates of reform. He nonetheless believed that Muslims were in a better position than medieval Europeans and that real reform was possible, for "Islam

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[16]Aḥmad Fatḥī Zaghlūl, *Sirr Taqaddum al Injlīz al Saksūniyīn* (Cairo: Maṭba'at al Sha'b, 1908), 80, 176-9, 256-8. See also his *Sirr Taṭawwur al Umam* (Cairo: Maṭba'at al Ma'ārif, 1913), 39.

[17]*Al Manār*, 2 (1899), 69.

[18]Ibid., 3 (1900): 31.

[19]Ibid., 4 (1901): 648-85.

abolished all spiritual authorities, restricted the powers of rulers by a doctrine based on real freedom, justice, and equality."[20] He therefore asserted that

> Islamic reform could take place in the East, but it depends in the first place on convincing traditional scholars of the indispensability of natural sciences, on which the possession of power and wealth rests.[21]

Riḍā's article, "The Advantages and Disadvantages of Europeans in the East,"[22] marked the beginning of a new phase in his thinking on the causes of Western progress. In this article, which was published first in *al Jarīdah* in 1907 and then in *al Manār*, Riḍā refuted various possible causes for Western advancement and then reduced these factors to one prime cause: the existence of associations (*jam'īyāt*). Riḍā's use of the word "associations" was very broad (i.e., political parties, interest groups, financial corporations, and philanthropic societies) and connotes cooperative organizations for achieving collective and special interests.

In the West, various associations specialized in enhancing the educational, cultural, economic, political, and social life of the society. The formation of these associations was the act of rational individuals who, out of their concern about the backward conditions of their society, sought its progress.[23] Political associations, in the form of interest groups and parties, succeeded in abolishing the absolute power of kings and popes and in replacing them with republican symbols of government and constitutional monarchies. Religious and philanthropic associations established schools, orphanages, and hospitals. Scientific and educational associations broadened the spheres of science and the arts and widened the fields of knowledge. Financial associations, in the form of companies, built factories for various industries and banks for facilitating financial transactions.

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[20]Ibid., 1 (1898): 885-6. See also ibid., 3 (1900): 245.

[21]Ibid., 2 (1899): 70.

[22]Ibid., 10 (1907), 340-3. The following sections are basically drawn from this article.

[23]Ibid., 14 (1911): 289.

In fact, the development of modern Western institutions and patterns of organization provided Riḍā with new explanations to account for the backwardness of Muslim society. Thus, after locating the secrets of Muslim regression, he attributed the Muslims' inability to preserve and develop their civilization to the fact that it was not based on associations or institutions, but rather on individuals, and was thus subject to eventual collapse. Riḍā tried to encourage the appearance and subsequent growth of such organizations by searching for their roots in traditional Islamic heritage. He mentioned that political associations had existed in the Muslim world in the past but had failed to survive. He mentioned such groups as the Shī'ah, the Khawārij, and the Sufi mystical orders. The first two failed because they concealed their objectives, while the third failed because it was politically submissive.

This aspect of Western civilization had a great impact on Riḍā's political attitude. He was active in the formation of several political and cultural associations (i.e., *Jam'īyat al Shūrā al 'Uthmānīyah, Ḥizb al lā Markazīyah al 'Uthmānīyah, Jam'īyat al Rābiṭah al Sharqīyah,* and *Jam'īyat al Jāmi'ah al 'Arabīyah*),[24] and emphasized that the role of associations in the development of Europe was not a coincidence. This idea appears to have gained wide support among 'Abduh's disciples in Egypt, particularly among those associated with the *Jarīdah*-Ummah group, which included Luṭfī al Sayyid, Faṯḥī Zaghlūl, and other intellectuals working for the extension of 'Abduh's liberal views and his policy of social reform.

The Dilemma of Westernization

Riḍā's search for the secrets behind Western civilization generated another controversial issue among Arab and Muslim intellectuals: What kind of elements should the Muslim world acquire from the West and how should it obtain them? Riḍā had his own views on the issue, as well as his own criteria for the process of transferring Western achievements and his own reservations concerning the wholesale adoption of Western models. In fact, the key elements for understanding Riḍā's opinions on imitating the

[24]Ibid., 26 (1915): 291-4.

West and on breaking the stagnant conditions in the East revolved around Egypt's problematic situation. Even after a century of acquiring Western achievements, Egypt remained backward, dominated by foreigners, increasingly dependent on the West, and seemingly unable to confront successfully the threats of political, social, and cultural disintegration. He cited the case of Japan as a non-Western nation that had successfully achieved a remarkable level of progress in a shorter time than either Egypt or Turkey.[25] Riḍā painfully viewed the irony that although most non-Western countries had by that time been exposed to modern Western civilization, they had failed to achieve a reasonable level of scientific or industrial advancement. Moreover, whereas the indigenous values of these societies were shaken, they were not replaced with Western moral values or with their modernizing consequences.[26] Egypt, after accumulating knowledge from the West and importing its educational models for many years, was still unable to breed philosophers and scholars of independent judgment or outstanding scientists with creative abilities.[27] Riḍā apportioned a major share of the blame for this negative situation to the existence of stagnant traditional scholars and Westernized intellectuals.

It seems that the enmity between Riḍā and the conservative ulama class was deep-rooted. He blamed them for fragmenting the Muslim nation by engaging in fanatical sectarian and dogmatic disputes and accused them of destroying the Muslims' independent and democratic spirit by supporting tyrannical rulers and justifying their despotic practices. Riḍā also condemned their opposition to modern science and the reform movements.[28]

He also had some negative words for Muslims who were Westernizing themselves. He bitterly accused them of blindly imitating the Europeans and placing themselves in a subservient role at a time when they had neither the experience nor the

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[25]Ibid., 8 (1905): 813, 811-9, and 515-5. See also ibid., 1 (1898): 278.

[26]Ibid., 8 (1905): 96.

[27]Ibid., 9 (1906): 358.

[28]Ibid., 8 (1905): 117, and 789. See also Safran, *Egypt*, 80.

independence of judgment to really understand what they were doing. They were infatuated by the superficial aspects of Western civilization and had no regard for the more serious side of its scientific achievements, technical skills, and organizational ability. He blamed them for failing to realize what the drastic consequences of such imitation had on their own society.[29] Riḍā maintained that the Westernizers suffered from an inferiority complex, a condition that led them to the irrational imitation of foreigners as a result of their self-contempt and the glorification of others. They therefore humiliated themselves by remaining subordinates rather than becoming models for others to follow, by being enslaved rather than independent.[30]

He attributed this negative development to the spread of Western schools, for he believed that these foreign institutions alienated their students by bringing them up to admire Western values and culture while leaving them improperly educated in their own cultural traditions.[31] Those Westernizers, Riḍā believed, stood behind the introduction and persistence of British imperialism in Egypt by serving the interests of the occupiers. Their pursuit of Western ways of life and patterns of conspicuous consumption led to the eventual squandering of the nation's wealth and also caused Egypt's continued dependence on the West. These people also contributed to the disintegration of those social and cultural bonds that held the nation together by introducing alien values.[32] Riḍā's opposition to the Westernizers arose out of his conviction that

> all that we need to acquire from Europe is its scientific achievements, technical skill and advanced industries. The acquisition of these aspects does not require all this amount of Westernization.[33]

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[29]Ibid., 30 (1929): 119.

[30]Ibid., 30 (1929): 120.

[31]Ibid., 20 (1917-18): 341-3.

[32]Ibid., 8 (1905): 814, and ibid., 18 (1915): 229.

[33]Ibid., 19 (1916): 128.

Riḍā's statements reflected his belief that the acquisition of some aspects of Western civilization should not be left to chance. Rather, it should be a rationally defined process and be preceded by certain objective conditions. In his journal, Riḍā called for the rationalization of this process and tried to spell out exactly how the Muslim world should conduct itself while encountering the West. Riḍā's selective scheme included the development of industry and the technical and scientific skills that supported it. He stressed the need for seriously studying, but not automatically adopting, Western historical, political, and social developments. Equally important in this process of acquiring some aspects of Western achievement was Riḍā's acceptance of the assistance of Europeans who had no religious, political, or imperialist ambitions on Egypt.[34]

Riḍā also emphasized his fellow Muslims' failure to distinguish between Western civilization's superficial features and its essential products:

> We must compete with the Europeans in an effort to discover the sources of benefit to us. We must explore their signs and causes, and refrain from confining ourselves to the importation of the products of their industries and achievements, such as military equipment . . . Imitating the West will make us dependent on the Europeans forever and eliminate all our hopes to approach and emulate them.[35]

Riḍā was convinced that the material progress of the West, as well as its advancement in industry, economy, and politics, was a by-product of a specific impetus: Western scientism. It was this factor, he stressed, that sustained the West's economic and military progress, strength, and hegemony. But behind these external elements were two other factors: the advancement of scientific methods and technical skills.[36] The de facto British occupation and military control of Egypt reinforced this conviction on

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[34]Ibid., 17 (1914): 10-11.

[35]Ibid., 1 (1898): 551-2.

[36]Ibish, *Raḥalāt*, 28-9.

the part of Riḍā, who opined that Muslims must acquire the Western scientific spirit if they were ever to combat Western aggression successfully.[37]

The basic element of Western science, according to Riḍā, was the distinction between reason and emotion. Western scientists and philosophers directed their powers of reason to the discovery of the universe and the development of natural sciences and directed their emotions to religious affairs. Neither one was allowed to interfere with the other. To eliminate any contradiction between science and religion, Riḍā cited such great Western leaders, scientists, and thinkers as Bismarck, Pasteur, and Tolstoy.[38] Another element of Western scientism that attracted Riḍā's attention was its practitioners' research method, which was based on independent thought, analysis, and inductive and deductive methods.[39]

Riḍā justified the acquisition of certain Western traits on the bases of religion and necessity. He argued that since the Muslims' backwardness had led to the suspension of many religious duties, the most important being jihad—impossible from such a position of weakness—Muslim society had to be modernized, not Westernized. The success of this venture was dependent upon modern science, industry, and technical skill—all found in the West. As acquiring the skills or knowledge needed to carry out a religious obligation was itself a religious obligation, he maintained that it was incumbent upon all Muslims to learn what they could from the West in order to restore their civilization to its former high level of development.[40] However, perhaps speaking now to another and more secular audience, he also argued that the need for technical skill was universal and necessary to all nations regardless of religion, language, tradition, and habit.[41]

A major area of concern was whether the Muslim world could remain immune to the inevitable infiltration of Western

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[37]*Al Manār*, 29 (1928): 120. See also ibid., 5 (1902): 91.

[38]Ibid., 9 (1906): 190.

[39]Ibid., 10 (1907): 199; Riḍā, *Al Waḥī*, 87; Ibish , *Raḥalāt*, 28.

[40]Hourani, *Arabic*, 236. See also *al Manār*, 1 (1898): 551-2.

[41]*Al Manār*, 30 (1929), 129.

values both during and after its acquisition of Western scientism and technical knowledge and skills. Riḍā, faced with this issue during a meeting in Geneva with the editor of the *Tribune de Genève*, replied that foreign intervention in Muslim affairs deprived them of the freedom and independence to freely choose their own path to progress while preserving their cultural heritage. Moreover, he opined that people possessed a natural readiness to acquire scientific and industrial expertise, especially if they had had comparable experience in those fields, as was the case with the Muslim world. The example of Japan, which had managed to develop in a similar fashion to the West while preserving its national character,[42] was held up by Riḍā as a model.

Motivated by a deep admiration for the Japanese model of modernization, Riḍā listed the requirements that had to accompany the process of borrowing Western innovations. First, these elements ought to be acquired independently and freely so that they would become an inherent part of the nation's character. One way to achieve this was to translate Western scientific texts into Arabic and develop the Arabic language itself so that it would not have to engage in large-scale borrowing of Western terminology.[43] Second, this process must be carried out by people who were both experts in the various sciences as well as firmly rooted in their own national characteristics and cultural values.[44] Third, the members of the nation must be linked by a single bond.[45] In fact, the agreement on certain values was a distinctive factor of the Japanese and the Arab models. Whereas the Japanese were united and agreed on certain indisputable values—the nation and the emperor—the Arabs had failed completely in their quest to achieve unity based on such traditional concepts as the Ummah and the *khalīfah*. Fourth, Riḍā emphasized the importance of carefully observing any changes that might take place in Muslim society as a result of importing these foreign elements. In this regard, the study of historical and radical

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[42]Ibish, *Raḥalāt*, 372.

[43]*Al Manār*, 27 (1926): 788-9.

[44]Ibid., 17 (1914): 10-11.

[45]Ibid., 8 (1905): 813.

developments which the developed nations had passed through would be of great importance, for it would provide Muslims with examples and allow them to make an educated guess as to what the positive or negative effects would be.[46]

Riḍā's remedy reflects his awareness of the harmful changes that took place in Egypt due to the deep Western penetration and the attitudes and practices of the Westernized portions of the society. It shows his sincere and serious attempt to work out a synthesis by which the modern could be absorbed and the old revived. Moreover, the conditions listed by Riḍā crystallize the profound impact that the Japanese experiment had on him. Like other non-Westerners, he believed that Japan's victory over "Western" Russia in 1905, in addition to its successful model of modernization which was achieved in a relatively short time, refuted the claims of inherent non-Western inferiority or inherent Western superiority.[47] He saw Japan's success as an indictment of the failure of Egypt's and Turkey's respective governments and intellectuals to achieve a similar level of development and modernization. This success, Riḍā believed, was due to the moral and military independence of the Japanese spirit, which had remained unspoiled and unbowed for thousands of years.[48] Muslims, however, had no equivalence of the Meiji government and leaders which had actively and intelligently guided Japan during its transition.[49]

Another obvious difference between the Muslims and Japan was apparent in the areas of education and moral habits. Japanese students sent to Europe specialized in practical and applied sciences and were an example of good behavior, seriousness, and activity. Their Egyptian counterparts, on the other hand, specialized in the theoretical and social sciences and were models of moral corruption and extravagance.[50] As a result, Japan produced many scientists who stood on an equal footing with the

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[46]Ibid., 30 (1929): 120.

[47]Ibid., 7 (1904): 629.

[48]Ibid., 200.

[49]Ibid., 8 (1905): 514-4.

[50]Ibid., 19 (1916): 128.

Europeans when it came to searching for facts and discovering new inventions, a feat which Egypt could not duplicate.[51]

Taken as a whole, these views reveal an unusually sophisticated awareness of the difference between modernization and westernization. Riḍā saw the first as consisting of the possession of technical skills and scientific knowledge while preserving the society's indigenous national values and moral basis. A later Islamic thinker belonging to the same school of thought said that modernization could be achieved if the nation believed that its backwardness was simply an accidental status that could be overcome by directing a unified nation towards the achievement of specific goals. Modernization required a national will and an efficient government capable of directing the nation towards industrialization. Westernization, on the other hand, was a belief that backwardness was part of the nation's essence—its culture, belief system, and history. Thus the nation had to sever all links with its past and restructure itself on the Western model of development[52] if it were to overcome its backwardness. For Riḍā, Japan was modernizing, whereas Egypt and Turkey were Westernizing, and history had already shown which path was preferable.

[51]Ibid., 27 (1926): 788-9.

[52]Muḥammad Jalāl Kishk, *Wa Dakhalat al Khayl al Azhar* (Beirut: al Dār al 'Ilmīyah, 1972), 11-5.

Chapter Four

MAJOR COMPONENTS OF WESTERN VIABILITY

Economic Vitality

Western industrial, technical, and economic advancement, not to mention technical achievements, stimulated the Muslims and brought to their attention the importance of wealth and its accumulation in the modern world. Their eventual conviction that European material prosperity was the cornerstone of Western progress led to a corollary: modern civilization rested on a viable economic base. Riḍā, who held the same views, saw wealth as "the flesh and blood of European civilization."[1] He wrote in *al Manār* that "the economy and the investment of wealth are the basis of their [Europeans] civilization and the pillars of their strength."[2] Therefore, he often stressed economic developments achieved by Europe as well as its ascendancy in industry, trade, agriculture, transportation, inventions, and scientific discoveries.

Nevertheless, unlike many Westernizers who believed that the direct acquisition of Western achievements would eventually guarantee national development, Riḍā was convinced that such a superficial view would perpetuate Egypt's dependence on the West. For Riḍā, the dependent condition of Egypt and Turkey refuted the Westernizers' claim. Instead, Muslims should concern themselves with the discovery and absorption of the constitutive elements of Western economic progress in addition to the scientific and organizational bases behind it. He demonstrated to his compatriots that the "northern nations" managed to develop sciences and rational economic methods for the investment and expenditure of wealth. Though he did not describe these methods, he proposed the immediate formation of an economic

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[1] *Al Manār*, 1 (1898): 183.

[2] Ibid., 48.

enterprise which, as part of its activities, would send outstanding students to scientific and educational institutions in Europe to study political economy and other necessary industrial and financial sciences. He hoped that, after their return, they would teach their compatriots what they had learned and that both groups would then use these sciences to develop their society.[3]

The scientific method for the development and investment of wealth was one element of European economic progress. Another element was the financial companies and economic corporations which utilized this method to create productive projects and constructive installations. Riḍā considered financial companies the source of progress and knowledge in Europe:

> They are the axis on which the development of industries and technical achievements revolve as they contribute to the establishment of schools, administrative offices, factories, and means of transportation.[4]

Influenced by these aspects, the solutions Riḍā suggested for developing Egypt's condition did not depend entirely on the benevolence and piety of the rich, but rather on practical and organizational principles. He urged his people to form financial companies and economic corporations to carry out various economic projects. He called for the organization of trade unions to preserve and defend the rights of the workers. Finally, he stressed the necessity of making Egyptians aware of their need to save and to impose their control over the nation's economy in order to guarantee its political independence.[5]

Riḍā believed that Western financial companies were also behind Western imperialism and economic exploitation. He was convinced that the West followed policies of conquest and imperialism in order to accumulate wealth through pillaging the resources of the colonized countries. Trade and commercial companies played a significant role in this respect by transferring the

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[3]Ibid., 22 (1920): 76.

[4]Ibid., 1 (1898): 13 and ibid., 10 (1907): 342,

[5]Ibid., 35 (1935): 473-81.

colonies' resources and dominating the thoughts and minds of the conquered people through spreading Western educational patterns, foreign languages, and alien values.[6] As a result of these beliefs, he was disturbed by Europe's extraction of Egypt's resources and asserted that

> there is no sign of civilization and progress in Egypt except for some palaces and shops which are owned by foreigners, in addition to some wide roads for the use of their horses and carriages. There are also some railroads, telegraph, and telephone lines which are not constructed by the people of this country but by foreigners. They enjoy the nation's fruits, extract its wealth through their control of trade and economic interests, and possess large estates in which they make serfs of the natives.[7]

Consequently, Riḍā linked economic independence to political independence, viewing the former as a precondition for the latter. In very explicit words, Riḍā stated that

> there is no hope for the independence and freedom of any nation without wealth . . . but there is no wealth without a viable economy. Political independence hinges on economic independence . . . . Yet, we are still negligent in the pursuit of this cause.[8]

In this respect, with the Europeans' thriftiness and economic behavior in mind, Riḍā directed his severest attacks against the majority of wealthy Egyptians who were unaware of the importance of saving and rational spending. By their lavish consumption of foreign products, they transferred the wealth of their nation to the West and, consequently, enabled the Europeans to develop industries and strengthen their economies. He asserted that the money they spent in Europe every year on their lusts, luxuries,

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[6]Ibid., 1 (1898): 47-8, 299. See also ibid., 14 (1911): 398.

[7]Ibid., 1 (1898): 80 and ibid., 13 (1910): 357-8.

[8]Ibid., 35 (1935): 473-81.

and gambling would be enough to spread education throughout Egypt. If it had been spent in their country on scientific and productive projects, or on paying Egypt's international debt, their country would have been emancipated from its current economic enslavement and would have reached a level of development similar to Europe in a short time.[9]

Riḍā was convinced of the potential political and economic role which some Egyptians could play in recovering their nation's economic independence. He regarded Egypt's survival as completely dependent upon its delivery into the hands of a group of indigenous politicians who would enforce justice and equality, restrict the oppressors, fight corruption, spread security, and establish factories, financial companies, and other constructive projects.[10] Undoubtedly, the most promising nominees for carrying out this task were 'Abduh's disciples, the members of the *Jarīdah*-Ummah party, who represented the interests of the whole nation and were worthy of encouragement. In *al Jarīdah*, Riḍā warned against losing control over the foreigners. He pointed to the drastic influence of their companies and banks and warned against their possession of land. He advocated firm Egyptian control over the country and the necessity of Egyptians being able to run their nation's affairs freely. To reach this goal, however, he maintained that foreigners would have to be prevented from buying land, Egypt's internatinal debt would have to be eliminated, and its wealth would have to be placed in the hands of its people. He proclaimed that Egypt's national wealth and its preservation was the only way to promote the best political and social objectives of the nation.[11]

Restricted Government

The Western model of nation building had a major impact on many Ottoman subjects. They believed that by adopting this model and relinquishing pan-Islamic solidarity they would be

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[9]Ibish, *Rahalāt*, 333.

[10]*Al Manār*, 1 (1898): 43.

[11]Ibid., 10 (1907): 111-4. See also ibid., 13 (1910): 355.

able to gain political independence. In order to provide this potentially separatist scheme with ideological grounds, many Arab and Ottoman intellectuals began to propagate Western types of secular nationalism and propose new components, other than religion, as the main factors of national cohesion.

Being conscious of the difference in historical and cultural conditions between the Muslim world and the West, Riḍā apparently understood the special nature of secularism and the threat that it posed to Ottoman and Muslim solidarity. He realized the contradiction between the various religious and secular factors in the Western understanding of what constitutes a nation. In his opinion, Western style nationalism had a secular basis composed of two major elements: race and language. Europe had managed to consolidate its nations and then guarantee solidarity and avoid possible religious revolts by stirring up racial loyalties and indoctrinating its people with the idea of racial unity despite religious differences.[12] Riḍā admired Bismarck, who had been successful in bringing about the national integration of the Germanic peoples. However, when nationalism began to spread in the Muslim world, it had an essentially disintegrative effect and eventually enabled Europe to destroy the political unity of the Ottoman Empire. In Riḍā's view, Europe benefited from the dissemination of secular nationalism, for this new ideology encouraged the Ottoman Empire's non-Muslim subjects to rise up against the state and demand independence.[13]

Realizing the drastic consequences of secular nationalism on Muslim solidarity, particularly in its crucial confrontation with Western imperialism, Riḍā opposed the advocates of nationalism and supported pan-Ottomanism and pan-Islamism. As someone who sought the political survival of the Islamic world, he believed in the ability of the religious and Ottoman bonds to assimilate the empire's various ethnic and social groups.[14] He also accused Europe of portraying pan-Islamism in a very negative and distorted way in order to scare people, even Muslims, away

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[12]Ibid., 1 (1898): 485.

[13]Ibid., 14 (1911): 844.

[14]Ibid., 8 (1905): 786-7.

from it. Europe, moreover, intimidated everyone who worked for Islamic solidarity. It invented new entities to replace Islamic ones, dangled the hope of future independence if Muslims abandoned pan-Islamism, and promised that "they would receive the assistance of humanitarian Europe, the enemy of religious fanaticism."[15] In addition to this there were also internal threats. Riḍā attributed the spread of secular nationalism to those Westernizers who naively trusted Western politicians and were thus influenced by Western political and social ideas that proved to be inconvenient and incompatible with local conditions. He described the advocates of secular nationalism—on racial and linguistic grounds—as "destroying a whole country in order to build a palace."[16]

Arnold Toynbee, in his analysis of the consequences of the cultural encounter and the infiltration of nationalism into the Islamic world, reflects Riḍā's sober awareness and fears. In fact, he considered the introduction of Western style nationalism into the Arab-Muslim countries to be a seamy side of Western civilization "which it would surely be a pity for the Arab-speaking peoples to copy exactly."[17]

As Riḍā discerned the absence of religion in this doctrine, he also noticed the separation between religion and politics in European states. He considered the influence of religion in the politics of medieval Europe to be a major cause of European backwardness during that era, as the Catholic church had stood firmly against any scientific or political progress. Europe had therefore had to separate the spiritual and temporal authorities, and define for each its domain,[18] so that it could overcome its backwardness. He believed that those westernized Muslims who wanted to pursue this same course of action were mistaken, for the principles and the courses of the development of each religion were com-

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[15]Ibid., 15 (1912): 740.

[16]Ibid., 8 (1905): 788.

[17]Arnold Toynbee, *Civilization on Trial: The World and the West* (New York: Meridian Books, Inc., 1958), 255. See also 253-6.

[18]Rashīd Riḍā, *Muḥāwarāt al Muṣliḥ wa al Muqallid* (Cairo: Maṭba'at al Manār, 1906-7), 55. See also *Al Manār*, 24 (1923): 350.

pletely different. Islam encouraged reason, progress, and the pursuit of natural sciences. It also called for the development of technologies and industries and emancipated all people from the enslavement of religious hierarchy and absolute rulers.[19] Medieval Christianity had never called for any of these.

Despite Europe's claims to the contrary, Riḍā believed that religion still influenced European policies and that it was used for political purposes. Europe had used religion as a pretext for intervening in the Ottoman Empire by provoking its subjects' religious sentiments and then declaring its protection for non-Muslims against Ottoman religious fanaticism.[20] He refuted this allegation by pointing out that the Jews fled to the Ottoman Empire to avoid repression in Europe.[21] In other issues of *al Manār*, Riḍā documented Europe's use of religion in politics and the stirring up of aggressive sentiments toward Islam, which were sometimes expressed in a fanatical religious tone. He cited several instances. The widely circulating French newspaper, *Le Temps*, described the British conquest of the Sudan as one of the Crusades. In one speech, Gladstone called for the destruction of the Qur'an and the purification of Europe from Muslims. Salisbury provocatively declared the need to retrieve all that the crescent had taken from the cross.[22] Riḍā was convinced that in spite of the separation between religion and politics in the West, religion still played a part in Western politics towards Islam.

European progress in science, industry, and economic welfare drew Riḍā's attention to the political system supporting such progress. Democracy, constitution, and parliament were seen as major manifestations of Western advancement. Moreover, in the Ottoman provinces, repressive political measures directed at dissenters increased the interest of Arab and Muslim intellectuals in Western democracy. This model appealed to them because, in the

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[19]*Al Manār*, 19 (1916): 8 and ibid., 5 (1902): 882.

[20]Ibid., 1 (1898): 509-15. Riḍā mentioned that France declared its protection over the Catholics in the East, Russia over the Orthodox, and that Britain inflamed the revolts of Protestant Armenians.

[21]Ibid., 8 (1905): 756.

[22]Ibid., 1 (1898): 509-15, and 489.

West, constitutions and elected parliaments restricted the powers of rulers and governments. Besides, freedom, security, and political participation were assured by law. Riḍā saw Europe's attempt to erect republican governing systems as an end showing its achievement of an unprecedented level of progress[23] and said that the greatest benefit acquired from Europe was the realization of the ideal type of government. Thus Muslims, inspired by the West, sought to replace absolute governments by ones based on *shūrā* (consultation) and the Sharī'ah (Islamic law).[24]

In a polemical argument revealing his knowledge of Western historical and political developments, Riḍā analyzed the Muslims' failure to form stable democratic institutions. He conceded that such a step necessitated a certain degree of social progress. While Islam mandated consultation, its followers had been unable to form a viable and long-lasting democratic government pursuant to their social progress. On the other hand, the emergence of Europe's parliamentary governments and republican systems evolved gradually and only after centuries of despotism. Moreover, Europe's gradual scientific and social progress had ensured the stability and advancement of that political system.[25]

Riḍā felt that Egypt had a long history of often painful despotism and that it was now time for a clear change. The emergence of new social groups seeking to articulate their interests and to acquire a greater share of power, in addition to the existence of a relative amount of freedom provided by the British, encouraged Riḍā to state explicitly in his journal:

> It is a substantive right for the nation to select the ruler and restrict its government by a constitution and laws on which it agrees. It also has the right to oversee and control their implementation, so that when the ruler or anyone else misuses his power it can depose him.[26]

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[23]Ibid., 1 (1898): 869.

[24]Ibid., 10 (1907): 282-3.

[25]Ibid., 8 (1905): 509-10 and ibid., 10 (1907): 110.

[26]Ibid., 7 (1904): 358.

Riḍā considered rebellion against despotism as one of the advantages which Muslims had acquired from Europeans.[27] The words "democracy" and "parliament" were sometimes translated into the traditional Islamic terms of *shūrā* and *ijmā'* (consensus), and "con-stitution" as "Sharī'ah" laws.[28] In this respect, Riḍā was reiter-ating some of the teachings of al Afghānī and 'Abduh.

Moral and Social Values

Riḍā believed that a civilization had to stand on more than just its economic and political dimenisons: it needed some underlying moral precepts and ethical values to sustain its progress. In the past, Muslims had created their own civilization by following the teachings and moral precepts of Islam, which contained the values and intellectual principles necessary for progress. As the proper understanding and adherence to these principles had decreased with the passage of time, the Muslim world stagnated and fell under the control of despotic rulers.[29] Western civilization embodied some of the moral values that stood behind its advancement and thus enabled the Europeans to dominate the Muslims. In order to correct this situation, the Muslims needed to regain the values they had lost and, at the same time, avoid those destructive elements of Western civilization that could contradict their traditions and prevent their progress.

Riḍā admired the Europeans' hard work, cooperation, organizational ability, love of knowledge, spirit of investigation and research, innovation, and the distinction between the domain of reason and emotion. This is due, in some degree, to his reading of Le Bon and Demolins, both of whom emphasized morality as the major distinctive factor between backward and advanced nations. They considered British ethical values the reason for their progress and real democratic practices.[30] Therefore

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[27]Ibid., 10 (1907): 283.

[28]Riḍā, *Muḥāwarāt*, 139 and *al Manār*, 10 (1907): 282-4.

[29]*Al Manār*, 9 (1906): 357.

[30]Zaghlūl, *Sirr Taṭawwur*, 80, 256-8; Zaghlūl, *Sirr Taqaddum*, 39, 43, 132-7.

Riḍā regarded the British as being the most deeply rooted in their admiration for personal freedom and independence of will, although they preserved their traditions and accepted change in an extremely gradual process.[31] In other words, Riḍā implied that adhering to commendable traditional values was not an impediment to progress. On his way to India, Riḍā traveled with a group of Englishmen and was attracted by their concern for physical fitness and their "unforgettable high manners and behavior."[32] He praised the Europeans of all social classes for their dedication to their nations and their feelings of patriotism. He acknowledged that "volunteering one's self and money for the nation is the virtue of all virtues in Western nations."[33] He urged wealthy Egyptians to understand what was meant by "real" virtues and to consider the patriotic behavior of the Europeans.

The West appeared to Riḍā to possess those positive moral values and ethical habits that the Muslim world had lost. However, despite the West's appearance as a source of direction and guidance for the East, it also held some subversive values that were incompatible with Islamic traditions and ethical values. Riḍā criticized some Europeans for moral laxity and excessiveness in satisfying such desires and whims as drinking alcohol, gambling, and extravagance.[34] Moreover, power and interest were major European values in both internal and external relations. In Riḍā's view, "Europe respects nothing but strength; it does not recognize right without strength nor does it submit except to strength."[35] Even among themselves "the Europeans respect each other due to the presence of a balance of power, mutual interests and to avoid harm."[36] Another negative value was Europe's pursuit of its national interest, which formed the mo-

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[31] *Al Manār*, 14 (1911): 408.

[32] Ibid., 15 (1912): 450.

[33] Ibid., 1 (1898): 167.

[34] Ibid., 802-3.

[35] Ibid., 24 (1923): 145.

[36] Ibid., 3 (1900): 861-2.

tive behind all their actions. They saw the world as a commercial enterprise and raised their children to seek profit from every deed. The same principle underlay the practical rules of Western imperialism.[37] Certainly, Riḍā's view on this point reflected the disappointment of the powerless colonized people with Western civilization, as will be explained in the next chapter.

By portraying these values, which were also a source for the complaints of some Western intellectuals, particularly Spencer,[38] Riḍā sought to demonstrate that Western civilization contained negative aspects that should not be adopted, while Islamic culture embodied some superior moral values that should be kept and followed. Moreover, he claimed that the West contained the seeds of its own destruction: the worship of power and competition over the maximization of interest. During the First World War, all the contradictions of the West came to a head and exploded in its face.[39]

The encounter with the West stirred up several issues. Two issues, religion and the status of women, seem to have had a profound impact on Muslim intellectuals and Muslim society.

Religion in the West

Europe's separation of religion and politics was a major attraction for Muslim intellectuals, as secular nationalism meant the end of the Ottoman elite's authority and repressive policies as well as the social decline of the Turkish aristocratic class. It also enabled some Egyptians to promote their social and economic status. Moreover, secularism meant adopting ready-made models, notably Western, without the need to synthesize the new with the old. As a matter of fact, they hardly felt at home with their indigenous culture and heritage and preferred to adopt the Western model in its totality. In the process, however, they failed to realize that Islam is an identity as well as a religion. Hence Riḍā attacked people like Salāmah Mūsà and 'Alī'Abd al Rāziq,

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[37]Ibid., 24 (1923): 328-9.

[38]Ibid., 18 (1915): 750.

[39]Ibid., 749.

both of whom advocated the separation of religion and politics, for he deemed this view a weapon in the hands of imperialism:

> The danger of views such as 'Abd al Rāziq's was that they could be used by the enemies of Islam. These enemies fought with ideas as well as the sword; in particular, they were trying to cut the links which bound Muslim peoples to one another so that they would become a prey to the wild beasts of imperialism.[40]

People like 'Abd al Rāziq were unaware that in a cultural encounter, the feeling of separateness and awareness of one's own identity was a substantial element for self-assertion and independence. Therefore, Riḍā tried to clarify religion's role in the West and to correct the fallacies which the westernized secular intellectuals made by comparing two dissimilar religions.[41]

He distinguished between Christianity as a religion and the clerical practices that distorted its essence. In reality, he asserted, Europeans had not relinquished their religion altogether, but only those traditions of the Church and its hierarchy responsible for their backwardness. This feat made it possible for them to use reason, to understand the laws of nature, and to realize independence of will and freedom of thought. The catalyst for this was the Crusades, which put an inferior medieval Europe into direct contact with a superior Islamic civilization, a development that led to a European revolt against the Church. Riḍā believed that most Europeans were basically religious,[42] and held that

> even the European philosophers who denied God denied only the God of the Church which portrayed Him in an unreasonable way. . . . This had been the conviction of Cecil Rhodes, Huxley, Spencer, and other philosophers.[43]

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[40]Hourani's translation for Riḍā. See Hourani, *Arabic*, 241.

[41]*Al Manār*, 5 (1902): 882.

[42]Ibid., 8 (1905): 148.

[43]Ibid., 7 (1904): 139.

To reinforce his view Riḍā quoted Spencer, who emphasized the important role which religion played in the formation of moral habits and ethical values.[44]

Furthermore, Europe still used religion as a political instrument for mobilizing European Christians by inflaming their fanatic religious emotions against others. This was seen in the spread of missions, which were used as a means of cultural and military conquest. Riḍā cited Germany's invasion of Kiaochow, China, after the murder of some missionaries.[45] To convert non-Christians, missionaries claimed that Western civilization and progress were based on the principles of the Bible. Riḍā asserted that nothing could be further from the truth, as Western laws and values were entirely incompatible with Biblical teachings.[46]

European politicians and the religious hierarchy also invoked religious fanaticism against non-Christians. To prove his point, Riḍā drew on historical and current examples. France compelled Algerian Muslims to convert to Christianity; Austria and Hungary enforced their marriage and divorce laws on their Muslim subjects; German papers criticized Wilhelm II who, during a visit to Syria, praised the Muslim hero Salāḥ al Dīn. Riḍā stated that

> if the Ottoman Empire had dared to inquire about her Muslim subjects in the colonies all Europe would have accused her and turned against her for inflaming religious fanaticism in the East.[47]

Thus notwithstanding Spencer and other Western philosophers, it was clear to Riḍā that most Europeans were still religious and, remarkably, that the West could be seen as a source of defending adherence to religion. Far from abandoning the essence of Christianity, the Europeans were still using religion as a political instrument.

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[44]Ibid., 13 (1910): 920.

[45]Ibid., 1 (1898): 485.

[46]Ibid., 25 (1924): 140.

[47]Ibid., 1 (1898): 483-93, 714-5. See also ibid., 13 (1910): 392.

Women in the West

During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Muslims became aware of another difference between them and the West: the social position of women. European women were more educated, independent, active, and enjoyed their social rights. Women's liberation movements appeared everywhere in the East, except Japan. Egypt's Qāsim Amīn, with the West in mind,[48] inaugurated this movement in 1899 with his book *Taḥrīr al Mar'ah* (The Emancipation of Women), with which he received 'Abduh's assistance, and *al Mar'ah al Jadīdah* (The New Woman) in 1901. Amīn advocated the provision of more social rights, education, and freedom for Muslim women so that they could perform their role in society and shape the nation's moral code.[49] Riḍā supported Amīn and he honored, defended, and quoted parts of his books in his journal.[50] He expressed his own views, which emanated from indigenous Islamic perspectives, and elaborated upon them in his *Nidā' ilā al Jins al Lāṭif* (A Call to the Fair Sex). Published in 1932, this book called for the reformation of women's conditions and compared the status and rights of women in Islam and women in pre- and non-Islamic societies.[51]

Drawing on the rights of women in Islam and on the financial and legal status of women in the modern West, Riḍā proved to his satisfaction that the Islamic principles governing the status of women were more progressive and even superior to those of the West. He stated that since its beginning in the seventh century A.D., Islam had recognized the equality of women and men in religious duties and in financial and legal affairs. Muslim women participated in wars and public affairs at a time when some Europeans were still asking whether a woman's soul had been derived from an animal or from the devil. Even in modern times and after Europe's social progress, Islamic principles

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[48]Qāsim Amīn, *Al Mar'ah al Jadīdah* (Cairo: Maṭba'at al Ma'ārif: 1901), 20.

[49]Ibid., 124.

[50]*Al Manār*, 3 (1900): 850 and ibid., 4 (1901): 26, 30.

[51]The book was first published in *al Manār*, 32 (1931): 354-400.

concerning women's financial and legal rights remained superior. French women did not have the right of full control over their property and legal transactions and were still restricted by the will of their husbands. This was due to traditional European suspicion of the capability of a woman's mind. American women had only recently been granted the right of full control over their own property.[52] Riḍā therefore anticipated that the facts of life and education would force Europe to acquire other principles from Islam. The Europeans had already permitted divorce and most likely they would legitimize polygamy in the future. To support his expectations, he quoted from some European newspapers such as the *London Truth*, *Echo*, and *The Eastern Mail*, the wish of some "virtuous" European women to permit polygamy.[53]

Riḍā also criticized the education received by French and British women and described its drastic consequences on Europe's social stability. He believed that when women received the same education as men, they would depend entirely on themselves for earning their living. He saw this as disturbing women's nature, for it interfered with their ability to run their homes and care for their children. Many preferred to remain unmarried, some married at a relatively old age, and others did not have children so that they could keep their jobs. Equally important, free social interaction between the sexes encouraged immoral relations.[54]

Riḍā thus urged his people not to copy the Europeans in this matter. He posited another type of education by which a woman could preserve her good attributes as a woman. Relying on the West as a source for proving his view, Riḍā stated that "this is what Germany, the most progressive European country in science and knowledge, has chosen and realized."[55] He believed that it was enough for a woman to master her language, literature, mathematics, home economics, health, ethics, and pedagogy. The last two should be based on the principles of religion,

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[52]Riḍā, *Al Waḥī*, 276-83; *al Manār*, 33 (1932): 20-4.

[53]*Al Manār*, 4 (1901): 485-8. See also ibid., 5 (1902): 888-9.

[54]Ibid, same pages.

[55]Ibid., 8 (1905): 185-6.

a good knowledge of its rules, moral precepts, and doctrines. A woman should also learn history, geography, economics, and have a general knowledge of the principles and fields of all other sciences.[56] Moreover, competent girls should not be deprived of higher education, particularly in medicine and the management of girls' schools and philanthropic societies.[57]

This vision of female education reflected Riḍā's concept of a woman's role in Islamic society. As a woman's role had to coincide with the traditions, customs, and belief system of her society, education should prepare all women to become properly educated mothers raising their children on the virtues of religious principles and social values. Riḍā's views clearly represent an attempt to preserve the identity of Muslim women against a wider contemporary movement seeking their westernization.

To conclude, then, Riḍā admitted that Western civilization had some positive aspects and that it was these aspects that were responsible for its progress. Moreover, the Muslim world should adopt those which would help it overcome its backwardness. He was attracted by the European concern for the accumulation and investment of wealth and the formation of financial companies. Politically, he opined that the Western type of government constituted an element of Europe's success. Although he realized that the Western secular conception of a nation and a state was inappropriate for an Islamic society, other political aspects (i.e., democracy, constitution, parliament, and restricted government) appealed to him. Socially, the West contained some positive moral values, such as hard work, the spirit of research and investigation, and innovation, which the Muslims did not have. The West, however, also had some negative values: excessiveness in the pursuit of its national interest and the use of brute force. Moreover, he believed that religion had not disappeared in the West and that it was often used as a political instrument. The status of European women stimulated Riḍā to assert the superiority of Islamic teachings that recognized the rights of women long before the West did. In this respect, Riḍā believed that the West could still learn from Islam.

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[56]Ibid., same pages.

[57]Ibid., 10 (1907): 560.

Chapter Five

THE WEST AS A COLONIZER

For many Muslims, the West reflected more than one image. On the one hand it was a civilization, and on the other it was a colonizer. When viewed within its own borders, the West appeared to denote progress, freedom, and equality. Outside its borders, however, the West was associated with imperialism, economic exploitation, and repression. Its arrogance did not allow it to recognize the natural rights of others, especially the rights of independence and freedom. In addition, the West reflected two images, one to itself and one to others, and the two seemed to be contradictory. For example, the most attractive universal values embodied in the French Revolution—liberty, equality, and fraternity—were very shortly sacrificed to the needs of French imperialism and military repression. According to Riḍā, who was well aware of this dual nature of the West,

> France combined contradictions . . . . France in Europe is totally opposite of France in Africa. In Europe it is the mother of freedom and equality and the source of science and arts. However, there are no traces of these aspects in Africa.[1]

The same applied to the Europe in the matter of religious fanaticism. While strongly denouncing this tendency, its behavior clearly showed that "religious fanaticism is prohibited in the West but sanctioned in the East."[2]

Many Muslim intellectuals, among them Riḍā, attributed this duality to some intrinsic values in Western civilization which placed an excessive emphasis on individualism, power, racism, national interest, nationalism, and the fulfillment of material needs. Therefore, Western civilization appeared incapable of presenting a consistent and universally accepted model, for it

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[1] *Al Manār*, 16 (1913): 666.

[2] Ibid., 1 (1898): 486.

allowed its carriers to have two contradictory behaviors. Moreover, Riḍā believed that most of the attractive values—freedom, equality, and justice—which Europe claimed to stand for were mere instruments for subduing Muslims. These values were portrayed to Muslims as higher and more just in order to convince them to relinquish their indigenous values and adopt Western ones. In the end, however, the conquered peoples did not enjoy these "universal" Western values, as they were violated in the colonies by French and British imperialism. Meanwhile, the Muslims lost the values embodied in their own culture that had sustained them for centuries.[3]

Riḍā's understanding of this moral dichotomy led him to make comparisons between "Western civilization after five centuries of progress and Islamic civilization in its first century."[4] In his comparisons, Riḍā found a way to prove the superiority of his own culture, particularly its moral aspects. He stressed the indispensability of religion and its precepts, specifically justice and mercy, in the formation of civilization. Claiming that scientific progress was not enough to secure a consistent civilization, he presented the difficulties of Europe in this respect. Europe, although it had reached a high level of development in the natural sciences, failed to approach the moral status of early Islam. The Muslims of that time were not guided by science but by Islam's moral principles. To enhance his argument, Riḍā gave examples from history to show the justice and fairness of the rightly-guided *khulafa'*, the mercy of the early Muslims in the countries they conquered, and their just treatment of non-Muslims. He often quoted Le Bon, who highly praised the mercy of Muslim soldiers.[5] Rida compared this with the repulsive practices of twentieth-century Europeans, who were dealing with the conquered peoples in an arrogant manner and corrupting their indigenous morals.[6]

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[3]Ibish, *Raḥalāt*, 281-2; *Al Manār*, 10 (1907): 41.

[4]Ibid., 4 (1901): 11-12.

[5]Ibid., 30 (1929): 458.

[6]Ibid., 14 (1911): 850-1; ibid., 9 (1906): 122.

This dichotomy in European practices inspired Riḍā, and before him 'Abduh, to implement a particular approach when dealing with the Western occupiers: appealing to either the occupying power's political or ethical values. Riḍā advised anyone who was being negatively affected by colonialism

> to reach them [the occupiers] through their well-established ethical values or their deep concern for the pursuit of their own interest. By these methods, the Imam ['Abduh] succeeded in convincing Lord Cromer [the representative of British imperialism, on the one hand, and British high morals on the other] of many beneficial measures for the country.[7]

Riḍā related two incidents in which 'Abduh used this tactic. The first occurred when Cromer wanted to abolish the system of attorneys general in the Egyptian courts. 'Abduh warned him of the dangers of such a step, explaining that the attorneys general included the most educated and rational members of society, and that they would turn to politics if they were dismissed from their posts. Thus, eventually they would become a source of political agitation and a nuisance to "those responsible" for social order. In the second incident, Cromer insisted on dismissing the grand *qāḍī* of Egypt, an Ottoman appointee, and replacing him with an Egyptian judge. The Khedive opposed this, for it would have embarrassed him before the sultan. Seeking 'Abduh's help, the latter explained to the Khedive that the British treasured the freedom of conviction and conscience. He then advised the Khedive to inform Cromer that he believed that judicial appointments and dismissals were the sultan's prerogative and that he could not go against his conscience. 'Abduh assured the Khedive that "once one like Cromer, who possesses high British morals, would hear that, he would not permit you to go against your conscience."[8] 'Abduh's advice worked, and Cromer obliged on both occasions by not carrying out his wishes.

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[7]Riḍā, *Tārīkh*, 921-2. See also Kawtharānī, *Mukhtārāt*, 21.

[8]Riḍā, *Tārīkh*, 2, 921-2.

On another occasion, while Riḍā was on a visit to Beirut, a conflict arose between the Christian missionary schools and the Muslim community. At that time, the administrations of these schools were compelling the Muslim students to follow Christian teachings while not allowing them to perform their own religious activities. Speaking to the students and directors of the American College in Beirut, Riḍā reminded the directors of the virtue of respecting the principles of democracy, justice, and freedom.[9]

The presence of Western imperialism was indeed very disappointing. This might explain why Riḍā admired parts of Western progress while sometimes expressing critical views of Western imperialism. During his lifetime, Riḍā witnessed the gradual fragmentation of the Ottoman Empire by foreign forces and observed the flagrant economic exploitation of the occupied countries' natural resources and the breakdown of traditional social bonds. The most drastic change that he saw was the formation of new political entities and nation-states in the area, including the attempts to create a Jewish-Zionist state in the midst of the Arab world. Riḍā had no doubt that "imperialism is the source of all contemporary problems and conflicts between nations."[10]

Riḍā's views of the Western occupation of the Islamic world can be categorized into three stages. In the first, which he viewed as consisting of the very early years of his presence in Egypt, Riḍā was still under the influence of al Afghānī and his anti-imperialist tendencies as articulated in *al 'Urwah al Wuthqà*. As a result, the first issues of *al Manār* were largely similar in tone to al Afghānī's view of Western imperialism. Riḍā was confident that the real purpose of imperialism was the accumulation and transfer of resources from the colonies to Europe. He also understood the consequences: the penetration of European industries and trade into the East, the availability of more jobs in the colonies for Europeans, the promotion of European industrial products, the circulation of wealth outside the occupied countries, and permanent dependence on the West.[11]

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[9]*Al Manār*, 12 (1909): 21-4.

[10]Ibid., 1 (1898): 47-8.

[11]Ibid., 47-8, 299-308.

Riḍā also distinguished between the imperialism of some European countries and their attitude toward their colonies. France and Holland were cruel and oppressive, while Britain was relatively tolerant. The Germans appeared to be less greedy and more honest. Italy's invasion of Libya in 1912 was considered to be the most evil example of imperialist power.[12] The preference for British colonial rule was based on Britain's policies in Egypt, where, according to Riḍā, "the British prefer to acquire gains through peaceful means and avoid provoking feelings of resentment among the people."[13] This preference could also be attributed, at least partially, to the influence of some of Le Bon's views on Riḍā, who stated that "Le Bon . . . preferred the policies of Britain in its colonies to those of France."[14]

As for the means adopted by European imperialism, Riḍā believed that Europe resorted to measures other than war for two purposes: to disguise its hegemony and to ensure the maximum possible gains. In their rush to conquer other countries, he explained, Westerners realized that military victories would not always guarantee all the anticipated results, for wars often destroyed wealth and inflicted some loss upon the victor. Westerners therefore invented new pretexts and methods for "peaceful" invasion: the spread of modern civilization and education to "savage" nations,[15] the protection of their special interests in the occupied countries, the obligation to ensure the safety of their religious missions, and the defense of these countries against external enemies. They also exploited their agreements and treaties with the colonies in ways designed to result in the permanent occupation of the latter by the former. Riḍā affirmed that "all these claims have no meaning except to secure the possession and control of other countries without war or struggle."[16]

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[12]Ibid., 8 (1905): 790. See also ibid., 31 (1930): 672.

[13]Ibid., 8 (1905): 814.

[14]Ibid., 31 (1930): 149.

[15]Ibid., 1 (1898): 47, 299.

[16]Ibid., 585.

There were other means which Europe used to ensure its continued domination. Riḍā believed that Europe managed to control the revenues and minds of the occupied peoples through debts and trading companies. Egypt's financial problems and heavy debts represented an incentive for European intervention:

> These debts enabled the Europeans to dominate Egypt as well as other non-Western countries. The European shareholders seized its land and the Suez Canal. Their administrators controlled Egypt's revenues and the state apparatus.[17]

European trading companies, backed by authority and influence, played a cultural as well as an economic role. They filled the minds and thoughts of the conquered peoples by spreading foreign systems of education, languages, and manners. By doing this, they dissolved the cultural and social links which had up until that time preserved the solidarity of the occupied nation, thus laying it open to fragmentation and external domination. The Europeans also acquired a thorough knowledge of the social manners and human nature of the colonized nations. They recognized that extravagance and luxury, unaccompanied by proper education, would lead to social disintegration. They also realized that the Islamic world lacked proper education and unity, and hence, that the promotion of luxury goods would dissolve their moral cohesion and solidarity. Consequently, "the West rushed into the East with a host of new fashions, products, jewelry, and luxury goods. The outcome was the erosion of the East's economic position and its morals."[18]

Riḍā's awareness of the economic impact of European imperialism was the basis of his profound conviction that economic independence was a precondition for political independence. It also explained his persistent warnings against allowing foreigners to possess Egyptian land and economic enterprises. He advocated the Egyptian control of Egypt and the formation of national financial institutions. In order to preserve the nation's

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[17]Ibid., 305.

[18]Ibid., 307.

resources and to prevent the circulation of its wealth abroad, Riḍā stressed the need for acquiring Western technical skills and the principles, not the products, of foreign industries.

In the second stage of his thinking, which lasted until the beginning of the First World War, Riḍā became directly associated with 'Abduh and his disciples. His writings urged a more conciliatory attitude towards the British occupation. Riḍā recommended gradual reform and resented any aggressive or militant approach to the achievement of political independence. His attitude was mainly determined by his conviction that an anti-British revolution in Egypt could not succeed. In his opinion, the facts of the political situation at that time were too strong to be reversed. In Riḍā's words, the powerful "northern states" were determined to swallow up the weak "southern states."

Riḍā considered such a revolution to be "drastic and entail consequences that would be very dim and very painful."[19] Moreover, he and many Egyptians believed that 'Urābī's revolt in 1882 caused the British occupation of Egypt in the first place and that another rebellion would only lead to the consolidation of their position.[20] Riḍā also believed that neither the Ottoman nor the Egyptian officials were capable of defending their subjects, who had to depend entirely on themselves and on their peaceful relations with the occupying power, namely Britain. Hence

> the only possible course under the existing circumstances is to avoid conflict with the authorities and persuade those who wield power that progress is useful for the people and cannot harm them. The reformer in these circumstances must be satisfied with this conciliatory method.[21]

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[19]Ibid., 798-9.

[20]Ibid.

[21]Ahmad, *Intellectual*, 52, quoted from Riḍā.

His final justification was that British rule successfully checked the absolute powers of the Khedive, who was viewed as an obstacle to reform. In 1904, therefore, Riḍā was able to talk explicitly about the natural rights of the nation in appointing and dismissing its ruler, restricting the powers of the government, and issuing laws and supervising their execution.[22] Despite its defects, British rule remained better and closer to justice than the rule of any other European imperialist power or even that of the traditional indigenous rulers.[23] Under the British, Egypt enjoyed security and freedom of the press which allowed journals such as his to be published. Thus it seemed that "if the Egyptians worked at present, they could reform their country, a course which was not available to them before."[24] Indeed, some of his countrymen were already benefiting from reform:

> The reforms which the British initiated in irrigation, finance, administration, and politics forced the majority of Egyptians to recognize the beneficial consequences of these measures. And if it had not been for their dissatisfaction with British policies concerning education, they would have an admitted the good will and benevolence of the occupier.[25]

Probably all of these factors, in addition to Cromer's approval and encouragement of the political and intellectual position of the Egyptian moderates represented by 'Abduh and his disciples, convinced Riḍā to adopt a policy of gradual reform. Its success did not depend on confrontation, but rather on conciliation with the occupying power. He believed that reform could only be achieved through avoiding politics and refraining from resisting authority. In his view, the more useful approach was to concentrate on education and develop Egypt's social and economic

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[22] *Al Manār*, 7 (1904): 358.

[23] Ibid., 589, 720.

[24] Ibid., 7 (1904): 589.

[25] Ibid., 621. See also ibid., 5 (1903): 38, 110.

conditions. He added that "this was the opinion of our Imam ['Abduh] on the Egyptian question."[26] With this in mind, he ascribed the failure of al Afghānī to his mixing of reform with politics, a course which resulted in al Afghānī's failure to achieve complete success in Egypt or in any other country.[27]

In the third stage of his thinking, Riḍā saw the failure of a conciliatory policy toward Britain and was disappointed in its refusal to grant the Arabs an independent state. At this point, Riḍā appeared to rediscover the righteousness of al Afghānī's policy toward Western imperialism. He rehabilitated al Afghānī by reprinting in *al Manār* the revolutionary articles he had written in *al 'Urwah al Wuthqà*[28] and reaffirmed his links with al Afghānī by explicitly opposing British policies concerning the Arab and Islamic questions.[29] This new post-First World War position had roots in an earlier event: Italy's conquest of Tripoli in 1912, which had provoked Riḍā's fears about the durability and viability of the Ottoman Empire—an empire that represented the wider Muslim community but was now failing apart, one province after another being occupied by Europe. He declared that this aggression had eliminated his old conviction that the Muslims would have the chance to achieve a measure of progress if they did not antagonize Europe. Italy's action, however, proved that Europe raped the Ottoman provinces for mere financial gain.[30] Reverting to an old theme of his, Riḍā stressed that

> Europe has infatuated our rulers and peoples . . . . It has attacked us with armies of priests, teachers, brokers, debtors, prostitutes, nightclubs, and bars. Europe has fought us in our religious beliefs, national traditions, and habits, resources and wealth . . . . It was able to dissolve

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[26]Ibid., 9 (1906): 287.

[27]Ibid., 282.

[28]Ibid., 24 (1923): 26. See also Kawtharānī, *Mukhtārāt*, 58.

[29]*Al Manār*, 26 (1925): 593.

[30]Ibid., 14 (1911): 840-3.

our unity and eliminate our wealth while we imagined ourselves to be progressing.[31]

To face this danger, he called on Egyptians in the name of all bonds (i.e., human, Eastern, Ottoman, language, neighborhood, and religion) to defend Tripoli and stand beside the Ottoman Empire.[32] He also urged the Ottoman Empire and the whole nation to do what it could to oppose Europe, even if it meant the complete destruction of all Ottomans.[33]

Two other concurrent developments influenced his change of outlook. First, he discovered the disparity between his intellectual position and that of the other disciples of 'Abduh, the members of the Ummah party. Riḍā felt that this group was no longer capable of influencing Egyptian public opinion because its spirit was "non-Islamic."[34] He disapprovingly noted that after the Italian conquest of Tripoli and the failure of the Ottoman Empire to defend its subjects, Luṭfī al Sayyid, the editor of *al Jarīdah*, called for Egypt's complete independence from the Ottomans.[35] Second, in 1912, the Khedive drew closer to Riḍā, and relations between them became more friendly. Riḍā returned from Istanbul in 1911 after his failure to persuade the Unionist government to support his project to establish an educational and reformist seminary. His plan was to establish the seminary in Turkey in order to avoid the intrigues of the National party and the British in Egypt. The Khedive, an opponent of the Unionists, approached Riḍā and supported his project.[36] This new association with the Khedive encouraged Riḍā to take a more aggressive stand against the British occupation and Western imperialism.

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[31]Ibid., 923-5.

[32]Ibid., 15 (1912): 5.

[33]Ibid., 14 (1911-12): 840-3.

[34]Ibid., 17 (1914): 73.

[35]Al Sayyid, *Cromer*, 203-4.

[36]Arslān, *Al Sayyid Rashīd Riḍā*, (Damascus: Maṭba'at Ibn Zaydūn, 1937), 147-9.

Riḍā's bitter experience during and after the First World War increased his resentment towards Britain. He expected the breakdown of the Ottoman Empire and searched for an independent Arab state that would preserve the Islamic Ummah. The British hoped to use his influence in parts of the Arab world to encourage Arab neutrality during the war in return for future independence. However, they intercepted letters that he sent to warn the Arabs against British betrayal and arrested him. Fearing that exile to Malta would put him in contact with the Turks there, they kept Riḍā in Egypt under close surveillance until the end of the war.[37] Afterwards, and while Riḍā was in Syria, the Egyptian government censored his political writings and tried to prevent his return.[38]

This treatment altered Riḍā's views. He now opined that Britain's reforms were intended to serve its imperialist interests.[39] Britain and France further disappointed the Arabs by turning Iraq and Syria into mandates and giving Palestine to the Zionists. This frustration was translated into Riḍā's conviction that

> Europe has destroyed all the good reputation it had in the East after her experience during and after the war. Nobody believes the word of the Europeans any more, nor does anybody trust them or even perceive them to be qualified to exercise justice and virtue.[40]

Particularly galling was the intimate relationship between Western imperialism and Zionism.[41] Riḍā believed that Britain hoped to use the Jews to weaken the Arabs by creating an enemy in their midst. This enemy would exhaust their power

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[37]Ibid., 155-6. See also *al Manār*, 31 (1930): 719-20.

[38]Sharabāsī, *Rashīd Riḍā*, 2, 62, 66.

[39]*Al Manār*, 22 (1920): 398.

[40]Ibid., 142.

[41]This section depends wholly on Riḍā's two articles "On the Revolution of Palestine," *al Manār*, 30 (1929): 385-93, 450-68. See also A. M. al Abaid, "Al Imām Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā wa al Ṣahyūnīyah," *al Ummah* (19 October 1982): 32-8.

and sever the natural links between one Arab country and another. Both peoples would be preoccupied with fighting each other and, at the same time, would depend on the British for settling their disputes. Thus the Arabs would direct their enmity against the Jews instead of the British. Moreover, the Jewish state would be an obstacle between Egypt, the Hejaz (Saudi Arabia), and Palestine and would prevent the creation of a strong united Arab-Islamic state standing against European imperialism and its interests in the Middle and Far East. In addition, Riḍā predicted that the Jewish state would spill over into East Jordan, Syria, the Hejaz, Iraq, and even Egypt.

The Zionist goals seemed very clear to Riḍā: to usurp and build Palestine for themselves, to organize and unite international Jewry, to revive and stimulate their religious sentiments, and to gain worldwide sympathy and support for their cause. To achieve these goals, the Jews would resort to financial power and political intrigue. Riḍā claimed that they managed to enslave great countries by their manipulation and possession of money, which, in the civilized world, generated influence and control of the mass media. He pointed to Zionist attempts to buy Palestine from the Ottoman sultan 'Abd al Ḥamīd who, however, firmly refused their offer. They then launched ferocious attacks against him in Europe and succeeded in deposing him by virtue of their activity in the ranks of the Unionist movement.

To face the Zionist threat, Riḍā proposed measures ranging from the peaceful to the violent. He urged Arabs to form associations and hold conventions to investigate and oppose the Zionists' goals. After his return from Istanbul in 1911, he perceived the Jews' strong influence on the Unionist leaders as well as their resolve to realize their plans. He contacted Chaim Weizmann and Jewish leaders in Egypt and the Arab world and told them that while Arab leaders were willing to accept the Jews as ordinary citizens, they would not agree to an independent Jewish state. Riḍā also informed the Jewish representative in Egypt that the Arabs would form armed resistance groups to fight the Jews if an independent Jewish state came into being. In addition, he warned Arabs not to sell land in Palestine to Jews or foreigners. He also demanded that the Ottoman government prevent the arrival of Jewish immigrants in Palestine and refuse to sell land to them. When peaceful means for resisting the Jewish takeover of

Palestine failed, he suggested the organization of armed groups to fight the Zionists and abort their plans.

As this suggests, Riḍā believed after the war that Muslims should break completely with the British. He wrote: "It is either friendship or absolute enmity."[42] The British, like other Europeans, respected, recognized, and feared nothing but force.[43] In 1930, he suggested a boycott of foreign goods and called for civil disobedience and a bloody revolution.[44] In a letter to his friend Shakīb Arsalān, Riḍā mentioned his proposals to the High Board of the Muslim Youth Association, of which he was a founder, to arrange with the merchants a successful boycott of foreign commodities and to organize association members into military units. He noted that his proposals gained acceptance.[45]

More than political disappointment, the war exposed to many Muslims the violent and ruthless side of Western civilization. The West appeared to have tremendous power for destruction and havoc, a fact that shed great doubt on the viability of its values and progress. Riḍā, completely surprised and shocked by the aggressive behavior of the West during the war, declared that "it did not come across anyone's mind that all these evils could be committed by the great [European] states . . . the states of sciences, the arts, and civilization."[46] Western civilization seemed to have failed in putting sufficient moral checks on its leaders' destructive ambitions. Moreover, scientific advancement turned into guns and bombs used for the annihilation of human beings. As a refinement of his earlier thinking, Riḍā now concluded that "there is no benefit in modern civilization when based on selfishness and material strength . . . nor in science and progress when they turn into means for enslaving others."[47]

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[42]*Al Manār*, 29 (1928): 7-8.

[43]Ibid., 30 (1929): 452.

[44]Ibid., 31 (1930): 219.

[45]Arslān, *Al Sayyid*, 576.

[46]*Al Manār*, 18 (1915): 128.

[47]Ibid., 2-3.

Conclusion

CONCLUSION

Riḍā's views of the West were diverse and complex. Although critical of some aspects of Western civilization, he was no simple rejectionist. Nor was he a mere imitator. His intellectual contribution lay precisely here: whereas 'Abduh was intent on proving to the West that Islam was modern and rational, Riḍā, less optimistic, was intent on saving his country by selective borrowing from the West while reaffirming the strengths of Islamic tradition. In his view, before the First World War, the West in many respects mirrored what was lacking in the East. Some aspects seemed overpoweringly attractive and needed to be emulated. Yet Riḍā also attempted to outline the requirements that had to accompany this process so that Egypt could modernize while holding fast to its indigenous culture and historical identity. He realized that modernization was a structural and not only a mental process.

The West contained various aspects which Riḍā believed to stand behind its advancement. At the top of these came organizational ability in the form of associations, technical skills, and scientific spirit. He admired its concern for the development of wealth on a scientific basis and its formation of financial companies. Though Riḍā realized the incompatibility of the Western secular conception of a nation and state with his "Islamic" society, he was attracted to other Western political aspects such as democracy, restricted government, constitution, and parliament. In his view, the Westerners possessed positive social habits which sustained their development, such as their love for knowledge, innovation, and research. He also admired their virtues of patriotism, independence of will, and self-reliance, which Muslims seemed to lack.

However, Western civilization also embodied such destructive values as excessiveness in the pursuit of national interest, power, and material needs. In this respect, Riḍā attempted to prove the superiority of his own culture. To defend adherence to religion, Riḍā viewed the majority of Europeans as religious in essence. Moreover, religion still intervened in Europe's policies, particularly when it came to opposing Islam. In his study of the

status of women in the West, Riḍā stressed the validity of his own traditional heritage that had recognized women's rights earlier than Europe.

Riḍā was a great admirer of Japan. While seeing its successful development as a refutation of the claim of inherent non-Western inferiority, Riḍā defined certain measures for a workable synthesis between the old and the new. These measures, in the final analysis, reflected his awareness of the difference between the westernization which Egypt and Turkey achieved and the modernization which Japan successfully achieved.

The Western occupation of Muslim lands was simultaneously invigorating and disillusioning. Indeed, the occupation endowed Western civilization with a double image: what the West preached within its borders contradicted how it behaved outside them. Riḍā's views, nonetheless, reflected the realities of the Egyptian situation. At first, influenced by the militant zeal of al Afghānī, he gave vent to anti-imperialist views in the early issues of his journal. As Riḍā became closely associated with Muḥammad 'Abduh and the possibility of revolution seemed to grow remote, he adopted a more moderate attitude. Then came the First World War, during which Britain and France betrayed Arab aspirations for independence and displayed the horrifying destructive potential of Western technological achievements. This led Riḍā to advocate violence against Britain and imperialist Europe and, more importantly, it confirmed his growing doubts about the worthiness of Western material progress. Where once parts of Western civilization were held out as exemplary, the Western occupation now left only profound disappointment.

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ABOUT THIS BOOK

When Western influences began to pervade the Muslim world over a century ago, intense and rapid changes occurred in almost every sphere of Muslim life. The encounter with the West profoundly influenced Arab and Muslim intellectuals and led them to compare their stagnant condition with that of the more dynamic West. Questions arose: What were the secrets behind the West's ascendancy and the reasons for the East's decline? How could the East be revived? How could it emulate the West without losing its identity? Could it reconcile the prevailing values in the East with those of the West?

In spite of its brevity, this book offers the reader a fascinating study of how one of the century's most important Muslim thinkers dealt with the ideas and institutions of the West. While Riḍā's intellectual odyssey ran from guarded admiration of the West to contempt for its hypocrisy and even to calls for open rebellion, what is important to note is that his foremost concern was with values and ideas, in the tradition of the hadith which states that wisdom is like the believer's lost camel, it is his to mount regardless of where he may find it. Thus, while Riḍā could hardly have endorsed the colonial policies of a Bismarck, for example, he nonetheless admired the man's thinking in regard to education.

Through the efforts of Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā an entire generation of Muslim intellectuals was brought face to face with the thought of several of the West's most important writers and social philosophers. Finally, though the inhumanity of the battlefield may have convinced Riḍā that Western politics were about the cynical exercise of power, the humanity of the West's thinkers remained the standard by which he judged the West in general.