

## DEFINING THE ENEMY AS ISRAEL, ZIONIST, NEO-NAZI, OR JEWISH: THE PROPAGANDA WAR IN NASSER'S EGYPT, 1952–1967

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**President** Gamal Abdel Nasser's repudiation that Egypt's conflict with Israel should be viewed in the context of Egypt's aversion to Zionism — not the Jewish people — requires a greater examination of the declarations and actions under Nasser's Egypt. To gain a more cogent understanding of Nasser's perception of Israel and Jews, it is necessary first to define anti-Zionism and antisemitism. Zionism is a political and nationalist movement which claims that Jews have the right to self-determination. Most Jews consider the manifestation of Zionism as the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948 — the rebirth of their nation after nearly 2,000 years in exile. Anti-Zionists claim they do not have specific grievances against the Jewish people per se, but rather they do not believe that Jews constitute a distinct nation requiring a homeland in Israel. Many anti-Zionists espouse radical views such as calling for the liquidation of the state of Israel and the expulsion of the Jews living there.

The European Union Agency for Human Rights defines antisemitism as

a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of anti-Semitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, towards Jewish community institutions and religious facilities.

This includes calling for, aiding, or justifying the killing of Jews; dehumanizing Jews; holding Jews collectively responsible for real or imagined events; denying or trivializing the Holocaust; and accusing Jews of dual loyalties or being more sympathetic to Israel than their own nations. Antisemitism does not necessarily constitute criticism of specific Israeli policies; however other manifestations of antisemitism are related to Israel:

Denying the Jewish people's right to self-determination; applying double standards by requiring of it a behavior not expected or demanded of any other democratic nation; using the symbols and images associated with classic anti-Semitism (e.g., claims of Jews killing Jesus or blood libel) to characterize Israel or Israelis; drawing comparisons of contemporary Israeli policy to that of the Nazis; and holding Jews collectively responsible for actions of the State of Israel.<sup>1</sup>

One of Nasser's biographers, Said Aburish, asks "Nasser was strongly anti-Communist, but was he intrinsically anti-Israel? Was he pushed into his anti-Israel position by his pan-Arab ambitions or by the behavior of Israel itself?"<sup>2</sup> Aburish attempts to answer his own question by stating that Israeli actions in the mid-1950s

and Israel's general misunderstanding of Arab society prompted Nasser to adopt anti-Israel policies.<sup>3</sup> While this assessment is partially correct, and it is true that Nasser's speeches contained mainly anti-Zionist and anti-Israel motifs, not anti-Jewish ones, it ignores previous instances which revealed antisemitism. In 1958, Nasser recommended the *Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion* — an early 20th-century antisemitic Russian document which claimed international Jewry conspired to take over the world — to R. K. Karanjia, editor of the Indian English-Language paper *Blitz*:

I wonder if you have read a book 'Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion.' It is very important that you should read it. I will give you a copy. It proves beyond the shadow of a doubt that three hundred Zionists, each of whom knows all the others, govern the fate of the European Continent.... and that they elect their successors from their entourage.<sup>4</sup>

While it is unclear if Nasser himself continued propagating the *Protocols*, the government cited the antisemitic text ubiquitously, not only in Arabic but in multiple languages. *Israel, the Enemy of Africa* contained select quotes from the *Protocols*, and was distributed by the Egyptian Information Department to Africa in 1965.<sup>5</sup>

Like Aburish, Robert Stephens, another Nasser biographer, differentiates between Nasser's anti-Zionist and anti-Israel declarations, and he denies that the Egyptian president displayed antisemitic behavior:

Whatever Nasser's motives for conflict with Israel, anti-Semitism of the European kind was not among them. Nasser was not an anti-Semite. He lived beside Jewish neighbors during his boyhood in Cairo. He claimed that he had no anti-Jewish prejudice and that he maintained contact with some of his Jewish friends from that time. 'I have never been anti-Semitic on a personal level,' he told a British interviewer. 'It is very difficult for a thinking Egyptian to be so. We have so many basic links — after all, Moses himself was an Egyptian. My feelings and actions against Israel later were inspired solely by the Israelis' actions as a state.'<sup>6</sup>

The fact that Stephens specifically rejected the possibility of Nasser exhibiting traits of "anti-Semitism of the *European* kind," does not necessarily mean that Nasser displayed other shades of antisemitism. Although he did not espouse European racial antisemitism reminiscent of Nazi Germany, Nasser, like other Arab leaders and their government propaganda, tended to combine anti-Israel, anti-Zionist, and anti-Jewish motifs to such a degree that they often overlapped. Moreover, growing up among Jews, or any other minority group for that matter, does not automatically make one immune to prejudice. In their book, *Jews of the Nile*, Youssef Darwish and Jack Hasun argue that despite the fact Nasser grew up on Khoronfoush Street just outside *Haret el-*

*Yahud* (the Jewish alley) until age six, that “didn’t stop him from forcing the Jews out of the country from 1956 to 1967 on a ‘Never to Return’ agreement.”<sup>7</sup> The Arab world was not immune to antisemitism, and just because Arabs claimed that they too were Semites, does not validate their inflammatory rhetoric.

#### NASSER’S PERCEPTION OF ZIONISM AND JEWS DURING THE 1950S

Nasser and a group of military officers participated in a bloodless coup on 23 July 1952 against King Farouk, ending the monarchy and Turco-Circassian elite who during Ottoman rule had governed Egypt for centuries. Muhammad Naguib became Egypt’s first president and prime minister until Nasser, who served as deputy prime minister and interior minister, ousted him from power. Nasser became prime minister in 1954 and ruled Egypt largely behind the scenes after becoming official sworn in as president on 23 June 1956.<sup>8</sup>

After consolidating power, Nasser wanted to become the undisputed leader and spokesperson of the Arab world. In his 1954 memoir, *The Philosophy of the Revolution*, Nasser claimed that Egypt’s unique geography and historical legacy enhanced its ability to influence Africa, the Muslim world, and the Arab world. Of these three significant regions, it was the Arab world which captivated Nasser’s attention the most: “I always imagine that in this region in which we live there is a role wandering aimlessly about in search of an actor to play it.”<sup>9</sup>

The Jewish state of Israel, bordered by four Arab nations including Egypt, was not initially perceived by Nasser as a threat but as an artificial outpost of Western imperialism; an illegitimate entity, albeit one not worth provoking into a war. In a December 1953 interview with British Labor Minister Richard Crossman, Nasser announced that he had no desire to destroy Israel and that “the idea of throwing the Jews into the sea is propaganda.”<sup>10</sup> The renowned political scientist P. J. Vatikiotis observed that before 1955, Nasser held positive views of Zionism and Israel, and that the United States and Britain viewed him as a moderate capable of reaching a peace agreement with Israel.<sup>11</sup>

#### THE PARADOX OF NASSER’S PAN-ARAB IDEOLOGY AND ACTIONS

Nasser’s vision to unite the Arab world under his leadership and reluctance to fight Israel underscored a paradox. Attaining the position of undisputed leader of the Arab world required promoting Arab unity, freedom, and championing the cause of Palestine. How could Nasser become the supreme Arab leader when he did not want to fight against Israel? The Arab League, formed in 1945, comprised Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Yemen, and Transjordan (later Jordan), none of whom recognized the United Nations partition of Palestine on 29 November 1947 or Israel’s independence on 14 May 1948.<sup>12</sup> However, Egypt did accept UN Resolution 194 and signed the 1949 Egyptian-Israeli Armistice to end the war, which implied that it accepted Israel’s de facto, but not its de jure existence. Yet Israel was collectively

perceived in the Arab world as an unlawful entity backed by the West which had usurped Arab land at the Palestinians expense.

Nasser and the Arab League considered Zionism to be an injustice and perceived Israel's independence as *al-nakba* (the catastrophe) which caused hundreds of thousands of Palestinians to flee. Nasser viewed Israel's existence as a physical obstacle to Arab unity which separated Arabic-speaking North Africa, known as *al-Maghreb*, from Arabic-speaking Middle East, known as *al-Mashriq*. He described Israel's creation as a crime against the Arab nation and voiced that Palestinian rights could only be restored by reversing the events of 1948, a euphemism for the deconstruction of the Jewish state.<sup>13</sup>

However, it soon became evident that Nasser's actions contradicted his rhetoric. Although Nasser decided not to confront Israel directly, he initiated a low-intensity terrorist campaign against Israel commencing in May 1954.<sup>14</sup> Supporting and training Palestinian *fedayeen* (self-sacrificers) to launch border raids from Egypt against Israeli targets, Nasser hoped to exhaust Israel to the point where either it would be forced to cede territory to Egypt, or its citizens would no longer feel safe in their own country and would emigrate. Inspecting a *fedayeen* training camp south of Cairo in Beni Suef in the previous year, Nasser encouraged Palestinians not to give up their hopes and dreams that they would one day return to their homeland. Claiming that history was on their side against the West and that Palestine would one day be liberated, Nasser voiced his optimism: "Our future goal is to achieve the greatest homeland at some stage in colonialism's departure."<sup>15</sup>

#### NASSER'S PALESTINE POLICY DURING THE 1960S

In a speech to the Indian Parliament on 31 March 1960, Nasser blamed Israel and Western powers for conspiring against the Arab cause and for preventing the return of Palestinian refugees to their homes. He declared that the Arabs of Palestine "were driven out of their homes. Their land was usurped, their property looted, their future destroyed and their basic right to life denied."<sup>16</sup> Later in April, Nasser gave a press conference in India elaborating his views of Israel. When asked what Egypt and the Arab world should do in order to solve the Arab refugee issue following Israel's independence, Nasser proposed to confront Israel militarily, since he claimed Israel's leaders "declared the Holy Land between the Nile and the Euphrates" which included "a part of Egypt, part of Syria, part of Saudi Arabia, all of Jordan and part of Iraq." On the issue of the rights of the Palestinians, Nasser insisted that they must have the right to return to their homes, although he did not specify how this would occur.<sup>17</sup>

Speaking at the UN General Assembly on 27 September 1960, Nasser referred to Israel's independence as an "error," and implied that justice for the Palestinians could only occur after the expulsion or killing of Jewish Israelis: "The only solution to Palestine is that matters should be restored to normal and should return to the conditions prevailing before the error was committed." Ironically, however, Nasser

viewed this outcome as one of peace, not war, in which he stressed that Egypt desired peace based on justice established through the United Nations.<sup>18</sup>

During a ten-day visit to Sudan on 15 November 1960, Nasser and President Ismail al-Azhari declared their support of “the Arabs of Palestine” to achieve their full rights including their “right to return” to Israel, which would “[remove] the factors of tension in the Middle East.” At a “peace summit” in Casablanca in January 1961, Nasser and Moroccan King Muhammad V censured Israel and charged that its very existence threatened world peace and Arab unity. Disregarding prior declarations espoused with Yugoslav President Josip Tito about ending nuclear proliferation, Nasser and the Moroccan King boasted that Palestinian rights could only be regained through force, even if it meant deploying an atomic bomb.<sup>19</sup>

#### NASSER PRESSURES KENNEDY TO ADOPT ANTI-ISRAEL POLICY

On 11 May 1961, President John Kennedy began a correspondence with Nasser in an attempt to strengthen bilateral relations and ease tensions in the region. Kennedy affirmed the United States’ commitment to achieve a peaceful solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict and acknowledged that although disagreements over American and Egyptian policy existed, maintaining open channels of communication and diplomatic relations had the potential to overcome the differences. Nasser responded that Palestine represented a primary concern and Israel’s actions threatened world peace. He articulated that the Palestinians were righteous victims, arguing that the Zionists, “through force and deceit...usurp[ed] the right of the legitimate owner and [took] away from him what he owned and deserved.” Nasser ridiculed Britain for using the Balfour Declaration as a pledge to support an independent Jewish homeland in Palestine, a pledge which he claimed was unacceptable “in a land she does not own, but is owned by the Arab people of Palestine.”<sup>20</sup>

Nasser also accused Jewish Americans of having a disproportionate influence on US policy. American presidents, Nasser wrote, forfeited their principles of justice and law to secure Jewish votes in elections. By supporting Israel at the Arabs expense, Nasser reasoned, they violated “every principle of American freedom and American democracy.” Israel’s existence, he added, did not “merely represent the aggression already committed against the Arab right, but it extends to the Arab future and threatens it with fabulous dangers.” It also served imperialist ambitions which Nasser charged, were used “as a tool to divide the Arab nation geographically and also as a base from which to threaten any movement aimed at liberation from imperialist domination.” Curiously, despite his grievances, Nasser referred to Kennedy as a “friend” and urged him to reverse US policy from supporting Israel to supporting the Arab cause of Palestine.<sup>21</sup>

NASSER INTRODUCES EGYPT'S OFFICIAL *CHARTER*

At the Inaugural Session of the National Congress of Popular Powers on 21 May 1962, Nasser introduced Egypt's official *Charter*, a 119-page pamphlet outlining the nation's economic, social, and political philosophy. The *Charter* praises its citizens for their indefatigable struggle and success in expelling foreign influences from Egypt, including "Ottoman imperialism," British imperialism and the "alien Royal Family." Addressing the Egyptian Revolution, the *Charter* stresses that the aims of "Freedom, Socialism and Unity" underscores the true spirit of Arab unity.<sup>22</sup>

*The Moral of the Setback* in chapter four devotes a single page to describing Zionism as a racist, illegitimate movement which sought to divide and conquer the Arab Middle East. Egypt perceives Palestine as exclusive Arab territory, given to "an aggressive racial movement" (Zionism), "with neither historical nor natural justification, to be used by the imperialists as a whip in their hands to fight the struggling Arabs if one day they were able to overcome their humiliation and survive the crisis." The *Charter* adds that the West wanted to impose its will on Palestine in order to thwart progress and divide the Arab world. Consequently, this action would sever Egypt from the Arab world and undermine its ability to play a leadership role by dividing North African Arabic-speaking nations from the Middle Eastern Arabic-speaking nations.

The *Charter* explains Zionism as a movement too weak to stand on its own. Its vitality remains dependent on Europe and the United States, and its support is part of a Western-backed imperialist plot to dominate the Arab world, prevent development, and rob the region of its natural resources, namely oil and gas. This assertion, according to the *Charter*, came at the expense of Arabism, or Arab unity, and therefore Zionism and Israel's very essence are fundamentally aggressive, expansionist, and violent. The British in particular were responsible for Israel's creation and survival, since Israel's "military operations were placed in the hands of a British officer who received his orders from the very statesman who gave the Zionist movement the Balfour Declaration on which the Jewish state in Palestine was based." In addition, Egypt and the Arab world could not tolerate Israel's existence because it served as a constant reminder of imperialism:

Long years will elapse before the Arab Nation could forget the bitterness of the experience it underwent during that period, trapped between terrorism and humiliation. The Arab Nation emerged from that experience with an adamant determination to hate and defeat imperialism.<sup>23</sup>

## NASSER CREATES THE PALESTINE LIBERATION ORGANIZATION

To highlight his commitment to the Palestinian cause, Nasser organized the first Arab League summit in Cairo on 13 January 1964. At the summit, he played a leading role in persuading Arab heads of state to condemn Israel for what was perceived as its

aggression and for its responsibility in creating and perpetuating the Palestinian refugee issue. Nasser and other Arab leaders advocated the right to self-determination for Palestinians and the right to free themselves “from the Zionist colonization of their nation.”<sup>24</sup> He reiterated these points to Yemeni President Abdullah al-Sallal in April, stating that Israel embodied “the Zionist danger which is threatening the Arab homeland.”<sup>25</sup>

Nasser’s vision of creating a Palestinian entity under his control was realized in the creation of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) during the first session of the Palestinian National Council in East Jerusalem between 28 May and 2 June 1964. Nasser handpicked Ahmad Shukeiri, a lawyer and former Saudi ambassador to the UN, to serve as chairman of the PLO. According to Aharon Yariv, who directed Israel’s army intelligence during this time, the PLO represented “a tool that would address the ‘Israeli problem’ without involving Egypt in a major war with Israel.” However, authors Neil Livingstone and David Halevy allude in their book *Inside the PLO: Covert Units, Secret Funds, and the War against Israel and the United States* that Nasser’s decision to sponsor the group made another war with Israel inevitable. The PLO’s Covenant called for the establishment of a Palestinian state upon Israel’s ruins and rejected a peaceful solution to the Arab-Israeli dispute. Articles 16 and 17 of the Covenant condemned the partition of Palestine as illegal and claimed “liberating Palestine” constituted a morally justifiable act. Paradoxically, while Article 24 claimed to respect Jordanian sovereignty over the West Bank, Article 2 states that Palestine’s borders as it existed during the British Mandate (1920–1948) represented an indivisible unit, alluding that Jordan like Israel is an artificial creation which should be “liberated.”<sup>26</sup>

As a result of Nasser’s success, on 5 September 1964, the Arab League convened for its second summit in Alexandria. A joint communiqué issued on 11 September agreed that it was a national objective for Palestinians to liberate themselves from “Israeli colonialism” and sanctioned the creation of the PLO, albeit under Nasser’s auspices, to be used as a political and military weapon “in order to liberate Palestine.”<sup>27</sup> Nasser therefore was seeking to balance his commitments to the Palestinians while not directly initiating conflict with Israel. This half-hearted attempt proved unsuccessful after the 1967 War and the incessant Palestinian and Arab declarations for Israel’s annihilation also backfired.

#### NASSER ADDRESSES PALESTINE IN THE NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT

At the second Non-Aligned summit in Cairo on 5 October 1964, Nasser praised the results of the first summit in Bandung, Indonesia in 1955 and denounced Israel as part of a Western imperialist conspiracy to divide the Middle East. Nasser equated Israel with racism and asserted that its treatment of Palestinians fared worse than white Southern Rhodesian persecution of black Africans. He asserted that Zionism and Western imperialism had raped the “very heart of the Arab Nation,” expelled the

inhabitants, and created a fortress enclave in the center of the Arab world. Israel's very existence, Nasser added, threatened Arab unity and freedom, and prevented Arabs from aspiring to their full potential.<sup>28</sup>

When asked if peace in the Middle East was an attainable goal, Nasser replied that Palestine remained the primary obstacle to peace. He said that Israel's creation had been aided and abetted by colonialism, which resulted in the Palestinian exodus from their land. Since its foundation, Israel disregarded UN resolutions, especially the most recent one adopted in 1963 which called on Israel to repatriate the Arab refugees.<sup>29</sup> When followed up with a statement that Israel had in fact felt threatened by Egypt, Nasser reasoned that "when a thief breaks into your home and takes your possessions, and then you try to recover what he has taken...he will charge that you are threatening him. But what kind of logic is that?"<sup>30</sup> He did, however, offer a vague opinion on what preconditions were required to end the conflict:

I have said that peace must be based on justice, for otherwise peace would be synonymous to a threat to use force. Former Israeli Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion once said that peace should be imposed on the Arabs. This signifies that he wanted to impose a peace that was not based on justice. This is no peace as the attempt to impose anything automatically means resorting to force. Consequently, any bid to enforce a settlement or impose peace will mean war. On our part, all we want is for the Arabs of Palestine to obtain their rights.<sup>31</sup>

#### THE ROAD TO WAR

Addressing the Palestinian National Congress at Cairo University on 31 May 1965, Nasser devoted most of his speech assuring that he did not abandon the Palestinian cause. He mocked Tunisian President Habib Bourguiba, who on 3 March had unprecedentedly suggested that Arab states recognize Israel based on the 1947 United Nations Partition Plan.<sup>32</sup> This represented the first time an Arab leader publicly recommended that the Arab world explore a political solution with Israel. Nasser unleashed scathing attacks against Bourguiba, stating that "servants of colonialism live amidst us" and denounced him as a Western agent and a betrayer of Palestinian rights.<sup>33</sup>

In an interview in July 1965, when asked if he foresaw a negotiated settlement with Israel, Nasser once again rejected the possibility of reaching a peaceful solution:

The Palestinians have been expelled from their land and deprived of their property, and the Israelis took their homes and property.... I say that there is no opportunity for a peaceful settlement with Israel.<sup>34</sup>

When a follow-up question asked, without peace, would war commence, Nasser answered affirmatively and said: "It may not be today; it may be after 5 years, after 10 years. The Arabs, during the time of the Crusades — when they occupied a part of the

Arab country — they waited for 70 years.” When a question surfaced if he could ever accept Israel’s existence or coexist with it, Nasser opined that “the only solution is to liberate Palestine by force.”<sup>35</sup> Emphasizing his unwillingness to recognize Israel, Nasser raised the analogy of negotiating with an alien race that has colonized someone else’s land:

Suppose someone occupied California and expelled the people of California out of California, and brought other people from abroad to settle there. Are you ready to negotiate peace with him and leave California to him? This is simply the question.<sup>36</sup>

On 13 September 1965, the thirteen-member Arab League heads of state met in Casablanca for a third official summit. Nasser and the other Arab leaders agreed to strengthen the PLO’s military wing, the Palestine Liberation Army. While declaring their open support for the PLO, which states in its Covenant the annihilation of Israel, Nasser and the Arab League ironically repeated their desire for peaceful coexistence and world peace.<sup>37</sup>

Although Nasser had frequently stated that the liberation of Palestine was an essential component of Arab unity, his vision evolved from proposing open, total war to one which stressed a more pragmatic, long-term struggle. In November 1965, Nasser called for the destruction of Israel at a meeting held at the Arab Socialist Union youth training camp in Helwan, a suburb south of Cairo. However, while Nasser admitted to having a plan to destroy Israel, he did not indicate when this would happen, implying that war would not come soon:

Of course it is our objective to secure the full rights of the Palestinian people. In other words, our objective is to destroy Israel.... We have a plan, but I am not at liberty to tell you what it is, because then I would be letting Israel in on it. I hope we secure freedom for Palestine and restore the rights of the Palestinian people.<sup>38</sup>

By May 1967, Nasser’s Palestine policy, leadership status in the Arab world, and inter-Arab rivalries had fully consumed Egypt’s decision making policy. Two weeks before the 1967 War, Nasser addressed the Egyptian Air Force Command, boasting:

Our armed forces are ready for war. The Gulf of Aqaba belongs to Egypt. There is no way that we will allow Israeli ships to pass through. The Jews are threatening war. We tell them hello and welcome.... [W]e are ready for war. But there is no way we will give up our rights to the Gulf of Aqaba.<sup>39</sup>

In response to a British proposal backed by the United States on 24 May, which advocated preventing war by authorizing Western ships to ensure freedom of innocent maritime passage through the Straits of Tiran, Nasser referred to the proposal as “a

preliminary to an act of war” and stated that Egypt “would never recognize such a declaration.”<sup>40</sup>

During a speech on 27 May, Nasser threatened that if war erupted, “our basic objective will be to destroy Israel.”<sup>41</sup> In an interview on 28 May, Nasser claimed that from a legal perspective, the Straits were within Egyptian territorial waters and therefore Egypt had the right to open or close them at will. He argued that United Nations Emergency Forces had arrived in Egypt under his orders and when he advised them to leave, it was accepted by UN Secretary-General U Thant.<sup>42</sup> The *New York Times* reported that during the interview, Nasser called on Egypt and the Arab world to exercise patience for ten years to facilitate the restoration of Palestinian Arab rights. He said that a peace settlement was out of the question until the Palestinians could exercise authority over their homeland again. He stressed the importance of bilateral relations while simultaneously denouncing Washington for its support of Israel.<sup>43</sup>

By 1 June, PLO leader Ahmad Shukeiri had issued three direct threats of annihilation against Israel, of which the most notorious included threatening to eliminate Israeli civilians and deport the remaining survivors. Since Shukeiri continued operating in Cairo under Egypt’s protection, it may be inferred that Nasser indirectly supported the PLO’s genocidal threats.<sup>44</sup>

Israel viewed Aqaba and the Straits as international waterways, the closure of which constituted a *casus belli*. Nasser expressed that if Israel did not attack Egypt, Egypt would not attack Israel. However, he concurrently declared that as long as Israel refused to permit Palestinians to return to their homes, conflict would be inevitable. Nasser’s erratic behavior was exemplified during an interview on 2 June with British Member of Parliament Christopher Mayhew:

Mayhew: Would you agree, Mr. President, to a settlement with Israel, based, say, on the old U.N. partition plan?

Nasser: We want the rights of the Arabs of Palestine. We want the Palestinians to return to their land.

Mayhew: That does not necessarily mean though, does it, that they cannot go back without destroying the state of Israel if you had frontier adjustments?

Nasser: If they return 1 million refugees, one-and-a-half million refugees, this means the regaining of the rights of the Arabs of Palestine.

Mayhew: You mean that the Arabs will rule Palestine?

Nasser: Well, the Arabs; I mean Christians, Moslems and Jews, not a state based on Judaism.

Mayhew: But then, in fact, are you not giving the Israelis a choice between either beating you in war or losing their state altogether? Are you not goading them into taking action against you?

Nasser: Well, this is a case, the case of the Arabs of Palestine. You know, here in this part of the world — the Arab country — no one accepts this idea about forgetting all the past, all the 20 years, and closing our eyes and leaving everything as it is. We insist about the rights of the Arabs of Palestine.<sup>45</sup>

Therefore, Nasser presented Israel with a *fait accompli* — either to reverse the Jewish nature of Israel to facilitate a Palestinian Arab entity, or prepare for war. When pressed that he could be giving Israel an excuse to build nuclear weapons, Nasser replied: “Well, you know it is a vicious circle. If they make these weapons, we will also make these weapons. And they are at a disadvantage, because their country is very small in comparison with Arab countries.”<sup>46</sup> Nonetheless, on 5 June, using the blockade of Aqaba as a pretext, Israel launched a preemptive strike on Egypt. On the following day, Egyptian media reported an allegation from *al-Abram* which said that according to a reliable UN source, the United States would provide Israel with air cover and deploy marines if Egypt gained the upper hand during the war. Also on that day, Cairo Radio announced that the United States had colluded with Israel; it had created Israel through aggression and protected it for aggression; and it consistently thwarted resolutions in favor of the Arabs from being adopted in the Security Council. Another broadcast titled, “The United States Unveils Its Ugly Face,” announced that the United States and Britain had “infiltrated across the seas and stood side by side with the racist Zionist aggression, supporting the attack on the Arab land of Palestine.... And so America flies its aircraft to provide an aerial umbrella over Arab lands occupied by aggression....”<sup>47</sup>

#### EGYPT’S ATTACK ON JEWS AFTER THE 1967 DEFEAT

The 1967 War, which lasted from 5–10 June, ended in defeat for Egypt, Syria, and Jordan. Syria lost the Golan Heights and Jordan lost the West Bank and East Jerusalem, home to approximately 800,000 Palestinians. Of all the Arab belligerents, Egypt suffered the most. Nearly 13,000 Egyptians were killed and Egypt lost the Gaza Strip, a small, densely populated territory containing half a million Palestinians and more significantly, it lost the Sinai Peninsula, a large, triangular-shaped desert containing oil fields and bordered by the Gulf of Suez, Gulf of Aqaba, the Mediterranean, and Red Sea.<sup>48</sup>

Moreover, Nasser took revenge against Egypt’s ancient, but significant Jewish population. In 1948, there were approximately 75,000 Egyptian Jews. Following Israel’s independence and the 1956 Suez War, most Jews either fled out of fear or were expelled. By 1967, around 4,000 Egyptian Jews remained, and they were

punished for Israel's third military victory. Eight hundred Egyptian Jews were detained on conspiracy charges and had their property seized. On 11 June, fifty-four Egyptian Jews sought refuge in Naples, Italy.<sup>49</sup> The refugees said that they were motivated to flee Egypt after the war began on 5 June, when shortly after they were imprisoned, beaten, and deprived of food and water for long periods of time. Historically, under the Ottoman Empire, many Egyptian Jews had been granted dual citizenship in European nations, and their asylum was made possible due to their possession of Italian passports. After the war, an estimated 300 Jews remained in Egypt, mainly in Cairo and Alexandria.<sup>50</sup>

On 20 June, the Associated Press reported that Egyptian and Libyan Jews were planning to emigrate out of fear of Arab retribution.<sup>51</sup> According to Remy Pessah, an Egyptian Jew who lived through the 1967 War, "Nasser had all Jewish men from eighteen to sixty-five rounded up and sent to prison camps."<sup>52</sup> Marc Khedr, who was sentenced to three years in an Egyptian prison, recalls his experience of prisoners being forced into a courtyard and routinely chased by an Egyptian soldier with a belt.<sup>53</sup>

Apart from Moroccan King Hassan and Tunisian President Bourguiba, who claimed that Tunisia was "not inspired by racial hatred," Arab leaders refused to publicly condemn the violence.<sup>54</sup> Egypt, however, not only declined to condemn its anti-Jewish violence but refused to acknowledge it existed. On 24 June, the Egyptian government issued a communiqué which asserted

the falsehood of this allegation and that it is completely without foundation. It is but a part of the premeditated and planned campaigns aimed at the deception of World Public opinion and at harming the Arabs at this very time during which the aggressors are committing the most atrocious crimes against the Arab citizens in the occupied regions.<sup>55</sup>

The communiqué also noted that it had informed the Swiss ambassador in Cairo that "the Egyptian Authorities do not discriminate between one citizen and another on the basis of religion" and added that "there were 86 Italian Jews living in Egypt, some of whom wished to leave the country while the others preferred to remain in the U.A.R."<sup>56</sup>

#### THE IMPACT OF SOVIET ANTISEMITISM IN EGYPTIAN MEDIA

The distinguished Middle East historian Meir Litvak notes that the most common theme in Arab media since 1946 is the linkage of Zionism and Nazism as two racist ideologies. Arab media propagates a moral equivalence between Israeli policies toward the Palestinians and Nazi policies toward the Jews, and this was no exception under Nasser's Egypt.<sup>57</sup> The Soviet Union, Egypt's greatest patron, had a history of antisemitic propaganda which also reinforced Egyptian media after the 1967 War.

For example, after Egypt's defeat, Moscow severed diplomatic relations with Israel. It also took additional steps to demonstrate its commitment and support, which included aggressive anti-Israeli incitement and misinformation. Some criticisms were rather mild, such as 9 June *Pravda* editorial which equated Israel's stunning triumph with arrogance: "Intoxicated by the certain successes which the element of surprise gave them, the organizers of the aggression are howling that they have gained 'a crushing victory.'"<sup>58</sup> Another editorial in *Pravda* on 11 June stated that "An absolutely unjustified aggression of a predatory, marauding nature was perpetrated against the U.A.R. [Egypt], Syria and other Arab states"<sup>59</sup> and a 13 June column in *Izvestia* attributed Israel's military success solely to Arab unpreparedness.<sup>60</sup>

Other Soviet criticism was blatantly antisemitic. On 12 June, Dmitry Chuvakhin, Soviet ambassador to Israel, told Shmuel Mikunis, secretary-general of the Israeli Communist Party, that "in the occupied territories in Jordan, Israeli troops are exterminating the Arab population, are forcing it to leave the cities, and are behaving like Nazis." Mikunis, accompanied with Israeli and international news teams, visited the area but did not witness anything resembling the ambassador's description. "On the contrary," Mikunis observed, "measures were taken for returning to normality, for caring the wounded, the children and the population."<sup>61</sup>

On 16 June, *Izvestia* echoed Chuvakhin's accusations, again equating Israel's behavior with Nazism:

The occupiers have subjected the residents of the occupied areas to humiliations, indignities, violence and looting. The Israeli invaders are killing prisoners and peaceful peasants; they are holding public executions, including of women and children; and they are driving residents from their homes.<sup>62</sup>

While the Soviet Union was Egypt's greatest patron and exerted the most influence, French President Charles de Gaulle's pro-Arab policy reinforced anti-Zionism and antisemitism in Egyptian media. During a press conference on 27 November 1967, de Gaulle's comments that Jewish people were "elite, self-confident and domineering," were warmly received in the Arab world and praised by Egyptian spokesperson Muhammad el-Zayyat and Cairo Radio.<sup>63</sup>

#### NASSER'S LETTER TO KOSYGIN: ANTISEMITISM OR ANTI-ZIONISM?

On 18 June Nasser wrote a letter to Soviet Chairman Alexei Kosygin expressing his frustration that the Soviet Union had failed to come to Egypt's rescue during the war, while assuring him of the strong bond between both nations. Nasser once again accused the United States of collusion with Israel: "the imperialist aggressor in Washington, whose intervention prevents us, when victory was in our grasp..." and threatened "our eternal goal of exterminating Israel."<sup>64</sup>

Nasser articulated his disappointment with the Soviets, lamenting to Kosygin: “You have not, Brother of the North, been in communication with us.” However, Nasser appeared to forgive him, asserting that “It is understandable. You are chagrined by your blunders of these past weeks. Do not be embarrassed. We Egyptians are a people who let bygones be bygones.” While ostensibly accepting a Soviet apology for their inadequate response to Egypt’s woes, Nasser sought to receive additional shipments of military aid. “One thing, however, dear Brother,” Nasser wrote:

We will have to insist on a year’s guarantee on all equipment received in future. I am told that the tanks which we recently tried out are very deficient in the forward gear. Thus, while our soldiers were burning to do battle with the treacherous Israeli dogs, they found at the crucial moment they were unable to advance. Several tanks came back to Cairo all the way in reverse, with, I am proud to say, the soldiers shaking their fists and shouting imprecations at the infidel scum the entire distance.<sup>65</sup>

Nasser also requested better radar technology, since the one Kosygin had sent was set at “east-west, and the ignorant barbarians came from the north instead of over the border....” Curiously, Nasser revealed that Egypt had an “Astrology Department,” whose “Chief of the Horoscope Division has been whining that his chart for the day was ‘Fear not From the West.’” While acknowledging that the Chief was “technically correct,” Nasser declared that he “cannot tolerate this kind of sloppiness in a key Government Department.” Nasser described Israeli General Moshe Dayan’s military tactics in the Sinai during the war as “ludicrous,” who after eleven years, engaged in the “Same old pincer movements, same old encircling tactics.”<sup>66</sup>

Nasser’s antisemitism was lucidly revealed in his following comments on both Jews and Zionists, of whom he made little distinction. He spoke despairingly of the Jews, calling them “a backward people, and so imitative they copy themselves.” He said that the “Zionists, anxious to avoid entanglement with our fierce Egyptians, were actually fleeing to Damascus. Their officers could not control them. Well, I have always said, what can you expect from a nation of bookworms and money-lenders?” Nasser’s prejudices seemed to blur his own judgment. He opined that “had the war dragged on into a second week, there would have been large-scale desertions on the Israeli side.”<sup>67</sup>

Nasser told Kosygin, whom he described as “Dear Brother,” that he had drafted “plans for our next ‘Holy War.’ Already the Jews are covering at the thought and screaming for help from their American gangster friends.” Daringly, Nasser asked Kosygin, “What would you think about shutting off the Panama Canal?” He concluded his remarks by asking if the Soviets could arrange for a cease-fire in a future war before fighting began.<sup>68</sup>

## MUHAMMAD HEIKALS'S ANTISEMITISM

*Al-Abram* editor Muhammad Hassanein Heikal's association with Nasser has piqued the curiosity of many world leaders and journalists, some of whom have suggested that Heikal served as Nasser's de facto official spokesperson. Saudi King Faisal once candidly asked Nasser if Heikal's opinions and commentary were his personal views, or those of the Egyptian president. Nasser denied this charge and told Faisal that "*Al-Abram* is one of the Egyptian newspapers. It does not reflect my personal opinion." When the issue was raised further by Saudi Prince Nawaaf, Nasser stated that *al-Gomburia*, not *al-Abram*, was Egypt's official government newspaper: "*Al-Abram* is an independent paper and Heikal, its chief editor, is the most active journalist in Egypt. He spends twelve hours in his office every day."<sup>69</sup>

In reality, however, ample evidence indicates that Heikal was in fact Nasser's de facto spokesperson. In October 1967, a journalist with the Beirut Bureau quoted Heikal as stating that his editorials were first sent to Nasser for approval: "My views in print are my own," he insists, but then adds with a smile: "Everyone else reads my weekly column Friday except the President, who reads it Thursday."<sup>70</sup> Scholar Ghada Hashem Talhami adds that as a friend with unrestricted access to Nasser and the media, Heikal became known in the 1960s for articulating the President's personal views and he regularly sent Nasser rough drafts of his weekly editorial *Bisaraha* (Frankly speaking) for approval. Abdel Magid Farid, Nasser's secretary-general, transcribed minutes of meetings the president held with various leaders from 1967 to 1970, and he argued that Heikal did in fact articulate Nasser's views:

Indeed, Muhammad Hassanein Heikal did enjoy a special relationship with the President. When asked by his colleagues in the Revolutionary Command Council and in the Central Committee of the [Arab Socialist Union] ASU why Heikal received preferential treatment, Nasser explained that although he had previously dealt with other journalists, he had found Heikal to be the one best able to express his thoughts and opinions. He also pointed out that he himself also benefited from the relationship, since Heikal used to telephone every morning to give the President an accurate and useful account of the latest news and current affairs, including political developments in the Arab world, as well as his own personal views on them. This relationship between the two men evolved over time to transcend what would be considered normal between a president of a republic and a journalist, becoming a relationship of friendship and trust.<sup>71</sup>

On 30 June, Heikal wrote a long introspective article analyzing Egypt's postwar predicament titled, "Signs: Whereto from Here and Whereto after Now?" He articulated that US policy had been usurped and occupied by Zionist Jews. In

particular, he singled out three Jewish-Americans in the Johnson Administration presumably for controlling US policy:

Walt Rostow, his advisor on foreign affairs, who is a Jew and a Zionist; his brother Eugene Rostow, who is also a Jew and a Zionist and was chairman of the special committee formed to deal with the crisis; and Arthur Goldberg, the U.S. permanent delegate to the United Nations, who is also a Jew and a Zionist.<sup>72</sup>

This gross oversimplification of the American political system, whereby Heikal chose to ignore the complex and dynamic role of the vice president, Senate, Congress, State Department, Defense Department, and intelligence agencies exposed not only Heikal's anti-Jewish bigotry for singling out three Jews out of the dozens of policymakers in the Johnson Administration, but exposed a broader antisemitic trend within the Egyptian government and media. Borrowing from classic antisemitic texts including the notorious *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* and *Mein Kampf*, Heikal viewed the Jews in Israel as essentially weak, cowardly, and feeble, who, without Western assistance, could not have defeated Egypt. He simultaneously portrayed American Jews as immensely wealthy and powerful, wielding a disproportionate influence on the government and the media.

In an editorial in *al-Ahram* on 14 July, Heikal emphasized the need for an Arab conference for heads of state and noted that the Arabs should at least attempt to overcome their differences. He brushed off accusations that Arab disunity was comparable to American and Soviet differences, and as in his previous commentary, Heikal's antisemitic prejudices — and indirectly Nasser's since he was purported to approve Heikal's columns — were exposed yet again: “The Arabs have not reached the stage which could be compared with the devil,” Heikal declared, “and even if the matter was so, all the Arabs are called upon to ally with the devil against the Nazi racist Israel to fight the horrible war launched by imperialism against the whole Arab nation.” Intentionally associating Jews with Nazi fascists, instead of Italian, Spanish, or Japanese fascists was not coincidental, since Heikal understood the history of World War II and the Holocaust, evident from his lengthy journalistic career.<sup>73</sup>

Continuing his rant, Heikal also wanted Saudi King Faisal to explain Israel's six-day lightning victory over Egypt, Jordan, and Syria, without US assistance. Attempting to humor Faisal, Heikal surmised that if Israel had in fact acted alone during the war, how would the Saudi King respond to American support for Israel at the UN? America, Heikal opined, had diligently canvassed support against the non-aligned draft which had been popular in the Arab, Muslim, African, Non-Aligned, and Communist-bloc nations. Specifically addressing Jews, Heikal said that international Zionism comprised both “progressive” and “reactionary” elements, but neo-colonialism and Israel represented only one of its aspects — namely reactionary — and Israel exported strife abroad: “The rich Jews exported the poor Jews to Israel which they usurped

from the Arab homeland. The rich Jews, such as the Rothschild family, remained abroad and to Israel streamed the victims of Tsarist Russia and Nazi Germany.”<sup>74</sup>

Writing in *al-Abram* on 10 November, Heikal proffered that a diplomatic solution would be impossible and urged Egyptians to brace themselves for a long, bitter war against Israel. Egypt’s war with the United States would also be inevitable, however, he cautioned against engaging in a direct military confrontation which would only serve Israeli interests. Asserting that Egypt could never obtain a favorable resolution in the UN, Heikal said that the conflict presented Egyptians with “no choice” and “no alternative.” Contrasting fundamentally with Nasser and his deputies more pragmatic tone during private talks with American, British, and Soviet officials, Heikal’s comments seemed to resort back to the typical radical anti-Israel prewar rhetoric broadcast in Egypt’s state-run media.<sup>75</sup>

Heikal also exposed another example of antisemitism, which indirectly implicated Nasser. He proposed that the General Assembly discuss the Arab-Israeli conflict some place in Europe far from New York to prevent “the Zionist influence in a city that has more Israeli supporters than the entire Jewish population of Israel itself.” Moreover, Heikal discouraged Arab representatives from interacting with Ambassador Goldberg, “who is not only a Jew — a fact that does not in itself shame or disgrace him — but who is also an active Zionist and founding member of the B’nai B’rith Society, the most active and biggest Zionist organization in the United States.”<sup>76</sup>

Addressing the Egyptian National Assembly on 23 November, Nasser delivered a two-and-a-half-hour speech, detailing Egypt’s situation in the postwar era.<sup>77</sup> Commenting on UN Resolution 242 — which called on Israel to withdraw from territories captured during the 1967 War in exchange for peace with its neighbors — Nasser coined an anti-Israel catch phrase which would be invoked until his death in September 1970. He declared that “whatever is taken by force cannot be restored except by force;” a declaration which Heikal later explained did not entail:

another full-scale confrontation, which Israel might win, but a long low-intensity campaign of attacks, relying on the Israeli press to remind Jews that every lost life weakened the Zionist state. The Egyptian strategy was to show Israel the emptiness of victory without peace, and to keep a candle lit in the gloom of Arab morale.<sup>78</sup>

#### NASSER’S TOLERATION OF ANTISEMITISM IN EGYPTIAN MEDIA

In the semi-official Egyptian newspaper *Akhbar al-Yaum* on 1 July 1967, Ihsan Abdel Quddus examined the concept of launching another war against Israel. Abdel Quddus prefaced his argument by countering the prevailing wisdom that Egyptians wanted war for war’s sake, and stated that “war is not an end but a means.” He justified using war to eliminate the consequences of aggression, reaffirming the ubiquitous postwar slogan articulated by Nasser and his government with the ostensible meaning of regaining the occupied Arab territories from Israel. This suggested placing Egypt’s primary focus on

regaining lost 1967 territory to avenge *al-naksa* (the setback), while not specifically advocating retaking lost territory after the 1949 Egyptian-Israeli Armistice to rectify *al-nakba* (the catastrophe). This nuance should not be overlooked, since prior to the war on 5 June, Nasser and other Arab leaders commonly characterized Palestine as having been illegally usurped by Zionists and described Israel's pre-1967 borders as an unlawful "Zionist entity" and "occupied Palestine."<sup>79</sup> Middle East expert Yehoshafat Harkabi notes the paradoxical Arab strategy:

*a peaceful settlement of the present crisis* does not necessarily mean a peace settlement with Israel, but only the withdrawal of Israeli troops to the pre-1967 war lines. *Liberating the Occupied Territories* may apply to the area occupied in the Six-Day War and also to the liquidation of Israel, since Israel, prior to 1967, was already referred to in Arabic as *the occupied territory*. *Recognition of Israel's existence* may mean no more than an awareness that there *is* such a thing as Israel (since Egypt has continuously called for the destruction of Israel, he apparently senses no contradiction between recognizing the existence of Israel and calling for its liquidation). *Nonbelligerence* means that the Arab regular armies will not take military action against Israel, but it does not exclude support of terrorist action operating from Arab territory. Since the Arabs declare that they agree to nonbelligerence but not peace, nonbelligerence must thus be interpreted as merely a pause in the war.<sup>80</sup>

Several editorials reiterated Nasser's calls for Egypt to have its rights and dignity restored, through any means necessary. An editorial in *al-Akhbar* on 12 July commented on Israel's refusal to accept a Pakistani resolution condemning Israel's unilateral annexation of the Old City of Jerusalem, calling its actions clear proof of its hostility against the United Nations. In a more blatant antisemitic reference equating Israeli policy with Nazism, the editorial added that "Israel adopts the Nazi style and plan of action" in order to create a *fait accompli* by dictating terms to the Arabs through military might, not through humanitarian law. Therefore, the Arabs needed to unite and carry on their diplomatic efforts in the UN and "exploit Israel's rash decision over Jerusalem."<sup>81</sup>

On 14 August, Fawzi Surur's commentary in *Cairo Domestic Service* expressed that Egypt and the Arab League needed to consolidate a united economic policy to defend itself against three principal threats: "colonialism, Zionism, and imperialism."<sup>82</sup> Under the headline, "The New Nazism," on 18 September *al-Abram* editorialized that Israeli soldiers imitated Nazi behavior by indiscriminately persecuting unarmed civilians in the West Bank, and for treating prisoners and detainees "just as the fascist Nazis did before." The editorial added that unless the United Nations prevented this, "a new type of Nazism" would be legitimized.<sup>83</sup>

An editorial in *al-Abram* on 4 October expressed satisfaction that *fedayeen* operatives inflicted casualties inside Israel and created anxiety. The editorial did not distinguish whether terrorist activities to liberate territories captured by Israel in 1967 were acceptable, or within Israel's pre-1967 borders: "The strengthening national resistance movement sheds new light on the problem faced by public opinion, light which will clearly reveal to that sector of public opinion misguided by false propaganda that the problem is one of a national liberation movement by a people whose land has been usurped through aggression."<sup>84</sup>

On 21 October, Egypt's military sank the Israeli vessel *Elath*, after it allegedly entered Egyptian territorial waters. A secret Soviet cable revealed that upon hearing the news, Soviet Ambassador to Egypt Vladimir Vinogradov noted Nasser could barely contain his excitement.<sup>85</sup> The story was sensationalized in *al-Abram*, which once more attempted to associate Israeli policy with Nazism:

This bloody atmosphere being created by the Israeli authorities is but another instance of the atmosphere the Nazis created in the past when they were preparing aggression. Every time Israel carries out aggression, its leaders forget the fate of Nazism, which was crushed by the people. Israel today is pushing itself toward a situation which will inevitably bring it the same fate of the Nazis.<sup>86</sup>

During a UN Security Council hearing regarding the incident on 24 October, Egyptian Ambassador to the UN Muhammad el-Kony repudiated Israel's retaliatory strike against Egypt after it had sunk the *Elath*. El-Kony claimed that Egypt had acted purely in self-defense, since the vessel had entered Egyptian waters with the intent of committing aggression against Port Said. Equating Jews with Nazis, el-Kony said that the Israeli vessel had violated Security Council cease-fire resolutions but when the *Elath* was destroyed earlier in the week, "all the Israeli leaders and the neo-Nazi generals made it abundantly clear that they would not tolerate the defensive action of the United Arab Republic forces and that the Israeli retaliation would be forthcoming." He urged the Security Council to condemn Israel and declared that "Israeli aggression...has reached intolerable limits in threatening international peace and security," and appealed to the Security Council to take enforcement measures against Israel, "the outlaw of the international community."<sup>87</sup>

In his weekly press conference on 5 December, Egyptian spokesperson Muhammad el-Zayyat responded to a French journalist inquiring about the Jewish republic of Birobidzhan, created by a decision of the Soviet Union on 28 May 1923. El-Zayyat replied that the

Zionist propaganda tried often to justify Jewish immigration to Palestine by claiming that Jews wanted to live peacefully in a country where they could manage their own affairs in accordance with their own traditions and culture though in fact they refused to live in a

republic which was actually established for them a quarter of a century before the creation of Israel.

El-Zayyat added that “it was quite evident therefore that Zionist designs were to establish Israel in its present place, in the heart of the Arab World with the purpose of exploiting the peoples and wealth of the region.”<sup>88</sup>

#### CONCLUSIONS

A comprehensive study from 1952–1967 reveals that Nasser’s Egypt was primarily anti-Zionist, but at times also antisemitic. However, Nasser and his deputies would most likely deny that they themselves were antisemites since they consistently voiced opposition to all forms of racism, colonialism, and imperialism. Nonetheless, Nasser admired antisemitic texts including the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*; exacted revenge against Egyptian Jews after the 1967 War; sponsored the PLO whose Covenant advocated Israel’s liquidation; and tolerated Egyptian media and press allegations that Zionism was synonymous with Nazism. Furthermore, his de facto spokesperson suggested that American Jews wielded a disproportionate amount of power, controlled Congress, and singled out Ambassador Goldberg’s religious heritage to imply that he was more loyal to Israel than the United States. These actions do not provide a compelling argument that Nasser was solely against specific Israeli policies, but rather suggests that he did express hostility against Jewish people and their right to establish a nation in their ancestral homeland.

In the forty-one years since Nasser’s death in September 1970, anti-Zionism and antisemitism have manifested themselves from “top-down” expressions of the Arab-Israeli conflict which tend to condemn Israel as an illegitimate, expansionist outpost of Western imperialism. These diatribes have become part of mainstream Egyptian social and political life. While Nasser’s media often failed to distinguish between anti-Zionist and antisemitic declarations, Nasser himself did, and in many instances the former typically prevailed over the latter. Yet it appears almost paradoxical and contradictory that his successor, Anwar Sadat, who ended Egypt’s state of war with Israel and signed a peace treaty with the Jewish state in March 1979, held deeply antisemitic beliefs.

Writing in the pan-Arab daily *Asbarq al-Awsat* on 7 October 2009, Anis Mansour, a close confidant to Sadat, recalls a story underscoring Sadat’s anti-Jewish prejudices. Sadat had received a gift from Israel which he thought was a golden eagle, but had in fact been a small bird painted gold. Implying that Jews are deceitful and cheap, Sadat laughed to Mansour — who was with him at the time — and said: “You forgot that they are Jews.” Mansour describes another instance when Sadat, during a trip with Israeli Defense Minister Moshe Dayan, conveyed his hopes that Israel return all its forces to the 4 June line and for a Palestinian “right of return.” In response, Dayan gave Sadat a piece of chocolate and told him, “it is for your grandchildren.” Sadat was puzzled by the offer, and considered Dayan miserly for offering candy only to one and not to all of his grandchildren.<sup>89</sup> Lebanese academic Gilbert Achar notes in his book,

*The Arabs and the Holocaust: The Arab-Israeli War of Narratives*, that the antisemitic declarations espoused by Sadat, whom he describes as a “notorious Jew-hater,” were often just as vile if not more so than current Islamist radical groups including Hezbollah and Hamas.<sup>90</sup>

Sadat’s successor, Hosni Mubarak, maintained the peace treaty with Israel and received 1.2 billion dollars in military aid from the United States annually. However, unlike Sadat’s direct antisemitic declarations, Mubarak allowed the media to vilify Israel and Jews as a means to redirect public anger against nepotism, corruption, unemployment, poverty, and human rights abuses. Consequently, in the past three decades, anti-Zionist and antisemitic motifs became a regular staple of the Mubarak regime. Television and newspapers — both from the opposition and government-owned — routinely equate Israel with Nazism, trivialize or deny the Holocaust, and promote the notion that a Jewish cabal is secretly plotting for world domination.

In 2000, Egyptian pop singer Shaaban Abdel Rahim released his most popular single to date called, “I Hate Israel” (*Ana Bakra Isra’il*).<sup>91</sup> During the Islamic holy month of Ramadan in 2002, Dream TV, a privately-owned Egyptian satellite channel, broadcast a forty-one episode series inspired by the *Protocols* called “Horse without a Horseman.”<sup>92</sup> In December 2005, Qatar sponsored the seventeenth International Book Fair which featured dozens of antisemitic publications produced in Egypt promoting conspiracy theories that Jews are responsible for the world’s troubles; that the *Protocols* are a historical truth; denying or trivializing the Holocaust; and that Jews have conspired against Muslims and Arabs since the beginning of Islam. Moreover, Egyptian cartoons frequently depict Israeli leaders as menacing, hook-nosed Jews reminiscent of classic European antisemitic motifs.<sup>93</sup>

At the height of the anti-Mubarak protests in Egypt in January and February 2011, some demonstrators hoisted Mubarak’s picture with the Jewish Star of David branded on his forehead. It is unclear if these demonstrators drew distinctions between denouncing their president as an “Israeli,” a “Zionist,” or a “Jew,” but the depictions nonetheless suggested that Mubarak is a traitor. More direct examples include assaults on foreign journalists reporting in Egypt who were perceived as Jews. CBS reporter Laura Logan — who is not Jewish but was covering the protests in Tahrir Square — was shouted down as a “Jew!” while being assaulted by thugs.<sup>94</sup> BBC journalist Thomas Dinham was accosted by five men in Cairo. Dinham managed to free himself by shouting it was shameful for Muslim to disrespect a guest during Ramadan, and he was set free and unharmed. The men apologized, saying “sorry.... we thought you were a Jew.”<sup>95</sup>

Egyptian attitudes toward Israel are at their most negative since Mubarak’s abdication from power. Egypt’s transitional military junta has honored the peace treaty with the Jewish state, but failed in restricting acts of violence against Israel. In an unprecedented rage on 9 September, an Egyptian mob shouting *Allahu Akbar* (God is great) stormed the Israeli Embassy in Cairo, forcing Israeli diplomats to evacuate. On

15 September, Egyptian interim Prime Minister Essam Sharaf issued a diplomatic threat that Egypt's peace treaty with Israel "is not sacred." Moreover, under Mubarak, exporting gas to Israel had been criticized, but the regime prevented saboteurs from bombing Egyptian pipelines. Militants bombed Egypt's pipelines ten times 2011, illustrating both the military junta's ineffective border security and rising Egyptian hatred against Israel.<sup>96</sup>

With the increasing popularity of Islamist parties in Egypt, including the Muslim Brotherhood and the Salafis — both of whom are anti-Zionist and antisemitic, and are expected to play an important role in Egypt's next government — the fate of Egyptian-Israeli relations remains uncertain. However, the prospect of any positive change in Egyptian attitudes towards Israel, Zionism, and Jews appears unlikely.

#### NOTES

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ZIONIST, JEW-NAZI PROPAGANDA is KILLING America and ENSLAVING, EXTERMINATING humanity....Â When Americans got TIRED of the Cheney, Bush, WOLFOWITZ-CHERTOFF-ZACKHEIM-MUKASEY crew USING AMERICAN TROOPS like CANNON FODDER to DESTROY NATIONS in the Mideast FOR ISRAEL we Americans voted for the "OBAMA CHANGE!" revolution - and the evil Jews SIMPLY USED Obama, Kerry, Pelosi, Panetta, Brennan, & Bill & Hillary Clinton to COZY UP TO THE SAUDIS and GIVE THEM BILLIONS to HIRE TERRORIST ARMIES. to take up where the Bush-Cheney Republicans didn't quite get to - DESTROYING SYRIA & IRAN for them.Â This "ZIONAZAI PROPAGANDA is KILLING AMERICA" headline finally gets to the crux its achievements. Nasser's early gambles paid off because he was the.Â but this time Egypt fought a strictly Egyptian war for the return of the Israeli-occupied Sinai. Although Egypt waged thewar in tandem with Syria, it quickly broke with Syria in the war's aftermath. By. the decade's end, Sadat had given Israel a peace treaty in return for. the Sinai. Sadat's recognition of Israel, his reliance on the United.Â stand up to powerful external enemies such as Israel. But they could. ward off interventions by one another, and enforce their will over. 1967 Warâ€”Tension was mounting between Egypt and Israel over territory located between the two countriesâ€”the Sinai and Gaza Strip. To help Israel get an unfair advantage, the Soviet Union resorted to trickery: Soviet diplomats in Egypt told President Nasser to threaten war but not attack. Then Soviet diplomats told Israel's leaders to threaten war and then go ahead and attack.Â Yet, the Soviets supplied military equipment to the Arabsâ€”Israel's enemies; and at the same time, the Soviet Union's enemy, the United States, was arming Israel. To understand the treachery which Zionist/Bolshevik Jews are capable and to understand the treachery which took place before and during the 1973 War, I must explain the New York/Moscow/Tel Aviv Triangle.