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**THE CRY**

**of**

**EGYPT'S COPTS**

*Documents on Christian Life  
in Egypt Today*

Published by  
**PHOENICIA PRESS**  
19 West 44 Street, New York 18, N. Y.

1951

## الاهراء

إلى كل وطنى غيور . !  
إلى كل أمين للقانون مخلص للدستور . !  
إلى كل من يعى ما جاء فيه : « المصريين جميعاً متساوون  
في الحقوق والواجبات »  
إلى كل من يشق فى القول : « إنما الأمم الأخلاق ما بقيت .. »  
إلى كل من يعمل مخلصاً خيراً مصر ورفعتها ..  
... إلى كل هؤلاء أرفع كتابى هذا .

الدكتور  
زغيب مجنايل

سنة ١٩٥٠

**T**HE documents here presented tell a tragic story of the decline of tolerance and brotherhood in the greatest and most advanced of the Arab-speaking lands. Throughout the nineteenth century and up until recent decades, Egypt, under the beneficial influence of the dynasty founded by Mohammad Ali, was the model of progress and liberalism for the entire Islamic world. The intellectual elite of the neighboring countries found refuge and a field of activity in Egypt. The various religious and racial elements in the Egyptian population lived at peace with each other, and when Zaghloul led the revolution of 1919, Copts and Moslems both responded to his call and worked harmoniously with each other for the freedom of Egypt. More than half the Wafdist party were, in fact, Copts, struggling together with their Moslem brothers.

The Copts — descendants of Egypt's native Christians — had been treated with special consideration and interest by Mohammad Ali and the great Khedive Ismail. Their Church, founded in the early centuries of Christianity, is the remnant of the great, all-embracing Christian community of Egypt before the Arab conquest. The number of the Copts today exceeds two million.

The pages that follow tell an unbelievable story. In the third decade of the twentieth century the healthy body of Egyptian society was attacked by the plague of reactionary religious fanaticism, in the shape of the Moslem Brotherhood. In the next decade the ravages of this plague were supplemented by another—the nefarious and unrealistic Pan-Arab policy foisted upon Egypt, in desperation, by the British Colonial Office, eager to keep Egypt from its true national objectives.

The results were tragic. Egypt's national interests suffered and the Copts became the first victims. Their suffering has reached such a point that they can no longer be silent. Despite the censorship unhappily prevailing in present-day Egypt, they are expressing their agony openly and clearly.

The material in these pages, translated in each case from the original Arabic, describes the dreadful religious, cultural, political and economic discrimination now suffered by the Copts. Each of the articles here included appeared originally in one of three places: the Coptic-owned

Cairo daily, *Misr*; the weekly magazine of the Coptic community, *Al-Manarat*; or, especially, a remarkable book called *Farrîq Tasud* which was secretly printed in January, 1950, without mention of publisher or press.

The author who was daring enough to put his name to the book, Dr. Michael Zugheib, suffered the consequences in a terrible way. A group of Moslem youths, living near his town of Abu-Gurgas, came one Saturday night and attacked his home, shooting about thirty bullets into the house. They burned a house or two in a nearby Christian village. In one of these an old woman was burned to death. Luckily for Dr. Zugheib and his family, they happened to be out of town at the time.

The book has been outlawed by the Egyptian government and the Arab States. Even the Christian Republic of Lebanon, under the government of Riad Solh, followed the Moslem Arab States in forbidding the entry and circulation of the book, as a courtesy toward Egypt.

*Farrîq Tasud* is not meant as an attack on the Moslems, but rather as an appeal to their conscience. It invokes the memory of past brotherhood, urging the Moslems to refrain from persecuting the Christian Copts whose ancestors lived in Egypt before the Islamic conquest and who are, therefore, the true sons of the Nile Valley.

The Copts feel that their Christian brothers in the West do not know of their plight. This brochure attempts to make their voice heard throughout the world, and in particular in the United States and the city of New York — home of the United Nations and the Charter of Human Rights.

For the Copts' sake, for Egypt's sake, for the sake of human freedom and progress, may the message of this brochure find listening ears.



## For the Sake of Our National Unity

### *An Introduction to the Book, "Farrîq Tasud"*

By SALAMA MOUSA\*

**T**HIS is a book I should like my Copt brothers to read and then forget, and my Moslem brothers to read and reread and remember.

I pray that the author will contribute 500 copies of it to distribute gratis to the members of the Egyptian Senate and Chamber of Deputies, to the members of this Cabinet and previous ones, and to journalists. But just as ardently I hope that this book will not be sent from Egypt to the other Arab countries, for it reveals a national disgrace which will discredit us everywhere.

It is my belief that when our Moslem brothers read this book and note the complaints of the Copts, they will rise to help them achieve justice. There may be some Moslems who have not freed themselves from injurious old traditions, and there may be some Copts who are still attached to old traditions which are more bad than good. Yet, I feel certain that everyone who reads this book will feel personally responsible for the fate of the Copts and will feel that he must raise his voice and make all the world understand the necessity of quickly doing justice to the Copts — before extreme bitterness takes hold of the Copts and outweighs their national spirit. That way lies destruction for us all.

Unity between the Moslem and Copt was the symbol of the 1919 revolution, and we used to cry out: "Long live the Crescent and the Cross." I heard learned men from Al-Azhar speaking in the churches and I saw and heard priests greeted by Al-Azhar. This unity should have been with us today, but new developments have deflected the tide of our history. It is the mission of the author of *Farrîq Tasud* to warn us of these changes and the dangers to Egypt in them.

The British were careful to create a rift between the Moslems and the Copts. They cannot be blamed for that: from the time of the Romans to the present, imperial power has been built on the old maxim: "Farrîq Tasud" (Divide and Rule). Hence, we saw the British working to bring about a virtual Moslem monopoly on

\* Salama Mousa, himself a Copt, is one of the outstanding Arabic writers in present-day Egypt.

certain of the higher offices, like those of deans, school administrators, school inspectors and teachers of the Arabic language.

**T**HESSE divisions and discriminatory practices should have been abrogated after the revolution, but to our regret they were not. My belief is that, if not for the dictatorial, vested interests which always found it advantageous to work hand in hand with the colonial power, the Wafd, given the opportunity to rule democratically, would have done away with these divisions and discriminatory practices. Instead, we find new regulations working for divisions and rifts, like the religious aspects of the compulsory education law. This has broken the hearts of the Copts and filled them with anger, for their children are now obliged to memorize the Qoran and to learn the Moslem religion. As a logical consequence of this religious aspect of education, Copts now find themselves barred from the 35,000 elementary teachers' posts in Egypt. This is a shameful thing, and it is the duty of every honorable Moslem to protest against it and to attempt to change it by all means.

Take the case of the special school of banking. Up to a short time ago, the pupils admitted to this school must either have completed the preparatory school of science to which no Copt is now admitted, or must have had one of the following: an elementary teacher's diploma, the second diploma of Al-Azhar, a commercial diploma, or a B.A. or B.S. degree. When it became evident that a large number of Copts had a B.A. degree, the latter was no longer accepted as a pre-requisite for admission to the School of Banking. It has become almost as impossible for any Copt to be admitted, as it would be if the School of Banking were a branch of Al-Azhar or banking and accounting were Moslem religious functions. Oh Moslem reader! What do you say to this? Why is it that the Copts should be deprived of the opportunity to become bankers?

The author mentions a large number of Coptic schools which used to serve all the sons of Egypt, both Moslem and Copt, and which have been closed by order of the Ministry of Education on strange and unbelievable grounds. He also protests against the imposition of Moslem religious education on all children in the schools, whereas special Christian training for the Copt children is forbidden.

Here I beg to differ with the author. What I learned from Voltaire, Comte and other philosophers and from the history of European liberation movements, makes me believe that religion must be separated from the state, and that the government has no right to teach any religious belief at all in public schools. The task of schools is to impart learning and science, while religious instruction should be left to the parents.

What grieves the Copts particularly is the workings of the conversion to Islam, resorted to by Christians who cannot otherwise divorce their wives or husbands. We all know that these conversions are not genuine. Still the courts accept them and facilitate divorce from the Coptic partner. The poor divorced wives, in these cases, are deprived of any support for themselves and their children, since they do not adhere to their husbands' new faith.

THE study of the Arabic language has become a Moslem domain, and the Copts are excluded from it. Those few Copts who have acquired a literary diploma with a specialization in the Arabic language, find the Ministry of Education not disposed to appoint them teachers of the language. There is no other nation on this planet which links language with religion! If the ministers of education responsible for this, had had a little national consciousness, they would have known that language has a social value as well as a cultural one, and they would have made every effort to encourage the Copts to learn the Arabic language and to love its literature. Keeping them from studying Arabic literature is like cutting them off from the national spirit of Egypt. This is sheer madness, oblivious to the future interests of the country.

Foreign nations established free schools in Egypt to teach their languages to the people and make them love their cultures. But our ministers of education do not seem to understand that the Copts should learn to know and love Arabic! It seems they want the Copts to remain alien to Arabic, neither teaching nor studying it. In the Academy of the Arabic Language there has not yet been a single Copt, though there are Moghrabi, Syrians, Iraqi and Lebanese members. More than that, there even was an Iraqi monk! . . .

*The author gives the details of many other privations and grievances — like the regulations on the building of churches. He mentions the many university exchange missions from which brilliant Copt students are excluded, and he mentions sixty high offices in the Ministry of Health which Copts cannot fill, including four directorships, twelve heads of offices, seven assistant heads, twenty-six district directors and eleven district deputies. He also mentions the exclusion of Copts from the National Broadcasting Station which does not even mention anything about the Christian holidays and festival ceremonies. All this is true, and the government must stop this order of things and correct it!*

The author does not forget the Moslem Brotherhood and the "Shabab Muhammad" (Mohammedan Youths) with their shameful incitement against the Copts. It should be mentioned here that the government of the late Nuqrashy Pasha finally became aware of this danger, and we hope that these chapters of the regretful drama played by the Moslem Brotherhood will not be repeated in the future.

It is good that our brother Moslems should know all the facts in this book. It is compulsory reading if we are to breathe in purity and cleanliness. To keep silent on these grievances and persecutions will harm the Copts at present and the Moslems in the future. It will harm the Egyptian nation irreparably and will eventually dismember it.

After thanking the author for his efforts, I urge him once more to present this book free to all the deputies and senators and to all the members of the present cabinet and previous cabinets, as well as to journalists, in order that this subject be discussed and commented upon for the benefit of the Egyptian people. Our people is still good and healthy at heart, but to keep us so, our progressive leaders must keep us united, well knit together, far from division and dismemberment!

## مقدمة

### للأستبان سلامة موسى

هذا كتاب أحب أن يقرأه اخواني الأقباط ثم ينسوه . وأحب أن يقرأه إخواني المسلمون ثم يذكره بل يتذكروه

فقد ملأ هذا الكتاب نفسى مرارة حتى لقد أحسست وأنا أنتقل بين فصوله انى أتذوق علقما لا يفادر لسانى طعمه . ولهذا أحب أن أنسى ما قرأته

وانى أرجو المؤلف أن يضحى بنحو خمسمائة نسخة يوزعها بالمجان على أعضاء مجلسى النواب والشيوخ . وعلى الوزراء الحاضرين والسالفين وعلى الصحفيين . ولكنى أرجو ألا يخرج هذا الكتاب من مصر إلى الأقطار العربية الأخرى . لأنه يحوى مخازى وطنية تفضحننا وان تكن حقائق

## Discrimination in Politics

By MASAAD SADEQ\*

I CANNOT imagine how the Wafd Party prepared its list of nominations to the Egyptian Senate, and on what basis it chose the names of its nominees!

The Wafd seems to have forgotten that there are Copts qualified for nomination, and that this nation and people are composed of two elements, Moslem and Copt, so that neither of the two should be ignored in national representation.

Perhaps the Wafd did not remember that there are Copts who should be taken into account when the nominations are made, and perhaps no one bothered to remind the party of the existence of the Copts. Maybe modern Egypt has no place for the Copts any more.

But do the Wafd leaders believe that no one paid attention to their negligence and to this discrimination?

Do they believe that the Egyptian people read the lists of nominees without noting something strange about them?

It was only natural for this question to arise: "Isn't there more than a single Copt nominee? And can it be that all the electoral districts, with the exception of one, have no more Copts in them?"

Three million Copts studied the lists and read the names once, twice and three times, and they did not know if their eyes had deceived them.

These three million Copts did not pass by the lists in silence and quiet. No, on their lips was a bitter smile, remembering with pain a past happy era when the Wafd had many Copt members, deputies and senators.

May God have mercy on that time and on Saad Zaghlul.

If Saad were still alive, would he have kept silent at the painful grievances of the Copts?

We would have kept silent except for the fact that this is one in a series of painful events. *In the Chamber of Deputies the Copts today have only ten deputies among hundreds, while in the past, in a smaller Chamber and with fewer electoral districts, we had tens of deputies!*

How has this happened? We are receiving a smaller and smaller representation — and what grieves us particularly is the fact that

\* Masaad Sadeq is co-editor of the influential Egyptian daily, *Misr*, owned by the great Coptic family of Al-Menqbadi. This article appeared in the issue of March 23, 1951.

this is happening under a Wafd government from which the Copts in the past always expected justice and equality!

I always used to direct the Wafd Party's attention to the injustice of previous elections when we Copts got only ten deputies instead of a score or more. I used to ask the Wafd to see to it that in the completion of the Majlis and the elections for the Senate, the Copts should have a fair representation. Now I must remind the Wafd of its past glory, when no separation existed between Moslem and Copt.

## The Copts and The Council of State

By MASAAD SADEQ\*

**E**VERYTHING pertaining to us Copts is becoming a concern of the Council of State, as if we were foreigners who recently came to this land from the desert. We must submit to *fatwa* (interpretation of the Qoranic laws), to plans and to decrees which limit our rights in Egypt.

The rites of worship in our churches have gone on in the same manner for many, many centuries in the land of this valley. We Christians pray in our churches and bring offerings which are a part of our worship. It has been thus for the past two thousand years, but in these latter days the Ministry of Religious Affairs has put its finger into our churches and asked even to supervise the offering boxes. In order to do this, it asked the Council of State for a *fatwa* and got it; only when the Coptic Patriarch protested, was the *fatwa* amended.

Our churches used to be built wherever the faithful wished. They are the houses of God for His worship. In them the Christians prayed for themselves and for their fellow-men. Churches were always built in the land of this valley — before Islam and after Islam. Churches were built in the neighborhood of mosques or elsewhere, and no one ever set any conditions as to where they could be built. *But now, in this twentieth century, people are forging chains and irons to limit the freedom of worship of the Christians and deprive them even of the liberty to build churches. Things are being done which were not done even in the Dark Ages and these things — these conditions and chains — are in the hands of the Council of State!*

Minarets and church steeples rose to the skies, relating the grace of God to the faithful. Bells used to ring, calling them to

\* This article appeared in the February 17, 1951 issue of *Misr*.

prayers, and the people used to build and renovate the churches whenever there was need.

And today we must have a permit to build the steeples, and they must have certain limits in height and length, and bells are not permitted or, if with great insistence, we get some, the sizes are children's sizes. Church cannot be built or repaired without a new permit, and in most cases the church crumbles into ruins before the permit is obtained. These permits, too, must come after presentation to the Council of State.

**I**N accordance with ancient precedent, the Copts chose their religious council, the *Majlis Milly*, but the Council of State ordered a new *Majlis* and gave the government the right to appoint the members representing the Copts!

Then in the Senate the Minister of the Interior, Fouad Serajeddeen Pasha, rose to amend the list of the *Majlis*, and to say that its decisions cannot be enforced. Do you know why? Because these decisions, according to him, cannot be executed before they are presented to the Council of State.

And this *Majlis Milly*, the decisions of which the government presents to the Council of State, has been established according to the recognized law of the land. The government, therefore, should be obligated to enforce the decisions of the *Majlis*, in quite the same manner as decisions coming from other tribunals are enforced. But it seems clear that the government does not want to do this.

The decisions or finding of the *Majlis* are legally equivalent to decisions passed by other tribunals. They used to be so, but suddenly in the year 1950 they are no longer considered binding.

A poor woman must now wait months until she can get a decision by which she can get maintenance for her and her children from her husband, for, after the decision of the *Majlis*, the Council of State must give its approval even for this.

Yesterday a Christian wished to go back to his religion, after he had embraced Islam, and the Ministry asked the Council of State to approve, but the Council issued a *fatwa* that he cannot, and why? Because there is a clause in the Egyptian constitution which says: "The religion of the State is Islam." The Council of State issued this *fatwa* on the basis of a clause in the constitution, conveniently forgetting the other clauses which proclaim equality for all Egyptians and freedom of worship and religion.

The Council of State can easily make this *fatwa* apply to all the religious affairs of the Christians. It only has to say: "The religion of the State is Islam." Who knows? The Council of State may yet apply this *fatwa* to the exercise of all Christian rites in the churches and to the teachings of the Holy Gospels.

## Are All Egyptians Equal?

By RAMSES JIBRAOUI\*

**T**HIS is the case of one Emile Tadros, who proclaimed his conversion to Islam and then wished to go back to his original Christian faith. He applied to the Minister of State to have his official religious listing changed back to Christian in the government records. The Ministry of State then turned to its Privy Counsellor to ask whether such a change was possible. The answer of the Counsellor was set forth in terms of *Fatwa* No. 12-1-40, interpreting the constitutional law on this point. The *fatwa* reads:

Inasmuch as Clause 139 of the Constitution of Egypt states that the religion of the state is Islam,

And inasmuch as Islam does not recognize reconversion, reconversion (i.e. return to Christianity) is against the public laws.

Accordingly, we do not accept, nor do we agree to the demand on the part of Emile Tadros that his religious registration be changed in the official records.

We have always been proud of our country's constitution and relied upon it in all disputes. We say that this *fatwa* is to be respected because of the authority behind it. But it cannot be accepted, because it is wrong and is a menace to logic, freedom, and equality in this country.

The Constitution states in Clause 12 that "freedom of faith is absolute." Yet here is our colleague on the Council of State saying in effect: "There is no such thing as freedom of faith," because the Constitution, in his interpretation, denies freedom of faith to both the born Moslem and the converted Moslem. This interpretation of the Constitution takes from every Moslem the right to think and reflect on the truth of his faith or to be convinced by the truth of any other faith. It forbids the converted Moslem to go back to his original religion which is well established in his heart on a strong foundation, and which may sometimes be shaken by a strong wind but cannot be uprooted altogether, so that when the wind becomes calm, the convert goes back more confirmed to his original faith!

His Excellency, the Counsellor, says that the basis of the *fatwa* is the clause which says that the state has a religion, and that religion is Islam, and that Islam, in his opinion, permits the non-

\* Ramses Jibraoui is an eminent Egyptian attorney. This article appeared in the March 5, 1951 issue of the Coptic weekly, *Al-Manarat Al-Misriyat*.

Moslem to become Moslem, but forbids the converted Moslem to go back to his own original faith.

Thus whenever a Christian in this country is the victim of pressure, coercion, persecution, and deprivation on account of his religion, he is told in justification for this state of things: "Have you forgotten that the state is religious, and that the privileged persons are those belonging to a particular religion?"

**E***VIDENTLY this Constitution gives and takes away freedom of faith purely in the interest of Islam. It decrees equality and forbids it in the interest of Islam, and all the rights it sets forth apply only to the Moslems and Islam.*

We may gather also from this *fatwa* that our beloved Moslems are still enjoying the rights emanating from their conquest of Egypt in the seventh century — that they are still exercising the rights of the conquerors over the original inhabitants. Our Moslem fellow-citizens, if they proclaim brotherhood, equality of rights, and freedom of religion, do so only in jest.

If this *fatwa* is the true interpretation of the Constitution's clause on the religion of the state, then the clause should be taken out of the Constitution and religion should be separated from the state to give the Moslems and Christians equal rights. If this is not done, then the Constitution is not worth the effort put into its making nor the paper on which it was written and the ink used in writing it. A constitution like that is not worthy of the name or of the honorable preamble which began it, or the noble signature which was stamped on it!

If this *fatwa* is faulty in cause and effect, then another *fatwa* must be given in an official proclamation correcting the present government policy and proclaiming that all Egyptians are equal before the laws of the state. This should be put into execution immediately. Christianity should be as highly regarded by the government as Islam is now. Christian prayers should be broadcast as Moslem prayers are. Moslems should be permitted to become Christian without any penalizing of property rights or any violation of inheritance. Civil service jobs should be available to all Egyptians without discrimination on religious grounds. Severe penalties should be imposed on all those who differentiate between citizens on account of their religion, or call for such discrimination, or try to impose their religion on others by material or mental coercion.

## The Restrictions on Coptic Churches\*

IN February, 1934 Al-Azby Pasha, Deputy Interior Minister of Egypt, issued a decree listing ten conditions governing the building of Christian churches in Egypt. This decree claims to derive its validity from the fact that the government is entitled to control places dangerous to the public safety. Somehow our churches are suddenly included among these dangerous places.

The ten conditions are thoroughly dictatorial and tyrannical. Their objective is simply to put obstacles in the way of building new churches and repairing and remodeling old ones. An interminable length of time — more than a decade, in many cases — now passes between the presentation of the application and the granting of the permit for building a church. Very often people who apply for a permit become so disgusted that they abandon the project of building or repairing. No such nonsensical laws and conditions ever existed or exist today in any country of the world.

What has the irrigation bureau or the railroad bureau to do with the building of churches? And why should churches be put in a class by themselves, so sharply distinguished from mosques, cemeteries, other public places? And what difference does it really make whether a church is in a Moslem district or a Christian one — the subject of the third condition? Are we by any chance in India where there are special places for Hindus and others for outcasts? Even in India this has been changed. Maybe our government wants to demonstrate that the citizens of this Egypt of ours are actually divided, though God has united them in one nation, living in the same dwelling places and doing business together!

There are no special districts for Moslems and others for Christians in all the villages and towns of the country. We find Moslems, Christians and others in the same city, dwelling in the same building. Why then this dangerous division between the two which gives our country a bad name, externally and internally?

The fourth condition is still more strange. It takes it for granted that churches must not be built near the dwellings of Moslems. Can they tell us why a church cannot be built in a street where Moslems live?

The fifth condition asks: "Is there another church for the same people in the town?" As if the existence in a town of more

\* This detailed account is taken from *Farriq Tassud*, p. 83, ff.

than one church is an evil and must be stopped! A similar restriction is never applied when anybody asks for a permit to open a wine shop or a dance hall!

The sixth condition stipulates investigation of the distance between the town where the church is going to be built and the next town which has a church, implying that the people can travel, take their provisions on their back and go looking for a neighboring town which has a church.

The seventh condition asks how many persons will attend this new church, meaning that a small group of Christians have no right to worship and pray. Only Egypt, it seems, thinks that way. We read in the newspapers that the Japanese government, a government which does not have a heavenly religion, permitted fewer than a hundred Moslems in one of its towns to build a mosque.

AS a result of these conditions, no new Christian churches are built and the old ones are crumbling to dust. The hierarchy of the Christian churches in Egypt have more than once protested against these conditions, have more than once appealed to the King, to the cabinet, to all the important ministries — but to no avail.

Here are some examples:

The Church of Kafr-Al-Sheikh has been waiting to be built since 1936.

The Church of Kafr-Sheshta was closed and there was no chance to reopen it, but to our surprise something queer happened and His Excellency, Badawy Pasha Khalifa, Deputy Interior Minister, gave permission for it to be opened two hours on the night of holidays, prescribing that it should be closed afterwards. Surely, wine merchants are freer than Christians in this country. Can this happen in any country in the world but Egypt?

As for the Church of Port Fouad, on January 20, 1940 the Copts of Port Fouad presented an appeal to the Ministry of the Interior to permit them to build a house of worship for themselves. They were told unofficially to go ahead. The land was purchased, a society was formed. The Patriarch blessed the project. Here we are in 1950, and still no official permit can be gotten. This particular project was given more publicity than any other because a few Copt attorneys made it their business every once in a while to demand the permit from the proper authorities. But the result was the same in their case as in the others.

The church of Aja has needed repairs for the past twenty years. It is in ruins now. Why? The cause is that on the next corner from the church there is a *Zawiat*, a little mosque for the Moslems.

The Church of Al-Qasaseen has never been built, despite

innumerable petitions, recommendations and appeals. A church is evidently less important in the eyes of the Egyptian government than a grocery store, a mill or a cinema theater!

Church steeples must conform to a law that severely limits their height. Church bells must not ring lest they disturb peaceful citizens. We wonder whether the government has ever considered the fact that radio broadcasts disturb peaceful citizens, too, both day and night.

We conclude this chapter on the churches by a still stranger fact. *His Honor, Sheikh Muhammad Al-Banna, Director for Religious Affairs in the Prime Minister's Office, is today the arbiter and the head of Coptic religious affairs in the country.* These affairs, it goes without saying, are of a purely Christian nature. No Moslem was ever an arbiter of Christian religious affairs! Today the man who interprets our Coptic religious laws is not of the church and knows nothing about the church. No wonder that our protests and appeals do not find a listening ear and do not bring us justice!

## “Even This Post They Begrudge Us”

By PROFESSOR LABIB AL-MENQBADY\*

**E**GYPTIAN government policy in recent years has been aimed at depriving the Copts of government offices. No Copts are appointed any more. The government has gone even further than that, for it is beginning to dismiss those Copts who were appointed years ago and who have given proof of their skill and zeal in the service.

*Why is the appointment of Copts so rare and impossible? Some say it is high policy; others say it is a matter of population statistics; still others say the time of the Copts has gone and they have no more rights in this country. The conclusion we have arrived at is that we Copts have become foreigners in our own country or are considered foreigners. Foreigners cannot of course enjoy the rights of citizens.*

This is a very sad state to endure with resignation and the hope that God may come to our help! But alas! It seems that the awaited help is far from coming.

We have suffered in our prestige and we have ceased to feel

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\* This article appeared originally in the March 3, 1950 issue of *Misr*.

blow after blow. Our voices have become weak, and we do not raise them to demand our rights.

We were a progressive and healthy people, and today our pulse is weak and there is almost no blood in our veins.

Petty disputes take all our time, and evil elements rule our feelings. Thus, we cease to think, and to perceive what the others intend to do to us!

But is there any doubt? Is it not their aim to make us low, degraded, and miserable? I say this confidently and loudly after having learned that the *government has decided to appoint one of our Moslem brothers as director of the Coptic National Museum!*

We suffered in silence when we were deprived of civil service employment, despite the Egyptian Constitution's guarantee of equality to all the Egyptian nationals! We have patiently endured the closing to us of employment opportunities in business companies, and the persecution and discrimination we encounter in the liberal professions!

We were very patient in the hope that a day would come when our brothers would change this evil policy of prejudice which benefits no one and makes enemies of brothers.

It seems that our silence has been interpreted as weakness which made our brothers even more greedy and led them to deprive us also of this office of directorship of the Coptic Museum the only symbol of national pride left to us.

O no! O masters! Our national pride cannot permit us to leave this inheritance in the hands of others or to be silent any more.

We have the most able persons to fill all kinds of offices, jobs and professions. Will you not at least leave us this office so that we may have some little cheer in the midst of our suffering?

## The Plagues of Arabism in Egypt

By RAMSES JIBRAOUI\*

WE read in the Egyptian press, a few days ago, that Egypt intends to settle Arab refugees from Palestine in the Sinai peninsula, and that she is to use the technical help of American experts in order to provide the means of existence for these Arabs there.

We know, and everyone in the world knows, that Egypt is over-populated; that she is threatened with near starvation because the land cannot produce enough food for its inhabitants; that she cannot continue to produce enough food because the Egyptian masses are still reproducing like rabbits, and our number increases more quickly than the amount of cultivable land.

How is it, then, that when we ourselves have no room to breathe and no room for expansion except in the wildernesses surrounding us, we choose the most fertile of them, the richest in minerals and resources, and propose to give it to so-called relations, some million foreign Arabs? How is it that at the same time we are tightening the ropes on the throats of foreigners born in Egypt who have been living in it for tens of years, and who have shown their superiority in learning, progress and production, and been good tax-paying citizens? How is it that while we refuse to give these people among us Egyptian citizenship except in very acute cases, we open the door wide to a million Arabs with no scientific knowledge, art or culture and no abilities at all? Shall we take the bread out of our sons' mouths and give it to these Arabs? Shall we deprive ourselves of the necessities of life for their sake, increasing our misery in the present and making our future even darker?

They are a million Arab plagues! They will reproduce themselves quickly, adding more plagues, increasing our troubles. Already, for their sake, we have lost our good name and much of our revenue (175,000,000 guineas) which we spent in a war that was no concern of ours at all. *And today we are spending more millions on arms for these Arabs' sake because a state of war — we don't know why — still exists between us and the State of Israel. Nor dare we forget the thousands of our youths whom we sacrificed in that war, and the many thousands more that we are making ready*

\* This article appeared in the April 2, 1951 issue of *Al-Manarat Al-Misriyat*.

*for the boiling cauldron of war in the cause of this Arabism which has fallen on us so suddenly in this cynical age.*

**T**HESE Arab plagues are now increased by still another, for we read in *Al-Ahram* lately that the Secretariat of the U.N. has asked the Egyptian government for assurances that it will pay its share, 71/100, of the \$55,000,000 total earmarked for the help of these Arabs. This means that the share of Egypt is 38½ million dollars!

I find myself completely confused by all this. All the essential projects for improvement of Egyptian conditions have either been stopped because of our abject poverty, or are making the slow progress of a tortoise. Ignorance and disease are still killing our minds and bodies; millions of us do not eat more than one very meager meal each day; our hospitals are empty of doctors, and if we find some, there are no medicines! Our lords make us live like beasts of burden without a definite goal or plan, except the goal of Arabism, Arab unity, Arab federation and other Arab aims which are in the interests of the British and the Arabs. As for intelligent, progressive Egyptians, they are all the losers for it!

And what is left for us to do? We must now forget our misery again and concern ourselves with the Arabs of Morocco, as if it were our destiny to turn our heads toward the Arabs of the East and those of the West until we see double or our heads leave our bodies altogether! We have had enough plagues, but our leaders now wish us to suffer the plagues of the Arabs of the East and the West, as well as our own!

It seems that we must burn in order to light the way for Arabism! This is to be our high ideal! All honor to such honest nationalism, befitting the sons of the Pharaohs and their great leaders!

O, you Egyptian patriots! Do not be surprised if our sons to-morrow will revolt against us and will damn us in future generations for the legacy we bequeath them of ignorance, disease, misery and other Arab plagues!

## If We Are Exiled from Egypt . . .

By AL-QUMOS SERGIUS\*

*The writer tells the story of how in a depressed mood he felt compelled to leave his desk in Cairo and take a rest at Suez where his daughter and her husband live. His depression was due to all the letters he had been receiving from his readers complaining and describing their miserable life in Egypt, their own land and the land of their ancestors. At Suez he thought inevitably of the ancient exodus of the sons of Israel from tyranny in Egypt, when they left a great, rich land, a land of plenty, happiness and civilization, for a barren desert. Then this question came to his mind and is formulated in the article as follows:*

**W**ERE the people of Israel more miserable than in Egypt, than the sons of the Copts are now? When the sons of Israel were thrown out of Egypt and crossed the Red Sea, they found a desert to take refuge in. But for the Copts, still pursued and persecuted by their countrymen, what escape is there, what deserts will give them refuge?

Israel, which was pursued to the Sinai desert, did not pass forty years there for nothing. This period was a period of study and research on the nature of the land. They entered the promised land and were exiled to Assyria, then came back to their land, and afterward they wandered all over the earth till now they have returned and are beginning to make the deserts into gardens and paradises by means of the learning and resources they have acquired in their exile . . .

*But if we are thrown out of the land of our forefathers, Egypt, will Israel let us take refuge in the Sinai desert of our land? Or will they stand before us, forbidding us to rest our feet on the edge of the desert, while our countrymen push us from the back and we find no heart with pity on us except the Red Sea willing to take us to its bottom and to deliver us from a life worst than Hell?*

Some say that Israel may welcome the Copts if they are thrown out of Egypt and make their home in Sinai, because Israel will understand what good neighbors the Copts are. Together they might develop the desert which would become the land of the Copts, its natural owners.

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\* Al-Qumos Sergius is a dean of the Coptic Church. He is editor and publisher of *Al-Manarat Al-Misriyat*, Cairo Coptic weekly, in the February 19, 1951 issue of which this article appeared.

Those who say this base their belief on fantastic interpretations. They say "Don't you hear our brother Moslems on their holidays, when their sons and daughters travel back and forth in the trams shouting: 'You Christians! You Jews! Your faces are like monkey faces!'"

All these insults, people say, are levelled at us within the hearing of the police — and while the whole people of Egypt look on without shame, does anybody tell them to stop? No! . . . This indicates that many of our Moslem compatriots share this attitude toward us! This is a crime that should be punished by law!

Inevitably, therefore, some Copts conclude that as long as the faces of Christians and Jews are considered alike in their resemblance to monkeys, then a day may come when, indeed, the Sinai desert will be cultivated, and great forests will grow within its borders. On the trees of those forests the monkeys of Jews and Copts will jump and gambol together, both groups sharing the love for work and culture and mutual benefits!

Those that say such things merely wait for an indication from the Egyptian government that they should leave Egypt, so that they may find a little respite from their sufferings and at the same time protect Egypt from becoming known as a shameful persecutor of Christianity. Then the Copts would enter into extensive negotiations with those that are concerned, and thus their misery would end, while their compatriots would be relieved of them.

Nothing is surprising in this land of miracles!

## Christian Leaders, Where Are You?

*An Editorial from the March 5, 1951 issue of  
"Al-Manarat Al-Misriyat"*

*Demonstrations and parades have recently been organized by professors of the Al-Azhar University, the famous Moslem University of Cairo, in which the professors presented their complaints and grievances to the King of Egypt and to the various Moslem embassies in Cairo, claiming that they are not treated fairly and squarely, and demanding compliance with their requests for higher wages and better security for them and their Moslem students. In the light of these demonstrations, the editor of Al-Manarat, the weekly magazine published in Arabic as the organ of the Copts, editorially addressed the Christians of Egypt. Since they are now enduring a wave of persecution ranging from discrimination to physical and moral injuries, the editor turns to them and asks them to parade and demonstrate before the Christian embassies in Egypt like the Moslem professors of Al-Azhar who took their case to the*

السنة ٢٤
مجلة اسبوعية الاشتراك ٥٠ قرشا عن سنة ٢٥٠ قرشا عن نصف سنة ( يدفع مقدما )
التمن ١٠ مليات

العدد ١٠
الادارة شارع الزهار رقم ١٧ بالقلي بصر ( بجوار كنيسة القلي القبطية )
تليفون ٤٥٥٣٠

# مجلة المسيحية لصاحبها: القمص جرجس

٢٦ أمتير ١٦٦٧

الانتين ٥ مارس سنة ١٩٥١

علماء الازهر يطوفون بالسفارات الاسلامية

يشكون ظلم دولهم

فلماذا لا يشكو المسيحيون اضطهادهم لسفراء الدول المسيحية ؟

*Moslem embassies of Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran, Turkey, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Transjordan, Yemen, Saudi Arabia, and the General Secretariat of the Arabic League. The professors claim that what they are protesting is not a matter of allowances, salaries, etc., but a far more fundamental matter: the persecution of Islam.*

*The text of the editorial follows:*

**Y**OU Christian religious leaders, where are you? Are inequities in salaries and subsidies more dangerous than the perils threatening you, your religion, and the Christian people which gave you leadership, and which you see everyday drowning in waves of persecutions?

You see them with your own eyes, and you touch them with your own hands, and the cries of our suffering sons pierce your ears in their pain and agony! . . .

Your churches are closed, and the faithful are driven out after being insulted and beaten. Obstacles are put in the way of building your churches, till it becomes actually impossible to build them. Your children are forbidden to learn their religion in school, though Moslem children are taught theirs. Your children's teachers insult the Christian religion shamelessly and deliberately, in the hope of shaking their belief and making them easy prey for conversion to Islam!

You see how Christian boys and girls are kidnapped and coerced to embrace Islam by all hellish ways, while the Council of State issues the *fatwa* that no one who embraces Islam can go back to his previous religion. If, by chance, a Christian, after embracing Islam, should go back to Christianity and then die, he is taken by force and buried in the Moslem cemetery after the usual prayers in the Mosque. His fortune is then seized and given to the Moslem *Waqf* (fund) because his return to Christianity is not valid according to Moslem law! . . .

Christians cannot be civil service employees now, and they cannot even be employed in industrial companies founded by Christians and with Christian capital. In their little businesses they are subjected to excessive taxes in many forms, until they are forced to abandon their commerce and industries and end up by wandering about or being imprisoned in jails where they are painfully maltreated. There is nothing that can lighten their sufferings in prison except conversion there and then to Islam.

You see with your own eyes, O Christian leaders, how you, and your Christian people with you, have become outcasts, in this day and age when even the outcasts of India have become free and the negroes of America are acquiring all their civil rights! . . .

Radio broadcasting is forbidden to you and your religion, but

the country listens freely on its radios to evil songs, immoral monologues and bad words. It is your gospels and your masses that are judged to be damaging. What is more, with your own ears you hear insults to your religion on the radio broadcasts that come to your homes, and these go on in spite of all your protests!

**W***E Christians today have no natural rights, and we have become foreigners in our own country, while every foreigner who enters the country is considered a citizen as long as he is a Moslem, and has the right of civil service employment, the right to acquire land and property, and the right to be master of the native Christian citizen!*

All this persecution should make you rise up and do something. Does not this call for your summoning a general Christian conference to consider this deliberate program of persecution aimed at Christians, a program which increases in intensity whenever the oppressors' minds find new ways and means to force the Christians to abandon their religion and embrace Islam, in order to escape bitter misery, permanent threats, and painful maltreatment and attacks?

Of what are you afraid? Why not follow in the footsteps of the *Ulema* of Al-Azhar and ask the help of the ambassadors of the Christian countries in Egypt, presenting to them the notes and reports and the pictures of the various persecutions, and asking them to make these known. The persecutions meted out to the Christians in this country have no equal in all the countries of the world — not only the civilized world, but even the so-called savage, barbarian countries. All other countries of the world leave their people free to worship the God they want and the religion they prefer, as is their natural right!

Can it be that you are more patriotic than the Moslem professors of Al-Azhar? Or is it that you are more wise and more zealous for your country than they?

What will the people say about you, and what will your excuse be if you fail to follow the *Ulema* of Al-Azhar and do not go and present your complaints to the Christian embassies? . . .

We are waiting for every religious leader to tell us of his readiness to call such a conference, and to demonstrate before the Christian embassies and the Moslem ones, too!

If this is not done, then we — the clergy, priests, deacons — will call and organize a Christian conference. We will demonstrate and parade before every embassy, Christian and Moslem. We will go to America, if necessary, to make the Christian world a witness to our fate, and we will tell them that Egypt has no Christian leaders who cherish and are zealous for their religion and their people!