

## Modern Egypt



By virtue of all his up-to-date all encompassing reforms, Muhammad Ali is truly considered the founder of Modern Egypt. He encouraged and sponsored men of learning, scientists and artists. He built a powerful army as well as a military academy. A ship building industry was started in Boulaq, Cairo together with a shipyard in Alexandria.

He specially attended to the administration of government affairs. During the first half of the 19th Century, a full-scale economic revival was in full swing. Special attention was given to agriculture and irrigation, where barrages, dams and canals were built. In industry, Muhammad Ali adopted a policy of dispensing with foreign-made products, and creating national factories and plants to meet the needs of the army and the public. In trade, he sought to provide security for internal trade routes and create a foreign trade fleet. During his reign, trade flourished.

At the same time, Muhammad Ali was enthusiastically interested in spreading education to cater government manpower needs. Schools of various levels and specialties were built and educational missions were sent to Europe to transfer modern sciences to Egypt.

After his death, Muhammad Ali's successors tried their best to follow his suit by attempting to catch up with European civilization. During the reign of Khedive Ismail, Egypt witnessed an awakening administrative reform, while agriculture, industry, construction and architecture prospered. Most notable of his achievements was the establishment of the Opera House, railroads and the Suez Canal which was opened to international navigation in 1869.

Thus, the 19th Century was one of enlightenment, rediscovery of the Egyptian power system and development of human wealth. By the end of the century, Egypt witnessed many revolts against the foreign intervention.

The nationalist movement grew stronger and several popular revolts took place. However, the Orabi Revolution (1882 AD) ended up with Egypt being occupied and declared a protectorate by Britain in 1914. Accordingly, Egypt officially broke off from Ottoman suzerainty.

Thus, Egypt entered the 20th Century, suffering under the yoke of British colonialist rule that plundered its resources. Popular resistance and national movements soon escalated under the nationalist leaders: Mostafa Kamel, Muhammad Fareed and Sa'ad Zaghloul, leading the 1919 Revolution calling for independence. The British occupation of Egypt came to an end and the country was declared as an independent state in 1922. The first Egyptian Constitution was issued in 1923.

Later, there ensued a period of economic revival led by the great nationalist economist Tala'at Harb, leading to the establishment of an industrial, productive and services base in all sectors of the economy.

### **The July 23, 1952 Revolution**



Under the leadership of Gamal Abdel Nasser, the July 1952 Revolution brought about a host of achievements including the enactment of the first agrarian reform law and the first 5-year plan for socio-economic development in the history of Egypt (1960).

Industry and production were developed. The Aswan High Dam was completed (1960-1970). Outstanding achievements were also made in the fields of education, health, agriculture and construction. In the field of foreign policy, Egypt adopted a policy of positive neutrality and encouraging national liberation movements.

Cognizant since its inception of Egypt's leading role in the Arab world, its growing military power and untiring defense of the Palestinian case in world forums, Israel launched a treacherous assault on June 5, 1967 against Egypt, Syria and Jordan, ending up with Israeli occupation of Sinai, the Golan Heights and the West Bank of Jordan. The Egyptian army managed successfully to stand the test of the Israeli troops in a war of attrition. In the meantime, the leader of the July Revolution, Gamal Abdel Nasser, died in September 28, 1970.

President Anwar el-Sadat proceeded with the policy of mobilizing all state resources for the liberation of the occupied land. On October 6, 1973, both Egyptian and Syrian armies simultaneously launched a battle for liberating Arab lands from Israeli occupation. A few hours after the start of the war, the Egyptian army victoriously crossed to the east bank of the Suez Canal where the Egyptian banner was raised high.



In the October War, Egyptian forces scored an outstanding victory. This prompted President Anwar as-Sadat to contemplate a radical settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict and the establishment of just and lasting peace in the Middle East. There followed the peace treaty with Israel (Camp David Accord) in March 26, 1979, with the participation of USA. This treaty was preceded by President Sadat's visit to Israel in 1977. On April 25, 1982, Israel withdrew its forces from the Sinai Peninsula and later from the frontier strip of Taba pursuant to arbitration by the International Court of Justice.



Following President Sadat's death in 1981, President Muhammad Hosni Mubarak assumed office. Since then, he has sought to bring about internal stability, improve and firmly establish democratic practice, the rule of law and help realize social peace and national unity. Mubarak's main concern centers on achieving comprehensive development.