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Enthusiastic Beginnings: The Private Press, 1855–1882

Lebanon in the mid-nineteenth century was the scene of growing intellectual ferment. An educated group with a command of foreign languages, and inspired by Western ideas, was eagerly shaking the dust off the old treasures of local culture. Their small circle was growing slowly but continuously thanks to an expanding network of new schools that competed with each other in introducing pupils to modern thought and technology. Printing was advancing: As against one active press in Lebanon in 1800, there were four in 1850 producing holy books but also, notably, other texts. Cultural and literary societies were being formed, following the lead of the Syrian Scientific Society (*al-jam'iyya al-'ilmiyya al-Suriyya*), founded in Beirut in 1847 by Protestant missionaries and their students. Five years later, the first volume of the society's yearbook, a mirror of this energetic endeavor, contained articles on scientific issues such as copper smelting, social questions such as women's education (a striking idea at the time), daily household matters such as modern methods of child rearing, and historical, geographic, and literary subjects. Soon Beirut would boast dozens of bookstores; presses that printed classical works, modern dictionaries and a modern universal encyclopedia; numerous scientific societies with substantial memberships; and two important colleges. Lebanon would blaze the trail for the cultural, and later nationalist, awakening of Middle Eastern society, while Lebanese intellectuals in Beirut, Cairo, Istanbul, and Paris would pioneer the revival of language and literature and the establishment of theater and the press.[1]

Why Lebanese? Two interrelated factors were responsible for their early leadership: A tradition of resourcefulness and creativity, en-

hanced by the markedly diverse composition of Lebanese society; and the incentive provided by Christian missionaries based there since the early 1820s. Lebanon, a Christian island in a Muslim sea, had been a focus of European attention—more specifically, that of the Catholic Church—as far back as the early seventeenth century. A printshop was set up there at that time, the first in the Arab lands.[2] Intermittent contact between Catholic Europe and the local Christians, especially the Maronites of Mount Lebanon, continued until the early nineteenth century, although it was too meager to have a significant impact on the Lebanese cultural scene. The arrival in Lebanon of American Protestant missionaries in 1821, however, prompted competition between the various missions there, which became a powerful vehicle for change. The contest for winning converts focused on quality of education, provoking the indigenous Christian communities to join the race lest they lose members to the missionaries. The result was accelerated progress in the schooling system, a development that appeared in Lebanon long before it did elsewhere in the region.

The Christian Lebanese responded eagerly to the riches offered them by the emissaries of the modern world. Having none of the Muslim qualms about borrowing from Westerners, they sought to benefit from their newly acquired skills in order to improve their lot as a minority while pushing the entire society forward. Such improvement, they believed, was ultimately attainable by resurrecting indigenous Arab cultural treasures and reviving the Arab genius in language, literature, art, and science. Meanwhile, they immersed themselves in learning new methods and adapting foreign ideas. Printing and scientific societies were two such innovations. Periodicals were another.

Christian Lebanese, along with coreligionists from northern Syria, not only pioneered journalism in the Arab countries but dominated it for the rest of the century, even when the center of Arab journalism shifted from Beirut to Cairo in the late 1870s. It was a Syrian Christian, Rizqallah Hasun (1823-1880), who started the first private Arabic newspaper. The son of an Armenian Catholic merchant, Hasun grew up in Aleppo and was educated in a mission. He joined the family business, which brought him to Paris and London. At age 17, restless and enterprising, he settled in Istanbul, where he continued in commerce, joining other Aleppines who formed a sizable immigrant community there. Fifteen years later, during the Crimean War, Hasun launched his journalistic project, motivated both by business concerns and intellectual ardor. The war provided two essential ingredients: the public's hunger for news, and the telegraph, which the British brought with them to the Ottoman front for the first time. Sometime in 1855 Hasun began publishing a news weekly, *Mir'at al-Ahwal*, which featured battlefield reports as well as accounts of other developments mainly in the Syrian cities. This was the second private paper to appear in the Ottoman capital—it was preceded by a Turkish journal published by

an Englishman[3]—but the very first in the Arabic language. *Mir'at al-Ahwal* seems to have lasted for about a year (no copies are known to be extant), after which Hasun joined government service. Later, his Russophil views forced him to escape abroad.[4]

Hasun's Christian compatriots followed his example, turning journalism into an exciting field. One of them, Ahmad Faris al-Shidyaq, duplicated Hasun's move to the Ottoman capital and began publishing there. A Maronite convert to Protestantism and then to Islam, Shidyaq (1801–1887) had an unusually kaleidoscopic career that took him from Beirut via Cairo and Malta to Oxford and Paris. In each place he translated, adapted, and produced original Arabic literary works with great skill, acquiring a reputation as a gifted writer and a master of the Arabic language. He also engaged briefly in journalism in Cairo as editor of *al-Waqa'i' al-Misriyya* during 1833–1834. Shidyaq landed in Istanbul as the protégé of an old friend, Minister of Education Sami Pasha, apparently in 1859. Two years later, on 31 May 1861, he launched a weekly newspaper, *al-Jawa'ib*, which became one of the most influential Arabic papers of the century.[5]

For the Ottoman government, the publication of an Arabic paper in the capital by someone of Shidyaq's acumen was a development not devoid of advantageous potential. Shidyaq was allowed to run his paper on his own, under the eye of the authorities, but within a few months, as he ran into financial difficulties, the government willingly rescued his project and took it under its protective wing. Shidyaq was invited to print his paper at the state press and accept a royal subsidy, which he did for the next nine years, in return for which he defended the imperial point of view in his columns. "It has been decreed," the paper informed its readers, "that the expenses of *al-Jawa'ib* from now on be covered by the Ministry of Finance and that it be printed at the imperial press. Under these circumstances, we must pledge loyalty to our master, the great Sultan."[6] Shidyaq's prestige and editorial skill made *al-Jawa'ib* a more effective tool than the largely discredited official bulletins published in the provinces. He served the government by producing reports and analyses that were sympathetic to, or at least did not contradict, official policy, along with official government notices. The paper also contained detailed news about the ruling elite and about events in the capital, in the provinces, and abroad, for which Shidyaq had enviable access to sources. In addition, it carried original articles by the editor; texts of speeches by world leaders, international treaties, and diplomatic documents; discussions of social, cultural, and literary issues; and responses to critics from other papers. Despite its reputation as a semiofficial organ, *al-Jawa'ib* did maintain a degree of independence, for which it was even punished occasionally. In 1879 it was suspended for six months because of the editor's refusal to publish an article critical of the Egyptian khedive, who was another of Shidyaq's benefactors, and for printing a sympathetic piece instead.[7]

Shidyaq was at once an authority on Arabic literature and grammar and well-versed in European culture. This expertise, combined with government backing, made *al-Jawa'ib* what appears to have been the most popular Arabic paper of its time. According to contemporary accounts, it was read by Muslim rulers and intellectuals from Morocco to India and from Aleppo to Zanzibar ("I have found it in the Nejd merchants' houses at Bombay," reported a traveler in central Arabia in the 1870s[8]). It was also monitored by foreign observers who, quite logically, considered it to be a mouthpiece of the Ottoman government. Manifestly a one-man operation, *al-Jawa'ib* was in effect much more: a major institution in the cultural and political life of its time until its closing in 1883.[9]

The Private Press in Lebanon

Shidyaq, a conspicuous product of the cultural ferment in Lebanon of the nineteenth century, had transplanted himself outside the country. Others chose to express their creativity without leaving Lebanon. Among them were men of letters such as Nasif al-Yaziji and his son Ibrahim, Butrus al-Bustani and his son Salim, Tannus al-Shidyaq (Ahmad Faris's brother), Mikha'il Mishaqa, Nakhla Mudawwar, and Mikha'il Shihada, to mention only a few prominent names, all of them pupils of the missionaries in one way or another. Sensing an enormous cultural and educational challenge, they were eager to meet it by using the tools with which the missionaries had equipped them, displaying an endless appetite for knowledge and a remarkable capacity to absorb it.

Absorbing knowledge, however, was only the first step. No less vital was disseminating it. "There is no doubt that newspapers (*al-jurnalat*) are among the most important vehicles in educating the public," Butrus al-Bustani, secretary of the Syrian Scientific Society, stated in his famous *khutba* (public address) of 1859, discussing the cultural state of the Arabs.[10] Bustani was congratulating his colleague, Khalil al-Khuri, who a year earlier had established the news weekly *Hadiqat al-Akhbar* in Beirut. Khuri (1836–1907), a Greek Orthodox employed in a commercial firm, wrote poems that attested to a certain literary talent and had sound knowledge of both Turkish and French. These attributes made him an appropriate candidate to head the first journalistic undertaking in Lebanon. Wealthy Christian businessmen assisted by purchasing a defunct printing press that belonged to the Greek Orthodox metropolitan and securing a government permit to publish a newspaper. At first, Khuri favored a poetic name for it—*al-Fajr al-Munir* ("The Shining Dawn")—a seemingly innocuous name yet not entirely devoid of political connotations. In the end, however, he chose instead the safer *Hadiqat al-Akhbar* ("Garden of News"), a neutral title with a distinctly traditional flavor. Such caution was a valuable asset; it

enabled Khuri to publish his paper for the next 50 years, notwithstanding the many changes in the empire's government.[11]

With the appearance of the first issue of *Hadiqat al-Akhbar* on 1 January 1858, the educated elite in Lebanon had a periodical of their own that in format, makeup, and regularity of publication resembled the modern newspapers they received from Europe. Respectable-looking, the paper was published exclusively in Arabic on four large pages, with an aesthetic masthead and section headlines. It was available through agents listed on the front page, and the stated price for subscribers was 120 qurush in Beirut and Mount Lebanon and 144 qurush elsewhere. Merchants and businesses were invited to advertise at a cost of 5 qurush a line.

From the first issue, the paper carried detailed reports on developments in Beirut, the Syrian cities, Istanbul, and Egypt, as well as Europe and America. This coverage was drawn from official Egyptian and Ottoman organs, the international press, and reports sent by the paper's agents and other acquaintances of the editor in the provinces. Issue no. 20 of 10 May 1858, to pick a random example, offered reports on the Paris conference concerning the future of Wallachia and Moldavia; a British parliamentary move to rephrase the members' inaugural oath; and rumors of an impending Spanish-American war, all of which appeared on the paper's first two pages. The third and fourth pages were devoted mostly to news within the empire, including accounts of the sultan's bestowal of ranks and titles upon several Egyptian princes; a banquet held in Beirut by the head of the Ottoman Bank; and the arrival of several European diplomats in Damascus. One item contained segments from the proceedings of the dramatic trial of an Italian named Orsini who had attempted to assassinate the French emperor. Local and provincial news was two to three weeks old, while foreign news, which was undated, referred to events that had taken place up to two months previously.

Prudence required editorial distancing from religious issues, an especially sensitive area in Lebanon of the late 1850s, as well as caution in handling political issues, in particular foreign matters. Khuri wisely followed the lead of the official bulletins coming from Istanbul, confining himself strictly to the factual reporting of events so as not to irritate the authorities. He had more freedom in other areas: economic and commercial affairs, both domestic and international, for which there was much demand in the business-oriented milieu of Lebanon; and perhaps more important, cultural, scientific and literary matters, for which the local elite had a large appetite. Businessmen were offered reports on the state of European markets, currency fluctuations, foreign tenders and lotteries, and the arrival of ships at the port of Beirut. The intellectuals were attracted by accounts of new books and theatrical presentations, another novelty. An idealist, the 22-year-old Khuri saw

himself as a missionary bringing modern civilization to his community. He sought to enlighten his readers by including columns, however rudimentary, on modern science and technology, such as on electricity, barometric pressure, printing, and photography, and on other fields of general knowledge, for example, on the world's navies or the idea of *habeas corpus*.[12] He also wrote editorials—a new genre—on such issues as the need to expand education, including education for women; the need to modernize the Arabic language; and, most important, the need to learn "from the peoples and communities which have attained command of arts and sciences," to wit, "learning the sciences of Europe."[13] A literary supplement was also added from time to time, in which Khuri serialized classical Arabic works, translated foreign literature, and published original stories and poems by himself and other writers. *Hadiqat al-Akhbar* was Khuri's personal voice, but beyond that it became a lively forum for public discussion, and sometimes controversy, on issues that engaged the Lebanese intelligentsia of the time. As such it was a vivid mirror of the country's cultural life.

The mission that Khuri took upon himself was indeed enormous. As he and his colleagues saw it, informing and edifying society were only a means toward the larger end of rescuing society from its appalling, if temporary, backwardness. There was so much to do: inculcate modern science, redefine social values, revive the national cultural heritage, adjust the language to new needs. Khuri and his colleagues were convinced that newspapers and periodicals were an effective means of attaining these formidable goals. *Hadiqat al-Akhbar* styled itself a "civilian (*madani*), scientific, commercial, historical journal," an all-embracing formula that reflected its editor's ambitious vision. This intense focus on news and enlightenment as necessary agents for the improvement of society would characterize Lebanese journalists until the end of the century and beyond.

Hadiqat al-Akhbar seems to have been a success story. Three months after it appeared, it boasted some 400 subscriptions (with additional copies sold on the street), no small achievement considering the novelty of the institution.[14] Another mark of its success was the decision in 1860 by Fu'ad Pasha, the Ottoman foreign minister, to "adopt" the paper and provide it with a monthly subvention of 20 Ottoman pounds, thereby turning it into a semi-official organ.[15] The paper continued as a government mouthpiece until 1865, when its official role was assumed by the state bulletin *Suriya*, which appeared that year in Damascus. Later, in 1868, it was again turned into an official organ by Franco Pasha, the vali of Mount Lebanon, but resumed its independent status after a while. These changes in status, and the fact that Khuri himself was employed as state censor in Beirut in the 1870s and 1880s, would later prompt a debate among Arab historians of the press about whether *Hadiqat al-Akhbar* should be classified as an official publication.[16] *Hadiqat*

al-Akhbar, along with *al-Jawa'ib*, which was published in Istanbul, dominated Syrian-Lebanese journalism with no significant competition throughout the 1860s.

There were several other attempts at publishing papers in Lebanon by missionaries and by private individuals during that decade. Protestant proselytizers, who were leaders in the cultural sphere, were particularly active in this field, providing an example to their local followers while angering the Catholics. As early as 1851, that is four years before Hasun launched his *Mir'at al-Ahwal*, Eli Smith, head of the American mission in Beirut, started a publication for his mission entitled *Majmu' Fawa'id* ("Collected Useful Lessons"), an annual compilation of essays on religious, historical, and cultural matters. It turned out to be a disorganized effort with little impact that died out after four issues, and merits mention only because it is sometimes considered "the very first and earliest of all Arabic-language periodicals."[17] The Protestants renewed their initiative with more gusto in the early 1860s, launching several new journals consecutively, each under a different name. By 1871 this energetic Protestant effort took on a more organized form with the publication of *al-Nashra al-Usbu'iyya* ("Weekly Bulletin").[18] Concerned, the local Catholics and their religious allies, the Jesuit Fathers, responded with their own weekly paper, *al-Bashir* ("The Herald"), which was begun in September 1870.[19] Both *al-Nashra al-Usbu'iyya* and *al-Bashir*, backed by their respective churches, proved impressively enduring, appearing in an orderly fashion throughout the rest of the century and on into the next. They carried on bitter debates with each other, often in harsh language, sometimes drawing other journals into the conflict. This kind of heated encounter, endemic to the Lebanese scene, had constructive results in generating a seminal educational and cultural contest of ideas in the nineteenth century. In the twentieth, however, the encounter would become less beneficial, spawning painful intercommunal political friction.

One other publication during the 1860s, put out by an individual, deserves consideration. Between September 1860 and April 1861, in the wake of the bloody factional clashes in Syria and Lebanon, Butrus al-Bustani, a prominent Lebanese intellectual, addressed a passionate call to his countrymen for restraint and unity, choosing as his medium a series of bulletins (*nasharat*, as he named them), which he issued irregularly under the title *Nafir Suriya* ("Syrian Clarion"). Apparently 11 issues of this broadsheet, one or two pages in length, appeared altogether, containing variations on the themes of patriotism, religious freedom, and communal coexistence written by Bustani.[20] While there was little journalistic merit in this series of fervent appeals, there was a certain novelty in the fact that an individual with no official standing would publish his views on social and political issues. The novelty turned out to be a portent for the future, for it was Bustani who published the next significant periodical a decade later.

With the painful events of 1860 over, and political and administrative stability attained, Lebanon again became the scene of feverish cultural activity. The Syrian Protestant College, later to become the American University of Beirut, opened in that city in 1866. The Syrian Scientific Society, all but moribund for several years, vigorously resumed activity in 1868, attracting a membership three times larger, and considerably younger, than formerly. In another celebrated speech to the society that year, Bustani addressed the need for more schools, more printing presses, and more newspapers. In an age of great spiritual advancement, he stated, "We must have . . . more books fit for educating and entertaining those who can read and for kindling the desire for education among the illiterate," as well as more "reading rooms for books, commercial magazines (*kazitat*), and professional journals (*jurnalat*)."[21] Soon thereafter a spate of journals sprang up in Lebanon, no less than seven in 1870 alone. Bustani, together with his son Salim, again led the way. In January of that year they began to publish the biweekly *al-Jinan* ("Gardens"), and six months later the weekly (later semiweekly) *al-Janna* ("Garden," or "Paradise"), which became two mainstays of the enlightenment effort of the time.

Butrus al-Bustani (1819–1883), a Maronite won over to the Protestant church, was an impressive product, and later leader, of the Lebanese cultural awakening. He founded the National School (*al-madrasa al-wataniyya*, 1863), published the first modern Arabic dictionary (*Muhit al-muhit*, 1870–1871), and launched the first modern multivolume Arab encyclopedia (*Da'irat al-ma'arif*, 1876–1900), editing its first six volumes before he died. In *al-Jinan*, an educational, historical, and literary journal, Butrus and his son made a systematic effort to acquaint their fellow Arabs with the fruits of Western achievement while reviving their own rich legacy. "Thanks to our magnanimous rulers," he stated in an opening note, the country already had several Arabic-language papers that provided news and information. But it was still in need of a means "to spread universal knowledge—scientific, cultural, historical, industrial, commercial . . . and the like—as in the foreign countries where their benefits have become evident."[22] Summaries of current events in Europe, chapters from its history, and translations from the European press and its literature were presented along with Arab literary and historical pieces. To pick an example at random, the issue of 15 December 1870 included a lengthy article on the idea of politics, past and present; an analysis of aspects of the Franco-Prussian war of that year; a report on Russia and the Black Sea adapted from an Istanbul paper; a segment of a serialized biography of Napoleon III; an article on moral values; an essay on translation; a segment of a serialized Arabic novel; and a set of anecdotes. The biweekly was an ambitious enterprise that won high esteem on the part of the educated community throughout the Arab lands during the 16 years of its existence. The other project, *al-Janna*, was a weekly and later a semiweekly, and hence primarily a

news medium, its lifespan identical to that of its biweekly counterpart. In 1871 the third in this "botanic" series appeared under the name *al-Junayna* ("Little Garden"), edited by Salim al-Bustani and his father's cousin Sulayman. *Al-Junayna* came to be regarded as the first Arab daily, although it was published only four times a week.[23] Like most of the early Arabic papers, it did not last long, expiring after four years.

Other intellectuals, similarly stimulated by the new horizons they had discovered and the old ones they rediscovered, and anxious to spread the light, also utilized the potent new device of printing. In January 1870, at the same time that *al-Jinan* appeared in Beirut, another literary journal, *al-Zahra* ("Flower," or "Venus"), was started there by the Catholic writer and poet Yusuf al-Shalafun, who later published several other papers as well. In May that same year, the literary monthly *al-Nahla* ("The Bee") appeared, the first in a long series of periodicals published by an eccentric Catholic priest, Luis Sabunji. Both *al-Zahra* and *al-Nahla* turned out to be short-lived, but once they died out, their owners joined forces in a typical example of Christian journalistic collaboration and produced another paper in Beirut under the optimistic name *al-Najah* ("Success"), a semiweekly devoted to politics and science. Their cooperative effort, however, proved as short-lived as their previous papers.[24] The next journal to appear was far more important, the scientific and literary monthly *al-Muqtataf* ("Selections"). Begun in May 1876 by Ya'qub Sarruf and Faris Nimr, it became one of the leading Arabic-language publications, a prominence it would retain for the next 75 years. Yet another notable venture was the semiweekly (later daily) *Lisan al-Hal* ("Voice of the Present"), published by Butrus al-Bustani's nephew Khalil Sarkis in October 1877, which would play a distinguished role as a source of news and commentary for a full century. By the end of the decade, Beirut had become the birthplace of no less than 25 newspapers and journals,[25] divergent in frequency and focus but having similar objectives.

Conspicuously, all of these papers were established by Christians, who led the cultural awakening. Muslims were not involved in the early phase of this endeavor; most of them, in fact, regarded it with suspicion. This was an anomalous situation that could not persist for long, for the zeal of the Christians in spreading their innovative message was bound to provoke a Muslim reaction. In 1873 a group of educated Muslims convened in Beirut to establish the Society of Arts (*jam'iyyat al-funun*), with the twofold objective of disseminating knowledge and, more traditionally, helping the poor. In April 1875, apparently concerned about the growing assertiveness of some of the Christian journalists, the society began to publish a weekly organ, *Thamarat al-Funun* ("Fruits of Knowledge"), edited by one of its members, 'Abd al-Qadir al-Qabbani. The paper, which acquired a mostly Muslim readership, was manifestly pro-Ottoman and strongly traditional in cultural orientation and literary taste. *Thamarat al-Funun* lasted until 1908, in large

part due to the backing of wealthy Muslims, during which time it was the leading Muslim publication. It was a less attractive product than many of its Christian counterparts, reflecting an odd dissonance between the novelty of the medium and the conservatism of its message.[26]

Thamarat al-Funun was a group project that was run as a share company, and in that, too, it differed from Christian papers. Christian journalists often collaborated with each other and contributed to each other's papers, but usually disbanded their partnerships after a while and moved on to the next project. Theirs was typically an enterprise of independent individuals, sometimes idealistic, often gifted, always ambitious. Their individualism and sense of competition was the product of their experience as a minority whose skills in survival generally and in commerce in particular were channeled into an aggressive missionary drive. The press, like other commercial areas, involved competing for a limited market and entailed rivalry and even conflict; more than other commercial enterprises, it engaged in ideological and religious issues, which often rendered the contest highly passionate. Considerable space and energy were devoted to internecine squabbles—such as between the Maronite-turned-Protestant Bustani and the Greek Catholic Sabunji;[27] between Bustani, along with Ibrahim al-Yaziji, and the Islamized Shidyaq;[28] or between Shidyaq and the Greek Catholic Hasun[29]—over political, cultural, linguistic, and invariably personal issues. Muslim papers such as *Thamarat al-Funun* were also involved in controversies with Christian papers,[30] but these were generally less acrimonious than the intra-Christian encounters.

For all its ambition, and the impressive progress that it generated, the Lebanese press of the 1860s and 1870s was still in its infancy and faced difficulties of all kinds. Idealistic motivation to educate the community, however fervid, was in itself insufficient. Setting up a paper and running it required financial resources, especially as the market was not yet prepared to absorb this novelty. Publishers who were not wealthy could not afford to sustain a paper at a loss for long, and they were usually forced to abandon these projects. The technological conditions necessary for running a newspaper—gathering news, printing it, and distributing the final product—were primitive and developed slowly. The flow of information was sluggish: Unlike in Egypt, where the telegraph had been inaugurated in 1866, Lebanese journalists remained without access to this innovative source of information until the end of the century and had to rely on reports sent by agents and informants through the mail and on foreign (including Egyptian) journals for news. An issue of *Hadiqat al-Akhbar* from June 1861, for example, featured a "telegraphic messages" section on events in Europe which quoted cabled reports that were 10 weeks old or older.[31] Sixteen years later, in 1877, the opening issue of *Lisan al-Hal*, whose owner made special efforts to gather and print news faster than his competi-

tors, still drew on Egyptian and European papers and quoted telegrams that were up to four weeks old.[32] Printing was likewise slow, with machines that produced one to three newspaper copies per minute.[33] All these difficulties discouraged the publication of daily newspapers (with the partial exception of *al-Junayna*)[34] and limited the number of other news journals to a handful. Newspapers of the period clearly reflected these hardships in their poor physical quality, sloppy layout, and mostly irregular publishing schedule.[35] Technically, it was much easier to publish scientific or literary periodicals, where production could be handled by a single individual who would gather or write the material, print it, and even distribute it all by himself.

There was another, rather obvious reason why Lebanese journalists should choose to invest their efforts in non-news journals and, more generally, nonpolitical writing. The Ottoman government viewed any active interest in politics by its subjects with unmistakable distaste. In previous centuries such activity would have been inconceivable. But even in the second half of the nineteenth century, when various reforms were being introduced, the printing of news and views on public affairs by anyone other than the authorities was still suspicious. We have already seen that the government under Sultan 'Abd al-Majid decreed licensing and censorship of all publications. Actually, Ottoman policy under both 'Abd al-Majid (1839–1861) and his successor, 'Abd al-'Aziz (1861–1876), is known to have been relatively liberal in these matters compared with what was to follow. During their reigns, so long as journalists respected the rules, the government showed reasonable tolerance. Nevertheless, caution was in order; it was safer to praise the achievements of scientists than of political rebels. No one was more aware of, and sensitive to, this need than the Christians of Lebanon, with their millennium-old experience as a minority in an Islamic land.

Economic, technological, and political factors, then, constricted the development of the Lebanese press during its infancy. The typical product of these circumstances was the *majalla*, a weekly or monthly scientific and literary magazine with an emphasis on expounding rather than on reporting, on long-term enlightenment rather than day-to-day information. Political matters were also discussed, but to a limited extent and within the framework of the kingdom's rules. If these journals waged a battle, it was against ignorance and backwardness. "All we seek," wrote the editor of *al-Zahra* in an opening article in 1870, is "to attract our compatriots, above all the common people, to the pleasure of habitual reading, to the joy of acquiring scientific and cultural books."[36] Political struggle was rarely a part of the endeavor at this stage; it would become so at a later time and in another place. This pristine journalistic quest, however limited in focus, was a promising beginning in its sincerity of purpose.

The government's attitude changed markedly when 'Abd al-Hamid the Second acceded to the sultanate (1876–1909). The new

sultan resorted to harsh domestic measures following the Ottoman defeat in the war against Russia (1877–1878), suspending the constitution (which he himself had earlier promulgated), dissolving the parliament, and enforcing stringent press censorship, which became even more rigid in time. No new papers were permitted to appear for five years after the war, with the exception of the Maronite *al-Misbah* ("The Light," 1880) and the Greek Orthodox *al-Hadiyya* ("The Gift," 1883) which undertook to limit themselves to domestic communal affairs only. Later, publication permits were granted sparingly, entailing extensive bureaucratic difficulties, and the few periodicals that appeared were subject to harassment of all kinds. This harsh atmosphere, replete with punishments for deviations from the rules, was a major factor in the strangulation of the nascent Lebanese press and in prompting its practitioners to look elsewhere for a more hospitable environment.

From the early 1860s onward, Syrians and Lebanese, mostly Christian, began to emigrate in large numbers as a result of several factors: intercommunal strife, which reached a bloody peak in the Damascus massacre of 1860; economic pressures largely due to the gap between rapid educational advancement and slow economic development; and the pull exerted by Egypt under Isma'il's animated leadership for the Syrian intellectuals' skills, alluring them with options that their country could not offer. Another factor that encouraged the exodus from Lebanon was the limitation on freedom of expression imposed by the new sultan in the late 1870s. Between 1860 and 1915, fully a quarter of Lebanon's population—the great majority of them Christians—emigrated, primarily to Egypt and the Americas. Egypt now presented itself as a more suitable venue for writers and journalists, and would become still freer a decade later. The Christian Syrians and Lebanese who came to Egypt, mostly young unmarried men, joined the state administration, worked as physicians, pharmacists, and teachers, and opened businesses in Cairo and Alexandria.[37] Among the educated immigrants who moved there were those who brought journalistic experience, zeal, and sometimes their periodicals, thereby shifting the base of the incipient Arab press from Lebanon to Egypt.

Egypt: The Focus Moves West

Isma'il's Egypt was a dynamic milieu. Throughout most of his reign, until around the mid-1870s, it was also marked by a striking purposefulness. Resolved to make Egypt "a part of Europe," the spirited khedive invested his vision and talent in the reformation of every aspect of the country, from the economy to education and from the legal system to the urban architecture of the capital. The call of the day was modernization, the model for emulation Europe, primarily France. Egypt's integration into world trade, begun under Muhammad 'Ali, was intensified, and the country reaped the fruits of this effort when it became a

major cotton supplier to Europe as a result of the halt in American exports during the American Civil War. The opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 a decade after digging had begun further enhanced the country's international importance. Other projects, more domestic in nature, were less spectacular but also had decisive effects. Isma'il, conscious that education was essential in order for the country to reach the desired European level, invested vast resources in expanding both the traditional and modern sectors of the school system.[38] He also sought to modernize the governmental bureaucracy by forming *majlis shura al-nuwwab* in 1866, an elected council of provincial notables with deliberative and advisory authority which was meant to function as a tentative counterpart to European parliaments. Isma'il expanded and beautified Cairo, built an extended railway system that connected the capital with the provinces, installed a telegraph network linking Egypt's towns, and introduced modern state postal services. By the end of his reign, the country, though still far from realizing the objectives that the restless khedive envisaged for it, was clearly making great strides toward this goal.

Quite likely, Egypt in the second half of the nineteenth century would have attracted Western interest even without Isma'il's deliberate efforts. It was perhaps inevitable that Europe, at the height of its imperialistic age, would seek deeper involvement in that strategic territory. Undoubtedly, however, the khedive's policy accelerated the process. The economic momentum generated by his development projects and the relatively liberal atmosphere that he fostered allured foreigners to settle in Egypt, especially Greeks, Italians, and Frenchmen, who led a vibrant communal life there. The foreign population increased seven- or eight-fold under his rule, reaching some 70,000 by the end of his tenure.[39] This momentum also drew foreign capital investment and, more significantly, loans to the Egyptian government. The foreigners enjoyed the legal and political protection of European states, a status that gradually became a pressing constraint on the government. Eventually European powers, exploiting Egypt's financial indebtedness, invaded it after removing Isma'il from office.

The process of exposure to the West had other facets as well. The expansion of the foreign presence in Egypt brought with it an increase in missionary activity and the educational endeavors that went along with it. As in Lebanon, missionaries played a role in educating Egyptian society that was far more significant than their limited presence might have suggested. Missionary schools, along with those established by the foreign communities, offered quality instruction and training in practical skills, primarily foreign languages, and attracted a sizable share of the country's student body. A local class educated in Western mores was slowly emerging, the product of modern institutions and exposure to ideas transmitted to the country through a variety of channels: the large community of foreign settlers; the educated Syrian

Christian immigrants; translations of Western books and travel journals; periodicals that arrived from Europe or that were published by the foreign communities in Egypt; and, eventually, the newspapers that they themselves established. This last development was facilitated by the introduction and expansion of railways and telegraph, the establishment of international news agency offices, and the accelerated development of printing, with many private presses set up to serve growing literary activity.

Perhaps more than any ruler in the Middle East of the nineteenth century, and surely more than any ruler before him, Isma'il appreciated the power of the press. He understood how to manipulate it and make it work for him. Journals in Europe as well as in the empire, foreign-language papers in Egypt, and the Reuter and Havas news agencies all enjoyed generous Egyptian government subsidies, as Egyptian archives reveal. Foreign journalists visiting Egypt received royal treatment at the state's expense.[40] Isma'il revived the official journal that had become paralyzed under his predecessors and initiated several other official organs. Upon his instruction, *al-Waqa'i' al-Misriyya* was transformed from an interior circular for state officials only to a publication that engaged in public debate with the foreign-language papers and was sold on the streets of Cairo and Alexandria.[41] Yet this ardent believer in the power of the printed word soon became convinced that a more subtle and incisive press strategy was needed based on the manipulation of newspapers that would have an independent image but would be unreservedly loyal to him.

Such was the semiweekly *Wadi al-Nil* ("Nile Valley"), started in Cairo in July 1867, a small-format (16 × 22 cm) publication that looked more like a booklet than a newspaper. Its subtitle, printed below a fancy masthead embellished with a drawing of pyramids, palm trees, and camels, defined it as a "popular paper" (*sahifa ahliyya*). Claiming "popularity," it would often be depicted, somewhat fancifully, as the first private Egyptian paper. In fact, it was comfortably under the government's protection, assured of a regular flow of information and an equally reliable subvention. The editor, 'Abdallah Abu al-Su'ud, was a veteran translator in the state service, a writer of school textbooks, a poet, a pupil of Shaykh Tahtawi, and one of Isma'il's protégés. Much of the paper's reportage and commentary focused on defending Isma'il's policies against his critics, so that *Wadi al-Nil* read rather like *al-Waqa'i' al-Misriyya*. There were also up-to-date reports on foreign affairs and commercial developments — *Wadi al-Nil* was the first Arab paper to use Reuter's telegrams — as well as a literary section. As would often happen in later years in Egypt and elsewhere, Abu al-Su'ud's son, Muhammad Unsi, joined the venture and became a journalist in his own right. The paper ceased publication in 1874, to be replaced by *Rawdat al-Akhbar* ("Meadow of News"), another professedly "popular" publication with Unsi in the role of editor and his father in charge of

the political and literary sections. *Rawdat al-Akhbar* differed from *Wadi al-Nil* in name only; sources, political point of view, and editorial style were all but identical. When Abu al-Su'ud died in 1878, the project died with him.[42]

Isma'il's relatively liberal attitude, however, encouraged the emergence of a truly private press as well. Educated Egyptians, as impressed as the khedive with the importance of periodically printed texts, began initiating their own publishing projects. The first attempt of this kind was made in 1869 by two men: Ibrahim al-Muwaylihi, a printer and a close acquaintance of Isma'il, who would later become his private secretary, and 'Uthman Jalal, a translator and writer. The two were granted a permit to put out a political weekly called *Nuzhat al-Afkar* ("Promenade of Thoughts"), but it must have been too dangerously assertive, because Isma'il closed it down after only two issues.[43] Four years later, in 1873, two Syrian Greek Orthodox emigrants, the brothers Salim and 'Abduh al-Hamawi, began a political and literary weekly in Alexandria entitled *al-Kawkab al-Sharqi* ("Oriental Star"). It was the first Arabic paper in the city, where several foreign-language journals had previously appeared, but it met the same fate as *Nuzhat al-Afkar*. "Circumstances do not call for the publication of Arabic journals at this time," Isma'il explained to the brothers, and ordered the paper closed.[44] At that stage, the khedive was still vacillating between his desire to encourage cultural activity—he offered the Hamawi brothers reimbursement for their losses—and the necessity to contend with the political implications of such activity. But before long he agreed to permit additional ventures of this kind. The next journalistic undertaking, likewise by Syrian immigrants in Alexandria, would prove far more significant and durable.

The Greek Catholic brothers Salim (1849–1892) and Bishara (1853–1902) Taqla moved from Beirut to Alexandria in the early 1870s, bringing with them new ideas and high aspirations. Well educated, and possessing a keen business sense, they would start a newspaper that would set new standards in Arab journalism. Like many of their countrymen, they valued the transmission of Western knowledge to their own society. But perhaps more important, they were particularly interested in the process of obtaining and marketing the latest and most accurate news, which, they felt, was in demand in Egypt. In 1875, still in their twenties, the Taqlas applied for and were granted a license to open a press in Alexandria and publish a weekly paper. They decided to call it *al-Ahram*, "The Pyramids," an innocuous name, possibly appealing subtly to the popular sense of regard for anything ancient, although not to any political position.[45] They conscientiously pledged to limit themselves to printing "telegrams, [and] commercial, scientific, agricultural, and local" news, as well as cultural and literary items, namely, only "the things whose printing is permissible." The khedive, disposed to encouraging the enterprising Syrians but still cautious, granted the permit, but not without reiterating these restrictions.[46]

Al-Ahram began and remained above all a conveyor of news. From the first issue (5 August 1876) on, it offered its readers a wealth of reliable, up-to-date information on local and foreign political and economic issues, accompanied by a fair measure of analysis. The Taqlas' financial situation, which apparently was solid from the start, allowed them to subscribe directly to Reuter's and Havas news agencies, as well as to retain agents of their own who acted both as informants and sales representatives throughout Egypt and in the main cities of the region from Baghdad to Istanbul.[47] The necessary degree of caution and political discretion enabled them to successfully navigate the paper through the troubled waters of domestic and international politics, a strategy that required praising the khedive occasionally as well as acquiring the patronage of a foreign power, namely France, a clever choice. With this investment, the brothers were able to produce a high-level publication that showed continuous improvement in reporting techniques, editorial standards, and linguistic style. The Taqlas, however, were not indifferent to the powerful sociopolitical forces at play in Egypt in the late 1870s. They expressed their views, favoring greater political freedom and opposing foreign intervention, in two other papers that they published, *Sada al-Ahram* ("Echo of the Pyramids," 1876–1879) and *al-Waqt* ("Time," 1879–1880). Both papers were issued warnings for expressing "subversive" views, suspended, and eventually shut down.[48] *Al-Ahram*, on the other hand, adopting a more neutral tone, was not restricted by the authorities.[49] In January 1881 it became a daily, maintaining the same guiding principles and continuing to improve its professional standards. It operated from Alexandria until November 1899, and thereafter from Cairo.

In many ways, *al-Ahram* was a unique species in the garden of Egyptian journalism. From the first, it stood apart by putting reportage before political ideology. For most other papers in the late 1870s, political confrontation was the key word and the *raison d'être*. Egypt's recent exposure to international politics, combined with the emergence of a modern Egyptian elite with keen political awareness reinforced by educated Syrian arrivals, engendered a new phenomenon: a demand on the part of the governed, articulated by an intellectual leadership, to be involved in matters of government, to be informed, and to be consulted on questions relating to their future. It was becoming apparent, during the second half of the 1870s, that Egypt was in grave economic and political trouble, and there were growing doubts about Isma'il's ability to rescue it. To those with modern education, the new ideas of political rights, a constitution, and popular representation seemed not only attractive but vital to the country's situation. Inspired by such views, the *majlis*, the quasi-modern advisory body set up by the khedive in 1866, had become by the end of the 1870s a forum for criticizing the government for its failures. Echoing this criticism, periodicals conveyed popular discontent and became a major vehicle for the expression of public

sentiment. The journalists believed that at that stage Egypt could not afford the evolutionary pace of educational development that would gradually invigorate the community and eventually lead it to repel its adversaries, sensing that circumstances demanded a more immediate political response. This sense of urgency molded the nature of the early private press in Egypt with far-reaching effects.

Several of the leading papers of the period were inspired by Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, the Iranian-born, charismatic politico-religious agitator who resided in Egypt from 1871–1879. Afghani's international experience had exposed him to the power of the press, and he urged his eager adherents to raise a cry against the government's tyranny as well as its feebleness in the face of the threat of foreign onslaught. The situation, he argued, called for action of the most effective kind—making use of the traditionally mighty weapon of the word through a powerful new means, print. Responding, his followers initiated a lively movement of political writing, producing periodicals and books. Among them was the Greek Catholic Syrian Adib Ishaq, an impatient activist who arrived in Egypt in 1876 at the age of 20. Ishaq had an intensive if brief career: In his short life of 28 years (1856–1884), he published and edited half a dozen papers in Beirut, Cairo, Alexandria, and Paris—notably *Misr* ("Egypt," weekly, published in Cairo and Alexandria, 1877–1879), *al-Tijara* ("Commerce," daily, Alexandria, 1878–1879), *Misr al-Fatah* ("Young Egypt," weekly, Alexandria, 1879), and *Misr al-Qahira* ("Egypt the Victorious," monthly/weekly, Paris, 1879–1880), along with producing literary and theatrical works. Ishaq aimed to acquaint the Arabic-reading public with the ideas of the French revolution—political freedom, civil rights, free speech, and opposition to despotism—and to demonstrate the relevance of these ideas as a remedy to the ills of Arab society.[50] He collaborated in some of the papers with the Syrian Christian Salim Naqqash, who also published his own journals: the daily *al-Mahrusa* ("The [divinely] Protected," a popular epithet used mostly for Egypt) and the weekly *al-'Asr al-Jadid* ("Modern Era"), both in 1880. A third Syrian, Salim 'Anhuri, founded the semiweekly *Mir'at al-Sharq* ("Mirror of the Orient") in Cairo in 1879, edited it for a few weeks, and then passed it on to another fervent disciple of Afghani's, the Egyptian Muslim Ibrahim al-Laqqani.[51] Another paper that was launched during this period, the Coptic weekly *al-Watan* ("Homeland"), founded in 1877 by Mikha'il 'Abd al-Sayyid, aimed primarily to provide the Coptic minority with an outlet for its communal views and grievances rather than fight a national battle. But under its bold editor, *al-Watan* soon joined the protest movement, calling for greater popular representation in government and an end to tyranny, and enduring punishment for its outspokenness.[52]

More original and colorful, and subsequently more famous, was the Jewish Egyptian Ya'qub (James) Sanu' (1839–1912), another member of this highly charged political-ideological band. Commonly known

by the title that he used for several of his many papers, *Abu Naddara* ("The Bespectacled One"), he published the first version of his satirical journal in early 1877, and it became popular overnight. Sanu' was friendly, at first, with Isma'il, but managed to upset the khedive with his biting criticism and was deported a year after his journal was launched. Settling in Paris, he continued to publish papers, which were smuggled back into Egypt, harshly attacking Isma'il and later his successor.[53] One of Sanu''s prominent colleagues who also merits mention was the Egyptian 'Abdallah Nadim (1845–1896), an eloquent orator and an aggressive critic of the government. Nadim, who at first wrote for several of his friends' papers, later established two journals of his own in Alexandria, the biweekly *al-Tankit wal-Tabkit* ("Mockery and Reproach") and the daily *al-Ta'if* ("The Rover").[54] Nadim's papers in fact belonged to a second wave of nationalistic publications that made their appearance in 1881, the stormy year preceding the British invasion. Other papers in this group included Hamza Fathalla's *al-Burhan* ("The Proof"), founded in May 1881; Ibrahim Siraj al-Madani's *al-Hijaz*, begun in July of that year; and Hasan al-Shamsi's *al-Mufid* ("The Informer"), established in October 1881, and *al-Safir* ("The Traveler," or "Mediator"), begun in August 1882.[55]

Young, restless, most of them Christians, these writers waged a passionate battle for reform. Their publications were conceived as weapons, the best the country could produce at the time. Many of the titles of their periodicals attested to this spirit: "Young Egypt," "Modern Era," even simply "Homeland," or "Egypt"—more than just names, they were battle cries. They lashed out at Isma'il, expressing the discontent of the small educated class with his autocracy and inadequate performance and helping create the atmosphere that, along with other factors, brought about his dethronement in June 1879. Warning against the growing European encroachment on their country, they avidly supported the rebel Ahmad 'Urabi, the Egyptian officer who defied Isma'il's successor, Tawfiq, and later led the vain military effort to prevent the British occupation of Egypt. The government met this outspoken challenge with bribery, warnings, and punishment. Newspapers were suspended and closed down,[56] and journalists were forced out of the country. When this proved insufficient, the new government of landed notables, formed in September 1881, issued a prohibitive press law in November of that year imposing licensing and *a priori* censorship and prescribing heavy penalties for offenders.[57]

Egyptian political journalism was thus molded in its infancy by circumstances that evoked intense struggle. The atmosphere was tumultuous, characterized by an unprecedented variety of political options, with the press mostly on the protest end of the battlefield. Professionally still immature, newspapers aspired to higher standards. But format and style were of secondary importance: It was the political message that mattered. Nearly all of the papers that were born during

that fateful period became casualties of the contemporary turmoil and perished early, having had only limited bearing on the forces that shaped Egypt's destiny between 1878 and 1882. They did, however, play a lively role as a forum for debate among social and intellectual leaders and as a means of involving the public more actively in events. Eventually, these publications of protest were overwhelmed by powerful forces, and the press arena became silent for several years. But the lesson of the potential contained in newspapers was not lost in Egypt, and news journals would be vigorously revived by other intellectuals toward the end of the 1880s.

Europe, the Convenient Refuge

Lebanon and Egypt were the only two centers of independent Arab journalistic endeavor in the region up until 1908, to which may be added the important *al-Jawa'ib* in Istanbul—the privately published newspaper with strong governmental backing. A third center, however, existed outside the region, in Europe. Some of the earliest journals were founded there in the 1850s and 1860s by Arab immigrants, all of them Christians, who arrived in mid-century seeking a better life. Another wave of Arab immigrants, escapees, and deportees reinforced these expatriate communities in the European cities toward the late 1870s when the political atmosphere in the region became repressive. Among them were a group of journalists who pursued their occupation upon settling abroad.

Faced with economic, cultural, and political difficulties in its own homeland, Arab journalism moved from Beirut to Cairo and Alexandria, and when Egypt became less friendly, to Paris and London as well as New York. Europe offered a convenient environment, with an atmosphere of free speech and a technologically more advanced infrastructure for the publication of periodicals. Moreover, the immigrant Arab communities there, though not large, constituted a potential pool of avid readers. Papers could also be shipped, or if necessary smuggled, to the journalists' lands of origin, where they could have an impact. The constricting realities in the Ottoman Empire and Egypt lent Arab immigrant papers a significance beyond that which expatriate publications normally have when conditions at home are more comfortable.

As early as 1858, the year the first important Arabic journal appeared in Beirut, an attractive-looking Arabic publication titled *Birjis Baris* ("The Paris Jupiter") appeared in the French capital. Its owner and editor was the Lebanese Rushayd al-Dahdah (1813–1889), whose lively career contained many elements typical of other Arab writers abroad. Dahdah, a member of a prominent Maronite family from northern Mount Lebanon, had been employed in the early 1840s as advisor to one of the region's princes and was also a writer of poetry.

The political upheaval of these years in the province prompted him to emigrate and he settled in Marseille in 1845. There, while successfully engaged in commerce, he satisfied his literary cravings by setting up a printing press and publishing several classical Arabic works, meanwhile becoming, in the words of a contemporary observer, "*Français de coeur et d'âme.*"[58] When *Hadiqat al-Akhbar* first appeared in Beirut in January 1858, Dahdah, then living in Paris, was convinced that his intimate acquaintance with European culture and ready access to its technology equipped him to produce an even better publication and render a more useful service to his compatriots in Lebanon and abroad. The result, in June of that year, was *Birjis Baris*, a large-format, handsomely printed Arabic biweekly. It was admirably rich in content, with reports and commentary both on local issues geared to the immigrant Arab community, and international affairs, especially France's relations with the empire and the Arab countries. Literature and historical essays were also featured. Dahdah made great efforts to adapt the Arabic language to modern usage, devising many new terms and rejuvenating old ones (he is credited with first using the word *sahifa* for newspaper). *Birjis Baris* seems to have won popularity quickly and, as the list of its agents would indicate, was sold extensively in Syria, Egypt, and North Africa. In 1860 it became bilingual—Arabic and French. In that year, following the paper's relentless assault on the Ottoman authorities' poor handling of the Lebanese crisis, the government banned it from its territory, a fate shared by many Arab publications thereafter. Dahdah edited the paper until 1863, when he retired, assigning this duty to a colleague, Sulayman al-Hara'iri, who carried on for another three years before the paper closed down. Dahdah himself moved to Tunis but later returned to France where he occupied himself with trade, writing poetry, and possibly also with another brief journalistic venture until his death.[59]

Dahdah's biography typified many Arab men of letters who left their distressed homelands for Europe during the nineteenth century and devoted themselves to journalism either as a mission or as a business. Such was the case with the Syrian Rizqallah Hasun, founder of the first Arabic paper, who, like Dahdah, fell out of favor with his patrons at home, left, and found his way to London. There he published several short-lived papers in the late 1860s and 1870s, including one that replicated the name of his Crimean War journal, *Mir'at al-Ahwal*.[60] Such was also the case with the Armenian Catholic priest Luis Sabunji, who left Beirut in 1874 or 1875 due to a religio-communal controversy. Moving to England, he published a series of periodicals intermittently during the 1870s and 1880s, the best known being the Arabic-English *al-Nahla*, and was also engaged in other business, cultural, and political activities.[61] The career of yet another Christian, Jibra'il Dallal, followed a slightly different pattern. An Aleppine like Hasun, Dallal arrived in London in the mid-1870s, motivated less by

pressure in his homeland than by an urge for an adventure. After briefly collaborating with Hasun on one of his papers, Dallal moved on to Paris where he published his own journal, *al-Sada* ("The Echo"), which proved short-lived.[62] Dallal's place in journalism was insignificant, but he merits attention as an example of a notable phenomenon that recurred throughout the century. As individuals, most of these emigrants played a role as ephemeral as Dallal's, as did their numerous periodicals, which rarely attained popularity. Together, however, they represented a vital option for escape on the part of ambitious men of letters. The importance of this option increased with the increase of pressure at home, ultimately forcing the press to shift its base temporarily from within the region abroad. This was the case with the "Young Ottomans," the Ottoman opposition writers who emigrated in the 1860s in order to write in Paris and London, as well as with the Egyptian opposition press the following decade.

As we have seen, growing numbers of Lebanese writers who were oppressed by the distrustful sultan in the late 1870s moved to Egypt, but in articulating their forward-looking ideas clashed with the authorities there as well, as did their Egyptian colleagues. The Egyptian government, if more liberal than the sultan's, was tolerant only up to a point. Aggressive newspapers were shut down and defiant journalists were muzzled or expelled. Sanu' was deported in 1878, and Adib Ishaq was forced to leave the following year. In an odd twist of fate, the khedive who drove them out was deposed in 1879 and was himself deported to Naples. His own views, which ceased to be accepted in his country, could now be expounded only outside it, a curious if not altogether unique situation. Isma'il's friend and secretary, Ibrahim al-Muwaylihi, who joined him in Italy, served for a while as the ousted ruler's voice through a paper he published there, *al-Khilafa* ("The Caliphate"). Muwaylihi then moved to France, where he continued his journalistic activity. Other intellectuals from Syria and Lebanon joined the growing Arab emigrant community in Paris, most notably Khalil Ghanim, a former delegate to the short-lived Ottoman parliament and an outspoken critic of the government. Following the dissolution of the parliament in 1878, Ghanim arrived in France and launched a journal called *al-Basir* ("The Keen Observer"). Shortly thereafter, the community welcomed an even more eminent figure, the mentor of so many young activists in Egypt, Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, who was deported by Tawfiq, the new khedive, when he acceded to power in 1879.

Europe, the new home of so many Arab political activists, became an important base for the ideological struggle for political freedom. From Paris, Ya'qub Sanu' continued to lash out at the Egyptian rulers, first Isma'il and then, even more venomously, Tawfiq, conducting his offensive through a series of innovative illustrated papers with endlessly changing names designed to circumvent official attempts to thwart their entry into Egypt. With their sarcastic style, vibrant colloquial lan-

guage, and witty cartoons drawn by Sanu' himself, these journals were received eagerly throughout the country. The ample evidence that they made their way to the educated readership and to the military (and even, inadvertently, to the khedive's own table) illustrates that they filled a real need.[63] Similarly, Adib Ishaq occupied himself with "stirring . . . oriental zeal and exciting . . . Arab blood" through his journal *Misr al-Qahira* under the motto: *hurriyya-musawa-ikha'*—"liberty, equality, fraternity."[64] Another important, and apparently influential, paper emanating from Paris was *al-'Urwa al-Wuthqa* ("The Firm Bond"), which Jamal al-Din al-Afghani published for several months in 1884 together with his most celebrated pupil, Muhammad 'Abduh. With Egypt occupied by Britain, *al-'Urwa al-Wuthqa* devoted its columns to impassioned assaults on British imperialism and to exposing the roots of Muslim weakness. Although banned by the authorities, in this case the British, the paper found its way to many eager readers in Egypt and elsewhere, setting the imagination of such young thinkers as Rashid Rida "in a blaze."[65]

Shortly afterward, under Lord Cromer's more liberal administration, Egypt once again became an arena of free speech and consolidated its position as the capital of Arab journalism. It retained this status until after World War II, despite moments of tension with the authorities at home, providing a haven for journalists from various Arab countries who faced obstacles in writing in their homeland. During these later years, expatriate Arab writers would continue to publish in Europe and elsewhere but with a different objective: They would cater mainly to the ever expanding communities of Arab emigrants abroad rather than to the readership in their lands of origin. Their journals, in Arabic as well as in other languages, would reach their home countries and find a market there, but their role in the region's sociopolitical affairs and in the development of its press would be all but negligible. They are therefore excluded from the rest of this survey. Only in the second half of the twentieth century, with the political rules in the region once again rewritten, would bases outside it again become an important front for journalistic opposition and political involvement.