UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA SAN DIEGO

A Forgotten Legacy – The Transformative Impact of Modern Sport in Egypt, 1882-1956

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by

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The dissertation of Paul Kost Nikolai Tchir is approved, and it is acceptable in quality and form for publication on microfilm and electronically.

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DEDICATION

Dedicated to my wife, Meg, without whom none of this would have been possible, and my mother, who tried to warn me, but read over all of my drafts anyways.

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

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Through the application of sociological theory to the historical study of Egypt under the British occupation (1882-1952), this dissertation argues that sport plays a significant role as a transformative element in society and politics, rather than merely a reflective one. It demonstrates that sport, and its concomitant discourse, acts as a channel to convey the ideas of intellectuals in a more accessible way. Acknowledging the role of sport restores the agency of a broader segment of the population to negotiate the meaning, and ultimate impact of, particular ideologies.

The enduring nature of sporting institutions in post-revolutionary Egypt was built upon foundations laid during the preceding seven decades of British occupation. Through the use of national newspapers and magazines, supplemented by archival material from Britain and the International Olympic Committee, this case study demonstrates how sport can serve as an organizational force that is able to engender political transformations. This dissertation highlights the development of sport in Egypt from its origins as a tool used by the colonizers to reinforce their rule into a multifarious series of perspectives on what "Egyptian sport" could mean. These narratives slowly coalesced into a single ideal of a "sportsman" who transcended sectarian, ethnic, and class differences and represented his nation on the world stage at the Olympics and beyond in the 1920s and 1930s.

By the time of the 1952 Egyptian Revolution, sport had established itself as a potent channel for spreading ideology, and thus there was more continuity than discontinuity between British and post-revolutionary policy. It was not until the 1956 Suez Crisis that a shift occurred in which the Egyptian government abandoned its attempts to become one among the club of Europeans, instead seeking a leadership role in the Arab World.

Introduction

On December 17, 2010, a Tunisian street vendor by the name of Mohamed Bouazizi set himself on fire in protest of a government that was as corrupt as it was unconcerned with the well-being of its people. Even prior to his death on January 4 of the following year, protests against President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali had reached the national capital, and on January 14 he fled the country. By then the movement, on its way to becoming known as the "Arab Spring" in reference to several historical liberalizing revolutions, had spread to countries throughout the region. On February 11, Egypt's Hosni Mubarak became the second state leader to be ousted by the protestors.

Meanwhile, on July 27, 2012, judoka Hishām Miṣbāḥ, a bronze medalist in the middleweight division at the 2008 Beijing Games, carried Egypt's flag in the opening ceremony for that year's London Olympics, representing the 109 athletes from his country who would compete at the Games over the next two weeks. Just one month earlier, a new president, the Muslim Brotherhood-affiliated Mohamed Morsi, had been elected in Egypt following over a year of interim presidency under Mohamed Hussein Tantawi. In just over a year it would be Morsi who would be ousted by a military coup, supported by popular protests, and jailed until his death in June 2019.

Despite this political turmoil, Egypt's 2012 Olympic delegation was its second largest ever, falling just short of the 114 athletes who competed at the 1984 Los Angeles Games, participation at which was hampered by a Soviet-led boycott. As the state underwent its first meaningful transformation in decades, therefore, Egypt not only maintained the infrastructure required to produce internationally competitive athletes, but sent one of its largest delegations, succeeding in forming a strong national team as it struggled to do the same for its government.

The country ended up with four medals from the Games, which was its second-best total since 1948.[1] These medalists included weightlifter ʻAbīr ʻAbdulraḥman, the first Egyptian woman to win an Olympic medal, and ʻAlāaddin Abū Alqāsim, the first Olympic fencing medalist from Africa.

This triumph, however, came at the heels of a sporting disaster, as 74 people were killed in Port Said Stadium on February 1, 2012, following a match in which the local Al-Masry Sporting Club defeated the popular Al-Ahly Cairo team 3-1. The supporters of the victorious Al-Masry team stormed the field, attacking not only the fans of the opposing team, but the players and coach as well. The local police were involved in facilitating the riots and supporters of the ousted Mubrak would later use the incident to claim that stability, law, and order were only possible under his leadership and that of the military. Some reports indicated that the security forces permitted the incident to happen as revenge for the significant role in which the Ultras, extreme supporters of Al-Ahly, had supposedly played in mobilizing, and fighting in, the protests that fueled the Egyptian Revolution of 2011.[2] Regardless, the remainder of the 2011-2012 football[3] season was cancelled and domestic matches were closed to the public until September 2018.

These developments are only the most prominent examples indicating that sport in Egypt has an influence that extends outside of the realms of entertainment and popular culture. Sport can be considered as pervasive as religion, if not more so, and in some cases has even been proposed, with varying degrees of seriousness, to be a modern, secular one.[4] Acknowledging this

[1] The country had earned five medals in Athens in 2004.
[2] At least one author has argued that "[w]hile their participation was undeniable in the first days of the uprisings, it was limited to a passive engagement." See Gabril "Shifting" 11
[3] Unless otherwise indicated, "football" will be the term used to refer to the sport known as "soccer" in the United States and Canada
[4] Guttmann "Ritual" 25

importance, over the last few decades, the history and sociology of sport (among other fields) has developed from a fringe specialty into a widely (although by no means universally) accepted method of inquiry into social, economic, and even political change. As one prominent sports scholar argues:

> Why should modern sports not be studied as intensely […] as language, literature, and the mass media? Cricket tests are the passion of thousands of West Indians who have never read a line of Derek Walcott's poetry. Soccer football is played in venues still unreached by the Associated Press, UPI, Reuters, and Agence France-Presse. [….] If Marxist scholars can unmask Donald Duck as an agent of American imperialism, is it not high time that we ask some serious questions about Babe Ruth?[5]

One of the most common ways in which scholars suggest that sport engages the political is as a vent for frustrations. By choosing to support one team over another, for example, an individual can indicate their rejection of (or acquiescence to) the current regime and potentially express views and positions that are unacceptable or repressed in the public sphere, except in the coded discourse of sport. These gatherings can have transformative political consequences. In Romania, for example, it has been suggested that chants in the stadium led to chants in the streets in the leadup to the 1989 Romanian Revolution, and that "the local soccer club was one of the few intermediary organizations in Romania that possessed the mobilizing potential of primary organizations."[6] Qualifying for the 1990 World Cup allowed people to band together and feel safe criticizing the government even outside of sport "in a virtual dress rehearsal for the revolution".[7] This seems to confirm the argument that "[s]port is one of the strong modern rituals that affirm the myriad of networks that constitute a nation. Sporting spectacles can provide

[5] Guttmann "Empires" 9
[6] Siani-Davies 43-44
[7] ibid 44

recognition to national communities. Sport is important to nationalism because it constitutes a charged interaction ritual out of which imagined national communities arise."[8]

Such sentiments need not rise to the level of revolution in order to be important. In examining football in the Soviet Union, for example, Robert Edelman argues that by following Spartak Moscow, "a significant portion of Moscow working males made one of the few choices available to them, a choice that established in a limited way their independence from the regime",[9] but making that choice was not an exercise in dissidence, as the idea of Spartak being the "people's team" was more a brand than a reality.[10] From a more Marxist perspective, there is also the classic notion of sport as "bread and circuses", a distraction used to divert attention away from class struggle and government corruption and misrule.

What is Sport?

Before an argument about the impact of sport can be explored and advanced, however, one must come to a rigorous and consistent definition of the term "sport". While seemingly simple in concept, the notion of sport, as distinguished from play, leisure, and other similar concepts, has been the subject of numerous monographs stretching back far longer than sport itself has been seen as a viable academic subject from a non-kinesiological perspective. One of the earliest and most influential scholars in this regard was Johan Huizinga, who was among the first to argue that "play" was a core element of human culture and civilization and had a purpose beyond mere biological function. He defined play as: "a voluntary activity or occupation executed within certain fixed limits of time and place according to rules freely accepted but absolutely binding, having its aim in itself and accompanied by a feeling of tension, joy, and the

[8] Xenakis and Lekakis 331-332
[9] Edelman 124
[10] ibid 304

consciousness that it is ‘different’ from ‘ordinary life’”, and further suggested that its function was to promote social interactivity without material desire or profit.[11]

Huizinga’s ideas were pursued by many scholars, most notably American Allen Guttmann, who took issue with several of Huizinga’s propositions. He therefore simplified the definition of “play” to “any nonutilitarian physical or intellectual activity pursued for its own sake” and that “games” were “organized play”.[12] Critically, this definition removes concerns of motivation from the definition of “play”. Guttmann then dispensed with Huizinga’s notion that contests are games, which had led the latter to consider any human activity with an agonistic element (even the legal system and war) as a “game” constitutive of the human cultural experience. Guttmann’s separation of “contest” and “game” allows him to produce a pragmatic definition of “sport”: "nonutilitarian contests which include an important measure of physical as well as intellectual skill”.[13]

Guttmann’s definition has since been refined, challenged, and rejected by numerous contesting scholars on several theoretical grounds, but at its core it provides a workable foundation for narrowing the scope of the concept. For example, the Olympic art competitions, which are gradually becoming recognized as an important part of the movement’s history and can be applied to arguments concerning the ways in which the Games could be more inclusive to marginalized groups, will be excluded from this discussion, even though Egypt produced an Olympic art competitor. Bridge and chess, as other examples, were topics that often appeared in the “sports” section of publications during certain eras of modern Egyptian history, but they are not engaged in this work’s analysis.

[11] Huizinga 47
[12] Guttmann “Ritual” 3-4
[13] ibid 7

As even Guttmann concedes, however, his definition is not sufficient to draw a rigid line between all activities. Dancing, automobile racing, and scouting were all considered at one point as worthy of being included in the "sports" section of newspapers and journals worldwide, all of which could be seen as straddling the line of Guttmann's definition. Is dancing sufficiently agonistic to qualify?[14] Does automobile racing require enough physical skill to count? Scouting is a particularly important case, as it promoted good health, physical fitness, and socialization, all of which were critical components to what most actors in the Egyptian sporting world saw as the value of sport. The expansion of scouting in Egypt was also perceived as an important development by the British during their seven-decade occupation of the country.[15] As such, scouting was for many decades a regular feature in the sports column of *Al-ahrām*, Egypt's most widely-circulated newspaper through most of the publication's history, and scholars such as Wilson Chacko Jacob have dealt with this topic thoroughly and effectively. For the purposes of this discussion, therefore, "sport" will follow Guttmann's definition, but exclude liminal cases such as those addressed above so as not to distract from broader and more important considerations.

Such a definition, however, does not reflect the historical usage of the term, nor does it aid one in understanding the "modern" qualifier that is often attached to the scholarly study of sport. In this regard, Barbara Keys provides a concise history of the concept; she begins by arguing that "[w]hat we know today as sport […] is a uniquely modern and historically contingent form of physical activity that was born in 18th- and 19th-century Britain and from there was transmitted to the rest of the world."[16] She summarizes the developments thusly:

[14] One author, writing in 1947, put forward a strong case that dancing should be considered a sport among the Arabs. See ʿAlawī 181.
[15] Our Own Correspondent, "Empire Day and Boy Scouts", *The Near East*, June 6, 1913, 121
[16] Keys 12

> […] in the years before the Second World War sport became a global cultural form. […] This expansion was driven in part by international sport organizations with global ambitions, which sought to create a universalist vision of sport, one that provided uniform rules and conditions for the practice of sport across time and place. [… Sport's] powerful expansion was also driven to a significant degree by the desires of governments and private groups to assert national identity and power on an international stage. Sport's extraordinary rigidity as an international system helped fuel this dynamic. Precisely because of the uniformity of the rules and the universalistic pretensions of sport, it seemed to offer a uniquely objective and quantifiable means of comparing national strength. [… Although] the international sport system reflected and reinforced nationalist impulses, it was also premised on an ideology of achievement, competition, individualism, and universalism.[17]

"Modern" sport will refer, therefore, to the framework of global sport that was "codified and standardized in Britain, then spread to other countries" so that, by the mid-twentieth century it had "established global supremacy in the realm of physical culture."[18] This description aligns well with Guttmann's own analysis of the development of "modern" sport. In *From Ritual to Record,* the scholar proposes seven characteristics that define "modern" sport: "secularism, equality of opportunity to compete and in the conditions of competitions, specialization of roles, rationalization, bureaucratic organization, quantification, the quest for records."[19] Guttmann charts the history of sport across these dimensions through various time periods and cultures, and argues that only sport that is engaged in an era where all of these characteristics exist systematically can be considered modern. This confluence of characteristics, in Guttmann's evaluation, only occurred after the intellectual, and most importantly mathematical, developments of the 17th and 18th centuries.[20]

It should be further noted that Britain's role in spreading modern sport was not lost on contemporaries. In an April 1938 article entitled "World Sports Movement", the author suggests

[17] Ibid 7-8
[18] ibid 18
[19] Guttmann "Ritual" 16
[20] ibid 85

that, prior to British imperialism, all notions of sport traced their history back to Ancient Greece. He argued, therefore, that

> Britain's greatest gift to the world may well be judged by history to be neither in the sphere of government nor of art, but in the revival of [the] sporting spirit and in teaching the world how to play games. In the physical realm games enable an urban and industrial population to keep its health, while, psychologically, games absorb that combative spirit […] which for thousands of years has expressed itself in war and political revolution[21]

His explanation for Britain's role, however, was not as theoretical as scholars have since pondered. For the author, "[w]hile a temperate climate and a meat diet have created superfluous energy, strong government has maintained peace. Sport is the expression of this energy."[22] He also credited global conflict and the impact of British troops in the spread of these ideas.[23]

While this study will be concerned primarily with British sports and their diffusion, as they maintained a hegemonic presence in Egypt, their influence did not occur in a vacuum. It is worthwhile, therefore, to engage Martin van Bottenburg's more global theory of the dissemination of sport. Bottenburg argues that the factors involved in the popularity of a sport at the national level are: "the social background of the people who practice it in its country of origin and how they relate to other social groups; the relations between this country and the 'adopting' countries; and the social groups that take it up in the 'adopting' countries and how they related to other groups."[24] He continues by postulating that "the diffusion of sports was promoted by specific groups from the 'dominating' countries" and that "[d]uring the process of diffusion, sports would start off as the exclusive province of the urban elite: educated people with international ties who could journey abroad. But as relations in society changed – between

[21] "World Sports Movement", *Great Britain and the East*, April 28, 1938, 454
[22] ibid
[23] ibid
[24] Bottenburg 43

classes, between men and women, and between city-dwellers and country folk – many sports spread through wide sections of the population"[25]

Bottenburg does not believe, therefore, that individuals make arbitrary choices about particular sports, but instead evaluate the social status associated with sports and choose one that best fits the circles of which they wish to be a part. As more individuals find the resources to engage in "upper class" sport, the individuals associated with those sports abandon them and seek more exclusive pastimes. As activities such as football and cricket became more accessible, for example, the economic elite shifted to tennis, and then golf, yachting, and equestrianism. Bottenburg's analysis will prove useful, therefore, not only in understanding why certain games were adopted in Egypt and others not, but on how emerging economic class distinctions helped define the popularity of a sport once it was adopted.

That said, the theory is not without its limitations, some of which are self-admitted by the author. Even in his own work, Bottenburg introduces external variables to explain sporting developments in certain countries and he declares certain sports to be of unclear origin, which eliminates potential rival nations to Britain's status as the chief disseminator of modern global sport. It also denies the agency of the domestic actors that received sport when it was imported into their country; such a contention would reduce the need for an analysis of sport's transformative impact on society and culture, as it emphasizes causation working only in reverse.

The important notion to garner from Bottenburg's text, therefore, is that preferences for particular sports do not arise from some arbitrary point. Each sport is exported with a social and cultural connotation that is understood by the host nations. Whereas Bottenburg would argue that this context influences individual and group actors to select certain sports, this dissertation

[25] ibid 44

demonstrates that these actors play an active role in interpreting, shaping, and ultimately transforming these connotations, often leading to results that differ fundamentally from the activity's original context and exist as an authentically indigenous product. This aligns well with Walter Armbrust's study *Mass Culture and Modernism in Egypt*, where he argued that the modern and the traditional do not exist as binaries in Egypt, but rather form a complex synthesis that allows various actors to emphasize or downplay certain elements in order to pursue their own agendas. Cultural spaces in this context become nuanced, allowing individuals to have complex, and even contradictory, relationships with them. Something inspired by the colonizer can be reinvented as something internal and become a site of resistance, or even lie outside of that paradigm altogether.[26]

In order for this contention to be valid, however, one must dispense with the popularly-held notion that sport is apolitical, despite the fact that this conjecture has been advanced by numerous presidents of the International Olympic Committee (IOC), an organization that is arguably the world's most important actor in contemporary global sport.[27] John Hoberman, in attempting to justify the American-led boycott of the 1980 Moscow Olympics, is particularly critical of "[t]he core doctrine of the Olympic movement […] 'amoral universalism,' which strives for global participation at all costs, even sacrificing rudimentary moral standards."[28] He argues that "[t]he paradox is that sport has become an emblem of the moral order precisely because it does not call for moral actions. It is universally acceptable because it does not make judgments."[29] In other words, the very fact that the IOC attempts to portray itself as a moral

[26] Armbrust 3-9. Alexei Yurchak expands upon the notion of everyday living operating outside the binaries of resistance and conformity in the Soviet context in his work *Everything Was Forever, Until It Was No More*.
[27] Houlihan and Giulianotti 701
[28] Hoberman "Crisis" 2
[29] ibid 6

authority by being apolitical means that it becomes immoral by not taking a stand on issues related to the Games that are inherently political. Silence and inaction represent consent, and acquiescence to the continuation of a situation is a political act. Hoberman's work does attempt ultimately to create a dichotomy between "good" and "bad", but his point on the impossibility of a being apolitical, particularly for a movement as large as the Olympic one, remains valid. Perhaps put more simply, "Sport is a latently political issue in any society, since the cultural themes which inhere in a sport culture are potentially ideological in a political sense."[30]

The Historiography of Sport

With sport more clearly defined, it is possible to examine more closely the ways in which sport can be said to have a transformative impact on politics, society, and culture. On the surface, no study would suggest that sport lacks a transformative element entirely. It is not difficult to determine, as one correspondent from Sudan bemoaned, that a poor game hunting season might "impoverish an already depleted Treasury" of a region, which in turn contributed to the necessity to raise local taxes.[31] Thus, when one examines the transformative impact of sport, it is critical to consider the *relative* degree to which sport is more transformative or reflective.

In the example above, one might conjecture that the decline in game hunting, and the concomitant decrease in revenues, was a result of World War I, and thus sport was more reflective of broader developments than a transformative force in and of itself. When discussing the economics of sport, a better example of its transformative impact would be the racial integration of college football in the United States. Seeking to draw more crowds (and thus ticket revenues) by winning games, coaches at many colleges began prioritizing talent over race, recruiting African American players despite the overall reluctance of universities to accept them

[30] Hoberman "Ideology" 20
[31] A Correspondent, "The Sudan Big-Game Season", *The Near East*, May 28, 1915, 97

as students.[32] Here, sport offered (admittedly to a small fraction of) a marginalized segment of society an opportunity to gain an education and thus situate itself more advantageously against its oppressors, a relatively significant transformative role for college football.

Theoretical works on global sport, particularly those that engage on the Middle East, have focused more on what sport can tell us about the human condition rather than how it can catalyze meaningful change. The latter half of Guttman's *From Ritual to Record,* for example, looks to explain why baseball and American football were popular during particular points of United States history, and how Americans' choice of sport reflects a national character of teamwork rather than individualism. Similarly, in *Hockey Night in Canada* Richard Gruneau expands upon the theories elucidated in an earlier work, *Class, Sports, and Social Development*, to explain how the popularity of ice hockey in Canada was influenced by economic and social factors, rather than arguing for any reciprocal influence. In fact, he suggests (in 1993) that the game no longer reflects a globalized Canada and predicts that it will fade away and be replaced by something that better represents an increasingly diverse nation.[33]

One of the earliest works in the field, James Riordan's *Sport in Soviet Society* from 1977, focused more on chronicling the facts about its topic than arguing its eponymous relationship, although this should not discount the novel defense of his "belief that a historical account of sport could contribute to an understanding of the nature of Soviet society […] and of the place of sport in society in general."[34] This argument was based in the notion of sport as "one of the most far-reaching social activities in the USSR", acknowledging sport's reach and multifarious uses

[32] Guttmann "Ritual" 129
[33] Gruneau and Whitson 283
[34] Riordan 2

for both the state and individuals.[35] Both in terms of its breadth and the academic approach it took to its topic, the work represents a milestone.

A decade later, Richard Holt helped established a more critical approach to British sports, surveying its history from the premodern era through the age of commercialism and violence, and injecting the argument that sport reflected domestic sociocultural changes. One of his major contributions to the field was popularizing the notion that continuities, for example between traditional and modern, were just as important (and observable) as discontinuities.[36] In more recent years, Laurent Dubois, in *Soccer Empire*, argued that the multicultural nature of the French national football team, which contains numerous players from former colonies, symbolizes a unity of French people across racial and ethnic lines. The squad's success and failures, therefore, become lightning rods for commentary on both sides of the political spectrum, particularly in times of immigration and integration-related tension.

From a global perspective, and closer to the topic of this dissertation, albeit engaging Egypt only occasionally and focusing more on the organization than the continent, Paul Darby's *Africa, Football and FIFA* explores Africa's role in the development of the International Federation of Association Football (FIFA). Arguing that "football has functioned as a vehicle for both Western-driven cultural imperialism and as a locus for resistance to imperial pressures",[37] the author demonstrates that Africa's influence in FIFA, which has waxed and waned, paralleled its position on the international scene as it moved from colonization to independence, through growing importance vis-à-vis the Non-Aligned movement, to the modern era, where its concerns

[35] ibid 7
[36] Holt 3
[37] Darby 2

were catered to only so long as it took for larger nations to exploit them, while offering as little as possible return.

In *Sport in Capitalist Society*, meanwhile, Tony Collins argues that modern sport is a reflection, and ultimately a product, of capitalism and did not rise independently to develop from a biological ludic spirit or function within humans. In taking a Marxist approach that rejects explicitly the notion of teleological modernization,[38] he demonstrates that sport "emerg[ed] in its embryonic modern form as a form of commercial entertainment, part of a leisure industry that was emerging primarily in London and south-east England in the eighteenth century."[39] He proceeds to chronicle how sport transformed in parallel to changing economic factors and globalization.

Collins does postulate, however, that "[s]port was not merely co-terminous with the expansion of capitalism but an integral part of that expansion".[40] This suggests that sport is more than a mere reflection of the economy, but a product of it. This acknowledgement of a more active role for sport is not unique. Particularly in the field of sociology, scholars have been more willing to investigate and unpack the transformative role that sport can play in society, politics, and culture. In *Quest for Excitement*, for example, Norbert Elias and Eric Dunning argue that the development of modern sport is an important facet of the Elias' "civilizing process", wherein societies become less violent as they advance. Rather than merely reflecting this process, however, the editors argue that modern sport plays a crucial role in facilitating this process as a major activity and spectacle that allows people to release certain types of tensions that build as the need for people to restrain their impulses increases.

[38] Collins viii
[39] ibid 13
[40] ibid

With this acknowledged, however, for both Collins and Elias, sport remains a by-product, albeit an integral one, of socioeconomic developments, but does not catalyze these changes, even if it later helps to facilitate them. There are scholars, however, for whom the function of sport as a transformative force is a more active agent. In *The Making of Les Bleus*, for example, Lindsay Sarah Krasnoff argues that France, weakened by World War II and caught in between the superpowers of the United States and the Soviet Union, sought alternative ways to exert its influence on the global scene. Lacking the military might of either of these nations, France opted for the path of soft power, which meant strengthening its culture so that it could be used to influence other nations and "portray power abroad".[41] Sport played a major role in this plan and thus received increased funding from the state so that it could be used towards these ends. "To be viewed as an athletically victorious nation," she posits, "could enable it to keep a certain degree of influence and respect from its former African colonies."[42] It was also intended to have a secondary domestic effect, including the integration of immigrants in a post-colonial world and providing alternatives to "delinquency" in order to invigorate national youth.[43]

Perhaps because sport in the Middle East received only scant attention until the last decade, academic studies have been more willing to acknowledge a transformative role for sport within society. One of the earliest works on the topic, *Arab Soccer in a Jewish State*, written by sociologist Tamir Sorek, argued that football served a role as an "integrative enclave", which allows Arab-Israelis to be part of the state without abandoning their relationship to the Palestinian cause through strategies of "separation" and "substitution".[44] Grossly oversimplified, the author's perspective is that football allows Palestinian-Israelis to temporarily "separate"

[41] Krasnoff 20
[42] ibid 23
[43] ibid 3
[44] Sorek 2-3

themselves from their Arab identity and "substitute" association with a team for affiliation with a nationality. They can therefore feel as if they are part of the state, without jeopardizing their support of, and relationship to, the Palestinian national cause. Critically, however, Sorek notes that this enclave is subject to multiple interpretations, and therefore multifarious and inconclusive results. While for some football is a space where Arab-Israelis are most visible and can have their voices heard, for others one's participation in, and therefore acknowledgement of, a structure imposed by the Israeli state "reaffirms the legitimacy of domination".[45] Even at the individual level, these viewpoints are not mutually exclusive, making football contested terrain in Israel, but the perception of sport as apolitical paradoxically allows the state to acquiesce to this very political space's existence.

Mahfoud Amara's *Sport, Politics and Society in the Arab World* takes a similar approach in considering sport's transformative power, but takes a much broader perspective. In surveying most of the Arab world, he concurs with Sorek that sport produces a variety of interpretations and suggests that the region neither accepts the teleological notion of the modernity of sport wholeheartedly nor rejects it outright in favor of local essentialism.[46] Instead, sport produces a variety of discourses, some that align well with the hegemonic narrative of modern sport, others that dismiss it, but most that blend the two into a hybrid outcome. Arenas of colonial domination, for example, become arenas of resistance, nationalist sporting mega-events often require the infusion of transnational resources, and sites of control for newly-independent nations develop into targets and spaces for the populace to reject state measures. These new narratives catalyze societal transformation from the bottom-up (in more authoritarian societies), as well as the top-down (as is often the case in Gulf countries).

[45] ibid 7
[46] Amara 13

Alan Raab and Issam Khalidi's volume *Soccer in the Middle East* engages similar themes with a focus on football, albeit with more of an emphasis on using it as a lens to explore regional cultural topics. It does, however, engage one of the most popular transformative roles for sport: as a site of resistance where like-minded individuals can gather in an ostensibly apolitical space and, as Sorek suggested, use team pride as a proxy for otherwise prohibited expressions of nationalist or ethnic sentiments. In referring to Egypt's experiences in the Arab Spring, Raab notes that "[t]he ultras' long history of street battles and experience working together were well employed", and that they were motivated by the anti-authoritarian ideologies that they could express only within the context of football.[47] Alternatively, he also conjectures that sporting spaces can serve as a target for physical hostility, with attacks on large crowds serving the dual purpose of drawing attention through the causation of mass causalities and symbolically attacking outposts of "foreign" intrusion.

Most recently, Danyel Reiche and Tamir Sorek have sought to build upon the transformative approach in their 2019 edited volume *Sport, Politics, and Society in the Middle East*. Although leaning more towards the Gulf states in terms of content, due to the upcoming 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar, the work nonetheless covers a broad swath of historical and contemporary Middle Eastern sporting history. Though the chapters vary in terms of their content, all are guided by the notion that "sports in the Middle East are much more than an 'interesting angle' through which to popularize academic themes. They are themselves a major political and economic force that not only reflect but also shape both individuals' lives and large-scale social processes."[48]

[47] Raab 6
[48] Sorek and Reiche 9-10

Reiche and Sorek's volume also contains one chapter on the importance of sporting performance, rather than mere participation, which reflects another trend with the broader field of sports studies. Such works emphasize the benefits of success at major sporting competitions, such as the Olympic Games, and the influence of athletes who were victorious internationally, will figure prominently into any discussion of Egyptian sport during this era. As Nadim Nassif puts it simply, "winning in sports is essential to reflect the strength of a nation".[49] Coming to academic conclusions about performance and its impact, particularly ones with pragmatic policy implications, requires an engaged understanding of multiple variables, as well as a thorough knowledge of the country of study, and can rarely be accused of anything less than serious rigor.

Yet, while these studies reflect an understanding of sport's transformative nature, they will not be engaged directly in this dissertation, which should not be taken as a rejection of performance studies. Instead, it is a pragmatic decision based on a desire to avoid being distracted from broader notions of participation, which can have a wider impact on politics and culture. While significant achievements are undoubtedly impactful, only top-tier athletes can engage them directly, whereas nearly anyone can participate in sport more broadly. Moreover, while elite victories receive a substantial amount of coverage in publications, particularly in the era under consideration, there was no shortage of written material produced on local and amateur competitions either. Thus, while certain prominent successes figure significantly into Egypt's sporting narratives, and will be highlighted, discourses on everyday sport made critical contributions and touched upon the lived experiences of many Egyptians.

Narrowing the focus even further to Egypt yields even more sporadic results, many of which are focused on the kinesiological perspective or presenting a chronological history. Jean-

[49] Nassif 147

Marc Ran Oppenheim's 1991 PhD dissertation "Twilight of a Colonial Ethos", which surveyed the history of the Alexandria Sporting Club as it transformed from a bastion of colonialism into a (relatively) more inclusive space, is an oft-cited example from the latter category. It was Yoav Di-Capua's chapter "Sports, Society, and Revolution: Egypt in the Early Nasserite Period", however, that provided a more critically-based impetus for the study of Egyptian sport. In this work, the author argued that there was a sharp change in the way in which the state engaged sport following the 1952 Revolution. For Di-Capua, sport grew to become a direct concern of the state and a necessary tool for drawing the masses to support and involve themselves in government social projects. Simply put, "sports revealed the need of the regime to modernize Egypt."[50]

Even Di-Capua's analysis, however, rests often on the notion that sport serves as lens through which one can observe change, rather than a force in and of itself to enact that change, although he does touch upon this latter dimension. Certainly, he argues that the state had particular transformative societal goals in mind when they developed sports policy, but these goals were part of a broader state program, of which sport played only a small role. The state was engaging a process of broad national restructuring, and sport was an inevitable part of that puzzle. Had sport not been a viable conduit for these changes, it would have been ignored or discarded in favor of other cultural channels (such as film or television, which were engaged in this process). That is to say, in Di-Capua's analysis, there is nothing about sport *precisely* that explains why it was used; it was simply available and the scholar can now use it to better understand the transformations that were happening at the time.

[50] Di-Capua 145

Subsequent studies engaging the transformative impact of sport in Egypt to varying degrees. In his article "Football as National Allegory", for example, Shaun Lopez examines the coverage of the 1924 and 1928 in *Al-ahrām* and concludes that it reflects Egypt's desire to win the approval of Western nations and appear "modern" in their ideas. In his 2011 dissertation "Aha Gun!", Shawki Ebeid El-Zatmah, meanwhile, argues "that the history of soccer in Egypt overlaps with and has been affected by the major political, economic, social, and cultural transformations of Egypt in its contemporary experience, thus presenting us with an important site through which these transformations can be better understood."[51] He succeeds in providing consistent analytical rigor to the topic, and produces a previously unmatched level of detail, demonstrating the depth and variety of sporting activities that existed outside of the British's aegis of "modern sport", which excluded most indigenous Egyptians. Overall, however, he demonstrates ultimately how football reflected sociocultural and political trends rather than how it catalyzed them.

Jacob's study of Egyptian masculinity *Working Out Egypt* argues that when the British imported their version of masculinity to the country, various social classes mimicked, reinterpreted, and ultimately made their own narratives about what masculinity meant. One class in particular, the *'afandiya*, used these notions to shape their own vision of an authentically "Egyptian" nation, which proved to be influential to the broader society. In this, Jacob's findings mirror those of sports historians from other regions, such as Patrick McDevitt, who demonstrated that sport across the globe had to engage with British notions of masculinity, but that the responses spanned the spectrum of acceptance and resistance and led to new interpretations and narratives.[52]

[51] Zatmah 1
[52] McDevitt 139-141

Despite these moves towards a greater acknowledgement of sport's transformative potential, the dominant paradigm in the field remains a reflective one. As Scott Waalkes sums up succinctly in a 2017 *Soccer & Society* article entitled "Does Soccer Explain the World or Does the World Explain Soccer?", "[t]he evidence suggests that soccer competition affects the world on a global scale primarily in the realm of culture, where the game influences how we imagine ourselves as globalized humanity. But in the realms of politics and economics, it is easier to see how soccer reflects political and economic globalizations more than it contributes to them."[53] Nationalism, he argues, hampers football's ability to foster unity supranationally, and thus sport's contributions in this regard are limited to the local level. He contends that "[m]ost evidence suggests that soccer has a modest effect on the global economy and instead mainly reflect its larger patterns",[54] and that "globalization creates hierarchies that are played out on the field all too often".[55]

This dissertation acknowledges this alternative perspective, but returns to the question raised by the opening of the Introduction: if sport is merely reflective, how could it have been so important in Egypt? How did it persist when the government and the economy collapsed around it? What was so critical about maintaining sport on a global level that it appeared to supersede (or at least bypass) local concerns? In order to respond to these questions, we must first ask a more basic one: what has been the transformative impact of modern sport in Egypt? Searching for an answer in the era of British colonial occupation (1882-1956) is the objective of this dissertation; this periodization was chosen because the course of Egyptian sport was altered dramatically upon the arrival of the British, and again after 1956 when Gamal Abdel Nasser

[53] Waalkes 167
[54] ibid 171
[55] ibid 173

seized complete control of the country. The answer offered is that sport and its concomitant discourse allows ideas to be presented in a way that, consciously or otherwise, are easier for broad segments of society to internalize.

The primary actors under examination during this period were educated, indigenous equivalents of a "middle class" who were blocked from upwards mobility by an occupying power and lacked support from the lower, mostly rural, segment of society that had little attachment to concepts such as nationalism. These intellectuals theorized that an independent Egypt would bring them political influence, and thus they needed to mobilize a base of popular support. In doing so, they had to appeal to an ideal of nationalism that would impact the masses, while obscuring the reality that an independent Egypt would be most beneficial for the mobility of this "middle class".

Although these intellectuals accomplished this aim through numerous channels, the hypothesis here is that one key advantage of sport in facilitating the dissemination of ideology is that it can be engaged by individuals regardless of their educational background, literacy, or conscious attachment to nationalist sentiments, thus increasing its appeal and mobilizing power. Acknowledging the role of sport, therefore, restores the agency of a broader segment of the population to negotiate the meaning, and ultimate impact of, particular ideologies. Sport discourse, therefore, is not merely a source that tells a story, but one that serves as an active agent of change, as can be seen through a consultation of contemporary print journalism in both sport-specialist and non-specialist media, among other archival sources.

The overarching theme that emerges is that sport in Egypt developed its transformative edge gradually, until Nasser engaged it directly under the post-revolution state and unleashed its full potential. Chapter one will cover the leisure life of Britons in Egypt from their 1882

occupation to the end of the First World War. After presenting the British narrative, which suggests a hegemony of foreign interests over Egyptian sport, it will challenge this perspective as functionally correct, but superficial and incomplete. Through a series of contrasting, indigenously-based sub-narratives of the meaning of "Egyptian" sport, the importance of the multifarious origins of modern sport in Egypt in coalescing the ideal of a "sportsman" that transcended sectarian, ethnic, and class differences and represented the nation on the world stage becomes evident.

The second chapter will argue that after the 1919 Egyptian Revolution, it was no longer possible for Britain to rule without at least the appearance of collaboration with the Egyptians. In sport, as in politics, the British restructured their hegemony behind an indigenous façade that made it seem as if they were granting genuine agency to the Egyptians in their national affairs. The lion's share of the power, however, remained with Britain, and the empire exercised its will whenever necessary, such as when it played a pivotal role in the cancellation of the Egyptian-led 1929 African Games. Furthermore, the narratives in Arabic sports publications simply reframed traditional British sporting discourses and never suggested that "strengthening the nation" should come in the form of challenging the occupying presence.

Chapter three will analyze the gradual transformation of Egyptian sporting discourse into a genuinely indigenous phenomenon. The onset of World War II loosened Britain's grip over its narrative of sport, while those publishers running the Arabic sports journals began to realize that there was little to gain, in terms of social advancement, from obsequiousness to the occupying power. A shift becomes evident, beginning in the mid-1940s, wherein the hegemonic narrative transformed from being a veil over British discourse into an experimental channel that cautiously tested nationalist-leaning sentiments. Although these experiments never manifested into a serious

challenge prior to the 1952 Revolution, they did provide an easily accessible vessel for the new, independent state to use as a tool for propaganda.

Chapter four will investigate the first few years of independence, as the government decided which aspects of the old system to maintain and which to discard. One shift that occurred was that sport in Egypt became overtly political, being used to disseminate state-sponsored narratives and ideologies. Sport received more resources and ideological support from the government than ever before, and helped subscribe Egyptians to new ideals of socialism, suggesting that the role of building the nation belonged to everyone. Moreover, there was a much greater attempt to communicate and work with international sporting bodies in the hopes of integrating Egypt even deeper into the global sporting movement. This demonstrates the state's continued commitment to the idea that a nation's prowess in sport reflects its overall civilizational value, even as Egypt shifted its outlook from wanting to be one among a club of Europeans to seeking a leadership role within the Arab world.

Class will be a critical parameter through which this work will analyze sport. One weakness of focusing on written discourse is that it is produced and preserved by the literate. A 1942 British wartime report estimated that 80% of the total population was illiterate.[56] A study undertaken in 1956, the terminal year of this dissertation, discovered that in one village "considered to have the highest literacy rate in in Egypt outside of urban centers", only 20.5% of the adult (15 years and older) population could read and write.[57] One can presume, therefore, that the experiences of rural dwellers and much of the urban poor from the colonial era are not reflected in the archives. With certain exceptions, therefore, this dissertation will convey the transformative impact of sport from, and on, Egypt's more educated classes. This should not

[56] FO 371/31579 – 1942 – Plan of propaganda to Egypt. Code 16 file 114
[57] Hirabayashi 359

suggest significant limitations on any conclusions reached; the literate classes held power that impacted all segments of Egyptian society and the meanings that they attached to sport were reproduced in mass movements and in men from lower class backgrounds who rose to become sporting stars. Rather, the results discussed should be considered a representative, rather than comprehensive, narrative of sport's transformative impact. After all, almost anyone could play sports.

Furthermore, print is merely the surviving remnants of sports broadcasting. In addition to films, such as the 1937 comedy *Ar-riyāḍy*, journalism is one of the only ways in which the culture and narratives surrounding sport can be revisited. Yet even those who could not read, or travel to cafes and have the sports pages read to them, could consume sport actively through radio broadcasts. Thus, discourse analysis limits our access to the totality of sport during this era, much of which is now lost. With that said, the study mentioned above noted that only 55% of the villagers listened to radio,[58] a number that must certainly have been lower during the colonial era, as radio was not used for sports broadcasting until 1934.[59] Di-Capua notes further than it was not until 1954 that radio became a conscious tool of the state to spread ideology through sport.[60] Thus the missing data from sports broadcasting should not be overstated, nor the representativeness of sports journalism be understated.

The literacy figures reveal a more important omission: according to the study, only 5% of the adult women in the village were literate.[61] Even without knowledge of exact figures, it seems safe to assume that women's experiences are not well represented or preserved in colonial-era sports discourse. While one might be tempted to dismiss sport as purely masculine preserve in

[58] ibid
[59] Gamal 89
[60] Di-Capua 154
[61] Hirabayashi 359

Egypt at the time, which to a large extent it was, sufficient fragments survive that suggest the role of women was of consequence and contributed to narratives about what it meant to be "Egyptian". Each chapter, therefore, will include a section dedicated to examining women's role in the narratives of the era.

Less emphasis will be placed on the role of religion in sport. Islam was clearly an important factor in Egyptian culture and "Islamic" sport has been described as an important part of the Arab tradition, due to scholars arguing for the religious necessity for physical activity.[62] The classes most influential in shaping sport, however, gravitated to a more secular understanding of the game, due to the nature of their educational upbringing and desire to identify the nation as European. "Muscular Christianity" and missionary schools did, however, play an important role in the dissemination of the British model, and the spread of "modern" sport, even within Egypt, cannot be said to be wholly secular. Yet even with a sizeable Christian minority population, the religious aspects of the colonizer's games could not be emphasized directly if new forms of leisure were to become sufficiently popular to have a transformative impact. Nor was sport's promulgation as simple as the "Islamification" of the British games. Religion had a complex and nuanced role to play in the narrative, but this was one element that was arguably more reflective than transformative of broader societal changes at the time. As such, while the role of religion will be discussed as appropriate, it will not be a focal parameter of analysis.

Finally, the present-day Egypt is considerably different than the Egypt of the colonial era. At the most basic level, the modern state of Sudan was part of an Anglo-Egyptian condominium from 1899 through 1955, which spans the vast majority of this dissertation. Yet while Sudan was

[62] See, for example, 'Alawī 152

nominally part of Egypt, administratively and culturally there was a disparity between the two so large that it all but obviates meaningful comparison. Nonetheless, it is worth taking into account that the very Egyptian class that was most engaged with sport in Cairo and Alexandria was the same one that filled the mid-level administrative positions in Khartoum and elsewhere that were long denied to most indigenous Sudanese. Moreover, the British overseers considered sport as exclusive a pursuit for themselves in Sudan as they did Egypt, albeit speaking down upon the Sudanese potential more patronizingly and for longer than they did in Egypt.

Thus, while a proper look into Sudanese sport would require a separate monograph, each chapter will devote attention to this region not only to provide a more comprehensive view of the subject at hand, but to offer contrasting perspectives and narratives to Egypt. Furthermore, while this study places Egypt within the context of the global sporting movement, it does not offer the kind of explicitly comparative perspective that has been emphasized by transnational scholars as being important to dismiss the perspective that Egypt somehow developed in a vacuum. Examining developments in Sudan will, at least, allow this dissertation to raise questions about Egyptian sport's relationship with nations comparable in culture and economic development, even if it leaves those queries unanswered. Particularly after the Second World War, Egypt took pride in its sporting influence over nearby Arab countries such as Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon.

Even beyond this, colonial era Egypt was not homogenous in terms of its view on what constituted Egyptian nationality. The intellectuals of the day formulated numerous conceptualizations of what it meant to be "Egyptian", from being of the "land of the Pharaohs" to being a leader in the Arab world. When one speaks of "Egypt", therefore, one cannot make the assumption that everyone thought of themselves as an actor living within, and having a role in

shaping, the boundaries of the modern state. When they engaged the concept of "Egypt", they may have ignored non-Muslims or Upper Egypt. It may or may not have included Sudan.

Scholar Will Hanley, in his dissertation "Foreignness and Localness in Alexandria, 1880-1914", argues against overemphasizing nationality in discussions of pre-independence Egypt, postulating that "[c]lassifying persons according to nationality rarely captures a comprehensive sense of their social personality".[63] Working in the allegedly "cosmopolitan" city of Alexandria, he rejects a duality in identification by demonstrating that "many Alexandrians existed somewhere on a social spectrum between foreign and local. For others, questions of national affiliation were so rare as to be irrelevant"[64] and shows that "most Alexandrians paid little attention to foreignness, localness, or nationality" and "for many foreigners, nationality was incidental."[65]

Thus, nationality was not on the minds of everyday Egyptians, even those in urban centers, and therefore such musings were the preserve of a select few. The individuals engaged by this study, therefore, should not be assumed as representative of the "average" Egyptian, even if this "average Egyptian" was the target of their discourse. The argument presented here suggests that sport was effective in conveying nationalist narratives in part *because* one did not require conscious adherence in order to internalize. As such, efforts will be made to account for how representative of the "average" Egyptian individuals discussed in this dissertation are, as well as the potential size of their audiences.

Additionally, over-theorizing divergences in self-conceptualization of nationality is not a critical task for this thesis. If, for example, sport imbued a sense of Egyptian nationalism in an

[63] Hanley 287
[64] ibid 354
[65] ibid 228

individual, it should not be implied that this was exclusive, or even superior to, other manners of self-identification. In the pre-revolutionary days, particularly in sport, being an Alexandrian or a Cairene was an important source of communal connection. A broad overview such as this, however, cannot hope to touch upon all theoretical intricacies, lest it lose its value in bringing new considerations to light.

Discourse analysis has served as the methodological bedrock for sport historians,[66] and as such plays a critical role in in establishing the foundations of an analysis of sport's relationship to the broader society. This thesis also models elements of its methodology from James Jankowski and Israel Gershoni's *Redefining the Egyptian Nation*, which examines the way in which notions of Egyptian Arab Nationalism were formed and made accessible through works of popular literature. After being internalized by a new, western-educated "middle class", this particular ideology took on a political dimension during the Palestinian crisis of the late 1930s and transformed Egypt from an observer of regional Arab politics into its leader. This understanding of accessible literature is utilized as a gateway through which an understanding of how more "popular" forms of culture can be used to inculcate values and ideologies into a society. Similarly, Heather Sharkey's *Living with Colonialism* engages the example of Sudan to show how the "everyday colonialism" of bureaucracy fostered nationalism in that country through a pragmatic need to work within the system. This thesis follows a scholarly tradition that suggestions that nationalism need not be fostered primarily through exceptional events and individuals.

I also seek to address criticism that historians of sport have not always taken sufficient advantage of critical theory.[67] In considering sport as a realm in which meaningful change can be

[66] Day and Vamplew 1717
[67] ibid 1716

engendered, I engage the theories of sociologists Richard Gruneau and John Hargreaves. Both argue that power is the outcome of constantly contested discourses and that sport is one of the most prominent realms in which these struggles play out. Hargreaves takes this concept one step further and applies it to demonstrate how different British social classes negotiated political power structures through sport during the 1880s. Modifying his work to add the international dynamic of imperialism allows this study to elucidate Egypt's struggle between foreign and indigenous elites during the 1930s and 1940s and the role that sport played in that process.

The foundational pillars of this research are Arabic-language archival sources from Egypt, including coverage of sport in *Al-ahrām*, journals and magazines that specialized in sport, reports of the National Committee of Physical Culture (a body that existed from 1937 through 1952 to oversee domestic sport), communication between the palace and sporting clubs and organizations from Egypt's National Archives, and collections of the American University in Cairo's records of its athletic competitions. In order to facilitate a transnational approach, sources from England, primarily from the British Library and the National Archives, have also been engaged at length, alongside several local studies archives in England in order to gauge the more popular perspective on Egyptian sport from individuals, primarily soldiers, who were resident in the country. Such an approach is complemented by the archives of the International Olympic Committee, which will aid in placing Egypt within a broader context of the development of the global sporting movement, particularly during the time when the country was transitioning from occupation to independence in the aftermath of the 1952 Revolution. Such a

broad array of sources was also necessary because materials involving sport are rarely categorized precisely in archival collections.[68]

Discourse analysis has limitations. A small handful of individuals produced the surviving narratives and, with literacy rates low, one cannot assume that they were widely accessible, let alone internalized. Taking into account, however, that written texts were often read aloud and shared to mass audiences in cafes, that similar messages were promulgated in film, and the high figures of sporting attendance, one can reasonably conjecture that most people engaged the messages of sporting discourse to at least some degree, albeit perhaps not as explicitly or nuanced as in the written text that survives. This is particularly true of publications that specialized in sport, as their narratives were the most complex and well-articulated, but distribution figures remain a notable lacuna. On one hand, submissions to these journals via post suggest that readership was considerable enough to produce robust discussion; on the other, the short lifespans and shifting content of many of these publications, even in times of economic prosperity, hint that supply perhaps exceeded demand. Regardless, with the appropriate caveats, they serve as an important proxy for otherwise unavailable records.

In terms of selection of material, this dissertation uses *Al-ahrām* to represent Egyptian general news reporting, as it was the most popular daily news publication throughout the period of study and considered mild enough to upset neither the British nor the majority of its indigenous readership with its commentary. Where necessary, other papers fill gaps and expand upon certain oversights in *Al-ahrām*. Most notable among these was *The Egyptian Gazette*, the premier English-language newspaper in Egypt, which examined some elements of sport ignored

[68] As an example, the author's initial searches for sporting material regarding Egypt in the British National Archives yielded only a Foreign Office report on a man who stole a cheque from the Khedivial Sporting Club of Cairo and subsequently attempted suicide.

by *Al-ahrām*, while also presenting a British perspective of events. While usually supportive of the British community, *The Egyptian Gazette* was not entirely uncritical or propaganda-driven either.[69] Neither publication covered sport in significant depth until the 1930s, when indigenous magazines rose to provide critical commentary on the state of sport in Arabic and from an Egyptian perspective, making these journals critical to this thesis' argument.

In regards to transliteration, this dissertation utilizes the guidelines laid out by the United States Library of Congress' Arabic Romanization table, which is based on Modern Standard Arabic pronunciation, rather than that of the Egyptian dialect. Exceptions are made for places (i.e. Cairo, Alexandria) and individuals (i.e. Gamal Abdul Nasser, Ahmed Hassanein) with well-known spelling in English.

[69] "The History of the 'Egyptian Gazette', *Al-Megalla*, February 1947, 59

Chapter 1: From Athens to Cairo

As of July 2020, the International Olympic Committee's database of Olympic medalists lists only two facts about the runner up in the singles tennis tournament at the 1896 Summer Games: that his name was Dionysios Kasdaglis and that he represented Greece. In both cases, this information is incorrect. In regards to the first matter, his real name, as he spelled it in English, was Demetrius Emmanuel Casdagli. The truth behind the second issue is more complex, but if there was one subject on which he and his soon-to-be ex-wife could agree upon during their years of divorce proceedings, it was that Demetrius was not Greek. Nonetheless, in the official reports for the 1906 Intercalated Games (which, as will be discussed, was at the time considered to be an edition of the Olympic Games),[1] Casdagli is listed explicitly as Greek.

Demetrius was born October 10, 1872 in Salford, England to Emmanuel Casdagli, a naturalized British citizen who had been born in Rhodes, Greece to Russian parents.[2] Emmanuel had established himself as a merchant in Manchester in 1862[3] and eventually organized an arm of the business in Egypt, where Demetrius moved to in 1895.[4] The following year, the younger Casdagli entered the tennis tournament at the 1896 Athens Olympics, where he won silver medals in both the singles and doubles events. In the diary of Briton John Pius Boland, who defeated Casdagli in both competitions to win gold, he referred to his opponent as "an English speaking Greek called Kasdagli".[5] In 1905 Demetrius married Jeanne Casulli[6] and, a year later, was back in Athens for the 1906 Intercalated Games, where he was eliminated in round one of the mixed doubles tournament.

[1] Mallon "1906" 5
[2] J 77/1238/7705 – 1917
[3] "Manchester Commercial List" 48
[4] J 77/1238/7705 – 1917
[5] Boland 140
[6] FO 841/153/16 – 1915

On November 8, 1914, Demetrius committed adultery and this, along with alleged cruelty during the marriage,[7] became grounds for divorce proceedings the following year.[8] As the case was drawn out, Demetrius argued that he was not subject to the authority of the British courts in the matter, claiming that he had "acquired domicil of choice in the British Protectorate of Egypt" and that he and Jeanne were "not domiciled in England and never have had a matrimonial home or residence in England."[9] It was at this juncture that Jeanne made a critical claim regarding Demetrius' identity, in an attempt to demonstrate that he was a British subject and nothing else. In her writ, she noted that "[a]t the time of said marriage [1905] my family put forward the suggestion that the Respondent [Demetrius] should become a Greek subject which would have been an easy thing for him to do, but he steadfastly declined and has ever since declined to abandon his British nationality."[10]

Demetrius never denied the assertion that he was not Greek, but continued to argue steadfastly that, for the purposes of the law, he was domiciled in Egypt. By 1919 it was determined that Casdagli possessed a valid claim for having established domicile in Egypt, reversing the earlier ruling that "it was impossible for a British subject to acquire a domicil in Egypt on account of the extra-territorial rights which British subjects there enjoyed".[11] This reversal, based on findings that the Capitulations in Egypt had allowed Britain to exercise extra-territorial jurisdiction,[12] had a significant impact in English case law.[13] Casdagli spent most of the rest of his life in Cairo and remained a marginally notable figure; in May 1915, for example,

[7] While the charge of adultery was uncontested, Demetrius' friend George Eugenios testified that "[t]he manner of Mr. Demetrius Emmanuel Casdagli towards his wife was uniformly kind and courteous." See FO 841/153/16 – 1915.
[8] FO 841/153/16 – 1915
[9] J 77/1238/7705 – 1917
[10] ibid
[11] "Casdagli v. Casdagli", *The Times Law Reports*, Volume XXXV, November 8, 1918, 30
[12] J 77/1238/7705 – 1917
[13] Yen

he hosted politician Eleftherios Venizelos during Venizelos' short break between his first two terms as Greek Prime Minister.[14] Casdagli died in Bad Nauheim, Germany on July 6, 1931, aged 58.[15]

It may be difficult to imagine that a British citizen of Russian origin with a Greek name was the first in a line of athletes that would influence the development of an authentic, indigenous sporting movement in Egypt. Casdagli was, however, part of a Greek community that one scholar has argued "became as much part of Egyptian society as of the Greek diaspora".[16] Will Hanley has also cautioned against placing too heavy an emphasis on contrasting "foreignness" with "localness" in Egypt, arguing that fixed categorizations of individuals were overstated: "Residents of Alexandria won and lost foreign protection in so many ways […] that foreignness itself, as a demographic category, becomes so heterogeneous as to lose most explanatory power. […] The definitive labels employed by demographic social description conceal [… that] nationality as practiced by foreign individuals in Alexandria […] was incidental".[17]

Perhaps more importantly, however, Casdagli exemplifies the type of sportsman who was prominent in Egypt during the period between the British Occupation of 1882[18] and the end of the First World War: wealthy and possessed of a complex origin that was Egyptian perhaps solely for legal purposes. In other words, a modern observer would consider him Egyptian only nominally, if at all. Furthermore, born into an aristocratic family and participating in sports was considered "elite" or "gentlemanly", Casdagli fit well into Britain's paradigmatic model of

[14] Our Own Correspondent, "M. Venizelos in Cairo", *The Near East*, May 7, 1915, 4-5
[15] "Deaths", *The Manchester Guardian*, July 7, 1931, 18
[16] Kitroeff 7
[17] Hanley 288
[18] Although, as will be discussed, the British presence was not declared officially as an occupation until 1914, this description will be used to reflect the historiographical consensus on the reality of the situation from 1882

modern sport that was making its way around the world during his lifetime.[19] The narrative that he represented – and promulgated – through sport, therefore, existed in service of British cultural, political, and military aims in the colonized world.

Egyptians, however, both resident and indigenous, were not passive in their reception of this narrative, nor were they idle in reproducing it. As the narrative was repeated within the country, its performance began to vary and the diversity of its players branched out across numerous societal divisions. This led to the creation of new narratives that, while bearing some fundamental relationships to their predecessors, provided an array of co-existing – and even conflicting – definitions of what "sport" meant in Egypt, transforming it into an authentically indigenous cultural project. While some of these narratives varied wildly from the model, perhaps to the point of unrecognizability, their collective existence set the stage for period of coalescing, which, after the 1919 Revolution that demanded release from Britain's occupation, helped produce a unified vision of a national sportsman that could be taken abroad and used to represent the strength of an independent Egyptian nation.

The Political Context

From the perspective of sport, scholars have chosen 1882 traditionally as the beginning of a "modern" age in Egypt. Alon Raab, for example, in his 2015 introduction to the compiled volume *Soccer in the Middle East*, postulates that "British sailors, merchants, teachers and engineers introduced soccer to Egypt […] at the end of the nineteenth century,"[20] with administrators and soldiers helping it spread after the 1882 occupation. From there, as in many colonized territories, sport trickled down from the colonizers to the indigenous elite. Raab notes that, unlike in French-controlled North Africa, "in Egypt the educated elites were allowed to

[19] See the introduction for a complete discussion of the use of the term "modern sport"
[20] Raab 4

play. In newly established schools, […] sports were used, as in Victorian England, to teach moral lessons and strengthen a sense of unity among the ethnically and religiously diverse student body."[21] Furthermore, while British clubs for travelers and expatriates had existed prior to 1882, it was the founding of the Gezira Sporting Club[22] in that year that began to establish a dominant sporting discourse by transferring narratives from the occupying country. The Gezira Club's membership consisted of a large number of wealthy British subjects, a handful of "foreigners" of European and Levantine origin, and some token members from the nation's indigenous elite.[23] Aside from serving as a social meeting space, its sporting grounds catered to elite tastes. "By 1909," according to one chronicler, it "had thirteen tennis courts, eight croquet grounds, four polo grounds, cricket and football grounds, six squash courts, a twelve-hole (soon increased to fifteen-hole) golf links, courses for races and steeplechases and a training track."[24] Originally known as the Khedivial Club, as it was built on land leased by the Egyptian monarch, the name was changed to Gezira with the onset of World War I.[25]

Before delving into the state of sport during the period from 1882 until 1920, however, it is necessary to review some of the relevant developments on the political scene. From 1517 through 1914, Egypt was nominally a territory of the Ottoman Empire but, by 1882, it had been ruled by Muhammad Ali and his descendants for nearly 80 years. In September of that year, the British occupied the country under the pretext of ending a nationalist revolt led by Colonel Aḥmad 'Urabī that was threatening European economic interests and privileges. French interests in the region "deprived their occupation of a legal basis in international law, as well as

[21] ibid
[22] Founded originally as the Khedivial Sporting Club, the name was changed to Gezira during World War I. See Jackson 113. For the sake of consistency, it will be referred to as Gezira for the entirety of its existence, outside of quotations.
[23] Di-Capua 146
[24] Mostyn 135
[25] Jackson 113

recognition by the powers and Turkey"[26] and thus the Britons did not declare their presence an occupation, operating at first under the pretense their stay would be brief. It was not until 1888 that there were any serious suggestions that the British stay should be extended.[27]

The need for their intervention in reclaiming Sudan from a religious insurrection, led by Muḥammad Aḥmad, which was considered a threat to Egypt, entrenched the British presence.[28] A 1904 accord with the French, meanwhile, removed the majority of other foreign interests from the country.[29] Nonetheless, it was not until the onset of World War I that the British declared an official protectorate over the country. In the meantime, the 1906 Dinshawāy Incident[30] catalyzed a nationalist movement, although its fortunes were uneven, and relatively muted, until 1919, when a revolution against the British occupation broke out. As a response, the British declared independence for Egypt unilaterally in 1922. This "independence", however, was effectively nominal, and did little to change the reality of British control over the country.

A discussion of modern sport in Egypt could therefore begin with the British occupation of 1882, although several important caveats must be considered. The indigenous record of Muslim Egyptian[31] sport history, though sparse, is not silent on the topic of local sporting activities. In his 2011 dissertation, for example, Zatmah notes the existence of a game known as *'Aṣfūrah*, which is the word for a female song bird. As the scholar describes the game, a "wooden

[26] Zayid 31
[27] Tignor 87
[28] ibid 61
[29] Tignor 268
[30] In this incident, a group of British soldiers shot several pigeons that were owned by residents of Dinshawāy, leading the villagers to protest. Escalating violence led to a mob attacking the soldiers, one of whom fled into the desert and died from the heat. This provoked a severe response from the British, who proceeded to hang and flog numerous individuals who had been involved in the rioting. See Tigor 280-282.
[31] Many Egyptians today draw proudly from the history of Ancient Egypt, including sport, and see themselves as inheritors of these traditions. Upon revealing his subject of study, the author was often told of drawings inside Egyptian pyramids that demonstrated how the ancient Egyptians invented all of today's sports. The Egyptian Olympic Committee's museum repeats this narrative and includes photographs of the relevant depictions. While this phenomenon is a noteworthy feature of Egyptian sporting culture, it lies outside of the scope of this study.

shaped bird that was placed in a location between two neighborhoods whose teams took turns hitting it with a wooden stick in the direction of the opposing neighborhood. The team that succeed in hitting the [bird] to an agreed upon location of the opposing teams [*sic*] neighborhood won the game."[32] Moreover, writer Muḥammad ʻAlawī, in his 1947 work *Ar-riyāḍah al-badanīyah ʻinda al-ʻArab* (Physical Culture Among the Arabs) produced a national narrative of "sport" in the Arab World, mainly Egypt, that resembled the patterns of pre-World War I British thought. The majority of his narrative focuses on the aptitude of Arabs for hunting, as well as related skills such as equestrianism and archery.

A more contemporary chronicler, Hilmī Muḥammad Ibrāhīm, suggested that Egyptian children of the 19th century were influenced by Napoleon's 1798 invasion of the country and were well-versed in French games prior to the British Occupation.[33] Ibrāhīm also noted, however, that "the only sporting activity that was celebrated by the Ottomans while they were in Egypt was equestrian, and this because of its importance in the field of warfare".[34] As in many traditional and Orientalist accounts, Ibrāhīm portrays the Ottomans as ignorant of and averse to modern sport. When the empire established an equestrian school in 1830, it was designed primarily to serve the military, although it trained its pupils in shooting and fencing, and sent delegations to France to learn new techniques.[35]

Thus, as with many other advances from foreign lands, the Ottomans imported particular ideas selectively and cautiously in order to improve their military position, but were unable to contain their spread to other segments of society, particularly the wealthy and connected elite.[36]

[32] Zatmah 12-13
[33] Ibrāhīm 182
[34] ibid 183
[35] Ibrāhīm 183
[36] Berkes 30-31

The impetus for the Ottomans to establish a comprehensive system of physical education did not occur until it faced defeats in the Balkan Wars of the 1910s, long after Egypt had *de facto* escaped the Empire's aegis.[37]

The Evolving British View of Sport

Indigenous narratives of Egyptian sport arose and became important within the context of the hegemonic narrative of the time. In discussing hegemony, this work will utilize the term in a Gramscian sense, referring to a group's cultural power and control over a society that is enforced discursively through the promulgation of a particular narrative (or set of narratives). Its primary objective in doing so is to reinforce its own rule and legitimacy by transforming its own values into sociocultural norms. Such enforcement comes at the expense of alternative narratives, and thus rival groups within the society often contest this hegemony with their own narratives. As will be seen, such challenges often force the dominant power to adapt and modify in order to survive.

Sport has often been used in the modern context as one of the channels for establishing hegemony, and the case of the British in Egypt was no exception. As an occupying power with both substantial military resources and control over the nation's publications and education, the British were able to establish the prevailing idea of what "sport" meant in the Egyptian context. This vision, which was representative of only a small fraction of physical culture in Egypt between 1882 and 1920 and willfully ignored developments outside of elite circles, came to be perceived as definitive of the topic. As such, despite its remoteness from the more important story of Egyptian sport, it must be outlined and engaged as critical context within which sport's transformative impact emerged.

[37] Tarakçıoğlu 1807-1808

From the British perspective of the mid-to-late 1800s, "sport" referred to a narrow set of elite activities that often presented significant economic barriers with regards to access. Chief among these pursuits were hunting (particularly of "exotic" animals in foreign lands) and horse racing. This was part of a broader movement by Britain's upper classes who, threatened by the narrowing distinction between themselves and a burgeoning middle class, sought exclusivity in many realms.[38] Sociologist John Hargreaves argues that, in terms of sport, this conception was the result of movements, driven by insecurity, to first repress "popular" sport and reconstitute the concept within a bourgeois framework.[39] It was not until the end of the century that circumstances transformed the definition of "sport" into one that aligned more closely with the ideas discussed in the introduction.[40] Even then, this process was undertaken only grudgingly. In May 1865, for example, Andrew Clark, who went by the pseudonym "The Gentleman in Black", disparaged the recent popularity of billiards, rackets, and even track and field athletics, considering them illegitimate sports. He classified them instead as entertainment for the uneducated masses who lacked culture. Unlike cricket or rowing, he argued, they did not test the true strength of a man:

> It is not necessary, however, to halloa very lustily when an Oxford or Cambridge man gains the superiority of half a minute in a mile or of half an inch in a jump. They are very pretty sports, vastly entertaining to schoolboys and their mammas, of great utility in bringing out the character and the muscles, be it at Eton or the University; but they are in their wrong place, when put by the side of the cricket match, or the boat-race, as a trial of strength. They have the advantage of great economy as a pastime, and they allow almost everybody to participate in them; but when men talk of them in the same breath with the great games of Greece or Rome, it is plain that they have overlooked the great purposes of these latter[41]

[38] Holt 55
[39] Hargreaves 16-56
[40] Hargreaves 57
[41] The Gentleman in Black. "University Competition by Land and Water", *Baily's Magazine of Sports and Pastimes*, Volume IX, May 1865, 328-329.

He continued by claiming that "[t]he most dangerous start in life that a man can make is with a reputation as a billiard player"[42] and that "[c]onsidered in the abstract, a young man had better hunt foxes than do anything else."[43] In a January 1868 review of the book *Sportascrapiana*, he lamented that college students of the day focused too much on sport and not enough on study,[44] and repeated this complaint in a different review one year later.[45]

A different (and anonymous) author in May 1870, however, offered a slight shift in tone. While still supporting the drive against "excessive athleticism in the Universities and public schools", he suggested that the problems it causes are not intrinsic to the pursuit itself.[46] He highlighted the idea that, in moderation, track and field athletics could offer benefits, including "abstinence from useless or pernicious pursuits" and bodily health.[47] He concluded with an optimistic outlook: "Granting that athletics generally, when at their proper level, may be regarded not merely as sports and pastimes, but as also exerting many healthy influences, we may predict for them a long and successful existence."[48]

This was the broad perspective of the British on sport when they occupied Egypt in August 1882. It is of little surprise, therefore, that the only references to sport in Egypt in British publications prior to this date concern hunting or horse racing. Of the era's nearly two dozen references to Egypt in *Baily's Magazine of Sports and Pastimes* (henceforth *Baily's*), for example, all focus on one of these topics. This aligned with the broader narratives about Africa that are exemplified by works such as French-American traveller Paul Du Chaillu's "Adventures in Equatorial Africa." Published in June 1861 in *Baily's*, it chronicles the author's journey

[42] ibid 329
[43] ibid 333
[44] ibid. "Athletics and Sport", *Baily's Magazine of Sports and Pastimes*, Volume XIV, January 1868, 195
[45] ibid. "British Sports and Pastimes", *Baily's Magazine of Sports and Pastimes*, Volume XVI, January 1869, 70-79
[46] "The Present Aspect of Athletics", *Baily's Magazine of Sports and Pastimes*, Volume XVIII, May 1870, 198
[47] ibid 199
[48] ibid 204

through Africa, highlighting his ability to tame savage wilds while at the same time remarking bemusedly on the eccentricities of the local cultures.[49] Books, both fiction and non-fiction, applied these themes to Egypt as early as 1874,[50] and continued for many decades thereafter, thus establishing a tradition that "sport" in Egypt revolved around savage, exotic beasts and bumbling, ignorant natives. At best, hunting trips became excuses to pen anthropological fantasies that explored the quirks of rural or nomadic Bedouin life. Even later works that portrayed Egypt as more civilized, such as Baron de Kusel's *An Englishman's Reflections of Egypt*, still gave off a condescending tone when referring to the Arabs that accompanied them on their hunting trips.[51]

In contrast to the narrative of hunting, horse racing was portrayed as a refined, gentlemanly sport that foreigners, primarily British ones, brought to Egypt as bastion of civilization in an otherwise hostile, wild land. References indicate that the sport was enjoyed in Cairo by the British not later than the 1850s, by enthusiasts seeking the prowess of the Arabian horse.[52] Alexandria had a horse-racing hippodrome by 1863[53] and regular races were established in the country by the 1870s.[54] Descriptions of horse racing form a larger part of the narrative surrounding expatriate life in Egypt during the period prior to the occupation of 1882.

It is therefore not surprising that, with such a limited and unfavorable perspective of what "sport" meant in Egypt, the British demonstrated very little interest in improving sports facilities

[49] Du Chaillu, Paul, "Adventures in Equatorial Africa", *Baily's Magazine of Sports and Pastimes*, Volume III, June 1861, 81-89. Another prominent author in this style from *Baily's* was Henry Astbury Leveson, who wrote under the pen name of "The Old Shekarry" and wrote of his adventures in India and Africa. Also worthy of note is H. Faulkner's two-part series "A Sporting Trip to Algeria" published in April and June 1867.
[50] "Two Days' Shooting in Fatshan Creek, Canton", *Baily's Magazine of Sports and Pastimes*, Volume XXV, May 1874, 165-170
[51] See, for example, Kusel 69-72, which takes place in 1868.
[52] Thormanby, "Anecdotal Sport", *Baily's Magazine of Sports and Pastimes*, Volume LXXI, June 1899, 426-430
[53] Oppenheim 224
[54] "How We Spoiled the Egyptians", *Baily's Magazine of Sports and Pastimes*, Volume XVII, July 1869, 5-10

in the country after the occupation.[55] Exclusive clubs such as Gezira were formed for the foreign elite and provided a space for esoteric – at least from the Egyptian point of view – sports pursued by soldiers stationed in the country; Corporal F. J. M. Mace, stationed with The Royal Sussex Regiment in Cairo for two years beginning in 1884, noted cricket among his regular recreational activities in the country,[56] while other sources pointed to the establishment of a snooker club in 1887.[57] Yet there was essentially no effort put into improving the state of physical culture or recreation at the indigenous level. Even once the expectation of the ephemeral nature of the occupation dissolved, the best the British had to offer was the introduction of gymnastics as a mandatory element of the school curriculum in 1892. This provision, however, was not enforced widely until after World War I.[58]

Traditional accounts of "sport" in Egypt at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th, therefore, construct an image of bountiful elite pursuits and an almost complete absence of activity on the indigenous level. As early as 1889, F. M. Sandwith highlighted Egypt's status as a winter resort for the British, due to its "facilities for riding and driving, and for playing all outdoor games."[59] One district in Alexandria could claim "a colony of English officials and merchants who are famous for their hospitality and their lawn-tennis parties" where "[t]he English residents boast of as many as fifteen lawn-tennis courts, a book club, and even a race meeting during two days in June."[60] In the Cairo area, nearly every sport of the time was accessible, from billiards to polo to cricket, but the main draw remained the hunting in the areas surrounding both cities. In terms of hunting, which was well-regarded globally by the turn of the

[55] Ibrāhīm 183
[56] RSR/MSS/2/13, Diaries of Corporal F J M Mace, 2nd Battalion, The Royal Sussex Regiment, stationed at Malta and, from 26 January 1885, at Cairo - 1 January 1884 - 31 December 1885, West Sussex Records Office
[57] Ibrāhīm 212
[58] ibid 184
[59] Sandwith 5
[60] ibid 137-139

century,[61] one observer noted that "[t]he majority of the villagers have very vague ideas of whom the English are and where they come from, but they look upon us as benefactors".[62]

Discussing Cairo eight years later, Eustace Alfred Reynolds-Ball's *City of the Caliphs* revealed much of the same: "From January to April there is one unceasing round of balls, dinner parties, picnics, gymkhanas, and other social functions […] When it is the case of a bicycle gymkhana, a polo match at the Turf Club ground, or a lawn-tennis tournament at the Ghezireh Palace, or a visit to a gloomy old temple, it is perhaps only natural with young people that the ancient monuments should go to the wall."[63] Yacht clubs, though not as prominent in descriptions of Cairo's sporting life, were also popular,[64] as was golfing, which became fashionable in the mid-1880s.[65] In 1901, Wilfrid Blunt noted the novelty of fox-hunting in the Cairo area, another pastime that aligned well with notions of British sport.[66]

Scholar Douglas Sladen, whose personal papers demonstrate a keen concern providing precise and accurate details about British expatriate life in Cairo,[67] painted a vivid picture of how the community had developed by 1908: "There are dances, races, polo, golf, tennis, croquet, cricket, riding, motoring, shooting, excursions up the Nile, the opera, concerts, services of all kinds and creeds in churches, and club life".[68] As for the local population: "At the same time the Egyptian yields the officers the sincerest form of flattery: he races because they race; he drives tandems because they drive; he plays tennis because some of them play tennis; and he would play polo, golf, and cricket, if those games did not demand qualities which he does not

[61] W, "Rough Shooting in the Nile Delta", *The Scottish Field*, April 18, 1900, 15
[62] G. G. H. "Shooting in Egypt", *Baily's Magazine of Sports and Pastimes*, Volume LXXIII, January 1900, 34
[63] Reynolds-Ball 130
[64] "A Welcome Donation", *The African World*, August 4, 1906, 671. Naturally, yachting was more popular in the coastal city of Alexandria. See, for example, "Doings in Society", *The African World*, May 21, 1904, 86.
[65] Mostyn 135
[66] *Wilfrid Blunt* 3
[67] The Sladen Manuscripts, SLA 12, Richmond Local Studies Library, 1912
[68] Sladen "Egypt" 503

possess."[69] He also argued that, for the Egyptian, "the chief pleasure he takes even in a football match is cheating."[70]

The sophistication and quality of the elite British club soon became a point of pride within the narrative of sporting life in Egypt. In 1889, Sandwith noted "about fifty acres of grass belonging to the Ghezireh Sporting Club, and devoted to polo, cricket, football, golf, lawn-tennis, pigeon-shooting, etc. There is a course for riding and for leaping, and every winter there are two race meetings of two days each, three skye meetings, and six of seven Gymkhanas."[71] In the summer months, he added, "after 4 p.m. every Englishman goes out to ride, drive, golf, or lawn-tennis, and the British soldier plays cricket and football."[72]

A program for a January 1893 festival at the Gezira Club, meanwhile, utilized the entire front cover to list its distinguished patrons, including the Khedive himself.[73] While token gestures were made to less elite pursuits, such as the inclusion of a walking race or tug-of-war competition, the vast majority of the program was occupied by sports that had significant financial barriers, such as polo[74] and horse racing.[75] A survey of "Cairo's Clubs" in the November 26, 1904 edition of *African World* noted the Gezira Club as "a pleasant social rendezvous" that possessed "extensive grounds where polo, golf, and croquet are played," and commended it for its facilitation of a ladies' club.[76] Sladen also offers a lengthy description of

[69] ibid 159
[70] Ibid 82
[71] Sandwith 65
[72] ibid 41
[73] Khedival Sporting Club – Programme of a Skye Meeting, Hampshire Archives and Local Studies, January 27, 1893
[74] Griffiths, Major Arthur, "The Affair at Abu-Simbel", *Baily's Magazine of Sports and Pastimes*, Volume LXVI, August 1896, 130-135
[75] Khedival Sporting Club – Programme of a Gymkhana Meeting, Hampshire Archives and Local Studies, April 1, 1893
[76] "Cairo's Clubs", *The African World*, November 26, 1904, 108

this club, arguing that "no fault can be found" in what it has to offer to the British residents.[77] As early as 1893, *The Egyptian Gazette* expressed dismay that Egypt's clubs were overlooked in a recent publication:

> We received by the mail that arrived this morning from England an attractively got up booklet entitled 'Clubs, 1893, A list of Clubs frequented by the English in all parts of the World, by E. C. Austen Leigh.' […] We at once looked at page 36 where, under the heading of Egypt, we found 'Algiers, English Club, Mustapha Superieur, Cairo, 'Club Khedivial.' That was all! We were not previously aware that Algiers was in Egypt and the compiler has evidently not heard of the Mohamed Aly and Khedivial Club at Alexandria, or the Turf Club at Cairo, or of the Port-Said Club at the port of that name.[78]

These clubs excluded Egyptians: "Up to 80 percent of members were either British officials and their families or Anglo-Egyptians […] The rest were 'foreigners' [who] had lived in Egypt for a longer period. By far the smallest and most insignificant class of members was that of the aristocratic Egyptian families."[79]

Local hotels were also expected to provide world-class sporting facilities to bolster social life,[80] and discussions of these establishments almost always included to reference to what sorts of recreational pursuits were available. As early as 1889, Shepheard's Hotel had a lawn-tennis court available for recreational use.[81] A review of "Local Hotels" in the January 9, 1904 edition of *The African World* notes in relation to the Mena House Hotel that "[a] very large marble swimming bath is attached to the hotel, whilst tennis, golf and horse riding can be enjoyed throughout the winter. During the season pony races, gymkhanas and dances are organised by the management of the hotel".[82] The Ghezereh Palace Hotel, meanwhile, was "situated just off the

[77] Sladen "Egypt" 505
[78] *The Egyptian Gazette*, January 27, 1893
[79] Di-Capua 146
[80] Reynolds-Ball 122
[81] Sandwith 58
[82] Our Special Correspondent, "Local Hotels", *The African World*, January 9, 1904, 439

fashonable [*sic*] Ghezereh drive, in close proximity to the racecourse, golf links, cricket grounds and tennis courts of the Khedivial Sporting Club."[83]

By the 1900s, events at sporting clubs, particularly race meetings, were among the most prominent hubs of British social life, and were covered extensively in publications oriented towards those living in Britain with an interest in the region, such as *The Near East* and *The African World*. As such, they often served as loci for the gathering of societal elites, including members of the British royal family on their visits to Egypt,[84] and as sites of military tournaments that showed off the strength of the British.[85] Even venues designed primarily for use by soldiers had to maintain strict standards of quality, as they were often patronized by visiting British dignitaries. The visitor's book for the Soldier's Club at Esbekieh Gardens, for example, contains the signatures of numerous high-ranking officials, including Evelyn Baring, 1st Earl of Cromer, the first Consul-General of Egypt.[86] The inspection of a colonial shooting team by an important dignitary, including the British monarch himself, was not an unheard of occurrence.[87]

As attitudes towards what qualified as "sport" grew more lenient, a broader range of athletic activities crept into the narrative of sporting life in Egypt. From 1893 through 1906, for example, *The Egyptian Gazette* covered gymkhanas, racing, cricket, athletics, hunting, tennis, cycling, football, polo, fencing, and shooting. In reviewing, in June 1896, the inaugural edition of the Olympic Games, the traditionally more elitist *Baily's* was positive in its assessment, if cautious.[88]

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[83] ibid
[84] See, for example, "The Prince of Wales in Egypt", *The African World*, April 7, 1906, 467
[85] See, for example, Mansfield, Bernie, "The Royal Military Tournament", *The African World*, January 16, 1904, 553
[86] 1999-12-164, Visitor's book, Soldier's Club, Esbekieh Gardens, Cairo, 1902-1941, National Army Museum
[87] See, for example, "Points about People", *The African World*, July 29, 1905, 524
[88] "The Olympic Games", *Baily's Magazine of Sports and Pastimes*, Volume LXV, June 1896, 439-441.

This portrayal stemmed from the backgrounds of those covering the topic, as the most popular publications describing life in Egypt at the turn of the century would be produced by members of the educated, wealthy foreign class. Moreover, texts prepared for publication not only had to draw from stereotypical narratives in order to remain accessible, but also had to emphasize particularly "exotic"-sounding elements in order to sell copies. When "Arab games" were mentioned, it was often in the context of amusement for tourists rather than genuine consideration for indigenous sport. A representative example comes from *City of the Caliphs*:

> These races are called in Egypt 'a gymkana', and consist of horse, donkey, camel, and foot races of every imaginable variety. They are organised and patronised by the hotel guests, and afford great amusement to the natives as well. The most interesting event was a race between eight camels ridden by almost nude Bisharin Arab boys. The skill of these boys and the speed attained by those awkward beasts was simply marvellous.[89]

When one peruses private recollections and memoirs, the picture begins to grow more complex, while not altogether abandoning the hegemonic narrative. While stationed in Egypt, for example, Lieutenant J. A. Churchill noted several occasions during which "Arab" games were practiced within range of the British gaze. In February of 1906, for example:

> Well, in the afternoon we attended an Arab race meeting. It was not waste of time [*sic*]! far from it. There were races of every kind which gave these Arab fellows a chance of showing a big gathering of globetrotters how to ride!
>
> They race on donkeys (riding with their backs to the donkeys heads) Camels (standing up on their backs and remember a Camel goes like the wind!), buffaloes and horses. In each race we saw grand exhibitions of riding: No saddles of course, and the whole thing done by superb balance. There was a 2 furlong race open to visitors. Tom and I entered and selected two strong donkeys![90]

[89] Reynolds-Ball 340

[90] 1974-09-2, Bound transcript, spined 'Journal J C 1905-1906'; transcripts of 20 letters written between 30 Oct 1905 and 11 Mar 1906; the addressee of the letters is unknown, the sender Lt J A Churchill; compiled during a tour of India and visits to Egypt, Palestine and Italy, National Army Museum

Unlike members of the more elite British circles, Churchill and his companions were not hesitant to engage with these pursuits on their own terms, even if his accounts are patronizing towards the indigenous population and treat their physical activities as expressions of entertainment rather than physical culture. The fact that there were other activities outside the aegis of the hegemonic narrative, and that these activities were engaged in by the British, demonstrate competitive conceptualizations of "sport". The mere co-existence of these competing narratives, however, was all but denied by publications such as *The Near East* and *African World*. When it was recognized, the result was universally derogatory or patronizing. "My own opinion," remarked one author in an article about a hunting expedition in Egypt, "is that [the Arabs] lacked that spark of enthusiasm, which must be present, combined with courage and indomitable perseverance […] in order to make the ideal sportsman."[91]

It is worth noting, however, that the personal communiques of the elite British expatriate community do not differ substantially from the narratives that they provided to the public. For example, during a stay in Cairo, Edgar Bonham-Carter, who served among other capacities as a high-level administrator in Sudan, faithfully reproduced the hegemonic narrative of Egyptian "sport" to his parents in his letters home. Referring to his daily activities at the sports clubs on numerous occasions, he even remarks how "[t]he Sports Club is a very important institution for all Englishmen."[92] The journals of his parents, who visited in 1902, are replete with entries concerning their sporting activities in the country.[93]

Thus, while the narrative of Egyptian sport had branched out in the first two and a half decades of British occupation, very little had changed from the British perspective by the time of

[91] Lamb, P. H., "Arab Sport", *The Near East*, March 1909, 13-15
[92] 38M49/G4/2/11, Letter from Edgar Bonham Carter to his parents, Henry and Sibella, Hampshire Archives and Local Studies, November 26, 1899
[93] 94M72, Bonham Carter Family Papers, Hampshire Archives and Local Studies, 1902-1907

the 1906 Dinshawāy Incident. In an article entitled "Sport in Turkey" in the November 1908 edition of *The Near East*, "sport" in the Middle East was still considered to be synonymous with the idea of hunting.[94]

As Hargreaves outlines, however, a hegemonic narrative expressed through sport never assumes absolute prominence and is always being contested by rival discourses that force it to adapt and transform in order to retain its dominant position.[95] A hegemonic power, therefore, can survive only by adapting to the challenges presented by competing narratives. Moreover, Jacob argues in *Working Out Egypt* that attempts at imitating colonial discourses of modernity, when repeated over time, vary in their reproduction over the course of these performances and diverge from both the original and other indigenous interpretations.[96] Thus, while Egyptians set out at first to mirror British masculinity within their own country, over time these attempts resembled the foreign model less and less, particularly as they were influenced by factors other than the original example, and as they were performed by Egyptians without any foreign ancestry.

Such was the case with sport in a more general sense. The British disinterest in sport outside of their own elite milieus left an opportunity for both other foreigners and indigenous Egyptians to fill the gap and construct their own visions of what sport in Egypt – and Egyptian sport – could mean. It was these ideas that would establish the foundations of the various narratives that would contest for hegemony over the country's sporting life through the First World War. In order to fully comprehend the hegemonic narrative, one must understand both how it functioned and how it responded to the challenges posed by competing discourses.

[94] Whittall, Sir William, "Sport in Turkey", *The Near East*, November 1908, 282-284
[95] Hargreaves 7
[96] Jacob 5-6

By observing, reproducing, and reinterpreting these frameworks and their concomitant discourse, as performed by prominent locals of foreign ancestry such as Demetrius Casdagli, Egyptians during this period were experimenting with the different ways in which physical culture could function as an authentic reflection of their own identity. The emergence of competing narratives that attempted to express the many perspectives of Egyptian life was the first step in the process of coalescing a unified representation of what it meant to be "Egyptian".

The Egyptian View of Sport

Contemporary sources provide a clear dismissal of the notion that the country's indigenous inhabitants were late to the party in terms of modern sport. In November 1924, *Al-ahrām* noted evidence of Egyptians organizing football as early as 1885, within three years of the British occupation.[97] In February 1956, *Al-mal'ab,* a publication touting itself as a "weekly, technical, cultural sports journal", traced the origins of the first "Egyptian" team to 1890.[98] Zatmah notes the earliest reference in an Egyptian periodical to locals playing the game occurred in 1895; the tone and content of that report indicates clearly that the game had been organized at an indigenous level well before that time.[99] Murat Yıldız argues that "starting in the 1890s, Cairo's Arabic press started to feature irregular articles on sports clubs, sport, and physical exercise."[100] Yet another chronicler noted that a government employee by the name of Muḥmmad Afandī Nāshid came up with the idea of putting together a team to compete against the British in 1895.[101]

[97] *Al-ahrām*, November 21, 1924, 8
[98] "Mundh Niṣf Qarn – Nugum Kurat Al-Qadm Fi Miṣr" (Half a Century Ago, Football Stars in Egypt), *Al-mal'ab*, February 24, 1956, 3
[99] Zatmah 25-26
[100] Yıldız 22
[101] Thābit 78

Scholar David Goldblatt expands upon these origin stories, arguing that "rather than using its accumulated cultural and political capital to reject or resist the emergence of football – as Ottomans had in Istanbul – the Egyptian ruling class embraced and excelled at the game."[102] Sport was often acknowledged as an important tool of empire that built indigenous support for a British occupation with a limited presence by "Westernizing" key, elite segments of the local population. In 1930, for example, one correspondent for *The Manchester Guardian*, claimed that "[n]ext in importance to the Crown, royal visits, and the representation of the Crown by Dominion Governors we out here would place international sport as an effective bond of Empire."[103] As a typical example, in 1919 the manager of the National Bank of Egypt in Khartoum was celebrated for his services to the British Empire in finance, military service, and, of course, sport.[104]

Given the pretense that their occupation was ephemeral, if extant at all, however, the British had no desire to coopt societal elites through sport. Unlike in India, where indigenous elites were taught "gentlemanly" games such as cricket as part of a project to invest them as members of British high society and thus ensure powerful local support for their rule, the Egyptian upper classes were granted no substantial opportunities to engage in the sports of the occupiers.

Most coverage of Arab attempts at engaging western sport were therefore exercises in derision and mockery and only in rare cases, such as the following letter to the editor of *The Egyptian Gazette*, was the possibility of Egyptians adapting British sport successfully even suggested:

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[102] Goldblatt 485
[103] "True Bonds of Empire", *The Manchester Guardian*, April 2, 1930, 11
[104] Our Own Correspondent, "Visitors to Khartoum", *The Near East*, March 13, 1919, 224

> English games are racy of their soil, and their success depends on *good temper* and *fair play* in the fullest sense of those terms. Without these two elements, football and cricket cease to be English games. Thus (according to my view) the Egyptian lads will need a gentle control in their English games, and this control is only possible by engaging an Englishman in the first place as master to teach them our language.[105]

It was, therefore, not surprising that the urbanized, educated middle-class[106] intellectuals, referred to often as the *'afandiya*, took up pursuits such as football, which were shunned in the early days of the occupation by elite Britons as "popular" sports, as their gateway to modern sport. Egypt thus followed a similar path as much of British-occupied Africa: "since it was inconceivable for the local elite to play a large part in these clubs' activities, as in India, golf, tennis, squash, and above all the typical colonial sports of cricket and hockey never achieved the same popularity as in Asia".[107]

As Zatmah notes, however, the *'afandiya* were at first hesitant their children to take up football, specifically because of its association as a lower-class sport.[108] Even the introduction of the game as part of the character-building curriculum of the elite government schools in the 1890s[109] did little alter this perception. In many regards, the hostility was mutual. G. W. Steevens, in *Egypt in 1898*, engaged an anecdote that showed that schoolmasters had as little patience in teaching Egyptian children football as their parents had with them learning it:

> The only occasion when the Egyptian schoolboy gives trouble is at the annual sports. Here he is insubordinate indeed. When the first meeting was held many eminent persons were invited to see what the Egyptian schoolboy could do […] The eminent persons duly came; so did five thousand Cairo schoolboys, for the meeting was open to all Cairo schools. The half-mile was duly covered in three

[105] Cameron, C. D. A., "The English Language & Games", *The Egyptian Gazette*, April 6, 1893, 2
[106] Lucie Ryzova, has challenged the notion of the *'afandiya* class as a "middle class" in her chapter "Egyptianizing Modernity Through the 'New Effendiya'" in *Re-envisioning Egypt*. Ryzova argues that conceptualizations of the social position of this class experienced numerous shifts and that, although its members were presented as the "middle class" necessary for the realization of a modern, liberal state, this perception was not an accurate reflection of their material reality.
[107] Bottenberg 193
[108] Zatmah 24
[109] Reid 389

> minutes fifteen seconds – but, alas for the behaviour of the five thousand! They had come to see, and they meant to see; they evaded or overpowered the police, stormed the grand stand, and came swarming over its railings on to Lord Cromer's toes. […] Since then several powerful squadrons of mounted police have always attended the annual sports.[110]

Nonetheless, the author admitted that the Egyptian schoolboy "is learning to play football, and that will be good for him."[111] The hesitance on the part of the parents, meanwhile, began to dissipate as football took on its first associations with resistance to the British; the 1895 article referenced above celebrated the defeat of a regimental team at the hands of an Egyptian squad.[112] In 1900, three of the most famous schools, Sayidiyah, Khadīwiyah, and Tawfīqiyah, established football teams. From 1914 through 1932, except in 1919, governmental schools contested the Aḥmad Ḥishmat Cup to determine that year's football champions.[113] The sport's corrupting potential was only dismissed fully during the career of Mokhtar El-Tetsh, a superstar of the 1920s and 1930s who also excelled academically and was known for his morals.[114] The Egypt-wide Sultan Hussein Cup was founded in 1916 as the country's first national cup, alongside the Egyptian-English Football Association (EEFA), although it did not get broader participation until indigenous Egyptians were permitted to be involved in its organization the following year.[115]

Yet this was only one of the many perceptions of sport at the time among Egyptians, and not all members of the *'afandiya* bought into this narrative's value during the first few decades of British occupation. Lawrence R. Murphy, who chronicled the history of the American University

[110] Steevens 117
[111] ibid 118
[112] Zatmah 25-26
[113] Thābit 78
[114] Faraj "Abṭāl"
[115] Yıldız 33

in Cairo, noted that even at the time of the institution's founding in 1919, the idea of physical culture in general was perceived as a concern of the lower classes:

> No aspect of the early AUC program was more difficult to inaugurate or more popular once it had been established than athletics. […] If AUC was preparing young men to undertake advanced training outside Egypt, it thus seemed as natural to demand participation in athletics as to require courses in science, English, or ethics.
>
> Such ideas were difficult to propagate in the Middle East. Students were often unaccustomed to formal physical training and did not normally associate sports activities with a college or university. Some pupils associated physical activity with lower social classes and feared their status would suffer, while others were embarrassed to be seen partially clad in public.[116]

At the turn of the century, therefore, with Egyptians effectively barred from entering the sporting clubs, football's contribution to the growing number of narratives about "Egyptian" sport existed only in a fledgling state. Weightlifting, which would later become a crucial element in the nationalist attempt to counter the hegemonic British narrative of sport, was also in its infancy, having just begun to be taken up on a large scale at around this time.[117] With the British disinterested in encouraging the development of an indigenous physical culture, there was an opening for other interests to attempt to shape national sport in their vision. This opportunity was seized most fervently by Angelo Bolanaki, an industrialist of Greek ancestry residing in Alexandria.

Bolanaki was born on May 20, 1878 in Alexandria. His father, Christos, established a distillery in 1884 and Angelo was involved deeply in the family business.[118] Angelo was also no stranger to sport. He won a school tennis championship in 1896 and was the Egyptian 100 and

[116] Murphy 53
[117] Ibrāhīm 222. A national federation would not emerge until 1930, although it was practiced among more elite circles in the first decade of the 1900s. Ṣadqy Bey, for example, represented Egypt at the 1911 European Weightlifting Championships.
[118] Wacker 57

200 metre champion in 1899 and 1900, also holding national records in the high and long jumps. Considered by the Egyptian Olympic Committee (EOC) to be the country's first international athlete, he competed in track tournaments in Athens and Izmir in the early 1900s, and did not end his competitive career until 1906.[119] His athletic victories in Africa, Asia, and Europe led him to be crowned "the champion of the three continents."[120] After his retirement, he took charge of developing sport in Egypt and formed the first federation for sports clubs, the General Sports Club in 1907. A year later, he founded the Union Internationale des Sociétés Sportives D'Égypte (UE), which received royal patronage in 1910. Bolanaki, meanwhile, was appointed as a representative to the International Olympic Committee (IOC) that same year.[121] The governing body of the UE, at least in its early years, was entirely non-indigenous origin, as few, if any, delegates from the almost exclusively foreign clubs that constituted the organization were Arab Egyptians.[122]

Bolanaki's attention to sport in Egypt touched upon nearly every conceivable facet. Among his more visible achievements were his contributions to the building of a world-class stadium in Alexandria. Conceived in 1909, Bolanaki engaged in extensive negotiations with the municipality to construct a facility that would be suitable for holding international events. By 1911, with progress slow, he declared his desire to have the project sped up as part of his detailed plan to prepare Alexandria for a bid for the 1916 Olympic Games.[123] As part of this process, he

[119] Bolanaki 19
[120] Faraj "Rawwād" 13
[121] Bolanaki 19
[122] *Annuaire Sportif: 1913-1934*.
[123] He would later show an interest in having Alexandria host the 1936 Summer Games. See Africa Games Correspondence, 1929.

wanted the stadium to be complete in time for the city to host an international athletics competition in October 1913, to demonstrate the feasibility of holding the Olympics there.[124]

Despite being supported financially and spiritually by the Khedive, the project fizzled out and the IOC decided on Berlin as the host of 1916 Games.[125] Bolanaki did manage, however, to put together a competition known as the Pan-Egyptian Games at the smaller Shāṭbī Stadium, which some sources cite as being host to the first time that the Olympic flag was flown.[126] With the intervention of World War I, the Alexandria Stadium project was all but abandoned until after the conflict. It was not completed and opened by King Fu'ād until 1929.[127]

Bolanaki's influence and activities, however, were not limited to such grand projects. His surviving papers from the Egyptian National Archives demonstrate the vigor to which he applied his time to even the most minor of details, such as his repeated attempts to gain discount train tickets for athletes competing in national championships.[128] He was also extremely effective in turning Alexandria into Egypt's hub for sporting activity and gaining international attention for his efforts.[129] Until World War I, for example, track and field athletics were run exclusively by foreigners based in Alexandria.[130] Rowing existed in a similar situation, as up to 1907 there were only four clubs dedicated to the sport, all limited to foreigners, and all based in Alexandria.[131] He

[124] DAW 0069-011576, "Awrāq Khāṣāh Biīnshāa Īstād Al-Īskandarīyah" (Private Papers Relating to the Founding of the Alexandria Stadium), 1909-1917
[125] ibid
[126] Mallon and Buchanan "Historical" 213 cite these Games as being held in 1914, while Amer 26 notes that this tournament was held in 1913, and that the flag was flown at a separate ceremony "celebrating 20 years since the establishment of the Olympic Games" in 1914. Wacker 58 notes archival evidence suggesting that these Games were not even proposed until January 1914.
[127] DAW 0069-011576, "Awrāq Khāṣāh Biīnshāa Īstād Al-Īskandarīyah", 1909-1917
[128] Bolanaki, Angelos, DAW 0069-004110, "Mukābat īlá Maktab Al-'ām Liwizārat Al-Mūāṣalāt Bish'an Al-Īthād Ad-Dawly Liljam'iāt Ar-Riyāḍīyah Limiṣr wa Īshtirāk b'aḍ Al-firaq Al-Miṣrīyah Bilmusābaqāt Ar-riyāḍīyah", (Letter to the Public Office of the Ministry of Transportation Regarding the Issue of the General International Sporting Federation of Egypt and the Participation of Some of the Egyptian Teams in Sporting Competitions), 1923
[129] Our Own Correspondent, "Sports in Alexandria", *The Near East*, May 10, 1912, 4
[130] Ibrāhīm 208
[131] ibid 216

was also no stranger to building publicity, and credited working with the Egyptian (presumably non-Arabic) press as a major factor for his success in developing national sport.[132] This was all despite the fact that "Cairo grew in primacy over the second half of the nineteenth century" and was certainly the political center of Egypt in the immediate aftermath of the British Occupation.[133]

Egypt and the Olympic Games

Bolanaki's most enduring legacy concerns his contributions to the Olympic Games. Lacking any competition from the British occupiers, he was well-positioned to establish a powerful opposing narrative to the notion of sport in Britain being a purely elite, foreign pursuit. He was so successful at this that the EOC continues to laud his contributions to the development of sport in Egypt, even though they boycotted the 1932 Los Angeles Olympics to protest his position as the nation's sole representative on the IOC. Nor are they alone in such praise. In a late 2017 article in the *Journal of Olympic History*, Christian Wacker extolled Bolanaki's efforts in the Olympic movement in an article entitled "The Bolonachi Story – Egypt goes Olympic with Greek Entrepreneurship", which concludes by lamenting how its eponymous subject's contributions were largely marginalized due to the nationalist fervor and anti-foreign sentiment of the 1930s.[134]

To deny Bolanaki's role in Egyptian sport would be a difficult proposition, but neither should his efforts be overstated. His narrative became the most prominent, but other Greeks in the Egyptian community had already made their mark on the Games. Wacker, for example, notes the case of Greece-born George Averoff, an Alexandria resident, who was "the benefactor

[132] Bolanaki 25
[133] Hanley 132
[134] Wacker 63

behind the restoration of the stadium for the 1896 Olympic Games".[135] Equally notable was the athlete mentioned earlier, Demetrius Casdagli. Having lived most of his adult life in Egypt, Casdagli was a member of the Alexandria Sporting Club and, later, Ifitous Cairo, which, by the standards of the early Olympic Games, would pave the way for a claim that he was the first Olympian from Egypt. While such a contention may seem facile on the surface, it is bolstered by Casdagli's own assertions during his divorce, ones that, from a legal perspective, later proved to be more than merely self-serving.

Unpacking national identity as it relates to the early Olympic Games is not a simple task. Prior to 1908, "any members of athletic clubs were permitted to represent the country where that club was domiciled, irrespective of their own nationality."[136] Furthermore, as Yıldız has noted, indigenous Egyptians did join certain "foreign" clubs occasionally, which meant that being a member of such club did not automatically preclude one from being "Egyptian".[137] Rather than considering Casdagli as the first Egyptian Olympian, or even an Egyptian at all, he should instead be seen as a microcosm of modern sport's complex origins in his adopted homeland. This complexity extends to the 1906 Intercalated Games, which the International Olympic Committee has rejected as an official edition of the Olympic Games. The consensus of Olympic historians, however, is that not only should the 1906 tournament be considered official, but that it is responsible for saving the Olympic movement after the coopting of the Games by outside interests in 1900 and 1904 led to a loss of faith in the future of the tournament.[138] It is, therefore, worth considering this event as an important milestone in the development of the global sporting

[135] ibid 56
[136] Mallon and Buchanan "1908", 17
[137] Yıldız 18-19
[138] In 1900, the organizers of a Paris world fair relegated the Olympics to a minor part of the exposition. In 1904, the organizers of the St. Louis Louisiana Purchase Expedition threatened to hold a rival tournament if Chicago, who had originally been granted the Games, did not hand them over to St. Louis. Chicago acquiesced, and the Olympics became a footnote to the larger fair. Lennartz 19, 35, and 37

movement. At this tournament, Casdagli is listed in the official report as Greek, although it would have been more accurate to say that he was British.[139]

Two other competitors, however, were listed as competing for Egypt. The first, Arthur Pitt-Marson, was a Briton resident in Egypt as part of the civil service. He competed relatively unsuccessfully in both the marathon and the five-mile race, but garnered more success locally through the end of the decade. Although he represented an Egyptian club, which perhaps led to his designation a competitor from Egypt in the official report, all other contemporary accounts identify him distinctly as an Englishman.[140] The other athlete, Eugène Colombani, was a member of an Italian club in Egypt and took part in two cycling events, as well as Greco-Roman wrestling, with limited success. He continued his career in sport until the end of the decade, and was president of the Sports Cercle Athletique of Cairo from at least 1911 through 1914.[141]

The rejection by the IOC in 1949 of the 1906 tournament as an official edition of the Olympic Games[142] obviated the surface question of whether or not Pitt-Marson or Colombani should be considered Egypt's first Olympians. Even if this were not the case, however, it would appear self-evident that they would hold that distinction in a technical sense only. James E. Sullivan, for example, who attended the event in Athens as the American Commissioner, did not

[139] Interestingly, the IOC lists him and his very much Greek partner competing as a "mixed team" in the doubles tournament of the 1896 Athens Olympics. Casdagli's Alexandria-born younger brother, Xenophon, living in England at the time, is also listed as Greek.
[140] Our Own Correspondent, "The Cairo Season", *The African World*, February 27, 1909, 186.
[141] See "Brigade of Guards", *Army and Navy Gazette*, September 23, 1911, 12, as well as *Annuaire Sportif: 1913-1914*, 107
[142] According to Lennartz 1: "When the IOC member, the Hungarian historian Ferenc Mezö proposed a motion at the 41st session 1948 in London to recognise the event in Athens 1906 as "*IIIb Olympic Games*" the assembly transferred the appeal to the so-called *Brundage Commission*. The committee with its members Brundage, Sidney Dawes (CAN) and Miguel Angel Moenck (CUB) met in January 1949 in New Orleans and came - without examining the sources - to the conclusion that it would not be advantageous to recognise the Games as Olympic ones. Accordingly the item on the agenda concerning the "*Acceptance of the Intermediate Games 1906*" was officially "*rejected*" in the 42nd session 1949 in Rome."

acknowledge any Egyptians among the runners at the 1906 marathon,[143] despite later mentioning Marson as a competitor in the five-mile race and as an Egyptian.[144] Ioannis Kollaros, who competed in the standing long jump and is listed as Greek in most sources, is noted as Egyptian in Sullivan's notes.[145] While Kollaros did compete for a club in Egypt, this is true of at least eight Greek competitors in 1906, including the Casdagli brothers. Xenophon, who won two tennis medals, is classified as Egyptian,[146] but his partner Ioannis Ballis was listed as Greek, despite the unofficial 1906 report noting that he was an Egyptian lawn tennis champion.[147] E. Parousis was another competitor from an Egyptian club, but he is also denoted as Greek for his participation in the javelin throw in the same publication.[148] The other four, including Demetrius Casdagli, were not discussed, and the report's main participation table does not list any Egyptians.

Sullivan also lists Colombani, A. Rudel, and Phillipe [*sic*] Nassif among the Egyptians competing in weightlifting.[149] While Rudel's background is unknown, Nassif, a Cairo-born Coptic Christian,[150] was likely of French origin, and might have been a serious contender for the first true Egyptian to compete at the Games. Yet there are no accounts, aside from Sullivan's, to confirm that he, Colombani or Rudel, actually participated in weightlifting and lift-by-lift results of the event do not include any of these competitors.[151] Overall, Sullivan lists five Egyptians as

[143] Sullivan 33. His description contains several errors, and lacks mention of the Italian and Swiss runners, so it is not possible to determine how, if it all, he classified Pitt-Marson. Regardless, the totality of his account his account suggests that the Egyptian nature of the Olympian was not considered noteworthy at the time.
[144] ibid 71
[145] ibid 73
[146] Ibid 111
[147] Savvidēs 119
[148] ibid 93
[149] ibid 103
[150] Chapman 145
[151] Widlund

competing in a participation table,[152] but mentions six in his account. It seems, therefore, that the classification of "Egyptian" at this tournament was, to say the least, flexible.

The issue of the 1906 Games is perhaps more important when one considers that the participation of an "Egyptian" nation in any form would have been an oddity. At the time, and until the outbreak of World War I, Egypt was still *de jure* an Ottoman province, even if it had been *de facto* autonomous under the Muhammad Ali dynasty for nearly a century. In his work on the 1906 Games, Olympic historian Bill Mallon discusses several such cases and notes that countries under the Great British aegis that were governed independently, such as Australia and Canada, were permitted to compete independently.[153]

Were this the case, this would explain Egypt's appearance, and with two non-indigenous representatives, such a situation was unlikely to rouse the ire of the British. One contemporary chronicler mentioned Egypt as being among the nations that participated in 1906,[154] but then several pages later noted the following: "The Games were then formally declared open by the King of Greece, who stood to receive the salutes of the teams of the competing nations, who filed past in the following order: "Germany, Great Britain, United States of America, Australia, Belgium, Denmark, France, Hungary, Italy, Norway, Sweden, and Greece."[155] At the very least, this indicates that Egypt did not march with its flag in the opening ceremony but, perhaps more importantly, it demonstrates that there was confusion surrounding the issue of national participation even at the time.[156] Finally, if any more indication were needed that the team was

[152] Sullivan 119
[153] Mallon xi
[154] Webster 195
[155] ibid 198
[156] One summary of the 1906 Games contains an odd account of Egypt's participation that year: "The Olympic tradition of black sportsmen from Africa was initiated by Egypt. As early as 1906, when the so-called Olympic Interim Games were held in Athens, three Egyptian weight lifters tried their luck. The strong men from Cairo and Alexandria did not manage to win one of the coveted Olympic medals but their Olympic début is still remarkable to-day." One Greek weightlifter, Ioannis Varanakis, is listed as having represented a club in Alexandria, but otherwise,

not truly “Egyptian”, the entire organizing committee of the national delegation was of Greek ancestry.[157]

For the 1908 London Olympics more of an attempt was made to clarify the classification of athletes at the Games. As Bill Mallon and Ian Buchanan outline:

> A major step was taken towards clarifying, in an Olympic context, the definition of a 'country' and a 'sovereign state.' At previous Games any members of athletic clubs were permitted to represent the country where that club was domiciled, irrespective of their own nationality, but for the 1908 Games more stringent rules were introduced. A complex set of new regulations permitted British Dominions to enter separate teams and countries such as Finland could enter separately from Russia. The IOC was well aware that the decision they had reached was no more than a compromise and that they would have to review their position if, for example, Bavaria or Saxony made representations to compete as separate entities.[158]

This decision, agreed upon at the 1907 IOC conference in Den Haag, Netherlands, stated that a "'country' is any 'territory having separate representation on the International Olympic Committee,' or, where no such representation exists, 'any territory under one and the same sovereign jurisdiction".[159] Furthermore, "[n]atural-born or fully naturalised subjects or citizens of a 'country' […], or of the Sovereign State of which a 'country' forms part, are alone eligible to represent that country as competitors in the Olympic Games."[160]

There is no Olympian with even a pretense of a claim to being “Egyptian” at the 1908 London Olympics and thus, to return to the issue of narratives of national sport, it is the 1912 Stockholm Games that must be considered. In his memoirs, Baron Pierre de Coubertin, the founder of the modern Olympics, recalled that, by 1912, the IOC had successfully fended off

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as noted in Sullivan’s account above, there is no evidence to support the facts listed in this report, and it is unlikely that Varanakis, Colombani, Rudel, or Nassif would be considered “black Africans”. See Naumann 37 for more.

[157] Sullivan 173

[158] Mallon and Buchanan “1908”, 17

[159] Cook 171

[160] ibid 174

attempts at creating rival global sporting organizations, in large part due to the efforts and strengthening of the National Olympic Committees (NOCs). He referenced Egypt in particular as an example of this, noting how "the National Olympic Committees were consolidating their power. M. Bolanaki and Count Gautier-Vignal had formed committees in Egypt and Monaco, with the Khedive and the Monegasque sovereign agreeing to act as Honorary Presidents."[161]

Yet beyond this, Coubertin does not mention Egypt in his memoirs, save for a brief reference to their role in the cancelled African Games of the 1920s, although he did mention these Games as part of what he felt to be sport's potential for "civilizing" the continent.[162] This contributes to the murky history of Egypt's Olympic engagement in the 1910s and the degree to which Bolanaki's narrative of Egyptian sport, which is today the hegemonic referent for that period in the country, was prominent at the time. Nearly all sources, including the IOC, point to 1910 as being the founding date of the EOC, which would make Egypt only the 14th country with a recognized National Olympic Committee and by far the first from Africa; the next country from the continent to achieve this, Nigeria, would not do so until 1951. Wacker, however, produces convincing evidence from the IOC's archives that this did not occur until 1914.[163] If this is correct, it would not be the first time that Egypt's early Olympic history was misrepresented significantly by these organizations.

Numerous sources, including the IOC and EOC, report that a fencer by the name of Ahmed Hassanein represented Egypt in the fencing tournament at the 1912 Stockholm Olympics; the EOC even celebrated one hundred years of Olympic participation in 2012 based on this premise. Delving deeper, however, Mallon and Ture Widlund note that the official report

[161] Coubertin 135
[162] Coubertin "Colinsation" 12
[163] Wacker 58

lists all fencers who were entered into the tournament whether or not they actually participated. They continue by asserting that "Hassanein carried the Egyptian flag at the Opening Ceremony. He was the only Egyptian athlete entered in 1912. He is usually listed as competing in fencing, but there is no evidence that he actually competed, which means that Egypt had no competitors at the 1912 Olympic Games."[164]

Further archival evidence supports the claim that Hassanein never actually participated in 1912,[165] and that this was a later misinterpretation of his appearance as a flagbearer. A December 1939 letter from the EOC to the President of Egypt's council of ministers, for example, states explicitly that the country's Olympic participation began in 1920,[166] as does a memorandum from the National Committee for Physical Culture (NCPC) produced to support Egyptian preparations for the 1936 Berlin Olympics.[167] Moreover, in a December 1932 interview in *Al-abṭāl* (The Champions) Minister of Sport J'afar Wāly also noted 1920 as being Egypt's first Olympic appearance,[168] while the headline of the June 3, 1948 sports section in *Al-ahrām* (and many subsequent articles on the topic) was titled "Fifth Egyptian Olympic Delegation", and referred to the first four as having been in 1920, 1924, 1928, and 1936.[169] The discussions of Egypt's participation at the 1952 Helsinki Games also aligned with this numbering scheme.[170]

The misattribution of Hassanein as Egypt's first Olympian lends additional credence to the narrative of Bolanaki being the prime mover in Egypt's early Olympic history, as it would

[164] Mallon and Widlund 59
[165] It may be worth noting here that *The Egyptian Gazette* made no mention of his appearance at the Games, although, given the overall dearth of attention this publication gave to indigenous Egyptian sport, this absence would be not surprising even if Hassanein had competed.
[166] DAW 0069-004116, "Awrāq Khāṣāh Bijam'yat Al-āl'āb Al-Awlīmbīyah" (Private Papers Relating to the Olympic Games), 1930
[167] DAW 0069-004129, "Awrāq Khāṣāh Bilijnat Al-ahlīyah Ar-riyāḍah al-badanīyah" (Private Papers of the National Committee for Physical Culture), 1934
[168] "Al-wazīr Ar-riyāḍy Yataḥadth" (The Sports Minister Reports), *Al-abṭāl*, December 24, 1932, 10
[169] "Bi'ath Miṣr Al-uwlimbīat Al-khāmsah", *Al-ahrām*, June 3, 1948, 7
[170] "Miṣr Tashtarik Fi Dawrat Hilsinki" (Egypt Takes Part in Helsinki Games), *Al-ahrām*, March 18, 1952, 4

indicate the impressive alacrity with which he was able to organize an (albeit one-man) delegation to a world-class sporting tournament. This, combined with Hassanein's elite status (as will be discussed in the following chapter), obfuscates the roles played by other Egyptians in building sport in the country. With that being said, this appearance should not be dismissed entirely. It is notable that Hassanein was able to carry the Egyptian flag and assert the nation's presence on the global scene, even if it was under the special conditions outlined in 1907, which also applied to Finland and Bohemia.[171] As will be discussed later, the ability to demonstrate one's power on the global sporting stage became a critical component of Egyptian nationalist rhetoric in the 1930s. Moreover, while Hassanein becomes a more central figure in the next period of his country's sporting history, it remains noteworthy that he is an indigenous Egyptian, albeit from a highly elite social class.

The Foundations of Sport in Egypt

Indigenous Egyptians were active in forming competing discourses to the hegemonic view of national sport. In the earliest days, as has been shown, many of these narratives centered around football. By World War I, even the British admitted that indigenous Egyptians had demonstrated an impressive prowess for learning the game.[172] Perhaps this was due in no small part to their having it taken it up at a time when the British themselves were still debating whether or not football could be considered a true "sport".[173]

[171] Mallon and Widlund 20

[172] "Football in Egypt", *The Near East*, July 17, 1914, 377. Of course, the article does not miss the opportunity to highlight how the first players, though excelling in physical power, lacked the intellectual or tactical capacity to truly understand the game, until that knowledge was imparted upon them by the British. This is a recurring trope within such accounts.

[173] "Football", *Baily's Magazine of Sports and Pastimes*, Volume L, November 1888, 103-110 and "Football and its Critics", *Baily's Magazine of Sports and Pastimes*, Volume LI, March 1889, 143-147 do a good job of outlining this debate from a contemporary perspective.

The Egyptians, for their part, had no such compunctions. Zatmah notes that the "first exclusively Egyptian sporting club", the Olympic Club (originally known as the Government Employees' Club), was founded in Alexandria in 1905.[174] Having been given the opportunity to learn the game in government schools, but denied the ability to practice in clubs, the vast majority of Egyptians grew up playing the game on the streets.[175] As one player recalled, the culmination of this tradition was the establishment of an organization like the Olympic Club, as it became a home for those who witnessed the rallying effect of Egyptians taking on their occupiers, in the form of British regimental teams, in football, and even beating them at their own game. Soon everywhere became a potential space for footballers to train, practice, and develop, making the formation of such a club inevitable.[176]

Of the many clubs that were founded over the next few years, none would end up approaching the mythological status that would be bestowed upon Cairo's Al-Ahly Club, whose name translates to "The National" Club. In nearly all accounts, both foreign and indigenous, Al-Ahly was the team of the people and a bastion for anti-colonial sentiment and action.[177] Certainly, some of its "revolutionary" history has been exaggerated. Like all clubs of the era, it was founded by those wealthy enough to afford the investment, the *'afandiya* class, and intended to serve graduates of the elite government schools.[178] In fact, Zatmah notes that its original charter "made it impossible for the lower classes to join the club."[179] Internal documents from the early years show a pointed concern with payment of club dues.[180] Nor at its inception was the club exclusive to Egyptians; Europeans were members in the early days and there was no explicit

[174] Zatmah 42. The club's football team still plays in Egypt's Second Division as of 2020.
[175] Ibrāhīm 184
[176] "Ar-riyāḍah Mundh Rubu' Qarn" (Sport a Quarter-Century Ago), *Al-abṭāl,* January 14, 1933
[177] Alegi 3
[178] Zatmah 45
[179] ibid 50
[180] DAW 0069-004107, "Awrāq Khāṣāh Binādy Al-Ahly" (Private Papers of the Al-Ahly Club), 1909-1938

suggestion that it was to become a preserve for football-thirsty Egyptians seeking a home.[181] *Al-ahrām* payed little attention to its founding at the time, as there was nothing to distinguish it from similar organizations that were sprouting up across Cairo and Alexandria.

None of this should suggest that one can dismiss Al-Ahly's legacy. The founders of the club were, in fact, nationalists, and this would lead their organization to play an important role in the 1919 Revolution and beyond.[182] What it does highlight, however, is that while the ideas of Al-Ahly being central to the sporting life of "the masses" is important, it is only the most prominent of the many competing narratives that vied for a hegemonic position that would determine how "national sport" would come to be defined.

In part, this narrative of Al-Ahly's revolutionary roots likely stems from a need to cover up football's more exclusive locus, the government schools,[183] which were accessible only to those wealthy enough to enroll their children, such as the *'afandiya*. Zatmah remarks that, by 1910, it was these institutions that "had come to dominate Egyptian soccer".[184] The British too noticed that these schools were becoming hubs for physical culture. One observer noted that "[t]he boys take a passionate delight in their studies; when they are not in the class-rooms or on the parade ground they sometimes play football; but their favourite amusement is to drill one another, or practise their gymnastic exercises".[185] Even when referring to indigenous sport in their typically derisive manner, they could not fail to notice the growing importance of the game:

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[181] Ibrāhīm 185
[182] Zatmah 46
[183] These were institutions ostensibly open to the "public", but in reality accessible only to those who could afford tuition. They should not be confused with military schools, which were also centers for the indoctrination of British sports. See, for example, "Athletic Sports at the Military School", *The African World*, May 6, 1911, 866. The military was also a rare preserve where indigenous athletic achievements were acknowledged, perhaps as a way of demonstrating the "civilizing" effect the British could have on the Egyptian army. One article on an Egyptian Army tournament noted how "[t]he gymnastic display of the cadets of the Military School testified to the high efficacy of their training." Our Special Correspondent, "Egyptian Army Tournament", *The Near East*, April 4, 1913, 611.
[184] Zatmah 38
[185] Low 26

"These boys also showed indications of Western influence in their enthusiastic loyalty to athletics in the shape of football. I was told that this was virtually the only game which they cared to play, it being impossible to establish cricket or certain other European games."[186]

The most important player to come out of these schools in the early days was Hussain Hegazi. Hegazi was born into a wealthy family and, on the surface, led a life that aligned well with British expectations. Contemporary reports of his career offered unqualified praise,[187] while his obituary in the Egyptian Gazette, one of the first such notices in that publication for an indigenous Egyptian sportsman, noted that he was "a typical example of the sportsman and gentleman."[188]

Hegazi's performance of the British model of sport varied significantly, however, largely due to his engagement with sport on a more popular level. Despite his more privileged background, for example, he learned to play – and love – football on the streets of his local neighborhood like most other Egyptians.[189] He attended elite government schools during his youth and excelled in both track and field and football, but did so while building relationships with other Arab Egyptians rather than foreigners.[190] He began his higher education at London University and was only recruited to the more prestigious Cambridge University after people began to take note of his prowess in the game.[191]

During his time there, he became the first Egyptian to earn a full blue, as well as the first to play for an English football club, Dulwich Hamlet. Such was his skill that, by the time he left

[186] Cooper, Clayton 120
[187] "Mr. H. Hegazi, of St. Catharine's College, Cambridge, who played for Cambridge University against Oxford on Saturday at Association football, although not scoring himself, is stated to have been one of the two best forwards in the match, some of his individual efforts being quite a feature of the game." "Personal and Social", *The Near East*, February 13, 1914, 478.
[188] "Hussein Hegazy Dies: 72", *The Egyptian Gazette*, October 10, 1961, 2
[189] Faraj "Higāzy" 15
[190] ibid 24-27
[191] ibid 33

England in 1914, he had earned a reputation as the "King of Football".[192] As one Arabic biography put it, "he was among the most famous names known in England […] an unofficial ambassador for Egypt […] in a country that sanctifies sport and honors sportsmen and considers physical education among the greatest pillars of the nation."[193] Nor did he escape the notice of the English-language publications of the day. He endeared himself to one author by turning down a potentially lucrative contract with Fulham F.C. due to his loyalty to the much smaller Dulwich Hamlet, which appealed to the spirit of "gentlemanly" sport still championed by the upper classes of Britain.[194] Such praise was not the exception during his time in England; local newspapers, as well as broader publications such as *The Near East*, covered his exploits routinely.

Upon returning to Egypt, after having raised the stature of homeland abroad, Hegazi committed himself immediately to improving the state of football among his countrymen. In 1915 he founded a team and named it after himself, recruiting future national squad members such as Ḥassan ʻAlūbah and ʻAbbās Ṣafwat, and took this squad on tour throughout the country. By granting the nation's nascent football clubs an opportunity to compete against more well-known players, including the "King" himself, and demonstrating that they could be taken seriously, he helped foster a broader engagement with the sport.[195] It has been argued that this tour, "was among the factors that interested the public in sport in all of the provinces and […] is considered among the reasons for the success of football in Egypt."[196] Hegazi later joined Al-Ahly and used his reputation to help shape the club as the "people's team", travelling to three

[192] ibid 36-27
[193] ibid 14
[194] "Current Comments", *The Near East*, November 22, 1911, 77
[195] Faraj "Higāzy" 42-43
[196] ibid 42

editions of the Olympic Games as a member of the Egyptian national football squad, albeit playing only in 1920 and 1924. He also led teams in matches against the British occupiers, and his victories, literally beating the English at their own game, became a symbol of resistance and the strength of the Egyptian people.[197] He continued his efforts after retiring from active play in 1932, serving as an administrator and referee.[198]

Hegazi thus drifted away from the British aegis voluntarily and used his influences to transform sport in Egypt, so that it could begin to be used to demonstrate the nation's strength to the world, and particularly to its British occupiers. Moreover, as he was an indigenous Egyptian, unlike Bolanaki, he was able to mold the final result into something that was more culturally authentic. Hegazi, however, was only the most prominent among the many Egyptians who were taking football and making it their own game; Zatmah notes that there were many similar teams led by members of the *'afandiya* class being formed and touring the country at this time.[199]

Even among the more elite circles, there are occasional references to individuals with Arab-sounding names succeeding in sport. In 1913, for example, an "H. Fauzi" of the Sports Cercle Athletique of Cairo was the Egyptian amateur heavyweight champion, while an "M. Bassiouni"[200] of the same club was the nation's heavyweight weightlifting titleholder. Kamel Saffar of "Club Milon" took several field titles, while "A. Khairy" was the 100 and 200 metres sprint champion.[201] While one can only speculate without further details, it seems likely that "A. Khairy" was Ahmed 'Abbas Khairy, who competed in those events, as well as the 400 metres, at the 1920 Antwerp Olympics. As will be discussed in the following chapter, the 1920 Games

[197] ibid 51
[198] Zatmah 38
[199] Ibid
[200] This is possibly Mahmoud El-Bassiouni, the Egyptian national champion in middleweight wrestling, or a relative
[201] *Annuaire Sportif: 1913-1914*

were the first with unambiguous Egyptian participation and Khairy's inclusion suggests that he had distinguished himself in athletics prior to sport becoming more accessible to indigenous Egyptians.

Centers of Sport in Egypt

Figures such as Hegazi, however, did little to catalyze change in the Britons' hegemonic narrative of sport, as the most prominent names in Egyptian sport were not Arab. Levantines and foreigners continued to dominate the national championships, the most well-known example being that of Percy Hobsbawm, the 1912 Egyptian lightweight boxing champion,[202] who went on to become the father of the noted British historian Eric Hobsbawm. This was not surprising, as boxing was introduced by the British and not taken up by Egyptians in great numbers until around the 1920s.[203] After 1906, the Egyptian Gazette continued to cover a wide array of activities, including track and field athletics, shooting, cricket, football, tennis, gymnastics, yachting, racing, billiards, gymkhanas, and polo, but began to pay attention to the different foreigners who were engaging in these pursuits. Nonetheless, the British remained dominant in controlling the discourse and therefore leisure time, from their perspective, remained very much the same. A 1907 report in *The African World* summarized the situation thusly:

> [W]e have certainly had a very full programme of amusements to fill our days. The Khedivial Sporting Club has been more than usually energetic, and under its new management we have had a continual round of entertainments, which have attracted all the world of Cairo to that beautiful ground at Ghezireh. There have been race meetings of all descriptions, military tournaments and sports, gymkhanas and polo matches, while the golf links have been in constant requisition, and the tennis tournament has had its greatest success for years. The same outdoor sports have also taken many people out to Heluan and Mena House, both places having grown rapidly in favour of late alike with those who are in perfect health and those who hope to acquire the same.[204]

[202] *Annuaire Sportif: 1913-1914*
[203] Ibrāhīm 252
[204] Our Special Correspondent, "Plenty of Amusements", *The African World*, April 27, 1907, 646

Sporting clubs also continued to develop as important markers of prestige in British Egypt.[205] The Khedivial Yacht Club grew "by leaps and bounds",[206] Cairo's wealthy neighborhood of Ḥalwān earned a reputation as having "the best golf course in Egypt",[207] and plans were drawn up "for the creation of a jockey club for Egypt, on the same lines as the English Jockey Club."[208] In general, as one observer put it, "it may be remarked that Cairo is well supplied with first-class establishments,"[209] while another noted that that was "an important side of Cairo, no doubt. It brings in much money, and it helps on the process of Westernization."[210] They also remained visible sites for the patronage of distinguished visitors[211] and displays of British military power,[212] and were important loci for the coronation ceremonies held in 1911 in honor of the ascension of George V to the British throne.[213]

Nor was Egypt's other capital left out of these developments, as the elite Alexandria Sporting Club, founded in 1890, grew alongside Bolanaki's developments and rivaled the facilities of the Cairo clubs.[214] By 1909, there was "racing, yachting, and rowing, picnics, theatres, visits to music-halls, and café concerts",[215] and the Collège Sainte-Catherine held an "annual monster gymnastic display".[216] By 1911 there was a proud traditional of an annual ball at the Alexandria Swimming Club,[217] which had been founded in 1902 due to the need to train

[205] "Cairo" 336
[206] Our Special Correspondent, "The Khedivial Yacht Club", *The African World*, May 11, 1907, 48
[207] "Attraction of Helouan", *The African World*, November 23, 1907, 130
[208] Our Own Correspondent, "Personalia", *The African World*, July 9, 1910, 464
[209] Wyndham, Horace, "The Matter of Clubs", *Supplement to The African World*, November 30, 1907, 23
[210] Fyfe 21
[211] Our Own Correspondent, "Visit of the British Fleet", *The African World*, November 27, 1909, 180
[212] Our Own Correspondent, "Ghezireh Tournament", *The African World*, March 27, 1909, 358
[213] "Personal and Social", *The Near East*, June 14, 1911, 126 and Our Own Correspondent, "Coronation Festivities", *The Near East*, July 5, 1911, 192.
[214] Lamplough 127
[215] "Alexandria" 430
[216] Our Own Correspondent, "College de St. Catherine", *The African World*, July 3, 1909, 304
[217] Our Own Correspondent, "Alexandria News", *The Near East*, December 29, 1911, 224

people to save drowning tourists to the coastal city.[218] At the onset of World War I, Cairo and Alexandria had a well-established, and well-matched, sporting rivalry.[219]

At the same time, there was also a movement to found organizations that were less exclusive, at least in relation to the British. At the end of 1911, for example, a Cairo branch of the Y.M.C.A. sought to establish a new sports club, because "[t]here are many young Englishmen in Cairo whose means do not permit of their becoming members of the Khedivial Sporting Club, and who feel the want of a recreation ground."[220] One article noted the defining features of the Heliopolis Club, founded that same year, which "sprang into instantaneous success. The club contains all that is necessary to meet the demands of the average Englishman. There is a golf course, racquet and tennis courts, a polo ground, and a racecourse, where meetings are held regularly during the season".[221] This stands in contrast to the situation in Egypt less than a decade previous, when attempts to found a club more accessible to Britons living in the country met with limited support and eventually floundered.[222] Hotels too continued to upgrade their facilities, and the inclusion of recreational grounds became essential features for newly-founded enterprises.[223] As suggested by one supplement, designed to attract tourists to Egypt, the country was "the World's Playground" and it was "in hotel-life […] that the real axle of Egypt's great joy-wheel spins. The big hotels are more in the nature of clubs than of hotels properly speaking".[224]

[218] "Alexandria Swimming Club", *The African World*, October 21, 1905, 488
[219] See, for example, Our Society Correspondent, "The Cairo Season", *The Near East*, January 23, 1914, 389.
[220] "A New Sporting Club", *The African World*, December 23, 1911, 427
[221] "Heliopolis: The City of the Sun", *Supplement to The Near East*, January 23, 1913, 10
[222] Our Special Correspondent, "British Recreation Club", *The African World*, April 4, 1903, 388-389
[223] "A City in the Desert", *Supplement to The African World*, December 3, 1908, 51
[224] "Egypt the World's Playground", *Supplement to the Near East*, January 24, 1913, 6

Newer athletic pursuits were introduced to Egypt, or expanded, as well. The first pool for competitive swimming was founded in 1907, with a swimming federation following in 1910.[225] Ignored by the indigenous press, this sport was another preserve for foreigners, as evidenced by the names of those who took part in the regular competitions.[226] In 1889, one author had lamented the lack of development of the Nile,[227] but fishing soon became popular and was well-established by the onset of World War I.[228] Although it was ultimately limited in the Cairo area, it flourished in Alexandria.[229] Spaces for field hockey were available widely by the 1910s, [230] and more classically "colonial" sports such as cricket[231] and polo were practiced with increasing frequency.[232] A Cairo to Ḥalwān marathon was established in 1909,[233] a British Rifle Club opened in 1911 under the patronage of the Consul-General in Egypt,[234] and the city of Alexandria even inaugurated a skating rink in 1909.[235]

A pointed interest in developing tennis in Egypt also occurred at the turn of the decade, and courts for the game became signature features of newly established clubs.[236] Coverage of the sport began to take up increasing space in publications geared towards describing British life in the region,[237] particularly of "[t]he monster tennis tournament at Helouan, which takes place

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[225] Ibrāhīm 231
[226] See, for example, Our Own Correspondent, "Swimming Match", *The African World*, August 7, 1909, 28 and Our Own Correspondent, "Alexandria Swimming Club", *The African World*, September 4, 1909, 198.
[227] Sandwith 66
[228] Horsley 111-127
[229] See, for example, Our Own Correspondent, "A Nile Perch", *The Near East*, May 29, 1924, 552 and "Fishing in Egypt", *The Fishing Gazette*, February 24, 1934, 176-178
[230] Our Own Correspondent, "Hockey at Ghezireh", *The African World*, March 18, 1911, 384
[231] Coverage was sporadic in the first decade of the century, but increased noticeably in the 1910s. This included a visit by the famous I Zingari cricketers, as covered in *The Near East* between February and April 1914.
[232] Although these polo matches almost ubiquitously featured British players, "Egyptian Polo Team", *The African World*, July 15, 1911, 565 contains an interesting account of an Egyptian polo team consisting of members of the indigenous aristocracy playing internationally against English and French teams. This tour, however, is anomalous in the coverage of sport during this era.
[233] "Egyptian Marathon Race", *The African World*, January 2, 1909, 358
[234] "Personalia", *The African World*, October 28, 1911, 561
[235] Our Own Correspondent, "Alexandria's New Skating Rink", *The African World*, October 30, 1909, 604
[236] Our Own Correspondent, "Heliopolis Sporting Club", *The African World*, March 18, 1911, 384
[237] Our Own Correspondent, "Al Hayat Tennis Tournament", *The African World*, January 8, 1910, 486

every year as Christmas draws near".[238] One article hoped that the arrival of a new player from Cambridge University would help build Cairo's reputation as a new locus for tennis talent.[239]

This is not to suggest that the more traditional definition of "sport" was left in the dust. Horse racing remained immensely popular and almost synonymous with the term "sport" in the country. Until the conclusion of World War I, no recreational pursuit was covered more often than horse racing in non-specialist publications such as *The African World* and *The Near East*, which were largely responsible for spreading news and perceptions of the Middle East to the general British population. This was encouraged in large part by Egypt's second Consul-General, Eldon Gorst, who kept meticulous notes and clippings on Cairo's horse racing scene, entered his own animals into the competitions, and offered his patronage to the development of the sport in the country until his unexpected death in 1911.[240] This interest was maintained by the third Consul-General, Lord Kitchener, although his background as a military officer led to a bolstering of support for polo during his tenure.[241] In a 1912 Foreign Office report documenting Kitchener's patronage of British institutions in Alexandria, prior to his ascension as Consul-General, the author reaffirmed that "[a]s a whole our Colony in Egypt are of the gentleman class in Sport & Athletics, amateurs by instinct".[242]

Hegazi's story also underscores the reality that World War I did little, if anything, to slow the development of ideas surrounding "modern sport" in Egypt. One author has argued that World War I was in fact critical to the mass popularity of football in Egypt, since it was a rare opportunity for the general public to leave the house and gather during the conflict.[243] Much like

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[238] Our Own Correspondent, "Helouan Tennis Tournament", *The African World*, December 24, 1910, 380 refers to
[239] A Correspondent, "A New Resort", *The Near East*, December 6, 1912, 125
[240] Gorst Race Meetings, St. Anthony's Middle East Center, 1908-1911
[241] See, for example, Our Special Correspondent, "Polo Match", *The Near East*, February 21, 1913, 439 and Our Special Correspondent, "Polo and Tennis", *The Near East*, March 28, 1913, 581.
[242] FO 891/4, 1912 – British Institutions in Alexandria: Lord Kitchener's patronage of
[243] Ayūb 76

in the political realm, where an internal crackdown on political activity led the British to believe that the nationalist movement had been repressed, sport soldiered on. What remained visible, and in many cases, due to factors that will be discussed in the concluding chapter, was all that survived, was the hegemonic British narrative. *The Near East*'s coverage of sporting life in Egypt continued to focus on the effectively uninterrupted programs of horse racing in the country.

As has been suggested, the military and sport were intertwined strongly during this era, in large part due to the belief in Britain that physical culture was essential to the development of a strong fighting force. This connection was prominent even in the early days,[244] and grew only stronger as time went on. Military games drew crowds and attracted visiting dignitaries,[245] inter-regimental polo tournaments were held,[246] and regular troops, while not engaging the exclusive pursuits of the officers, were expected to be fully capable of demonstrating the peak of their physical condition.[247] Such exercises were often not mere games, but rigorous exercises that sometimes lead to casualties, such as with the death of Lieutenant V. F. Banfield while training in polo at the Khedivial Sporting Club.[248] It is not surprising, therefore, that, aside from a slight influx in the prominence of military sports, and the context,[249] that *The Near East's* coverage of physical culture changed little during this period.

A Cairo Y.M.C.A. program from March 14, 1914, a Saturday, lists billiards and tennis among the physical activities being offered among a series of debates and lectures.[250] This slate

[244] "Hunting", *Baily's Magazine of Sports and Pastimes*, Volume LXXXVI, November 1906, 419-421
[245] Our Special Correspondent, "Gordon Highlanders' Entertainment", *The Near East*, February 28, 1913, 471
[246] "Social Notes From Egypt", *The African World*, April 11, 1908, 471
[247] Our Own Correspondent, "Military Tournament", *The Near East*, January 24, 1913, 325
[248] Our Own Correspondent, "Lieutenant Banfield's Death", June 14, 1911, 120
[249] The British Rifle Club, for example, became an exclusive preserve for the military and was as much about training as it was recreation. See, for example, Our Own Correspondent, "The British Rifle Club", *The Near East*, June 30, 1916, 196.
[250] Barrett 30-31

of activities expanded and remained vibrant during the war, particularly after the founding, in conjunction with the Y.M.C.A., in August 1915 of the Esbekieh Gardens Club for soldiers. Reporting on the club in 1917, a Y.M.C.A. publication noted that "[s]ports are one of the special features there. Rink hockey and other matches are held, and any game new to one nationality is put on attraction."[251] A schedule for the week of September 15 through 21, 1918 listed swimming, roller skating, and billiards among the club's offerings.[252] *The Near East* noted the Y.M.C.A.'s work in this regard as well, also mentioning boxing tournaments as an activity provided by the organization.[253] Private memoirs confirm that there was no shortage of recreation during the conflict,[254] and that civilians remained welcome at most sporting displays once the imminent danger had passed.[255] One Englishwoman wrote to *The Near East* in November 1914 that "business is being done as usual" at the clubs;[256] just over a year later, she had the following to say:

> Social intercourse will, of course, remain at its lowest ebb. We shall, as before, dine occasionally and quietly at one of the hotels to speed some parting soldier friends; on our 'afternoons off' we shall fly to Gezira for golf and tennis, which are the things we miss more than anything else in the new circumstances of our daily life; we may perchance steal away to a race meeting; and now and again there will be other distractions, such as a concert or a variety show.[257]

By June 1918, with the end of the war in sight, the Alexandria Sporting Club was able to host a full program of physical activities in celebration of Empire Day.[258] Once the conflict

[251] ibid 117
[252] ibid 56-57
[253] Our Cairo Correspondent, "Y.M.C.A. Work in Egypt and at the Dardanelles", *The Near East*, December 24, 1915, 203-204
[254] 1998-10-151, Diary of 2/Lt Trevor Trought, 29 Oct 1914 to Apr 1915; with letters to his family written 17 Dec 1914 to 30 Sep 1915, and his notes on a trip to the Qalala El Bahariya Plateau, Egypt, Apr 1924.
[255] DE/Hl/F123 – 1916 – Journal - Of a journey from Egypt to India and back, including stay at Vice-Regal Lodge. 4 Aug 1916 to 14 Oct 1916
[256] "An Englishwoman in Egypt – Impressions", *The Near East*, November 6, 1914, 15
[257] "An Englishwoman in Egypt – War Time Impressions", *The Near East*, December 10, 1915, 155
[258] Our Own Correspondent, "Empire Day Celebrations", *The Near East*, June 21, 1918, 499

concluded, there was no hesitation in the attempts to re-establish Egypt as a center for sporting life. The Jockey Club of Egypt, for example, was working on its reconstitution by the end of 1918 and lining up official patrons to restore the prestige of their organization.[259] In March 1919 a "three-day athletic meeting" was organized, including "a five-mile cross-country race - the first, it is said, ever to have been organised in Egypt."[260] Field hockey, the practice of which was expanded greatly during the conflict, began to seep into the government schools,[261] particularly in Zaqāzīq,[262] although a federation would not be founded until 1942.[263]

Alternate Narratives on Egyptian Sport

By the time of the 1919 Revolution, therefore, the British seemed fully in control of the discourse surrounding sport in Egypt. Yet one year later, in 1920, the country sent its first delegation of indigenous athletes to the Olympic Games. In this sense, there was a shift in the hegemonic narrative surrounding sport that began to center perspectives around the physical culture of actual Egyptians. As will be seen in the next chapter, this change, like Egypt's "independence" in 1922, was a thin veil over continued British control, but it could not have been possible without a foundation of narratives competing against Britain's hegemonic vision. Many of these experiences, such as the culture of Egyptian street football, went unrecorded or have since been lost, particularly since major Arabic-language periodicals such as *Al-ahrām* more or less ignored sport until the 1920s. As football historian Shaun Lopez suggests, this dearth of material is regrettable, because the status of Cairo as a football capital today indicates that there is much that could be written about the history of the game there prior to World War

[259] FO 141/786/6 – 1918-1928 – Reconstitution and membership of the Jockey Club of Egypt
[260] Our Own Correspondent, "Army Sports", *The Near East*, March 20, 1919, 247-248
[261] Ibrāhīm 257-258
[262] ibid 184
[263] Faraj "Rawwād" 15

I.[264] The historical record, however, has left us with limited traces of what they might have looked like.

The stories of Angelos Bolanaki and Hussein Hegazi have already been discussed, and these remain the most prominent among competing visions of Egyptian sport. Yet even these narratives do not escape the frameworks established by the Britons, which locate the nation's sporting history in the north of the country, which is known as Lower Egypt, primarily in Cairo and Alexandria. Even in this region, while cities such as Ismailia took time to develop,[265] there is evidence of a significant, challenging narrative from Port Said, one that often centered around resistance to the foreign presence in the Suez Canal.

Such resistance culminated in the foundation of the Al-Masry (Egyptian) Club in 1920, which "unlike other teams of this Suez Canal city, included only Egyptian players, and was a symbol of national identity and independence".[266] This was part of a larger trend, wherein "[a]fter the First World War, soccer became an area where resistance to British rule was manifested,"[267] as being barred from clubs such as Gezira became a point of contention that led to anti-British sentiments.[268] Thus Al-Masry competed directly with symbols of sport's hegemonic narrative, such as the 1913 establishment of a nine-hole golf course.[269] This was intended to complement the availability of tennis and cricket that signalled the growing prominence of the city for tourism, commercial, and military purposes.[270]

Yet this did not mean that Al-Masry was beloved by all Egyptians. By 1940, despite its relatively small size, the club had succeeded in producing many national champions across

[264] Lopez 285
[265] Sandwith 14
[266] Raab 4
[267] ibid
[268] Harris 116-117
[269] "Current Comments", *The Near East*, July 25, 1913, 338
[270] "The Summer Season", *The Near East*, June 12, 1914, 174

numerous sports.[271] Its success raised the ire of the far larger Al-Ahly club who, as will be seen, were by then advancing their own narrative that placed Cairo at the center of the national "sporting renaissance" in the hopes of creating a unified, hegemonic series of discourse about the meaning of "Egyptian" sport. Port Said was peripheral in these narratives, and thus Al-Ahly in the post-World War II era worked actively to limit Al-Masry's influence.[272] The obstacles against which Al-Masry was encountering did not escape the public eye, and as late as 1951 *Al-ahrām* was lamenting that Port Said's "sporting renaissance" was being notably curtailed.[273]

Sport in the south, Upper Egypt, was not ignored entirely, and from an overarching perspective followed the same trend as its more urban counterpart in the north, beginning with an early focus in the region on hunting in the areas surrounding cities such as Luxor.[274] Even by the turn of the century, however, hunting in the region was considered far less fruitful than elsewhere.[275] Thus, as in the two capitals, hotels had to organize their own elite amusements, such as tennis.[276] Sporting facilities expanded in Upper Egypt during World War I as they did in the north. According to one account, "[i]n such centres as Assiut, Minia, Girga, and Sohag, there is a nucleus of English officials. Life for the officers was thus varied with a little gaiety on the local tennis-courts or golf-links."[277] Even before this, Aswān was noted for "entertainments

[271] "Andiyat Būr Sa'īd" (Port Said Clubs), *Al-āl'āb Ar-riyāḍīyah*, September 5, 1940, 2
[272] DAW 0069-004128 "Tilighrāf Min 'abdalraḥman Lutfy Bāshā R'ayīs An-nādy Al-miṣry Bibūr Sa'īd Bish'an Ṭalab Rafa' Shakwāhum Ilá Galālat Al-malik Min An-nādy Al-ahly Min Ḍam Lā'ibīn Ilīhu Yūsā'il Al-āghrā' Al-mukhtalifah Wa Ṭalab 'dm Taḥkum Hadha An-nādy Bimālah Wa Nufūdh A'ḍā'ih Fī Andīat As-ṣaghīrah" (Telegraph from 'abdalraḥman Lutfy Bāshā, President of the Al-Masry Club of Port Said Regarding the Request to Raise their Complaints to His Majesty the King of the Al-Ahly Club Annexing Players by Various Different Means and a Request for this Club not to Control Small Clubs through the Wealth and Influence of Its Members), 1946
[273] "Anṣafū Nahḍah Būr Sa'īd (They Saw Justice Be Done for Port Said's Renaissance), *Al-ahrām*, January 24, 1951
[274] Sandwith 128
[275] Reynolds Ball 259-260
[276] Lamplough 83
[277] Briggs 180

galore for the visitors, such as gymkhanas, sailing races, dances, bridge parties, tennis, croquet, billiard tournaments, etc."[278]

Despite a similar overarching narrative, sport in Upper Egypt was less organized, less ubiquitous, more geared towards soldiers stationed in the region, and more lenient on the types of pursuits that were considered "acceptable." A program for a meeting to be held at The Luxor Sporting Club on February 23, 1893, for example, lists the following activities:

1. Donkey boys race standing on saddles
2. Water girls' race, carrying goollahs full of water on head
3. Camel race
4. Ladies' and gentlemen thread and needle race
5. Gentlemen's whisky and soda and goollah race
6. Buffalo race
7. Ladies' donkey race
8. Horse race for Natives [barebacked]
9. Tug of War: Sailors of "Rameses" against "Prince Abbas"

Although derisive and patronizing towards the indigenous population, it remains a rare example of an acknowledgment of alternative narratives in the south of the country.[279]

From a different perspective, although "American sports did not get off the ground in Africa until after decolonization,"[280] *The African World* recorded details of a game of baseball being played at the American College in Asyūṭ in 1910: "The Americans have been training their students very carefully in this game for a considerable time, and the Egyptians have taken an interest in it for the past two or three years, and show much skill in the game."[281] This occurred over three years before two American baseball squads made an appearance in Cairo as part of a "round the world" tour.[282]

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[278] Our Own Correspondent, "The Season at Assouan", *The African World*, February 11, 1911, 51
[279] The Luxor Sporting Club, 8th Meeting, Thursday, 23rd. February 1893, commencing at 4 p.m. – Programme, Hampshire Archives and Local Studies, April 1, 1893
[280] Bottenberg 194
[281] Our Own Correspondent, "Base-ball at Assiout", *The African World*, December 24, 1910, 380
[282] "Current Comments", *The Near East*, March 13, 1914, 605

Trekking further south from these cities, one would reach the land now known as the independent country of Sudan, which at the time was part of Egypt officially, albeit administrated separately by the British. Sudan had been conquered by Muhammad Ali in 1821 and run jointly with the Ottoman Empire for the next sixty years. Religious insurrection then removed foreign influence from the region but, once the British occupied Egypt, they spent almost two decades wrestling Sudan into British colonial hands.[283] The power scheme over the territory, known as the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium, lasted until 1955 and was nominally a joint Egyptian-British venture, although it was effectively under British control.

In the early 1880s, a decade and a half prior to the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium in Sudan, *Baily's* ran a six-part series entitled "Sketches in the Soudan" that detailed, mainly, the thrill of hunting in the region. This narrative continued after the British took control of Sudan in 1899, and game hunting was featured as the primary "sport" in the country through World War I, taking on the role that horse racing held in the north. Publications such as *The African World* often covered the larger expeditions in detail throughout this era, while works of fiction such as H. Clayton East's *The Breath of the Desert* often engaged the hunt as an important part of regional colonial life.[284]

This emphasis is understandable when one considers that hunting was of a pragmatic importance to the administration of the region. One observer noted that the drop-off in this pursuit during World War I had a significantly deleterious impact on the country's finances: "It will scarcely come as a matter for surprise that the big-game shooting season the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan should this year have proved a comparative failure, thus further tending to impoverish an

[283] Sharkey 4-5
[284] East 29-34

already depleted Treasury, and occasioning additional depression in commercial circles."[285] By September of 1915, the situation necessitated an increase in taxes to make up for the budget shortfall.

Moreover, not everyone was pleased with the excessive hunting being undertaken in Sudan. In *Five Years in the Sudan*, Edward Fothergill lamented the state of such activities by 1911: “They shoot indiscriminately, and with the mere desire to kill; sport as sport does not enter into their calculations at all, and when an unfortunate fever of enterprise takes them up into the lands where larger game is to be found, they do more than thin the herds of antelope and gazelle than all the resident officials of the country put together.”[286] He had much more praise for the indigenous Sudanese who, unlike the Egyptians, were “for the most part, without fear, and love the excitement of the sport”.[287] Similarly, in *My Sudan Year*, Ethel Stefana Stevens, while having no objection to hunting on principle, complained of the wastefulness of hunters and their breaking of the rules: “[i]n the majority of cases these big game hooligans are rich and influential people, and fines do not worry them.”[288]

Game hunting was by no means the sole “sport” in the area. As early as 1904, one survey noted that "[l]ike most places under British influence, there are all kinds of sports. Polo, cricket, tennis, and even in somewhat uncongenial surroundings a Khartoum football club flourishes"[289] By the 1910s there was a 12-hole golf course,[290] tennis was popular, and polo and cricket were regularly accessible.[291]

[285] A Correspondent, “The Sudan Big-Game Season”, *The Near East*, May 28, 1915, 97
[286] Fothergill 47
[287] ibid 235
[288] Stevens 172-174
[289] *The African World Christmas Annual*, December 1, 1904, 191
[290] A Correspondent, “A Sudan Hill Station – The Charms of Erkowit”, *The Near East*, October 25, 1911, 611
[291] Our Own Correspondent, “M.C.C. v. Egypt and the Sudan”, *The Near East*, June 5, 1914, 142

The true hub for sport, outside of hunting, was Gordon Memorial College. Opened in late 1902, this institution took indigenous youth from wealthier families, "socialized its students and produced a shared culture – meaning an outlook and lifestyle based on achievements, interests, and assumptions".[292] As in England, part of this process involved inculcating the pupils with British games, which promoted values of team spirit but also encouraged students to seek individual distinction.[293] It also taught responsibility "by giving the elder boys special duties in connection with discipline and athletics".[294] As one scholar suggests, "Their engagement with organized football was, in some sense, an early exercise in mass politics and popular government. […] At Gordon College, this brand of sport promoted the team spirit that later invigorated the early nationalists."[295] Another historian noted that "[t]he fortunes of the football 1st XI were keenly followed. The 1907 report recorded that the team 'was never defeated by any native or Egyptian combinations, while it put up some credible fights against the team of British soldiers and officials'."[296] Football chronicler Peter Alegi also emphasized the college's importance:

> In Northeast Africa, Gordon Memorial College was singularly responsible for popularizing football in Sudan. […] Gordon alumni went on to form government departmental teams and, in the 1950s, took control of the Sudan Football Association - an example of both the role of Western schooling as a crucible for African nationalism and the resonance of football in the popular struggle against colonialism[297]

Thus, unlike in Egypt where the government took a hands-off approach in absorbing elements of the local population into its governing system, the actions of the British in the Sudan

[292] Sharkey 41
[293] ibid 46
[294] Our Special Correspondent, "Education in the Sudan", *The Near East*, March 22, 1912, 655
[295] Sharkey 47
[296] Jackson 211
[297] Alegi 11

resembled more closely their programs in other colonial domains. While the true significance of engaging Sudanese youth in these activities would not be realized until many years later, even contemporary observers could not fail to see its importance. As early as 1908, *The African World* took note of developments at the college: "To a large extent the boys of the country are trained on Western ideals, games are encouraged, and there is a good football team. The experiment has worked well, and the effect on the boys' characters is very encouraging."[298] Another observer noted that "the Gordon College boys can play an excellent game and often meet our regimental teams"[299] In the 1910s, discussions of athletic life at Gordon Memorial rivaled the coverage of game hunting in many publications. In 1912, the college even hosted a Ladies v. Gentlemen cricket match.[300] Moreover, its status as a center for education undoubtedly made it even more attractive for visiting dignitaries than the sports centers of the north, and the Egyptian Governor-General did not fail to visit and strengthen ties between Sudan and Egypt through the distribution of athletic prizes.[301]

The third loci of sport in Sudan were the British military barracks, which, outside of Gordon College, included the only opportunities for indigenous sportsmen to take part in British physical culture, although they were limited to track and field athletics. The strong presence of the armed forces in the region led, unsurprisingly, to the formation of numerous sport shooting clubs, which in turn resulted in the serious consideration of a Sudanese shooting federation as early as 1912.[302] In this respect, it was far ahead of Egypt, which did not establish a national

[298] "Khartum College", *The African World*, October 31, 1908, 538
[299] Stevens 57
[300] "Personal & Social", *The Near East*, January 19, 1912, 336
[301] See, for example, Our Own Correspondent, "'Old Boys' Day' at Gordon College", *The Near East*, January 31, 1913, 354 and Our Khartoum Correspondent, "Personal and Social", *The Near East*, May 4, 1917, 8.
[302] "Personal & Social", *The Near East*, March 1, 1912, 545

federation of this kind until 1950.[303] In this realm too, there were observers who possessed a low opinion of sport in Sudan as engaged by British officers:

> They find time to play, too; there is polo or tennis going most afternoons, some cricket, football for the British battalion, a little shooting of sand-grouse and gazelle and bigger game, bridge at the club, tea parties and dinner parties in the winter months, which is the Khartum 'season.' But all these are incidentals. Nobody is sportsman enough to live for sport in the Sudan; the social amusements are a mere passing episode of the cool weather.[304]

This contrasts his much more positive assessment of sport in Cairo, particularly at the Gezira Club.[305] Another account noted the failures of the British to establish quality football in Sudan, owing to the lack of suitable grounds and weather.[306]

By the end of World War I, sport in Sudan had followed a similar path to that of Cairo. Tennis, for which a club had existed as early as 1907,[307] developed, as it had in Egypt, in the early 1910s; by 1911, tennis was "the fourth of the five stages into which Khartum's day is divided."[308] That same year, another observer highlighted other pursuits: "One patronises balls and other gaieties, polo of the best, golf, rackets, &c".[309] During this decade, local yacht regattas also became popular,[310] cricket came to the region,[311] and an ice skating rink provided "evidence of the cosmopolitan character of the population of Khartoum."[312] A survey of the Sudan Times from 1917 through 1920 demonstrates coverage of horse racing, billiards, football, golf, track and field, tennis, cricket, and boxing.

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[303] Ibrāhīm 229
[304] Low 41
[305] ibid 159
[306] Our Own Correspondent, "Sports and Football", *The Near East*, October 11, 1912, 666
[307] Hall 416
[308] Fyfe 223-224
[309] Comyn viii
[310] See, for example, Our Special Correspondent, "A Regatta", *The Near East*, March 7, 1913, 499 and Our Own Correspondent, "Land and Water Races", *The Near East*, February 6, 1914, 437
[311] Our Own Correspondent, "Port Sudan Notes", *The Near East*, February 20, 1914, 502
[312] Our Own Correspondent, "Sudan Notes", *The Near East*, March 23, 1917, 479

As in Egypt, there was the suggestion of establishing a club for the benefit of those Britons of lesser means.[313] Unlike in Egypt, however, the latter effort bore limited fruit,[314] although less gentlemanly sports were not altogether absent. One traveler noted his engagement in running and wrestling, alongside riding, during a stopover at the Selima Oasis.[315] Sport could, at times, be as intensely practiced as in the north. In 1907, for example, a "boxing bout at the British barracks, Khartum, had a very sad termination. One of the contestants received a very severe blow on the neck which proved to be fatal."[316] For the most part, however, sport was more leisurely, leading to Fothergill's condemnation of the weakening and feminization of British men: "Sport is the mainstay of Britain; but sport does not consist in going week after week to see paid men perform, and the man who cheers loudest has, in all probability, never stretched his muscles in honest exercise himself; his sport (*sic*) consists of watching the game and reading an account of it in the daily papers the following morning."[317]

Summary

Other narratives of British sporting life in Egypt were even more marginalized than those outside of the population centers in the north of the country. British women, for example, had opportunities to engage in sports such as tennis tournaments.[318] One woman, in suggesting a daily routine for her Cairene compatriots, included "play[ing] tennis, a women's four probably, or a little golf."[319] She outlined a similar situation in Alexandria:

> In the afternoon the sojourner generally goes to the Sporting Club or to the Yacht Club. There are admirable tennis-courts at the Sporting Club, but if you are an insular lady you may unkindly wish that there were more British people present, for they are decidedly the minority. There is a good golf course. Race meetings

[313] A Correspondent, "British Sports Club", *The Near East*, January 5, 1912, 261
[314] "Khartoum Sports Club", *The Egyptian Gazette*, July 16, 1912, 5
[315] Comyn 301
[316] Our Special Correspondent, "Brevities", *The African World*, June 8, 1907, 261
[317] Fothergill 191
[318] Our Own Correspondent, "Tennis in Alexandria", *The African World*, June 12, 1909, 304
[319] Peto 102

> take place here all through the summer. […] The sailing enthusiast drives almost daily to the Royal Yacht Club, or to the British Boat Club, and gets extremely wet, and wins silver cups, and talks very learnedly about spinnakers and jibs. The Yacht Club is also used for afternoon tea-parties by very beautifully dressed Greek ladies, and it is a sad moment, upon her way to the dressing-room from the landing-stage, the enthusiastic yachtswoman trails past these sparking berouged multitudes, with her permanent wave in wisps, her legs quite bare, and her frock as wet as a bathing-gown.[320]

Perhaps surprisingly, opportunities for physical culture were not limited to foreign women. One historian noted that

> Physical education was initially taught during leisure hours by non-specialized Egyptian female instructors who were teaching formal subjects. In 1897 1 h per week was specified for physical education. In 1918 an administration was established by the Ministry of Education to supervise the teaching of physical education; it was run by the English until 1939[321]

He continued, however, that "[d]uring this period women's sports faced several problems caused by religion, old traditions, mistaken beliefs and a lack of specialized teachers."[322] Sport among the indigenous Coptic Christians was another narrative that was documented poorly.[323]

From the analysis above, it becomes clear that the discourse surrounding sport in Egypt prior to 1920 was controlled unabashedly by British gentlemen, at the expense of all other narratives. Indigenous activity existed at a greater level than traditional histories might admit, but Egyptians were by and large excluded from the realm of physical culture of foreigners. Despite the anecdotes introduced in this chapter that complicate the picture, even indigenous studies admit that such narratives were limited.[324]

Yet it was the very exclusivity of these pursuits that the nationalist sport movement would come to react against. After the 1919 Revolution, many of Egypt's oldest clubs that had

[320] Ibid 150
[321] Badr 46-47
[322] Ibid 47
[323] Carter 56
[324] Ibrāhīm 182

been managed previously by foreigners fell into indigenous hands. For example, Al-Sikkah Al-Ḥadīd, which had been founded in 1902 as a track and field athletics club for foreign employees of Egypt's railways, blossomed into a powerful Egyptian football club.[325] This development, combined with decades of practice and passion for the sport, helped the Egyptians field an experienced squad at the 1920 Summer Olympics. Bolanaki, acting as the head of the mission for the Egyptian delegation, related the positive reception the team received from the European audiences in his report to the Sultan about the Games: "the Egyptian team, after a very lively game, although beaten by two goals to one, was much applauded for its repeated attacks, its beautiful passes, and its overall game."[326]

In addition to the football team, as well as the fencer Hassanein in his actual Olympic debut, Egypt sent two track and field athletes, two gymnasts, one weightlifter, and one wrestler. Bolanaki noted that they "represented the Egyptian Nation very well and were repeatedly admired and applauded by the public. The result of the participation of these few athletes will be of great use for the future development of sports education in Egypt."[327] While the competitors themselves were Egyptian, the heads of the federations that sent them were not. Many of the relevant organizations were located in Alexandria, affiliated somehow with Bolanaki, and did not see indigenous involvement until the 1920s and beyond. One can only speculate, therefore, what influences individual Egyptians involved with these federations must have experienced.

These fledgling intersections between sport, identity, and nationality founded channels that would eventually allow ideologies access to a large audience in a seemingly apolitical fashion and fashioned an experimental realm in which different visions of what it meant to be

[325] ibid 210
[326] DAW 0069-004108, Bolanaki, Angelos, "The Seventh Olympic Games", 1920
[327] ibid

"Egyptian" could attract adherents, compete, and ultimately synthesize to produce a narrative of independence behind which a majority could rally. The multifarious origins of modern sport in Egypt prior to 1920, therefore, were critical in coalescing the ideal of a "sportsman" that transcended sectarian, ethnic, and class differences and, as will discussed in the following chapters, represented the nation on the world stage at the Olympics and beyond.

Figures like Bolanaki built upon foundations laid by the British and took advantage of the occupiers' disinterest to take the helm of Egyptian sport, which allowed more privileged Egyptians such as Hegazi to take part at previously unseen levels. Yet Hegazi eventually broke ranks and took his performance to the people, beginning the process of transforming the movement into something culturally authentic. A pioneer, Hegazi was only the most prominent of many Egyptians who engaged modern sport and provided a pathway for their countrymen to take these ideas and make them their own after the 1920s.

Chapter 2 – "A Shining Example"

In 2012, the Egyptian Olympic Committee celebrated the 100th anniversary of its participation at the Olympic Games and honored its first indigenous competitor, a fencer by the name of Ahmed Hassanein. As discussed in Chapter 1, however, while Hassanein carried an Egyptian flag in the Stockholm opening ceremonies, it is almost certain that he did not actually participate in the tournament. With the onset of World War I, the planned Berlin Games of 1916 were cancelled, and competitors of all nations would have to wait until 1920 to take their shot at Olympic glory.

Egypt, by the time of the 1920 Summer Olympics held in Antwerp, was officially an occupied territory of Great Britain, having had its nominal connection to the Ottoman Empire severed during the conflict. *De jure* independence for Egypt would not be implemented for another two years, but the Egyptian Revolution of 1919 had united the population in opposition to the occupation and a sense of a unified, national consciousness was at its peak. It is therefore not surprising that Egypt's delegation to the 1920 Games was entirely indigenous, its 18 members competing in fencing, football, gymnastics, weightlifting, wrestling, and track and field athletics. While it is unclear exactly how the composition of the delegation was determined, the decentralized nature of Egyptian sport at the time suggests that the competitors were nominated on an individual basis and perhaps confirmed by Bolanaki.

Aside from Hussein Hegazi, and possibly his footballing compatriot 'Ali Al-Hassany, Ahmed Hassanein was the most well-known of those who made the trip to Belgium that year. Unlike in 1912, there is no question as to whether or not Hassanein competed, and he served as the team's captain.[1] In the individual foil competition, he lost three of four bouts, emerging

[1] "The Egyptian Team", *The Egyptian Gazette*, August 23, 1920, 5

victorious against Denmark's Verner Bonde, but losing against fencers from Italy, Belgium, and the United States. He fared better in épée, winning five bouts in the opening round and coming joint-second in his pool, behind only the eventual gold medalist, Armand Massard of France. He emerged victorious in four of his matches in the quarter-finals, but this was not sufficient to qualify him for the semi-finals. He participated in the épée tournament again at the 1924 Paris Olympics, but did not advance beyond round one. In regards to his 1920 performance, the English-language Egyptian Gazette bemoaned the fact "that he was handicapped by lack of practice of a high enough standard to train him for this competition".[2]

On the surface, the participation of these athletes at the Games, coupled with the emergence domestically of a sporting infrastructure crafted and overseen by indigenous members, would seem to indicate a genuine shift to Egyptian control over sport in the country. In reality, however, these developments were merely a local face to what was not only the continued hegemony of the colonizer over sport in Egypt, but a scaling up of British interest in, and engagement with, the national sporting culture. Just as Britain's unilateral declaration in 1922 gave Egypt its political independence in name only, so too did the colonizer retain its controlling interest in the realm of sports under a thin veil of autonomy.

No sportsman better represents this duality than Ahmed Hassanein. Unlike Casdagli or Bolanaki, Hassanein was unquestionably Egyptian from an ethnic standpoint. In all other ways, however, he was "at every stage of life a shining example" of what the British wanted to cultivate in Egypt through their occupation.[3] Born in 1889 among the highest ranks of society, he was the grandson of the last admiral of the independent Egyptian Navy and the son of a Sheikh, attending the country's prestigious Al-Azhar University. He received much of his education,

[2] A Special Correspondent, "The Egyptian Olympic Team", *The Egyptian Gazette*, October 1, 1920, 4
[3] FO 141/1223 – 1947 – Propaganda: British: Effendi Class

including a year of law school, in Egypt, but eventually transferred to Balliol College, Oxford, which endeared him to British culture, as well as the practitioners of fencing. When World War I broke out, he attempted (unsuccessfully) to join the British Army, but nonetheless served as an aide to John Maxwell, who commanded the British troops in Egypt during the conflict.[4]

Hassanein has been credited with introducing fencing to Egypt after the war, which led to the establishment of the first dedicated fencing clubs.[5] He was also the first president of the Egyptian Fencing Federation from 1929 through 1934.[6] Between his two Olympic appearances, he gained fame as an explorer for discovering new oases in the Libyan desert. Afterwards, he increased his activity on the political scene, including serving as tutor – and later advisor to – Prince Fārūq, the son of King Fu'ād. He dabbled in aviation at the turn of the decade, but eventually settled into politics and served in various court roles for the remainder of his life, particularly after Fārūq ascended to the throne in 1936. He never abandoned sport entirely, however, and in 1944 gave a speech at a celebration in Alexandria on the 50th anniversary of the birth of the Olympic movement, where he praised Bolanaki's contributions to national sport.[7]

Of Hassanein, one Foreign Office report mentioned "[h]is knowledge of English and his charm of manner", even while remaining suspicious of his support for an Egypt free of British control.[8] These fears, however, seem to have been assuaged by the time of death in February 1946, when he was killed in a car crash that involved a member of the British military on the Qasr Al-Nīl Bridge. In a contemporary report, the Foreign Office noted that "the procrastination of the Claims Commission [in compensating his family] is bad for our prestige in a case like this

[4] FO 371/45925 – 1945 – Anglo-Egyptian relations: treaty revision: political situation: Egyptian Personalities Report. Code 16 File 3 (papers 3013-3216)
[5] Ibrāhīm 234
[6] Faraj "Rawwād" 179
[7] Bolanaki 32
[8] FO 371/45925 – 1945 – Anglo-Egyptian relations: treaty revision: political situation: Egyptian Personalities Report. Code 16 File 3 (papers 3013-3216)

when a British soldier is responsible for the death of an eminent pro-British Egyptian,"[9] demonstrating that the British considered Hassanein important to the legitimacy of their presence in Egypt.

A tournament held in his honor on April 19, 1947 at the Heliopolis Palace Hotel, and sponsored by King Fārūq, demonstrates the level of respect he inspired among Egyptians for his contributions to the national sporting scene.[10] The EOC's celebration of his role in developing Egyptian sport further shows that this legacy has survived intact to the present day. Yet even a brief review of his life and career reveals his support of British interests in Egypt, a commitment acknowledged and respected by the British themselves in both public and private documents. Much like Casdagli in the previous era, Hassanein exemplifies both the political and sporting culture of his time, nominally indigenous, but still well within the control of the colonial hegemony. For the first decade and a half after the Revolution of 1919, the narratives and ideologies that could be transmitted through sport formed a superficial national unity, but were ultimately restricted from developing into as an authentic cultural movement and a challenge to the occupying powers.

Political and Sporting Developments

By the end of World War I, Britain's heavy hand in Egypt had taken its toll on both the urban and rural population, leading to a hostility that was compounded by the shortages and difficult conditions that accompany major military conflicts. Realizing the potential to earn broad support for action against the British, an educated, elite segment of the population sought to

[9] FO 141/1213 – 1947 – Hassanein Pasha (deceased)
[10] DAW 0069-011589, "Awrāq Khāṣāh Biṭalab Nādy Alsilāḥ Almaliky Almuāfaqah 'Alá Aqāmah Lawhah Biālm Ḥassanain Bāshā Naqsh 'Alayhā T'aiziyah Malikiyah Wa Aqāmah Ḥaflat Alsilāḥ Alfranasy Alītāly Almiṣry Taḥt R'āiyaht Galālat Almalik Fāruq Alāwal" (Private Papers Relating to the Request of the Royal Fencing Club to Establish a Plaque in Sorrow of Hassanain Pasha, Engraved with Royal Condolences, and to Hold a French-Italian-Egyptian Fencing Tournament Under the Patronage of His Majesty King Fāruq I), 1946

exploit these tensions in the hopes of improving their own social and political status, which was restricted by the presence of the British.[11] The idea for such a movement was formulated by Prince ‘Umar Ṭūssūn, whose lengthy reign as the first President of the EOC lasted from 1910 and 1934, and Sa’d Zaghlūl. Zaghlūl was an excellent representative for a motivated upper class that sought to create distance between Egypt and Britain. Western-educated and politically charismatic, Zaghlūl was also relatively moderate in his outlook and did not seek any type of radical reform for Egypt.[12]

Nonetheless, Zaghlūl was popular among the people and perceived as being a champion for alleviating their plight. He approached Reginald Wingate, then High Commissioner in Egypt, in October 1919 and requested to travel to London “to discuss Egypt’s future status with the British government”, which, in Zaghlūl’s mind, meant independence.[13] Unsurprisingly, the British rejected this demand, and then arrested and exiled him, as well as several of his associates, for his persistence.[14] The British underestimated the broad base of his support within the country, however, and, within two weeks, they had a full-scale revolt on their hands.[15] Thus began the Revolution of 1919, which serves as a prime departure point for examining the shift in both political and cultural trends, as there has perhaps been no other time in modern history where the Egyptian population has been so united.

The British military soon restored order but, sensing that this could be only a temporary solution, the new High Commissioner, Edmund Allenby, released Zaghlūl and permitted him to travel to Europe.[16] The British government then commissioned Lord Milner to lead a mission

[11] Terry 71
[12] ibid 73
[13] McIntyre 17
[14] ibid 26
[15] ibid 29
[16] ibid 31

into "investigate the existing conditions in Egypt, as well as examine the causes of the 'present outbreak' and determine the future form of the British protectorate."[17]

By the time the "Milner Mission" arrived in Egypt in December 1919, tensions and discontent had risen once again. Zaghlūl was by then the leader, albeit abroad, of a political movement known as the *Wafd*, the Arabic word for "delegation", reflecting its original purpose as a representative from Egypt at the postwar Paris Peace Conference. The Wafd promulgated a boycott of Milner's mission for three reasons: because the problem was an international one, and thus bilateral negotiations with the British were unacceptable; because the mission was within the framework of the protectorate, which was seen as illegitimate; and because the conditions of martial law made it impossible for genuine discussions to take place.[18] The efforts of the Wafd to draw together all sectors of Egyptian society were successful and brought a more unified form to the national consciousness through its ability to foster almost near-universal adherence to the boycott "regardless of […] religion, sex, age, or social status."[19]

Given this combined front on the political scene after the war, it is not surprising that indigenous Egyptian sport was not only growing more prominent, but also attempting to bring together the multifarious narratives of the prewar era. The most obvious manifestations of this trend were the efforts of Hussein Hegazi, referred to contemporaneously as being one of "the pioneers of sports and technical journalism",[20] to raise the stature of football nationwide and use it to bring together the disparate segments of Egyptian society. Egypt made its Olympic debut in football in 1920, but lost its opening match to Italy 2-1, which led to their elimination from the tournament. They were, however, victorious in a consolation match of questionable Olympic

[17] ibid 33
[18] ibid 63-64
[19] ibid 188
[20] Faraj "Higāzy" 54

status against Yugoslavia, defeating their opponents 4-2. They also won a friendly match organized with locals prior to the Games, which the *Egyptian Gazette* referred to as "one of the new phases of sporting progress that one is continually running up against here."[21]

This international appearance associated, for the first time, the pride of the Egyptian nation with its performance in the global sporting scene. Yet there were also those who believed that the team sent to Antwerp was not truly representative of the nation because its members had been chosen by the EEFA rather than a fully Egyptian body.[22] Thus, by the end of 1921, members of the *'afandiya*, with the assistance of Bolanaki, had formed an Egyptian Football Association (EFA), with the express goal of raising the stature of football so that it could be utilized more effectively as a tool for fostering unity.[23] At the same time, Zaghlūl and the Wafd, while not as involved with the club as later mythologized, became associated with Al-Ahly, leading to its designation as the "people's team".[24] In this it was compared to Nādy Al-Mukhtalaṭ (The Mixed Club), later renamed Nādy Fārūq (Fārūq Club) and, after the 1952 Revolution, Zamālik, the name by which it is now known. Unlike Al-Ahly, Al-Mukhtalaṭ was founded by foreigners who were members of the Mixed Court system (hence its original name) and has carried the stigma of being the team of the occupiers, as well as anyone else opposed to the general will of the Egyptian people.[25] As Goldblatt describes it:

> Almost unnoticed, the street had taken to football and was beginning to supply a new generation of players recruited from the urban poor. Dangerously revolutionary ideas circulated in the same neighbourhoods among secular socialists and the Muslim brotherhoods presenting a series of challenges to the central axis of Egyptian politics. That axis lay parallel to the rivalry of Cairo's two leading clubs, Al-Ahly and Farouk. By membership and outlook the clubs

[21] "The Olympic Games", *The Egyptian Gazette*, September 2, 1920, 5
[22] Gabril "Egypt" 349
[23] "Al-wazīr Ar-riyāḍy Yataḥadth" (The Sports Minister Reports), *Al-abṭāl*, December 24, 1932, 10
[24] Zatmah 58
[25] Zatmah 60

> stood opposed: liberal republicans vs. royalist conservatives; the Wafd nationalist movement and its parliamentary representatives vs. the King and his coterie.[26]

Local accounts draw this rivalry back even earlier; for example, an April 1949 article in *Al-ahrām* traces the conflict back to World War I. The author argues that tensions surrounding the outbreak of the war in 1914 placed the foreign-run, British-sponsored Al-Mukhtalaṭ at odds with all other true "Egyptian" clubs, and that it was Al-Ahly who rose to the challenge of showing the true prowess of Egypt. The article also credited Hegazi as having paved the way in this regard.[27] Regardless of its exact beginnings, there was clearly a strong relationship between sport and national pride by the 1920s.

The development of Egyptian football was recognized by the ascension of the nation to the ranks of FIFA in 1923.[28] By that time, however, Egypt had already sent a national team to the Olympics. Eschewing the complications of determining what constituted a "nation" for the purposes of the Games, in 1920 the Antwerp organizing committee sent personal invitations at its own discretion, with the consent of the IOC.[29] Egypt accepted and the government refused to nominate anyone who was not an Arab Egyptian.[30] Although its athletes did not win any medals, Bolanaki was, as noted in the previous chapter, enthusiastic about the delegation's participation and its prospects for the future. Even the *Egyptian Gazette*, despite its overall disinterested coverage of the Egyptians during the Games, noted their prowess and expressed optimism "as the nation takes its place amongst the Powers, that, they too, will hold their proper place in the world of Sport."[31] One member of the gymnastic team that did not end up starting in the

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[26] Goldblatt 486-487
[27] "Al-munāfasah Alatī Aḥyat Kurat Al-qadm Bimiṣr" (The Match That Revived Egyptian Football), *Al-ahrām*, April 1, 1949, 6
[28] Goldblatt 238
[29] Mallon "1920" 5-6
[30] "Al-āl'āb Ar-riyāḍīyah" (Athletic Games), *Al-ahrām*, May 5, 1920, 3
[31] A Special Correspondent, "The Egyptian Olympic Team", *The Egyptian Gazette*, October 1, 1920, 4

tournament, Mohamed Zaki el-Faransawi, found another way to bring positive attention to Egypt by rescuing a drowning girl.[32]

The Arabic-language sporting press in Egypt, which, as will be discussed, became an important factor in national physical culture, was not present significantly at the time of the Antwerp Games. *Al-ahrām*'s coverage of the 1920 Olympics was limited, having not yet taken sport seriously as a topic of interest for the indigenous population. The situation was different by the time of the 1924 Paris Games, however, as sport had by then become a routine part of the newspaper's national coverage. Discussion of the Olympics in the publication was well underway by March 1923, over a year before the Games were to be held, with interest extending as far as the art competitions, in which one Egyptian, 'Ināyatallāh Ibrāhīm, would eventually participate.[33] During the Games themselves, *Al-ahrām*'s coverage focused largely on the fortunes of the football team, which was eliminated in the quarterfinals after being shut out 5-0 by upcoming bronze medalist Sweden. Nonetheless, Egypt's 3-0 victory against Hungary in the earlier round suggested that there was hope for even more success at the 1928 Amsterdam Olympics.[34] At this point, as will be seen, the Arabic-language coverage of the Games was already tied inexorably to notions of national pride and the country's overall standing on the world stage.

The 1924 Paris Olympics, however, yielded no medals for Egypt, though two competitors came close. At the time, the better known of the two was probably weightlifter Hāmad Samy of Alexandria, who finished fourth in the middleweight class and had also participated in the same

[32] "The Egyptian Team", *The Egyptian Gazette*, August 23, 1920, 5. Faransawi was the great-grandson of the French-born Egyptian military officer Sulaymān Pasha al-Faransawi.
[33] "Al-āl'āb Al-Uwlīmbīyah Wa Al-Musābaqāt Al-Faniyah" (The Olympic Games and The Art Competitions), *Al-ahrām*, April 21, 1923, 6
[34] "Al-āl'āb Al-Uwlīmbīyah Fī Fransā" (The Olympic Games in France), *Al-ahrām*, June 3, 1924, 8

event in 1920. In light-heavyweight Greco-Roman wrestling, meanwhile, a 19-year-old by the name of Ibrāhīm Muṣṭafá lost his round six bout against upcoming champion Carl Westergren of Sweden, leading Muṣṭafá to rank fourth overall. This achievement elicited limited reaction from the press, perhaps because wrestling had only become popular in Egypt that year; it would not be until 1933 that a national federation for the sport was formed.[35]

Nonetheless, Muṣṭafá would be elevated to the pantheon of Egyptian national heroes four years later, when he won the event at the Amsterdam Games. He missed becoming Egypt's first Olympic champion by a week, as Sayid Nuṣṣayir had recently claimed that distinction in light-heavyweight weightlifting and thus became associated, as one author put it, with the true opening of sport in the country.[36] A third Egyptian, Farid Simaykah, took silver and bronze medals in platform and springboard diving respectively at these Games. Perhaps of equal importance, the Egyptian football team reached the bronze medal match at the 1928 Olympics, only to be defeated 11-3 by the Italians.

Egypt's delegates also made several important contributions to the nation's international reputation in sport outside of the Olympics during this period. Ishak Helmy, for example, received praise in both Arabic and English-language publications for his successful swim across the English Channel on August 31, 1928 in just under 24 hours.[37] Edmond Soussa, meanwhile, earned acclaim for winning numerous world billiards titles in the late 1920s and early 1930s. After graduating with an engineering degree in Alexandria, he took up billiards, which had had a national federation since 1920,[38] and quickly displayed his proficiency in the sport. Although he moved to France prior to winning his first world titles, where he would spend the rest of his life,

[35] Ibrāhīm 247
[36] Faraj "Rawwād" 61
[37] Our Own Correspondent, "The Egyptian Channel Swimmer", *The Near East and India*, September 27, 1928, 360
[38] Faraj "Rawwād" 15

he had won numerous competitions in his homeland and was considered by publications of the era to be a true Egyptian.[39]

No account of Egyptian sporting culture can be considered complete without taking into account developments in the press during the 1920s. Discussing *Al-ahrām* in particular, Shaun Lopez argues that "thanks to a nascent national press, the popularity of football transcended regional and class boundaries and thus provided a widely accessible language for the discussion of modernity and progress."[40] Moreover, journals and magazines specializing in the coverage of sport were emerging at this time, and they too adopted the language and paradigms of Egyptian nationalism. While on the surface these publications appeared to be an authentic expression of national sentiment, beneath a thin veneer of indigeneity they reflected the continuing hegemony of foreign, primarily British, interests in physical culture. Thus, much as with the administration of Egyptian sport, the national narrative remained nominal and superficial.

Tracing the history of the Arabic-language press in Egypt, and reviewing the state it was in when coverage of sport began developing beyond sporadic mentions in the early 1920s, is essential to understanding its impact. Ghada Talhami asserts that "the struggle to establish […] modern Egyptian identity began at the end of the eighteenth century and spanned a century and a half. The process began with Muhammad Ali's push to establish better lines of communications with his subjects by reviving traditional Arabic, the language used in the official gazette, *al-Waqai al-Miṣriyyah*."[41] The press developed as a tool to Arabicize Egypt, and distance itself from its *de jure* Ottoman ownership, and was therefore relatively robust when the British occupied the country in 1882. It was also no stranger to attempts at swaying national discourse,

[39] "Abṭālna Fī Al-Mir'āh" (Our Champions in the Mirror), *Al-abṭāl*, January 14, 1933, 6
[40] Lopez 284-285
[41] Talhami 26

as “[b]y the end of the twentieth century, political parties used the daily press as an extension of their political party”.[42] Sladen, a contemporary observer, noted too in 1908 that the Arabic-language newspapers were highly developed and fiercely political.[43]

The British were not ignorant of this potential. One of their first attempts at swaying public opinion in their favor was through funding an Arabic edition of the English-language *Egyptian Gazette*, which had been founded two years prior to the occupation.[44] They made a more concerted effort to combat the views of the popular press through the establishment of the pro-British *Al-Muqaṭṭam*.[45] Press censorship, on the other hand, was not high on the occupier’s agenda when they arrived, as Lord Cromer believed "that though the Egyptian Press did much harm, it did more good,"[46] and attempts at repression would be more harmful than a free press. His annual reports paid little attention to the subject.[47]

Talhami notes, however, that while the British wanted “to lay the foundations for a free and unfettered press […] [t]he Egyptian press was multifaceted but hardly independent or free.”[48] Cromer’s successors, Eldon Gorst and Herbert Kitchener, were less permissive, particularly after the assassination of the pro-British Prime Minister Boutros Ghali in February 1910.[49] By the onset of World War I, criticism of the British in the press had been largely neutralized and the emergence of new publications curtailed.[50] With additional restrictions imposed by the conflict, one report in 1915 concluded that “the Arabic press has to a large extent

[42] Ibid 28
[43] Sladen “Egypt” 134-135
[44] Mansfield 214
[45] Talhami 42
[46] Mikhail 3
[47] Talhami 49
[48] ibid 41
[49] Ibid 52
[50] Mikhail 4

ceased to reflect the trend of Egyptian feeling in all aspects",[51] as permits to publish any potentially controversial media were increasingly denied. In the aftermath of the war, the Foreign Office considered both the press and literature as important avenues for pro-British propaganda, as spreading ideas and information across the educated classes would spur these individuals to inculcate it among the general population. In the realm of sport, scouting was mentioned as an important venue for this sort of propaganda.[52]

For much of its history, *Al-ahrām* has been Egypt's most popular newspaper. Founded in 1875, for the first three and a half decades of its existence it was considered the most professional and respectable Arabic-language publication in the country and this, along with its Christian background, allowed it to survive despite its reputation as a forum for supporting secular nationalism,[53] and being one of the most firmly anti-British publications at the onset of the occupation.[54] Press restrictions implemented after Ghali's assassination tempered the paper's most outspoken pieces, and a 1915 report considered it moderate and pro-British, which aided its survival.[55] After the Revolution, *Al-ahrām* "was also commonly viewed as the official voice of the Egyptian government despite its openness to views of the political opposition"[56] and, as another author noted, "[e]ven after the 1919 Revolution for independence, championed by Saad Zaghlul, non-patriotic Egyptian journalists continued to hold highest positions in the press industry."[57]

Until 1922, *Al-ahrām*'s coverage of sport was essentially non-existent. On November 1 of that year, however, an article entitled "Physical Culture and the Egyptian Newspapers" was

[51] L/PS/18/B208,"Note by the Aga Khan and M. A. Ali Baig on the Situation in Egypt", 1915, 6
[52] FO 141/582/2 – 1919 – "British propaganda to counter nationalist and anti-British agitation in Egypt"
[53] Talhami 45-46
[54] "The Arabic Press of Cairo", *Al-Megalla*, February 1947, 57
[55] FO 141/582/2 – 1919 – "British propaganda to counter nationalist and anti-British agitation in Egypt"
[56] Talhami 96
[57] Bendary 3

published, declaring an intent to print a regular and dedicated sports column in the newspaper. In justifying this position, the author argued that the responsibility of building sport in Egypt fell on many different organizations and people, each playing a specific role. The job of the newspaper included encouraging the process by sharing news from different perspectives, correcting misperceptions, and educating the population. Sport was important so that the Egyptian could conquer his own body by learning about nutrition, fighting diseases, and guarding against "disruptive aspects" of the soul.[58] This would claim the ultimate objective of bringing peace, as sport was a way to bring people together. Yet this path was not an easy one and required journalists to take a leading role in highlighting the benefits of sport and making Egypt a great country.[59] Literacy was not an obstacle in this mission, as articles "were often read aloud in coffeehouses and other public spaces, making [them] available to a broad cross-section of Egyptian men."[60] This meant that, as one observer noted in August 1924, although "the circulation of the most widely read newspaper does not exceed 40,000 copies […] [i]t would be a mistake […] to imagine that the masses are thereby debarred from taking part in public affairs."[61]

Coverage of the 1924 Paris Olympics, and the football tournament in particular, elicited much attention in the publication. Moreover, as with its other articles, *Al-ahrām* displayed no compunctions about being expressly political, particularly when Egyptian teams would battle the British on the playing field.[62] Lopez, who studied *Al-ahrām*'s reporting on the 1924 and 1928 Olympic football tournaments extensively, argued that the newspaper's articles were based on the idea that "[s]uccess in Olympic Football Competition would herald Egypt's return to its

[58] "Ar-Riyāḍah Al-badanīyah Wa Al-Ṣuhuf Al-Miṣri*",* (Physical Culture and The Egyptian Newspapers) *Al-ahrām*, November 1, 1922, 1
[59] ibid
[60] Lopez 287
[61] Hay, Lady Drummond. "The Press in Egypt", *The Near East*, August 21, 1924, 195
[62] Ibid 288

rightful status as one of the world's greatest civilizations, and a basis for the nation's modern renaissance."[63] Explicit mentions were made of football's connection to politics through lists of important Egyptian figures who were in attendance at the matches, a feature that was also notable when discussing domestic matches against British teams.[64]

Al-ahrām was not alone in its mission to promote sport to broader segments of the population. The 1920s saw a propitious rise in the number of Arabic-language journals dedicated to the coverage of sport in Egypt, a trend that would continue into the 1930s. Such publications were not an entirely new phenomenon; the first magazine devoted to sport, *As-sibāq* (The Race) was founded in Alexandria in 1895. *Ar-riyāḍah* (Sport) followed one year later, an identically named paper arrived in 1905, and *Al-āl'āb Ar-riyāḍīyah* (Sporting Games) was first published in 1907.[65]

Most, however, either emerged or rose to prominence in the 1920s. Like *Al-ahrām*'s sports column, these publications had the express goal of promulgating awareness of sport in Egypt so that it could be used towards supporting a unified national ethos. In the leadup to the 1928 Amsterdam Olympics, *Ar-riyāḍah*, for example, contained frequent criticisms of sport culture and justified its attention to the matter by extolling the virtues of sport to personal and, by association, national growth. Their reach in the late 1920s may have been limited, but it laid the foundation for critical contributions to physical culture in the first half of the 1930s.

Sporting Developments in Egypt

On the surface, therefore, sport and its concomitant discourses were drifting away from the control of the British and into the hands of Egyptians. This mirrored developments on the

[63] Ibid 291
[64] Ibid 292
[65] Ayūb 143

political scene, where the 1919 Revolution had raised hopes that the future of the nation would be determined by its people. Yet just as with these political developments, British colonial officials realized that they not only had to reassert their hegemony over Egypt, but they would have to disguise it as well.

The boycott of the Milner Mission, and its subsequent limited report, forced the British to finally take the Egyptian nationalist movement seriously, and thus they began negotiating with Zaghlūl and the Wafd to rework their relationship with the country. Unable to come to a mutual agreement, on February 22, 1922 Allenby issued a unilateral declaration that, at least nominally, granted independence to Egypt. The announcement, however, stipulated that the Britain would still handle communications, defense, matters related to foreigners and minorities, and Sudan, effectively depriving "Egypt's independence of its substance," since these restrictions would allow Britain "to interfere in the affairs of Egypt whenever she wished."[66] For nearly a decade and a half thereafter, the British were able to play the various political factions who approved and disapproved of this relationship off of each other, as well as the monarchy, to effectively control the political scene. Thus, despite the acknowledgement that this "independence" was a farce, Egypt's unity was shattered and Britain's hegemony over the country was maintained under a thin veil of autonomy.[67]

Nor had physical culture escaped the grasp of foreigners. The development of most sports in Egypt during this period fell under the aegis of either Bolanaki or some other foreign body. The sporadic praise of the *Egyptian Gazette* or international publications such as *The Near East and India*, aside from often possessing a patronizing or sardonic edge or repeating tropes of indigenous backwardness, was not a reliable indicator of shifting British perspectives on colonial

[66] Zayid 108
[67] ibid 195

sport. *The Near East*, for example, described the departure of the Egyptian team to Antwerp thusly:

> it is agreed that the men who left in yesterday's party comprise the flower of the athletic community of Egyptians. Sports such as those that they will have to contest in are as yet but in their infancy in this country. There are no traditions, no records, no ancient champions […] they have been engaged in games in which the standard of skill has been infinitely lower […] And so the team goes forth thus handicapped, bearing bright hopes from enthusiastic – but much younger – comrades and good wishes from every section of sportsmen in Egypt.[68]

Outside of football, the indigenous organization of Egyptian sport in the interwar period was, as an internal 1938 report explicated, "run by federations for the most part poorly administrated, practiced in the clubs equally poorly administrated"[69] and not taken seriously enough by either the public or the members, leading to poor funding. It was, in essence, "particularly backwards".[70] Most sport that was visible to the public and the international community, therefore, was still controlled by foreign actors, who often eschewed even a nominal indigenous role in administration.

A photograph from the archives of the American University in Cairo, for example, captions a 1920 game as the "First Basketball Game in Cairo" and, by the mid-1920s, the game had grown popular at the school. The institution competed in games against the American College in Assiut and the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) and, by 1930, attracted enough interest to allow for the establishment of a national federation.[71] The YMCA also helped establish a federation for volleyball that year, a sport in which the organization had promoted

[68] Our Own Correspondent, "Egyptian Athletes Leave for Antwerp", *The Near East*, August 5, 1920, 185
[69] DAW 0069-004120, "Awrāq Khāṣāh Bilijnat Al-ahlīyah Ar-riyāḍah Al-badanīyah" (Private Papers of the National Committee for Physical Culture), 1938
[70] ibid
[71] Ibrāhīm 238

vigorously in Egypt.[72] AUC students represented Egypt internationally and, as one chronicler noted:

> Physical training, individual competitions, and team sports elicited student enthusiasm for AUC. Few youngsters cheered or even boasted to their friends about the school's academic programs or its innovative extracurricular activities. Let the basketball team do battle with representatives of another college, however, and the entire student body would cheer and sing for their boys. The solidarity of the students and their loyalty to AUC thus often centered around the competitive athletic program, and the spirit that prevailed on campus set standards that other institutions tried to meet.[73]

AUC emerged as a prominent center for Cairene sporting activity, perhaps because of, as one photograph of the 1928 field day noted, "the excellent Egyptian winter making it possible to dispense with expensive gymnasiums".[74] The AUC Review began reporting on sport in its second issue in 1925, and the section soon grew to encompass a large portion of the publication, covering football, volleyball, basketball, track and field, tennis, cycling, and swimming. The good weather allowed for the extension of the cricket season,[75] which bolstered the development of the Gezira Club and its penchant for elite sport. The Egyptian Tennis Federation was founded in 1923 under the auspices of the Gezira Club, where it had been played since at least 1904.[76] Table tennis had a similar start in 1925, with a federation coming in 1931.[77] The club was also the home of the Egyptian national golf tournament.[78]

After a lengthy history in Alexandria (and a not-inconsequential one in Port Said),[79] the first rowing club in Cairo was founded in 1925, with a national federation emerging two years

[72] ibid 239
[73] Murphy 54
[74] AUC photographic archives
[75] Our Own Correspondent, "The Cricket Season", *The Near East*, October 4, 1923, 344
[76] Ibrāhīm 219
[77] ibid 220
[78] Our Own Correspondent, "Sport", *The Near East*, February 7, 1924, 136
[79] Our Own Correspondent, "The Regatta", *The Near East*, July 10, 1914, 342

later, although none of the clubs were open to indigenous Egyptians.[80] As late as January 1933, *Al-abṭāl* was wondering why Egyptians had champions in so many sports, but not rowing, and suggested that a club for indigenous Egyptians be founded on the banks of the Nile.[81] ‘Abdulmun’aim Mukhtār, who had entered the diving tournament at the 1928 Amsterdam Olympics after being told he could not compete in gymnastics as the delegation’s sole member (Egypt did not have a genuine national gymnastics federation until 1936),[82] founded such a club in the Giza neighborhood of ‘Agūzah in the Summer of 1932.[83] It soon failed, however, despite Mukhtār’s reputation as an indigenous sporting pioneer, which would have aligned his club well with growing notions of the “Egyptian” nature of sport.

Overall, the rising prominence of these sporting activities helped develop not only a sporting scene in Cairo that could rival that of Alexandria, but also raised the stature of the former city as an Egyptian political capital. Edward VIII, then the Prince of Wales, played polo on the Gezira grounds during his 1922 visit,[84] and Empire Day was celebrated for the first time in Cairo (having been feted previously in Alexandria exclusively) in 1926.[85] Even the officers of the Royal Fleet, who were traditionally more at home in the port city of Alexandria, began organizing many of their traditional sporting events in Cairo.[86] Throughout the first half of the 1930s, sport became part and parcel of the efforts of both the royal family and the military to establish their legitimacy and political power in Cairo.

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[80] ibid 216
[81] “At-Tajdīf Riyāḍah Badanīyah Kāmilah” (Rowing is a Complete Physical Exercise), *Al-abṭāl*, January 28, 1933, 16
[82] Faraj “Rawwād” 15
[83] “Abṭālna” (Our Champions), *Al-abṭāl*, February 11, 1933, 4-5
[84] Our Own Correspondent, “The Prince of Wales’ Visit”, *The Near East*, June 29, 1922, 859
[85] Our Own Correspondent, “Empire Day Celebrations”, *The Near East*, June 10, 1926, 652
[86] Our Own Correspondent, “The Visit of the Fleet”, *The Near East and India*, February 9, 1928, 164

Some visitors sneered at these developments and perceived them to be contributing to the decline of a once idyllic and peaceful city. Whether it was due to the city's transforming into something too European, or its increased accessibility by both Britons and Egyptians of lesser means, there were those for whom the city's increasingly cosmopolitan nature caused them to retreat to more exclusive enclaves such as Maadi.[87] Such perceptions were not helped by the occasional poor organization of these events, such as that of an Egyptian Army sports tournament in 1926.[88]

On the whole, however, developments in Cairo ensured that the British sporting clubs remained expensive to join, even if open nominally to Egyptians. As an extreme example, one member of a yacht club owed 350 pounds, well over $20,000 in 2019 terms, "in settlement of subscription as family member for 1935".[89] This was as true in Alexandria as it was in Cairo, despite the former's relative decline in sporting prominence. Overall, access was limited to "well-to-do Egyptians who exhibited an acceptable foreign culture, French or English mainly".[90]

Nowhere was the lack of Egyptian autonomy in the realm of sports more obvious in the 1920s than in the fiasco surrounding the attempts to establish a regional African tournament. In his memoirs, Pierre de Coubertin notes that he had been in favor of holding an "African Games" in Algiers in 1925,[91] an idea that had first been proposed by French colonial officers in 1923. Despite questions regarding how Morocco and Tunisia should be represented, as independent

[87] Hopwood "Tales" 10-14
[88] Our Own Correspondent, "The Egyptian Army Sports", *The Near East and India*, June 3, 1926, 622
[89] DAW 0069-011594 "Awrāq Khāṣāh Binādy Al-Bikht Al-Miṣry" (Private Papers of the Egyptian Al-Bikht Club), 1939
[90] Oppenheim 9
[91] Coubertin 206

entities or under the French aegis,[92] on April 11, the committee voted to adopt the suggestion.[93] The following day, Bolanaki, with the blessing of King Fu'ād, offered to host the tournament's second edition in Alexandria in 1927.[94] The hosting of an Alexandria Games was seen as a trial that would determine the viability of a regularly scheduled regional tournament.[95]

When plans for the Algiers tournament fell through, however, the IOC decided, at a session held in Paris in July 1924, that Bolanaki's offer would be accepted as the basis for the inaugural African Games.[96] Soon thereafter, Bolanaki requested that the IOC relax its rules so that those resident in Africa for at least two years, rather than just native Africans, could participate. The IOC acquiesced, seeing the rule change as necessary for the tournament "to ensure its success and give the necessary impulse its beginning."[97] In 1926, the Games were postponed until 1929 due to internal troubles and Alexandria's failure to complete its stadium on time.[98] Eventually, however, they were cancelled, and although Bolanaki held out hope that it might yet be held in 1931, it never came to be.[99] Coubertin noted his disappointment regarding the circumstances surrounding the cancellation of these Games:

> Our colleague in Egypt, A. C. Bolanaki, threw himself into this scheme with a keenness and a generosity made even more effective by his competence which was recognized by all… At the *last moment*, an English political manoeuvre, in which France joined, rendered ineffective all the work done […] at the back of it all, there was the basic conflict, the struggle of the colonial spirit against the tendency to emancipate the natives [… these ideas] belonged to a past that was completely dead.[100]

[92] Comité International Olympique, Séance du Dimanche matin 8 Avril 1923, 12. Independent NOCs would not be established for Morocco and Tunisia until 1959 and 1957 respectively, with both making their debut at the 1960 Rome Games.
[93] Comité International Olympique, Séance du Mercredi 11 Avril, après-midi 1923, 25
[94] Comité International Olympique, Séance du Jeudi matin 12 Avril, 1923, 30-31
[95] Comission Executive du Comité International Olympique, 13, 14, 15 Octobre 1923
[96] CO 554/77/7 – 1928-1929 – African Games: Alexandria, 1929
[97] Africa Games Correspondence, 1929
[98] Comission Executive du Comité International Olympique, 7-8 Mars 1926, 5
[99] Africa Games Correspondence, 1929
[100] Coubertin 207

Coubertin was not exaggerating about the state of preparation. A program for the Games, to be held April 5 through 19, had already been printed at the time of cancellation. It demonstrated that tournaments had been organized in track and field athletics, cycling, gymnastics, weightlifting, fencing, boxing, wrestling, rowing, swimming, lawn tennis, and football. It even proposed an exhibition of "National Egyptian Sports", which included "Nabout (stick)" and "Fantasia on horse back."[101] *The Near East and India* published a short article on the program in October of 1928, indicating that the assumption that the tournament was to be held was no secret,[102] and Arabic-language postage stamps, among other memorabilia, were issued in celebration of the event. Two national amateur boxing federations, the Union Egyptienne des Societies Sportives and the Federation Egyptienne de Boxe, even settled their differences and merged into a new organization, the Federation Egyptienne de Boxe Amateur, in order for the International Amateur Boxing Association to permit Egypt to run its own tournament in the sport at the African Games.[103]

On the surface, little had changed about the condescending British perspective regarding the Egyptian sporting scene, despite its apparent takeover by indigenous elements. In covering a visit by Hakoah Vienna in 1924, for example, *The Near East* viewed these matches as indicative of Egypt's prospects at that year's Olympics, which were not bright. It remarked that the demonstration of "the individualistic and rather disjointed efforts of the local teams seem ineffective by comparison," although it noted that "[i]f further similar visits from foreign clubs could be arranged the standard of Egyptian football might be considerably raised."[104] In

[101] CO 554/77/7 – 1928-1929 – African Games: Alexandria, 1929
[102] "The First African Games", *The Near East and India*, October 25, 1928, 487
[103] Africa Games Correspondence, 1924-1928. The military had its own organization, the Army Boxing Union founded in 1928, that was not under the purview of this federation.
[104] Our Own Correspondent, "Egyptian Football", *The Near East*, January 17, 1924, 57

contradiction to the burgeoning popularity of sport in *Al-ahrām*, the *Egyptian Gazette* paid only nominal attention to Egypt's participation at the Paris Games. It remained equally disinterested in 1928 and, although it covered many sports, throughout the era the only indigenous sportsmen that merited attention were footballers and the occasional boxer. Non-fiction monographs continued to paint stereotypical portraits of Arabs as backwards and incapable of truly grasping modern sport.[105]

Behind the scenes, however, the British were becoming increasingly aware of the potential for sport to contribute to the political dynamic within the country. An early, but undated, letter from an Alexandria-based "Egypt-Europe" association examined the potential of building such relations through sport, specifically through the exchange of information with sports journals.[106] More concretely, internal British documents discussing the African Games demonstrate a clear concern about gathering so many colonial subjects in one place at one time, particularly in a country such as Egypt where nationalist sentiments were pronounced. The inevitably of the indigenous subjects literally beating the colonizers at their own games was a risk too great to take. "It seems to me," scribbled one commentator in the file, "a totally evil show conceived in Pan-Africanism + Egyptian propaganda. I should be inclined to tell Governors not to have anything to do with it."[107] "I agree," responded another, "I know nothing of M. Bolanachi, but Prince Omar Toussoun is probably the most dangerous + anti-British man in Egypt," referring in the latter case to the President of the EOC.[108]

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[105] See, for example, Jarvis "Sinai" 201-224
[106] DAW 0069-003904, "Makātbah Bi Sh'an Takwīn Al-Jam'iyat Al-Awrubiyah Al-Miṣriyah Wa Al-Nishāṭ Aladhy Sataqūm Bih Hadha Al-Nishāṭ Al-'Amal 'Alá Tanmiyat Al-'Alāqāt Al-Qā'imah Bayn Al-Miṣryīn Wa Al-Awrubyīn Wa Al-Nishā' Marākiz Al-Tanmiyah," (Correspondence on the Issue of Forming a European-Egyptian Association and the Activity it will Undertake, and from these Activities the Work on the Development of the Existing Relationships Between Egyptians and Europeans and the Establishment of Development Centers)
[107] CO 554/77/7 – 1928-1929 – African Games: Alexandria, 1929
[108] ibid

The debate was not entirely one-sided. One commentator argued that "for every native who becomes a sportsman, you will find one less agitator against law and order."[109] Ultimately, the British Foreign Office came to the conclusion that its colonies should not participate and the French concurred, leading both nations to withdraw their support of, and participation in, the Games, thus ensuring their failure.[110] After this, it became more difficult for the British to disguise their interest in the political elements of Egyptian sport, although they continued to maintain in public that this entanglement was a consequence of the Egyptian politicization of an otherwise apolitical realm. A 1931 article in *The Near East and India*, for example, discussed a sporting incident involving the Prime Minister's son to demonstrated "how tangled up with politics is the whole life of the country."[111]

Tensions

This was not the first time that this particular publication had noted the problem of Egypt's intertwining of sport and politics. In noting the cancellation of the Games in March 1929, *The Near East and India* referred to the project as having been "ill-fated" due to the earlier 1927 postponement.[112] The controversy at the time, they stated, was the lack of King Fu'ād's preparation for the Games and the nation's inability to complete its stadium project in time. The problems were mentioned in the previous chapter, but the delay became a central criticism in the wake of the cancellation of the African Games. Progress in construction was slow during the 1920s, in part due to the use of prison labor in its construction, which was in turn necessitated by

[109] ibid
[110] Jacob 134
[111] Our Own Correspondent, "Sport and Politics", *The Near East and India*, November 19, 1931, 549
[112] Our Own Correspondent, "The Pan-African Games", *The Near East and India*, March 7, 1929, 295

a lack of funding.[113] In 1926 the Alexandria Municipality raised ire by delaying the drawing of a lottery that had been designed to fund further development.[114]

Following the inauguration ceremony, which the publication praised highly, *The Near East* expressed its hope for the "end the run of ill-luck that has dogged the Stadium ever since its inception",[115] but it was not to be. The general negativity towards the Alexandria Stadium came to be used by those *'afandiya* involved in sport to demonize Bolanaki for their own social gain, as his name had been attached to the project as its prime proponent for two decades. This was accomplished through journals, among other venues, and came despite his being the only even nominally Egyptian member of the stadium's committee,[116] as he was becoming well-known as an ally of the British. In encouraging to Britain to grant its blessings to the African Games, the Colonial Office argued that the organizer of the tournament, Bolanaki, was "an excellent type of man who has a great regard for Great Britain".[117] Thus, even before the cancellation of the Games, there were rumblings of discontent about Bolanaki's control over Egyptian sport. In January 1928, an article in *Ar-riyāḍah* criticized the EOC, and Bolanaki in particular. "Egypt", it argued, "is still arrested in protective bonds and denounced in the shackles of occupation, and all that has been said and is said about freedom and independence [… as well as] all of these appearances of parliament and government and tradition, what are they except deceptive manifestations that caused laughter?"[118] Bolanaki, according to the publication, represented

[113] DAW 0069-011576, "Awrāq Khāṣāh Biīnshāa Īstād Al-Īskandarīyah", 1909-1917
[114] Our Own Correspondent, "The Stadium Lottery", *The Near East and India*, April 22, 1926, 470
[115] Our Own Correspondent, "The Alexandria Stadium", *The Near East and India*, December 5, 1929, 618
[116] DAW 0069-004115, "Awrāq Khāṣāh Bilīftitāḥ Īstād Al-Īskandarīyah" (Private Documents Concerning the Opening of the Alexandria Stadium), 1929
[117] CO 554/77/7 – 1928-1929 – African Games: Alexandria, 1929
[118] "Hawl Al-Lijnat Al-Uwlimbiyat Al-Miṣriyah" (Concerning the Egyptian Olympic Committee), *Ar-riyāḍah*, January 19, 1928, 1

himself and not the people, and the English were looking for such opportunities to exploit Egypt.[119]

The journal repeated its criticisms in March, claiming that he worked only for himself and the IOC, and that he had too much power over Egyptian sport. It argued that Egyptians should protest and complain that they were being represented by what *Ar-riyāḍah* saw as a foreigner, which left the nation shackled and unable to achieve true glory. Respect for his past contributions was due, but not at the expense of strengthening the nation. It was time, in the opinion of the article's author, to move on from Bolanaki.[120] Following the cancellation of the African Games, which caused further resentment of the interference of foreigners in Egyptian sport, calls for Bolanaki's resignation, most notably from the Egyptian sports federations, grew more intense.[121] By 1930, the problem had gained the attention of both the British and the IOC. Britain agreed that Egypt could not be represented at the IOC by a foreigner, but also believed that it would be disrespectful to ask Bolanaki to resign after all he had done for sport in the country. The best solution, in their eyes, was to appoint a second representative, ideally from outside of any governmental or political body.[122]

This plan never came to fruition and, for the most part, both Bolanaki and the IOC rejected the notion of Egypt having two representatives.[123] The EOC and its constituent federations remained equally firm, and declared that they would not participate in the 1932 Los Angeles – or any subsequent – Olympics unless they were represented at the IOC by an

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[119] ibid
[120] "Markaz Al-Misyu Anjalū Būlānāky Fī Miṣr" (Position of Mr. Angelo Bolanaki in Egypt), *Ar-riyāḍah*, March 1, 1928, 1
[121] Egyptian Olympic Committee Correspondence with the Egyptian Olympic Committee: 1933-1938
[122] DAW 0069-004116, "Awrāq Khāṣāh Bijam'iyat Al-āl'āb Al-Uwlīmbīyah" (Private Papers of the Olympic Committee), 1930-134
[123] In a session on July 28, 1932, Bolanaki and IOC did agree on principle to nominate a second delegate from Egypt as an exceptional circumstance, but by then it was too late for the EOC to accept this compromise. See Comité International Olympique Session de 1932, 3.

Egyptian.[124] While the calls to replace Bolanaki had popular support, at least among the *'afandiya*, not everyone agreed that withdrawing from the Games was the best tactic. In an article in *Ar-riyāḍah al-ūsbū'īyah* (Weekly Sport), the successor publication to *Ar-riyāḍah*, an author writing under the pseudonym Abū Naẓārah[125] argued that Egypt must attend the Games, and that Bolanaki could be supported for what he had done for Egypt's reputation in the sporting world. Egyptians were prepared for the Games and could not lose an opportunity to demonstrate their strength on the world stage, as that chance comes about only once every four years. Treating the athletes in the manner they deserved, and enhancing Egypt's reputation abroad, was paramount. "And as long as the promotion of Egypt is the goal that we see together," he continued, "and as long as the defense of our sporting reputation is the goal that we strive for […] scattered efforts and a lack of togetherness under one banner is a crime that we must avoid […] sport does not know a religion or a homeland, but is owned communally by all nations and countries".[126]

In the end, however, the EOC stuck to their position and did not send a delegation to Los Angeles, no doubt influenced in large part by the nationalist-minded Prince 'Umar Ṭūssūn, who remained at the head of the committee. *Ar-riyāḍah al-ūsbū'īyah* lamented this decision, pointing out that, even without Olympic participation, due to the efforts of Egypt's world champions "the name of our beloved country – Egypt – is known in the world of sport and the westerners have begun to look to our champions with a look of caution and fear".[127] It was the responsibility, in the paper's opinion, of the government to safeguard this reputation and support sport in schools

[124] Wacker 62
[125] A play on words that humorously refers to his position as an opinion writer
[126] Abū Naẓārah. "Al-Dawrat Al-Uwlīmbīyah – Wa Mādhā Sani'nā Lihā?" (The Olympic Games – And What Will We Do About Them?), *Ar-riyāḍah al-ūsbū'īyah*, February 7, 1932, 1
[127] Abū Naẓārah. "Wājib Al-Hukūmah Nahū Ar-Riyādah" (The Duty of the Government to Sport), *Ar-riyāḍah al-ūsbū'īyah*, August 11, 1932, 1

and clubs both morally and financially. In essence, "our duty in the face of all of this is preserving what we have achieved and we agreed […] to look towards the future […] and do all we can with our strength on this path".[128] The author continued, emphasizing the importance of making sport a central part of one's culture: "Let us take a lesson from the Olympic Games that were founded by Ancient Greece and continue to be held until this day [… and] that the Greek team in every Games marches in front of the rest of the nations in honour of the immortal people who founded these Games."[129] A follow-up article detailed everything that Egypt had lost by not participating.[130]

With the cancellation of Egypt's participation at the 1932 Los Angeles Games, the pressure for Bolanaki to resign reached critical mass. He finally departed on November 21, 1932 and, perhaps justifying the criticisms that he did not have Egypt's best interests in mind, rejoined the IOC less than a year later as a representative from Greece. His passion for Egypt was certainly dampened for a time, and at the 36th IOC session in Berlin in 1936 he was directing the energies from his abandoned Alexandria dream into focusing on a proposal to host the Games in Athens in 1944.[131] His departure also contributed to further to Alexandria's sporting decline relative to Cairo, as his presence had not only kept indigenous sport alive, but had also bolstered the elite scene as well. *Ar-riyāḍah al-ūsbū'īyah* was saddened to see him leave, arguing that he had done much to raise Egyptian sport to greatness and bring national issues to the attention of Europe.[132] The journal dedicated much of its December 1 issue to extolling his contributions to Egyptian sport[133] and, two weeks later, declared that Egypt's behavior demonstrated that it was

[128] ibid
[129] ibid
[130] Abū Naẓārah. "Al-Dawrat Al-Uwlīmbīyah" (The Olympic Games), *Ar-riyāḍah al-ūsbū'īyah*, August 18, 1932, 1
[131] Comité International Olympique, Séance du 30 Juillet 1936, 3
[132] "Al-Misyu Anjalū Būlānāky" (Mr. Angelos Bolanaki), *Ar-riyāḍah al-ūsbū'īyah*, November 24, 1932, 1
[133] "Anjalū Būlānāky" (Angelos Bolanaki), *Ar-riyāḍah al-ūsbū'īyah*, December 1, 1932, 1

not a true sporting nation. Comparing the country to Greece, it argued that Egypt was a sporting nation only superficially, because sport did not pervade all aspects of life and its infrastructure was lacking. Sport, it insisted, must be treated like a science.[134]

The Arabic Sporting Press

Bolanaki's legacy in Egypt is therefore a complicated affair. In the previous chapter, it was noted that Christian Wacker's 2017 article in the *Journal of Olympic History* is representative of how non-Egyptians perceive Bolanaki: as the most critical factor in the development of Egyptian sport. Even Egyptians have long since rehabilitated him in their collective memory; in 1955, he was awarded the first Insignia of Merit from the EOC,[135] an early attempt to shape, as well as discard pieces of, the social memory of sport in Egyptian under British occupation. Certainly, his contributions cannot be ignored, although, as was argued in Chapter 1, he cannot be seen as the sole source of Egypt's early successes on the international sporting scene either.

For the most part, however, at the time Bolanaki's departure was received positively in the country, and Egypt seemed to be asserting its independence in the realm of sport as it marched towards the 1936 Berlin Games. Bolanaki's replacement as Egypt's representative to the IOC in May 1934 was Mohammed Taher, a man who seemed much better aligned with the growing demands for national autonomy.[136] At the time, his prime accomplishments in Egyptian sport related to aviation and automobile racing, and his nomination for the position was due in large part to his political connections to King Fu'ād. The fact that, as one British "Personalities"

[134] "Aṣbaḥat Miṣr Ūmah Riyāḍiyah?" (Has Egypt Becoming a Sporting Nation?), *Ar-riyāḍah al-ūsbū'īyah*, December 15, 1932, 1
[135] Bolanaki 39
[136] Prominent sports administrator and Governor of Alexandria Hussein Sabri Pasha was considered for the role, but declined for personal reasons. See Egyptian Olympic Committee Correspondence with the Egyptian Olympic Committee: 1932.

report phrased it, he made "no secret of his dislike for all things English" likely bolstered his credentials in the public eye as well.[137] Shortly before his appointment to the IOC, his name came up as a possible President for a British association in Cairo and Alexandria, to which Miles Lampson, then High Commissioner in Egypt, responded "that Taher Pasha is the last person who would be suitable for President of any Association which is to conduct British propaganda."[138]

Despite this, Taher was far from a perfect representative of the Egyptian nationalist sentiments of the time. Born in 1897 in Istanbul, he was the son of a Turkish Minister and King Fu'ād's sister Āminah and served in the Turkish Army before studying abroad in Germany and Switzerland. According to his "Personalities" report, he "became an Egyptian subject partly to regularise his military position."[139] Given that his "dislike for all things English" was "tied up with German aviation interests",[140] it is not surprising that later reports downplayed this facet of his character. By 1939, one British official argued that "we have counteracted of late years his earlier German proclivities",[141] while his 1945 "Personalities" report added a note that "[h]e later showed signs of being more friendly to us."[142]

Taher Pasha would later become a true pioneer in Egypt sport, and in his first few years as a representative he succeeded in redeeming his country in the eyes of the global sporting movement, even convincing them to hold an IOC session in Cairo in 1938. At the time of his appointment, however, he was, like Hassanein, Egyptian only superficially, and in no manner a true reflection of the nationalist spirit of sport in his country. This type of superficiality was best reflected, however, and best disguised, in the contemporary sporting press. As will be

[137] FO 371/23362/478 – 1939 – Egyptian Personalities Report. Code 16 file 478.
[138] FO 141/482/2 – 1934 – British Cultural Propaganda, Education and Culture
[139] FO 371/23362/478 – 1939 – Egyptian Personalities Report. Code 16 file 478.
[140] FO 371/23367/2265 – 1939
[141] ibid
[142] FO 371/45925 – 1945 – Anglo-Egyptian relations: treaty revision: political situation: Egyptian Personalities Report. Code 16 File 3 (papers 3013-3216)

demonstrated, while journals that specialized in sport were controlled by Egyptians and, nominally, promulgated national values and perspectives, they were in large part only a veil over the continued hegemony of British discourse over the regional sporting scene. Much as with Taher Pasha, it would not be until World War II that they began to depart truly from the interests of the colonizer in the country.

In the interim between Bolanaki and Taher's tenures as IOC representatives for Egypt, the sports press expressed its opinions on contemporary developments. Founded in December 1932, *Al-abṭāl* (The Champions) was one of the most critical and influential voices in the discourse surrounding Egyptian sport. It opened its first article by declaring that "Egypt is our homeland, to which we owe everything, and that we must serve in the way that we are able."[143] The magazine's responsibility was to "to serve Egypt by way of physical culture" and they insisted that "we will continue our efforts until the end, until every citizen knows the value of physical culture, as the whole world knows it."[144] Furthermore, the authors positioned themselves as more than mere observers of sporting developments, but activists "work[ing] together with honesty and sincerity until achieving what we want from progress and reform."[145] The publication was "a mirror" for their work, a venue to gather like-minded individuals and share ideas, "an honorable field for an honorable struggle", and, ultimately, "a cutting weapon to kill hatred".[146]

As was seen earlier with *Ar-riyāḍah al-ūsbū'īyah*, the editorial became a popular and important space for the discourse surrounding sports to be negotiated by the editors. Editorials were crafted not from arbitrary opinions, but carefully selected voices that represented the

[143] "'Ahdnā" (Our Covenant), *Al-abṭāl*, December 17, 1932, 1
[144] ibid
[145] ibid
[146] ibid

broader interests of the publishers' class. In this, they followed in the tradition of Egyptian newspapers. As one author argued, "[t]he main difference between the Western newspaper and the Egyptian newspaper is that the Western gives a lot of importance to the news while the Egyptians give it to articles and essays."[147] If this were true of regular news, then it was even more accurate for reporting on sport.

Al-abṭāl was one of the most prominent examples. This publication argued that not participating in the 1932 Los Angles Olympics hurt Egyptian sport,[148] and supported the idea of holding an African Games in Egypt, long after they had been cancelled.[149] The latter was in the context of a long-running series supporting the need for a "worthy" stadium in Cairo, to make Egypt comparable to other nations, as Egypt's pride on the national sporting scene depended on its ability to attract big sporting events with an international-caliber stadium. This necessity did not go unnoticed by *Al-ahrām* either.[150] *Al-abṭāl* also profiled national sportsmen and their contributions to Egyptian sport in depth, and encouraged support for youth in athletic pursuits.

For *Al-abṭāl*, sport was important for the youth in particular, as they were the force that "connects Egypt abroad through real sportsmen".[151] Getting the youth involved in clubs became a recurring feature in the journal, as it believed that they were the key to making Egypt great in the future.[152] Moreover, sport was a way to strengthen both the body and moral character of youth, many of whom suffer from deleterious effects to their physical and mental health due to a lack of physical education.[153] Its criticism grew increasingly scathing, arguing for the need of a

[147] "The Arabic Press of Cairo", *Al-Megalla*, February 1947, 57
[148] "Al-Ḥarakah Ar-Riyāḍiyah Fī Miṣr" (The Sports Movement in Egypt), *Al-abṭāl*, January 14, 1933, 4
[149] "Nurīd Ml'aban Jadīran Bal-Qāhirah", (We Want a Worthy Playing Field in Cairo) *Al-abṭāl*, December 24, 1932, 4
[150] "Ḥājah Al-Qāhirah Īlá Stād 'Sha'by' Lā Ḥukūmy" (Cairo's Need For A "Popular" Stadium Not Governmental), *Al-ahrām*, January 23, 1936, 12
[151] "Īlá Al-Qār'a" (To the Readers), *Al-abṭāl*, December 17, 1932, 1
[152] "Al- īndiyah Ar-Riyāḍiyah" (The Sports Clubs), *Al-abṭāl*, January 21, 1933, 3
[153] "Al-Āl'āb Ar-Riyāḍīyah" (Athletic Games), *Al-abṭāl*, January 28, 1933, 3

comprehensive, national system for getting youth involved in sport. Egypt in the early 1930s had nothing to offer the youth: no encouragement, no help, and no attention. The nation's failure to take this duty seriously enough would lead to the failure of the "Sport Renaissance" that had been achieved in other countries.[154]

Other well-known publications included *Ar-riyāḍah al-ūsbū'īyah, Al-midmār* (The Track), and *Al-āl'āb ar-riyāḍīyah* (Athletic Games), the latter of which was founded in October 1933 with the intent of contributing to the same "Sporting Renaissance" mentioned by *Al-abṭāl* within the country.[155] *Al-āl'āb ar-riyāḍīyah* referred to itself in its tagline as "[t]he only journal that publishes the most important sports news in Egypt and abroad," but was unfocused in terms of its content and eventually settled into its role as a horse racing magazine. The term "Sporting Renaissance" (*Nahdah Riyāḍiyah*), however, was a frequent term utilized in this era to refer to Egypt's use of sport to assert itself on the international stage.

Even publications such as *Al-Malāhy al-muṣawarah* (Entertainment Illustrated), which focused primarily on media entertainment, used this term when discussing sport. Relatively nationalist in tone, *Al-Malāhy al-muṣawarah* established the "Sporting Renaissance" as an Egyptian development that stood in opposition to the British Occupation, and celebrated victories of Egyptians over foreign teams. Hard work and good morals were essential ingredients for this renaissance, and were required on behalf of every Egyptian sportsman if the project was to succeed. Most publications were similarly willing to print sporting news and political opinions side-by-side.

[154] "Hal A'dudnā Lisabbābnā Ṭarīqan Lilnubūgh Ar-Riyāḍy" (Have We Prepared A Path For The Sporting Mentality For Our Youth?"), *Al-abṭāl*, February 4, 1933, 3
[155] "Īlá Ar-Riyāḍīayn Al-A'iz'a" (To The Beloved Athletes), *Al-āl'āb Ar-riyāḍīyah*, October 23, 1933, 3

Al-Malāhy al-muṣawarah also serves as one of the clearest examples of the self-consciousness of these journals in terms of their contribution to Egyptian nationalism. It often stated its explicit goal of rising to the level of European publications: "The reader's satisfaction is the basis of our success, persevering in the readability of *Al-Malāhy* until we are able to make our Egyptian magazines at the level of foreign newspapers".[156] When attempting to reinvent their magazine in May 1934, they asked their readers three questions: what should the name be, what day should it be published, and, perhaps most importantly, what should be added or taken away? This impetus to transform based on the desires of the people was also seen in *Al-āl'āb ar-riyāḍīyah,* which solicited feedback on how it could improve its efforts to raise the level of sport in the country,[157] as well as in *Al-abṭāl*.

On the surface, these publications, which were run by members of the *'afandiya*, reflected the nationalist ethos that was popular in the country. Beneath this layer, however, their messages promulgated and accomplished little that would concern the British and, in many ways, reinforced their hegemony over the discourse of physical culture. Several scholars have examined political, cultural, and social developments from the popular and indigenous level utilizing the *'afandiya* as their lens of analysis, most notably Israel Gershoni and James Jankowski in their 1995 work *Redefining the Egyptian Nation*. Gershoni and Jankowski identify the *'afandiya*, as the driving force behind indigenous movements that were attempting to redefine Egyptian nationalism away from a territorial conceptualization, wherein "Egypt" was defined as a land with historical continuity dating back to the Pharaohs. The most popular of these trends was what the authors term "Egyptian Arab nationalism", which was based around the notion of the Arabic language as the unifying element and saw Egypt as having potential as a

[156] "Īlá Aṣdiqā'inā Al-Qār'a" (To Our Friends The Readers), *Al-Malāhy al-muṣawarah*, October 10, 1933, 24
[157] "Shakar wa 'Ahd" (Thanks And A Pledge), *Al-āl'āb Ar-riyāḍīyah*, October 29, 1934, 1

regional Arab power.[158] This cultural movement became political during the Palestine Arab Revolt of 1936-1939 and, in later years, manifested itself into an authentic and pragmatic representation of indigenous concerns that demanded an independent Egypt.

The *'afandiya* were also behind the spread of the Egyptian physical culture movement. As Michael Gasper has pointed out, however, the *'afandiya* nationalists who controlled the majority of Egyptian journals (political or otherwise) often had ambiguous relationships with the colonial powers and thus had to avoid direct opposition to the British presence. Given this, the editors supported nationalism only insomuch as it could advance their own socioeconomic position.[159] The British, therefore, probably had little to fear by not interfering with the rise of nominally independent and indigenous publications, since their editorial boards consisted of individuals whose desire for advancement were tied to the social and economic structures facilitated by the British occupation.

The emphasis on health, nutrition, and fitness in these journals best demonstrates the continued hegemony of British influence over the discourse surrounding sport in Egypt. As Di-Capua commented in his chapter "Sports, Society, and Revolution", the idea "that a physical healthy individual was a precondition for national revival and progress", although it would "be appropriated and put to work by the revolutionary regime" after 1952, was nonetheless thoroughly European.[160] Hargreaves goes further in *Sport, Power, and Culture,* defining the theory behind physical education as a whole as "a programme of control through sustained work on the body"[161] and arguing that in practice it is highly ritualized in forms that create power relationships of society over the body and convey certain messages about appropriate states of

[158] Gershoni and Jankowski "Redefining" 117
[159] Gasper 182
[160] Di-Capua 149
[161] Hargreaves 163

being. An "ideal" body, therefore, is socially constructed and used to naturalize cultural relationships and characteristics, creating a distinction between those with or without the "ideal" characteristics.[162]

In Hargreaves' analysis, which reflects his focus on how the British upper and middle classes sought to maintain hegemony over the lower ones, this ideology was manipulated in a way to preserve distinctions against the working class while maintaining an illusion of equality in physical culture. Tony Collins applies this same idea to an international context, arguing that capitalist societies developed bodily "ideals" to reinforce racial and sexual power relationships through the creation of the able-bodied, heterosexual white male as an athletic paradigm, which was subsequently globalized alongside the spread of capitalism.[163] Viewed in this manner, the emphasis of ideal body types in sports journals of the time reflected the prevailing discourse. Particularly in regards to their fascination with Britain as an ideal system, the nominally indigenous author and editorship of these journals formed a superficial "Egyptian" layer that masked the retention of a hegemonic foreign ideology over national sports discourse. As *Al-āl'āb ar-riyāḍīyah* switched formats in an attempt to find its niche within Egyptian physical culture, dabbling even in filler material that had no relation to sport, it too developed a health focus before committing itself as a horse racing magazine.

The AUC Review, for example, had long promulgated such ideas as part of its curriculum of western education. In its 1926 commencement issue, an article entitled "Training in Athletics Has Important Place" focused on the benefits of college athletics for training the mind and developing character.[164] Its importance was reiterated the following year.[165] These ideas,

[162] Hargreaves 170-171
[163] Collins 129
[164] "Training in Athletics Has Important Place", *The AUC Review*, May 1926, 6
[165] "Sports Have Important Place in College Work", *The AUC Review*, June 2, 1927, 2

however, were not in any way limited to those institutions and publications that were expressly foreign. *Ar-riyāḍah*, for example, which had been notably critical of sporting culture in Egypt, focused primarily on sport as treating illness, including correct exercise and body decisions among its general themes. When discussing the primary value of sport in Egypt in a February 1928 article, it argued that the primary benefit of such activities was health. Any sport could provide these boons, as they all strengthened muscles, purified the blood, and cured disease, while developing a cultured mind.[166] Even the entertainment-focused *Al-Malāhy Al-muṣawarah* provided tips on developing the body and succeeding in marriage and, in mid-1934, shifted to further emphasize the development of the body. In April 1934 the publication began a series entitled "General Education in Physical Culture", which included photographs of sportsmen to use as examples and goals. Moreover, its nationalist critical edge was negotiating the desire for affirmation from Europe, even if not at the same level as other journals.[167]

Al-abṭāl supported similar ideas and contained a weekly feature where users could submit their health-related questions to the editor. The list of questions from February 4, 1933, is a typical representation:

1. I have Ancylostoma (hookworms), what do I do?
2. I am 14 years old and have bad eyesight and the doctor tells me it is natural. What is the reason and what is a natural cure?
3. How to treat the habit of masturbation through sports
4. I am 16 years old, in the past four years I have had four operations on my left side, and now I have a curvature and cavities
5. I have suffered from dysentery for a year and a half and it is making me suicidal
6. I masturbate every day, am frustrated with life, and have suicidal thoughts
7. I feel a weakness in my heart and have two sets of symptoms[168]

[166] "Al-Āl'āb Ar-Riyāḍīyah" (Athletic Games), *Ar-riyāḍah*, February 16, 1928, 1
[167] See, for example, "Fursānanā Al-abṭāl" (Our Champion Riders), *Al-Malāhy Al-Muṣawarah*, July 2, 1934, 5
[168] "Fī Ṣandūq Al-barīd" (In the Mailbox), *Al-abṭāl*, February 4, 1933, 17

Its founding issue declared an interest in focusing on physical culture and health,[169] and subsequent articles emphasized the importance of sport beyond recreation, but as a tool to develop the body, mind, and spirit.

In the early 1930s, however, no publication was more reflective of this trend towards the equation of sport and health, including the frank engagement with sexuality, than *Ar-riyāḍah al-badanīyah* (Physical Culture). Founded in 1929, the central themes of *Ar-riyāḍah al-badanīyah* included training exercises, developing the body, women's relationship with marriage and chastity, health and diet, the latest scientific research, relationships, combatting drugs and other immoral behavior, and beauty secrets. It was also explicit in its treatment of sexual topics, a fact to which Jacob attributes the publication's longevity,[170] and, as the journal moved through years, it covered increasingly provocative subjects such as nudism and prostitution. Like *Al-abṭāl*, *Ar-riyāḍah al-badanīyah* had a section reserved for letters to the editor, and its submissions (or, at least the ones it printed) centered heavily around sexual topics. Lest anyone be uncertain of the editors' inspiration, articles about classic Greek and Roman beauty and athleticism were frequent features. This was a prominent aspect of the sports journals as well, although in that context, it was utilized as a model for Egypt's own "Sporting Renaissance."

If there was one subject that *Ar-riyāḍah al-badanīyah* did not cover frequently, it was sport. In the context of the transformative impact of modern sport in Egypt, therefore, this publication's salience is relatively limited, although its "impressive distribution"[171] stands as testament to the competing, yet converging, narratives surrounding Egyptian physical culture at the time. Unlike in the first three decades under British occupation, where the narratives

[169] "Īlá Al-Qār'a" (To the Readers), *Al-abṭāl*, December 17, 1932, 1
[170] Jacob 163
[171] ibid 157

surrounding sport were numerous and dissonant, sports discourse after 1920, taking its inspiration from the 1919 Revolution, was moving towards a more cohesive whole. By 1934, there were two major strands: the sports-centered discourse that, as exemplified by *Al-ahrām*, related the success of the nation to its success on the playing fields, and the body-centered narratives that equated Egypt's strength with that of its individual constituents. These trains of thought were not mutually exclusive, and both drew heavily from the mindset of the colonizers, serving to reinforce the hegemony of the occupiers.

It is difficult to identify precisely when these trends merged fully, as well as when they began to espouse support for genuinely indigenous control over discourse in the realm of sport, but 1934, the year when *Ar-riyāḍah al-badanīyah* began to increase its coverage of sporting events and two sport shooters, Ibrāhīm Yakun and Yūsuf Fāris, represented Egypt at the World Sport Shooting Championships, was an important juncture. It was also the year of Egypt's qualification for the 1934 World Cup, making it the first African and Arab nation to accomplish this feat.[172] Ignored abroad generally as unimportant in the grander scheme of the tournament, even within Egypt there was little fanfare about the event. *Al-Malāhy al-muṣawarah* dismissed this development as inconsequential, arguing that it was a result of Turkey's withdrawal and the poor state of the only challenger, the Palestinian team, among other factors, rather than any indication of Egypt's greatness or development in football.[173]

While *Al-ahrām* was cautious about inferring too much from the qualification, not all publications were as hesitant to praise the Egyptian squad. *Al-āl'āb Ar-riyāḍīyah* covered the

[172] Egypt had been invited to the inaugural 1930 World Cup, but did not send a team. Accounts differ on why this was the case, with some claiming that the country dismissed the opportunity due to the travel distance, while others suggest that a team was prepared, but encountered obstacles shortly before travel. See Ayūb 274-276 for more details.

[173] "Ka's Al-'ālam" (The World Cup), *Al-Malāhy al-muṣawarah*, April 16, 1934, 1

match and emphasized that the nation's appearance at the World Cup would be an excellent opportunity for Egypt to demonstrate its sporting prowess. It praised the ability of each player to strengthen one another during the game, "for this is the greatest service for your country […] and when every player has in mind the interests of Egypt and his homeland, we will, God willing, we will inevitably win what we aspire to."[174] In the leadup to the tournament, *Al-ahrām* was cautiously optimistic, although it restrained its speculation and attempted to remain objective when analyzing the country's chances against its first round opponent, Hungary. After Egypt's 4-2 loss, the publication undertook a lengthy technical analysis of the match, but overall did not ascribe a broader political or cultural meaning to the result. This was despite claims from the Egyptian side regarding poor officiating that led to goals being allowed and denied against their favor.[175]

Perhaps the more notable development in 1934, even if it was not acknowledged at the time, was the founding of the National Committee of Physical Culture (NCPC), first envisioned the previous year.[176] Chartered by King Fu'ād and staffed by indigenous, educated Egyptians, the NCPC was established as a reaction to charges of foreign domination in the highest echelons of Egyptian sport. Its purpose was to oversee all matters relating to sport within the country, save for those within schools and the army.[177] International sport, primarily that relating to the Olympic Games, remained the purview of an independent EOC. The committee, therefore, was more focused on creating a sporting *culture* in Egypt, rather than simply training and administrating the athletes themselves. In an internal report produced shortly after its May 9

[174] "Ka's Al-'ālam" (The World Cup), *Al-āl'āb Ar-riyāḍīyah*, April 10, 1934, 1
[175] Njoroai Simiyu 974
[176] Di-Capua 148 refers to this body as the Civil Committee for Physical Education, but here I have utilized Jacob's translation of "Physical Culture".
[177] Ibrāhīm 187

founding, it acknowledged that Egypt had produced competitive amateur sportsmen on the world stage, but this impact was meaningless because there was no understanding among the general Egyptian population of the value of producing, for example, an Olympic Champion.[178]

What was required in order to instill this idea into the populace was a national committee, and thus the NCPC's goal was to organize sport within Egypt while simultaneously educating the people. In the eyes of the NCPC, the EOC's decision not to participate at the 1932 Los Angeles Olympics had weakened sport in the country, cutting the nation off from access to foreign trainers and patrons who could identify and develop the best athletes. Thus, while the committee would work with the EOC for the 1936 Berlin Games, a more realistic goal was to prepare Egypt for the 1940 Olympics. These efforts, however, needed to be initiated immediately, by organizing sport in schools and universities, establishing provincial sporting centers to provide an overarching authority to guide the development of clubs, founding a training school for coaches, erecting a suitable stadium in Cairo, and providing sufficient training spaces for athletes. These considerations should not be thought of as luxuries, "but as national plans, indispensable to the development of sport among people determined to advance on the path of progress."[179] The report further argued that "[t]o work on this education on a national level is therefore one of the greatest services that can be rendered to one's country and compatriots."[180]

Given that the NCPC was, like the contemporary sports journals, run by the *'afandiya*, it was unlikely at first to take any action or publish any statement against British interests, yet nevertheless appeared to be wholly "Egyptian". At the beginning of the organization's existence, it championed friendly relations between itself and the British and, although its published

[178] DAW 0069-004129, "Awrāq Khāṣāh Bilijnat Al-ahlīyah Ar-riyāḍah Al-badanīyah", 1934
[179] ibid
[180] ibid

material focused on strengthening the nation, this was never in the context of overthrowing the British or dampening their influence on Egyptian sport (or, for that matter, politics). Furthermore, much of the NCPC's private correspondence was in French, rather than Arabic.

Thus, journal articles discussing physical activity among the peasantry during the period studied are not common, despite the NCPC reports often mentioning the importance of spreading physical culture to rural areas in order to strengthen the nation,[181] which raises questions regarding how much these journals represent the "popular view" outside of urban circles. There were, of course, exceptions. In February 1933, *Al-abṭāl* published an article arguing the need for a physical education school that would focus on the peasantry, as they encountered the same issues as other Egyptians, yet lacked access to developments in physical education and remained in poor condition, despite their importance to building the nation.[182] In this context, strengthening the nation had little, if anything, to do with overthrowing the British occupation, as this was just one in a series that paid attention to the physical needs of all segments of society. The following issue, for example, contained an editorial that argued that businessmen needed to find time in their day for exercise and sport, since that was a crucial component of a complete existence and that, by not remaining active, they were endangering both the country's future and their own.[183] Despite its acceptance of the British occupation, at least at first, the founding of the NCPC remains an important milestone in the development of Egyptian sport because, as shall be shown, its ideological development, and that of its associated journal, *Ar-riyāḍīyah al-badanīyah*

[181] This also ties into Michael Gasper's idea that the *'afandiya*, through their publications, attempted to further their own socioeconomic agendas by representing the peasantry as the core of the nation and the element that needed to be strengthened and educated in order to gain independence from the colonizers. These editors represented themselves, meanwhile, as the only ones who could accomplish this task. Although Gasper's work covers the 1880s through the 1910s, this trend remains visible in NCPC publications as late as 1941-1942.
[182] "Nurīd Madrasa Liltarbiyah Al-badanīyah" (We Want A School for Physical Culture), *Al-abṭāl*, February 4, 1933, 5
[183] "Ar-Riyāḍīyah Wa Rijāl Al-'Amāl" (Sport And Businessmen), *Al-abṭāl*, February 11, 1933, 3

al-miṣrīyah (Egyptian Physical Culture), provided a centralized locus for discourse to transition away from British hegemony.

Before moving on, it is worth mentioning some of the more marginalized discourses and narratives that were present as Egypt moved towards a more unified definition of national sport. For example, women involved with sport during this period were rarely mentioned in either mainstream media or specialist publications, but they were by no means absent. One scholar has noted the oft-ignored foundations of women's sport in Egypt during the 1920s, which would come to play a greater role in succeeding decades: "Munira Hanem Sabry in 1921 was the first Egyptian woman sent to England to receive training as a physical education teacher. Another three followed to Scotland, others went to Sweden, Germany, America, France and Finland. Upon their return they became responsible for women's physical education in schools and its progress in Egypt generally."[184] Such overtures, however, were not indicative of the general trends. For example, women were banned from attending football matches until 1926.[185]

Peripheral centers such as Port Said developed alongside Cairo and Alexandria, but received limited attention in the mainstream press for their sporting facilities. Port Said had had an unsavory reputation in British eyes during the prewar era,[186] which had allowed more indigenous sport to develop (such as the anti-imperial Al-Masry club) and was less enticing for the growth of elite sport. Nonetheless, the clubs, and the stadium in particular, of Port Said were mentioned in *The Near East* as notable features of the town,[187] and, just as in Cairo, Empire Day came to be celebrated locally as an annual tradition.[188]

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[184] Badr 47-48
[185] Ayūb 178
[186] Hopwood "Tales" 16
[187] Trumper, Victor L. "Port Said", *The Near East,* April 16, 1925, 407-411
[188] Our Own Correspondent, "Empire Day", *The Near East and India*, June 7, 1934, 437

Sport in Sudan, meanwhile, remained trapped within the same paradigms that had defined the previous era and thus the tropes of Sudanese sport remained that of the uncivilized African who was unable to truly grasp the nature of modernity. A 1924 account of a Sudanese football match is perhaps an extreme, although not entirely unfair, reflection of this narrative:

> One evening we heard shouts and sounds of football, and went to watch an amazing game of 'soccer,' played by Sudanese and other hybrid natives, led by the Mamur of Shambe. There were two referees, who both played, and whenever the side of one was getting the worst of it, he blew his whistle and stopped the game. In slight disputes, when one referee is killed, the other can always give evidence at the inquest.
>
> A yellow dog, fast asleep, lay in the centre of the playing area, and never moved the whole time, even when the savage horde raced over his body. It was a strange sight.[189]

While Sudan did not have a strong nationalist sentiment at this point, Egypt considered the territory to be part of its own and therefore attempted to draw Sudan into its own burgeoning movement. Thus, Egypt was "important in the Sudan mainly as a symbolic counterpoint to the British presence and as a source of encouragement for Sudanese resistance."[190] When it came to distancing the relationship between Egypt and Sudan, the British could be more generous in their assessment of Sudanese sport:

> The recently instituted Football League has been one of the best efforts at anti-Nationalist propaganda that can be imagined. The native of the Sudan is by nature far more of a sportsman than the Egyptian, and has exhibited the greatest enthusiasm for the game. The various inter-Departmental matches are watched by numerous crowds, and partisanship and interest in the game run very high. A recent match between a team composed almost entirely of Sudani *versus* a team exclusively made up of Egyptian Effendia nearly led to bloodshed. Racial feeling towards the latter part of the game tended to make the players forget the ball and concentrate on the man. The sympathies of the native spectators were with the black team, and any score by the Egyptian eleven was received with deep gloom, whilst the Sudani team were vociferously encouraged at every opportunity. […] Enthusiasm has spread to the small boys, who may be seen daily on the various

[189] Millais 221
[190] Sharkey 6

> grounds energetically chasing the leather. Football boots are naturally at a premium, though several of the more hardy players dispense with these, and, to the astonishment of the European, prefer to play barefooted!

Nor should these depictions be taken as a sign that the British did not consider sport as an important tool for spreading culture and civilization, as it did in Egypt. In September 1921, John James Macfarlane Soutar proposed that the Sudan British debate the question of whether "too great attention is given to sport by the British people and that this is detrimental to their efficiency."[191] Soutar, of the Army Veterinary Corps,[192] admitted that the definition of sport was wide, but focused on "Horse Racing, Cricket, Football, Lawn Tennis, and Golf" as his representative examples.[193] While not denying the benefits of sport, he felt that, as a nation, Britain had devoted too much attention to physical activity, and that more could be attained with a greater focus on traits such as industry and thrift. In his mind, the "pathological interest in Sport" was "as well as being detrimental to the Nation's efficiency […] detrimental to Sport itself".[194]

Despite having been born in 1889, and therefore having experienced much of his youth in the early 1900s,[195] Soutar's arguments are reminiscent of those made in the 1870s, when the British were just demonstrating their willingness to expand the definition of "sport" beyond its limited, elite parameters, but were still cautious about the ways in which new forms could be engaged. Yet his debate opponent, J. P. Moir, was not entirely loyal to the notion that sport was a great benefit to empire, arguing that it was "a hopeless task to try and show that there is not a surfeit of interest taken in sport".[196] He emphasized, however, the need to expand sport to ensure

[191] "Sudan British Union", *The Sudan Times*, September 24, 1921, 2
[192] WO 372/24/58209, 1908-1924 – Medal card of Soutar, J J M Corps: Army Veterinary Corps Rank: Lieutenant
[193] "Sudan British Union", *The Sudan Times*, September 28, 1921, 2
[194] ibid
[195] Riddick 339
[196] "Sudan British Union", *The Sudan Times*, September 28, 1921, 2

that Britain's growing population remained physically, as well as mentally, healthy. Moreover, such interest in sport helped lessen the chance that an individual would be attracted to "extreme politics", as he would lack both the time and the unhappiness to do so. Moir could "think of nothing to take the place of interest in sport" and, when the discussion was opened to the floor, Soutar's resolution "lost by a big majority."[197]

These debates may have carried on in the public sphere, but the general trends of sport in Sudan remained relatively unchanged. The sports pages of the *Sudan Herald*, for example, expanded and were golf, boxing, shooting, racing, polo, football, sailing, tennis, cricket, hockey, hunting, and rugby, which were the same sorts of pursuits chronicled by visitors such as Reynolds-Ball. The *Sudan Times* was similar, although it occasionally touched upon women's golf, ladies vs. gentlemen cricket, and even indigenous players in the civil service, since "only one European is allowed in each team".[198] Internationally, *The Near East* usually engaged Sudanese sport only in terms of hunting and racing, but it touched upon tennis occasionally as well.

Gordon College remained the prime locus for promulgating the British narrative of sport and indoctrination of members of the indigenous elite, and in this role it often shared a close relationship with the local military presence.[199] At the turn of the decade, as outlined in the last chapter, the focus of the institution was on using sport exclusively as a didactic tool through which culture and "proper" behavior could be inculcated. As one report outlined dryly, "[g]ames are compulsory, the masters being associated with the boys in them, and it is impossible to watch a game on any of the eleven football grounds that the College boasts without being impressed

[197] ibid
[198] "Sudan Govt. Football", *The Sudan Times*, October 8, 1921, 2
[199] See, for example, "Armistice Day", *The Near East and India*, December 17, 1925, 736-737

with the keenness and *espirit de corps* of the players."[200] This discipline was intended to stand in sharp contrast to indigenous Sudanese physical culture, such as Nuba wrestling[201] or local board and puzzle games,[202] which were looked upon with amusement and condescension. These represented recreation for children; organized sport was for men.[203]

As in Egypt, however, British officials in Sudan had to adopt increased subtlety in their methods, although to a lesser degree given the lack of a strong nationalist movement in the territory. Gordon College thus gradually shifted from using sport exclusively as a didactic tool to permitting a more recreational element. As scholar Heather Sharkey has argued, "[c]ollege authorities tried to make games less authoritarian and more fun in the early 1930s, when, against the gloom of the Depression, they introduced recreation activities such as Ping-Pong, lawn tennis, and volleyball".[204] As will be demonstrated, this discursive shift provided an opening for the Sudanese people to inject their own nationalist ideology into sport. For the first half of the 1930s, however, it was the good fortunes of the football team, and claims of its "civilizing" impact, around which sporting discourse at Gordon College revolved.[205]

Summary

The relationship between sport and ideology in Sudan would develop much more strongly during, and in the immediate aftermath of, World War II, but by the mid-1930s, this discursive shift was growing more important in Egypt. Sudan, moreover, was not granted indigenous representation in sport after World War I; even the achievements of the talented

[200] "A Personal Impression", *The Near East*, January 11,1923, 40
[201] Abu Nakhla. "The Sudan at Play - II. Nuba Wrestlers", *The Near East*, August 17, 1922, 217-218
[202] Davies
[203] Sharkey 47
[204] ibid 46
[205] Jackson 211

players of Gordon Memorial College were often overlooked in favor of their British coaches and trainers. Egypt, on the other hand, produced an authentic delegation to the Olympic Games even before its formal independence, and established sport as a realm in which the nation, and its strength, could be defined.

As has been seen, the control of Egyptians over their own sporting narratives was limited. Foreigners, usually Bolanaki or the British, were in control of most of the athletic clubs and federations, with the important exception of football. The editors of the Arabic-language sporting journals were the educated, middle class *'afandiya*, whose financial and social interests tied them to the continued presence of the British in the country. Moreover, the British, who had a keen interest in, and understanding of, the use of sport towards political ends, could effectively quash any development that challenged their hegemony, and could do so as unilaterally as they had declared the Egypt's *de jure* independence, even if, as in the case of the African Games, that development had the strong support of both the King and the population. Although there may have been greater national unity in the realm of sport than on the political scene, the British were, in this period, able to meet any challenges effectively.

This would not, however, be the case forever. As limited as this discursive shift may have been, it gave the Egyptians a greater understanding of how sport could be useful as a national unifier and exist as something more than the scattered narratives that had characterized the first three and a half decades of occupation. After the 1934 World Cup and the founding of the NCPC, the next event on the horizon was the 1936 Berlin Olympics and, having sacrificed an appearance at the 1932 Los Angeles Games in order to rid themselves of Bolanaki, the EOC was more determined than ever to demonstrate Egypt's strength on the international sporting scene.

As in the realm of politics, they perceived 1936 to be the dawn of a new era for Egypt and, just as in politics, they were only partially correct.

Chapter 3: Beaten at Their Own Game

The 1936 Summer Olympics, held in Berlin, Nazi Germany, is considered by many scholars as an important milestone in the history of international sport. Discussing the 1930s, Barbara Keys notes that:

> This decade was a critical period in the expansion of sport, for it was during these years that the Olympic Games and major international competitions like soccer's World Cup became for the first time affairs of great international importance. It was also at this time that modern sport displaced its major European rivals, workers' sport and traditional gymnastics, securing for itself a position as the leading form of physical culture in Europe and presaging its postwar success in supplanting or marginalizing traditional forms of physical recreation in the rest of the world […] International sport became a useful arena for governments eager to display the virtues of their national systems for the increasingly sought-after judgments of a new force in international affairs: world opinion".[1]

The paradigm outside of Egypt for this new discourse was the League of Nations. Susan Pedersen notes that "What was new […] was the apparatus and level of international diplomacy, publicity, and 'talk' that the system brought into being. Put bluntly, League oversight could not force the mandatory powers to govern mandated territories differently; instead, it obliged them to *say* they were governing them differently."[2] International consensus, even if it was solely rhetoric, became a critical tool for legitimacy.

It is within this context that the Egyptians made their preparations to attend the 1936 Berlin Olympics. Having rejected the invitation to the 1932 Los Angeles Games, the EOC was eager to make a comeback and demonstrate the worthiness of their civilization through modern sport. With this goal in mind, no competitor better exceeded their expectations than Khadr El-Touni.

[1] Keys 3-4
[2] Pedersen 4

Unlike many of the Egyptian Olympians who came before him, El-Touni did not come from a notable, or even well-off, background. Born December 15, 1916 in Cairo, his father was a leather merchant, and Khadr left school early in order to work and supplement the family income. Like many of his generation, however, he took part in the burgeoning sport movement on the street, playing football and winning local competitions in discus and javelin.[3] It was not until 1934, when he was noticed at his job for his exceptional strength, that he was encouraged to join a weightlifting club by his peers. At a local club in the Shubra district, he met Nūraddīn ʻAzzat, a former national champion, who trained him in proper technique.[4] Within two years, El-Touni was setting records, reigning as the Egyptian national middleweight champion.[5]

By the time of the 1936 Berlin Olympics, El-Touni was acknowledged internationally and considered by the German press to be a serious contender for the middleweight title at the Games. His greatest challenger was German Rudolf Ismayr, the current Olympic champion, who would have the home crowd advantage. Ismayr was the consummate representation of what Germany wanted to portray to the international community through sport, a physical embodiment of the strength of the German nation and people. Hopes were high for Ismayr: he was chosen to take the athlete's oath at the opening ceremony, and Adolf Hitler himself would be in attendance at his event.[6]

What transpired, however, far exceeded even the greatest of Egypt's expectations. Not only did El-Touni win the event, but he did so with one of the most dominant performances in Olympic weightlifting history. With a final total of 387.5 kilograms, not only did he surpass runner-up Ismayr by 35 kilograms, but he lifted 15 kilograms more than Frenchman Louis

[3] Faraj "At-tūny" 15
[4] ibid 19
[5] ibid 22
[6] ibid 29

Hostin, the winner of the division above El-Touni. Even Hitler could not fail to be impressed; he allegedly told the Egyptian that his performance was so great that he should consider Germany his second home.[7] Whether or not this is apocryphal, it was certainly a part of the Egyptian narrative about El-Touni, and it is difficult to conceive of a greater honor that could have been bestowed on a country yearning for recognition on the world stage.

El-Touni's fortunes were uneven after the Games, and he found himself unemployed in the aftermath of his participation, having been fired because his employer was unaware of the reason for his lengthy absence.[8] Nonetheless, he was eventually given a nominal position in the Ministry of Education,[9] which allowed him to begin representing Egypt abroad without concern for his economic security. He attended the 1938 World Championships, but was hospitalized for injuries and was unable to earn a medal. World War II then intervened, but El-Touni continued to compete and remained national champion for the duration of the conflict.[10]

El-Touni returned to the international scene as World Champion in 1946, setting the scene for him to defend his title at the 1948 London Olympics. Upon arriving in England, however, he succumbed to illness and was hospitalized once again, placing an unfortunate fourth in his event.[11] Nonetheless, he went on to claim World titles in 1949[12] and 1950[13] and was third in 1951.[14] Having also won the title at the inaugural 1951 Mediterranean Games, he was a potential contender for the 1952 Olympic crown, but the rising nationalist tide in the leadup to the Free Officer Revolution was suspicious of Egypt's former sporting heroes. Shortly before the

[7] ibid 33
[8] ibid 34
[9] ibid 35
[10] ibid 36
[11] ibid 37
[12] ibid 39
[13] ibid 43
[14] ibid 48

Games, he was among a handful of weightlifters determined, on questionable grounds, to be professional by the national federation and thus disqualified from the amateur Olympics.[15]

Yet if El-Touni could not represent a new Egypt on the international stage, he could still serve as a model for its best characteristics. He continued in his role within the Ministry of Education, as an inspector for weightlifters and bodybuilders, whose goal was to train new champions among the students for success, while building their morals.[16] He also worked as a trainer for the Tersana Club, as well as the national team,[17] but did not live long enough to realize the fruits of his labors. On September 22, 1956, he was electrocuted while working on the electrical wiring in his house in Heluan and died before reaching the hospital.[18]

El-Touni was eulogized widely and celebrated for his accomplishments after his death. In an Arabic-language biography published a month after his demise, he was praised for his morals and his contributions to sport in an introduction penned by President Gamal Abdel Nasser, who noted that El-Touni "lived to defend his blood and his people," and championed "the glory that he realized for his country."[19] With the tome not failing to note his contributions to Egypt's "sporting renaissance",[20] it was clear that his greatest contribution was that "for a period of 15 years, he raised the name of Egypt in the capitals of Europe."[21]

El-Touni is an exemplary representative of Egypt's more unified sporting narrative from the mid-1930s to 1952. Competing before and after the war, his numerous achievements drew the attention of an international community that was willing to consider him not only an equal to their own champions, but a figure who exceeded their own abilities. He was, therefore, an easily

[15] ibid 50
[16] ibid
[17] ibid 63
[18] ibid 61
[19] ibid 8
[20] ibid 73
[21] ibid 50

accessible symbol for an Egypt that saw itself as a major player on the global scene, one worthy of complete independence, and his accomplishments could embolden both elites and commoners to strengthen their collective resolve. Yet he was only one among many sportsmen who were making a name for Egypt abroad, as can be seen by the results the Berlin Olympics, which were Egypt's most successful to date and remain its highest relative ranking at the Games.

El-Touni was one of five Olympic medalists that year, and not even the only one to earn gold: the oft-forgotten Anwar Miṣbāḥ had tied Austrian Robert Fein for gold in the lightweight weightlifting division. Some stories claim that Egyptian broadcast media had failed to announce the victory, despite its coming before El-Touni's performance, but these anecdotes are possibly conflating Miṣbāḥ with Waṣīf Ibrāhīm, a bronze medalist in light-heavyweight weightlifting, whose achievement was overlooked for several days in *Al-ahrām*. The note on Miṣbāḥ in *Al-ahrām* the day after his victory read in its entirety: "And with that, Egypt achieved the honor of acquiring a gold medal, so congratulations to the glorious and great Egypt."[22] He did receive a slightly longer writeup the following day, but his accomplishments received limited attention after El-Touni's victory.

By 1936, the multifarious narratives surrounding the meaning of "Egyptian" sport had largely coalesced into a singular vision of an "Egyptian sportsman" who represented all people within an Egyptian nation, regardless of religion, ethnicity, or any other distinguishing factors that might have driven them apart. El-Touni was neither a wealthy Alexandrian of Greek origin nor an elite member of the King's royal court. He was a "true" Egyptian, born of modest means in the capital, who demonstrated that he could not only equal, but surpass, Europe in sport.

[22]"Uwlimbīyat" (Olympiad), *Al-ahrām*, August 4, 1936, 14.

If El-Touni could become a national hero, then any Egyptian could, and this was what made the nation as great as any other in Europe. To a certain extent, 1928 Olympic weightlifting champion Sayid Nuṣṣayir, who had been born outside the "two capitals" of Alexandria and Cairo in Tanta, also embodied this ideal, and his victory, as well as his moral and healthy lifestyle, had certainly catalyzed an increased national interest in the importance of sport. Nuṣṣayir's victory, however, had arrived at a lull in nationalist feeling, due to the tedious battles among the Egyptian political elite. When El-Touni took gold, however, the tide was just beginning to turn and thus sport became a realm in which Egyptians could express their national pride and, at least in theory, agitate for greater autonomy in their own affairs. As time moved on, they became more willing to do so.

These developments, however, did not occur in a vacuum. At the beginning of 1936, the political scene was still stagnant, with Britain able to play the national factions against one another and ensure that, at least when it came to critical concerns, it could always get its way. The threat of fascism, however, as well as the potential for another global conflict, loomed on the horizon, with Italy and Germany growing more favorable in the eyes of the Egyptians every day. A web of internal and external factors was working against the stability of the British presence in the country, and thus the British rushed to establish an accord with the Egyptians, who were growing ever more unified in opposition.

The Anglo-Egyptian Treaty that would be signed that year was a great ideological victory, but it had little practical impact on Egyptian autonomy. Although Britain surrendered some hegemony, they retained much more than they lost, and once World War II began, they all but abrogated the agreement. Nationalist Egyptians, who had been understandably cautious about testing the limits of their occupier's permissiveness, were vindicated in their circumspection

when the British shuttered the free press and clamped down on nationalist expression at the onset of the conflict. While sport, being nominally apolitical, possessed more freedom to promulgate dissenting opinions, its concomitant narratives remained relatively hesitant at first to engage with the idea of an Egyptian nation completely outside the framework of British tutelage.

Yet while the war caused the British to close many avenues to nationalists, it also opened doors to other opportunities. Gruneau presents "play, games, and sports as distinctly social practices existing in, and constitutive of, historically shifting limits and possibilities that specify the range of powers available to human agents at different historical moments."[23] In this, he aligns with Hargreaves in suggesting that control over narrative hegemony is always being contested, and one realm in which those contests occur is sport. "A dominant class," he argues "has advantages, it has superior resources, but it cannot prevent human beings from thinking on their conditions, from wanting to expand their powers, or from continually constituting their identities now in one way, now in another."[24]

This fits well with the concepts of "strategies" and "tactics" as delineated by the French sociologist Michel de Certeau. "Strategies", in de Certeau's conception, are utilized by hegemonic entities to exert power and influence over culture, society and politics. Those outside of the hegemony can influence the outcomes of this process through the use of "tactics", which are ways of working within the limitations of the hegemonic system in manners not anticipated or preferred by the hegemonic group.[25] In essence, a hegemonic entity can control the framework in which individuals operate, but not every way in which those people operate within the framework. Control, therefore, is not absolute, but can be resisted. Meaning can be imposed, but

[23] Gruneau 140
[24] ibid 69
[25] De Certeau xix

will not be adopted universally. These theories, therefore, restore agency to non-dominant groups in society while not denying the impact of hegemonic powers.

Gruneau applies this to sport by claiming that "play, games, and sports […] consist historically in a set of expanding and contracting abilities and are always faced with expanding and contracting opportunities. Together, these expansions and contractions constitute varying forms of 'structured possibilities' which specify 'the powers of agents, varying between agents and over time for any given agent."[26] Furthermore, in his estimation, such fluctuations within the hegemonic structure can, in theory, overturn it, allowing new groups to restructure their "tactics" as "strategies".

Returning to Egypt, while the occupiers were focused on restricting the most obvious organs for political activity, they had less time to consider other cultural arenas. The sporting press was the most notable among these realms. Widely popular, presumably apolitical, and already possessed of an indigenous presence at its helm, it offered the perfect opportunity to test the impact, and limits, of counter-hegemonic narratives. While its potential remained largely unrealized between 1936 and 1952, it nonetheless established itself as an extremely viable conduit for spreading ideology, one that merely required a determined figure to take the helm.

Egyptian Political Developments

The mid-1930s emerged as a period in which foreign hegemony began to be contested not only in sport, but on a broader societal and political level. The 1935 invasion of Ethiopia by Italy left all of the major political players in Egypt – the palace, the parties, and the British – concerned about Italian designs on Egypt. For the British, not only was Italian-controlled

[26] Gruneau 50-51

Ethiopia dangerously close to Sudan, but Italian Libya was mustering troops to the west of Egypt.[27] While the Egyptians might not have been particularly enamored of Italy, the lure of fascist propaganda was not inconsequential, and the British did not want to fight a war on two fronts, internal and external, should the situation deteriorate.

The Egyptians were not ignorant of the British concerns and sought to use them to their advantage. The political scene was fractured, but also weary from years of intrigue,[28] and everyday Egyptians were disenchanted with the lack of progress and the failed efforts of their politicians. Seeing support slipping away, Egypt's political parties banded together to create a "United Front" to face the British with demands for greater autonomy.[29] A new treaty was forged in 1936, one that "established Anglo-Egyptian relations on a legal basis […] broke the British monopoly over Egyptian affairs [… and] freed Egypt from what Egyptians considered their chief obstacle to progress: the Capitulations".[30]

This agreement became known as the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty and, as with the 1919 declaration, it was intended to proclaim a nominal independence for Egypt. As Jacques Berque, among others, argued, however, the 1936 proclamation was primarily symbolic, as it placed no meaningful freedoms or control in the hands of the people, but instead allowed Britain to maintain its hegemony discreetly under the guise of independence. The 1936 treaty did ameliorate conditions, but the standard of living for the lower classes experienced little change, as foreign business interests still dominated many spheres of Egyptian life. The "victory" also

[27] Zayid 148
[28] ibid 150
[29] ibid 156
[30] ibid 190

exhausted the nationalist parties and reinforced their traditional fragmentation.[31] As Berque phrased it, "foreign interference took cover and wore a disguise".[32]

The veil over this façade was lifted shortly after the onset of World War II, as the British effectively ignored their obligations towards Egyptian independence under the treaty. When war was declared, Prime Minister 'Aly Māhir broke off relations with Germany and declared martial law but, behind the scenes, as an ally of King Fārūq, he worked against British aims.[33] The British pressured Fārūq successfully to replace Māhir, but the two successive minority governments were unable to stifle growing opposition to poor wartime conditions in Egypt and rising support for the approaching Germans under Erwin Rommel's Western Desert campaign.[34]

The British decided that the only way to keep the situation under control was to force the King to appoint a Wafdist premier in the form of Muṣṭafá An-Naḥās. In February 1942, High Commissioner Miles Lampson delivered an ultimatum to Fārūq's chief advisor, the former Olympic fencer Ahmed Hassanein. The message to the monarch was clear: form the government desired by the British or be forced to abdicate.[35] When Fārūq refused, the military surrounded his palace and handed him a letter of abdication to sign. Only Hassanein's counsel prevented the King from doing so.[36] Fārūq thus acquiesced and Naḥās became Prime Minister. This was a position he would hold until October 1944 when, at that point unable to command popular support and no longer needed due to the halted German advance, the British allowed Fārūq to replace Naḥās with the more palace-friendly Aḥmad Māhir.[37]

[31] Berque 524-527
[32] ibid 540
[33] Cooper, Artemis 45-46
[34] Vatikiotis 347
[35] Cooper, Artemis 168
[36] ibid 170
[37] ibid 308

Although he attempted to distance himself from the British intervention that had brought him to power, the reputation of Naḥās and the Wafd declined immediately following this incident.[38] Naḥās was well aware that he held his position solely at the pleasure of the British, and thus was relatively willing to acquiesce to their directives. It was clear to everyone that the British had no interest in adhering to the "independence" they had granted to Egypt in both 1922 and 1936, and the Wafd was, at least to some degree, complicit in this betrayal of the Egyptian people. By the end of the war, the Wafd was discredited politically and other groups scrambled to fill the vacuum.[39] Among them was a handful of young military officers who had viewed the 1942 palace incident as the gravest of offenses to the Egyptian nation. As one author put it bluntly: "Gamal Abdel Nasser, on 4 February 1942, began systematically planning revolution".[40]

Such an assessment, of course, has the benefit of hindsight, and in the immediate aftermath of World War II, it remained unclear as to who would represent the people in their relationship, and negotiations with, the British. It would certainly not be the palace; as Artemis Cooper notes, "[w]hile Farouk was widely criticized for giving in too easily on 4 February, the British action was considered so brutal that it did rally patriotic feeling around the King […] Nevertheless, he had suffered an unforgettable humiliation, and his spirit never recovered."[41] Having lost interest in active rule, his involvement in the 1948 Arab-Israeli War, and Egypt's strategy overall, was engaged "in order to maintain the position of Egypt […] as the dominant power in the Arab World" by forcing the Jordanian military to weaken its armies, whose physical strength gave the country leverage over Arab affairs, in a drawn-out conflict.[42] Regardless of the

[38] ibid 348
[39] Vatikiotis 355
[40] Flower 158
[41] Cooper, Artemis 174
[42] Doran 163

rationale, the operation was a disaster for Egypt, and its military was defeated decisively as a consequence. Abdel Nasser was among those whose resentment towards the authorities was fueled by the result.[43]

Egypt's loss in the Arab-Israeli War shook up the political scene once more. The turmoil was such that, in 1950, Naḥās and the *Wafd* returned to power in parliament, despite the considerable unpopularity of both.[44] Naḥās remained in power until 1952, but could not control the growing discontent of the population with the British occupation. Radical organizations, jockeying for the favor of the disillusioned Egyptian people, waged guerilla warfare against the British.[45] When Cairo was set ablaze by protestors on January 26, 1952, Naḥās was dismissed and replaced by ʻAly Māhir.[46] It was, however, too late to salvage the situation.

The frustration of the Egyptian people towards the political situation dovetailed with developments happening on the intellectual level. As noted in the previous chapter, the nation was engaging an indigenous cultural trend that based Egyptian nationalism in the idea of the country as a regional Arab leader. The eruption of the Palestinian Arab Revolt in 1936 transformed this movement into a political one, because it was an anti-imperialist and Muslim issue that was geopolitically relevant and allowed nationalist leaders to take an assertive political stance without upsetting their relationship with the colonizing power.[47] Negative reaction to the Peel Commission findings in 1937, which recommended the partition of Palestine, was significant enough to encourage the Wafdist government to intervene in the issue in that hopes that "it would confirm its position of predominance in regional affairs."[48] Perhaps more

[43] Cooper, Artemis 327
[44] Vatikiotis 367
[45] ibid 369
[46] Ibid 370
[47] Gershoni and Jankowski "Redefining" 167
[48] ibid 178

important than government involvement, however, was the fact that the issue brought the disparate parts of Egyptian society together for a common cause in a way that had not been seen since the 1919 Revolution.[49]

These developments were reflected in a vibrant press that was more than willing to undertake the task of spreading new, pro-Egyptian ideas. According to Talhami, "the state of the press in the 1930s and 1940s was defined by its extreme emphasis on political debate and literary content".[50] In general, there were few strict controls prior to World War II, and the press had no compunctions about being overtly opinionated. This led to fewer types of publications being denied permission to operate, and more freedom for the *'afandiya* to spread their influence through mass media.[51] During the conflict, of course, the British placed severe restrictions on what could be published, but an alleged shortage of paper also contributed to the problem:

> One of the results of the state of war which exists and of the closing of the Mediterranean to a large proportion of the shipping which habitually passes through it is a shortage of paper. The Government is giving the matter serious consideration, for unless something is done the schools may find difficulty in carrying on, and the local Press may be seriously affected. In a way the shortage of newsprint might have good results, since it could afford the Government, particularly if it takes the supply under its control, an opportunity for withdrawing the permits from a number of organs. It is notorious that Egypt has far too many newspapers and periodicals for the size of its reading pubic [*sic*][52]

While the political and literary press was stifled, many sports publications soldiered on despite the restrictions and the more difficult access to paper. While some shuttered, many adapted to the new conditions, with their chances at survival bolstered by a need for distraction during the war and their seeming innocuousness.

The Impact of the 1936 Olympics

[49] ibid 180-181
[50] Talhami 99
[51] ibid 93
[52] Our Cairo Correspondent, "Paper Shortage". *Great Britain and the East*, September 28, 1939, 294

Although the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty produced far more newspaper coverage in 1936, that year's Summer Olympics attracted widespread attention in the country. The two topics even went in tandem on occasion, as when the *Egyptian Gazette* ran Mohammed Taher's speech celebrating the achievement of Egyptians at the Games side by side with coverage of the treaty's signing.[53] Moreover, the legacy of the Olympics was more enduring and looked upon more fondly. There was more print space dedicated to the Games now that Egypt was represented at the IOC by a more "authentic" Egyptian, and major publications such as *Al-ahrām* were active in their coverage of the leadup to the tournament. The first sports page of the year was graced with the title "Today Begins the Eleventh Olympic Year", and provided a brief overview of the planning, and hopes, for the coming year.[54] This aligned well with the publication's growing emphasis overall on the importance of sport in society. Early in the year, the paper implored youth to heed the call of sport in service of the nation, as it could do much to improve their personal lives in addition to aiding the country.[55]

Subsequent articles covered the unfolding of the Games' organization routinely, as well as the preparations that Egypt's sporting bodies were, and should have been, undertaking. The paper was also willing to take a critical approach, noting when the NCPC and the EOC were failing to meet the challenges of Egyptian sport or missing opportunities for its development and promotion. One article, for example, lamented the lack of coverage of fencing, a sport at which Egypt was relatively proficient, as detrimental to the development of a national sporting culture that needed to follow the undertakings of all sport, not just the most popular ones.[56] Thus a regular feature emerged, the *Al-ahrām* Travelogue, which chronicled the journey of Egypt's

[53] "Egypt's Success in Olympic Games", *Egyptian Gazette*, August 8, 1936, 2
[54] "Al-yawm Yabdā Al-'ām Al-uwlmby Al-ḥādy 'ashr", *Al-ahrām*, January 1, 1936, 14
[55] "At-tarbiyah Al-badaniyah" (Physical Education), *Al-ahrām*, February 29, 1936, 14
[56] "Fī As-shīsh" (In Fencing), *Al-ahrām*, May 30, 1936, 14

Olympians from their training camps to Berlin, and provided both positive and critical assessments of their progress.

Nor were sporting journals derelict in their duty to cover the Games and, often, they were even more critical than mainstream publications. In April 1936, for example, in an article titled "Our Money is in Vain", *Al-āl'āb Ar-riyāḍīyah* criticized preparation for the Olympics within the larger framework of sport in Egypt. Arguing that sport relied too heavily on foreigners due to the "softness" of local administrators, it suggested that while the athletes headed to Berlin were being looked after, other prospects were ignored by the federation.[57] This was a common criticism in such journals: too much attention was being paid to the most skilled and successful athletes and not enough funding was going towards training up-and-coming competitors and broadening the nation's talent pool.

Nonetheless, Egypt's performance at the 1936 Berlin Olympics, relative to all other competing nations, has yet to be surpassed as of 2016.[58] In addition to the gold medals of El-Touni and Miṣbāḥ, three other Egyptians won weightlifting medals at the Games. Waṣīf Ibrāhīm was the light-heavyweight bronze medalist, while Sāliḥ Muḥammad Sulīmān and Ibrāhīm Shams took silver and bronze respectively in the featherweight division. Yet aside from the significant coverage and high praise for El-Touni's accomplishments, and what they meant for Egypt due to the international recognition of his achievements,[59] *Al-ahrām* was slow in acknowledging the value of the nation's performance at the Games. Sulīmān and Shams, for example, merited only brief notes regarding their accomplishments at first,[60] although they received praise, alongside

[57] "Amwālnā Tadhhab Habā'" (Our Money is in Vain), *Al-āl'āb Ar-riyāḍīyah*, April 7, 1936, 1
[58] Egypt's five medals, two gold, one silver, and two bronze, position it as 15th in unofficial rankings of the 1936 Berlin Games (the IOC does not maintain lists of this type). Egypt's performance at the 1948 London Games was technically superior (two gold, two silver, and one bronze), but it still finished 16th overall.
[59] "Khadr At-tūny Najam Miṣr As-sāṭi' Fī Samā' Ad-dawrat Al-uwlimbīyah" (Khadr El-Touni: Egypt's Shining Star in the Skies of the Olympic Games), *Al-ahrām*, August 11, 1936, 14
[60] "Uwlimbīyat" (Olympiad), *Al-ahrām*, August 4, 1936, 14

Miṣbāḥ, a few days later.[61] Ibrāhīm received no acknowledgement at all in the immediate aftermath of his event, despite having been mentioned in the next day's *Egyptian Gazette*,[62] and he was granted a short mention by the paper only five days later.[63]

By the time the champions arrived back in Egypt, however, Ibrāhīm was listed among the "mighty titans" that had brought pride to Egypt through their great victories.[64] The reason behind this change is unclear, although perhaps in the context of El-Touni's victory, the implications for national strength of any medal were inescapable. Once the Games had ended, *Al-ahrām* discussed how Egypt had made its voice heard and should come out of the tournament proud,[65] calling for Egyptians to send affection to all of their athletes and help encourage and prepare them for the 1940 Tokyo Games.[66] It argued that "our sporting renaissance is a national renaissance, for we now realize that sport is a powerful, effective influence in the renaissance of nations and their progress", and concluded by asking, "Do we not see that the greatest civilized nations are the greatest in sport?"[67]

Nor did the English-language *Egyptian Gazette* ignore Egyptians at the Games, also covering nearly every athlete, including non-starter ʻAbdul Yazīd Al-ḥalawāny, who was scheduled to compete in the 800 metres sprint and the 400 metres hurdles, but was "unfit".[68] The *Egyptian Gazette* also featured a story on Miṣbāḥ's victory in lightweight weightlifting. Its reporting, however, was not always entirely accurate. In praising the efforts of fencer Maḥmūd ʻĀbdīn, the paper argued that his surviving to the third round was impressive "especially as

[61] "Risālat Barlīn" (Berlin Letter), *Al-ahrām*, August 8, 1936, 14
[62] "The Olympic Games", *Egyptian Gazette*, August 5, 1936, 6
[63] "Risālat Barlīn" (Berlin Letter), *Al-ahrām*, August 8, 1936, 14
[64] "Dhuyūl Al-uwlimbīyād" (Tails of the Olympiad), *Al-ahrām*, August 25, 1936, 14
[65] "Uwlimbīyat" (Olympiad), *Al-ahrām*, August 16, 1936, 14
[66] "Dhuyūl Al-uwlimbīyād" (Tails of the Olympiad), *Al-ahrām*, August 25, 1936, 14
[67] ibid
[68] "Egypt's Heavy Defeat in Fencing", *Egyptian Gazette*, August 4, 1936, 8

Egypt had only just taken up the game",[69] missing the fact that ʻĀbdīn was a well-known fencing instructor in Egypt who had competed at the 1928 Amsterdam Games.[70] Nonetheless, the *Egyptian Gazette* was, overall, very positive in its assessment of the nation's performance.

At least one sports journal, *Al-āl'āb Ar-riyāḍīyah*, characterized Egypt's performance at the Games as poor and was expressly frustrated that the delegation was proud of what they had accomplished. This was not, of course, an indictment of the accomplishments of the weightlifters. Rather, this criticism was centered around the performance of the football team, a critical representation of Egypt's prowess, which had been eliminated in a 1-3 round one loss against eventual silver medalist Austria. Egypt, the article argued, was not living up to its potential and was being laughed at, a crucial problem in an era when the duty of the nation was to represent itself as an equal to the Europeans. The author noted that football in the country took a break during the summer, instead of training year-round like other national federations, and thus its players were not prepared sufficiently for upcoming seasons, nor inculcated with the necessary values of hard work and perseverance required for success. Egypt, he continued, was "sleeping", a theme in similar publications that recurred almost as often as the distant goal of a true "sporting renaissance".[71]

Al-ahrām, while more subdued, made a similar call for "the renewal of administrative blood in its entirety,"[72] while coach and trainer Aḥmad Muṣṭafá blamed Egyptian administrators first and foremost for the wrestling team's failure to medal in Berlin.[73] In September, the publication argued for the need to conduct a thorough investigation into what happened in Berlin

[69] "Olympic Games", *Egyptian Gazette*, August 6, 1936, 8
[70] "Takrīm Al-ʻustādh ʻĀbdīn Batal Miṣr fī L'ab Ash-shīsh" (Professor ʻĀbdīn, Egyptian Champion in Foil, Honored), *Al-ahrām*, February 13, 1936, 14
[71] "Taqhiqir Al-kurah Fī Miṣr" (Decline of Football in Egypt), *Al-āl'āb Ar-riyāḍīyah*, September 21, 1936, 1-2
[72] "Risālat Barlīn" (Berlin Letter), *Al-ahrām*, August 11, 1936, 14
[73] "Min Dhuyūl Al-uwlimbīyād" (From the Tails of the Olympiad), *Al-ahrām*, September 1, 1936, 14

in order for Egypt to be considered a world power in sport.[74] As with other publications, it was most critical of football, with one article warning players that one's vanity always leads to decline. "Do not give into ego, oh players of Egypt," it implored, "for it distracts you from your duty towards yourselves and towards your nation."[75]

The *Al-āl'āb Ar-riyāḍīyah* article highlights a major theme of such narratives in the mid-1930s, which was the suggestion that transformation must occur at the school, club, and federation levels of nearly every sport in order for Egypt to become the equal of Europe in the realm of sport. While El-Touni's results were praised, the feats of Egypt's other Olympians received less attention in the press, and the results of the football team, the standard metric for accomplishment in sport, were dismal. When other athletes were discussed, it was often in the context of how they and the administration of their sports could improve for the future. It is not surprising, therefore, that the accomplishments of the Egyptians in Berlin were celebrated extensively only in retrospect. Just as the nation was still under political occupation by the British, regardless of the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty, so too was the nation's sporting movement held hostage by the need for validation from Europe.[76] One month after the 1936 Games, *Al-ahrām* made an explicit, lengthy comparison between the sport renaissances of Europe and its own, noting how the former had influenced Egypt, but that progress still needed to be made.[77] "Strengthening Egypt", however, was an exercise engaged in for its own sake and for national prestige, not to rid the country of the occupation or attain any similarly revolutionary goals.

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[74] "Fī Al-ba'ath" (Regarding the Delegation), *Al-ahrām*, September 10, 1936, 14

[75] "Ghurūr Al-lā'ib Al-miṣrī Sayu'dá Ḥatmān Ilá Taqhiqir" (The Egyptian Player's Ego Will Lead Necessarily to Decline), *Al-ahrām*, September 17, 1936, 14

[76] This validation was not sought solely from Britain, as the comparative prowess of other European nations was featured as well. In the lead-up to the 1936 Berlin Games, for example, *Al-ahrām* provided extensive coverage of the visit of Hungarian boxers to Egypt and wrote lengthy articles comparing the two sides.

[77] "An-nahaḍāt Ar-rīyāḍīyah Fī Awrbā Wa Nahaḍātnā Al-miṣrīyah" (The Sporting Renaissances in Europe and Our Egyptian Renaissance), *Al-ahrām*, September 16, 1936, 14

In time, this would change but, in the leadup towards World War II, commentary about sport in the press would focus on the failures of Egyptians to live up to international standards in both administration and performance. Such concerns amounted to more than just talk. In 1938, for example, Al-Ahly was explicit about how its members were to behave and expelled those who broke those standards "in the interest of the club, sport, and the nation".[78]

As a government organization charged with improving the stature and conditions of domestic sport, the NCPC was situated directly in the locus of criticism surrounding the inadequacies of Egyptian sport infrastructure. Leaving the top athletes under the purview of the EOC, the NCPC was tasked with ensuring that Egypt's future sportsmen were well-prepared to represent the nation's greatness to the entire world. As such, the NCPC was acutely aware that more needed to be done to develop domestic sport. Early on, it perceived its charge as taking the organization in two potential directions: overseeing the work being done by the federations and the clubs and distributing subsidies, or developing a national culture of sport by inculcating the value of sport through education.[79] The committee chose to focus its limited resources on the latter objective and, between 1940 and 1952, concentrated its efforts on developing and spreading physical education programs in the nation's schools.[80]

This is not to suggest, however, that the NCPC ignored the other approach completely, as the example of water polo demonstrates. Water polo was introduced into Egypt in 1924, but it was not until 1937-1938 that sufficient teams existed to establish a league. In 1939 the Egyptian Swimming Federation formed a national team for the sport, with the assistance of the NCPC, and began contributing resources for local and regional development. In 1941, they sought the

[78] DAW 0069-00417 "Awrāq Khāṣāh Binādy Al-Ahly" (Prviate Papers of the Al-Ahly Club), 1909-1938
[79] DAW 0069-004120, "Awrāq Khāṣāh Bilijnat Al-ahlīyah Ar-riyāḍah Al-badanīyah" (Private Papers of the National Committee for Physical Culture), 1938
[80] Ibrāhīm 190

support of the King to found a cup that would raise water polo's prestige in the country. Their request noted that they had "done much to spread benefits of swimming and to spread it, and many have taken up the sport, inspired by prizes," but they wanted "to found a swimming cup in [the King's] name that will be the biggest and best yet."[81] Their request was granted and their efforts were not in vain. At the 1948 London Olympics, Egypt fielded a respectable team that survived round one and placed seventh overall out of 18 teams. Many of its members went on to win a silver medal in this sport at the inaugural Mediterranean Games in 1951. Rowing was another sport that benefitted from the NCPC's attention, and in 1938 programs for celebrating, and of course competing in, this sport were expanded.[82] As in water polo, Egypt made its Olympic debut in rowing in 1948.

The *'afandiya* and the Sports Journals

Prior to and during World War II, the *'afandiya* that controlled the NCPC and the sporting press maintained a close relationship with the colonizing power in both politics and sport. On an individual publication level, periodicals such as *Al-āl'āb Ar-riyāḍīyah* continued to focus on health, nutrition, and fitness, which was a trend followed by the NCPC in its annual reports, as well as its associated biweekly journal *Ar-riyāḍīyah al-badanīyah al-miṣrīyah*. Broadly, the journals and the committee reproduced two hegemonic narratives: relating the success of the nation to its success on the playing fields, and equating Egypt's global strength with the physical fitness of its citizens.

[81] DAW 0069-004125, "Awrāq Khāṣāh Bialitiḥād Al-Miṣry Lilsibāḥah Mubāriyat Kurah Al-Mā' Wa Al-Muṣāra'ah Bilqāhirah" (Private Papers of the Egyptian Federation for Swimming, Water Polo Matches, and Wrestling), 1941
[82] DAW 0069-004123, "Barnāmaj Ḥaflat Al-āl'āb As-sanawiyah Ath-thālithah Linādy Kafar As-sawāḥil Ar-riyāḍīy fī 14 Aghusṭus" (Program of the Third Annual Games Celebration for the Kafar As-sawāḥil Club on August 14), 1938

The narratives of the NCPC often treated sport as if it existed in a vacuum. If, for example, the NCPC was concerned about the specter of war in Europe in the late 1930s, and how their nation might be dragged into the conflict, then they decided against taking advantage of sports as a cultural arena to express their thoughts. One might even believe that the NCPC was dismissive of the prospect for war, since its 1937-1938 report (compiled and published in 1939) discussed enthusiastically its involvement with "encouraging some of the Egyptian students abroad" to engage in physical culture and bring it back to Egypt.[83] The committee even funded students to join clubs in Paris and return with the latest European techniques and knowledge. The same report also championed sports journalism as a way of involving youth more in sport and encouraged the Egyptian press to "follow the lead of the finest European journals" in its writing.[84]

Further signaling their acquiescence to the continuation of the colonial project, the 1938 issues of *Ar-riyāḍīyah al-badanīyah al-miṣrīyah* were virtually devoid of critical commentary in their quest to bring physical culture to a new generation of Egyptians. They focused instead on factual content, such as the results of national and international competitions, as well as those of more regional and local matches. Despite being charged explicitly with developing sport policy within Egypt, the official journal of the NCPC lagged behind other sporting journals that had, for many years, felt free to take a critical approach to the handling of sport in the country.

Often, these publications themselves seemed unsure as to exactly what they wanted to be and how to negotiate the dominant sporting narratives of the era. *Al-āl'āb Ar-riyāḍīyah*, for example, pledged in September 1937 to take on literature, politics (from a pro-*Wafd* perspective), sport, and art. This change lasted only briefly until a hiatus, which was followed by a December

[83] "Al-Miṣryūn Bilkharij" (Egyptians Abroad), *At-taqrīr As-Sanawy 1937-1938*, 1939
[84] ibid "As-ṣaḥāfah Ar-riyāḍīyah" (Sports Journalism)

announcement of a new format for the publication to be unveiled in January 1938. This, however, did not come to pass, but the journal did mix political commentary with sport intermittently in 1938 and 1939, and published a proclamation in April 1940 that it would address social and moral issues as well. Whether these developments were due to an identity crisis, an attempt to make *Al-āl'āb Ar-riyāḍīyah* more attractive to consumers who could only afford one journal, or just a negotiation of declining paper supplies, it is clear that the melding of politics and critical commentary in a sports publication was not unfathomable.

Nevertheless, any concerns about the state of sport in Egypt were always expressed within the hegemonic framework. In one of its earliest attempts to relate the politics of the nation to sport, *Al-āl'āb Ar-riyāḍīyah* implored that more attention should be given to promulgate physical culture among the peasantry. "The people of Egypt are glorious people and the most glorious of them is the peasant," began the author, who signed his name only as "!", before discussing all of the physical and moral problems that were plaguing this class.[85] This put the villages in danger and, when the villages were in danger, so too was all of Egypt.[86]

Adherence to the two hegemonic narratives continued into 1939 but, after Germany's invasion of Poland in September, discussion of war-related matters was unavoidable. *Ar-riyāḍīyah al-badanīyah al-miṣrīyah* began to devote space in every issue to gearing up for the war effort and, in particular, rallying patriotism by showing sportsmen (and sportswomen) as either members of the military or supporting the armed forces in other ways, such as making appearances to boost troop morale. They often highlighted sporting activities and tournaments within the military, as this was the only realm in which such pursuits not only maintained steam,

[85] !. "Khawāṭir" (Reflections), *Al-āl'āb Ar-riyāḍīyah*, September 8, 1938, 1
[86] See the note from the previous chapter regarding Michael Gaspar's argument on the relationship between the *'afandiya* and the peasantry

but thrived during World War II.[87] Backing the British effort was unavoidable given wartime control of the press, and rallying calls for patriotism were not based in nationalist discourse, but centered on mustering youth (and the broader population) to support the war effort. Nonetheless, the publication maintained a façade of independence by focusing on the nation's prospects at the 1940 Summer Olympics that were to be held in Finland.[88]

With the plummeting number of national, and certainly international, tournaments on which to report, this emphasis on the 1940 Games can be attributed partially to a need to fill space, but it also served to reinforce the need for validation on the Egyptian sporting scene by European standards. Given the wartime situation, it is not surprising that the interest in Europe came to be centered around Britain, a change from the prewar context, where countries such as France and Germany were seen as equally worthy of emulation by the Egyptians. Each issue contained several articles discussing sport in Britain (and England in particular) and how the Egyptian system could model itself after this example in order to improve its international standing, as well as its national health and fitness. *Ar-riyāḍīyah al-badanīyah al-miṣrīyah* continued to reinforce the narrative that Egypt's national identity and strength could be defined solely under British terms.

Nor was the emphasis on health, nutrition, and fitness stifled during the early years of the conflict. A considerable focus on these elements, as well as methods for success in sport, emerged in 1939 in *Ar-riyāḍīyah al-badanīyah al-miṣrīyah* as the primary replacement for the declining number of "results" to print. Moreover, the 1939-1940 report mentions health and

[87] See, for example, DAW 0069-018176 "Taqrīr Sanawy Min Muḥammad 'abbās Musā'id Mudarib At-tarbiyah Al-badaniyah Bish'an Al-āl'āb Ar-riyāḍīyah Bilḥaras Al-malaky Mawsim 1942 Wa 1943 " (Annual Report from Muhammad Abbas, Assistant Coach of Physical Education Regarding Sporting Games of the Royal Guard's 1942-1943 Season), 1943. Shooting clubs fell under this category as well; see for example DAW 0069-011602 "Awrāq Khāṣāh Binādy As-ṣayd Al-malaky Al-miṣry"(Private Papers of the Royal Egyptian Hunting Club), 1941-1951

[88] Tokyo had been designated originally as the hosts of these Games, but withdrew in July 1938, leading the IOC to move the games to Helsinki.

nutrition, as well as cultural research and maintaining the integrity of sport, as being among the committee's top priorities,[89] all of which dovetailed nicely into its main objective to "draw the attention of the youth to the essence of physical culture."[90]

This trend continued into 1940 in *Ar-riyāḍīyah al-badanīyah al-miṣrīyah*, particularly after the much-lamented cancellation of that year's Summer Olympics left even more space available for contributors to fill. Suggestions for coaches and notes on proper technique replaced coverage of results and, while there was some commentary on the connection between the glory of Ancient Egyptian sport and the modern situation, the emphasis remained on England serving as the model. Ersatz calls for patriotism, through the representation of prominent sports figures as strong supporters of the military and the British war effort, were also popular. The NCPC report, meanwhile, took a similarly eclectic approach to its content. By 1941 even these additional features had tapered off and tips for improving health and physical fitness, almost always in relation to the British ideal, were becoming the defining feature of *Ar-riyāḍīyah al-badanīyah al-miṣrīyah*.

By 1942, editors of *Ar-riyāḍīyah al-badanīyah al-miṣrīyah* appeared more comfortable in experimenting with what their publication could do. Its content had grown more varied and, while articles on nutrition, health, sport instruction, and fitness all remained prominent, more critical commentary came to the fore. Most notably, a semi-regular column emerged that analyzed how a particular element of Egypt's sporting infrastructure, such as a selected sport or organization, was remaining strong "in the current circumstances" of the war. This was not exclusive to *Ar-riyāḍīyah al-badanīyah al-miṣrīyah*; even *Al-āl'āb Ar-riyāḍīyah*, which by this

[89] "Magalah Al-Lagnah Al-Ahlīyah: *Ar-riyāḍīyah al-badanīyah al-miṣrīyah*" (The Magazine of the National Committee: *Egyptian Physical Culture*), *At-taqrīr As-Sanawy 1939-1940*, 1941
[90] "Bayān: Siyāsiyah Al-lagnah Al-ahlīyah wa Athārhā fī Al-ḥarakat Ar-riyāḍīyah" (Statement: The Policies of the National Committee and Their Influence on the Sports Movement), *At-taqrīr As-Sanawy 1939-1940*, 1941

time was essentially just a racing magazine, offered the occasional commentary on how their sport was managing to survive despite cuts in government funding. Yet the very fact that a magazine about horse racing in Egypt could continue to be published fairly regularly underscores just how removed sport journalism could be from the reality that surrounded it.

It is difficult to chastise such publications for this, however, as British social life carried on in a similar manner, with near-complete disregard for the war. Soldiers stationed in Egypt, even during the times of greatest threat from the Italians and the Germans, wrote of the bevy of amusements available to them. Sergeant Kenneth Arthur Cooper, for example, provided great detail of boxing, football, and field hockey tournaments that he witnessed and participated in during the latter half of 1940,[91] while in the same era Private Sam Rhodda was able to take part in ball games and cross-country racing.[92] Guides for servicemen on leave in Cairo and Alexandria list numerous sporting clubs among the many entertainments available in these cities.[93] Aside from a slight scarcity of resources available to the organizations, these offerings remained mostly unchanged from the pre-war years.

In the sporting press, although England still remained the main subject of discussion and articles with titles such as "Lord Lloyd's Opinion of Our Country",[94] designed to reinforce the friendly relations between the colonizer and the colonized, were common, articles about sport in

[91] 1997-07-08 - Large quantities correspondence, including letters and airgraphs, from Sergeant Kenneth Arthur Cooper to his wife from Egypt, Ethiopia and India, 1940-1944; copies of 'The Spur', the journal of 928 Motor Ambulance Convoy, 1944, to which Cooper was attached; handbooks, teaching notes and other service documents. National Army Museum.
[92] 2000-12-500 - Memoirs of Pte Sam Rhodda, 1930-1940 (c); Rhodda served with the King's Own Royal Regiment, the Tank Corps, mainly in Egypt, 1930-1937, and as a recalled reservist with the 3rd Divisional Signals, Royal Signals, during the retreat from Dunkirk, 1940. National Army Museum.
[93] 1987-01-35 - Copies of two guides to Cairo and one to Alexandria, 1942-1944 (c); produced for the use of servicemen visiting the towns on leave, World War Two (1939-1945).
[94] "Raī Al-lawrd Lūyd fī Bilādnā", *Ar-riyāḍīyah al-badanīyah al-miṣrīyah*, August 1942 – This article in particular highlighted the high praise from Lloyd, the High Commissioner of Egypt from 1925 through 1929, of the country's potential for the elite sport of hunting.

places other than Britain began to appear with increasing frequency. Other eclectic selections, meanwhile, discussed sport in America, Ancient Egypt, and the participation of women, and contained extensive coverage of local competitions during the middle of the year. Regardless of the political intent of these articles, they were primarily a consequence of the need to fill space, which, as suggested by the large amount of repetition within and across the issues, was a significant concern during these years.

In the 1942-1943 NCPC report, however, in a section entitled "The National Committee: Its Purposes and Essence", the body declared a desire for increasing independence from the government in order to fulfil the committee's mission of spreading physical culture. Noting that its "first and last goal is the freedom of sport under the banner of government and the law," the NCPC called for legislation to guarantee its survival outside of the flow of political currents and protect its existence against regime changes.[95] Although the piece quickly modified its tone to champion the committee's successes given the hardships of war, by then standard fare for the publication, and challenged the national government rather than the occupying forces, this nonetheless stands out as one of its most critical items of commentary to date. Furthermore, it signaled a shift within the NCPC to further acknowledge its potential for politicization, to critique its benefactors, and to migrate towards a more autonomous existence from which a genuinely indigenous movement could, at least in theory, be launched. Perhaps because the British wished to maintain the illusion of sport as an apolitical realm, or perhaps because the infraction was too minor to be of concern, this statement managed to dodge the censorship through which much of the Egyptian press suffered during this period.

[95] "Al-Lagnah Al-Ahlīyah: Aghrāḍ wa Māhīyathā", *At-taqrīr As-Sanawy 1942-1943*, 1944

From a political perspective, these developments occurred in the aftermath of the unabashed British intrusion into Egyptian politics that had occurred in early 1942, which had resulted in Naḥās' ascension to the Prime Ministership. In the aftermath of the incident, High Commissioner Lampson had "reported that 'our action has also caused much resentment among the princes and princesses and among the upper classes, more especially in Cairo and Alexandria" and remarked on "a tendency towards a social boycott.'"[96] One manifestation of this was in how "[s]ome Egyptians returned their memberships of the Anglo-Egyptian Union and the Gezira Club", even though Lampson "said that if they did, they would certainly not be allowed back."[97] As one scholar put it, "[t]hough the social boycott thawed in time, Anglo-Egyptian relations were never the same again."[98] This gesture was all the more significant given that most Egyptians, even those among the elite, would remain barred from these institutions until after the war, with a vision clubs could become a protected enclave for Cairo's British community in case of serious nationalist disturbances."[99] Thus, by this point in the conflict, with the colonizing power unashamedly asserting its superiority when necessary, the '*afandiya* were among the many who were realizing that the pursuit of social advancement under British terms was likely a dead end.

In this regard, the '*afandiya* were building upon a movement of establishing social legitimacy through alternative channels that had begun around the turn of the century. Keith Watenpaugh, studying the equivalent of the '*afandiya* in Aleppo, discusses this trend through the paradigm of a developing "middle class" that was engaging "voluntary associations […] to cut

[96] Cooper, Artemis 173
[97] Ibid. The Anglo Egyptian Union was founded in 1936 "to promote a dialogue between individuals of the two countries, and to further the ideals imbedded in the Treaty. It bespeaks the failure of this aim that in 1947, the Union voted itself out of existence." See Oppenheim 214.
[98] Cooper, Artemis 173
[99] Oppenheim 208

across professional and sectarian lines, to become sites of proper, urbane middle-class social interaction, and to provide a blueprint for the broader participation of the middle class in all elements of society."[100] In Watenpaugh's estimation, such social clubs allowed the "middle class" to take on functions, such as the provision of charitable medical care and meals, that had been headed traditionally by either the government or traditional elites. In doing so, they established their legitimacy as a powerful class by taking on roles that were not being filled by either Egyptian politicians or the British overseers. The support that they gained and could mobilize from these activities gave them leverage in making demands for social advancement and a popular base through which they could gain and maintain power in a way that did not depend exclusively on the charity and whims of those above them. For Egyptians, a similar objective could be attained through sport.

The social organizations of the '*afandiya* mirrored those of the Turco-Egyptian Elite, such as the Mohamed Ali Club,[101] and other institutions for wealthier Egyptians such as The Royal Automobile Club D'Egypte (RACE). The latter, founded in 1924, was a meeting place for "a cross section of Cairo's elites" of Levantine origin.[102] At least two of Egypt's Olympic fencers were members of RACE. Mohamed Charaoui, who served as a senator prior to the 1952 Revolution, competed in both épée and saber at the 1928 Amsterdam Games.[103] Attorney Jean Asfar took part in the épée tournament of the 1948 London Olympics[104] and settled in France after the Revolution. Both were members of the associated Cercle Royal d'Escrime, which

[100] Watenpaugh 81
[101] Oppenheim 212
[102] Oppenheim 213-214
[103] "Who's Who" 220
[104] "Who's Who" 172

counted among its membership no fewer than eleven of Egypt's Olympic fencers who competed prior to 1952, including Hassanein.

Mine Ener provides a similar example of Watenpaugh's analysis for Egypt, wherein "[d]uring the British occupation, the government's social priorities were sidetracked by political exigencies".[105] Until the 1930s, therefore, religious groups, as well as the more secular upper classes, took advantage of the government's inattention to establish their own paternalistic roles by providing venues and establishing organizations for the relief of the poor.[106] Once the government resumed its role in handling these functions, however, these classes needed to seek other bases through which they could establish legitimacy outside of the purview of the colonizers. Sport offered one potential channel for these desires.

The need to fill space in sports journals, meanwhile, became even more noticeable in 1943, although frustration, rather than experimentation, seemed to prevail as the publication's content grew increasingly stagnant. Issues of *Ar-riyāḍīyah al-badanīyah al-miṣrīyah* contained numerous articles on how the war effort was affecting sport, particularly in terms of the lack of results on which to report. The journal maintained a focus on nutrition, fitness, and proper technique for sporting, and began including a monthly section containing health tips and explanations of the rules and playing fields for various sports, some common, some more esoteric, seeking to introduce an educational component by providing the historical background and context for these activities. Moreover, it put forth a greater effort to introduce an overtly British focus into these articles by discussing life, sport, health, nutrition, and fitness in Britain. The desperation for content also became more obvious, as the journal emphasized, and reproduced in full, reports and decisions from the organizing bodies of major sports (and sport in

[105] Ener 132
[106] ibid

general). This dearth of material led to several interesting features, including more articles dealing with women, both in Egypt and abroad, as role models in the realm of sport and contributors to the war effort. More articles on sports personalities appeared, although the majority of the individuals covered were bureaucrats and coaches, instead of the athletes themselves. The influence of the United States and the Soviet Union, as well as Egypt's interests in these regions, was present, albeit limited.

In 1944 *Ar-riyāḍīyah al-badanīyah al-miṣrīyah* saw much of the same types of content as the previous year, the only significant difference being the increased discussion, with the end of the war in sight, about what sporting life would look like in the future and what the status of national and international competition might be. The official reports of the NCPC engaged an increasingly noticeable trend towards expressing financial concerns. Although the NCPC would later admit to having been in dire financial straits since 1939,[107] whispers of these difficulties emerged only in the 1943-1944 report. Until then, the committee had sallied forth and met its obligations with determination and a positive outlook, claiming to be doing all it could given the circumstances. For this edition, however, despite claiming to possess sufficient, if limited, resources, the NCPC not only acknowledged its financial burdens, but argued that failing to increase its funding would lead to trouble in the future,[108] further sharpening the critical edge of the publication. The following year's report, although declaring that the committee would do its best to not show weakness, argued that the NCPC's failings affected all other organizations and negatively impacted the development of youth, which indicated an unsustainable long-term outlook.[109]

[107] "Niẓām Al-Lagnah Al-Ahlīyah" (The National Committee's System), *At-taqrīr As-Sanawy 1946-1947*, 1947
[108] "Al-Lagnah Al-Ahlīyah" (The National Committee), *At-taqrīr As-Sanawy 1943-1944*, 1945
[109] "Al-Lagnah Al-Ahlīyah" (The National Committee), *At-taqrīr As-Sanawy 1944-1945*, 1946

This increasing willingness to present the Egyptian sporting scene as blemished, as well as to implicitly criticize the lack of funding it was receiving, demonstrates how pragmatic wartime concerns exerted pressures on the '*afandiya*'s role in hegemonic restructuring, impeding its progress by shifting the group's interests away from the process. In other words, with the war having distorted the benefits of maintaining an ambiguous relationship with the British, an opportunity arose for the urban educated class to explore alternative paths towards improving their socioeconomic status. The realm of sports, perceived as apolitical, allowed these classes to test the waters and make more demands. Unlike in Hargreaves' example, where the upper classes had sufficient time to maneuver politically and retain their hegemony, the outbreak of World War II hampered Britain's ability to shift into less overt forms of control. Politically, their heavy-handed rule of Egypt during the conflict destroyed any pretense that the 1936 Anglo-Egyptian Treaty granted the nation anything more than nominal independence. As one author put it, "after World War II, the receding hegemony of the colonizing power, and along with it, the reduced privileges of the other resident foreign minorities, allowed an emerging indigenous bourgeoisie to accede to positions of professional and social prominence".[110]

After World War II

Di-Capua argues that "[a]fter World War II, organizational developments, as well as growing awareness on the side of the nationalists, brought to the surface an urgent need to 'Egyptianize Sports'".[111] The British, for their part, were not ready to surrender control and were well aware that encouraging nationalist discourse to rally a country to support the war effort could be dangerous. Once the war concluded, these energies could be directed against the

[110] Oppenheim 9
[111] Di-Capua 149

occupying power, particularly as these journals existed, nominally, as the voice of the indigenous Egyptian. As Elena Zubkova outlined in her seminal study of the Soviet Union, *Russia After the War*, Stalin gave society much more cultural and political freedom during World War II in the hopes of fostering unity, cohesion, and drive from below to emerge victorious in the conflict and, when the war ended, many citizens expected that this societal freedom would be maintained and even expanded. At first, the people tolerated a continuation of restrictions on their social and political freedoms because they felt that the dismal state in which the nation found itself was a consequence of having to give everything to win the war. By 1948, however, material conditions were still poor and the Soviet citizenry was less willing to blame their situation on the exigencies of war.[112] At this point, however, Stalin was in a position to create an atmosphere of fear by instituting outright oppression of dissent.[113] He was, therefore, able to reassert his control over Soviet society and end calls for the expansion, or even maintenance, of war time liberalization.

The British needed to respond to these expectations in Egypt more subtly than in the Soviet case, and with Egypt having been largely unaffected by the conflict, they did not have the excuse of reversing devastation to stall and exercise more authoritarian policies. Had the occupiers had more time, they might have completed the restructuring that they began prior to the war and maintained foreign control over the discourse surrounding sport by appeasing the '*afandiya* and fostering a situation wherein this segment of society benefitted from reproducing discourse that reinforced the contemporary nature of power relationships.

This was not to be the case, although the editors of *Ar-riyāḍīyah al-badanīyah al-miṣrīyah* never championed political independence or made any explicit recommendations for

[112] Zubkova 102
[113] ibid 130-131

Egypt to distance itself from the British sporting model. Up until the 1952 Revolution, they continued to pay lip service to a continued British presence in the country and maintain an outwardly apolitical veil. Their task, as events unfolded over the next several years, was to experiment with nationalist ideology and make sport amenable to alternative narratives. As 1944 came to a close, the desperation for content became clearer and the editors published increasingly shorter issues, which dovetailed well with the reality of local paper shortages. This trend continued into 1945, but there were also notable changes in substance, including the waning of health and fitness-related articles. Furthermore, references to the United States as a model increased, even though Britain remained the most covered nation. The celebration of the 1948 Olympics became a feature in the later issues (even though London would not be confirmed as the host city until March 1946), as did the idea of engaging physical and mental health through a dedicated role for sport within the educational curriculum. Censorship of the press was lifted officially on June 9, 1945.[114]

The *'afandiya*'s shift in conceptualizing the utility of sport was perceptible in the NCPC's 1945-1946 report. At first it vacillated, tempering calls for more government funding by touting a desire to see more foreign coaches and players come to Egypt,[115] but remaining relatively pessimistic about the current status of national physical culture, even as the war came to a close. Noting a desire to improve upon the past,[116] it highlighted sports journalism's difficult dual role on both the international and national scenes. In regards to the former, the NCPC had a responsibility to represent Egypt's movement abroad and bring back new techniques, information, and developments for the benefit of the country. Domestically its charge was even

[114] Vatikiotis 358
[115] "Al-Lagnah Al-Ahlīyah" ("The National Committee), *At-taqrīr As-Sanawy 1945-1946*, 1947
[116] "Āmnā Ath-thāny 'Ashr" (Our Twelfth Year), *At-taqrīr As-Sanawy 1945-1946*, 1947

greater, for it had to help connect the urban and rural areas to the nation as a whole, bolster the sports movement, and spread physical culture. In order to accomplish this, it had to be free to criticize, which indicated a desire for a genuinely autonomous voice.[117] Calls were put forth for cooperation between the NCPC, the nation's sports unions, clubs, and other indigenous bodies in order to unify their efforts and enhance their ability to spread their vision of physical culture and strengthen the nation.[118]

Ar-riyāḍīyah al-badanīyah al-miṣrīyah made some of its most noticeable overtures in support of Egyptian nationalism in 1946. It was in this year that the 1936 Summer Olympics, which at the time represented Egypt's greatest success, first became intertwined with national pride and identity on the international sporting stage. These Olympics came to symbolize indigenous success and became the locus for nationalist discourse on sport. Connections between the physical and metaphorical strength of the country were emphasized and the publication began to engage more directly with the idea that proving one's prowess in international sport simultaneously demonstrated one's worthiness as a nation. The Games of 1948, as well as the 1950 World Cup, continued to gain traction as a subject of focus, and were seen as an opportunity to validate an indigenous "Egyptian" power on the world stage.

Reporting in 1947 amplified these trends and focused on highlighting the weaknesses and obstacles in the way of Egypt's success at the 1948 (and, in some forward-looking articles, the 1952) Summer Olympics. There was increasing scrutiny of successful international sporting systems, particularly the ones in the United States, with an emphasis on how these ideas could transfer to the Egyptian context in order to better prepare the youth for international competitions

[117] "As-ṣaḥafah Ar-riyāḍīyah Al-Miṣrīyah" (Egyptian Sports Journalism), *At-taqrīr As-Sanawy 1945-1946*, 1947
[118] "Al-Lagnah Al-Ahlīyah" ("The National Committee), *At-taqrīr As-Sanawy 1945-1946*, 1947

in the future. For example, in October 1947, *Al-āl'āb Ar-riyāḍīyah*, compared the footballers of the previous generation (such as Hegazi) to those of the day, highlighting the latter's lack of moral fortitude, which it believed was essential for becoming a true sporting champion.[119] The following issues contained a letter from the Secretary of Cairene Weightlifting arguing that, despite Egypt's current reputation in the sport, more must be done to keep up with current trends and that it is the national duty of trainers and administrators to maintain Egypt's reputation.[120]

Discussions such as these left little room for the traditional articles on health, fitness, and nutrition, which had disappeared permanently. Patrick McDevitt has argued that no British colony could escape engagement with imperial discourses on sport as a reflection of the ideology of masculine might, and Egypt's postwar emphasis on bodybuilding, wrestling, weightlifting, and other muscular sports as being vital to national health was certainly no exception. As he suggests, however, "engagement with" did not necessarily mean uncritical acceptance.[121] Overall, the removal of explicit discussions of fitness signaled a shift away from allegiance to the European-inspired narrative surrounding the ideal body, even if it was not a complete departure.

The idea of sport acting as a proxy for national political clout could also be seen in the NCPC reports. The 1946-1947 document, for example, praised Egyptian athletes' international success since the end of the war and called upon the Olympic committee, as well as indigenous sports authorities, to utilize these successes as a springboard for improving Egyptian physical culture. In the process, it extolled the value of Egyptian victories at the Olympics to the nation.[122] Another section announced the arrival of a "third stage" in the history of the National

[119] "Al-lā'ibīn Ams Wa Al-Yawn" (Players of Yesterday and Today), *Al-āl'āb Ar-riyāḍīyah*, October 17, 1947, 1-2
[120] "Rafa' Al-athqāl – Kayf Tuḥāfiẓ Miṣr 'alá Makānthā?" (Weightlifting – How Can Egypt Preserve Its Position?), *Al-āl'āb Ar-riyāḍīyah*, October 24, 1947, 2
[121] McDevitt 3
[122] "Āmnā Ath-thālth 'Ashr" (Our Twelfth Year), *At-taqrīr As-Sanawy 1946-1947*, 1948

Committee, which followed the well-funded prewar circumstances and the dire wartime conditions. The primary objective in this new stage was to work towards restoring the committee to its former glory and allowing it to meet the needs of the youth, a multifaceted undertaking that would require increased funding, improved cooperation, and the ability to act freely.[123]

By the time that the 1948 London Olympics arrived, the narrative in both the popular and sporting press was significantly different than it had been in 1936. In this they were taking their cues from the NCPC, whose annual reports had transformed from supportive texts extoling the existing relationship between Egypt and the British into critical publications decrying the level of provided funding and championing the need for indigenous sports institutions to work together in presenting a unified front for promulgating an Egyptian version of physical culture. The 1947-1948 report was the most critical to date, with calls to remove nepotism within the committee and reorganize it to be more effective.[124]

There was also notable, albeit limited, talk of "Egyptianizing" national administrative bodies. In track and field athletics, for example, the national federation moved their headquarters from Alexandria to Cairo in early 1948, as symbolic gesture of moving sport away from its foreign-controlled origins and towards the more Arab heart of the nation.[125] Later that year, *Al-ahrām* emphasized the criticism of having too many foreign trainers and coaches, which sapped power away from the national institutions and drew prestige away from indigenous Egyptians. The author of this piece was concerned about "state funds that are leaking abroad by way of those foreigners who enjoy in our country benefits and salaries denied to the Egyptian coaches",

[123] "Niẓām Al-Lagnah Al-Ahlīyah" (The National Committee's System), *At-taqrīr As-Sanawy 1946-1947*, 1948
[124] "Al-Lagnah Al-Ahlīyah" (The National Committee), *At-taqrīr As-Sanawy 1947-1948*, 1949
[125] "Tamṣīr Al'āb Al-qiwá" (Egyptianizing Athletics), *Al-ahrām*, January 2, 1948, 6

which further reduced their number.[126] The publication thus supported the creation of an association for Egyptian trainers to protect their interests and raise the level of coaching in Egypt overall. This was part of a broader movement where nearly all elements of sport came under scrutiny. The fact that signs on race courses were in English only became the subject of two articles in *Al-āl'āb Ar-riyāḍīyah* in 1947 alone, and the Arabic version of The AUC Review became much more concerned with the relationship between the students at AUC and sport.

Ar-riyāḍīyah al-badanīyah al-miṣrīyah, meanwhile, abandoned European discourses on health and the body that reinforced hegemonic power relationships and began promoting sport as a way to boost national strength and represent Egypt positively on the international scene. In the leadup to London, the publication maintained a focus on "Egypt's Position in the Upcoming Olympic Games",[127] with the September issue devoted exclusively to coverage of these Games. The announcement of the Olympic year in *Al-ahrām* on January 1, meanwhile, felt more subdued than it had been in 1936, but perhaps this was a consequence of developments that had shrunk the sports section over the course of the war. The Games were mentioned only briefly that day, and were not part of the title of the section in which they appeared.[128]

The coverage of sport in *Al-ahrām* during the lead-up to the London Games was substantially different than it had been for Berlin. Unlike in 1936, when the "Travelogue" feature meant that rarely a day went by without discussing the Games, in 1948 the Olympics were mentioned only eclectically during the first five months of the year. While there can be little doubt that the austere circumstances of many nations following World War II contributed to a

[126] "Rābitah Al-mudaribīn Ar-riyāḍiyīn Al-miṣriyīn" (Association of Egyptian Sport Trainers), *Al-ahrām*, October 4, 1948, 7
[127] "Mawqif Miṣr fī Al-al'ālab Al-uwlmbiyah Al-Qādimah" *Ar-riyāḍīyah al-badanīyah al-miṣrīyah*, April 1948
[128] "Mā Hī Sunah 1948" (What The Year 1948 Is), *Al-ahrām*, January 1, 1948, 7

depression of enthusiasm for international sport, *Al-ahrām* was by no means bereft of sporting commentary in 1948. The sports section had shrunk on average, but not significantly relative to the overall downsizing of the paper in the postwar years. Both local and foreign sporting life was covered in detail in the first half of the year, and there was a plethora of visits from sports figures and teams from across the globe that were welcomed with copious coverage and attention. As with the NCPC reports and the magazines, there was some expression of the relationship between the strength of sport and the strength of the nation, but it was neither particularly overt nor ubiquitous. In many ways, it was less pervasive than it had been in 1936, as if concerns about the tendrils of British censorship still lingered. For their part, the British may have been more concerned about what was being published in major press outlets, due to the spread of discontent with the political situation under the palace-friendly regime.

It was not until July 8, therefore, that *Al-ahrām* asked the question "What does the world know about Egypt" and the lives of its youth?[129] The answer, unsurprisingly, was not much. The publication lamented that it had told the EOC from the beginning to prepare for London as a promotion for its youth, but that the committee had "deafened its ears" and "lost every opportunity" to build relationships on the world stage.[130] From this point on, *Al-ahrām* covered the lead-up to the Games daily and showed a particular interest in what deemed the impressive American delegation.

The 1948 Games were Egypt's most successful in terms of medals won, a distinction they continue to hold as of the conclusion of the 2016 edition. Ibrāhīm Shams, the featherweight bronze medalist from Berlin, returned twelve years later and won the title in the lightweight

[129] "Mādhā Ya'rif Ad-duwal 'an Miṣr", *Al-ahrām*, July 8, 1948, 7
[130] "Ḍā'at Kul Furṣah" (Lost Every Opportunity), *Al-ahrām*, July 8, 1948, 7

division, paving the way for Maḥmūd Fayāḍ to take gold as a featherweight. Another lightweight weightlifter, ʻAṭṭiyah Muḥammad, took silver behind Shams. In Greco-Roman wrestling, Maḥmūd Ḥassan was the runner-up in the bantamweight category, while Ibrāhīm ʻUrāby, who had come in fifth as a bantamweight at the 1936 Games and had been the subject of one of *Al-ahrām*'s analyses for improvement at the time,[131] took bronze as a light-heavyweight. *Al-ahrām*'s overall assessment of Egypt's performance, as compared to other countries, was very positive.[132] There was also less concern with how Egypt was portrayed in foreign newspapers, although the paper did express its frustration the following year when it perceived that the nation's accomplishments at the Games were downplayed, and almost ignored, in the official Olympic film. Raising the fact that this had also been an issue with the British newspapers, *Al-ahrām* argued that such exclusion was harmful for the dignity of the nation, and suggested that an apology was in order.[133] This slight was quickly forgotten, however, and a few weeks later *Al-ahrām* was pleased to report the positive assessment by London Games organizer E.J. Holt of Egypt's sporting spirit. "Not much time will pass in the Middle East," he suggested, "until it will play a big role in World Championships."[134]

Moreover, Egypt's fortunes in football were more easily shrugged off in *Al-ahrām* than they had been in 1936, as impressing the Europeans in football seemed less important in the context of the nation's other successes. The team's 3-1 defeat against Denmark, which eliminated them from the tournament, received a fair amount of coverage, but the response

[131] "Risālat Barlīn" (Berlin Letter), *Al-ahrām*, August 14, 1936, 14
[132] "Markaz Miṣr Bālnsbah Ad-duwal Al-akhrá" (The Position of Egypt Relative to Other Countries), *Al-ahrām*, August 16, 1948, 1
[133] "Kayf Ṣawrūnā Miṣr Fī Al-fīlm Al-Awlīmbī" (How They Portrayed Egypt in the Olympic Film), *Al-ahrām*, March 27, 1949, 6
[134] "Ar-rūḥ Ar-riyāḍy Fī Miṣr Wa Ash-sharq" (The Sporting Spirit in Egypt and the East), *Al-ahrām*, April 4, 1949, 6

overall was not particularly emotional, and the match and its circumstances were discussed without the self-deprecation that had characterized the discourse surrounding their defeat in Berlin twelve years prior. A feature on August 5 went into great detail about the match, and took over the entire sports page, but did not offer much in the way of critical commentary.[135]

Overall, *Al-ahrām* was interested in looking towards the future and, just days after the conclusion of the Games, was already reporting on the planning for the 1952 Helsinki Olympics. Egypt's results in London had truly demonstrated its place among sport nations, the paper argued, but noted that it was neglecting several important fields, the most notable of which was track and field athletics. The fact that Egypt had ignored this sport since joining the Olympic movement was perhaps the reason that it was not known as a sporting nation.[136] Part of the path forward, according to the author, was ensuring explicitness in opinions on the national sporting renaissance and allowing an openness of criticism. Although the article began with a discussion on "neglected" sports, it concluded by mentioning that their suggestions were particularly important in the realm of football.[137] For all its efforts, the answer to the question that the paper had asked on July 8, "What does the world know about Egypt", remained "not much". As one headline put it bluntly, "The London Newspapers Do Not Know Egypt".[138] A later article implored that it was the duty of the EOC to change its laws and strip away regulations that shielded it from criticism and prevented it from learning from its experiences in London.[139]

[135] "Mubārat Miṣr Wa Ad-dānmrk Fī Kurat Al-qadam" (Egypt-Denmark Match in Football), *Al-ahrām*, August 5, 1948, 7
[136] "Ahmānā Mayādīn Muhimah" (Our Neglect of Important Fields), *Al-ahrām*, August 17, 1948, 7
[137] "As-sabīl īlá As-ṣlāḥ" (The Path to Reform), *Al-ahrām*, August 17, 1948, 7
[138] "Jarāid Landan Lā Ta'rif Miṣr", *Al-ahrām*, August 23, 1948, 7
[139] "Wājib Al-Lijnat Al-Uwlimbiyat Al-Miṣriyah" (Duty of the Egyptian Olympic Committee), *Al-ahrām*, September 6, 1948, 6

As in 1936, coverage of the London Games in the English-language *Egyptian Gazette* was thorough and positive overall. On the day that the majority of the team departed for Great Britain, the publication noted favorably the chances of both the football and basketball squads.[140] A follow-up article added weightlifters, wrestlers, divers, and fencers to the list of medal contenders and remarked that "Egypt's Olympic challenge is not being lightly regarded in sporting circles in London."[141]

By the time of the 1948 London Olympics, the Arab-Israeli War, and its concomitant censorship, was already well underway.[142] The martyrdom of sports figures, however, did not go unnoticed entirely. On January 9, 1949, *Al-ahrām* praised the sacrifice of boxer 'Abd Ar-ru'ūf Nūraddīn, who died while serving,[143] while later in the month, it championed the "necessity of immortalizing the memory of those martyrs" by holding annual tournaments in their name at their clubs so that they would not be forgotten.[144] In 2000 Abdel Aziz El-Shafei, who played water polo at the 1952 Helsinki and 1960 Rome Olympics, recalled the teammates and friends that he had lost to regional conflicts.[145] Nonetheless, press controls continued through this conflict, and were relatively effective at limiting at least overt criticism of the government, and the attention paid to these deaths was the exception, rather than the rule, in mainstream news.

At the turn of the decade, however, things began to change. As Talhami notes, "[w]hen the Wafd party returned to office in 1950, it was determined to restore freedoms that were suppressed by the previous Saadian government."[146] *Al-āl'āb Ar-riyāḍīyah*, essentially a sports

[140] "59 Members of Egypt's Olympic Team Leave", *Egyptian Gazette*, July 12, 1948, 4
[141] "'Egyptians in Fine Fettle' – Anwar Pasha", *Egyptian Gazette*, July 16, 1948, 4
[142] Talhami 108
[143] "Faqīd Al-Mulākimah Shahīd Miṣr" (The Late Boxer Is An Egyptian Martyr), *Al-ahrām*, January 9, 1949, 6
[144] "Dhikrá Shuhadā'inā Ar-riyāḍiyīn" (The Memory of Our Sporting Martyrs), *Al-ahrām*, January 13, 1949, 7
[145] "Abdel-Aziz El-Shafei: The moral of the sport", *Al-Ahram Weekly On-line*, September 28 – October 4, 2000.
[146] Talhami 109

journal in name only by this point,[147] celebrated this development, and urged support for Naḥās at several junctures, as they believed that he was best qualified to keep the nation influential and maintain the support of the British. Not all publications were as obsequious, but most sports journals did not advocate for opposition to the government or to the occupation after the lifting of press controls, if they even touched upon political issues at all. For example, listings of results became the most prominent feature in *Ar-riyāḍīyah al-badanīyah al-miṣrīyah* for the first time since the journal's founding, and critical commentary was reserved almost exclusively for Egypt's relationship with major international sporting events. The one major exception in both of these years was support for increasing physical activity in schools, which was tied to a desire to perform better in future athletic spectacles. The NCPC's final reports continued to champion cooperation between itself and indigenous organizations, while recapitulating demands for increased subsidies.

The Mediterranean Games

Ultimately, while *Ar-riyāḍīyah al-badanīyah al-miṣrīyah* drifted away from the British narrative and opened up space for competing discourse, it never had the opportunity to champion any explicitly radical ideal. The 1950s was the final decade for both the NCPC and the journal, as both collapsed alongside the reign of King Fārūq. This is despite the fact that the 1951 Mediterranean Games presented what seemed a perfect opportunity to challenge explicitly the hegemony of Europe in global sport. The Mediterranean Games were the brainchild of Mohammed Taher, Egypt's representative to the IOC. Following the 1948 London Olympics, the EOC was once again interested in holding an international tournament in the country, but the

[147] In 1951, for example, the publication was so focused on discussing politics and government that it essentially ignored that year's inaugural Mediterranean Games

opposition to, and eventual failure of, the African Games led them to pursue a different path towards this aim.

Taher had raised the idea of a tournament for the Mediterranean Games well before the London Olympics and had inquired with the IOC as to whether such an event would be possible. In 1946, he was still thinking along the lines of establishing an African Games,[148] but his focus soon shifted to the Mediterranean region when he estimated that only Egypt and South Africa would be able to participate in such a tournament.[149] Initially, there was reluctance from the IOC to consider his proposal. On December 8, 1947, Sigfrid Edström, then President of the IOC, sent a letter to Taher regarding the Games prior to its appearance on the agenda of the general body meeting.

> I have personally been thinking about the problem and if I am not wrong there is now a special organization for the Games in Asia Minor. Would it not be sufficient if Egypt joined this federation? One could also perhaps have Maroc, Tunis and other North African countries. The European Mediterranean Countries are already engaged with the European championships of the I.A.A.F. and it will not be possible for the to [*sic*] participate in two different events[150]

Taher would not, however, be so easily dissuaded or relegated to holding competitions with other African or Asian nations. By the end of World War II, the Egyptian sporting mindset was transitioning out of a self-conception as African and into one that was firmly European. Unlike in 1936, when Egyptians had been satisfied to be under the tutelage of European nations and fawned over any praise they received, post-war Egypt was intent on demonstrating its equality with the world's traditional sporting powers. Moreover, while they certainly continued to seek and note attention from Europe, it was no longer in the spirit of validation, but of

[148] Session Du Comité International Olympique, Lausanne, 3-6 Septembre 1946, 13
[149] Session Du Comité International Olympique, St. Moritz, 29 January – 8 February 1948, 31
[150] Taher Correspondence 1934-1970

recognition. It was clear that the intent of holding the Games in Alexandria was to demonstrate not only that Egyptians could compete at the level of European nations, but that they could successfully hold a tournament on this scale as well.

Neither in theory nor practice was Egyptian competition against other Mediterranean nations a postwar phenomenon. As Gershoni and Jankowski noted in *Egypt, Islam, and the Arabs*, much of Egyptian self-conceptualization among intellectuals revolved around the concept of Egyptian territorialism, wherein they saw themselves as having an identity outside of an Ottoman Islamic or regional Arab framework. What made Egyptians Egyptians, they argued, was an indigenous connection to the land that stretched thousands of years back to the time of the Pharaohs. An important component of this notion was the rejection of Egyptians as part of a broad Arab nationalism. Arabs were perceived as foreigners who had brought the inferior influence of desert environment and culture into Egypt. "Real" Egyptians, they argued, had the blood of the Pharaonic people coursing their veins, a superior culture that had been nurtured by the bounty of the Nile Valley. In this regard, the theory argued, Egyptians had much stronger cultural ties with the western nations of the Mediterranean.[151] Among the most notable proponents of this theory was famed intellectual Ṭaha Ḥussain.[152]

Although Egyptian territorialism may have died out in theoretical terms by the 1930s, its practical ramifications lived on. In many ways, this is not surprising, as much of the public face of Egyptian sport during its nascent days had been Greek, and Greek-Egyptians often took part in athletic competitions in the countries that bordered the Mediterranean Sea. This connection was

[151] Gershoni and Jankowski "Egypt'" 115
[152] Ibid 89

not severed prior to the 1952 Revolution, regardless of the degree to which indigenous Egyptians took the reins of their own sporting infrastructure.

There is evidence that these ideas seeped through the literature of the educated middle class and into the popular, public discourse through sport. A relatively lengthy June 1949 article in *Al-ahrām*, for example, compared sporting systems and culture in Greece, Turkey, and Egypt to each other, as well as to those in England, France, and the United States. It concluded by arguing that Egypt needed to free itself of the restrictions of external funding for its recreation and replace it with a popular movement whose enthusiasm would finance sport internally. Once sport was funded by the people, it could be used to strengthen the nation and increase national pride and unity through victories abroad.[153] The article never went as far as to suggest that these energies could or should be turned towards political ends, but it demonstrates the importance of the critical edge that journalism had acquired during the war. By toeing the discursive line between sport and politics, but never blurring or crossing it, commentary on athletic endeavors demonstrated its potential to proxy for the nationalist speech, although this did not occur prior to the 1952 Revolution. Nevertheless, one was now, for example, able to write about revolution and casting off of foreign shackles while remaining technically apolitical, allowing the discourse and symbols of nationalism to be transmitted to and processed by the people without its revolutionary content or implications.

Shortly before the London Olympics, the Egyptians participated in a conference in Athens with the goal of scheduling more football matches between the Mediterranean countries of Egypt, Italy, Turkey, and Greece,[154] which was in some ways a prelude to Egypt's committed

[153] "An-naẓam Ar-riyāḍīyah Bilyūnān Wa Turkiyā Wa Miṣr", (The Sporting System in Greece, Turkey, and Egypt) *Al-ahrām*, June 14, 1949, 6
[154] "Rubā'yat Al-baḥr Al-abyaḍ Al-Mutawasiṭ", (The Mediterranean Quartets) *Al-ahrām*, May 6, 1948, 10

departure from its perception as an "African" sporting nation. Yet several important steps had been taken earlier, such as the nation taking third place in EuroBasket 1947, the same year in which Maḥmūd ʻAbdulkarīm won the first of his four consecutive titles at the British Open Squash Championships. Ḥassan ʻAbdurraḥīm, meanwhile, became Egypt's first postwar swimmer to cross the English Channel, starting off a craze that would overtake the sporting pages in 1949.[155]

The bulk of the transformation, however, took place over the span of about a year in 1949, highlighted by Cairo holding both a World and a European Championship and excelling at both. In December 1948, the Fédération Internationale d'Escrime (FIE) announced that the 1949 World Fencing Championships would be held in Cairo in April. *Al-ahrām* praised this development as a "golden opportunity" not only for some of the finest sportsmen in Europe to visit the country, but for Egypt to demonstrate the prowess of its own fencers and win the most important prize of all: "a good reputation". [156] Soon thereafter, Cairo was also selected to host the Fédération Internationale de Basketball's 1949 European Championships, known commonly as EuroBasket, in May. If passions regarding Egypt's failures on the global sporting stage had been tempered, it seemed so too had enthusiasm for its success. *Al-ahrām*, for example, was cautious, although it did not dispute the principle that hosting such events was an "important cornerstone of publicity for the country".[157] It was, however, concerned with the more practical matter that the expenses of holding such events, including securing suitable grounds for the basketball

[155] As noted in the previous chapter, Ishak Helmy had been the first Egyptian to accomplish this feat when he did so in 1928.
[156] "Miṣr Tuqīm Butūlat Al-ʻalām Fī As-silāḥ" (Egypt Holds World Championships in Fencing), *Al-ahrām*, December 23, 1948, 7
[157] "Al-āl'āb Ar-riyāḍīyah (Athletic Games), *Al-ahrām* February 16, 1949, 6

matches, may not be recouped in revenues, and criticized the overall failure of the state and the federations to systematize its finances efficiently.[158]

Overall, however, the reaction to Egypt's selection as host was positive, and compounded the excitement that had already risen when the country decided to host an international tennis tournament in March of that same year.[159] The hosting of the fencing tournament, being a truly global championship, was perceived as the culmination of nearly three decades of the Egyptian sporting renaissance,[160] a term utilized often to refer to fencing in particular after Egypt not only defended its 1947 bronze medal in the team sabre event, but added two more in team foil and épée. The nation's foreign guests were also reported as having experienced "complete satisfaction" with Egypt's hosting of the championships.[161]

For the first time, Egypt demonstrated that it could not only compete with the best on the global stage, but host a top-level event as well. Enthusiasm for the nation's sporting prowess heightened when Egypt went undefeated to win EuroBasket, an improvement from their 1947 bronze medal. One commentator even suggested that the team's success, and its concomitant popularity among the youth, could serve as a boost for Egypt's nationalism.[162] Locally, these two tournaments cemented the reputation of Cairo, rather than Alexandria, as Egypt's sporting capital, another symbolic shift away from the foreign control of the days of old. Another influence on this change was Al-Ahly's domination of the Egyptian Premier League, which was

[158] ibid
[159] "Al-āl'āb Ar-riyāḍīyah (Athletic Games), *Al-ahrām* February 20, 1949, 6
[160] "Miṣr Tuqīm Butūlat Al-'alām Lilsilāḥ" (Egypt Holds World Fencing Championships), *Al-ahrām*, March 24, 1949, 6
[161] "Al-irtyāḥ Ash-shāmil" (Complete Satisfaction) *Al-ahrām*, April 21, 1949, 6
[162] "Fawz Kurat As-salah Ayqaẓ An-nā'im" (Basketball Win Awakened The Sleeper), *Al-ahrām*, June 1, 1949, 8

founded for the 1948-1949 season as Africa's first.[163] The Cairo-based team won 11 of the first 12 seasons; it would not be until 1966 that an Alexandria-based team would take the title.

For the rest of the year, the sports pages of *Al-ahrām* were replete with coverage and news of Maḥmūd 'Abdulkarīm, transforming him into a national celebrity, while golfer Ḥassan Ḥassanain drew international attention by winning the 1949 Italian Open, paving the way for him to debut at the British Open the following year. Hassanain's victory was linked explicitly in *Al-ahrām* to the influence of Abdulkarīm, and both were championed as bring Egyptians glory in new sporting fields.[164] Also important for Egyptian national pride were its English Channel swimmers; in 1949 alone, the country completed two individual and two six-many relay crossings. Individual stars Ḥassan 'Abdurraḥim and Mar'á Ḥassan would repeat their feats in 1950 and 1951, and were joined by two of their compatriots in the latter year. As one Egyptian living in London put it simply, the coverage of the swimmers in local newspapers and magazines was "the best publicity for Egypt abroad."[165]

Egypt also dominated the 1949 World Weightlifting Championships, held in The Netherlands, winning three of the six categories, coming in second in another, and dethroning the United States as the highest ranked nation in terms of team points and medaling in all events that they entered. *Al-ahrām* heralded the swimmers and the weightlifters as "the two delegations that raised Egypt's reputation", and called upon the nation to appreciate and celebrate their efforts and sacrifices that provided "strong publicity reported on by the newspapers of the world".[166] It

[163] Alegi 57
[164] "Hassanain Hassan", *Al-ahrām*, October 11, 1949, 8
[165] "Kān Al-mānish Khayr Di'āyah Li Miṣr Bāl-Khārij" (The Channel Was The Best Publicity for Egypt Abroad), *Al-ahrām*, September 27, 1949, 8
[166] "Al-ba'thatān Allatān Rafa'tā Sum'at Miṣr" ("The Two Delegations That Raised Egypt's Reputation"), *Al-ahrām*, September 8, 1949, 8

is of little surprise, therefore, that Taher provided an official proposal to the IOC in 1948 for the establishment of a quadrennial regional tournament to be open to all nations bordering the Mediterranean Sea, and to be held in its first iteration in Alexandria in 1951. The suggestion was approved, and the EOC mobilized to prepare for what was termed the Mediterranean Games.[167]

Overall, while the 1951 Mediterranean Games represented the pinnacle of Egypt's pre-revolutionary stature on the international sporting stage, they were neither unprecedented nor a radical departure from contemporary trends in sporting ideology. They were instead the product of a concerted effort by the *'afandiya* to construct an image of Egypt as a sporting nation worthy of European consideration. By appealing to both those socially above and below them, they succeeded where Bolanaki had failed. Whereas Bolanaki had focused his efforts on impressing the sporting elites of Europe by laying the foundations of grand projects, the *'afandiya* understood that they had to create a sporting ethos that touched upon all elements of society. As native Egyptians, they were in a much better position to inspire such a culture, even if their ultimate aim was to bypass the British and build relationships with other Europeans directly in the hope of social advancement. Equipped with the knowledge of nationalism and its discourse, they were able to employ it selectively to inspire the masses, yet held back its ultimate implications, as they had no desire to step on the toes of the Europeans, who were the very powers they were trying to impress.

Al-ahrām first noted the possibility of the Mediterranean Games in late April 1949, shortly before Taher's official proposal, although the article focused primarily on the facts and reserved its commentary on the matter.[168] A few days later, however, the newspaper made its

[167] Session Du Comité International Olympique, St. Moritz, 29 January – 8 February 1948, 31
[168] "Dawrah Lidūal Al-baḥr Al-abyaḍ" (Games for the Mediterranean Countries), *Al-ahrām*, April 29, 1949, 8

position clear as the author championed the shift in sporting policy from Africa to the Mediterranean countries. The "heavy burdens" and "enormous responsibilities" of meeting the challenge of mighty Mediterranean nations would test Egypt in a way that Africa never could, but, in doing so, Egypt would become a stronger country.[169] When all people of a nation, but particularly the youth, banded together to host an event of such magnitude, their dedication and service would lead to the power of the country emerging on the global scene.[170]

That should not, however, suggest that the prewar African Games had been discarded by the nation's collective memory. In July 1949, *Al-ahrām* began an article entitled "What Scares Us About the Mediterranean Games" by evoking the debacle of Bolanaki's cancelled 1929 tournament. Yet it was not the fear of foreign intervention that concerned the author, but that of travel and accommodation costs for the other nations, which had been an issue of concern for both EuroBasket and the World Fencing Championships. For both of those events, other nations had been reluctant to participate unless Egypt paid for some of these expenses, which put a burden on the national treasury. For the Mediterranean Games, the problem would be compounded by having the costs associated with the 1952 Helsinki Olympics the following year, a fact that the author felt made it even less likely that other nations would choose to attend the Mediterranean Games without a substantial subsidy.[171]

With the value for publicity and prestige in hosting international contests promoted so strongly, however, there would have been little that could have prevented Egypt from hosting a regional tournament in 1951. Boasting an auspicious start, the nation won the World Military Basketball Championship in January, a victory that served as "publicity for Egypt, its people,

[169] "Miṣr Bayn Dūal Al-baḥr Al-abyaḍ" (Egypt Among Mediterranean Countries), *Al-ahrām*, May 4, 1949, 6
[170] "Dawrat Dūal Al-baḥr Al-mutawasiṭ" (Games of the Mediterranean Countries), *Al-ahrām*, November 24, 1949, 8
[171] "Mā Nakhshāh 'alá Dawrat Al-baḥr Al-abyaḍ", *Al-ahrām*, July 17, 1949, 6

and its military".[172] Its organization served as a model for the Mediterranean Games, supporting the dominant narrative that success in hosting would depend not only on official bodies, but on "the solidarity and cooperation" of all Egyptian people to ensure that the tournament would demonstrate the strength of the nation and its youth.[173]

Developing the youth remained a frequent theme in *Al-ahrām* in terms of the importance of both the Mediterranean Games and sport in general. For example, great consideration was attached to a report by English writer Arthur Rose, who suggested football as being crucial for the future of the youth, because it might be "a treatment for the declining level of the game" in Egypt.[174] Another article declared that "a healthy mind resides in a healthy body and sport has become a national duty" for the youth and "there is no longer a civilized nation except that which makes sport the forefront of its pillars."[175] Sport, in continued, was no longer just a test of strength, but a test of one's character as well. Thus, with the opening of the Games, the eyes of the world would be on Egypt to judge its worthiness among Mediterranean nations through its sporting spirit.[176]

On January 30, *Al-ahrām* reported on the EOC's declaration that the first Mediterranean Games would begin on October 5 and that the budget would be 50,000 pounds, with an additional 10,000 needed for the travel and accommodation of referees, coaches, and representatives of athletic bodies.[177] Within a month, newspapers and sports administrators alike, such as organizing committee secretary Ahmed El-Demerdash Touny, were touting the publicity

[172] "Ḍarūrat Al-isti'dād Lidawart Al-baḥr Al-mutawasiṭ" (The Need to Prepare for the Mediterranean Games), *Al-ahrām*, January 17, 1951, 6
[173] ibid
[174] "Daras Fī Kurat Al-qadam" (Study in Football), *Al-ahrām*, September 8, 1951, 4
[175] "Ar-riyāḍah… Wa Athirhā Fī Bina'a Al-amam" (Sport… and Its Impact on Nation Building), *Al-ahrām*, October 6, 1951, 5
[176] ibid
[177] "Dawart Al-baḥr Al-mutawasiṭ" (The Mediterranean Games), *Al-ahrām*, January 30, 1951, 6

value that hosting such a tournament would bring.[178] There was much work to be done, however, and *Al-ahrām*, sharpened with a new critical edge, urged the administrative bodies to consider preparation for the Games as a "national duty [….] to represent the country consistent with [their] pride in Egypt's sporting reputation."[179]

Despite what one might expect, however, there was relatively limited press on the Games after this initial announcement, until shortly prior to their opening. This lack of publicity was not limited to the newspapers; as one July report in *Al-ahrām* noted after visiting Alexandria, "the first thing that drew our attention was the streets and centers were free of advertisements for the Games,"[180] and argued that the organizers were failing in their national duty of engaging the people. The committees countered this claim, pointing to the distribution of Mediterranean Games-themed stamps, a monthly newsletter, Arabic and French-language broadcasts, several dozen large advertisements throughout the country (particularly in Cairo), as well as more advertisements that were to be printed closer to the opening ceremony.[181] Nonetheless, within a month of the Games, *Al-ahrām* was still lamenting that Egypt's sporting propaganda was "weaker than it should be."[182]

They were opened officially by King Fu'ād on October 5, with the *Egyptian Gazette* author covering the event providing a relatively positive evaluation of Egypt's chances at its own tournament.[183] For *Al-ahrām*, meanwhile, the historical nature of the tournament was not lost:

[178] "Furṣah Di'āyah Lilwaṭan" (A Publicity Opportunity for the Nation), *Al-ahrām*, February 20, 1951, 6
[179] "At-tahub Li Dawart Al-baḥr Al-mutawasiṭ" (The Preparation for the Mediterranean Games), *Al-ahrām*, February 21, 1951, 6
[180] "Dawart Al-baḥr Al-mutawasiṭ Taftaqir Ilá Ad-di'āyah" (The Mediterranean Games Lack Publicity), *Al-ahrām*, July 8, 1951, 6
[181] "Ad-di'āyah Lidawart Al-baḥr Al-mutawasiṭ" (The Publicity for the Mediterranean Games), *Al-ahrām*, July 11, 1951, 6
[182] "Miṣr Laysat Fī Wujūdahum" (Egypt is Not in Their Presence), *Al-ahrām*, September 11, 1951, 6
[183] "King Will Open Med. Games Today", *The Egyptian Gazette*, October 5, 1951, 5

"And with the opening of these Games, Egypt records a new page in its sporting history, manifesting in it the strength of modern Egypt of its place" in the Mediterranean.[184] Nor did it fail to boast of Egypt's sporting renaissance.

Over the course of two weeks, 91 events were held across 13 sports and over 700 athletes, all men, took part in the festival.[185] Egypt came in third in terms of gold medals earned, with 20, bested by Italy (27) and France (26), but was first in number of medals overall with 65, perhaps not surprising as the host nation represented approximately one third of the overall competitors present. The *Egyptian Gazette* presented a charitable assessment of the proceedings, claiming that "athletics and swimming, especially, provided spectators with world class performances, although other sports […] also reached a very high standard."[186] It added that "no one can begrudge a special word of praise for the Organising Committee who came through their task with flying colours".[187]

Response to Egypt's performance in at the Mediterranean Games in *Al-ahrām* was mixed, but cautiously optimistic. One of the more pragmatic goals of hosting the Games was to evaluate Egypt's position for the upcoming Helsinki Olympics,[188] and from the perspective of the players, the outlook was hopeful. Almost as important, however, was evaluating where the administrative staff, including referees,[189] stood and, in this regard, the reaction relayed familiar criticisms about Egypt's shortcomings and how improvement could be attained.

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[184] "Maw'id Wusūl Ar-rukkāb Al-Malaky" (The Arrival Time of the Royal Passengers), *Al-ahrām*, October 5, 1951, 3
[185] *1ers Jeux Méditerranéens: Reglements Généraux et Programme*.
[186] "Ist. Med. Games close", *The Egyptian Gazette*, October 21, 1951, 8
[187] ibid
[188] "Atimām Al-munshiāt Bial-astād Al-awlimby" (Completion of the Facilities of the Olympic Stadium), *Al-ahrām*, September 25, 1951, 4
[189] "Ḥakamunā Ad-duwaliyūn Fī Ad-dawrah" (Our International Judges in the Games), *Al-ahrām*, September 26, 1951, 4

As one commentator from *Al-ahrām* put it near the end of the tournament, "and this glory is not for the players alone," but to "every Egyptian contributing to the success of these Games" that drew the attention of the international media.[190] Included were those who built the stadiums, the engineers who designed them, and all of those who worked day and night to ensure the Games would be held and display proudly a modern Egypt on the global stage.[191] Truly, the Mediterranean Games were not just about the sportsmen, but the power of what the nation as a whole could accomplish.

British Machinations

The aforementioned positive overtures regarding Egyptian sport during the 1936 and 1948 Olympics, as well as the 1951 Mediterranean Games, in the *Egyptian Gazette* were an indication of the much more positive reception of indigenous sport by the British. Although stereotypical analyses of "Arab sport" persisted, the instances of outright denigration of the Egyptians' ability to participate in "modern" sport were few and far between after the Berlin Games. Even the most exclusive clubs opened their doors to an albeit very limited number of Egyptians from the highest class, usually as a way to curry political influence and sway in governmental affairs.[192] This was particularly true after World War II, when "the receding hegemony of the colonizing power, and along with it, the reduced privileges of the other resident foreign minorities, allowed an emerging indigenous bourgeoisie to accede to positions of professional and social prominence."[193]

[190] "Al-Waṭanyah As-ṣādiqah Ta'mal Ṣāmitan" (Sincere Patriotism Works Silently), October 17, 1951, 3
[191] ibid
[192] Cooper, Artemis 30
[193] Oppenheim 9

This acknowledgement of Egyptian prowess, however, was a double-edged sword, for now the British Government was more acutely aware of the potential to use sport in the country for political and propaganda purposes. The Foreign Office's "personality reports" began to include listings and mentions of prominent individual's affiliations with sporting clubs, as a way to track their loyalties and political leanings. Eclectic uses of sport in this manner were replaced by a more systematic effort by the British. For example, a 1937 British Council report discusses sport as among the ways of "making British Teachers in Egypt a stronger force for spreading British culture". [194] It noted:

> Although England has introduced games into many parts of the world, natives of Eastern countries have come to excel in many of them, and this is the case in Egypt, particularly in respect of football – a most popular game.
>
> It is not always realised to what extent superiority at games is taken as indicating superiority in other directions. If it were possible that regiments sent to Egypt contained expert players of games, so that regimental teams were superior to local teams, British prestige would be affected in many ways.[195]

The following year, a memorandum for a proposed polytechnical college in Cairo listed football and basketball teams as a potential preliminary expense for opening such a school, demonstrating the sport was not just a continuing expense for the British, but an investment.[196]

The Foreign Office was also keenly aware that it faced challenges to its influence not only from indigenous forces, but from rival European powers. A 1937 report, for example, noted that, in most cultural realms, France's influence was so firmly entrenched that it would "hardly be possible" to dislodge it.[197] In fact, with the rising tide of fascism, the author of the memorandum argued that it would be more beneficial to work with the French to stymie the

[194] BW 29/3 – 1935-1937 – Education: general
[195] ibid
[196] FO 395/566 – 1938 – British cultural propaganda in Egypt
[197] FO/141/677/1 – 1937 – Memorandum on general cultural position in Egypt

encroaching Italian and German influence. A key recommendation, however, was that the British should "make our position in the lower and middle spheres of culture as strong as the French position in the higher branches".[198] Sports films were seen as one way to reach out in this regard,[199] in contrast to the measures taken at universities, such as the funding of tennis periodicals.[200]

Unsurprisingly, the British Council came to play an important role in spreading cultural propaganda in Egypt, including that related to sport. In 1938, Cyril Alfred Flux Dundas, whose resume made explicit note of his multifarious sporting career, was hired as the Council's representative in Egypt.[201] His renumeration included having his membership at the Mohamed Aly Club reimbursed, and his joining of the Turf Club was "highly desirable" given his responsibilities in the country, even if it could not be paid for since the Council could cover only one other subscription, and the British Union was deemed more critical.[202] In some of his earliest reports, in 1939, he noted the existence of a propaganda war in Egypt parallel to the physical conflict, and mentioned explicitly the use of Italian facilities for sports and games in this regard. The British, he argued, should also be emulating the efforts of the French, German, American, and Maltese schools in their emphasis on sport as propaganda.[203]

Foreign Office propaganda plans for the war years, however, demonstrate that this urging was not heeded and confirm the notion reflected in the indigenous sporting press that Egyptian sport was not considered a priority during the conflict. The British Council did not ignore sport

[198] ibid
[199] FO/141/677/1 – 1937 – Transmits memorandum by Roche re. suggested supply of British films for cultural propaganda purposes.
[200] FO/141/677/1 – 1937 – Arrangements for distribution of periodicals
[201] FO 395/567 – 1938 – Proposed appointment of Mr. Dundas as British Council representative in Egypt
[202] BW 82/12 – 1938-1943 – Correspondence of C A F Dundas, Chief Representative Middle East
[203] BW 29/47 – 1939-1940 – General Policy

entirely – for example, its 1944 report notes the organization of basketball games to foster relationships with the community – but this was the exception, rather than rule, and the occasional films on boxing that would be shown were in no way representative of the standard approach to British influence.[204] Contemporary reports indicate that the British felt secure with the strength of their propaganda, as well in their control over the mass media and their level of censorship.[205] They therefore had more urgent concerns than happenings within the press, particularly within sports specialized publications.

At war's end, however, the British seemed aware that more needed to be done in Egypt to spread cultural propaganda. Despite Lampson's threat that Egyptians engaging in social boycott would not be permitted to return, the British undertook a dedicated effort to not only draw elites back into the fold of the social and sporting clubs, but to expand indigenous membership as well. An early example of this phenomenon came as the British Council made its case to the British government to keep the Willcocks Sports Club open, which noted its services to the community and the fact that approximately one quarter of its membership was indigenously Egyptian.[206] The non-sporting Anglo-Egyptian Union, meanwhile, began publishing a journal of its transactions known as *Al-Megalla*, in both English and Arabic to promote their organization. The inaugural edition, in May 1946, began with an essay from an allegedly anonymous contributor about a future visit taken through Cairo in 1966, one where the Union was a shining beacon of British progress and generosity in an otherwise bustling, but cold, city.[207] One year later, on the Union's 10th anniversary, *Al-Megalla* commented on the development of the organization's diverse

[204] BW 29/2 – 1940-1944 – Annual and other reports from Cairo office
[205] FO 371/31579 – 1942 – Plan of propaganda to Egypt. Code 16 file 114
[206] BW 82 – 1945 – Willcocks Sports Club: embassy attitude re lease
[207] "The Anglo-Egyptian Union in 1966". *Al-Megalla*, May 1946, 55-57

membership since World War II, highlighting the number of Egyptians involved, including some who did not even speak English.[208]

The British were also acutely aware that their relationship with the '*afandiya* was deteriorating, and that this was causing the disenfranchised "middle class" to seek alternate paths to social advancement. As one 1947 report from the Foreign Office put it, there was

> a feeling of restlessness which is no doubt intensified by their growing realisation of the social inequalities in which they live and in which the renumeration for the posts and careers open to them is, in most cases, still very poor. It is not surprising that in such circumstances the great bulk of the Effendis should have a strong feeling of social grievance, or that, as a consequence, Communist doctrine should have made some progress among them[209]

It summarized the group's feelings towards Great Britain as "suspicious and hostile" and recommended that action be taken to endear them towards the British. Among the many factors explaining these developments, one analyst highlighted the fact that "though foreigners are admitted, they are unable to gain admission to such places as the Gezira Sporting Club" even when married to English wives.[210] Another contemporary author noted that "Gezira life gives a great deal to many of those who share it, but where it succeeds all too well is in the production of an outlook and an exclusiveness which seem offensive to a great number of Egyptians."[211] While this was clearly not the most pressing concern of the '*afandiya*, that it was even mentioned at all demonstrates the degree to which sport was a part of the sociopolitical consciousness of these Egyptians.

[208] "The Tenth Anniversary of the Anglo-Egyptian Union". *Al-Megalla*, February 1957, 52-55
[209] FO 141/1223 – 1947 – Propaganda: British: Effendi Class
[210] ibid
[211] Fedden 91

The overarching thrust of the report was that the '*afandiya* needed to be integrated into the benefits of British social life, and it was noted that this needed to begin at a young age, when the children of the current '*afandiya* could be socialized in British schools. Expenses for recreational fields and activities in these places, therefore, went up. A 1947 report for Victoria College in Cairo, for example, which was seeking to expand to a location in Maadi, lists numerous sports-related expenditures, from a gymnasium to ping pong rooms, squash and tennis courts, and cricket and football fields.[212] In arguing for the allocation of funding to keep the school open, the report claimed that Victoria College was "of greater importance to good Anglo-Egyptian relations […] than any other British activity in this country".[213]

A particularly relevant example is the lecture series of Ernest J. H. Holt through Turkey, Iraq, Lebanon, and Egypt. Holt was an English sports administrator, most notable as the Director of Organisation for the 1948 London Olympics, with the topic of his lecture being the 1948 Games, as well as sport in Britain more generally. Attendance at a talk given at Victoria College was approximately 300, consisting of both students and teachers, while a more exclusive presentation at the National Sporting Club still attracted around 200 guests, including "leading sports officials of Egypt".[214] He even travelled to Asyut in Upper Egypt, drawing "a very large attendance," and being favored with a local "Olympiad".[215] Holt's assessment of the reception that he received was positive, and that "contacts which were renewed or freshly made should be of value to the British Council", and note was made of the enthusiasm of the Egyptians towards a

[212] FO 141/1172 – 1947 – Education: Victoria College Cairo
[213] ibid
[214] BW 83/9 – 1949 – E J Holt: 1949 tour Egypt, Iraq, the Lebanon and Turkey, lecturing on sport in Britain and the 1948 London Olympics
[215] ibid

representative of British sport, despite his “somewhat rambling style” that made the lectures themselves “not entirely successful”.[216]

If even Asyut was a consideration for the British, then it should be no surprise that Sudan was a matter of concern for them as well, as they were keenly aware that Egyptian nationalists were conducting their own propaganda campaigns in the territory. "The danger of Egyptian propaganda,” one report argued, “is not that it is pro-Egyptian but that it is consistently anti-British and anti-Sudan Government."[217] It was therefore necessary that the Britons’ own activities pay close attention to Sudan. Yet in order to protect their own interests, it was suggested that “[i]n our propaganda in Egypt, therefore, we should never link Egypt with the Sudan as though they must of necessity be considered together.”[218] Foreign Office records indicate that while there may not have been as much attention given to Sudan as there was Egypt, the former was still an area of notable activity for the British.

Egyptian efforts to tie Sudan more closely to Egypt through sport were limited prior to World War II. In 1938, for example, Egyptians living in Sudan, seeking to bring youth together through sport, petitioned King Fārūq to found a club that would be known as the Al-Fārūqy Youth Sports Club of Khartoum. Such a club, they argued, would help bring Egyptians and Sudanese together, as well as connect Egyptians resident in Sudan back to their home country. They sought not only the King’s blessing, but also his physical presence at the opening.[219]

While it may seem unusual to request that the King provide his blessings, royal patronage of clubs was nearly as important in Egypt as it had been in the United Kingdom. Nor was it

[216] ibid
[217] FO 371/63084/11 – 1947 – Egyptian Propaganda in the Sudan
[218] FO 371/35594 – 1943
[219] DAW 0069-011601, “An-nādy Al-fārūqy Ar-riyāḍy Ash-shubbān Balkharṭūm” (Al-Fārūqy Youth Sports Club of Khartoum), 1938

unreasonable to expect the King's physical presence despite Khartoum's distance from Cairo; here too, as with the British Empire, an appearance by the monarch symbolized a connection between the metropole and the periphery and was intended to strengthen such ties. In other cases, communication between the palace and the sports clubs constituted simply of well-wishes from the latter, as a way of ensuring that such channels remained open. While this was most notable in the era prior to 1936,[220] before the *'afandiya* took a greater interest in the potential nationalist dimensions of sport, it was a tradition that continued through the end of the monarchy in 1952.[221]

[220] See, for example, DAW 0069-004111, "Tilighrāf Min Najīb 'wny Sikritīr Nādy Muḥarram Ar-riyāḍy BiĪskandarīyah Ilá Shiḥāta Kāmil Bāshā Bish'an Ṭalab Rafa' Al-Wala' Attahniyah Ilá Al-i'tāb Al-malakiyah Bimunāsibat Al-'īd As-sa'īdah" (Telegraph from Najīb 'wny, Secretary of the Muḥarram Sporting Club of Alexandria to Shiḥāta Kāmil Pasha on the Matter of Requesting to Present His Loyal Congratulations Most Obediently to the King on the Occasion of the Great Holiday), 1924, DAW 0069-004113, "Tilighrāf Min Khalīl Ghazalat Al-qāḍy Bilmaḥkamat Al-mukhtaliṭah Wa Ra'īs Nādy Al-itiḥād Ar-riyāḍy As-skandry Ilá Kabīr Al-imnā' Bish'an Takdīm Akhluṣ Al-aminyāt Ilá Jalālat Al-Malik Wa Samū Al-amīr Fārūq (Telegraph from Khalīl Ghazalat, The Judge of the Mixed Court and President of the Alexandrian Sport Union Club to the Chief Secretary on the Matter of Presenting the Most Sincere Wishes to His Majesty the King and His Highness Prince Fārūq), 1926, DAW 0069-004118, "Tilighrāf Muqadim Min 'Abd Allāh Salāma Ra'īs Nādy Shubra Ar-riyāḍy Ilá Kabīr Al-imnā' Bish'an At-tamās Rafa' Furūḍ Al-Wala' Wa Al-ikhlāṣ Wa At-tihāny Ilá Jalālat Al-Malik Fu'ād Al-Awal Bimunāsibat 'īd Al-julūs As-sa'īdah (Telegraph Submitted by 'Abd Allāh Salāma, President of Shubra Sporting Club to the Chief Secretary on the Matter of the Petition to Present His Loyalty and Sincerity and Congratulations Most Obediently to His Majesty King Fu'ād the First on the Occasion of the Anniversary of His Great Enthronement), 1934, DAW 0069-011582, "Tilighrāf Muqadim Min Aḥmad Bahā' Ad-dīn Bahajat Wakīl Majlis Idārah Nādy Al-qāhirah Lilāl'ab Ar-riyāḍy Bishubrā' Ilá Kabīr Al-imnā' Bish'an Taqdīm Attahniyah Litashrīf Jalālat Al-Malik 'āṣimat Milku (Telegraph Submitted by Aḥmad Bahā' Ad-dīn Bahajat, Representative of the Administrative Committee of the Cairo Sporting Games Club of Shubrā' to the Chief Secretary on the Matter of Presenting Congratulations to Honor His Majesty the King), 1925, DAW 0069-011584, "Tilighrāf Muqadim Min Al-qā'imqām Muḥammad Ḥaydar Wakīl An-nādy Al-mukhtaliṭ Lilāl'ab Ar-riyāḍy Bilzamālik Ilá Kabīr Al-imnā' Bish'an Rafa' Al-Wala' At-tahniyah Ilá Al-i'tāb Al-malakiyah Bimunāsibat Al-'īd Al-mīlād As-sa'īdah (Telegraph Submitted by the Qā'imqām Muḥammad Ḥaydar, representative of the Mixed Sporting Games Club of Zamalek to the Chief Secretary on the Matter of Presenting His Loyal Congratulations Most Obediently to the Occasion of His Great Birthday), 1929, and DAW 0069-011589, "Tilighrāf Muqadim Min Iskandar Maqṣūd Bāshā Bilni'yābah 'an 'aḍā' Nādy Al-Manṣūra Ilá Kabīr Al-imnā' Bish'an Iqāmah Ḥaflah Bimunāsibat 'īd mīlād Amīr As-ṣa'id Wa Taqdīm Al-Wala' Wa Al-ikhlāṣ Jalālat Al-Malik (Telegraph Submitted by Iskandar Maqṣūd Pasha on Behalf of the members of the Al-Mansoura Club to the Chief Secretary on the Matter of Holding a Celebration on the Occasion of the Prince of Upper Egypt's birthday and Presenting Loyalty and Sincerity to His Majesty the King), 1934.

[221] See, for example, DAW 0069-011610, "Tilighrāf Muqadim Min Ad-duktūr Sulaymān 'yd Nā'ib Ra'īs Nādy Al-Ismā'īlyah Ar-riyāḍy Ilá Ra'īs Ad-diywān Al-malaky Bish'an Rafa' Al-ikhlāṣ Nādy Al-Ismā'īlyah Wala'hum Ilá Jalālat Al-Malik Wa Ṭalab Al-'aṭf Ar-ri'āyah" (Telegraph Submitted by Doctor Sulaymān 'yd, Vice President of the Ismā'īlyah Sports Club to the President of the Royal Court on the Matter of Presenting Sincerity and Loyalty Most Obediently to His Majesty The King and Asking for Caring Kindness"), 1946 and DAW 0069-014995, "Mukātibah Min Nā'ib Kabīr Al-imnā' Ilá Ra'īs Diywān Jalālat Al-Malik Bish'an Al-aḥāṭah Bikhḍūr Jalālat Al-Malik Ḥaflah Al-malik Ḥaflah Al-āl'ab Al-baḥriyah Ar-riyāḍiyah Alty Satuqīmha Maṣlaḥat Ḥafr As-sawāḥil Fī 28 Aghusṭus 1938" (Letter from the Deputy Chief Secretary to the President of the Court of His Majesty the King on the Matter of the Briefing for the Attendance of His Majesty the King in the King's Party at the Navy Sporting Games Party that Will be Held by the Coast Guard Service on 28 August 1938), 1938.

In 1946, for example, shortly after the end of World War II, Egypt's weightlifting champions requested additional funds for their sport directly from the king because weightlifting was the only sport in which Egyptians had fostered "internationally excellence and global pride".[222] In the past, they had not only equaled the sportsmen of Europe and the United States, but surpassed them. With the proper resources, weightlifting could be used to propel Egypt back to the forefront of the international scene and position itself as an important soft culture player in a postwar world.

This relationship to the King was particularly important sports associated traditionally with the military, such as fencing and equestrian. In 1917, for example, in the middle of World War I, a delegation from Asyut had requested patronage for a horse-racing celebration to be held in the city.[223] Patronage often took the form of royal trophies and prizes, such as the annual King's Cup for army football, inaugurated in 1932.[224]

Such requests, however, were not limited to military matters. Non-military sports, such as sailing, often had prizes sponsored by the King, particularly if they were considered "elite" pursuits.[225] Moreover, even as early as 1926, when Ittihad Alexandria won the King's Cup for the first time and sent a letter of thanks to the monarch, domestic football attempted to build ties with the King. Records indicate that the club maintained this relationship for at least two

[222] DAW 0069-004127, "Awrāq Khāṣāh Biabṭāl Miṣr Al-Dawliyīn Fī Raf' Al-athqāl" (Private Papers of Egypt's International Weightlifting Champions), 1946
[223] DAW 0069-011578, "Awrāq Biāqāmat Alal'āb Ar-riyāḍy Biasyūṭ Ḥaflah Lisibāq Al-khayl" (Papers Regarding the Undertaking of a Horse Racing Sports Celebration in Asyut), 1917
[224] DAW 0069-004117, "Awrāq Khāṣāh Ittiḥād Al-jaysh Al-miṣry Lilal'āb Ar-riyāḍiyah " (Private Papers of the Egyptian Army Union for Sporting Games), 1931
[225] DAW 0069-010682, "Tilighrāf Min Ḥabīb Ḥassan Muḥāfiẓ Al-qināl Bilniyābah Ilá Kabīr Al-imnā' Bish'an Al-i'ilām Biḥuḍūrhu Ḥaflat As-sibāq Al-baḥry Lilzawāriq Linīl Al-k'ās Al-malaky Alty Aqāmhā Itiḥād Jam'yāt At-tajdīf Bilqaṭar Al-miṣry Wa Tawzī'ah Liljawā'iz 'Alá Al-fā'izīn Tanfīdhan Lilmanṭūq As-sāmy" (Telegraph from Ḥabīb Ḥassan, Acting Governor of the Canal, to the Chief Secretary on the Matter of the Media and Its Attendance at the Maritime Sailing Race for Acquiring the King's Cup that is Held by the Union of Rowing Associations in the Cairo Region and the Distribution of Prizes to the Winners in the Implementation of the Royal Imperative), 1932.

decades,[226] and even British observers noted the monarchy's relationship to the club.[227] Alexandria Sporting Club had a similar relationship that began in the 1920s.[228] Such actions were more than mere formality; they also opened a channel for administrators to request royal intervention. For example, in 1921 representatives of Egyptian clubs requested that the King become involved in disputes surrounding their representativeness on the committee the Sultan's Cup.[229] This protest was part of the movement that led to the creation of the EFA, which was an offshoot of the EEFA with more indigenous involvement, and the King's Cup.

Taken in this context, therefore, the 1938 request for the King to sponsor the Al-Fārūqy Youth Sports Club of Khartoum was part of the broader effort to tie Sudan more tightly to the Egyptian aegis. After World War II, with the reputation of the King weakened, attempts to build a relationship between Sudan and Egypt in sport moved into the public sphere. Publications such as *Al-ahrām* made more concerted, if uneven, attempts to integrate Sudanese sporting news into their daily columns. While these efforts were often ephemeral, they did lead to far more routine coverage of that nation's physical activity than ever before. They also encouraged local Sudanese teams, particularly football ones, to tour Egypt, and poured more resources into the physical education of youth.[230]

[226] DAW 0069-011596, "Awrāq Khāṣāh Binādy Ittiḥād Ar-riyāḍy Al-Iskandary" (Private Papers of Al-Ittihad Alexandria Sporting Club)
[227] Our Own Correspondent, "Royalty and Football", *The Near East and India*, October 5, 1933, 818
[228] DAW 0069-011585, "Awrāq Khāṣāh Binādy Asbūrtinj" (Private Papers of Sporting Club), 1929
[229] DAW 0069-011579, "Tilighrāf Min 'Abdu Al-Ḥablāwy 'ibādah Ilá Jalālat As-sulṭān Bish'an Iḥtijāj Mumathala Al-indiyah Al-miṣriyah 'alá Ijtimā' Lajnat Al-k'ās As-sulṭāny Taḥt A'āyat Jalālatuh Lahānatihum Wa Rafaḍ Samā'y' Aṣwathum Lilintikhāb Al-jadid – Wa Ṭalab An-naẓar Fī Dhalik" (Telegraph from 'Abdu Al-Ḥablāwy 'ibādah to His Majesty the Sultan on the Matter of the Protest of the Representatives of the Egyptian Clubs Against the Sultan's Cup Committee Under the Auspices of His Majesty for Their Insult and Refusal to Hear their Votes for the New Election – and the Request to Consider That), 1921.
[230] "Ar-riyāḍah Bifārūq Ath-thānawiyah Bilkharṭūm" (Sport at Fārūq Secondary of Khartoum), *Al-ahrām*, January 2, 1948, 6

Nor were these efforts unwelcome in Sudan; in February 1948, for example, the Sudanese Football Federation took it upon themselves to invite Eric Keen, then coach of the Egyptian National Team, to Sudan for a tour to see if he would train some of their local talent.[231] One Egyptian club based in Sudan even tested Egypt's willingness to provide material, rather than mere rhetorical, support by calling for a subsidy to allow them to purchase new kits for their football team.[232] Their request was granted by the Egyptian Ministry of Public Works.[233] A similar appeal was launched by the Fārūq Secondary School of Khartoum in order to take advantage of a large adjacent track of land to build a swimming pool and football field for its almost 300 students. In requesting funds from the Egyptian Ministry of Education, the institution pointed out that other non-Egyptian regional schools had plenty of sporting facilities available, including space for cricket.[234]

The Sudanese Football Federation, which had been founded in 1936, joined FIFA in 1948,[235] and thus it was doing all that it could to ensure that its national squad was of the highest caliber. In 1949 this governing body reported 17 playing fields in Metropolitan Khartoum (including Omdurman and Bahri) that could accommodate 10,000 spectators, with plans for another stadium that could seat 16,000. They hosted 22 competitive cups, officiated by 25 nationally-trained referees.[236] It was hoped that these numbers would indicate the nation's progress towards its goal of becoming part of the Egyptian football milieu in the near future.[237] Nonetheless, a Swedish team that was visiting Egypt that year declined an invitation from Sudan

[231] "Hal Yudarib Kīn As-sūdān" (Will Keen Train Sudan?), *Al-ahrām*, February 26, 1948, 7
[232] "Farīq Ar-rá Al-miṣry Bilsūdān" (Ar-rá Al-miṣry Team of Sudan) , *Al-ahrām*, September 22, 1949, 8
[233] "Farīq Ar-rá Al-miṣry" (Ar-rá Al-miṣry Team) , *Al-ahrām*, October 13, 1949, 10
[234] "Madrasa Fārūq Bilkharṭūm" (Fārūq School of Khartoum), *Al-ahrām*, November 19, 1949, 11
[235] "Bayānāt 'an As-sūdān" (Statements on Sudan), *Al-ahrām*, July 25, 1949, 6
[236] "Malā'ib Al-indiyah Al-kabīrah" (Playing Fields of the Big Clubs), *Al-ahrām*, July 25, 1949, 6
[237] "Lahif As-sūdān Limīdān Miṣr" (Eagerness of Sudan for Domain of Egypt), *Al-ahrām*, July 25, 1949, 6

to play several matches in that region on their tour,[238] and while no official reason was given, the implication seemed to be that a visit to Sudan would not be worth the time or money, perhaps due to the level of play.

Sudanese teams continued to tour Egypt and in 1949 Sudan founded two more sporting federations, for table tennis and basketball.[239] Yet while the sporting press was not entirely reluctant to praise the efforts in Sudan, Egypt's true feelings were most evident in its refusal to consider Sudanese participation at the Mediterranean Games. On May 14, 1951 the headline of *Al-ahrām*'s sporting page was titled "Sudan and the Mediterranean Games", although it devoted only three short paragraphs to the issue, suggesting that if Egypt considered Sudan part of its unified whole, then it should have no issue with including Sudanese athletes in its delegation to benefit the country's youth.[240] In mid-September, however, a letter from Khartoum to the publication expressed frustration that no invitations to participate had been received by any Sudanese federations,[241] and Sudan was ultimately left out of the Games.

Nonetheless, *Al-ahrām* continued to press the case, noting in November that if the King styled himself as the monarch of Egypt and Sudan, then there should be unity within the Egyptian and Sudanese football federations. It noted further that the EOC did not prohibit Sudanese-born athletes from being a part of their activities.[242] Although it expanded its appeal to cover all of the country's federations a few days later,[243] these entreaties ultimately went unanswered, although Ahmed El-Demerdash Touny did make a few gestures towards

[238] "As-sūdān Wa Da'wat As-suwīd" (Sudan and the Swedish Invitation), *Al-ahrām*, November 22, 1949, 6
[239] "Thālith Itiḥād Lilsūdān" (Third Federation for Sudan), *Al-ahrām*, October 13, 1949, 10
[240] "As-sūdān Wa Dawart Al-baḥr Al-mutawasiṭ" (Sudan and the Mediterranean Games), *Al-ahrām*, May 14, 1951, 4
[241] "Ad'ū As-sūdān Ilá Dawart Al-abyaḍ" (Invite Sudan to the Mediterranean Games…), *Al-ahrām*, September 17, 1951, 4
[242] "Ittiḥādā Miṣr Likurat Al-qadam" (An Egyptian Union for Football), *Al-ahrām*, November 14, 1951, 4
[243] "Mushkilah Ittiḥādāt As-sūdān (The Problems of the Federations of Sudan), *Al-ahrām*, November 17, 1951, 4

establishing swimming and gymnastics federations in Sudan.[244] With the desire to integrate Egyptian sports into the European milieu, there was no reason to engage the country's African holdings and character and many to ignore it.

Women, on the other hand, were a different matter. Just as in Turkey, where the nation sought to create the image of being progressive towards women as evidence of its "modernity", so too did Egypt seek to cast off the stereotype of Muslim women being exotic and oppressed. Yet, as in the Turkish case, the changes it made were superficial, albeit not leaving women with substantially fewer rights than were afforded European women of the time. In some cases, it may have seemed that women's sport was held to limited esteem in Egypt even on the surface. In an article published January 26, 1936, entitled "Sport Does Not Know Crying or Lamentations, O Girls", *Al-ahrām* covered a primary school basketball match between two teams and lamented that the defeated squad wept and blamed the referee for their loss. Sport, the author argued, should never lead to sadness because it was meant for recreation, and defeat is important because it teaches one the sporting spirit and to appreciate victory. Girls, he argued, should be taught self-control, serenity, and friendship through sport, rather than competition and emotion, in order for such exercises to have value.[245]

A month later, the author continued his focus of girls crying during a primary school netball tournament,[246] yet in both articles signaled that woman's sport, even if executed imperfectly (in his mind), could teach one how to live properly and should not be ignored or dismissed. There were, however, much more genuine efforts to demonstrate at least superficial

[244] "At-tashkīlāt Ar-riyāḍiyah Bilsūdān" (Sporting Organizations of Sudan), *Al-ahrām*, November 27, 1951, 4
[245] "Ar-riyāḍah Lā Ta'rif Al-bikā' Wala Alniwāḥ Ayatuhā Al-fatiyāt" (Sport Does Not Know Crying or Lamentations, O Girls), January 26, 1936, 14
[246] "Al-jins Al-laṭīf" (The Gentle Sex), *Al-ahrām*, February 29, 1936, 14

overtures to women's equality in sport. In January, the newspaper also published a letter from women fencers at Egyptian University (now Cairo University) supporting their desire to be allowed to practice at national clubs, just like their European counterparts. This would be part of the "sporting spirit"[247] and would certainly have aligned well with Egypt's desire to diversify and demonstrate its victories on the world sporting scene. Netball was also being introduced into this Egypt at this time, as the game was becoming more and more popular in Europe as a sport appropriate for women.[248] In this, it was perhaps hoped that the nascent sport might provide a comparative advantage for the Egyptian sporting scene, as their engagement would not be as delayed as it had been in other pursuits.

There were even expressly positive overtures towards women's sport. A March article on an Egyptian women's basketball match included a glowing evaluation of the player's physical prowess and mental soundness that aligned well with the "sporting spirit".[249] In April, responding to criticisms that women's sport went against tradition and morality, the sports page argued that the women's physical fitness could in fact preserve these ideals if implemented correctly, and pointed out the abundant encouragement in Islam for women to take part in sport.[250] Particularly supporting this position was Munīrah Ṣabry, inspector for girl's physical education in schools and the founder of Egypt's Girl Scouts, who argued that women's sport needed to be instituted systematically precisely so that the value of sport in promoting morality could be achieved.[251] Such systematic implementation began in 1937, with the establishment in Cairo of a physical education institute designed to train both male and female teachers.[252] The

[247] "Fī Muḥīṭ Al-banāt" (In the Women's Realm), *Al-ahrām*, February 3, 1936, 14
[248] "Fī Muḥīṭ Al-banāt" (In the Women's Realm), *Al-ahrām*, April 16, 1936, 14
[249] "Kurat As-salah" (Basketball), *Al-ahrām*, March 17, 1936, 14
[250] "Al-jins Al-laṭīf" (The Gentle Sex), *Al-ahrām*, April 23, 1936, 14
[251] "Fī Muḥīṭ Al-banāt" (In the Women's Realm), *Al-ahrām*, April 24, 1936, 14
[252] Sfeir 196

women's division was housed in a girl's secondary school and enrolled nine candidates initially. Interest quickly dropped off, however, with enrollment listed as five, two, and three women in the following years. By this time, there were a small number of women in the sports club of Cairo, most notably the basketball squad mentioned above.[253]

Overall, however, such overtures were the exception, as the idea that a strong women's sporting movement could bolster a nation's global soft power was almost non-existent anywhere until after World War II. Thus, it is not surprising the sports pages soon turned their attention elsewhere in the leadup to and aftermath of the Berlin Olympics, and that prewar articles covering women's sport were few and far between. After World War II, the women's physical education institute became independent as "The Physical Education Institute for Women in Cairo,"[254] and eventually opened branches in Alexandria.[255] Yet until the 1952 Revolution, women's sport continually butted up against the three problems encountered by Munīrah Ṣabry: false, traditional beliefs about women's sport (particularly concerning its relationship to virginity), a shortage of teachers, and inattentiveness to the development of curricula.[256]

Similarly, efforts to promote women's sport in newspapers and magazines was limited. During the war, sports specialist publications portrayed women as essential assets that provided moral support to the troops. Once such propaganda was no longer necessary, however, these journals turned their focus elsewhere. Attention was similarly marginal in *Al-ahrām*; in March 1949, for example, it published two articles lamenting the domination of foreign women in the Egyptian tennis championship, but offered little in the way of what could or should be done to

[253] Badr 48
[254] ibid
[255] Sfeir 196
[256] Badr 48

improve the situation. The following month, it noted that Egypt had entered a fencer into the women's individual foil tournament at the World Fencing Championships, but did not even list her name.[257] Coverage of women in general was sporadic, and almost never drew the same connections between women's physical activity and the strength of the nation that it did routinely with the men.

Interest in the religious aspect of sport was similarly stifled, which is of little surprise considering the secular push behind the Egyptian nationalism of the era. During World War II, *Al-āl'āb Ar-riyāḍīyah* twice printed a detailed discussion of how modern sport could be rectified with the requirements of Ramadan, a subject broached on occasion by various publications across all eras. While a cursory review of religious publications suggests that the relationship between Islam and sport was explored from time to time, there is no strong evidence that this connection was engaged deeply by the sports publications during this era.

As for other religions, while it seems clear that most top-tier athletes were Muslim, most of the time neither this reality nor its exceptions were engaged explicitly or with much critical interest. Most articles that did appear were simply notices of events that happened to be taking place at institutions such as the YMCA. Even when, for example, the establishment of a new Shubra branch of the Armenian Nubar Club made the main headline of *Al-ahrām*'s sporting page, the coverage was relatively factual and dispassionate.[258] In another example, the February 13, 1948 edition of *Al-ahrām* noted that some of reserve basketball players with Egypt's

[257] "Buṭūlat Ash-shīsh Al-'ālamiyah Lilsayidāt" (World Foil Championship for Women), *Al-ahrām*, April 17, 1948, 6. An issue of *L'Escrime*, discovered by fencing historian George Masin, lists her name as "Abine", but provides no other details. It is possible that this is a misspelling of "Abdine" and that the fencer was the wife of prominent Egyptian fencer Maḥmūd 'Ābdīn. In a personal communication, Masin suggested "it's likely that the FIE put pressure on the Egyptians to provide a female for the individual event even if she was a beginner or even had never fenced before."

[258] "Munash'iāt Jadīdah" (New Establishment), *Al-ahrām*, March 16, 1936, 14

Olympic delegation came from the YMCA, Maccabi, and Hakoah.[259] That this was mentioned, however, was likely a factor of their not having been skilled enough to play for the more prominent clubs such as Al-Ahly and Zamalek. The Christian players that made the starting lineup were noted as members of these larger clubs, which suggests that there was no active barrier for talented Christian sportsmen to reach the upper tiers of at least this sport, which had its origins in the Christian colleges and organizations of Upper Egypt.

Upper Egypt was part of a broader blind spot in most publications, particularly *Al-ahrām*, for the parts of the country outside of the major metropolitan areas. This was despite the fact that the government expressed a particular interest in raising the level of sport in the villages after World War II.[260] One notable exception to this lack of attention was an article in the May 7, 1936 edition of *Al-ahrām* detailing the contemporary sporting activities and infrastructure in the countryside. Despite the optimal conditions, such as increased free time and cleaner air, as well as an increase of rural sporting organizations, the author observed that there was a movement away from sport in the countryside, although its primary city of analysis was Beni Suef in Middle Egypt.[261]

Summary

Egypt's participation in the 1936 Berlin Olympics was not a nationalist awakening in sport, even though it was portrayed that way in the leadup to and aftermath of the 1952 Revolution. Beneath the surface of these Games was the promulgation of the hegemonic British narrative and the maintenance of the status quo, the use of Orientalist tropes to explain failures,

[259] "Al-lā'ibūn Al-Murashaḥūn Likurat As-salah" (The Nominated Basketball Players), *Al-ahrām*, February 13, 1948, 2
[260] DAW 0069-00416 "Awrāq Khāṣāh Bijimā'āt Nashr Ar-riyāḍah Bilqurá Fī Sanah 1946" (Private Papers of the Groups for Spreading Sport in the Villages in the Year 1946), 1946
[261] "Fī As-ṣaīd'" (In Upper Egypt), *Al-ahrām*, April 7, 1936, 14

and a yearning for European approval. It is evident that the traditional British hegemonic view of sport did not recede significantly, even if sporting discourse now allowed room for these nominally indigenous voices. Horse racing as a luxury pastime in Egypt never lost its popularity throughout World War II and, in the midst of the conflict, the elite segments of society still found time for cricket[262] and game hunting.[263] Recreational facilities continued to be built,[264] and while they became slightly more accessible to indigenous Egyptians during this period, this relative improvement was tempered by the rejection of these clubs by an increasingly independent *'afandiya*. And if even the famous English playwright Noël Coward "had the distinction of being asked to leave the premises of the Royal [Alexandria] Yacht Club for wearing shorts and a shirt",[265] then it seems doubtful that Egyptians could have engendered any substantial increase in their membership.

Yet Egypt's participation at the 1936 Berlin Games should not be dismissed as irrelevant. Their most lasting legacy was that they provided discursive anchors for writers in the postwar period to apply a more genuine, nationalist narrative to the events. As the Egyptian desire to win favor in the eyes of Europeans evaporated, the successes of their countrymen at the 1936 Berlin Olympics came to be seen as valuable in their own right, for demonstrating Egypt's potential as an equal among global players. Rather than criticizing football officials and administrators for not being more like their European counterparts, they instead began to ask why foreigners were running the teams. And while there is no evidence of El-Touni having any political affiliation

[262] FO 891/116 – 1942 – Alexandria Cricket Club: appointment of a trustee
[263] Jarvis "Scattered" 48
[264] T 161/874/9 – 1939 - RECREATION. General: Expenditure on recreational facilities for units in Palestine and Egypt.
[265] Cooper, Artemis 253

(perhaps unsurprising, given the restrictions of amateurism), at his death he was praised by revolutionary leader Gamal Abdel Nasser for "the glory that he realized for his country".[266]

One of the many effects of World War I on Egypt was a notable shrinking of both the size and number of national newspapers and publications soon after the conflict began.[267] This, combined with the fledgling state of the sporting press, meant that the war had little impact on the way in which sport was engaged in Egyptian society. By contrast, while the national press retreated during World War II, the impact was far less severe in the 1940s than it had been in the 1910s, presenting an opportunity for journalism to serve as a transformative channel during, and in the immediate aftermath of, the conflict. While wartime censorship and military control prevented outright subversive exercises, the '*afandiya* who had served effectively as figureheads over these publications came to realize their potential and began testing the waters.

Until the 1952 Revolution, there was uncertainty as to the direction that sport journalism might take. A June 1949 article in *Al-ahrām*, for example, celebrated the value of travelling abroad for sport as an exercise in publicity for Egypt, but also acknowledged the benefits of learning the newest techniques from Europe.[268] Even if one were to argue that sport was being used actively to promote nationalist ideology, it was clear that the message was not quite unified. It is more accurate to state, however, that the explicit use of sport as a transformative force through which government ideologies could be promulgated was not realized fully until after the July Revolution. The uncertainty as to its best use lingered in the early years of the Free Officer

[266] Faraj "At-tūny" 8
[267] "Newspapers", *The Near East*, November 5, 1915, 22
[268] "Kayf Nafīd Min Riḥlātna Al-khārijiyah" (How We Benefit from Our Foreign Trips), *Al-ahrām*, June 2, 1949, 6

regime, and thus the years before and after 1952 have more in common, at least in the realm of sport, than not.

Chapter 4: Calling Time Out

The United Arab Republic (UAR) made its debut at the Olympics at the 1960 Rome Games. Although politically it was a union between Egypt and Syria, there is no evidence that any of the nominated Syrians actually competed in the tournament, making it effectively another edition of the Olympics for Egypt. In that regard, its results were unremarkable: the only medals came from wrestler ʻAid ʻUthmān, who won silver in the Greco-Roman flyweight competition, and boxer ʻAbdul Monʼim Al-Gindy, who took home one of the bronze medals from the flyweight division. The other 72 competitors came home empty-handed.

Among them was a 27-year-old gymnast from Cairo by the name of Ahmad Ghonaim. Ghonaim had taken up gymnastics seven years earlier, but by 1955 he often found himself in trouble with the law. Noted for his ability while training at the Young Men's Muslim Association, he was offered an opportunity to join the capital's Police Sports Club and work up to representing Egypt on the national team. Training exclusively with Russian coaches, he was soon slated to take part in the 1956 Melbourne Olympics. Unfortunately, the Suez Crisis intervened and Egypt boycotted the Games, save for the equestrian tournament that had occurred earlier in Stockholm.

By 1959 Ghonaim was well-known at home as the national police champion, and he had his greatest international victory that year at the Mediterranean Games in Beirut. There he won five medals: gold in the parallel bars, silver in the floor exercise, horse vault, and rings, and bronze in the all-around. This secured his ticket to the Rome Games, where the UAR was 15th among 20 nations in the team all-around. Although he specialized in the bars, Ghonaim performed best individually in the horse vault, where he was joint-63rd.

By 1961, however, Ghonaim had fallen out of favor with the national press. He had been with the Police Club for six years but received no benefits and, in those days of Gamal Abdel Nasser's regime, he had no opportunities to transfer to a private club. In 1962, therefore, he took up an offer to help establish and perform in a Russian-run circus in Cairo. This further provoked the press, and had the Egyptian Army demanding that he join their clubs, as they viewed it as demeaning for a former national competitor to be working in a circus. Nonetheless, Ghonaim remained in the position for three years, despite the dangers of the shoddily-run attraction, where several of his friends were injured during practice and performances, and even killed by lions and crocodiles.

Finally, in 1965, the Army offered him a proper salary and an officer rank with all the commensurate benefits for him and his family. Once again representing the UAR, he won numerous medals at the World Military Championships and retired from active competition as he moved into his 30s, wanting to quit gymnastics while he was in peak form. It was then that he moved on to the second phase of his life in Lebanon, where he worked as a coach and trainer at government schools, as well as for the national team. Overcoming complaints from Christians, who did not want a Muslim teaching their children, Ghonaim trained a generation of Lebanese students to become the best gymnasts in the Arab world.

At the same time that Lebanon was sliding into civil war, its success drew the attention of the Saudis. Although the press again criticized him, accusing him of being an opportunist for a higher salary, the Lebanese government had actually encouraged him to depart with his family, given the deteriorating conditions within the country. He therefore moved to meet the challenges of the Saudi national system, where most had not even heard of the sport, and many were hesitant to wear shorts as required by gymnastics. Nonetheless, as a self-taught master marketer,

he engaged a series of demonstrations that won over many, and eventually the number of participants in his program skyrocketed. For over two decades, Ghonaim took the Saudis to competitions globally, making them a powerhouse in gymnastics across the Arab world. Ghonaim retired in 1996 and returned to Egypt. On his departure, he was presented with a solid gold plaque with his name and a declaration from the Saudi King that he was "the father of gymnastics in Saudi Arabia".

Had Ghonaim's exploits occurred prior to the 1952 Egyptian Revolution, one would expect him to be well-known and praised as a national hero. After all, he was a multiple national champion, represented his country abroad, and demonstrated Egypt's superiority within the Arab world by establishing an entire sport in two countries. The post-revolution era, however, had a vastly different experience with sport than it had had under British occupation. If one were to mention his name, even to sports experts, it is unlikely that anyone could tell you who he is. This may seem a personal slight, given his conflict with the national authorities, or given the fact that he helped train teams that would go on to defeat Egyptian ones, but Ghonaim was not alone in this regard. 'Uthmān and Al-Gindy, both Olympic medalists, received only passing mention upon their deaths in 2013 and 2011 respectively.

If the sporting figures of the Nasser years were so easily ignored, the champions of the occupation era fared even worse. Of the 13 pre-revolution Olympic medalists, only two received coverage upon their deaths commensurate to their status. One was Farid Simaykah, who had earned two medals in diving at the 1928 Amsterdam Games and was killed during World War II while serving with the United States military. The other, as mentioned in the previous chapter, was Khadr El-Touni, who was electrocuted in his home in September 1956. Both of these deaths occurred before a significant shift in Egypt's sporting mentality, although El-Touni's in

particular seems to signal the change of an era, as had the death of Ahmed Hassanein at the hands of the British military near the end of their control over hegemonic restructuring.

While some Olympic medalists received attention in the national press, never again was the coverage as substantial as it had once been, as the pantheon of sporting heroes came to be reserved almost exclusively for footballers. Some medalists seem to have vanished entirely. El-Touni's stature was such that he could not be ignored, and he was praised by Nasser, although one wonders if that would have been the case had he lived to a more advanced age. Nonetheless, El-Touni's obituary serves as a requiem for a disappearing age, as well as a fitting chronological conclusion for this study. It is clear that sport did not change instantaneously with the revolution, but certain shifts did occur at a far more rapid pace than they had in the past, as the government decided which aspects of the old system to maintain and which to discard.

Sport in Egypt became overtly political, used to disseminate state-sponsored narratives and ideologies. It therefore received more resources and ideological support from the government than ever before, and helped subscribe Egyptians to new ideals of socialism, suggesting that the role of building the nation belonged to everyone. Moreover, there was a much greater attempt to communicate and work with international sporting bodies in the hopes of integrating Egypt more profoundly into the global sporting movement. This demonstrates the state's continued commitment to the idea that a nation's prowess in sport reflects its overall civilizational value, even as Egypt shifted its outlook from wanting to be one among a club of Europeans to seeking a leadership role within in the Arab world.

While complete coverage of these developments is a project in and of itself, this chapter will attempt to map out some of the changes that were occurring in the aftermath of the revolution, and highlight continuities where they were present. The story of Ahmad Ghonaim is

representative of the Egyptian sporting world that emerged after these developments. The transitional period between 1952 and 1956 not only defined what it meant to be a sportsman from then on, but redefined and superimposed those definitions on the past as well. The story of sport under the British occupation, therefore, cannot be considered complete without an investigation into these years.

The 1952 Egyptian Revolution

"The spirit behind the Egyptian Revolution […] is represented by the ideal of creating a new national consciousness in Egypt, based on the staunch belief in democratic socialism and the fullest realisation of social justice".[1] These were the words of Gamal Abdel Nasser, an army officer who was the key figure in the Egyptian Revolution of 1952, which overthrew the monarchy, ending British hegemony. They were printed in his introduction to Muhammad Ata's *Egypt Between Two Revolutions*, a 1955 piece of nationalist propaganda for the uprising and portent to the decisive expulsion of the British that was to occur the following year. In the work, Ata describes the revolution as the product of the "Egyptian spirit" rising to the challenge of oppressive circumstances under the guidance of a charismatic leader.

The reality, of course, was far more complicated. The Cairo fire of January 26, 1952 had quite literally sparked off another round of vociferous and violent protests against the occupying power, this time culminating in a true revolution. With the Wafd discredited thoroughly, there were no clear front runners for the public's favor and the Prime Minister's office experienced rapid turnaround. 'Aly Māhir, who had been appointed in the aftermath of the Cairo fire, was replaced in just over a month by Aḥmad Najīb Al-Hilāly. Four months later, his cabinet resigned

[1] Ata 3-4

and he was replaced by Ḥussayn Sirry, who held the role for less than three weeks before confronting an uprising from the military.[2] With their frustrations founded in the February 1942 near-abdication incident and heightened during the 1948 Arab-Israeli War, the Egyptian Army was replete with officers who, despite their different philosophical and political outlooks, were eager to catalyze real change in the country.[3] On July 23, 1952, they succeeded in enacting a coup that removed Fārūq from the throne and replaced him with his son Fu'ād II, who was then only a few days over six months of age.[4]

The coup, which would come to be known as the Egyptian Revolution of 1952, was planned and executed in secret and lacked broad popular support. Egyptians of all kinds were no doubt open to, even pleased about, a radical change in government, but they were far from unified on what form a new government should take. In the uncertainty that followed the takeover, therefore, numerous factions began jockeying for control of not only the state, but the support of the people. By the end of 1953, however, the Officers had abolished the monarchy and seized more permanent power through a mix of populist reforms and promises and physical repression of their opponents. At the time, the movement's *de jure* leader was Muḥammad Naguib but, by the end of the following year, he had been outmaneuvered by the younger Gamal Abdel Nasser, who would remain President of the new Republic of Egypt until his own death in 1970. It was not until his 1956 nationalization of the Suez Canal, and the subsequent Suez War with Britain, France, and Israel, however, that Nasser would gain widespread national popularity and acceptance.

[2] Vatikiotis 370
[3] ibid 373
[4] ibid 376

Between 1952 and 1956, therefore, there was a concerted attempt by the Egyptian military to win favor among its citizens and, with so many different political organizations contesting for power, the state had to choose carefully which elements of the old regime were beneficial and which had to be altered or discarded. While issues such as land reform were of the highest priority, considerations such as sport and physical education were not to be ignored either. In the aftermath of the Revolution, sport developed from a sporadic concern in Egyptian government documents to an organized, even militant, element of state policy that became the subject of legitimate academic pursuit, albeit often in a kinesiological sense. While this process did not bear considerable fruit until after 1956, important changes were enacted from the beginning. The NCPC disbanded in 1952, for example, leaving the EOC to take on the responsibility of developing sport within the country. In 1956, meanwhile, the establishment of numerous government-controlled bodies relieved some of the pressure from the EOC and allowed the government to take more control of the minutiae, signaling a new era of state intervention in, and promulgation of, sport.[5] This was, for example, the year that Nasser carved out a section of the Gezira to serve as a space and a club that would be dedicated to developing the youth of the nation through sport.

Before the new government could settle on the development of a new sporting policy, it had to determine what its relationship to the occupying power would be. While the coup had not been officially directed at the British, their presence had been a significant motivating factor and expelling British forces was a decision almost certain to please everyone on the political spectrum. The relationship between Egypt and Britain for the first four years after the Revolution was tumultuous and uncertain as the new government negotiated for the removal of the foreign

[5] Ibrāhīm 192

troops from the country, while the occupiers focused on how to maintain its influence without a physical presence.

Britain was, however, exhausted after the hard years of World War II and its empire was disintegrating rapidly, unable to face the challenges of the vigorous and determined revolutionaries of the occupied territories. As military negotiations dragged on, therefore, the British were able to advance only weak strategies to influence popular culture, and sport in particular, a realm in which it had maintained a calculated policy less than two decades prior. The war effort had drained most of the funding from these programs and, while vestiges remained, the 1956 Suez Crisis only accelerated the process of Britain abandoning sport that began long before.

When pursuing the government for compensation for belongings lost during the Cairo Fire, for example, Canadian diplomat C. E. Butterworth registered numerous sporting goods among his missing possessions, including separate footwear for golf, tennis, squash, horse riding, and fishing.[6] Butterworth became the acting Canadian trade commissioner after his predecessor, J. McLeod Boyer, was killed alongside several others in a fire that engulfed the Turf Club during the January riots. Targeted specifically,[7] as one author noted: “The Turf Club had been founded in 1893 and, like the Gezira, was a visible British symbol. Unlike the latter, however, it remained a men’s club, and with very few exceptions, exclusively British in its membership”.[8] Another account discussed "Richard Howard Giles, who had been an assistant commandant of the police in Cairo in the 1940s,” who had “lost all of his possession in the Cairo Fire. […] He was a member of the Turf Club and the Gezira Sporting Club and noted that his recreational pursuits

[6] FO 371/97025 – 1952
[7] Hopwood “Egypt” 32
[8] Oppenheim 210

included 'shooting, golf, cricket, riding.'"[9] Sporting spaces that excluded indigenous Egyptians were still a feature of Cairo at the time of the Revolution, and they exemplified the type of establishment against which the disgruntled populace wished to take out their rage.

The 1952 Summer Olympics

The 1952 Helsinki Olympics had already begun when the Free Officers launched their coup, and thus the Egyptian delegation to the Games was not impacted by the Revolution. Moreover, given the initial slow pace of change, the Egypt that the athletes returned to was not substantially different than the one that they had left; therefore while their participation was chronologically under the new regime for the most part, for practical purposes it can be considered as having occurred under the full occupation of the previous period. Perhaps the most notable feature of Egypt's participation at these Games was its poor results; with only featherweight Greco-Roman wrestler 'Abdul'āl Rāshid taking home a medal, bronze, it was the country's worst performance since 1924, when it had come home empty-handed.

The discourse in the press, therefore, was not fundamentally different than it had been in 1948. By November 1951, *Al-ahrām* had digested the lessons from the Mediterranean Games and moved on to consideration of the Helsinki Olympics. A November 4 article, for example, argued that whether one was happy about the results of the Mediterranean Games or believed that further study was needed to explain failures, the Alexandria tournament was an important milestone in preparation for the next Olympics and form "the basis of the preparations for the Helsinki Olympic Games."[10] As in the past, the advice offered was for the sports federations to

[9] Reynolds 191-192
[10] "Ai'dādnā Li Dawart Hilsinki 1952" (Our Preparations for the 1952 Helsinki Games), *Al-ahrām*, November 4, 1951, 6

identify and correct the weaknesses to strengthen the results in Helsinki. Unsurprisingly, football merited special consideration in this regard, but wrestling was also targeted as an area for administrative improvement.

Still, the Games received only passing mention until after the Cairo Fire in January, when sporting activities were halted temporarily in the capital. With sports stopped in Alexandria by order of the police the following month, *Al-ahrām* used the opportunity to explore the need for better development of sporting legislation in Egypt.[11] Just as with World War II, a lack of results to print led to more critical commentary and, within the context of increasing opposition to British rule, open calls in the sports pages to strengthen Egypt's weaknesses for the good of country had the potential to be interpreted as commentary extending beyond the field of sport.

Sport soon returned to Egypt's urban centers, but concerns about the nation's upcoming performance at the Helsinki Olympics did not subside. *Al-ahrām*, at least, was eager to note that unlike in 1948, when the burdens of recovering from the war had made sport less of a priority globally, the world had refocused on sport over the past four years and the athletes of other nations were once again at their best. This meant that Egypt would have to increase its efforts to remain competitive.[12] Much of the burden of enacting the necessary changes fell on the federations, whom it was felt needed to enact better procedures to train, and ultimately select, competitors for the Games. The EOC also suggested that federations shift their focus to younger sportsmen, so that the knowledge and experiences of the past generations would be preserved for the future.[13]

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[11] "Taṭwur At-tashri' Ar-riyāḍy Fi Miṣr" (The Development of Sporting Legislation in Egypt), *Al-ahrām*, February 2, 1952, 4
[12] "Bad' Marḥalat Al-i'dād Al-awlmby" (Beginning of Olympic Preparation Stage), *Al-ahrām*, June 2, 1952, 8
[13] "Al-lajnat Al-uwlimbīyah Yawṣá Bian-nāshiīn'" (The Olympic Committee Recommends Youngsters), *Al-ahrām*, May 26, 1952, 6

Football, as expected, was a prime concern, as matches against numerous visiting teams since the 1948 London Olympics had demonstrated that Egypt was not up to the level of European play. Victory demanded sacrifice, rather than the complacency that had been observed thus far.[14] In wrestling, another popular sport, recent World Championships had proven that Egypt was competing at a world class level in Greco-Roman, at least in some categories, but was lagging in freestyle and needed new recruits. Ibrāhīm Muṣṭafá, the 1928 Olympic wrestling champion, claimed that Egypt possessed the talent to be world champions, but lacked the organization, coaches, and technical training.[15] Of all of them, only weightlifting, noted as being subsidized by the government, received unequivocal praise for the attention it received and its status.[16]

Yet by now, the Egyptian sporting press took a more comprehensive approach to analyzing sport and was well aware that victories in any field could lead to national prestige. On the other hand, Egypt's recent international success in fencing led *Al-ahrām* to comment that it was a top-notch national program, limited only by the considerable prowess of the French and Italians, while Sayfallāh Ghālib was considered the nation's best prospect in shooting, another sport in which Egyptians had merited international podium finishes. Basketball too had seen recent success, although the same article was concerned about the presence of non-European nations, chiefly the United States, but also the Soviet Union, who would be joining the Games for the first time.[17] Tournaments between Alexandria and Cairo would be needed to identify the best players to face these new challenges.[18]

[14] "Mawqif Miṣr" (Egypt's Position), *Al-ahrām*, May 22, 1952, 6
[15] Faraj "Abṭāl" 117
[16] "Miṣr Tashtarik Fi Dawrat Hilsinki" (Egypt Takes Part in the Helsinki Games), *Al-ahrām*, April 3, 1952, 6
[17] ibid
[18] "Kurat As-salah" (Basketball), *Al-ahrām*, May 25, 1952, 6

Other sports, such as equestrian, had at least taken positive steps forward, with the recent success of the national team in Europe being an example, albeit tempered by the need for better horses.[19] Boxing and athletics, meanwhile, required considerable development and careful selection of those who would benefit most from the limited availability of dedicated training. Nonetheless, it was believed that the boxers in particular could take home two or three medals from Helsinki.[20] There was limited optimism for aquatics (save for perhaps the water polo team) or gymnastics, while yachting was a "game not yet matured in sport circles. So we should drop it from our accounts."[21]

While these concerns were supported by the usual rhetoric of Egypt having to prove itself on the world scene, they took on an additional dimension with the acceptance of Israel to the Helsinki Games. As sources, reputable and otherwise, discussed the possibility of the withdrawal of Arab countries should Israel participate, *Al-ahrām* denied these rumors, declaring the Egypt would not "undermine the value of [its] sporting renaissance" by being absent.[22] Despite the nature of the political discourse, there seemed to be no taste for a boycott among sporting federations as there had been in 1932. No matter what, the paper argued, Egypt must face its challenges and attend the Olympics in Helsinki to maintain its reputation as a grand sporting nation among sporting nations.[23] This was to become a stark contradiction to Egypt's boycott of the 1956 Melbourne Games over the Suez Crisis.

For 1952, however, the Games went on. Just prior to the opening ceremony, Egypt found another reason to raise its hopes for the Olympics: 35 year-old Muḥammad Naṣr won the

[19] "Al-furūsiyah" (Equestrian), *Al-ahrām*, May 25, 1952, 6
[20] "Malākimū Miṣr Akfa' Aqwā'" (Egyptian Boxers are Efficient, Strong), *Al-ahrām*, July 26, 1952, 9
[21] "Miṣr Tashtarik Fi Dawrat Hilsinki" (Egypt Takes Part in the Helsinki Games), *Al-ahrām*, April 3, 1952, 6
[22] "Miṣr Tashtarik Fi Dawrat Hilsinki" (Egypt Takes Part in the Helsinki Games), *Al-ahrām*, March 18, 1952, 4
[23] "Farq Miṣr Biawrat Hilsinki" (Egyptian Teams at Helsinki Games), *Al-ahrām*, June 10, 1952, 6

amateur world bodybuilding championship and the title of "owner of the most complete body in the world".[24] Like scouting, bodybuilding was covered, albeit less frequently, in the sporting pages of newspapers as representing distinct, yet important, aspects of the image that Egypt wanted to portray to the world. There was the obvious connection to the idea that the strength and health of the body was a symbol of the strength and health of the nation, a notion that had been relegated to a minor discourse, but not entirely eliminated.[25]

Perhaps more importantly, however, bodybuilding was a realm of aesthetics, a judgment of physical beauty. While victories in weightlifting and wrestling were held in high esteem, they were also not incongruous with contemporary prevailing stereotypes about non-white individuals. British sport reporting of the period, for example, had routinely emphasized "the apparent physical superiority and intellectual inferiority" of non-European athletes,[26] and such representations were all that was available to casual sporting enthusiast. Moreover, competitions of strength were relatively objective. To be on par aesthetically with Europeans was much more subjective and revolutionary, in a time when comparisons of individuals of African origin to apes was still commonplace.

Thus, in time, Naṣr would join the pantheon of Egypt's sporting heroes (if perhaps a lesser one), but the papers had only limited space to devote to his victory when all eyes were on the Olympics. While usually such a victory would merit a week of extensive coverage in *Al-ahrām*, by the next day the sports page, now taking up an entire page, was focused almost exclusively on the Helsinki Olympics, as it would remain for the rest of the month. The coverage

[24] "Miṣr Yafūz Bibutūlat Al-'ālam Likamāl Al-ājsām" (Egypt Wins World Bodybuilding Championship), *Al-ahrām*, July 14, 1952, 10
[25] "Maṣlaḥat Al-majalah" (The Interest of the Magazine), *Al-mal'ab*, November 11, 1955, 2
[26] Fleming 110

itself, at least in terms of content, was mostly similar to that of the London Games in 1948, with speculation, an analysis of each team's fortunes, and plenty of tactical discussion of each day's results.

While football was important, *Al-ahrām* was never overly-optimistic about Egypt's chances in the tournament, and thus when the nation was defeated by Germany in round one, after having bested Chile in the preliminaries, the paper did not dwell unduly on the loss, at least at first. The fact that Germany also did not earn a medal, however, would come to be a bone of contention, as it indicated that Egypt had lost against less than the best of the Europeans. During the Games, however, the press was far more fixated on the basketball team, led by captain Hussain Muntaṣṣir, which won three of its first four matches to advance out of the preliminary rounds. Despite a valiant effort, however, it would not progress further.

Once again, therefore, it would be weightlifting and wrestling that would hold Egypt's greatest hopes at the Games. The wrestling team's coach, former Italian champion of the 1910s Ubaldo Bianchi, proclaimed that his Greco-Roman delegation was Egypt's best chance for a gold medal at the Olympics that year. Nonetheless, he warned, the Russians and the Swedes could not be discounted.[27] His comments were unfortunately prescient; four of the six Egyptian Greco-Roman contenders were eliminated by the end of the third round, including 1948 bantamweight silver medalist Maḥmūd Ḥassan, with the Hungarians proving themselves to be the most difficult opponents. In the flyweight, Maḥmūd Fawzy survived to round four only by virtue of a bye, after which he was promptly eliminated. Only one, featherweight 'Abdul'āl Rāshid, made it to the podium, earning Egypt's only medal of the Games, bronze. Two of Egypt's trap shooters,

[27] "Mudarib Al-musāri'ah Yataḥadath" (Wrestling Coach Reports), *Al-ahrām*, July 16, 1952, 10

Sayfallāh Ghālib and Yūssuf Fāris, also took home silver as part of the men's trap team competing in non-Olympic shooting events at the World Championships being held concurrently with the Games.

Even before the Games had ended, *Al-ahrām* was devoting copious amounts of space to discussing the nation's failure in Helsinki. The consensus between administrators, coaches, and players alike was that Egypt's lack of participation in international competition hindered their ability to perform at the Olympics, as they needed to face more skilled and difficult opponents. This could be accomplished through the dual process of inviting more foreign teams to Egypt and sending more local teams abroad. In essence, Egyptians could not expect to perform at the European level without facing more Europeans.[28] This perspective should not, however, suggest that Egypt had begun to look outside of its borders for the causes of its failures. The lack of international participation was the fault of organizing and bureaucratic bodies, as were lesser problems, such as the ineffective selection system for the national football team.[29]

Sport Under the Revolutionary Regime

While Egypt's outlook on, and relationship to, sport had not changed, the country that the Olympians left was not entirely the one that they returned to. Some changes were superficial, such as the August 11 decision to rename Nādy Fārūq to Zamālik.[30] One of the more meaningful differences came in the press, which was now open to criticize the former monarch. For sport, this was a convenient way to lay blame for the failures at Helsinki on the corruption of the king and his entourage.[31] After a honeymoon phase, however, the press developed an adversarial

[28] "Ḍa'f Natā'j Miṣr Fi Dawrat Hilsinki" (Weak Egyptian Results in Helsinki Games), *Al-ahrām*, July 31, 1952, 9
[29] "Kurat Al-qadam" (Football), *Al-ahrām*, August 7, 1952, 10
[30] "Nādy Al-zamālik Ar-rīyāḍy" (Zamālik Sporting Club), *Al-ahrām*, August 12, 1952, 10
[31] "Fashil Miṣr Fi Ad-dawrat Al-awlīmbiyah" (Failure of Egypt in the Olympic Games) , *Al-ahrām*, August 8, 1952, 10

relationship with the Free Officer regime as the government "took the attitude that the existing press as a corpus belonged to the bygone era of the monarchy and was tarnished with the corruption and political affiliations of that period."[32] Eventually, the regime enacted harsher penalties for critics, culminating in the imposition of a censorship law.[33]

This in and of itself would not have had a substantial impact on the discourse surrounding sport. Criticism within the sporting pages was predicated on the notion that sport was apolitical and those in charge wanted to maintain that idea, with sport becoming an increasingly fertile channel for the government to spread ideology. Censoring the sporting press was not in their interests. Yet there was one development that even sport could not bypass: nationalization. Politically, this meant that government became in charge of what was printed, journalists were less trusted by the public, and circulation figures dropped. Yet, "[m]ore surprisingly, the press became fixated on local and national news despite the regime's strong emphasis on Arab nationalism and the affairs of the rest of the Arab world."[34]

This meant that, in both sport and politics, the now government-run press was less interested in comparing itself to other nations, particularly those in Europe. Such metrics did not, of course, disappear entirely. The formerly Wafd-supporting *Al-āl'āb Ar-riyāḍīyah*, for example, argued for the continued role of newspapers in stimulating discussion about building the nation, highlighting the importance of letting the Egyptian Football Federation build the nation's prestige abroad. The interest in being part of the club of European nations, however, a notion that

[32] Talhami 132
[33] ibid 147
[34] ibid 153-154.

reached its climax with the Mediterranean Games and was still vibrant at the conclusion of the Helsinki Olympics, dissolved rapidly.

Al-mal'ab, covering a variety of national and international sporting topics after the revolution, justified its existence in November 1955 by arguing that "[s]port has become in these days an important element in the building of people and the renaissance of nations, as much as it has become a measure of the progress of a country".[35] The emphasis on health and the body, however, which had been based on a hegemonic European narrative, had been phased out and replaced with a focus on coaching and officiating. There was a sudden interest in the "proper" way to perform actions and participate in sport, and orderliness in sport became paramount. Coupled with the oft-repeated suggestion of submission to authority, emphasizing obsequiousness to trainers, it reflected a new emphasis on "instruction from above." Russia was now highlighted as a country worthy of emulation in this regard as "Egyptian relations with the Soviet Union during Nasser's regime sped up the expansion of Egyptian sport [… and] Soviet experts provided guidance and assistance in sport matters."[36] By 1954, Soviet cultural activities were in "full swing."[37]

With that said, the sporting press was still in a phase of adjustment, and no overarching generalities can explain the trends in such reporting between 1952 and 1956. In a February 1956 issue, for example, *Al-mal'ab* complained that the radio was not fulfilling its duty to sport and athletes, as it emphasized training too heavily and did not do enough to lead the sporting renaissance through discussions of history and culture.[38] While this could be interpreted as

[35] *Al-mal'ab*, November 11, 1955, 2
[36] Sfeir 191
[37] ibid
[38] "Al-idhā'ah Lam Taqum Biwājbhaā Ḥāmlān Nahū Ar-rīyāḍah Wa Ar-rīyāḍyīn" (The Radio Did Not Do Its Duty in Supporting Sports and Sportsmen) *Al-mal'ab*, February 17, 1956, 8

criticizing broadcasting for not emphasizing the glory of Egypt's past to support its future, it nonetheless points to a narrative in the sporting press that was not yet fully formed. Although post-revolutionary Egypt would all but discard the heroes of the past, the June 1954 obituary of three-time Olympic fencer Maḥmūd ʻĀbdīn demonstrated that this process had not occurred as of the first two years of the regime. "Egypt lost a sportsman from among its most athletic sons,"[39] began the article, which praised his contributions as both a competitor and a coach, despite his status among an upper class that was among Nasser's political pariahs.

The objective here is not to enumerate all of the changes that took place following the Revolution. Rather, what is important is that the process of transformation was neither immediate nor consistent. Regardless of the nature of changes taking place, it is of key importance to note that not only did sport maintain its important role in engaging society, it slowly began to heighten its influence as the government became more involved. Even prior to the Revolution, the British had been aware of sport's transformative potential. Archives of the British Council point to sporting assets, such as a playing field in Alexandria, that had to be dealt with in the aftermath of their departure, highlighting the role of sport in its objective to engender pro-British feelings in Egyptians.[40] A 1950 inspection of a British school in Port Said that prioritized the asphalting of the recreational fields, despite the relatively high cost, a budget deficit, and questions to whether the school would even be open after 1952, further demonstrates the important role of physical recreation. It also offered 40 pounds annually for Sports Day.[41]

[39] "As-silāḥ - Wafā Maḥmūd ʻĀbdīn" (Fencing – Death of Maḥmūd ʻĀbdīn) *Al-ahrām*, June 5, 1954, 10
[40] BW 29/50 – 1946-1959 – Minutes of the Ambassador's Advisory Committee: British Council status in 1949 and evacuation in 1956; includes other various policy matters
[41] BW 29/51 – 1950-1958 – British school: Port Said with press cuttings, Egyptian Education: Schools

The revolutionary regime had an even keener sense of sport's potential to advance their political aims and earn popular support. In less than a month, despite many other priorities, the government moved to consolidate civilian and military clubs under one system. Di-Capua notes that "[i]n less than two years, the revolutionary regime managed to gain control over all aspects of public life associated with sports", although he admits that "[t]his effort was not directed in particular toward sports but was part of a larger effort to create a new state-culture through the bureaucratization and reorganization of public life."[42] The old elites were removed from the EOC and replaced with military officers and individuals otherwise loyal to the regime. Prior to the revolution, nearly everyone on the committee was a Pasha or a Bey. By April 1954, four of the eleven committee members were officers and one year later, it was six of fifteen.

State sports clubs rose quickly and under Muḥammad Naguib they had two goals: "a means to control the urban Egyptian middle class" and "disseminating values, such as unity, equality, cooperation, and discipline, which were important to the regime and reflected its belief in modernization."[43] To do this, the clubs sponsored multi-festivals that were open for all to attend.[44] While these had existed under the monarchy, they were usually restricted to more well-off classes, or at least members of the club. After the Revolution, on the other hand, special attention was devoted to drawing participants from rural areas to draw the peasantry closer to the government center and earn its support.

Sport was also an important part of the government's project to build a relationship with youth, so that future generations could carry the mantle of revolution.[45] The introduction of a

[42] Di-Capua 150
[43] ibid 151
[44] ibid 153
[45] ibid 155

1956 work on Hussain Hegazi is a typical reflection of the earlier stage of this movement. It argued that Hegazi should be praised as a hero from the renaissance age and looked up to as a model for the current generation of youth. Emphasized were his virtues of cooperation and his morals.[46] The messages would not change as time went on, although the reverence for the figures of the past, and the emphasis on how well known they were abroad, would be phased out gradually.

Nasser took such programs even further as he consolidated power. As Leila Sfeir argues, "Gamal Nasser's revolution and the rise of Arab nationalism was a formidable stimulus for sport in Egypt. […] The Ministry of Education gave more attention to physical education by increasing its role within the general education, providing the schools with qualified teachers and introducing a curriculum based on science", as well as providing an increased financial commitment.[47] A February 1956 issue of *Al-mal'ab* noted that Egypt had neglected sport in schools for the past ten years, despite the fact that it was essential for youth to have the opportunity to succeed in sport from the beginning.[48]

Nasser perceived opportunities to promulgate these values through football in particular, which, although weak in Egypt relative to European nations, was far superior to its African counterparts. As Goldblatt describes:

> The leading Cairo teams possessed better facilities and greater resources than any other African clubs and the national team, the Pharaohs, fed on their strength. The military made sure that they could take advantage of this crucial national resource. Field Marshal Abdel-hakim Amer took personal control of the Egyptian FA. Leading footballers were drafted into the army where they were carefully

[46] Faraj "Higāzy" 9
[47] Sfeir 191
[48] "Al-ʿināyah Bilriyāḍah Fī Al-madāris" (Care for Sport in Schools) *Al-mal'ab*, February 17, 1956, 9

nurtured and General Abdelaziz Salem, a leading figure in the regime, was elected president of CAF, which was based in Cairo[49]

Nasser thus sought to utilize sport ideologically not just within the boundaries of his own state, but to catalyze a movement and message that would draw like-minded nations on the continent into his aegis. As *Al-mal'ab* put it in a December 1955 article, Egypt was in "a prestigious, global place among nations after its great revolution" and could compare "the victory in the revolution with other victories in diverse fields, especially in the field of sport, for the name of Egypt has been raised high among the nations".[50] A feature the following month had a picture of a physically buff Nasser kicking a football with the caption "Champion of every match he takes part in", which served the cover of the armed forces issue, thanking them for their contributions to sport.[51] After 1952, therefore, the success of the national football team became representative of the success of the Egyptian President.[52]

Sport and Pan-Arabism

While Nasser had political interests in Africa, there was a lengthier tradition of Pan Arabism for him to build upon in sport. Sport magazines, as well as *Al-ahrām*, demonstrated that the building of regional ties in places such as Lebanon and Iraq through assuming leadership roles played an important role in developing Pan-Arabism as well. The story of Ahmad Ghonaim, who worked with national teams in Lebanon and Saudi Arabia, is a clear example of this trend having been solidified in later stages of the regime. This process, however, had its roots in the 1930s under the monarchy. *Al-abṭāl*, for examples, published photos of non-Egyptian

[49] Goldblatt 495
[50] *Al-mal'ab*, December 23, 1955, 2
[51] *Al-mal'ab*, January 3, 1956, 1
[52] Gabril "Egypt" 351

Arab athletes from abroad, highlighting its perceived role in engaging sport outside of its own boundaries. This also meant, of course, that its readership extended far beyond Cairo.[53]

There were also numerous mentions of Egyptian coaches and trainers being sent to other Arab nations, or those countries sending their athletes to Egypt to receive similar services, during this period. In February 1936, for example, a group of Iraqi youth visited the Al-Ahly in order to survey it and gain inspiration to found a sporting movement in their home country. That these youth would study the Egyptian system was no surprise, for, as *Al-ahrām* put it, "Egypt has led the East, and preceded it in the formation of the modern renaissance for the formation of men of the future".[54] In October 1936, *Al-āl'āb Ar-riyāḍīyah* printed a feature on how Iraq was looking towards Egypt in order to found its own sporting program. "Iraq did not hesitate to take advantage of our sports renaissance," the article proclaimed, "considering it an inseparable part of the national education" and noting how Iraq praised Egypt for its strength in physical culture.[55] The same publication carried a feature on a Lebanese sports journalist's visit to Egypt in April 1943, where "in the atmosphere of fun, the talk revolved around closer ties" in the realm of sport and the press.[56]

Just as with national sport, patronage of the king was important in promoting Pan-Arabism as well. In 1937, for example, the President of the Al-Ahly club of Beirut sent a petition to King Fārūq requesting that a sporting foundation be established in the monarch's name in

[53] Yıldız 29
[54] "Ḍuyūf Miṣr" (Guests of Egypt) *Al-ahrām*, February 28, 1936, 14
[55] "Jārnā Al-'irāq" (Our Neighbor Iraq), *Al-āl'āb Ar-riyāḍīyah,* October 26, 1936, 2
[56] "Fī Ḍīāfat Miṣr" (Hospitality of Egypt), *Al-āl'āb Ar-riyāḍīyah,* April 16, 1943, 1

Lebanon.[57] Similar initiatives were underway in the 1950s in Yemen,[58] an area in which Egypt would be involved in deeply in the 1960s during the North Yemen Civil War.

After the Revolution, the building of soft power ties intensified. By 1954, according to one report from Lebanon, films from Egypt had "almost a monopoly of the Arabic cinemas" and were "extremely popular with the man in the street."[59] The most notable manifestation of this trend in the sporting realm was Alexandria's hosting of the first Pan Arab Games in 1953. The origins of this tournament were in the immediate pre-revolutionary era, with Cairo having hosted a Pan-Arab Schools Games in 1951, but Ahmed El-Demerdash Touny wanted to take them even further. Touny borrowed the idea of hosting a tournament exclusively for Arab nations from Abdul Rahman Azzam, the first Secretary General of the Arab League, an international organization founded near the end of World War II to promote cultural and economic cooperation and unity across Arab nations.[60] In this regard, it was a fulfilment of a November 1946 League Cultural Treaty that emphasized the need for more exchanges in sport.[61]

On the surface the concept behind the Pan Arab Games was simple: a gathering of all Arab nations on the field of sport as part of the Arab League's emphasis on youth. Egypt was chosen as the initial host because of both its legacy in modern sport and Nasser's Pan-Arab leadership.[62] In 1953, delegations from Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Palestine, Jordan, Libya,

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[57] DAW 0069-011600, "At-tamās Muqadim Ad-duktūr Muḥyaddīn Al-Mashaly Ra'īs Nādy Al-ahly Ar-riyāḍy Bibayrūt Ilá Jalālat Al-Malik Fārūq Bish'an At-tahniyah 'alá 'yd Liltatwīj Wa Ṭalab Shmūlhum Bil'aṭf Linshā' Mu'asasah Riyāḍīyah Bālm Jalālatuh Liyakūn Lih 'unṣur Asās Libayrūt" (The Petition Submitted by Doctor Muḥyaddīn Al-Mashaly, President of the Al-ahly Sporting Club of Beirut to His Majesty King Fārūq on the Matter of Congratulations on the Coronation Holiday and Requesting of His Majesty with Kindness to Establish a Sporting Foundation in the Name of His Majesty to Have a Source Base for Beirut), 1937
[58] DAW 0069-011610, "Awrāq Khāṣah Bilnādy Al-Ḥussayny Ar-riyāḍy Bia'dan" (Private Papers of the Al-Ḥussayny Sporting Club of Aden), 1950
[59] FO 371/108563 – 1954 – Egyptian propaganda and influence in countries of the Middle East
[60] Rolim Silva and Gerber 4
[61] Henry 301
[62] ibid 301-302

and Kuwait took part, and they were joined by Indonesia as an observer. That Indonesia was invited and Sudan participated from 1961 on suggests broader geopolitical aims for the Games than be discussed here, but it suffices to note that "speeches were highly political as the speakers presented the sporting festival as a training ground to tackle challenging tasks in the future."[63] The tournament listed its aims as giving "youth an education in sports, […uniting] the youth from different Arab States who have common sporting ambitions" and giving "the sporting initiative a national collaboration."[64] It also "aimed to raise the interest in sport as an educational tool and strategy that seeks to prepare strong youth, who believe in their Arab identity".[65]

The relatively overt political nature of the Pan Arab Games meant that the IOC could not give its official blessings to the tournament. Nonetheless, "[w]hile the IOC did not permit patronage to the Arab Games, neither did it show any objection to them [… and] saw the Games as an opportunity to establish organized sports in the Arab world."[66] As expected, Egypt proved itself far ahead of the other nations, winning all but three of the seventy gold medals available and nearly quadrupling the total medal count of Lebanon, who captured the remaining three titles and came in second in the overall rankings. Yet there was more than this to the Alexandria Games, which one study referred to as "a symbol of a new era for Egypt and the entire Arab world."[67] Most notably, it signaled a decisive ideological shift away from the Mediterranean Games and Egypt's desire to situate itself as a culturally European nation. This move was hastened by rising dissatisfaction from European countries at the exclusion of Israel from the Mediterranean Games and threats not to participate. The IOC warned Taher that the Games must

[63] ibid 8
[64] ibid 5
[65] Henry 301
[66] ibid 6
[67] Ibid 7

be apolitical and non-discriminatory,[68] which likely shifted Egypt's focus further to the Pan Arab Games, as that tournament could exclude Israel without any overt discrimination. Such changes provided an opportunity for Lebanon, a nation still very much concerned about its relationship to Europe, to take the reins of the fledgling Mediterranean Games movement.[69]

Taher could not afford to antagonize the IOC, as he was already at odds with the authorities in his own country. The Turkish-born Taher was wealthy and considered among the societal elite of Egypt prior to the Revolution, and as such he was a target of the regime. On November 18, 1953, the IOC received a letter from an Ahmed Mohammad Marzouk claiming that Taher had been imprisoned for financial crimes and proposing himself as a replacement. Marzouk's qualifications included working for the Ministry of Education as General Inspector of Physical Education, as well as for the Egyptian Higher Institute of Physical Education in Giza. He listed the ministers of Foreign Affairs, Education, and Societal Affairs as his references.[70]

The EOC quickly repudiated Marzouk's letter, but it became clear that Taher's position in Egypt was vulnerable. In 1954 he was replaced as the head of the EOC by a military figure, ʻAbdurraḥman Amīn, but the government lacked the authority to strip Taher of his role as an IOC member. It did, however, confine him to surveillance at his house and confiscate all of his property.[71] In 1957, he fled to Lausanne and remained there for the rest of his tenure as a regular IOC member, until 1968, after which he spent the last two years of his life as an honorary member. In 1960, Egypt sent Touny to Lausanne as a second Egyptian IOC member, a position that he held into the 1990s.

[68] Taher Correspondence 1934-1970
[69] Stanton 2120
[70] Egyptian Olympic Committee Correspondence with the Egyptian Olympic Committee: 1946-1960
[71] ibid

Nothing, however, impacted Egypt's relationship with Europe during this period more than the Suez Crisis. On July 26, 1956, as a response to the World Bank denying Egypt a loan to construct a damn in Aswan, Nasser nationalized the Suez Canal. This led Israel, backed by Britain and France, to invade Egypt in a war that lasted from October through November 1956, with foreign troops not withdrawn fully until the end of December.[72] From a political standpoint, this was seen a decisive moment in Nasser's shift from a pro-European stance to a Pan Arab and pro-Soviet one.

The reverberations of these events were felt in the world of sport as well. The 1956 Summer Olympics were held in Melbourne and, being in the southern hemisphere, it was decided that the Games would be held through the end of November and beginning of December. Due to national quarantine restrictions, however, the equestrian events had to be held at an earlier date in Stockholm. As such, while Egypt sent equestrians to the Games and competed, by November it was mired in the Suez Crisis. As early as August, Nasser had already declared his intention to boycott the Games, as he considered them part and parcel of the British enterprise that was in conflict with his nationalization of the Canal. President Avery Brundage wrote to the EOC, arguing that "[t]he fundamental basis of the Olympic movement is that it is non-political and non-commercial, and it would only be an injustice to the Egyptian amateur athletes who have trained faithfully for four years".[73]

Brundage's efforts were to no avail. On November 7, the EOC sent a telegraph to the IOC requesting that the nations who had "committed a cowardly assault" against Egypt in violation of Olympic ideals be banned from the Games.[74] The IOC, predictably, refused, as it

[72] Vatikiotis 389
[73] Egyptian Olympic Committee Correspondence with the Egyptian Olympic Committee: 1946-1960
[74] ibid

was of a "purely political inspiration."[75] Thus, for the second time, Egypt boycotted the Olympic Games, and were joined by Lebanon, Iraq, and Cambodia in solidarity. Ultimately, no punitive action was taken by the IOC, because Egypt had officially withdrawn "for lack of funds".[76] As Sfeir argues, "[f]rom that time nationalism became a traditional factor in Egypt for EOC policymaking".[77]

Indeed, the EOC was ideologically transformed after the 1956 boycott, which mirrored the physical and cultural development of the state itself. In February 1958, Egypt joined a union with Syria to form what became known as the United Arab Republic and the new NOC received provisional recognition at the IOC's 57th session in August 1960.[78] In both sport and politics, however, it was essentially an Egyptian enterprise. As noted earlier, the UAR took home two medals at the 1960 Rome Olympics, twice as many as Egypt had captured in 1952, but there do not appear to have been any Syrians on the final roster. Frustration with their lack of involvement in the governing of the UAR led Syrian politicians to secede from the union in 1961.

Even without Syria, the UAR retained its name through two more editions of the Olympics until 1971, after which it reverted to being called Egypt. Between 1960 and 2004, however, the nation earned only one additional podium finish: second in open class judo at the 1984 Los Angeles Games. Syria, in fact, had better results during this period: Joseph Atiyeh took silver in men's heavyweight freestyle wrestling in 1984, while Ghāda Shu'ā' won gold in the women's heptathlon in 1996. The Olympics were not the only realm in which Egypt's soft power

[75] ibid
[76] ibid
[77] Sfeir 101
[78] Minutes of the 57th Session of the International Olympic Committee in Rome – Hotel Excelsior – August 22nd to August 24th 1960

waned. As Goldblatt notes, "[a]s the regime's domestic popularity peaked, Egypt hosted and won the 1959 African Cup of Nations as the UAR […] But Egypt's advantage swiftly eroded as other nations caught up, and its own economy and polity began to stagnate."[79]

Trial and error, therefore, defined the narrative of Egypt between 1952 and 1960, with the nation's greatest success being its ephemeral influence in the sporting realm over African and the Arab world. As colonialism disintegrated, however, other countries caught up quickly, acknowledging the impact the sport could have in furthering soft power. The relationship between Egypt and Sudan, for example, remained mostly the same after the Revolution as it had before. Sudanese teams, often with a mix of local and expatriate players, in various sports would visit Egypt and were met by the press with neither awe nor derision. With the presence of Gordon College and clubs subsequently founded by its graduates, football was naturally the most popular sport, although table tennis, among others, was popular as well.

Occasionally, a Sudanese athlete would receive praise in the Egyptian press. In May 1952, for example, there was talk of a Sudanese swimmer, then not-yet 20, who showed promise enough to be trained for the Egyptian team for crossing the English Channel.[80] In fact, a small furor was raised when Muḥammad 'Abd Allāh, who played football in Cairo but was born in Sudan, was selected as a reserve for the national football delegation to the Helsinki Games. The question of whether he could (or should) represent Egypt at the Games was academic, as he ultimately did not appear in either of the team's matches, but it demonstrates that the Sudanese had the potential to be included in Egyptian sport. Moreover, Jamīl Al-Zubayr, the son of slave

[79] Goldblatt 495
[80] "Sabbāḥ Jadīd Min Al-janūb" (New Swimmer from the South) *Al-ahrām*, May 27, 1952, 6

trader and Sudanese governor Zubayr Pasha, represented Egypt in the football tournament at the 1928 Amsterdam Olympics without raising any attention.

Overall, however, the opinion of Sudanese sporting prowess outside of these exceptional cases was reflected in a hopeful, but ultimately unimpressed December 1955 article in *Al-mal'ab*. Sudan, the author claimed, was taking many steps towards a sporting renaissance and was learning from Egypt, but the lessons had not yet stuck and thus the nation was still in the mode of understanding to learn from its failures.[81] By this time, however, an agreement had already been signed in 1953 to allow for a three-year transition period towards Sudanese independence, which was realized in 1956.[82] One year later, it hosted the first Africa Cup of Nations and although it came last among the three entrants (the others being the victor Egypt and runner-up Ethiopia), it nonetheless demonstrated its capacity to host a regional tournament. This was also the year that the Confederation of African Football (CAF) was founded in Khartoum.[83] In 1962, it had a surprising second-place finish in the FIBA Africa Championship, with its only loss coming at the hands of the UAR. Sudan's sporting history is its own story, but it was clearly not as underdeveloped as the Egyptians, and especially the British, led their people to believe.

Egyptian women had a rocky relationship with sport at first under the new regime. Officially, women were encouraged more than ever before to participate in sport. In this, Egypt was following the Soviet model,[84] which emphasized the importance of women's equality in society from an ideological standpoint. While social equality rarely played out in practice in the Soviet Union, sport was a rare realm where the encouragement of women's participation had a

[81] "An-nashāṭ Ar-riyāḍy Fī As-sūdān" (Sporting Activity in Sudan), *Al-mal'ab*, December 9, 1955, 9
[82] Vatikiotis 386
[83] Njoroai Simiyu 975
[84] Sfeir 191

pragmatic application. With only limited attention paid to women's sport in most western countries, dedicated training regimes for Soviet women gave them an edge over their competitors in international tournaments.[85] Thus, in Egypt after the Revolution, "it became more acceptable for girls in large cities to join sports clubs and engage in different sporting activities. One aspect of this greater participation was that they took part alongside boys in the annual sport exhibitions for the first time. In addition a group of Physical Education Institute students started representing Egypt in [*sic*] a number of international occasions."[86] Alexandria also opened an physical education institute for women in 1955, and extended the three year program to four years in 1958.[87]

This post-revolution movement was built, as noted in the previous chapter, on a small, but firm, foundation of women's sport from the days of the monarchy, one that had been expanded in the immediate pre-revolution period. Less than two months prior to the Free Officers seizing power, for example, Alexandria had hosted its annual national women's basketball tournament.[88] Yet, as in earlier days, these occurrences were the exception rather than the rule, and while they were more emphasized after the Revolution and the pace accelerated, there were no immediate, substantial transformations in the sporting lives of women. In December 1955, for example, *Al-mal'ab* noted the representation of four Egyptian women at an international sport shooting tournament for the first time: Mā'idah 'Abdulmalik, Nabīlah Aḥmad Al-barrād, Najāḥ At-tahāmá, and Nawāl Ḥāfiẓ.[89] On the other hand, beginning in 1954, *Al-āl'āb*

[85] Collins 106
[86] Badr 49
[87] ibid
[88] "Butūlat Miṣr Lilanisāt Fī Kurat As-salah" (Egyptian Women's Basketball Championship) *Al-ahrām*, June 1, 1952, 10
[89] *Al-mal'ab*, December 16, 1955, 9

Ar-riyāḍīyah attempted to cover women more often in their magazine, but ended up focusing on tips for physical beauty rather than actual athletic activity.

A turning point for women politically came in December 1957, when Cairo hosted an Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Conference as part of Egypt's growing role in the Non-Aligned movement. At this event, Aisha Abdul-Rahman emphasized the role that women have played in national liberation movements and how that role must be acknowledged.[90] An Afro-Asian Women's Conference was held in 1961, with one author concluding that their demands were address in much of the same way as the "state feminism" in the Soviet Union, wherein improvements in the everyday lives of women were promulgated more in theory than in practice.[91] One cannot, however, assume that Egyptian women experienced the same level of support that the Soviet women did. While the Soviet team that debuted at the 1952 Helsinki Olympics had 40 women, or 15% of its total delegation, it took until 1984 for Egypt to send any women to the Games. Thus, as with most other developments during the first few post-revolution years, change was uneven and eclectic for women.

Christians under the Nasser regime had a similar experience to women, but in the opposite direction. While their political and social position certainly decreased after the Revolution, Nasser was ultimately a secular leader and saw the Muslim Brotherhood as a bigger threat than any Coptic sect. Thus, while the rhetoric may have been inflammatory at times, ultimately the changes were more ideological than pragmatic.[92] Christians seemed to fare similarly in sport. At the Helsinki Olympics, for example, a nationally proportionate number of Christians are identifiable in the delegation, particularly in basketball. As Di-Capua notes,

[90] Prashad 52-54
[91] ibid 60
[92] Pennington 163-167

Naguib and other "national leaders stressed the bond between Islam and sports", even going so far as to consider the daily prayer a form of exercise, but there is no evidence that, at least in the early years, there was any active discrimination against other religions in sport. This would not, of course, last, and by 1980, as demonstrated by Leila Sfeir, "[p]olitical and religious factors [were] latent and become manifest in controversial policies."[93]

By this time, however, the rhetoric had shifted to a more inclusive one. As Sfeir continues, "Islamic religion is silent towards modern sport and the Olympics. Officials in the EOC consider religious influences insignificant. In a normal period, 'we do not feel the religious influence,' claims the EOC Secretary General; 'We feel it only in a period of crisis such as in the case of the invasion of Afghanistan by Russian troops.'".[94] The exact narrative of non-Muslims in Egyptian sport after 1956 is beyond the scope of this chapter, and between 1952 and 1956 there appears to be little change outside of rhetoric. What is important to note, therefore, is that even as changes were occurring, developments relied on the strong foundation established during the colonial period.

The Egyptian Sportsman

This leads to the question of what sport actually meant to those who engaged it between 1952 and 1956. From its beginnings as a foreign import, sport in Egypt developed gradually from a series of narratives that mimicked colonial discourse into a model that resembled its origins only superficially. By 1952, there was a clear understanding, at least among those who engaged sport through written publications, of what it meant to be an Egyptian sportsman. Al-

[93] Sfeir 6
[94] ibid 105

Sayyid Faraj's biography of Khadr El-Touni, published in 1956, concludes with a description of "the sporting man" embodied by the Olympic champion:

1. He is one who plays the game for its own sake
2. And he plays for his team and not for himself
3. He is moderate in his victory and his disappointment, humble in victory, welcoming in the breast of the time of his disappointment
4. Accepting judgements with a sporting spirit
5. He will be gallant towards his defeated opponent
6. And he should not be selfish, but be ready to give aid to others
7. And to welcome a good game from both parties
8. And to not interfere with the affairs of the referees, whatever their rulings may be[95]

In another work, Faraj expanded open this ideal by referring to the qualities that made footballer Mokhtar El-Tetsh great: "amateurism, fitness, and morals".[96]

Finally, in 1959, the Minister of Social Affairs, Muḥammad Tawfīq ʻAbdulfattāḥ, brought an idea that had been prominent in sporting journals into the ideology of government. He argued:

> The strong nations consist of powerful individuals: and if we look for the secret in the strength of a nation […] we would not find something confined to the "physical phenomenon" alone, but we would find another "truth" that is deeper than this phenomenon, […] which is what supports the physical manifestation of psychological and spiritual strength that seems to the pensive searcher more wonderful, deeper, and firmer […] and what causes us, in this decisive period in our history of struggle in which our nation and our nationalism and our rising history and our new civilization was built on fixed foundations and firm pillars, to make "sport" at the forefront of these foundations and pillars so that we will raise upon them the building of our shining Arab nationalism in front of the entire world[97]

[95] Faraj "At-tūny" 76
[96] Faraj "Rawwād" 86
[97] Faraj "Abṭāl" 5-8

‘Abdulfattāḥ therefore acknowledged that the ideal of the Egyptian sportsman as represented in sporting discourse, an individual who is not only physically strong, but also psychologically and morally powerful, can also serve as a model for the entire nation.

One can observe, then, that the transformative potential of sport came to be realized by the government under the Nasser regime. The “Egyptian sportsman” was a model upon which the government could build a nationalist, and then Pan Arab, rhetoric that could represent what it meant to be “Egyptian” overall. It held the advantage of being a secular philosophy that could include the nation’s Coptic population, as well as one that was not bounded by the geography of the past, meaning that anyone had the potential to be part of the project so long as they lived within the boundaries of the state. Moreover, although its original inspiration was foreign, it could lay a convincing claim to be an authentically indigenous product. It is not surprising, therefore, that sporting programs were developed to utilize sport as a vehicle to spread these ideals throughout Egypt in the post-revolutionary era. Sport did not make modern Egypt, but it did help transform it by acting as both a vessel for elite ideas to reach a wider audience and a realm in which those notions could be negotiated to help define what was Egyptian.

Conclusion

"you are wasting your time"

Such was the response I received, in English, from one of the many individuals I contacted during my online attempts to uncover more information on Egypt's international athletes from the period of the British occupation. This particular person, who had been childhood friends with two-time Olympic basketball players ʻAbdulraḥman Ḥāfiẓ ʾIsmāʻīl and Fu'ād ʻAbdulmajīd Alkhayr, saw no value in my research into Egypt's sporting past. Instead, he suggested that I should be looking into more recent, developments in kinesiology. Moreover, he did not really know what had happened to his friends after their basketball careers; it was a "long time ago".[1]

This particular response was unusual only in its bluntness. Most of the individuals who I spoke with had little knowledge of Egyptian sport during the colonial period and even less interest. My attempts to track down copies of old sporting journals were rarely fruitful. One bookseller told me that such publications appear at estate sales frequently, but no vendors ever take them, because they have no resale value. Presumably, therefore, these decades-old magazines end up in the trash. Even at the National Library and Archives, few of these works were listed in the catalog, and even fewer were actually available to read, as many could not be located when I requested them. I was quite fortunate that the EOC library had a near-complete collection of *Ar-riyāḍīyah Al-badanīyah al-miṣrīyah*, in addition to copies of the NCPC's annual reports.

[1] I later learned that ʾIsmāʻīl moved to the United States and became a prominent personality at Purdue University and Alkhayr was the Egyptian men's basketball coach at the 1976 and 1984 Summer Olympics.

There is little doubt that these developments were largely a by-product of Egypt's attempts to discard the memories of its colonial occupation. The survival of the scant material from before 1936 that is available at the EOC Library, for example, seems to be entirely accidental, as the EOC implied that there was limited value in retaining such documentation. The EOC's museum contains more material from this era, but it exists in fragments highlighting Egypt's most glorious moments, which are disconnected from the narratives that produced them. Photographs of Egypt's early Olympic medalists, documents from the first years of the EOC, and clippings pertaining to the nation's contributions to emerging global sport are available for viewing, but they are contextualized as a small part of a powerful Egyptian sporting legacy that stretches back to the time of the pharaohs. Far greater emphasis is placed on either much more recent accomplishments, or those of the Ancient Egyptians.

When I would converse with an Uber or a taxi driver about my research, nearly all of them could recite the same narrative as the EOC museum: that depictions of sport on the walls of tombs and pyramids demonstrate that Ancient Egypt was the progenitor of modern sport. This argument was advanced in writing at least as early as 1947 by Muḥammad ʻAlawī. Europeans borrowed these ideas from the Egyptians and then brought them back to their occupied lands under the guise of "modern sport". It is no surprise, therefore, that Egyptians were so eager to adopt the physical culture introduced by the British; in their eyes, it had been part of their heritage all along. There was and remains no need to recall the specifics of what occurred under the occupation as, to most Egyptians, the games that they cherished most had been a part of their society for thousands of years.

On August 9, 1973, *Al-ahrām* reported that the Egyptian Football Association had approved a monthly pension for former international Ḥassan Al-Fār, who had represented his

country at the 1934 World Cup, as well as at the 1936 Berlin Olympics.[2] The newspaper followed up this report the next day, with author ʻAbbās Labīb sharing a letter he had received from Al-Fār two weeks earlier. In it, Al-Fār revealed that he had been struck by a second heart attack, was ailing in a hospital in Alexandria, and was having financial difficulties. He pleaded with the journalist to raise his situation with the Egyptian Football Association. Recognizing the player's contribution to national sport, Labīb sprang into action immediately, but was rebuffed by the Association and told to wait until the next meeting.[3]

Finally, on August 8, the council announced that it was going to fund a monthly pension for Al-Fār, leading Labīb to contact Hassan's brother Sharīf to share the good news. Sharīf was also an international footballer for Egypt, having represented his country at the 1952 Helsinki Olympics. Labīb soon received the following reply from Sharīf: "I am sorry… I will not be able to inform [Hassan], for he moved into the mercy of God on the same evening of the meeting."[4] Labīb's final paragraph in the report decried the shameful negligence of the Football Association for having ignored its former star until it was too late.

With the developments in Egyptian sport under the occupation having been ignored deliberately by the British and abandoned willfully by the Egyptians, it is not surprising that much of what has been covered in the preceding chapters has been forgotten by contemporary society. There is no doubt that many lesser-known narratives from this era are waiting to be uncovered in the publications that no longer exist in the National Library and Archives, but surely must be gathering dust in some collector's bookshelf. As the missing information on

[2] "Ḥassan Al-Fār Maʾāsh Shahry" (Hassan Al-Far Monthly Pension), *Al-ahrām*, August 9, 1973, 5
[3] Labīb, ʻAbbās. "Ḥālāt Karwiyah – Ḥassan Al-Fār… Lam Tudrikuh Al-āʾānah" (Catastrophic Incidents – Hassan Al-Far… Did Not Realize His Subsidy), *Al-ahrām*, August 10, 1973, 8
[4] ibid

Egypt's Olympic medalists suggests, there is much research left to be done and many stories that remain untold. The microhistories at the beginning of each chapter attempt to put a human face on the broad narratives engaged by this thesis, but they were only the most illuminating of those lives that could have been chosen. As the tale of Aḥmad Ghonaim shows, there are many sportspeople whose indelible contribution to Egyptian sport – and Egyptian society as a whole – have yet to be shared.

The objective of this study, therefore, was to demonstrate the potential of sport as a transformative element and suggest new paths for future study. In the conclusion of his reflection *The Philosophy of Revolution*, Nasser outlined three "circles" at which he believed Egypt found itself at the center of. The first was the Arab to which, at least in the realm of sport, Egypt gravitated towards quite rapidly with the Pan Arab Games. The second was the African,[5] and thus Egypt's participation in the first African Games represents an important landmark as well. Held in Brazzaville, Congo in 1965, 36 years following the cancelation of the Alexandria Games, they followed a tradition of minor regional African Games that had been held in the 1950s and early 1960s and attracted the usual derision from colonial and postcolonial powers. Although the UAR, as Egypt was then known, did not host the inaugural African Games, it did win the most medals, but more importantly its participation did much to dispel its former chauvinism against non-Arab Africans. These Games, and Egypt's participation in them, were another sporting manifestation of Egypt's political gravitation away from the west.

Nasser's final circle was the Islamic one,[6] and here too did Egypt engage this position in the realm of sport. There are lengthy files on the British Foreign Office's monitoring of Games

[5] Nasser 69
[6] Ibid 70

of the New Emerging Forces (GANEFO) during the 1960s. Established by Indonesia, which contains the world's largest Muslim population, this tournament was intended to bring the link between politics and sport out of the shadows and make it plain for all to see. Its objective was to establish a major international sporting event outside of the paradigms of capitalism and communism, one that would be available to all members of the global Non-Aligned Movement. Although only one edition was held, with the second Cairene tournament ending up cancelled, it serves as a visible reminder of a legacy of revolutionary sport that continues to this day. Even more so than the Pan Arab Games (which Indonesia had been invited to) or the boycott of the 1956 Melbourne Olympics, Egypt's participation in GANEFO signaled a decisive shift away from its ideological desire to be part of Europe, which had reached its peak with Alexandria's hosting of the 1951 Mediterranean Games.

In a June 1961 preparatory meeting in Cairo for the movement's first summit, Egypt played an important role in defining what it meant to be "Non-Aligned", a term coined at that gathering. There, it was decided that "Non-Alignment", at its core, meant agreement as a group to support movements of national liberation and independence.[7] The question of whether "Non-Alignment" meant equidistance from the western and eastern blocs, or simply anti-imperialism, was left open. The second summit was held in Cairo in October 1964 and "marked the beginning of a shift of the Movement's centre from Asia to Africa", reflective of Africa and the Arab's growing importance in international anti-imperialist affairs.[8] That the second GANEFO tournament was to be held in Cairo is of little surprise and, much as it had been during the era of colonization, international sport was perceived by Egypt to be a realm in which it could exercise

[7] Singham and Hune 71-73
[8] ibid 89

soft power and demonstrate its role as a leading nation. Between 1953 and 1965, it came out on top of the medal table at the Pan Arab Games for the first four editions, except for the second, which it boycotted for political reasons. Through sport, it aimed to demonstrate African leadership as well, and indeed it had the highest medal count for the first five editions of the tournament (1965 through 1991), save for 1978, when it withdrew due to violent incidents on the football field. Perhaps not surprisingly, the Cairo conference decided that the history of colonialism and imperialism from the west was more dangerous than the Soviets, and thus participants gravitated away from equidistance from the powers as a philosophy and towards socialism.[9]

It is important to acknowledge that these developments did not materialize out of the ether, but were part of a long history of non-Europeans attempting to redefine their relationship to hegemonic sport and transform a tool of the colonizer into an authentic cultural force for mobilization. What Egypt has lost, therefore, by ignoring the legacy of sport during the British occupation is not a supposed history of an invasive foreign ideology that forced itself upon a local population. While some of "modern" sport's more oppressive and disparaging characteristics cannot be denied, the story of Egyptian physical culture during this era can easily be told as one that was achieved by the nation through their own efforts, with limited influence by the colonizers, and with the British example serving as little more than a model to be reworked. Almost the entirety of the history and importance of Egyptian sport during this period can be related through an indigenous lens and voice. There is no pressing reason to have it buried, ignored, or forgotten.

[9] ibid 90-91

This notion is not lost in some circles of Egyptian sport. When discussing the title of my work with Sherif El-Erian, Secretary General of the Egyptian Olympic Committee, he disagreed with my choice. According to him, the legacy of sport during the colonial era had not been forgotten, but was instead seen by the EOC as an essential foundation for what they were trying to achieve today in enhancing Egypt's reputation on the international scene. Certainly to the families of Olympians such as Aḥmad Ghonaim, Egypt's sporting past is a crucial locus for understanding the identity of the nation today.

As another example, and given the story related above about her uncle Ḥassan, it is not surprising that the daughter of Sharīf Al-Fār established a Facebook page honoring her father's athletic achievements and was willing to share many personal documents and memories for my research. Ḥassan Al-Fār was not the only Olympic footballer whose cause was championed by 'Abbās Labīb in the 1970s either. On March 25, 1975, Labīb took up the cause of 'Aly Al-Ḥassany, who had represented Egypt at the 1920, 1924, and 1928 Olympic tournaments, but had been made a quadriplegic following an accident in 1958. Now in need of more money for his increasing care needs, Labīb appealed first not to Ḥassany's football career, but to his role in protecting women's protest activities during the 1919 Revolution. In life and in sport, he was a model for youth, and the state should support his care to thank him for his contributions to Egypt.[10] Labīb's was another voice in support of preserving the historical memory of Egypt's sporting past.

Modern sport has been a part of the story of Egyptian nationalism almost since it was introduced with the British occupation in 1882. Observing the European model, Egyptians both

[10] Labīb, 'Abbās. "'imlāq Fī Al-miḥnah" (A Giant in Distress), *Al-ahrām*, March 25, 1975, 6

resident and indigenous engaged the discourse surrounding modern sport and enacted nationally adapted performances of the same. Some mimicked the model almost perfectly, others did not. In the latter case, this was both intentional and unintentional but, either way, it led to the creation of a diverse and disconnected set of narratives on sport and its relationship to the Egyptian nation. Britain's initial disinterest in establishing institutions for sport, fueled by its assumption that the indigenous population was unsuited to such endeavors, facilitated this process by allowing others to take the reins in defining what sport might mean for nationhood.

Inspired by the unity of the 1919 Revolution and bolstered by new nationalist rhetoric, Egyptians began to coalesce these narratives into a single story on the meaning of Egyptian sport. As early as 1920, when the nation sent an entirely indigenous delegation to that year's Olympics, it appeared that Egypt was gaining increased control over the discourse of sports within the country. By 1936, the Western-educated, middle class *'afandiya* were publishing a wide array of sport-specialized publications and had established a national committee for the internal development of physical culture. By the Berlin Games, they had succeeded in reducing the number of narratives to two major ones: success in sport as representative of Egypt's cultural and civilizational value, and sport as a tool for health and enhancement of everyday life. Both strains agreed that sport strengthened the Egyptian man (and, occasionally, woman) and, by extension, the nation as well.

Yet just as with the political situation under independence, which had been declared unilaterally by Britain, true indigenous control was a façade during this era. For the most part, until the mid-1930s, foreigners were in control of the upper echelons of sport administration and, as seen in the example of 1929 African Games, could put a stop to any developments deemed harmful to their own interests. Furthermore, the discourse propagated around sport reflected the

occupiers' hegemonic perception of control over the body and ran parallel to colonial control. Calls to "strengthen" the Egyptian nation were intended to enhance the prowess of the country abroad, not to rally the population against the occupation. As they had in their own country, therefore, the British engaged in a process of "hegemonic restructuring" that attempted to portray the appearance of opening up sport to a broader segment of society, while masking its retention of administrative control.

The opening created by this process, however, provided the Egyptians with leeway to exercise genuine control over the discourse surrounding sport. In just over three years following a successful and inspirational performance of Egyptian athletes at the 1936 Berlin Olympics, Britain entered World War II and dragged its colonial territories into the fray. The 1936 Anglo-Egyptian Treaty was exposed plainly for what it was – a sham – and the *'afandiya* began to realize that collaboration with the British would never afford them the true social mobility and political independence that they sought. As the conflict raged on, therefore, they began to consider sport as a medium that, perceived as it was as seemingly apolitical, could be used to test the waters of various nationalist ideologies and rally the broader population in support. Busy with the war, the British had no time to close the opening created when they initiated the process of hegemonic restructuring, or to work around the illusion of sport's supposed apolitical nature. Relatively unaffected by the fighting after mid-1942, the *'afandiya* had plenty of opportunity and time to experiment with the narratives surrounding sport. Nationalism was effectively silenced in all other forums during the conflict but it thrived in sports reporting.

The *'afandiya* never had the capacity to propose anything truly radical, but the notion that sport allowed for the mass dissemination of elite ideologies would be realized fully under Gamal Abdul Nasser. When the Free Officers took control of Egypt's government in July of 1952, they

found a ready and willing channel to disseminate nationalist ideas and engage the people in the revolutionary project. Sport now availed itself of more resources and attention from the government than ever before, but its narrative shifted ideologically. Prior to the uprising, Egypt prided itself on its ability to hold its own in the sporting realm against Europe, culminating in the hosting of the 1951 Mediterranean Games in Alexandria, which seemed to cement the country as one among a club of European nations. Only two years later, however, it had committed to hosting the first Pan Arab Games, in 1956 it boycotted the Olympics as a response to imperialism, and by 1963 it positioned itself as a leader of the Non-Aligned movement by competing at GANEFO.

Had the 1952 Revolution occurred at a different time, or had World War II not interrupted the restructuring process, the British might have maintained a foothold within Egyptian infrastructure or, more likely, Egyptian sports would have crumbled, setting sport's progress back by decades and preventing it from becoming the influential societal force that it remains today. Modern sport in Egyptian history, therefore, did not merely reflect political and cultural developments, it drove them. After an early period of adjustment and mimicry, it blossomed and eventually departed from the hegemonic discourse of the day of its own initiative. Later on, it distanced itself even further from its origins and helped nationalist narratives stay alive during a period of censorship, ultimately providing a vehicle that the regime could use to drive the nation forwards after the Revolution.

This work has not enumerated every Egyptian narrative on sport. As noted in the introduction, there were avenues left unexamined and major contributors to the movement, such as women and Christians, are topics that have only begun to be explored. What it has done is demonstrate that the study of sport, and popular culture as a whole, can provide a meaningful

lens through which social and political developments can be further understood. Nor does it intend to imply that sport is the *sole* venue through which transformative ideologies were channeled. Studies have demonstrated that under Nasser's leadership many forms of popular culture, from films to literature, contributed to the nation's changing sociocultural, political, and economic landscape.

The 2016 Rio de Janeiro Olympics came and went during the course of this research. For Egypt, perhaps the most notable result came when Sara Samir, an 18-year-old from the Ismāʿīliya Governorate, became the first woman to receive an Olympic medal for Egypt, bronze in weightlifting's 69 kg class.[11] Eight days later, Hedaya Malak followed suit, taking bronze in taekwondo's featherweight division. As only one man, Mohamed Ihab, reached the podium, with a bronze in middleweight weightlifting, it was the women who contributed most significantly to Egypt's national rank at the Games. With the massive media attention given to sport today, and the renewed emphasis by the EOC on developing the country's international reputation, one can feel confident that theirs will not be a forgotten legacy.

[11] Following the disqualification of several medalists, ʻAbīr ʻAbdulraḥman was retroactively awarded bronze in the light-heavyweight division and silver in the heavyweight category of the 2008 and 2012 weightlifting tournaments respectively, but she did not receive these medals until after Samir had stood on the podium.

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