Peering Through the Lens of Dinshwai: British Imperialism in Egypt 1882-1914

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“PEERING THROUGH THE LENS OF DINSHWAI:
BRITISH IMPERIALISM IN EGYPT 1882-1914”

By

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A Dissertation submitted to the
Department of History
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

Degree Awarded:
Summer Semester, 2010

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ABSTRACT

As the largest empire in history, the British Empire has established relations with countries and peoples across the globe. Imperialism has formed the basis of many of these connections and shaped the ways in which areas under British influence developed. The Dinshwai incident serves as one representative example of British imperial relationships.

Occurring in British-occupied Egypt in 1906, the Dinshwai incident resulted when Egyptian villagers attacked British soldiers on a pigeon hunting expedition. British officials in Egypt reacted severely to the Dinshwai incident by invoking an 1895 khedivial decree to hold a special tribunal to try the Dinshwai offenders. This tribunal allowed Britain to make examples of the Egyptian peasants in order to demonstrate the strength of the British presence in Egypt. The harshness of the punishments inflicted, which included executions, imprisonment, and flogging, brought British policy in Egypt to the attention of British public opinion and created a backlash of anti-British feeling in Egypt, stoking the flames of nascent Egyptian nationalism.
INTRODUCTION

Occurring in British-occupied Egypt in 1906, the Dinshwai incident resulted when Egyptian villagers attacked British soldiers on a pigeon hunting expedition. British officials in Egypt reacted severely to the Dinshwai incident by invoking an 1895 khedivial decree to hold a special tribunal to try the Dinshwai offenders. This tribunal allowed Britain to make examples of the Egyptian peasants in order to demonstrate the strength of the British presence in Egypt. The harshness of the punishments inflicted caused outrage in a small group of anti-imperialists in Britain and created a backlash of anti-British feeling in Egypt, stoking the flames of nascent Egyptian nationalism.

This study will analyze Egypt’s importance within British imperial policy and will discuss how decisions regarding Egypt were made. It will analyze the Dinshwai incident as one example of British imperialism and contrast the different ways in which it was perceived in British and Egyptian culture. Finally, it will assess the impact that the Dinshwai incident had on Anglo-Egyptian relations and Egyptian nationalism.

One way to assess Egypt’s importance to the British Empire is to view the subject from a macroeconomic perspective. Toward the end of the nineteenth century, Britain began to lose its standing as the preeminent industrial power relative to other countries. Once nations like Germany and the United States began to industrialize, they gained dominance in some fields of industry and technology. The growth of Britain’s manufacturing sector slowed down while its service sector, which included foreign investments and international banking, grew. Britain’s share of world trade fell from 25 percent in 1870 to 14 percent in 1913.

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1 Imperialism may be defined as “the sustained effort to assimilate a country or region to the political, economic or cultural system of another power.” John Darwin, “Imperialism and the Victorians: The Dynamics of Territorial Expansion,” The English Historical Review 112, no. 447 (June 1997): 614.
As it faced greater competition in the world market, Britain also confronted new threats to its strategic policies. By the 1880s, Britain had invested almost one-fifth of its overseas investment in India and considered it vital to the continued health of the British economy.\(^5\) India served as a market for 19 percent of British exports, facilitated Britain’s trade with Asia, and provided an army that could be used to further British imperial policies abroad.\(^6\) British policymakers had determined that control of India and Britain’s dominance in the East were essential components of British strength. In order to maintain this dominance, they needed access to the shortest route to India, the Suez Canal.\(^7\)

Protecting this route guided British imperial policy. If Egypt fell into hostile hands, Britain’s economy would greatly suffer, allowing British rivals to gain a key advantage in the international competition for power and influence. British policymakers thus had to decide how to ensure that Egypt remained open to British shipping. They preferred to use economic and political influence over Egypt’s rulers to safeguard the canal.\(^8\)

Britain’s consistent strategy to protect its routes to the East resulted in an evolving policy during the nineteenth century that emerged in response to changing political circumstances. This evolving policy went from wielding influence over Egypt to military occupation. From 1838, Britain rejected the possibility of occupying Egypt, trusting its navy to protect the Suez route in case of war with France. It also cooperated with France to uphold the Ottoman Empire, thus providing a barrier to Russian expansion.\(^9\) As Ronald Robinson and John Gallagher explain, the British “preferred to watch over Egypt from Constantinople rather than from Cairo; and they subjected their local rivalry with France in north Africa to the broader community of interest in the rest of the Ottoman empire.”\(^10\) In 1878, Britain guaranteed the Ottoman Empire’s Asian territory against Russia and acquired Cyprus in order to safeguard Ottoman security.\(^11\) By 1881, however, British influence at Constantinople had diminished as a result of the Liberal government’s championing of the interests of Christians in Ottoman territory and its rejection of

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\(^6\) Ibid., 11-12.

\(^7\) Ibid., 464.

\(^8\) Ibid., 16.

\(^9\) Ibid., 77.

\(^10\) Ibid. Traditionally, Britain was concerned with keeping the Straits out of Russian control. The key way to do this, Britain believed, was through close relations with the Ottoman Empire to stop a Russian advance in Asia Minor rather than Africa.

the Conservative plan to defend the Ottoman Empire from Cyprus and Armenia.\(^\text{12}\) With reduced influence over the Ottoman Empire, Britain was anxious to retain an *entente* with France and attempted to address Egyptian instability in concert with France. Britain and France’s policies diverged, however, when British policymakers authorized the occupation of Egypt, which began in July 1882. As a result, France lost its parity of influence with Britain in Egypt and began a policy of obstruction to London. Hereafter, France would represent the primary danger to Britain’s policies in Africa.\(^\text{13}\)

During the 1880s and 1890s, Britain’s commitment to the strategy of protecting the Ottoman Empire from Constantinople began to weaken. In his correspondence with the Foreign Office from 1887 to 1892, Evelyn Baring, British Agent and Consul-General of Egypt, argued in favor of Britain remaining in Egypt, a policy that prevented, for the foreseeable future, Anglo-French reconciliation. In an 1888 letter to Sir William Edward Goschen, Baring summed up a new strategy by which British influence would shift from Constantinople to Cairo. He wrote, “I believe that the…centre of gravity of our real Eastern interests in Europe has, for the last twenty-five years, been shifted from Constantinople to Cairo, that we shall never be able to get any real friendship from the Turk, and that his friendship is worth little even if we succeeded in acquiring it. It is a pity that we ever came to Egypt, but we have some real solid interests here and it would be a mistake to sacrifice them in pursuit of the phantom of Turkish good will.”\(^\text{14}\) In 1889, Foreign Secretary Lord Salisbury, Robert Arthur Talbot Gascoyne-Cecil, accepted Baring’s arguments for the continued occupation of Egypt. Soon after, Salisbury also agreed to Baring’s assertions that in order to protect its position in Egypt, Britain could not allow any other

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\(^\text{12}\) Robinson and Gallagher, *Africa and the Victorians*, 93.

\(^\text{13}\) Ibid., 93-94; and Piers Brendon, *The Decline and Fall of the British Empire 1781-1997* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2008), 203. Britain’s policy in Egypt played an important role in the “Scramble for Africa,” in which European governments claimed nine-tenths of African territory in only sixteen years. Robinson and Gallagher, *Africa and the Victorians*, 17. Piers Brendon explained that the occupation of Egypt “helped to precipitate an international scramble for other African territories.” Brendon, *The Decline and Fall of the British Empire 1781-1997*, 183. Ronald Robinson and John Gallagher concluded, “From start to finish the partition of tropical Africa was driven by the persistent crisis in Egypt. When the British entered Egypt on their own, the Scramble began; and as long as they stayed in Cairo, it continued until there was no more of Africa left to divide. Since chance and miscalculation had much to do with the way that Britain went into Egypt, it was to some extent an accident that the partition took place when it did. But once it had begun, Britain’s over-riding purpose in Africa was security in Egypt, the Mediterranean and the Orient. The achievement of this security became at the same time vital and more difficult, once the occupation of Egypt had increased the tension between the Powers and had dragged Africa into their rivalry. In this way the crisis in Egypt set off the Scramble, and sustained it until the end of the century.” Robinson and Gallagher, *Africa and the Victorians*, 465-466.

European power to control the Nile valley. When Britain’s failure to prevent the Armenian massacres in 1896 displayed its loss of influence over the Ottoman Empire, the shift of emphasis from Constantinople to Cairo was completed.

Britain’s rivalry with France continued to cause conflict in Africa. In 1891 and 1892, France agreed to an entente and a military convention with Russia, thus strengthening France’s position relative to Britain. When the Ethiopians defeated the Italians at Adwa on March 1, 1896, and thus provided a way for France to approach the Nile from the east, Britain decided to reconquer the Sudan, which it did over the next two years. A. J. P. Taylor explained the significance of the reconquest of the Sudan: “The British expedition to the Sudan completed the revolution in Mediterranean politics. Previously the British had intended to oppose Russia at the Straits and therefore sought to keep France neutral.” Taylor continued, “Since the British could not pass the Straits, they decided to stay in Egypt permanently and to defend the Suez canal by the armed forces stationed there.” Piers Brendon also believed the reconquest of the Sudan was important because it “set the seal on Britain’s scramble for tropical Africa.”

The Anglo-French struggle over the Nile valley reached its climax in 1898 when the French expedition of Major Jean-Baptiste Marchand occupied Fashoda. General Horatio Herbert Kitchener, the commander-in-chief or Sirdar of the Egyptian army, had just defeated the Sudanese forces at Omdurman when he learned of Marchand’s arrival at Fashoda. He immediately took his army and proceeded to meet him. Unwilling to go to war over Egypt and the Nile, France signed an agreement with Britain on March 21, 1899, that excluded France from the Nile valley. Despite this agreement, relations between Britain and France continued to be strained over Egypt until the belligerent foreign policy of militarily powerful Germany brought the two countries together to resolve their colonial grievances with the Anglo-French Agreement, the Entente Cordiale, in April 1904.

16 Marlowe, *Cromer in Egypt*, 137.
18 Ibid., 367, 380.
19 Ibid., 367
20 Ibid.
22 Ibid.; and Taylor, *The Struggle for Mastery in Europe 1848-1918*, 380-382. With the French trying to establish a colonial empire in Africa from west to east and the British trying to link their territories in the north and south, there was bound to be conflict between the two nations’ imperial dreams, and this conflict occurred at Fashoda. If the French had succeeded in holding Fashoda, they would have destroyed British hopes for a Cape to Cairo route.
Previously, Britain and Germany had enjoyed cordial relations. In the last part of the
teneteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century, however, Britain perceived a
growing threat from Germany, which adopted Weltpolitik, or “world policy,” in 1897 and made
plans to construct a great navy.\footnote{Taylor, The Struggle for Mastery in Europe 1848-1918, 372-373.} Germany already possessed the most powerful land army on
the Continent, and now it sought dominance on the high seas. Coupled with its booming
industrial economy, Germany posed a distinct threat to Britain.

One of the primary reasons for Germany’s shift in policy was the ascension of Wilhelm II
to Kaiser. Young, brash, headstrong, and a lover of all things military, Wilhelm II abruptly
dismissed Otto von Bismarck, who had conducted a responsible foreign policy, and substituted it
with a bombastic and militarist policy intended to gain Germany a colonial empire. Paul
Kennedy relates that in that year “the men of the ‘personal rule’ of Kaiser Wilhelm II
maneuvered themselves into the key positions of state.”\footnote{Paul M. Kennedy, “German World Policy and the Alliance Negotiations with England, 1897-1900,” The Journal of Modern History 45, no. 4 (December 1973): 606.} As a result, Kennedy explains,
“Wilhelm possessed the politicians he needed to assist his ambition of playing a leading role in
world affairs, of constructing an enormous battle fleet, and of creating internal unity and a
stabilization of the political status quo. The country was directed toward the twin aims of
reaction at home and an extravagant, expansionist policy abroad.”\footnote{Ibid.} German leaders began to
promote a colonial policy, seizing the Chinese port of Kiao-Chow in November 1897 and
acquiring the Caroline Islands in 1899.\footnote{Taylor, The Struggle for Mastery in Europe 1848-1918, 373; and Kennedy, “German World Policy and the Alliance Negotiations with England, 1897-1900,” 609.}

Germany’s aggressive colonial policy began to pose a threat to British interests in such
instances as the Moroccan crises of 1905 and 1911. As a result of the Anglo-French Agreement,
Entente Cordiale, France finally recognized Britain’s position in Egypt and pledged not to call
for an end to the British occupation in exchange for Britain’s recognition of French preeminence
in Morocco.\footnote{Taylor, The Struggle for Mastery in Europe 1848-1918, 415.} The following year in the first Moroccan crisis, Germany attempted to undermine
this agreement “by showing the French that they could not rely upon British support to realize
their colonial aims.”\footnote{David E. Kaiser, “Germany and the Origins of the First World War,” The Journal of Modern History 55, no. 3 (September 1983): 452.} Germany also intended to prove that its views must be considered in all
colonial settlements. The first Moroccan crisis began when Kaiser Wilhelm II landed at Tangier
on March 31, 1905, and declared that Germany considered Morocco to be independent, even though the other great powers accepted that it lay within France’s sphere of influence.\(^{29}\) Germany then demanded that Morocco’s status be determined by an international conference.\(^{30}\) When this conference convened on January 16, 1906, at Algeciras, Germany found that France’s allies, including Britain and Russia, stood with the French and that, in contrast, it was isolated with only the support of Austria-Hungary and Morocco.\(^{31}\) On March 31, an agreement was signed which gave France control of the Moroccan police “with Spain as a junior partner.”\(^{32}\) Although the majority of the British viewed the first Moroccan crisis as simply an unfortunate incident, a few people in Britain began to perceive a German desire for continental hegemony.\(^{33}\)

The second Moroccan crisis solidified Britain’s view that Germany posed a threat to its interests. After France occupied Fez, Morocco, in May 1911, Germany assumed that France would declare Morocco a protectorate and hoped to gain colonial concessions in exchange for accepting French expansion. On July 1, a German gunboat anchored at Agadir in Morocco. Germany’s move disturbed the British, who feared that Germany would acquire Moroccan territory and thus threaten Gibraltar. In a speech given by Liberal Parliamentarian David Lloyd George on July 21, Britain warned that its interests must be considered in any partition of Morocco. Meanwhile, Britain made preparations for war. Germany, however, came to an arrangement with France. On November 4, the two countries signed an agreement that recognized France’s claim to Morocco in exchange for the cession to Germany of some territory in the French Congo. The second Moroccan crisis was significant to Britain because it solidified London’s belief that Germany was a threat and showed that Britain would risk war in order to protect her strategic interests and defend her allies.\(^{34}\)

Yet, the strength of Britain’s military might was called into question by its army’s poor performance during the Boer War (1899-1902) and its campaigns in Somalia. In the Boer War, Britain conquered the Boer republics of the Transvaal and the Orange Free State. Yet, the conduct of the war reflected badly on the quality of Britain’s military forces as well as the moral character of its policymakers. The disparity between the British and Boer forces was striking -

\(^{29}\) Taylor, *The Struggle for Mastery in Europe 1848-1918*, 428.
\(^{30}\) Ibid., 429.
\(^{31}\) Ibid., 439-440.
\(^{32}\) Ibid., 439.
\(^{33}\) Ibid., 440.
\(^{34}\) Ibid., 466-473
an imperial army of 250,000 men pitted against 45,000 Boers. Nevertheless, at the beginning of the war, the Boers made important advances, laying siege to British garrisons in Mafeking, Kimberley, and Ladysmith, and then went on the defensive. The British suffered huge losses under incompetent commanders. In the defeat at Colenso in December 1899, the British lost 143 troops with 1,002 injured while the Boers lost seven of their twenty-nine casualties. When the British began to make advances, forcing large-scale surrenders, the Boers shifted to a guerrilla campaign. In addition to the British military shortcomings in the war, Britain’s image suffered as its commanders instituted a scorched-earth policy and established fifty concentration camps for the wives and children of their enemy. The harsh conditions in these camps resulted in the death of one-sixth of the Boer population. Britain’s international image was deeply tarnished, with public opinion in France and Germany favoring the Boers.

Britain suffered a further loss of prestige as a result of reverses in Somalia. At the end of the nineteenth century, Somalia was divided between Britain, Ethiopia, and Italy. Britain acquired a protectorate over northwestern Somalia in 1884. Britain’s control over its protectorate, however, was loose and was complicated by the rise of a political-religious leader named Muhammad Abdullah Hassan, whom the British called the “Mad Mullah.” With the support of about 3000 tribesmen by April 1899, Muhammad Abdullah Hassan soon came into conflict with the British, whose poor sources of information in the interior led them to believe that he was organizing against them. As Muhammad Abdullah Hassan’s support continued to grow, trade in the British protectorate “came to a standstill.” From 1900 to 1905, Britain worked with Ethiopia against him and his supporters, but the two countries were frequently “frustrated in their goals and forced to retreat.”

After three failed expeditions against him, the British launched a fourth in 1904 that met with some success. In March 1905, Muhammad Abdullah Hassan concluded an agreement with the Italians in which he “was assigned the territory of the Nogal between the sultanates of Obbia and Mijertein” and his supporters were allowed “to enter part of the British protectorate

36 Taylor, The Struggle for Mastery in Europe 1848-1918, 388.
38 Ibid., 420.
39 Ibid.
40 Ibid., 420-421.
for pasturage in the dry season.”

Britain supported this agreement and enjoyed a tentative peace for the next three years. Nevertheless, Britain’s difficulties in its campaigns in Somalia further weakened British prestige and the image of the British army abroad.

At a time when it faced a growing military-industrial decline relative to other powers, a growing German threat, and military setbacks, Britain was confronted by the Dinshwai incident, which occurred June 13, 1906, when five members of the British army of occupation in Egypt arrived at the village of Dinshwai to go pigeon shooting. After they began to shoot, the soldiers were attacked by the Dinshwai villagers, who believed the shooting had caused a fire in the village. British officials in Egypt reacted severely to the Dinshwai incident by invoking an 1895 khedivial decree to hold a special tribunal to try the Dinshwai offenders. This tribunal allowed Britain to make examples of the Egyptian peasants who had attacked British officers in order to demonstrate the strength of the British presence in Egypt.

Given Britain’s relative imperial decline, it could be tempting to conclude Britain’s harsh reaction to the Dinshwai incident resulted from the Foreign Office’s desire to quell resistance and reaffirm British prestige internationally. Yet, this approach ignores the unique way in which Egyptian policy was determined. Instead of the Foreign Office initiating the main lines of Egyptian policy, the British Agent and Consul-General of Egypt Evelyn Baring, Lord Cromer, determined policy initiatives for Egypt.

In reference to Cromer, Ronald Robinson and John Gallagher recognize that “the Foreign Office deferred to his advice and left him a freedom of action given to no other official.”

In describing the government of Egypt, Rudyard Kipling acknowledges that the British Agency, of which Cromer was head, was the real seat of Egyptian power. He says, “Here is a country which is not a country but a longish strip of market-garden, nominally in charge of a government which is not a government but the disconnected satrapy of a half-dead empire, controlled pecksniffingly by a Power which is not a Power but an Agency.”

Cromer’s role in determining Egyptian

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41 Ibid., 422.
42 Ibid., 422-423.
43 Robinson and Gallagher, Africa and the Victorians, 276.
policy was paramount, and it increased over the course of his term as British Agent and Consul-
General.\footnote{Marlowe, \textit{Cromer in Egypt}, 227.}

Cromer set the main outlines of Egyptian policy between 1883 and 1907. He recommended the abandonment of the Sudan in 1883 and received the British government’s support. When the Egyptian government seemed unwilling to follow this policy, he appealed to his superiors in London for the authority to inform Egyptian officials that his policy must be implemented. As a result, the Granville Doctrine was issued on January 4, 1884, there was a change in the Egyptian ministry, and his recommendation was followed.\footnote{Ibid., 87-90.}

Cromer convinced the British government that the occupation of Egypt should be continued\footnote{Ibid., 138.} and defined Egypt’s role within British imperial policy. As John Marlowe explains, “It was largely as a result of Cromer’s influence that Salisbury gradually adopted the theses (a) that the consolidation of British influence in Cairo was a necessary compensation for its decline in Constantinople; and (b) that British control of the whole Nile Valley was a necessary condition of safeguarding the continuance of British influence in Cairo.”\footnote{Ibid., 300.}

Marlowe continues: “These theses were adopted by Rosebery in face of the opposition of most of the Liberal Cabinet and, later, accepted almost as articles of faith, not only by the Conservative Administrations in office between 1895 and 1906, but also by the Liberal Administration which came into office early in 1906.”\footnote{Ibid.}

During the negotiations for the Anglo-French Agreement of 1904, Cromer demanded that France’s recognition of Britain’s position in Egypt be a component of any agreement\footnote{Taylor, \textit{The Struggle for Mastery in Europe 1848-1918}, 414; and Marlowe, \textit{Cromer in Egypt}, 248.} and formulated Britain’s Egyptian policy “in its stipulations and in its concessions.”\footnote{Marlowe, \textit{Cromer in Egypt}, 250.} The British government’s dependence on Cromer’s guidance was clearly reflected over the question of the conversion of the Egyptian debt. When France resisted Britain’s suggestion to include this issue in the agreement, British Foreign Secretary Henry Charles Keith Petty-Fitzmaurice, the marquis of Lansdowne, appealed to Cromer asking his permission to adjust Britain’s goals. He said, “\textit{If you will allow us} to postpone the conversion our difficulties will certainly be diminished and the
retention of the Caisse, although with its wings clipped, will no doubt make the French easier to deal with. 52

The authority of Cromer and the British Agency was also clearly demonstrated in the handling of the Dinshwai incident. It was on Lord Cromer’s initiative that the khedivial decree of 1895 was issued, 53 and it was Lord Cromer and the British officer in command of the British army of occupation that called for the special tribunal to judge the Dinshwai case. 54 After the tribunal had been held, Charles de Mansfeld Findlay, who was acting for Lord Cromer during Cromer’s leave, reported that the British government did not have the authority to intervene to review the sentences 55 and thus led Grey to support them despite his own misgivings about them. 56 Once the sentences had been passed, Cromer refused to modify them despite Foreign Office pressure. 57

In addition to formulating Egyptian policy, Cromer greatly influenced overall British imperial policy. In this respect, however, his influence was perhaps unintended since his primary goal was “the rehabilitation, as he saw it, of Egypt.” 58 In 1896, British Prime Minister Lord Salisbury remarked, “If the world were falling to pieces round his ears, but Egypt was left intact, Lord Cromer would not ask for more.” 59 In a speech on December 15, 1908, Cromer confirmed that Egypt, rather than the British Empire, was his principal concern. He referred “to the cause of Egyptian reform, to which I have devoted the best years of my life.” 60 In reference to Cromer’s influence over the Foreign Office, John Marlowe remarked, “Largely because of that increasing and continuing authority, British Imperial policy, almost imperceptibly, became Egypt-oriented.” 61

52 Ibid., 249. The italics are mine. Despite Britain’s occupation of Egypt, it did not have complete financial control of the Egyptian budget. The Caisse de la Dette Publique still existed and ensured that making Egypt’s debt payments was the first priority of the Egyptian government. Cromer hoped that Egypt could gain greater control over its budget and thus allow the Egyptians to benefit from his financial economy.
54 Ibid., 4-6.
55 United Kingdom, FO 371/66, Findlay to Grey, No. 197, 6-28-06.
58 Marlowe, Cromer in Egypt, 302.
59 Ibid., ix.
61 Marlowe, Cromer in Egypt, 303.
Literature Review

British imperialism forms the backbone of this work, thus a wide selection of studies about imperialism provide the context for the discussion of the Dinshwai incident. The works of P. J. Cain and A. G. Hopkins as well as Piers Brendon explain the changing economic fortunes of the British Empire and how these affected British expansion. A. J. P. Taylor and Paul Kennedy present how relations between the European states affected their geostrategic policies. Ronald Robinson and John Gallagher explore the reasons for Egypt’s importance in Britain’s imperial policy.

Focusing on the economic climate, P. J. Cain and A. G. Hopkins explain that while Britain’s manufacturing sector declined, its service sector experienced tremendous growth. A high degree of integration in the international economy, however, made Britain more vulnerable in the event of international conflicts. In addition, expansion of British influence through economic penetration sometimes resulted in disturbing consequences for the partner states as in the case of Egypt.

In The Decline and Fall of the British Empire 1781-1997, Piers Brendon presents an interesting contradiction regarding the British Empire. He discusses the decline of the British industrial economy relative to other nations and reveals the military weaknesses that conflicts like the Boer War exposed. At the same time, he shows how a fear of decline and a concern to maintain strategic assets could fuel imperial expansion. For example, the imperial strategy of maintaining control of Egypt led to the expansion of the empire to secure the Nile valley.

In The Struggle for Mastery in Europe 1848-1918, A. J. P. Taylor provides a comprehensive analysis of the diplomatic history of the European states and their dominions. Of particular importance to this study was Taylor’s detailed portrayal of the changing concerns of the British Empire at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century. He shows how Britain’s fear of France’s growing influence in Africa, which led to the reconquest of the Sudan, was subsumed by the growing fear of an industrially ascendant Germany embarking on a great naval building program. He portrays the bluster and bluff of Kaiser Wilhelm II’s foreign policy as exhibited by the Moroccan crises and the threats to European peace that they represented.

Paul Kennedy supplies a thorough analysis of the German shift to Weltpolitik at the end of the nineteenth century. In the context of assessing the failure of the alliance negotiations
between Britain and Germany from 1897 to 1900, he reveals the incompatibility of Germany’s aim of building a naval program to counter Britain with its participation in alliance negotiations. He exposes the German leadership’s desire to cloak its true ambitions in order to safely traverse the vulnerable period when it had begun a naval competition with Britain but had not achieved a strength that would insure victory in a military conflict. Thus, he reveals the alliance negotiations as a deception designed to mask German policy.

In *Africa and the Victorians: The Climax of Imperialism*, Ronald Robinson and John Gallagher describe the changing importance with which Egypt was viewed in British imperial strategy. They explain that during the first half of the nineteenth century the British government hoped to avoid territorial commitments in Africa. British policymakers believed that they could facilitate trade and secure the Suez route by influence alone. Decades of foreign interference, however, had weakened Egypt’s government. In an effort to keep in step with its French ally, Britain participated in further intervention only to have France retreat just short of occupation. As a result of occupying Egypt alone, Britain’s relations with France soured, preventing British and French cooperation in the event of a threat to the Ottoman Empire. Since it could no longer uphold its original goal of power through influence and alliance at Constantinople, Britain came to value the possession of Egypt as an important substitute that would allow it to protect its main route to India. Once Cairo eclipsed Constantinople in British imperial strategy, Britain committed itself to the security of Egypt through control of the Nile valley.

The rise of Egyptian nationalism is also an important component of this study. In *Nationalism: History and Theory*, Paul Lawrence explores the various theories of nationalism, recognizing that it is an elusive concept that is difficult to quantify. He explains that some scholars believe that nationalism is a modern phenomenon while others trace its deep historical roots. He also notes that theories of nationalism are often heavily dependent on their historical context. For instance, studies of nationalism after World War II often viewed nationalism as a negative phenomenon with National Socialism as a primary example. This contrasts sharply with the scholarship before World War I that saw nationalism as essentially harmless.

In his article “Nationalism,” Ernest Gellner explores nationalism as a function of a modern industrial society. For him, such a society would be highly centralized. It would provide a common, relatively unspecified education that would allow its members to
communicate with people across jobs and obtain training to move between jobs themselves. It would have clearly defined boundaries and a shared language.

A number of sources describe Egyptian nationalism during this period. Israel Gershoni and James P. Jankowski’s *Egypt, Islam, and the Arabs: The Search for Egyptian Nationhood, 1900-1930* examines the rise of nationalism in Egypt during this time and analyzes the different forms nationalism took, such as territorial nationalism, Pan-Islam, and Pan-Arabism. As a consistent opponent of Cromer’s policies and a supporter of the Egyptian nationalist movement, Khedive Abbas II’s memoirs discuss this movement’s growth. The nationalist leader Mustafa Kamil’s writings such as *Egyptian-French Letters addressed to Mme. Juliette Adam, 1895-1908* as well as his communications with the press as presented in the *Egyptian Gazette* provide popular nationalist arguments against the British occupation. Abbas Kelidar highlights the role that the press played in the nationalist movement in his article in *Contemporary Egypt: Through Egyptian Eyes*.

Despite the lack of a comprehensive study of Dinshwai, there are ample materials available about the incident that form the intellectual foundation for this study. In *Egypt and Cromer: A Study in Anglo-Egyptian Relations*, Afaf Lutfi al-Sayyid Marsot provides a thorough account of British policy in Egypt from an Egyptian perspective. Her work covers the period in which Evelyn Baring, Lord Cromer, served as British Agent and Consul-General of Egypt from 1883 to 1907. John Marlowe also studies Cromer’s term in Egypt in *Cromer in Egypt*. Well-researched and comprehensive, Marlowe’s work nevertheless contains a subtle pro-British colonial bias. Robert L. Tignor’s *Modernization and British Colonial Rule in Egypt, 1882-1914* discusses not only British policy toward Egypt, but also the composition and functions of the various departments of the Egyptian government.

Several works presented, from a personal perspective, British policies during this period and how these policies were formulated. Lord Cromer wrote extensively about his service in Egypt. His *Modern Egypt* describes the Egyptian government in detail and reveals how British policy was made by recording the interchange of ideas and opinions between the Foreign Office and the British Agency in Egypt. Edward Grey’s *Twenty-Five Years* sheds additional light on the decision-making process in the Dinshwai case. *The Memoirs of Sir Ronald Storrs* discusses British policy in the period preceding World War I. As a supporter of Egyptian nationalism from the time of the British occupation through the pre-war years, Wilfrid Scawen Blunt offers a
critique of British rule in Egypt from an anti-imperialist perspective in My Diaries: Being a Personal Narrative of Events 1884-1914. In Atrocities of Justice under British Rule in Egypt, Blunt chronicles the irregularities in the Egyptian justice system when cases involved members of the British army of occupation of Egypt.

The ways in which the Dinshwai incident was perceived in both British and Egyptian society was revealed through a thorough exposition of the press. Six British newspapers, three of which had a liberal political outlook (Daily Chronicle, Manchester Guardian, Pall Mall Gazette) and three of which favored a conservative philosophy (Evening Standard, Globe, Times) provide an overview of the British press’ response to Dinshwai. The Egyptian Gazette generally presented Egyptian politics from the perspective of the British Agency. Since many foreigners in Egypt did not read Arabic, however, the Egyptian Gazette also devoted considerable resources to a discussion of the Egyptian press, frequently summarizing or quoting articles.

Two scholars have examined the Dinshwai incident. Mohammad Ramadan Salama uses Dinshwai as one of three examples in “Reading the Modernist Event from the Margins of History: The Denshawai Incident, the Trial of Djamila Bouhired and the Question of Egyptian Modernity.” Salama’s work assesses how Dinshwai was portrayed in both British and Egyptian sources and attempts to discover the relationship between literature and history. Ahdaf Soueif researches the incident in British and Egyptian sources in order to include it in her novel The Map of Love, which was published in 2000. In an interview on September 8, 2009, Soueif discusses the Dinshwai incident and its continuing impact on Egyptian society.

Since the Dinshwai incident was a subject of interest in Britain, there is considerable material concerning it in British governmental records. This study drew from a number of these files. After receiving questions concerning Dinshwai in Parliament, Sir Edward Grey, British Foreign Minister, agreed to present papers about the Dinshwai case. British Sessional Paper “Egypt. No. 3 (1906). Correspondence Respecting the Attack on British Officers at Denshawai” contains the correspondence regarding the Dinshwai incident and special tribunal, a copy of the decree of 1895, the judgment in the Dinshwai case, and a report on how the sentences were executed. British Sessional Paper “Egypt. No. 4 (1906). Further Paper Respecting the Attack on British Officers at Denshawai” provides the official account of the preliminary inquiry, which was presented to the special tribunal; the medical report regarding those injured, both British and
Egyptian, in the Dinshwai incident; and a summary of the proceedings of the special tribunal. Foreign Office file 881/8986 summarizes the evidence given during the trial. Foreign Office files 371/66, 371/68, 371/248, 371/448, and 371/450 contain the Foreign Office records about the incident which included correspondence between the Foreign Office and the British Agency in Egypt, questions asked in Parliament about the Dinshwai affair, and appeals from private citizens to the Foreign Office regarding Dinshwai.

The way in which the Egyptian public perceived the Dinshwai incident was another important aspect of this study. The Foreign Office Confidential Print presents articles regarding Dinshwai in the Egyptian press and reports on how it was represented in sermons and meetings in Egypt. Pierre Cachia records two popular folk ballads about Dinshwai while Saad El-Gabalawy translates Mahmud Tahir Haqqi’s novel The Maiden of Dinshway in Three Pioneering Egyptian Novels. Analyzing all of these sources was a significant step toward offering a comprehensive study of the Dinshwai incident.

**Organization of the Study**

This study is divided into four chapters. Chapter 1 discusses Egypt’s history of foreign rule and its status as a part of the Ottoman Empire. It explains the increasing European control wielded over Egypt as a result of its growing indebtedness. It chronicles the British occupation of 1882 and summarizes British policy in Egypt to 1906.

Chapter 2 provides a thorough discussion of the Dinshwai incident. It describes the Egyptian judicial system and how the special tribunal, which tried the Dinshwai case, fit within it. It compares the Dinshwai case to its judicial precedents and analyzes whether justice was served. It also reports the execution of the Dinshwai sentences.

Chapter 3 explains the British response to the Dinshwai incident. It presents the conflict with which the Foreign Office was faced of whether to support the British Agency’s actions in Egypt in the face of opposition at home. It follows the debate about the Dinshwai incident in Parliament and analyzes how the incident is depicted in the British press. It also describes private publications about the Dinshwai incident.

Chapter 4 covers the Egyptian response to the Dinshwai incident. It discusses the role that the press played in political discourse in Egypt and describes nationalist thought at this time. It reveals the impact that the Dinshwai incident had on all segments of Egyptian society and
portrays how it was depicted in the press, at sermons and meetings, and in literature. It also describes the impact that the Dinshwai incident had on Egyptian nationalism.

This study describes Britain’s disproportionate reaction to a minor altercation in a small Egyptian village. It was this reaction that made the incident so important in Egyptian eyes. It showed that the British were willing to maintain their prestige and authority at the expense of justice. By flouting the justice that they had supposedly championed, the British undermined their position in Egypt. The Egyptian *fellaheen* now saw that the British occupation was a threat to them and began to support Egyptian nationalism. The handling of the Dinshwai incident was a defining moment in the relationship of Britain and Egypt that sowed the seeds of conflict between the two.
CHAPTER 1

FOREIGN INFLUENCE, EGYPTIAN SOIL

_in the land of Egypt, its good things belong to others_
- _Popular Egyptian Saying_¹

With a stable agriculture facilitated by the yearly floods of the Nile River that provide both water and nutrients to the soil and its geographical position which gives it access to both the Mediterranean and Red Seas, Egypt historically has been a part of important trade routes and an enticing territory to rivals wishing to expand their empires. Suffering from repeated foreign invasions, Egypt was ruled by outsiders from 332 BC until 1952 AD. From 1517 to 1914, Egypt was a province of the Ottoman Empire, but Ottoman control of Egypt was not complete, leaving the governance of Egypt to various Mamluk factions until 1798. In that year, European rivalries brought Egypt within the realm of European politics when France’s Directory government sent General Napoleon Bonaparte to invade Egypt in order to threaten Great Britain’s route to India. The French succeeded in capturing Cairo and most of the Nile Delta but failed to control the entire country. In 1801, Great Britain and the Ottoman Empire assembled a military coalition to force the French from Egypt.² Its success led to the evacuation of French troops, a nominal resumption of Ottoman authority over Egypt, and the introduction of a new Egyptian dynasty founded by Muhammad Ali.³

² Afaf Lutfi al-Sayyid Marsot, _A Short History of Modern Egypt_ (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 50-51. In this context, Mamluks were members “of a military oligarchy ruling Egypt (1250-1517) and Syria (1260-1516) and retaining power in some areas up to the nineteenth century.” Arthur Goldschmidt Jr., _A Concise History of the Middle East_, 7th ed. (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2002), 442.
³ Goldschmidt, _Modern Egypt_, 19.
The Dynasty of Muhammad Ali

Muhammad Ali came to Egypt as second-in-command of an Albanian regiment that made up part of the Ottoman forces. Since a power vacuum existed following the French invasion, Muhammad Ali began to work with local Egyptian notables such as the ulama to establish his own power center. In 1805, his supporters overthrew the Ottoman governor in charge of Egypt, and Muhammad Ali was named the new Ottoman governor. He thus established a dynasty that would rule Egypt until 1952. Yet, Muhammad Ali and his successors did not wield total authority over the government of Egypt. Until 1914, Egypt remained a province of the Ottoman Empire, and throughout the nineteenth century the European powers exerted increasing influence over Egypt as well. This foreign influence culminated in the British occupation of Egypt in 1882, which gave Britain a controlling interest in Egypt.

As Muhammad Ali and his successors consolidated their authority in Egypt, their policies integrated Egypt into the European market and brought Egyptian interests into conflict with the economic and strategic policies of the European powers. Muhammad Ali embraced European mercantilist economic ideas and accordingly strove to attain a positive export to import ratio. He put all lands under state control, improved the Egyptian irrigation system, allowing Egypt to produce multiple crops per year, and continued the eighteenth century shift from subsistence to cash crop agriculture for the European market. Anxious to secure his hold on Egypt, he created an army that would eventually number more than 100,000 men and introduced factories that would provide his army with modern weaponry and utilize the raw materials that Egypt produced. He placed embargoes on foreign goods in order to benefit his new industries. Since an expanding army and a budding industry required the Egyptian population to acquire new skills, he sent Egyptians to study in Europe and introduced new educational institutions into Egypt.

Muhammad Ali also expanded Egypt’s territory along the trade routes to provide markets for Egyptian goods. From 1811 to 1818, his armies conquered the Hijaz and thus suppressed the Wahhabi movement that had wrested the holy cities of Mecca and Medina from the Ottoman Empire. In an effort to supply money and recruits for his army, his forces then moved into the Sudan and conquered that territory between 1820 and 1822. When Sudanese troops failed to

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adjust to the Egyptian climate, he followed the recommendation of his French advisors and impressed Egyptians into his army. The army’s ranks up to captain were filled with Egyptians while the higher ranks were reserved for Ottomans.\(^7\)

In the 1820s, the Ottoman Empire was fighting a losing battle against the Greeks, who sought independence. It therefore ordered Muhammad Ali to commit his army to the Greek fight. The Ottomans promised to give him control of the Morea and Syria if he succeeded in crushing the Greek rebellion. The Egyptian armies, led by Muhammad Ali’s eldest son, Ibrahim, quickly conquered Crete and Cyprus and then moved into the Morea, gaining control of that territory. This victory brought Muhammad Ali into conflict with the European powers that had sided with the Greeks in their war for independence. In the European countries, the war was seen as a battle of Muslims against Christians, and newspapers carried lurid descriptions of the “atrocities” committed by Ottoman/Egyptian forces.\(^8\)

Both Russia and Britain had a further interest in the Greek fight. Russia hoped to gain greater influence over Greece while Britain wanted to improve its trade relations with the Greeks. The British, Austrians, and French assembled a joint fleet that defeated the Ottoman-Egyptian fleet in 1827, stranding Ibrahim’s forces in the Morea and forcing Muhammad Ali to negotiate passage for his army back to Egypt in European ships. When the Ottoman Sultan refused to honor his pledge to turn over Syria to Egypt, Muhammad Ali began making preparations to take Syria by force.\(^9\)

Between 1831 and 1833, Egyptian armies conquered Syria, captured the Ottoman prime minister, and even threatened the Ottoman capital. The Ottomans came to terms with Muhammad Ali, granting southern Anatolia and greater Syria as provinces to be governed by Ibrahim; however, they did not see these arrangements as a permanent solution to the Egyptian threat. They appealed to Britain for help, but it had more pressing matters to handle. Russia, however, was eager to guarantee Ottoman territorial integrity in exchange for the Ottoman promise to prevent all foreign warships from passing through the Dardanelles. Russian support gave the Ottomans the added leverage they needed to come to terms with Muhammad Ali’s forces in 1833.\(^10\)

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\(^8\) Marsot, *Short History*, 61.

With Egyptian goods flowing into Syria, Britain became concerned that Egyptian manufactures would supersede British exports in the region. In 1838, the British signed a commercial treaty with the Ottomans at Balta Liman that made Britain the chief trading partner of the Ottoman Empire during the remainder of the nineteenth century. The commercial treaty was presented to the Ottomans as a way to control Egypt by lowering the import and export tariffs on European goods, thus disrupting Muhammad Ali’s monopolies. The Ottomans then resumed operations against Egyptian forces in Syria in 1839 and 1840 but were again defeated by Ibrahim’s troops. Britain persuaded the European powers to shore up the Ottoman position, and European troops joined the fight against Ibrahim’s army.\footnote{Marsot, \textit{Short History}, 59, 62; and Nicholas V. Riasanovsky, \textit{A History of Russia}, 5th ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 333.}

As a result of European interference, Muhammad Ali was forced to sign the Treaty of London (1840), which limited him and his family to the hereditary control of Egypt. Although this agreement provided European sanction for Muhammad Ali’s rule in Egypt, it also severely limited his ambitions. The territory under his control and the size of his army were reduced while the Ottomans’ commercial treaty with the British divested his industry of protection, forcing it to close in the face of cheap European competition. European intervention had defeated a threat to the Ottoman Empire and reduced Egypt from a burgeoning empire to an autonomous province. As a result, Egyptian manufacturing was crushed, and Egyptian raw materials were again available for export to the European market.\footnote{Marsot, \textit{Short History}, 59, 63-64; Goldschmidt, \textit{Modern Egypt}, 25-26; and William Ochsenwald and Sydney Nettleton Fisher, \textit{The Middle East: A History}, 6th ed. (New York: McGraw Hill, 2004), 283.}

Muhammad Ali’s successors further involved Egypt in the European market by increasing its importance as a trade route. Abbas I, who governed Egypt from 1848 to 1854, gave the British a concession in 1851 to build a railway from Alexandria to Cairo. Trade goods would travel from the Mediterranean Sea to Cairo by rail and then be transferred to stagecoach for the remaining journey to Suez. This route cut travel from London to Bombay from three months by steamship to approximately six weeks. Said, who reigned from 1854 to 1863, promised to reduce the trip from Europe to India even further when he granted his friend Ferdinand de Lesseps a concession to dig a canal to connect the Mediterranean and the Red Seas.\footnote{Marsot, \textit{Short History}, 59, 63-64; Goldschmidt, \textit{Modern Egypt}, 25-26; and William Ochsenwald and Sydney Nettleton Fisher, \textit{The Middle East: A History}, 6th ed. (New York: McGraw Hill, 2004), 283.}

In 1869, the Suez Canal was officially opened by Said’s successor, Ismail. Its opening...
was accompanied by three weeks of celebrations\(^\text{14}\) to which over 3000 Europeans were invited\(^\text{15}\) at Egyptian expense.\(^\text{16}\)

Ismail entertained the Empress Eugénie of France, Emperor Francis Joseph of Austria, and other European dignitaries and provided lavish festivities such as balls, fireworks, horse shows, and demonstrations of Egyptian sports to commemorate the occasion at a cost of at least two million Egyptian pounds.\(^\text{17}\) This massive celebration, in which some of the most influential people of Europe participated, seemed to affirm Ismail’s belief that Egypt was “a part of Europe.”\(^\text{18}\) Indeed, Egypt had become a vital component in European shipping, particularly important to Britain as a link to India; yet, this newfound importance on the European stage would produce mixed results for Egypt.

Ruling Egypt from 1863 to 1879, Ismail attempted to increase Egypt’s productive capacity while making the country more independent. He expanded Egypt’s irrigation system and added over a million acres of land into cultivation.\(^\text{19}\) He also spent money to improve harbors and build roads, bridges, canals, and railroads, doubling the size of the railroad network.\(^\text{20}\) This new infrastructure facilitated the export of raw materials, Egypt’s main source of revenue.\(^\text{21}\) He also spent vast sums of money to bribe the Ottoman Sultan to increase Egypt’s independence. As a result, he was able to change his title from pasha, which meant “governor,” to that of khedive, which meant “ruler” in Persian.\(^\text{22}\) By doubling his tribute to the Ottoman government, he also was given permission to order the succession by the practice of

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16 Finkel, *Osman’s Dream*, 472.
18 Goldschmidt, *Modern Egypt*, 36. In announcing the introduction of European ministers into his cabinet in 1878, Ismail stated, “My country is no longer in Africa; we are now a part of Europe.” Goldschmidt, *Modern Egypt*, 36. Though this statement was made almost ten years after the opening of the Suez Canal, Ismail consistently emulated the European experience when governing Egypt. He promoted education in an effort to westernize Egypt, introduced social and cultural institutions into Egypt based on the European model, and followed the European example of expansion into Africa by sending expeditions into the Sudan and beyond. Ochsenwald and Fisher, *The Middle East*, 289.
21 Marsot, *Short History*, 68.
primogeniture. Finally, he was allowed to contract foreign loans without Ottoman permission.

**Egyptian Debt and European Intervention**

Ismail’s massive spending on these and other projects put great pressure on the Egyptian budget. During the first years of his reign, however, Egypt was reaping huge profits as a result of a cotton boom. Long-staple cotton had been introduced into Egypt in 1821 and was highly sought by British textile manufacturers. With the outbreak of the American Civil War in 1861, a northern blockade of southern ports dried up the American cotton supply, and Egypt stepped in to fill British demand. The production of Egyptian cotton skyrocketed. In 1850, Egypt produced 35 million pounds of cotton annually, but during the American Civil War, Egyptian production reached 250 million pounds annually. With the Egyptian economy thriving, moneylenders flocked to Ismail offering him credit at low interest rates, but once the American South resumed its cotton trade, the cotton market collapsed. Ismail still required extensive capital to fund his projects, but now he could only contract loans with high interest rates. Egyptian debt grew rapidly from 3 million Egyptian pounds in 1863 to 93 million Egyptian pounds in 1879.

Ismail tried a variety of methods to keep up with Egypt’s debt payments. He offered tax abatements to landowners who could pay their land taxes in advance. In 1866, he established the Assembly of Delegates, a semi-parliamentary body of landowners, in order to raise taxes. In 1875, Ismail sold Egypt’s shares in the Suez Canal Company, which represented 44 percent of its stock, to the British government for £4 million and thus alienated an important source of Egyptian revenue. Ismail appealed to the European powers for help with Egypt’s financial situation, and in 1876, the Caisse de la Dette Publique was established. It was comprised of four commissioners representing the four principal bondholding countries: Austria, Britain, France, and Italy. When the Egyptian financial situation continued to decline as a result of a low Nile

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23 Marsot, *Short History*, 68. Previously, the oldest male family member in Muhammad Ali’s line would succeed. Ochsenwald and Fisher, *The Middle East*, 287.

24 Goldschmidt, *Concise History*, 178.


26 Goldschmidt, *Concise History*, 179.

27 Ochsenwald and Fisher, *The Middle East*, 287-288. Although the assembly served only a consultative function, it began making greater demands with the expansion of the Egyptian debt. These demands included ministerial responsibility and the right to vote the budget. Ismail dissolved the assembly in 1879. Ochsenwald and Fisher, *The Middle East*, 287-288.
and heavy military expenditures, Ismail allowed Britain and France to establish the Dual
Financial Control over Egypt’s revenues and expenditures. In August 1878, Ismail appointed a
British and French representative to his cabinet and introduced ministerial responsibility.\(^28\)

Egypt’s enforced economies and increasing European control caused opposition within
Egyptian society. Public works and education budgets were reduced. The army was seriously
affected by the cutbacks and suffered from long delays in pay. When an announcement was
made in February 1879 that over half of the army’s officers would be retired at half pay, the
army revolted. Street demonstrations and the mistreatment of some public officials, such as the
British finance minister, led Ismail to step in to regain his control over the situation. He
dismissed the European ministers, formed an exclusively Egyptian cabinet that began preparing a
constitution, and reversed the cutbacks in the army. The European powers were skeptical that
Egypt could pay its debts under the new government and put pressure on the Ottoman Sultan to
remove Ismail from power. In June 1879, Ismail was replaced as khedive by his son, Tawfiq.\(^29\)

When Tawfiq came to power, he faced a number of obstacles: Egypt was heavily in debt;
the European powers were committed to Egypt paying this debt and were willing to intervene in
the government of Egypt to ensure payment; and Egyptians were struggling under the massive
burden of debt payments. After watching his father’s deposition as a result of European
pressure, Tawfiq dared not resist European influence. He reestablished the Dual Control, though
he did not readmit foreign ministers to his cabinet.\(^30\) The Dual Control cut Egyptian spending
drastically, fomenting discontent.\(^31\)

**Urabi Revolt and the British Occupation**

The Egyptian army became the driving force against European control. Beginning with
Muhammad Ali, Egyptian rulers had brought Egyptians and Sudanese into the army. Yet, the
traditional ruling elite, the Turks and Circassians, monopolized the higher ranks. Ismail had
attempted to bar native Egyptians from the highest ranks, and Tawfiq supported severe budget
cuts in the army that unequally targeted Egyptians rather than Turco-Circassians. Colonel
Ahmad Urabi, one of only four native Egyptian colonels, led the army to force Tawfiq to form a

\(^{30}\) Goldschmidt, *Modern Egypt*, 41-42.
more liberal and pro-Egyptian cabinet and reverse military budget cuts. All elements of Egyptian society rallied behind Urabi and supported the establishment of constitutional government. In November 1881, a new constitution was proclaimed. Elections were held and a representative body with legislative powers was convened. This body soon demanded that it, rather than the Dual Controllers, had the right to determine Egypt’s budget.32

This domestic dispute presented Britain and France with a difficult dilemma. Their citizens held the majority of the Egyptian debt and pressured their respective governments to enforce the policies of the Dual Control.33 A large population of Europeans who resided in Egypt feared growing Egyptian nationalism and looked to their home governments for protection. When riots broke out in Alexandria in June 1882, their fears over the dangers of Egyptian nationalism seemed to be confirmed.34

Britain anxiously sought to cooperate with France in determining a policy toward Egypt. Neither country believed that the Egyptians could pay for constitutional reforms and continue to retire the debt.35 French investors placed heavy pressure on their government to intervene in Egypt, and Britain was willing to participate. At the last minute, a change in government in France prevented French support and left Britain to occupy Egypt alone.36

Britain’s overriding interest in Egypt was strategic. India and Britain’s dominance in the East were prime pillars of British strength; therefore, British policymakers refused to allow anything to threaten its access to the shortest route to India—the Suez Canal.37 The Suez Canal represented a vital link to eastern trade, with British shipping representing more than eighty percent of its total traffic.38 When British policymakers determined that instability in the Egyptian government threatened this link, they authorized the occupation of Egypt, which began in July 1882. The British bombarded Alexandria and took control of the Canal cities. In September, they defeated the Egyptian army at Tal al-Kabir and captured Cairo. Tawfiq had

32 Goldschmidt, Concise History, 180-181; Ochsenwald and Fisher, The Middle East, 291; Marsot, Short History, 72; and Goldschmidt, Modern Egypt, 42-44.
34 Goldschmidt, Modern Egypt, 45.
35 The Egyptian debt continued to rise during this period. Goldschmidt, Concise History, 181.
36 The government led by Charles de Freycinet lost a vote in the Chamber of Deputies for credit to occupy the isthmus of Suez on July 29, 1882, and the ministry resigned. It was replaced by the ministry led by Charles Duclerc. Cromer, Modern Egypt, vol. 1, 305.
encouraged British intervention to destroy what he saw as a threat to his position by Egyptian revolutionaries. When British shelling began, he took refuge aboard a British warship and proclaimed Urabi a traitor.\textsuperscript{39}

With British troops in control of the country and Tawfiq’s power restored, British policymakers believed that the job was nearly complete. They hoped to introduce some basic governmental reforms and withdraw their troops from Egypt relatively quickly.\textsuperscript{40} The circumstances of their intervention, however, prevented a speedy evacuation. The Khedive and his Turco-Circassian ministers had been discredited by their autocratic and anti-Egyptian policies, their willingness to bow to foreign pressure, and the crushing impact of the government debt. It was only through British intervention that the Khedive was able to retain his position,\textsuperscript{41} and he depended on continuing British support, particularly the backing of the British army of occupation. The British decision to restore not only the Khedive but also his Turco-Circassian ministers struck in the face of growing Egyptian nationalism. In addition, after occupying Egypt independently of France, the British were unwilling to submit voluntarily to a diminishment of their own influence by returning to the old parity of influence with France. They believed that the Dual Control had created some of the problems that had led to revolution, and thus they abolished it in January 1883.\textsuperscript{42}

In place of the Dual Control, a British financial adviser was selected who assumed the duties of the former British and French Controllers. France resented this loss of authority in Egypt and adopted a policy of obstruction to British rule in Egypt that would last until the Anglo-French Agreement, \textit{Entente Cordiale}, was signed in April 1904.\textsuperscript{43} The British had intervened in Egypt to secure the Suez Canal and retain their influence over the Egyptian government, and in the process, their power had increased. In the years that followed, they would be unable to formulate a strategy that would allow them to maintain their influence while keeping their promise to withdraw from the country. Thus, the British occupation continued.\textsuperscript{44}

\textsuperscript{39} Ochsenwald and Fisher, \textit{The Middle East}, 291; and Marsot, \textit{Short History}, 73.
\textsuperscript{40} Cromer, Evelyn Baring, \textit{Modern Egypt}, vol. 2 (New York: Macmillan Co., 1908), 349.
\textsuperscript{41} [Marsot], \textit{Egypt and Cromer}, 68. Sir Evelyn Baring, who became British Agent and Consul-General in Egypt in 1883, admitted that the Urabi revolt would have been successful without British intervention. Cromer, Evelyn Baring, \textit{Modern Egypt}, vol. 1 (London: Macmillan & Co., 1908), 334.
\textsuperscript{42} Marlowe, \textit{Cromer in Egypt}, 70.
\textsuperscript{43} Marlowe, \textit{Cromer in Egypt}, 70.
\textsuperscript{44} Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, an opponent of British imperialism in general and of the British occupation of Egypt in particular, wrote “it was impossible to leave Egypt and at the same time remain its lords and masters politically.” Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, \textit{My Diaries: Being a Personal Narrative of Events 1884-1914}, Part 1, 1888-1900 (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1923), 49-50.
Sir Evelyn Baring, British Agent and Consul-General to Egypt, 1883-1907

In September 1883, Sir Evelyn Baring arrived in Egypt to assume the position of British Agent and Consul-General. For the next twenty-three years, no other individual would play a larger role in determining British policy in Egypt. Trusted by successive secretaries of state, he was known to dictate to them the policy that he believed should be adopted.

Evelyn Baring’s background and early career supplied him with experience that would be vital to his work in Egypt. Although a member of a prominent banking family, Baring spent his early years preparing for a military career. He was exposed to British imperial policy during his service in the Royal Artillery in Corfu and as a member of Sir Henry Storks’ staff both when Storks was Lord High Commissioner of the Ionian Islands and then when Storks was Governor of Malta. He also spent several months in Jamaica, where Storks chaired a commission sent to investigate the suppression of an insurrection there. Early in 1868, Baring was admitted to the Staff College. He served in the Topographical and Statistical Department at the War Office, where his knowledge of the Ottoman, Russian, and Prussian armies won him the respect of his superiors. In 1872, his cousin Lord Northbrook, Thomas George Baring, was appointed Viceroy to India. He accompanied Northbrook to India, acting as his private secretary from 1872 to 1876. In India, Baring was able to participate firsthand in colonial government and came to be known as Northbrook’s right-hand man, gaining the nickname of the “Vice-Viceroy.”

At the end of Northbrook’s term of office, Baring returned to England and a position in the War Office. Dissatisfied with the military, however, Baring welcomed the opportunity to serve in Egypt as British Commissioner on the Caisse de la Dette Publique from 1877 to 1879. After considering a run for Parliament, he returned to Egypt in 1879 as British Controller.

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46 [Marsot], Egypt and Cromer, 55.
47 [Marsot], Egypt and Cromer, 64. In his biography of Khedive Abbas II, Lord Cromer reveals that he wrote a letter to the Secretary of State in which he instructed him to send certain messages of support that he could use in his dispute with the Khedive over the appointment of the Egyptian Prime Minister in 1893. Cromer, Evelyn Baring, Abbas II (London: Macmillan & Co., 1915), 23.
48 [Marsot], Egypt and Cromer, 54.
49 Marlowe, Cromer in Egypt, 20-21. Marlowe explains that the Topographical and Statistical Department corresponded roughly to an intelligence department that obtained information about foreign armies.
50 His commanding manner also earned him the nickname “Over-Baring.” [Marsot], Egypt and Cromer, 54.
51 Marlowe, Cromer in Egypt, 21-22; [Marsot], Egypt and Cromer, 54; and Cromer, Modern Egypt, vol. 1, 159.
In these positions, he gained a thorough knowledge of Egyptian finance. In 1880, Baring left Egypt to assume the position of Financial Member of the Governor-General’s Council in India. This posting provided him with further experience in colonial administration that would prove indispensable to his duties as British Agent and Consul-General of Egypt from 1883 to 1907.

Upon his arrival in Egypt in 1883, Baring was given the task of following the lines of policy established by Lord Dufferin as a result of his special mission to Egypt from November 1882 to April 1883. Dufferin had been charged with restoring the Khedive’s authority while introducing various reforms into the government, including liberal institutions. Baring believed that Dufferin’s objectives produced a contradictory policy. He thought that the British desire to evacuate British troops from Egypt quickly could be accomplished by strengthening the Khedive’s and his ministers’ authority but that this would lead undoubtedly to a return to autocratic government. If, on the other hand, the British were to support Egyptian desires for self-government through the establishment of liberal institutions and checks on the Khedive’s authority, Baring believed the British would need to remain in Egypt indefinitely in order to guide the reforms. During his first four years as Consul-General, Baring attempted to follow the first objective—to make possible a speedy British evacuation of Egypt by remedying Egypt’s financial problems and avoiding undue interference in the Egyptian government. Over time, however, he came to believe that the process of westernization had advanced too far to reverse. He became convinced that reforms must be implemented in Egypt, and for these reforms to be effective, European agency was needed to design and execute them.

Baring’s conviction that the British occupation would be lengthy reflected his beliefs about subject races, many of which he gained from his experience in India. Baring believed

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52 Cromer, Modern Egypt, vol. 1, 173.
54 Marlowe, Cromer in Egypt, 73, 81.
55 In an attempt to please Radicals in the British Cabinet who saw the British in Egypt as liberators and to provide an outlet for Egyptian wishes for governmental reform, Dufferin had created advisory provincial councils; a Legislative Council, which could examine and debate, but not initiate legislation; and a General Assembly whose function was to approve new taxes. These institutions failed to limit the control of the Khedive and his ministers in devising and executing their policies, but they did provide a forum for Egyptian public opinion. Marlowe, Cromer in Egypt, 69, 70, 74; and [Marsot], Egypt and Cromer, 33.
56 Cromer, Modern Egypt, vol.1, 333.
57 Marlowe, Cromer in Egypt, 283; and Cromer, Modern Egypt, vol. 1, 333-334.
58 Marlowe, Cromer in Egypt, 234, 283.
that there were vast differences between “superior” and “inferior” races.⁵⁹ He viewed Europeans as the most advanced, and he believed that they had established the only true civilization in the world.⁶⁰ Among Europeans, he saw Anglo-Saxons as the most highly evolved, believing that they had a special ability to rule subject races and could adapt themselves to different political situations with greater ease than other Europeans.⁶¹ Nevertheless, he thought the differences between European races were small compared to the differences between Western and Eastern peoples.⁶² For Baring, Western and Eastern peoples were direct opposites.⁶³ He wrote of “the want of mental symmetry and precision, which is the chief distinguishing feature between the illogical and picturesque East and the logical West.”⁶⁴ Since the Egyptians were “the rawest of raw material,”⁶⁵ it was unnecessary to consult them in determining policy. Baring asserted, “But it is essential that each special issue should be decided mainly with reference to what, by the light of Western knowledge and experience tempered by local considerations, we conscientiously think is best for the subject race.…”⁶⁶⁶⁶

Ironically, Baring had very little interaction with Egyptians. The members of the Egyptian government were often Turco-Circassians or other minorities,⁶⁷ and Baring’s inability to speak Arabic⁶⁸ caused him to form impressions about Egyptians based on official contacts and the opinions of third parties.⁶⁹ Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, a British supporter of Egyptian nationalism and an opponent of the British occupation of Egypt, described Baring’s knowledge of the Egyptians: “he, shut up in his office and seeing practically nothing of native Egypt beyond the tame officials whom he had attracted to his camp, lived in comparative darkness.”⁷⁰ In spite of his limited understanding of Egyptians, Baring’s control of Egypt became so complete that he was described as “‘the Egyptian Government’ in his own person.”⁷¹

⁶⁰ Cromer, Modern Egypt, vol. 2, 343.
⁶² Cromer, Political and Literary Essays 1908-1913, 40.
⁶³ Cromer, Modern Egypt, vol. 2, 144.
⁶⁴ Cromer, Modern Egypt, vol. 1, 7.
⁶⁸ Cromer, Modern Egypt, vol. 1, 7.
⁶⁹ [Marsot], Egypt and Cromer, 63-64.
⁷⁰ Blunt, My Diaries, Part 1, 45.
The “Veiled Protectorate”

Baring’s rule of Egypt as British Agent and Consul-General from 1883 to 1892 can be described as the “Veiled Protectorate.” During this period, Tawfiq and his ministers depended on British support in order to rule. Although Tawfiq retained the ability to name his own ministers and promulgate decrees in his name, it was the British who provided the outlines of government policy, and British officials served as advisors to the Egyptian ministries and often wielded more power than the Egyptian ministers whom they were supposed to serve. When a conflict occurred between the Egyptians and the British, the political power of the British, buttressed by the army of occupation, allowed them to overcome Egyptian opposition. This gulf in power became clear when the British and Egyptian governments differed on policy toward the Sudan. In 1881, a revolt in the Sudan broke out led by Muhammad Ahmed, who claimed to be the Mahdi, an Islamic religious figure who is believed to have received the authority of Muhammad and who is expected to return to guide his people. By the end of 1883, the Egyptians had lost important territory to the Sudanese and had neither the military forces nor the money to reconquer the Sudan. Baring thus recommended that the Egyptian government abandon it. When the Egyptian government hesitated to accept this recommendation, Baring appealed to the British government for support.

On January 4, 1884, British Foreign Secretary George Leveson-Gower, the second Earl Granville, sent a letter to Baring that established the Granville Doctrine, a policy statement that defined relations between the British and Egyptian governments. Granville wrote, “It should be made clear to the Egyptian Ministers and Governors of provinces that the responsibility which for the time rests on England obliges Her Majesty’s Government to insist on the adoption of the

73 Marlowe, *Cromer in Egypt*, 156.
74 An exception to British control of the ministries of the Egyptian government occurred in the Ministries of Justice and the Interior, which were left largely to Egyptian control between 1884 and 1891. Marlowe, *Cromer in Egypt*, 144, 154.
policy which they recommend, and that it will be necessary that those Ministers and Governors who do not follow this course should cease to hold their offices.”

As a result, the Egyptian prime minister resigned, and the Egyptian government consented to the abandonment of the Sudan. Wilfrid Scawen Blunt described the three conditions necessary for the success of the “Veiled Protectorate.” The Khedive had to acquiesce to British control, the extent of British dominance had to be hidden from the Egyptian people, and the power of the army of occupation had to be available to enforce British policy. When Tawfiq died in 1892 and his son Abbas Hilmi became khedive, the first of Blunt’s conditions was lost.

**The Reign of Khedive Abbas II, 1892-1914**

In January 1892, Khedive Tawfiq died suddenly after a short illness; however, his seventeen-year-old son Abbas, then studying at the Theresianum in Vienna, had yet to reach the age of majority. Fearing the consequences of a regency, Baring eagerly accepted the suggestion that Abbas’ age should be determined by the Muslim lunar calendar, which had only 354 days, rather than the Gregorian calendar. Through this device, Abbas was reckoned to be eighteen and thus eligible to assume the position of khedive as Abbas II. During the first days of his reign, Abbas worked closely with Baring to foil the Ottoman Sultan’s attempt to remove the Sinai Peninsula from the territory under Egyptian jurisdiction. Abbas also confirmed his father’s ministers in office. Baring thus felt confident that the new Khedive would acquiesce to the same type of indirect British control that had allowed the successful working of the “Veiled Protectorate” under his father. In March 1892, in recognition for his duties in Egypt, Baring was awarded the title of Baron Cromer. When he left Egypt for his yearly holiday that summer, he was confident that Egyptian affairs were proceeding according to British designs.

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78 Marlowe, *Cromer in Egypt*, 89-90.
81 [Marsot], *Egypt and Cromer*, 98-99.
82 Marlowe, *Cromer in Egypt*, 157-158.
From Tension to Crisis

When Lord Cromer returned to Egypt in November 1892, he perceived a different atmosphere. Abbas had begun to display an anti-English attitude that was being picked up by Egyptian society. Cromer had little patience with the Khedive, whom he resented as a child arrogantly attempting to meddle in matters beyond his understanding. He soon adopted an unflattering view of Abbas as “a petulant boy” and began to look for a means of providing Abbas with a “lesson” that would teach him his proper role in the government of Egypt.

Cromer’s opportunity for such a “lesson” came with the arrival of a ministerial crisis. In late 1892, Abbas wanted to appoint a prime minister who was not subservient to British views. The current prime minister, Mustafa Fahmi, was very much Cromer’s man and was seriously ill. Abbas hoped to nominate Tigrane, a Christian Armenian, to take Mustafa Fahmi’s place. Cromer objected to this appointment since he knew that Tigrane was likely to adopt an anti-British policy; however, when discussing the situation with the Khedive, he made his primary objection to such an appointment on the basis of Tigrane’s religious status as a Christian, arguing that a Muslim prime minister would be important in conciliating public opinion. Abbas was reluctant to adhere to Cromer’s recommendation despite the British government’s support for it. With the improvement of Mustafa Fahmi’s health, the issue seemed to lose its urgency. Then, on January 15, 1893, Abbas sent a representative to Mustafa Fahmi to request his resignation. When Mustafa Fahmi responded with the advice that Abbas should consult with Lord Cromer before making a change in the ministry, Abbas indignantly dismissed him from office, appointed Husayn Fakhri in his place, and removed the ministers of finance and justice. Abbas thought that he was well within his prerogatives as khedive to dismiss his prime minister since his father had dismissed ministers without consulting Cromer and he had taken into consideration Cromer’s advice to nominate a Muslim. Cromer, however, was livid. He immediately sought support from his government, citing the Granville Doctrine as precedent that the Egyptian government should defer to British judgment in important matters.

Cromer explained the main reason for his objection in his biography of Abbas II: “But the whole affair had been planned and executed without my being taken into council. It was

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85 Marlowe, *Cromer in Egypt*, 161-162.
impossible to acquiesce in a coup d'état, which swept all the Anglophile Ministers out of the Cabinet, and which was manifestly intended to deal a decisive blow to British influence.”

Eventually, a compromise was reached in which Husayn Fakhri resigned and Mustafa Riaz became prime minister. Cromer also forced Abbas to promise to heed British advice in important matters.

The results of the ministerial crisis were mixed. Although Abbas had not attained his first choices for prime minister, he gained immensely in public esteem for opposing British control. Discouraged to see the extent of public support for the new Khedive, Cromer called for an increase in the size of the British garrison in Egypt on January 19. A contentious fight within the British cabinet resulted from this request. The British Foreign Minister Archibald Philip Primrose, the fifth Earl of Rosebery, accepted Cromer’s claim that unrest could erupt in Egypt if the Khedive attempted another demonstration of his political independence and eventually carried the cabinet with him. This increase in the size of the British army of occupation was significant for several reasons: it represented the first time that the garrison had been increased in regard to internal security; it showed that the British occupation would continue even in the face of Egyptian opposition; and it marked the end of the “Veiled Protectorate” and introduced more overt British control.

Renewed Tension

British-Egyptian relations improved for a few months, but by the end of 1893, tension arose. Both the Khedive and the Egyptian prime minister were expressing hostility toward the British and had encouraged the Legislative Council to question the cost of maintaining the British occupation. Cromer believed that “a second lesson” was necessary, and the

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87 Cromer, Abbas II, 22.
88 [Marsot], Egypt and Cromer, 110; Marlowe, Cromer in Egypt, 166; and Goldschmidt, Modern Egypt, 51.
89 [Marsot], Egypt and Cromer, 110.
90 Marlowe, Cromer in Egypt, 167-169.
92 [Marsot], Egypt and Cromer, 111-112.
93 Marlowe, Cromer in Egypt, 168, 170.
94 Marlowe, Cromer in Egypt, 172-173.
95 Cromer, Abbas II, 41.
opportunity for such a lesson occurred in January 1894 while the Khedive was reviewing the 
Egyptian army on the Sudanese frontier.96

After making disparaging comments about the British officers in the Egyptian army, 
Abbas brought matters to a head on January 19, 1894, at Wadi Halfa when he told General 
Horatio Herbert Kitchener, the commander-in-chief or Sirdar of the Egyptian army, that he 
believed that it was a shame for Egypt to be served by so poor an army. Kitchener immediately 
offered his resignation. Abbas attempted to diffuse the situation, and Kitchener led him to 
believe that he would not pursue his resignation. Kitchener, however, reported these events to 
Lord Cromer97 who saw in the incident an opportunity for the Khedive to be “punished.”98

Cromer, with the support of Rosebery, demanded that Abbas issue a proclamation praising the 
Egyptian army and its British officers and that he remove his under secretary of state for war, 
whom Cromer believed had helped to instigate the incident. Abbas found himself abandoned by 
his ministers and, with the threat of dethronement, agreed to the British conditions.99

During the first three years of his reign, Abbas attempted to assert his authority and 
diminish British control. When his efforts failed, he learned that “it was useless openly to resist 
British policy in Egypt.”100 For the remainder of his reign, he feared opposing the British 
directly and began supporting Egyptian nationalists and the press, both of which enjoyed greater 
freedom to maneuver than he possessed.101

British authority was strengthened by these two crises; the British took greater control of 
the Departments of State, demanded greater access to the Egyptian Cabinet, and increased the 
numbers of British officials in the Egyptian service.102 Lord Cromer’s power over the Egyptian 
government was recognized by its people, who petitioned the British Agency, rather than the 
Khedivial Palace, for redress of their grievances.103 As Egyptian nationalist Mustafa Kamil 
complained, Cromer had “absolute authority equal to that of the Tsar.”104

96 Marlowe, Cromer in Egypt, 174.
97 Marlowe, Cromer in Egypt, 174-175.
98 Cromer, Abbas II, 55.
99 Marlowe, Cromer in Egypt, 174-175; and [Marso], Egypt and Cromer, 123.
100 Cromer, Abbas II, 63. In his memoirs, Abbas wrote, “There was no place under the British sun except for the 
weak and the resigned.” Abbas, The Last Khedive of Egypt, 73.
101 [Marso], Egypt and Cromer, 126-127.
102 Marlowe, Cromer in Egypt, 224.
103 Marlowe, Cromer in Egypt, 228.
As the twentieth century dawned, many Egyptians lamented that their aspirations for independence were farther away than ever. After centuries of foreign control, Egypt was fully subordinated to a British occupation that showed no signs of ending. Egyptian nationalists resented British monopolization of government offices and argued for the importance of greater spending for education. Yet, since Cromer attempted to further the Egyptians’ material interests, the majority of the Egyptian population was quiescent. For Egyptian nationalism to appeal to the masses, the British occupation had to pose a threat to the masses. It was in the Dinshwai incident and Britain’s mishandling of it that the Egyptian people as a whole were starkly confronted with the inequality of British rule and offered their support to Egyptian nationalism.

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105 Marlowe, *Cromer in Egypt*, 223.
CHAPTER 2

A QUESTION OF JUSTICE:
THE DINSHWAI INCIDENT OF 1906

No civilisation can rule, and endure, unless there is equal justice for all men.

- Mustafa Kamil

The first half of 1906 was a time of increased unrest in Egypt. Britain and the Ottoman Empire became locked in a dispute over the boundary between Egyptian and Ottoman territory in the Sinai Peninsula. British concern that the Ottoman Empire might extend its Hijaz railway to Aqaba led to a British attempt to occupy strategic portions of the peninsula. The British found that the Ottomans had already established a post at Taba and were unwilling to abandon it. The resulting boundary dispute culminated in May with a British ultimatum that the Ottomans abandon Taba within ten days. Unwilling to risk a military conflict, the Ottomans acceded to British demands and agreed to participate in a joint delimitation of the Egyptian/Ottoman frontier which was finally signed on October 1. Although Britain had prevented the Ottoman Empire from extending its territory in the Sinai Peninsula, British authorities in Egypt were surprised that Egyptian nationalists, such as Mustafa Kamil, supported Ottoman claims as the suzerain power of Egypt against what the British saw as the Egyptian territorial interests that they were championing.

Kamil published several articles in which he argued that Egypt had been given administrative authority over Sinai as a temporary measure that could be revoked by the Ottoman government. On May 13, Kamil published an article titled “Support your brother whether he be

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Kamil’s pro-Ottoman campaign led Cromer to argue that Pan-Islam and religious fanaticism lay behind Egyptian support for the Sultan. Kamil’s newspaper, Al-Liwa, stirred further unrest by calling for a strike of Egyptian law students who had grievances against their French director, forcing Cromer to mediate personally between the disputants to end the strike. In April, Cromer asked for an increase in the British army of occupation to prevent further opposition and to demonstrate British power. When a dispute arose in June at the village of Dinshwai, Egypt, in which Egyptian villagers disarmed and attacked British soldiers, Cromer determined to take a firm response to curb opposition. Sir Edward Grey, Britain’s foreign secretary, explained that British rule in Egypt depended “on force and on prestige.” Cromer saw the Dinshwai incident as a threat to the prestige of the British army of occupation; thus, he took strong measures to ensure that their prestige was restored and British strength was recognized in Egypt.

The British Army of Occupation in Egypt

Since Britain’s military occupation of Egypt in 1882, a force of British troops had been maintained in Egypt to preserve public order. This force was generally limited to about 4,000

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110 Ibid., 167.
111 [Marsot], Egypt and Cromer, 169; and Owen, Lord Cromer, 333.
112 Owen, Lord Cromer, 335. Cromer wanted to abolish the Capitulations that gave extraterritoriality to foreign subjects in Ottoman lands. In order to do this, he had to convince the countries, which had such rights, that their interests would be protected under British control of Egypt. Owen remarks that the increase of the British garrison was an attempt to reassure foreign governments of the stability of Egypt. Owen, Lord Cromer, 335. Apparently, Cromer was not above using deceit in order to accomplish his goal. According to the wife of Harry Boyle, Cromer’s Oriental Secretary and confidante, in her second biography of her husband, Cromer misled the Foreign Office by submitting a letter purported to describe the details of an Egyptian nationalist uprising and to have come before Boyle in his position as Oriental Secretary. What Cromer failed to mention was that the letter was not written by an Egyptian but by Boyle himself in order to support Cromer’s policy recommendations for Egypt. Clara Boyle, Boyle of Cairo: A Diplomatist’s Adventures in the Middle East (Highgate, Kendal, UK: Titus Wilson & Son, 1965), 62-63. This incident would have important implications for how the Dinshwai incident would be viewed. Though Cromer and Boyle knew that the letter suggesting a possible uprising was false, other British members of the Egyptian service as well as the Foreign Office believed in a legitimate threat and would view Dinshwai as an example of that threat. In arguing that Egypt was not troubled by Muslim fanaticism in August 1906, Mustafa Kamil stated that the only proof of Egyptian fanaticism had been a letter attributed to a Muslim. “Fanaticism in Egypt: Mustapha Pasha Kamel’s Opinion,” Egyptian Gazette (Alexandria, Egypt), 7 August 1906, p. 3. Assuming this letter to be Boyle’s false letter, Kamil’s argument reveals the extent to which Cromer misled the British government as to the threat of Egyptian unrest in 1906.
men, although occasional increases of the garrison during times of unrest could bring the military complement to nearly 6,000. Cromer believed that the army of occupation guaranteed “the good working and stability” of the Egyptian government. The members of the army were known for their exclusiveness and kept aloof from the workings of the Egyptian government. They were principally concentrated in the metropolitan areas of Cairo and Alexandria and fraternized little with the local inhabitants.

Robert Tignor explains how the army of occupation related to Egyptian society. He writes, “Because of severe limitations on the size of the military force they could support and the amount of money that could be spent in Egypt, they ruled by means of prestige, by the threat of force, by isolating themselves from the Egyptian populace, and by exaggerating their own power and superiority.” Thus, the army had little impact on the lives of the majority of the Egyptian people and failed to gain an understanding of Egypt and its culture. This separation led to misunderstandings.

Conflicts between the British and the Egyptians

One source of conflict between the British and Egyptians resulted from the British soldiers’ love of hunting and shooting. Egyptians objected to British soldiers hunting over cultivated land, and the two sides had different perceptions as to what could be hunted. For instance, pigeon-shooting was a popular sport among the British, the practice of which created several incidents with the Egyptian people. The Egyptians bred and raised pigeons in conical towers called dovecots. They considered pigeons “part livestock and part pets.” They would

118 Ibid., 253.
120 Ibid., 155-157.
122 Ahdaf Soueif, *The Map of Love* (New York: Anchor Books, 2000), 382-383; and Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, *Atrocities of Justice under British Rule in Egypt* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1906), 18. Although Dr. Soueif’s work is fiction, she has researched extensively the historical background for her novels and is meticulously careful to depict accurately the periods that she portrays.
124 Dr. Ahdaf Soueif, telephone interview by author, 8 September 2009, tape recording.
fly them in patterns, use their manure as fertilizer, and cook them as a special dish for important occasions.125

In 1864, Alfred Dugdale, a British engineer working in a cotton-ginning factory, began shooting pigeons near the village of Kalioub. After successfully shooting one bird, he was arrested for shooting the pigeons that belonged to the village and for suspicion of starting a fire as a result of his shooting. After explaining that he had not been shooting at the time of the fire and promising not to shoot in the village again, he was released.126 In 1887, an incident occurred when two British officers peppered some Egyptians with shot near the village of Keneseh while quail shooting. As a result of the inquiry into this case, it was suggested that officers obtain passes before going out shooting.127 By 1906, British officers were required to obtain the permission of the omdeh, headman of the village, before shooting.128

The Dinshwai Incident

On the morning of June 13, 150 members of the Mounted Infantry, while on the march from Cairo to Alexandria, arrived at the right bank of the Bagourieh Canal and set up camp.130 At about 1:00 p.m., five officers, an ombashi (police corporal), and an Egyptian guide proceeded six miles to the village of Dinshwai in order to shoot pigeons.131 Dinshwai was then a village of several hundred persons in the province of Menoufieh.132 On the road to Dinshwai, the officers passed fields of cotton and wheat, which had been harvested, and piles of corn.133 When the
group arrived at Dinshwai, they sent the ombashi of police to inform the omdeh of their arrival and separated into two groups to shoot. Major J. E. Pine-Coffin, Lieutenant S. J. Smithwick, and Captain Seymour Bull went to the north of the agricultural road while Captain J. S. Bostock and Lieutenant Porter went to the south of the agricultural road and the east of the village.  

After both groups began to shoot, a fire broke out in a threshing-floor, and the villagers attempted to disarm the officers, believing that their shooting had started the blaze. While the villagers were seizing the officers’ weapons, Lieutenant Porter’s gun went off, injuring a woman. Several other villagers were injured, but there are conflicting accounts as to how these injuries took place: either from the shot from Lieutenant Porter’s gun or from the shots of other officers who were trying to disperse the crowd. Major Pine-Coffin ordered the officers to surrender their guns, and they attempted to leave the village. The villagers pursued them to their carriages, throwing bricks at them and beating them with nabouts (heavy bludgeons) and sticks. After being pulled from their carriages and horseback, the officers decided to run for their camp. When Major Pine-Coffin fell behind and was knocked to the ground, Lieutenants Smithwick and Porter returned to defend him while Captain Bostock and Captain Bull continued to run for the camp to get help. Pine-Coffin, Smithwick, and Porter were taken back to the village and threatened with having their throats cut. Some local village officials intervened to shield them from the angry crowd. Eventually, a police officer arrived and escorted these three officers back to camp.

Meanwhile, Captain Bostock reached the soldiers’ camp and alerted it to the conflict, whereupon two units of mounted patrol set out for Dinshwai. Captain Bull fell unconscious outside of Sersina market about one and a half miles from the camp. Of the two mounted patrol units, one found Captain Bull at Sersina and, assuming that to be the place of the conflict, exchanged shots with inhabitants. At Sersina, one Egyptian was found shot and another was

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134 Ibid.; and United Kingdom, FO 371/66, map of Dinshwai. I have been unable to determine the first name of Lieutenant Porter.
found dead with his skull shattered. The other unit of mounted patrol met the three officers returning from Dinshwai and escorted them to camp.  

The officers received various injuries as a result of the incident at Dinshwai. Major Pine-Coffin had his left arm broken while Lieutenant Smithwick had his nose broken. Captain Bull received two blows to the head, fell unconscious outside of Sersina market, and died later that evening. The officers were robbed of their possessions.

British officers and Egyptian villagers had come into conflict; however, it was how this conflict was handled that would determine the incident’s significance. If the British handled it moderately, it could lead to reconciliation and promote greater cultural interchange that could reduce such incidents in the future. If the British sought retribution for a perceived slight against their authority, however, it could be the spark that kindled a conflagration.

The Egyptian Judicial System

In order to understand how this case was investigated and tried, it is important to have a general understanding of the Egyptian judicial system as it existed in 1906. Egypt had four basic types of tribunals: national courts, Mixed Tribunals, consular courts, and the Mehkemeh Sheraieh. The national courts, which were instituted in 1883, held jurisdiction over “all civil cases in which both parties are Ottoman subjects,” and “all criminal cases in which an Ottoman subject is the accused party.” The Mixed Tribunals, established in 1875, tried “commercial and civil cases involving foreigners” or “a foreigner and an Egyptian,” as well as certain specified criminal cases. Both the national courts and the Mixed Tribunals were based on the French legal code. Foreigners accused of criminal charges were generally tried by their own

139 “Story of the Outrage,” Egyptian Gazette (Alexandria, Egypt), 18 June 1906, p. 3; and House of Commons, “Egypt. No. 3 (1906). Correspondence Respecting the Attack on British Officers at Denshawai,” Sessional Papers, Cd. 3086, p. 9-10, 16.
141 Ibid., 515.
142 Ibid.
143 Tignor, Modernization and British Colonial Rule in Egypt, 1882-1914, 125.
144 Ibid.
145 Ibid.
146 Tignor, Modernization and British Colonial Rule in Egypt, 1882-1914, 129.
consuls under the legal code of their home country with appeals referred to the home country.\footnote{147} The Mehkemeh Sheraieh courts handled personal status cases such as issues of marriage, divorce, and inheritance based on Islamic law.\footnote{148}

According to this system, the national courts would try the Dinshwai case because the accused parties were Ottoman subjects. The status of the victims as British soldiers of the army of occupation, however, introduced a possible exception to the normal procedure. In 1895, a conflict occurred when residents of the city of Alexandria attacked sailors of the British cruiser \textit{Scout}.\footnote{149} Although Cromer recognized that the case was tried “well and promptly”\footnote{150} in the national courts, he sought to introduce a special tribunal which could “administer justice more promptly and inflict punishments of greater severity than is possible if the Egyptian Criminal Code continues to be applied in its integrity.”\footnote{151}

As a result of Cromer’s request, a khedivial decree was issued on February 25, 1895, establishing a special tribunal to try cases involving “soldiers or officers of the army of occupation,”\footnote{152} or “sailors of the British ships of war stationed in an Egyptian port.”\footnote{153} The khedivial decree would apply only in special cases in which both the British Agent and Consul-General and the general commanding the army of occupation requested that the case be handled under the decree; without such a request, cases would continue to be tried by the national courts. The special tribunal was given the authority to inflict any punishment it thought necessary

\footnote{147}{Cromer, \textit{Modern Egypt}, vol. 2, 319-320.}
\footnote{148}{Ibid., 320.}
\footnote{149}{“The Times and Mustapha Kamel,” \textit{Egyptian Gazette} (Alexandria, Egypt), 13 July 1906, p. 3; House of Commons, “Egypt. No. 1 (1895). Report on the Finances, Administration, and Condition of Egypt, and the Progress of Reforms,” Sessional Papers, C.7644, p. 27; “Preparing for Trouble in Egypt: Special Tribunal Is Formed to Try Offenses During the Ramadan,” \textit{Daily Inter Ocean}, 23 February 1895, p. 6.; and “Egypt’s Sop to England: The Khedive Creates a Tribunal Which May Offend France,” \textit{Philadelphia Inquirer}, 23 February 1895, p. 1. Though both Cromer and the news reports of the time cite the attack on the \textit{Scout} as the reason for the establishment of the special tribunal, I have been unable to find a detailed account of the case.}
\footnote{150}{House of Commons, “Egypt. No. 3 (1906). Correspondence Respecting the Attack on British Officers at Denshawai,” Sessional Papers, Cd. 3086, p. 1.}
\footnote{151}{Ibid., 2.}
\footnote{152}{Ibid., 4.}
\footnote{153}{Ibid.}
“without being bound by the provisions of the Penal Code.” No appeal was allowed, and punishments were to be carried out at once.¹⁵⁵

In a letter to Boutros Ghali, Egypt’s minister of foreign affairs, requesting the adoption of a khedivial decree, Cromer noted that exceptions in the handling of crimes against the army of occupation had been made before. He wrote, “In one instance of a serious nature a special Tribunal was called into existence, and in another case justice was administered under the direct orders of the General Officer Commanding the British troops.”¹⁵⁶ The first exception that Cromer mentions was taken as a result of an altercation between two members of the army of occupation, Lieutenants A. and B., and Egyptians near Keneseh, Egypt.¹⁵⁷ Cromer’s reasons for instituting a special tribunal, the facts of the case and the trial, and the punishments inflicted present striking parallels to the Dinshwai incident and how it was handled.

Judicial Precedents

Despite some unique elements in the Dinshwai case, British authorities were not operating in a legal vacuum, as there were judicial precedents to which they could turn for insight. On March 27, 1887, two lieutenants of the army of occupation went quail shooting near the village of Keneseh in the province of Ghizeh. While firing at a quail, Lieutenant B. peppered with shot some men who were riding by on camels and a donkey. Of the five men passing by, four were hit with shot, principally in the face and head, and one was bleeding slightly.

Although Lieutenant B. tried to offer the men baksheesh,¹⁵⁸ they refused to accept it and began

¹⁵⁴ Ibid. It is intriguing to note that this was not the first time in which a judicial body had been established in Egypt since the British occupation with powers to punish outside of the judicial code. From 1884 to 1889, Commissions of Brigandage were employed as a means of preventing lawlessness in the countryside. These bodies were abolished in 1889 when reports of their widespread use of torture to obtain confessions and their imprisonment of innocent men became widely known as a result of the investigations of the Procurer-General of the Ministry of Justice. Tignor, Modernization and British Colonial Rule in Egypt, 1882-1914, 132; and House of Commons, “Egypt. No. 3 (1906). Correspondence Respecting the Attack on British Officers at Denshawai,” Sessional Papers, Cd. 3086, p. 35.


¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 1.

¹⁵⁷ House of Commons, “Egypt. No. 10 (1887). Correspondence Respecting the Attack Made on Two Officers of Her Majesty’s Army at Keneseh, in Egypt,” Sessional Papers, C.5166, p. 1. The names of the officers are not listed in the report; however, Wilfrid Seawen Blunt relates that their names were Scoffield and Leith and that they were from a Welsh regiment. Blunt, Atrocities, 17.

seizing Lieutenant B’s gun. The gun went off, killing one of the Egyptians. There was disagreement about how this man was killed. While the British officers argued that the gun had gone off in the struggle, the Egyptians testified that the officers had repeatedly and purposefully fired at them. After the officers saw the man fall, they attempted to escape but were seized by villagers. The two officers were detained, abused, threatened, and robbed. Some friendly villagers, however, attempted to shield them, and police eventually rescued them from the villagers.

In deciding how to handle the case, Cromer wanted “some more speedy form of procedure and more exemplary form of punishment” than was possible if the matter had been left to the dilatory proceedings of the ordinary Egyptian Law Courts. Thus, he arranged for the formation of a special commission that tried the case on March 30 and 31. The four surviving men who had been peppered with shot were arrested. One of these four was sentenced to flogging and imprisonment while another was sentenced to flogging. The two remaining men were released because they were brothers of the man who had been killed. Three other Bedouins were arrested for participating in the affray “out of bad feeling and a hatred for Christians” and were convicted, receiving the punishments of flogging and imprisonment. In addition, the sheikhs and headmen of the village as well as Bedouin sheikhs and three fellaheen were convicted and sentenced to various sentences of imprisonment and/or flogging.

Major C. M. MacDonald, who was one of three members of the special commission and who prepared a report of the case, explained why the sheikhs and headmen were punished. He wrote, “This punishment of the Sheikhs and Headmen of the village will have a very good effect, for, had they wished it, they could without doubt have stopped the ill-treatment of the young officers.” He continued, “The Commission were further of opinion that, as the principal

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160 Ibid., 3.
161 Ibid., 3.
162 Ibid., 2-3.
163 Ibid., 1.
164 Ibid.
165 Ibid.
166 Sheikh Ali Memphi, a Bedouin sheikh, was released since he was the father of the man who had been killed. House of Commons, Ibid.
167 Ibid.
offenders were Bedouins, some punishment should be inflicted on the various responsible Bedouin Sheikhs.”

The special commission dictated that English military authorities carry out the sentences. Accordingly, on the afternoon of March 31 at the approximate time that the incident had occurred, sentences were enacted in the presence of the company of the regiment to which the British officers belonged, the majority of the men of the two villages involved, the headmen of the villages, and provincial officials. Wilfrid Scawen Blunt quotes a passage in the *Standard*, which describes the warning given to the villages following the punishments. The colonel commanding the Welsh regiment threatened the Egyptians that any similar incident would be punished even more severely. In response to the punishments, Cromer said, “I think the latter [flogging] carried out on the spot was very necessary.”

The 1887 case was not an isolated incident of taking extraordinary measures in disputes in which the British were involved. According to Nathan J. Brown in his discussion of law and imperialism, “Crime was one of the major obsessions of the British occupation and, when it was directed against British troops or the occupation itself, led the imperialists to employ extreme emergency methods outside the regular court structure (including military courts and invoking collective responsibility).” The 1887 case provided an example of using extraordinary methods outside of the regular court structure and of invoking collective responsibility for the accused, and the handling of the Dinshwai case would follow a similar pattern. When cases involving members of the army of occupation were tried according to normal judicial procedures, Egyptians still faced discriminatory treatment because of the “complete subservience of the Native Courts to the least hint or expression of the British Agent’s will.” Both the Montaza case of 1900 and the fox-hunting case of 1901 illustrated the British occupation’s flouting of justice in cases that involved members of the army of occupation.

The Montaza case began on June 10, 1900, when two British officers who were sailing to Abuqir were placed on shore at the private landing quay of the Khedive’s palace at Montaza.

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168 Ibid.
169 Ibid., 3-4; Mohammad Ramadan Salama, “Reading the Modernist Event from the Margins of History: The Denshawai Incident, the Trial of Djamila Bouhired and the Question of Egyptian Modernity” (Ph.D. diss., University of Wisconsin—Madison, 2005), 93; and Blunt, *Atrocities*, 18.
170 [Marsot], *Egypt and Cromer*, 171.
173 Ibid., 26-27.
Since they disembarked in an area reserved for the women of the Khedive’s household, a guard “motioned them away, and after an altercation between him and their boatmen which they did not understand, the man still opposing, they rushed on him, knocked him down and attempted to disarm him.” Some workers who were repairing a jetty answered the guard’s cries for help and beat the officers.

The British general in command at Alexandria insisted on a harsh punishment for the Egyptians, a punishment that violated both Egyptian law and justice. Egyptian government officials were hesitant to prosecute the case since it involved employees of the Khedive and happened on the Khedive’s private property. Cromer, however, intervened, pressuring the Egyptian ministers. The Egyptian prime minister thus issued a ministerial order appointing a special commission of inquiry to gather additional evidence about the case since the original police report was in favor of the Egyptians. “This special Commission consisted of two Englishmen, Mr. Corbett, the Procureur-Général, and the English Adjutant-Colonel of the garrison, with Kheyri Pasha, civil governor of Alexandria, as third.” After its investigation, the commission drew up an indictment against the guard whom the officers had attacked as well as another guard who had accompanied the officers away from the incident and was accused of striking them. Since the original guard had acted in self-defense and the British officers had entered a restricted area, there was little chance that the two Egyptians would receive a severe sentence according to Egyptian law. Therefore, the commission decided to charge the Egyptians with conspiracy and premeditation on the basis of article 220 of the Egyptian legal code. “According to this, persons forming part of a band of armed men more than five in number might be indicted as a band of highway roughs and punished with extreme penalties, and on this charge the Commission of Inquiry decided that the sentry and his companion should be tried before a Native Court at Alexandria.”

This charge was manifestly unjust: the guards did not compose a group large enough to be applicable under this article, the original guard had been alone when confronted by the officers and his boatmen, and the second guard was not with the officers when they received

\[174\] Ibid., 26.  
\[175\] Ibid., 27.  
\[176\] Ibid.  
\[177\] Ibid., 27-28.  
\[178\] Ibid., 28.  
\[179\] Ibid., 28-29.  
\[180\] Ibid., 28.
their injuries. Nevertheless, the two Egyptians were found guilty. The original guard was sentenced to eight months imprisonment, and the second guard was given three months. Upon appeal, the sentences were upheld.\footnote{181}

Another case in which political retribution rather than justice was exacted was the fox-hunting case of 1901. On July 21, some British officers broke into the garden of Wilfrid Scawen Blunt’s Egyptian home in order “to hunt the half-tame foxes there.”\footnote{182} When confronted by Egyptians in Blunt’s employ, the officers struck them with their hunting whips. The Egyptians “had at most struck one blow, and thrown a clod of earth in return, inflicting injuries so light as to have left no marks, not even a contusion.”\footnote{183}

The British general in command at Cairo called for severe punishment, and “a political colour was at once given to the affair.”\footnote{184} Blunt’s garden staff was arrested, and three of them were taken in irons to Cairo. Since the police report reflected negatively on the officers, it was thrown out, and a new inquiry was held. The Egyptians were charged with conspiracy and premeditation and tried “before a removable native judge.”\footnote{185} The prosecution asked for a sentence of three years imprisonment. Since they were Blunt’s servants, however, they were able to retain a capable lawyer. Nevertheless, they were given sentences of six, four, and three months imprisonment. Due to the political aspect of the case, both British and Egyptian officials attended the trial. The officers appealed, hoping that the Egyptians’ sentences would be lengthened. News of the case had reached England, and questions had been raised in Parliament. As a result, the appeals court reduced the sentences.\footnote{186}

Despite the mitigation of the sentences in the fox-hunting case, both the Montaza case and the fox-hunting case provide powerful examples of the British subverting justice in order to serve a political purpose, the punishment of Egyptians who came into conflict with members of the British army of occupation. In both cases, Egyptians were accused of conspiracy and premeditation despite the fact that they could not have known that the officers would be coming, and Egyptians were held responsible for conflicts that occurred between them and the British. Many aspects of these cases also would be reflected in the handling of the Dinshwai case.
The Governmental Response to Dinshwai

News of the Dinshwai incident reached the authorities very quickly. On the evening of June 13, 1906, M. Moberly, the inspector of the interior, submitted a report of the incident. The following day, Major-General G. M. Bullock, Commanding in Egypt, informed Cromer of the incident and requested that it be handled under the 1895 decree. Cromer agreed and explained his reasons in a July 12 memorandum. Cromer believed that Egypt was undergoing a “transition period from a reign of arbitrary government to that of law” and thought that during this transition period, punishments “should be prompt and severe.” The fact that the army of occupation had been involved and that he believed there had been Pan-Islamic unrest earlier that year convinced Cromer that the special tribunal should be convened. On June 14, he requested that Minister of Foreign Affairs Boutros Ghali summon the tribunal.

On the afternoon of June 13, Mohamed Ibrahim, the Chef du Parquet at Shibin-el-Kom, received a telephone message describing the Dinshwai incident. He, Mohamed Shoukri, the mudir of Menoufieh, and Moberly, the inspector of the interior, proceeded to Kamsheesh where the officers of the army of occupation were camped. Moberly met with the officers and then related Lieutenant Porter’s account of the incident to the Chef du Parquet, who began preparing procès-verbaux (written reports) of the evidence that would be used in the trial.

The following day, the Chef du Parquet ordered an examination of the wounded officers and interviewed Captain Bostock and Lieutenants Porter and Smithwick at Kamsheesh before moving the investigation to Dinshwai. After overseeing a medical examination of the injured

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188 Ibid., 23.
189 Ibid.
190 Ibid., 6, 23. This was only the second time in which the special tribunal had been used since the passage of the 1895 decree. In the 1897 Kalioub incident, the special tribunal was convened to try boys accused of throwing bricks at the army of occupation. I have not been able to find the records on this case; however, Robert Tignor reports that the outcome of the case was that Egyptians found guilty of assaulting members of the army of occupation were exiled. House of Commons, “Egypt. No. 4 (1906). Further Paper Respecting the Attack on British Officers at Denshawai,” Sessional Papers, Cd. 3091, p. 69, 73, 75; and Tignor, Modernization and British Colonial Rule in Egypt, 1882-1914, 281.
191 The Parquet was a judicial organization that investigated and prepared cases for trial. Marlowe, Cromer in Egypt, 144.
192 A mudir was a governor of a province. Ibid., 274.
193 I have been unable to determine Mr. Moberly’s full name. House of Commons, “Egypt. No. 4 (1906). Further Paper Respecting the Attack on British Officers at Denshawai,” Sessional Papers, Cd. 3091, p. 4, 20; Blunt, Atrocities, 22.
194 Major Pine-Coffin’s interview was postponed so that he could receive treatment at the hospital in Tanta.
Egyptians, he ordered that all owners of threshing-floors and fields in the vicinity of the incident, as well as inhabitants of Dinshwai, be brought up for identification before Lieutenant Porter and Captain Bostock, both of whom had accompanied him to the village. He also commanded that houses be searched, with their owners’ permission, and that any items taken from the soldiers or used in the attack upon them be confiscated. He then began questioning the accused persons.¹⁹⁵

Later in the afternoon, he received a telegram stating that the mudir of Menoufieh would take over the investigation as specified by the 1895 decree. Since the mudir had gone to Tanta to meet with the Adviser to the Ministry of Interior, the Chef du Parquet decided to continue his investigation until the mudir arrived. He also ordered that those who had been interviewed and shown to the officers be examined medically to determine if they sustained any injuries that could have been received as a result of the Dinshwai incident.¹⁹⁶

On June 15, the Chef du Parquet turned over his papers to the mudir who continued the investigation at Dinshwai. The mudir arranged for Captain Bostock and Lieutenants Porter and Smithwick as well as other witnesses to view the accused persons for identification. The mudir questioned the accused persons about their involvement in the incident. During the interrogations throughout the inquiry, the accused persons were often told who had accused them and were confronted by their accusers. If they mentioned any witnesses who could help their cases, these witnesses were examined in their presence. On June 16, the mudir ordered an assessment of the damage to the threshing-floor that caught on fire during the incident. It was found that straw and corn had been burned worth about 30 piastres and that the threshing-machine had been burned but was still functioning. In an effort to bring the remaining villagers before the witnesses for identification, a cordon was formed around Dinshwai village at 4:00 a.m. on June 17 so that any person trying to escape could be arrested.¹⁹⁷

Later in the day, Ahmed Habib, omdeh of Zaweit-el-Naoura, who had been commissioned to find the items taken from the officers during the incident, reported that he had found two of the officers’ guns at the house of Mohamed Darweesh Zahran. Two cartridges and a bag full of shot also were found at the home of a young widow, Khadra Bint Amir Abou

Khalil. On June 18, the mudir organized an experiment to test whether threshed corn could be set on fire by shots from the officers’ guns. Shots were fired at threshed corn at various distances but failed to cause the corn to ignite. He concluded that the shots of the officers had not caused the corn to catch on fire but that some accident had caused the fire. On June 19 at Shibin, Major Pine-Coffin was interviewed and asked to identify the persons involved in the incident. Later that afternoon, the investigation was closed, and the papers of the case were submitted to the Commandant of the Cairo City Police so that the accused could be tried before the special tribunal established by the 1895 decree. An indictment was issued accusing fifty-nine persons.198

The Special Tribunal

On Sunday, June 24, 1906, the special court created in accordance with the decree of 1895 convened at Shibin-el-Kom, the principal town of the district.199 The trial was held in a large tent with a platform for the members of the court constructed at one end. The accused were placed in docks next to and at right angles to this platform. Tables for the press and for those concerned in the trial, such as the members of the army of occupation, were situated in front of the docks. Several additional rows of seats for spectators who had been able to obtain tickets to the proceedings were located past the press tables.200 The press was heavily represented with over forty correspondents in attendance. Fifty-two accused occupied the docks.201 The correspondent for the Egyptian Gazette described the prisoners: “Each prisoner carried round his neck a large card bearing the number under which he is entered on the charge sheet. The accused varied in age considerably, some being but youths of 18 or 19, and others old men, but all were coarse featured, uneducated sons of the soil.”202

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198 The spelling of the names of the accused and witnesses in the Dinshwai case vary widely throughout the records. In order to reduce confusion, I have generally used the spelling listed on the indictment throughout this work. In quotes, however, I have faithfully reproduced the original. House of Commons, “Egypt. No. 4 (1906). Further Paper Respecting the Attack on British Officers at Denshawai,” Sessional Papers, Cd. 3091, p. 2-3, 5-16, 19-44, 48-51, 53-58, 60.

199 Ibid., 66; and Blunt, Atrocities, 39.


201 Of the fifty-nine accused in the indictment, only fifty-two had been captured. “Commencement of Trial,” Egyptian Gazette (Alexandria, Egypt), 25 June 1906, p. 3.

202 Ibid.
A few minutes after 10:00 a.m., the members of the court took their seats. Boutros Ghali served as president of the court as Acting Minister of Justice. He was joined by Walter Bond, Vice-President of the National Court of Appeal; William Goodenough Hayter, Acting Judicial Adviser; Lieutenant-Colonel E. R. Ludlow, Acting Judge-Advocate of the army of occupation; and Ahmed Fathy Zagloul, President of the National Court of First Instance of Cairo. Ibrahim Hilbawi served as prosecuting counsel. The government had retained Ahmad Lutfi al-Sayyid to defend the prisoners. Two additional attorneys, Mohamed Youssef and Ismail Assem, also had volunteered their services as defense counsel. The names of the accused were read, and they were charged with committing “an aggression against officers of the Army of Occupation, which aggression resulted in the death of one officer (Captain Bull) and resulted also in the serious wounding of two other officers (Major Pine-Coffin and Lieutenant Smithwick).”

The three defense attorneys stated the prisoners for whom they would be responsible to defend. Boutros Ghali began to ask each of the accused how he plead to the charge when it was found that the numbers of the accused did not correspond with the names and numbers on the indictment so the proceedings were delayed by a half hour so that the numbers could be updated in agreement with the indictment. Once the sitting resumed, each prisoner answered the charge, denying his guilt. Some of the accused affirmed that they had done nothing while others insisted that they had not been present at the place of the incident.

On Sunday, June 24 and Monday, June 25, 1906, the twenty-seven witnesses for the prosecution were heard. The evidence was presented in Arabic, and the Ministry of Justice had retained three translators to translate the officers’ testimonies. Members of the court could

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203 Ibid.
204 Minister of Foreign Affairs Boutros Ghali had no judicial experience; however, he had served in the department of justice for several years and was acting minister of justice during the minister’s absence. House of Commons, “Egypt. No. 3 (1906). Correspondence Respecting the Attack on British Officers at Denshawai,” Sessional Papers, Cd. 3086, p. 14; and United Kingdom, FO 371/66, Question in House of Commons 6-28-06.
208 Ibid., 67-68; and “Commencement of Trial,” Egyptian Gazette (Alexandria, Egypt), 25 June 1906, p. 3.
question the witnesses directly. Following the witnesses’ testimonies, the counsels for the defense were also given the opportunity to question them.209

The first witness was Major J. E. Pine-Coffin, who had his arm in a sling and was limping slightly; he was allowed to be seated during his testimony. He explained that he and his four fellow officers had left for Dinshwai at 1:00 p.m. on June 13 in order to shoot pigeons. When they approached the village, he sent the ombashi before them to alert the residents. They were met by Hassan Ali Mahfouz, whom Pine-Coffin believed to be a representative of the omdeh, as well as four or five other Egyptians. Through his guide, Pine-Coffin asked if they might shoot and was told that they could do so, but only far from the village. His party separated into two groups and began to shoot.210

Pine-Coffin noticed some fellaheen attempting to take the gun of Captain Bull, one of the members of his group. He saw smoke and was told by the guide that a fire had broken out in the tibn (chopped straw) and that the other group had been surrounded. He then approached the other group, around which a crowd had gathered. Lieutenant Porter informed him that his gun had accidentally discharged while the Egyptians were trying to take it from him, hitting a woman whom he believed to be dead. In an attempt to end the dispute, Pine-Coffin relinquished his gun and ordered the other officers to do the same. He told Lieutenant Porter that he would pretend to arrest him in order to get him safely away from the crowd. As the officers proceeded toward the carriages, the crowd began to beat them. He recognized Mohamed Darweesh Zahran as being the ringleader of the crowd and inciting the mob to beat the soldiers. He had given his watch to Mohamed Ali Samak as compensation in an attempt to end the dispute. As a result of the beating he received, he lost consciousness three times.211 In response to a question about whether the pigeons were private property or wild, Pine-Coffin stated that he thought “pigeons were public property when at certain distances.”212 Before ending his testimony, he related that he had spent three years in the country, had always been treated well by the omdehs and notables, and had treated the Egyptians well and bore them no ill feeling.213

210 “Commencement of Trial,” Egyptian Gazette (Alexandria, Egypt), 25 June 1906, p. 3; and United Kingdom, FO 881/8986, “Denshawai Case: Summary of Evidence,” p. 3-5.
211 “Commencement of Trial,” Egyptian Gazette (Alexandria, Egypt), 25 June 1906, p. 3; and United Kingdom, FO 881/8986, “Denshawai Case: Summary of Evidence,” p. 3-5.
213 Ibid.; and “Commencement of Trial,” Egyptian Gazette (Alexandria, Egypt), 25 June 1906, p. 3.
Lieutenant S. J. Smithwick then gave his account of the Dinshwai incident. His first indication that there was a problem came when the guide approached him in great excitement and motioned for him to come. He saw a crowd of people, heard the report of a gun, and watched the crowd disperse to reveal Lieutenant Porter and an Egyptian holding Porter’s gun. He saw the Major take one of Porter’s arms, and he took the other as if Porter was being placed under arrest. Pine-Coffin ordered him to surrender his gun, but before he could do so, Mohamed Darweesh Zahran took it from him. When the soldiers attempted to leave, the mob prevented them, and someone pulled Smithwick off his horse and began beating him. He saw Major Pine-Coffin and Captain Bull being beaten and intervened to help the Major. They were taken to the threshing-floor to see the wounded woman. The Egyptians placed tbn around them as if they meant to burn them. One Egyptian passed a hoe in front of his neck in a gesture intimating that they would be killed. He lost consciousness from the blows and was robbed of his possessions. One Egyptian offered him water, and some Egyptians protected the officers from the mob.\footnote{United Kingdom, FO 881/8986, “Denshawai Case: Summary of Evidence,” p. 5-6; and “Commencement of Trial,” \emph{Egyptian Gazette} (Alexandria, Egypt), 25 June 1906, p. 3.}

Captain Bostock was part of the second group of officers that went to the south side of the village to shoot. He explained that he and Porter were about 100 meters apart and 100 meters from the tbn. After he had fired nine shots, he noticed the people gathering around him and motioned for them to stand back. When they did not, he retreated 100 yards. Then, he saw a fire break out 100 yards from where he and Porter were. The Egyptians seized Porter’s gun and surrounded them.\footnote{Ahmad Lutfi al-Sayyid asked Captain Dr. Bostock why the people had crowded around him, and Bostock replied that the people had interfered with his shooting before the fire broke out.} He attempted to reach the carriages while trying to calm the people by offering them baksheesh. After the Egyptians would not allow them to leave, he decided to run for help. Upon looking back he saw Captain Bull running behind him and bleeding and asked how he was. Bull replied that he was all right. When he saw Captain Bull later in the market, Bull had three wounds in the head and face and was in serious condition. After Bull died, Dr. Bostock examined him and determined that his death had been caused by concussion of the brain and sunstroke.\footnote{United Kingdom, FO 881/8986, “Denshawai Case: Summary of Evidence,” p. 6-7; and “Commencement of Trial,” \emph{Egyptian Gazette} (Alexandria, Egypt), 25 June 1906, p. 3.}

The prosecutor Ibrahim Hilbawi then requested that Dr. Harold Nolan, the medico-legal expert to the national courts, be called to state the cause of Captain Bull’s death. Dr. Nolan
testified that Bull had received wounds from a blunt instrument; however, the direct cause of his death was sunstroke. Dr. Nolan explained “that, though the sunstroke was the cause of his death, yet the blows inflicted (upon the deceased) caused concussion of the brain and rendered the deceased extremely susceptible to sunstroke (literally, liable to be greatly affected by the sunstroke).” Ismail Assem asked Dr. Nolan if sunstroke alone could cause death, and Dr. Nolan replied, “Yes; it may by itself cause death. The wounds found on the body of the victim were not of a nature to cause death alone.”

The next witness, Lieutenant Porter, explained that he took his position to shoot to the southeastern side of the agricultural road between 200 and 300 yards from the village and about 150 yards from the nearest tibn floor. After Captain Bostock had fired a few shots, Porter noticed that the Egyptians were gathering around Bostock and interfering with him. He saw a fire break out in the tibn and witnessed about fifty Egyptians coming from the village; some worked to put out the fire while the rest gathered around Captain Bostock. Some Egyptians attempted to seize his gun. Porter tried to unload it but failed to do so and thus put it at safety. After his gun was taken from him, it discharged, and he saw a woman lying on the ground. Major Pine-Coffin came up and pretended to arrest him. Until this point, he had not been struck but had been pulled about, tearing his coat. The Egyptians began to throw bricks and dry mud at them. At one point, he heard someone say, “You had better run.” He related how the Egyptians beat them, forced them to sit on the tibn as if they meant to burn them, and took them to see the wounded woman. Some friendly Egyptians intervened, forming a ring around them and taking them to a mound a short distance away. Two mounted Egyptian police also came up and asked them about their stolen possessions. Once Major Pine-Coffin and Lieutenant Smithwick were able to walk, they were taken back to their carriages. Porter concluded that the crowd had a hostile intent since he saw no children in it.

219 Ibid.
221 Ibid.
Other Witnesses

Abd-el-Aal Sakr, the officers’ guide, testified that they had been met by a grey-haired man, Hassan Ali Mahfouz, who had told them: “Do not shoot near the village, but shoot at a distance from it.” Abd-el-Aal Sakr told him that the ombashi had been sent to alert the omdeh and sheikhs that they intended to shoot. When they began to shoot, a fire broke out in the threshing-floor. He saw the Egyptians trying to take Lieutenant Porter’s gun, which then went off, and recognized a woman and the sheikh of ghaffirs as attempting to seize the gun. Porter was then called to confirm this and testified that though many people were attempting to seize his gun, there was no woman among them.

Several other witnesses to the incident then testified. One of the carriage drivers, Bekhit Said, said that they had met Hassan Ali Mahfouz, who was angry, and asked, “Are you coming to shoot pigeons?” Both carriage drivers testified that they had also been beaten during the incident. The general messenger to the village, Ibrahim Moussa, confirmed that Hassan Ali Mahfouz had spoken to them. He testified that Mahfouz was with seven or eight people and told them not to shoot, saying “You came last year and the year before and excited the people, but if you will shoot that is your business.”

Next, the omdeh of Zaweit-el-Naoura, Ahmed Habib, gave evidence. On June 16, the mudir of Menoufieh, Mohamed Shoukri, summoned him and asked him to investigate the Dinshwai incident and, if possible, recover the officers’ guns. He addressed the sheikhs and villagers of Dinshwai, telling them that the consequences of the incident were serious and that the stolen items must be found. He was told by Abd-el-Razik Hassan Mahfouz that Mohamed Darweesh Zahran had two of the officers’ guns in his home, and when he went to investigate, found the two guns. During Ahmed Habib’s and the subsequent testimony, several of the defendants spoke out in court. For instance, Mohamed Darweesh Zahran explained that he had had a dispute over the selling of some straw with Ahmed Habib and that this caused him to give evidence against him. Zahran also argued that the guns found had been taken outside of his house.

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224 Ibid., 9; and “Yesterday’s Hearing,” Egyptian Gazette (Alexandria, Egypt), 26 June 1906, p. 3; and United Kingdom, FO 881/8986, “Denshawai Case: Summary of Evidence, p. 8.
226 Ibid., 9; and “Yesterday’s Hearing,” Egyptian Gazette (Alexandria, Egypt), 26 June 1906, p. 3.
The trial did not proceed without incident, as some of the defendants spoke without the judges’ permission. The defendants who interrupted the testimony were warned by the court, and when they continued to interject, three of them, Mohamed Abd-el-Nebi-el-Moazzin, Ahmed Ali Shaalan, and Abd-el-Razik Hassan Mahfouz, were removed from the court for the rest of that sitting. The *Egyptian Gazette* noted the interruptions and reported, “The evidence, too, given by the fellaheen was almost impossible to follow and the interpretations given by the translator were almost equally incomprehensible, chiefly owing to his being nearly inaudible.”

Ahmed Habib testified further that he had told the villagers that they could put any of the stolen items in an abandoned sakieh (well with water-wheel) anonymously. Through this means, he discovered a third gun.

The next two witnesses offered an explanation for the cause of the incident. Muhammad Omar Zayed, a peasant of Dinshwai, testified “that the whole matter had arisen through the people having been angered last year by the shooting of the pigeons.” He related that Hassan Ali Mahfouz and the other owners of the pigeons had expressed regret that the officers had shot the pigeons without being seized the previous year. Mohamed-el-Shazli, the omdeh of Dinshwai, reported that he had been absent from Dinshwai on June 13 to attend a meeting at the mudirieh (headquarters of the province) but had heard that the incident was caused because the Egyptians were angry at the shooting of their pigeons.

Ali Mahfouz, sheikh balad (village authority ranking after omdeh), testified to seeing Mohamed Abd-el-Nebi-el-Moazzin, Ahmed Mohamed Selim, and Abd-el-Razik Hassan Mahfouz seizing Lieutenant Porter’s gun. He and the sheikh of ghaffirs attempted to release the gun from them but failed. The gun discharged, injuring the wife of Mohamed Abd-el-Nebi-el-Moazzin. He further stated that after the officers had seen what happened, they fired three shots at the Egyptians in an attempt to scare them, injuring some of them.

The ombashi of police, Ahmad Hassan Zagzoog, stated that when they approached Dinshwai, he had gone to inform the omdeh, sheikhs, and ghaffirs. When he learned that the

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229 “Yesterday’s Hearing,” *Egyptian Gazette* (Alexandria, Egypt), 26 June 1906, p. 3.
231 Ibid.
232 Ibid.
233 Ibid., 10-11; and “Yesterday’s Hearing,” *Egyptian Gazette* (Alexandria, Egypt), 26 June 1906, p. 3.
omdeh was absent, he asked for his representative and returned to the officers. He saw a fire and went to put it out. Then, he saw someone attempting to seize Lieutenant Porter’s gun and tried to prevent this when a shot went off wounding a woman. The Egyptians began to beat them. Zagzoog claimed another British officer fired a shot, injuring a grey-haired man in the leg. Mr. Porter was called and testified that he had not seen the ombashi trying to prevent the seizing of his gun; he only saw Zagzoog about 60 yards away in the direction of the fire. In response to questions, Zagzoog claimed “he did not run away, and did not lose his consciousness.” He wanted to report the incident by telephone, but some Egyptians seized the reins of his horse and prevented him from doing so until Mohamed-el-Kholi drove them away. He was asked why he had not used his carabine to prevent the beating of the officers and replied that he had dropped it and one of the Egyptians had placed it in the carriage. When he tried to retrieve the weapon, one of the officers said to leave it.

Finally, the witnesses for the prosecution dealt with the question of whether the villagers of Dinshwai had advance notice that the soldiers were coming to shoot. Mohamed-el-Shazli, the omdeh of Dinshwai, had not expected the officers when he left for the mudirieh on June 13. Omar Mohamed Zaid, sheikh at Dinshwai, testified that they had not been warned that the officers were coming. Abou-el-Ela Harbi, a guard of the telephone at Abou Kullus, stated that he took a message that the officers planned to shoot at Dinshwai and attempted to deliver it to Dinshwai’s omdeh, but upon finding him absent, delivered it to Omar Mohamed Zaid and requested a receipt. As he left after delivering the message, he saw the ombashi approaching to alert the officials that the soldiers had arrived to shoot.

Once the prosecution’s witnesses had been heard, the counsels for the defense were given the opportunity to call witnesses for the defense. They, however, renounced their right to do so. This was unusual since at the beginning of the trial Ismail Assem had stated that he had witnesses for the defense of Mohamed Salem Ads and Ali-el-Amroussy. Although neither of these men were among the ringleaders singled out by the prosecution, they both had been

235 Ibid., 13.
236 Ibid.
237 Ibid., 10-11.
238 Ibid., 14.
recognized by Major Pine-Coffin during the preliminary inquiry. Thus, the failure to present witnesses on their behalf seems negligent.  

The Arguments of the Prosecution  

On Monday, June 25, 1906, and Tuesday, June 26, 1906, Ibrahim Hilbawi, the counsel for the prosecution addressed the court for three hours and fifteen minutes. In an effort to charm his British audience, Hilbawi flattered them. He began his pleading by reviewing the advantages of the British occupation of Egypt and praising the British army of occupation, which he said was “the finest standing army in the world.” He next reviewed the historical background for the establishment of the decree of 1895 and recounted that this trial of the Dinshwai incident was the second in which it had been used. He then summarized the incident, relating how the officers had come to shoot, how Lieutenant Porter and Captain Bostock had been in the second group of shooters 95 meters from the threshing-floors, how a fire had broken out in a threshing-floor prompting the Egyptians to attempt to seize Lieutenant Porter’s gun, how the officers had come to assist Porter, how Major Pine-Coffin had ordered them to relinquish their guns, how the officers were beaten, threatened, and robbed, and how Captain Bull and Bostock had run for help.

Hilbawi argued that the villagers had known of the officers’ arrival as a result of a notice given on June 10 that the troops would be passing through the district. He claimed that the pigeons were wild and that the dovecots were only traps. He contended that the Egyptians had intentionally set fire to the threshing-floor to provide a pretext for the attack, claiming that they

242 “Yesterday’s Hearing,” Egyptian Gazette (Alexandria, Egypt), 26 June 1906, p. 3.
were “by nature” capable of any crime.” Even if one believed that the officers had caused the fire, he asserted, there was no reason to continue the attack after the officers had given up their guns. Since the officers had sworn to tell the truth, he believed their assertions that they had not started the fire or fired upon the Egyptians.

Hilbawi rejected Ahmad Hassan Zagzoog’s claim that an officer had fired on the crowd and related that the prosecution initially had been hesitant to call him as a witness “as they did not wish to put forward the man as an example of the shortcomings of the Egyptian police.” “They would rather conceal the fact that the police were unintelligent and incapable.” When the counsel for the accused wished to hear his evidence, however, they were willing to have his evidence presented. Hilbawi claimed that the ombashi was guilty of neglect of duty by going to lunch with a friend instead of notifying the omdeh of the officers’ intention to shoot. He argued that the four Egyptians who had been injured were hit by a single shot from Lieutenant Porter’s gun as it was taken from him. The fact that they were all hit in the legs proves that they were wounded accidentally. He claimed that the evidence proved premeditated murder stemming from the Egyptians’ resentment at the shooting of pigeons the previous year.

Hilbawi argued that the attack was one-sided: “When a quarrel arises both parties usually exchange blows, but in this case only one side attacked. The officers did not even curse the villagers! Two of the officers went ahead for help and three remained at the mercy of an ignorant and savage crowd.” Hilbawi asserted that if the officers had understood Arabic, they would have been able to recount the villagers’ remarks that showed “proof of their evil intentions.” He explained that premeditation could be conditional in that murder was planned if a certain condition was met. For instance, the Egyptians had been upset with the shooting of pigeons the previous year and had determined to kill anyone who came to shoot pigeons again. Finally, he claimed that the ringleaders in the attack were Hassan Ali Mahfouz, Ahmed Mohamed-el-Seessy, Youssef Hussein Selim, Mohamed Abd-el-Nebi-el-Moazzin, Ahmed Abd-

247 Ibid.
248 Ibid.
249 Ibid.
250 Ibid.
el-Aal Mahfouz, El Said Issa Salem, and Mohamed Darweesh Zahran and asked that they be condemned to death. He summarized the evidence against the remainder of the defendants and requested that they be condemned to the punishment immediately inferior to death. He added a recital of the British officers’ fine character and a statement of their military service.\(^\text{254}\)

**The Arguments of the Defense**

At 11:30 a.m. on Tuesday, June 26, 1906, the counsels for the defense began making their case. Mohamed Youssef was the first to speak, arguing until 1:00 p.m. He began by expressing his relief that this was only the second attack against the army of occupation.\(^\text{255}\) He hoped that the incident, “the work of ignorant and savage people, inhabiting a criminal district,” would not change the relationship between the army of the occupation and the Egyptians.\(^\text{256}\) He expressed his gratitude “for the liberty which the Court allowed them.”\(^\text{257}\) He pointed out that Hassan Ali Mahfouz had warned the officers before they began to shoot. He argued that the cause of the incident was not the shooting of the pigeons, but shooting near the village, the threshing-floor fire and the wounding of the Egyptians. He assumed that the fire had been caused by accident and rejected the assertion that the Egyptians had intended to murder since they did not carry weapons and did not kill the three officers left behind. He believed that the officers had fired on the crowd intentionally to defend their comrade. He rejected the assumption that Porter’s gun had gone off accidentally since he had testified to putting it at safety and the Egyptians did not know how to cock it. Even if, however, Porter’s gun had discharged accidentally, he did not believe that this shot accounted for the injuries of four Egyptians. He questioned the officers’ ability to recognize so many defendants. He acknowledged that the Egyptians often form a crowd, but he did not understand why they had not killed the officers left behind if they had wanted to do so. He summarized the case of each accused for whose defense he had been selected and concluded by asking for the acquittal of all of the accused.\(^\text{258}\)

\(^{254}\) Ibid., 70-73; and “Death Sentence,” *Egyptian Gazette* (Alexandria, Egypt), 27 June 1906, p. 3.

\(^{255}\) In describing this as the second attack against the army of occupation, Mohamed Youssef appears to have been referring to the fact that it was the second case tried under the decree of 1895. There had been other attacks against individual as well as groups of soldiers. For example, a description of the Keneseh case of 1887 appears earlier in this chapter. House of Commons, “Egypt. No. 4 (1906). Further Paper Respecting the Attack on British Officers at Denshawai,” Sessional Papers, Cd. 3091, p. 73-74; and “Death Sentence,” *Egyptian Gazette* (Alexandria, Egypt), 27 June 1906, p. 3.

\(^{256}\) “Death Sentence,” *Egyptian Gazette* (Alexandria, Egypt), 27 June 1906, p. 3.

\(^{257}\) Ibid.

The court then took a three-hour recess. When it resumed at 4:00 p.m., Dr. Harold Nolan, the medico-legal expert to the national courts, was called to determine whether the four injured Egyptians had been hit by the same shot. He testified that he believed all had been hit by one shot and that a single charge could cause such injuries. Then, Ahmad Lutfi al-Sayyid spoke as a member of the counsel of defense. He argued that there was no premeditation but that “the crime was caused by the fire and the excitement arose on the spot and at the moment.” He asserted that Mohamed Abd-el-Nebi-el-Moazzin had believed that the officers’ shooting caused the fire, though it had since proven otherwise. He claimed that while theft with violence could be proved, murder could not since Captain Bull’s injuries were insufficient to cause death by themselves. If it had not been so hot on June 13, death may not have occurred. He dealt with individual defendants: one whom he believed to be insane, six against whom the evidence was weak, and two (Youssef Hussein Selim and Mohamed Darweesh Zahran) for whom he appealed for mercy. He concluded by saying that all of the accused had been affected by their environment and asked for mercy in their punishment.

Ismail Assem then spoke on behalf of the defendants for whom he was responsible. He argued that news that the officers were coming to shoot did not reach the village until the officers’ arrival, thus refuting premeditation. After relating the advantages that the occupation had brought, he asserted that the affray had been intensified by imagination, which caused Captains Bull and Bostock to flee. He acknowledged that the Egyptians had acted cruelly. He then dealt individually with the accusations against each of his clients. When he concluded his arguments, the court took a thirty-minute recess. At 5:45 p.m. when the court resumed, the defendants were given an opportunity to add a statement to what their counsel had said. After

June 1906, p. 3.


261 The temperature that day was 42º C or 107.6º F.


263 Presumably, Ismail Assem meant that the officers’ fear had magnified the seriousness of the situation in their minds, causing them to flee. House of Commons, “Egypt. No. 4 (1906). Further Paper Respecting the Attack on British Officers at Denshawai,” Sessional Papers, Cd. 3091, p. 75-76; and “Death Sentence,” *Egyptian Gazette* (Alexandria, Egypt), 27 June 1906, p. 3.

these statements, which lasted about fifteen minutes, were given, the court adjourned for the day.\textsuperscript{265}

**The Judgment**

On Wednesday, June 27, 1906, the court reconvened at 8:30 a.m. in order to pass judgment on the defendants. One of the defendants, El Said Suleiman Kheirullah, experienced an epileptic seizure, and Dr. Nolan went to his assistance. The court waited until the defendant could return, which was nearly 9:00 a.m., before continuing.\textsuperscript{266} *The Egyptian Gazette* noted the excitement of the audience and the increased police and military presence from which it was assumed that the punishments would be harsh.\textsuperscript{267} The secretary to the court, Osman Mortada, summarized the incident and the court’s findings that the Egyptians had beaten the officers with the intention to kill,\textsuperscript{268} making the crime of “homicide, preceded, accompanied, or followed by the crime of robbery with violence.”\textsuperscript{269}

The court concluded that the crime was intentional and prearranged as evidenced by the fire and sudden increase of the mob. In describing the villagers, the court found: “They were merciless to a blameless officer. People were present among the crowd who were strong enough to prevent the murder, but these were more severe and more merciless than the others.”\textsuperscript{270} The court continued, “As what makes the crime worse is that it was committed against men who had seen service and could have shot the aggressors as they did the pigeons, but they had peaceful intentions. They surrendered their weapons, making them defenceless.”\textsuperscript{271}

The court then delivered its judgment, convicting twenty-one of the fifty-two defendants present. Hassan Ali Mahfouz, Youssef Hussein Selim, El Said Issa Salem, and Mohamed Darweesh Zahran were sentenced to death by hanging at Dinshwai. Mohamed Abd-el-Nebi-el-Moazzin and Ahmed Abd-el-Aal Mahfouz were sentenced to life imprisonment. Ahmed Mohamed-el-Seessy was sentenced to fifteen years in prison. Mohamed Ali Samak, Abdou-el-


\textsuperscript{266} Ibid.; and “Denishwai Trial,” *Egyptian Gazette* (Alexandria, Egypt), 28 June 1906, p. 3.

\textsuperscript{267} There were twice as many police guarding the docks, and a detachment of the 6th Inniskilling Dragoons were stationed behind the docks on either side. “Denishwai Trial,” *Egyptian Gazette* (Alexandria, Egypt), 28 June 1906, p. 3.

\textsuperscript{268} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{269} “Denishwai Trial,” *Egyptian Gazette* (Alexandria, Egypt), 28 June 1906, p. 3.

\textsuperscript{270} Ibid.
Bakli, Ali Ali Shaalan, Mohamed Mustapha Mahfouz, Raslan-el-Said Ali, and El Issawy Mohamed Ahmed Mahfouz were sentenced to seven years imprisonment. Hassan Ismail-el-Seessy, Ibrahim Hassanein-el-Seessy, and Mohamed-el-Ghubashi-el-Said Ali were sentenced to one-year imprisonment as well as fifty lashes to be given at Dinshwai. Finally, El Said-el-Oufi, Azab Omar Mahfouz, El Said Suleiman Kheirullah, Abd-el-Hadi Shaheen, and Mohamed Ahmed-el-Seessy were to be given fifty lashes at Dinshwai. The rest of the accused were acquitted.\textsuperscript{272} The \textit{Egyptian Gazette} related, “The sentences were received by the prisoners without a word being uttered by any of them and perfect order was maintained throughout the proceedings.”\textsuperscript{273}

**The Sentences**

The following day, Thursday, June 28, 1906, the executions and floggings were carried out at Dinshwai. In an area northwest of and facing the village\textsuperscript{274} “midway between the places where the two groups of officers had originally taken up their positions for shooting pigeons,”\textsuperscript{275} a rectangle measuring 50 yards by 30 yards was roped off. In the center, the gallows and the triangles were set up 20 yards apart. The Egyptian police formed a cordon of about 300 yards around the punishment enclosure. They were supplemented by one hundred thirty-seven British troops from the Inniskilling Dragoons, military mounted police, and mounted infantry who surrounded the punishment enclosure, facing inward. Three tents had been erected, one for the prisoners awaiting sentence, one for the prisoners who had received their lashes, and one for the bodies of those executed. The representatives of the press were allowed on the main road, but no one was allowed within the punishment enclosure.\textsuperscript{276} The prisoners arrived about 1:00 p.m. riding in carts and heavily guarded. The first cart held the prisoners to be executed who were


\textsuperscript{273} “Denishwai Trial,” \textit{Egyptian Gazette} (Alexandria, Egypt), 28 June 1906, p. 3.

\textsuperscript{274} House of Commons, “Egypt. No. 3 (1906). Correspondence Respecting the Attack on British Officers at Denshawai,” Sessional Papers, Cd. 3086, p. 18.

\textsuperscript{275} United Kingdom, FO 371/66, “Mr. Machell’s Report Respecting Execution of Sentences on Prisoners Convicted of Having Attacked British Officers at Denshawai.” In the published version of this report as edited by Charles de Mansfeld Findlay, the first secretary in the diplomatic service who was acting for Lord Cromer during Cromer’s leave, the location of the execution of the sentences was altered to read “on the spot where the officers had been attacked.” House of Commons, “Egypt. No. 3 (1906). Correspondence Respecting the Attack on British Officers at Denshawai,” Sessional Papers, Cd. 3086, p. 18.

\textsuperscript{276} House of Commons, “Egypt. No. 3 (1906). Correspondence Respecting the Attack on British Officers at Denshawai,” Sessional Papers, Cd. 3086, p. 18-19.
“chained, handcuffed, and bound to each other by connecting anklets.”

The second cart contained the prisoners to be flogged. About 500 Egyptians had arrived from various areas of Menoufieh to witness the carrying out of the sentences. The villagers of Dinshwai itself were held within the village boundaries by a cordon of police.

At 1:30 p.m., the proceedings began with a British officer sounding “attention.” Mohamed Shoukri, the mudir of Menoufieh, called the first prisoner for execution, Hassan Ali Mahfouz. The Commandant of Police, who was standing near the prisoners’ tent, repeated the name. Hassan Ali Mahfouz was unfettered and brought before the mudir flanked by two Egyptian policeman with fixed bayonets. After the escort was ordered to “port arms,” the mudir read the sentence. The report prepared by Mr. Machell, adviser to the ministry of interior, described the first execution: “The accused prays loudly, and at a signal from the Mudir the executioner and his assistants pinion him. He is then led to the scaffold and guided up the steps. Hassan Aly Mahfuz, standing on the trap-door, before the cap was drawn over his head, paused in his prayers, and in a loud voice invoked ruin upon the houses of those who had given evidence against him. The Mudir gave the signal, the bolt was drawn, and death was instantaneous.”

The body of Hassan Ali Mahfouz was left hanging while the first two prisoners were flogged. Then, his body was removed, and the second prisoner was hanged. Two more floggings and then another hanging—such was the pattern until four men had been executed and seven had been flogged. Those undergoing flogging made loud groans in response to the lash, and after Ibrahim Hassanein-el-Seessy had received three or four lashes, he cried that he would rather be hung than flogged. Occasionally, loud wails could be heard coming from the women in the village. By 2:30 p.m., the punishments were over. The bodies were prepared for burial and

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278 Ibid.
281 Unfortunately, I have been unable to determine Mr. Machell’s full name. House of Commons, “Egypt. No. 3 (1906). Correspondence Respecting the Attack on British Officers at Denshawai,” Sessional Papers, Cd. 3086, p. 19.
282 One prisoner, El Said Suleiman Kheirullah, was exempted from his sentence of flogging on Dr. Nolan’s recommendation since he was deemed unfit to undergo the punishment due to his epilepsy. House of Commons, “Egypt. No. 3 (1906). Correspondence Respecting the Attack on British Officers at Denshawai,” Sessional Papers, Cd. 3086, p. 19-20.
284 Ibid. In Mr. Machell’s original report on the execution of the sentences, he had mentioned the noise made by the women of the village, saying, “the women on the house-tops made a considerable noise.” United Kingdom, FO 371/66, “Mr. Machell’s Report Respecting Execution of Sentences on Prisoners Convicted of Having Attacked
taken to the cemetery under police guard. Once they had been buried, the gallows and triangles were packed and the tents dismantled.\footnote{House of Commons, “Egypt. No. 3 (1906). Correspondence Respecting the Attack on British Officers at Denshawai,” Sessional Papers, Cd. 3086, p. 19.}

The mudir remained behind to inform the villagers of Dinshwai of their corporate punishment. Dinshwai would be deprived of an omdeh and attached to an adjacent village. All of its original ghaffirs were dismissed and their arms and equipment withdrawn. The village was left under the authority of one sheikh, one wekil, and twenty specially selected ghaffirs. The villagers would be responsible for the ghaffirs’ pay.\footnote{Ibid., 19-20.}

**Justice?**

The spectacle of Dinshwai was over. Four villagers were dead, seven were flogged, and twelve were in prison. The village itself had been punished. It remains to be seen whether the Dinshwai investigation, trial, and judgment represented an appropriate response to the incident. In order to determine this, it is necessary to discuss whether the investigation and trial were prejudiced, whether the investigation into the incident was conducted properly, how the villagers and British officers were portrayed during the trial, the cause of the incident, whether the officers’ fired at the Egyptians, if the judges were qualified to try the case, whether the defense and witnesses were accorded their proper consideration and rights, and finally if the judgment fit the crime committed.

The first issue that must be examined is whether the investigation and trial were prejudiced. Lord Cromer’s decision to call the special tribunal demonstrated the importance he placed on the case. In 1895 in a letter to Minister of Foreign Affairs Boutros Ghali, Cromer suggested that a special tribunal be created which could “in case of need, administer justice more promptly and inflict punishments of greater severity than is possible if the Egyptian Criminal Code continues to be applied in its integrity.”\footnote{Ibid., 2.} Cromer’s emphasis on the special tribunal’s capacity to inflict more severe punishments than those administered under the Egyptian criminal
code could have influenced those investigating and judging the case to treat the defendants harshly.\textsuperscript{288}

In addition, the Ministry of the Interior issued a general account of the case to the press on June 17 while the preliminary investigation was still underway. At this point in the investigation, the mudir had not performed his experiment to determine if threshed corn could be set on fire by the officers’ shots, and Major Pine-Coffin, the commander of the officers involved in the incident, had not been interviewed.\textsuperscript{289} In an extract from \textit{Al-Liwa} on June 19, 1906, the paper criticized those newspapers that had passed judgment on the case based solely on the Ministry of the Interior’s account. The paper reviewed its own record of printing both the governmental account as well as the villagers’ testimony and analyzing the differences between the two. It, however, pointed out that if the preliminary inquiry determined the final outcome of a case, there would be no need for a trial with statements from the prosecution and defendants.\textsuperscript{290} The premature release of the evidence in the case before it had been completely gathered could have prejudiced the members of the special tribunal in favor of the governmental account of the case.

The preliminary investigation was directed by Chef du Parquet Mohamed Ibrahim on June 13 and 14 and by Mohamed Shoukri, mudir of Menoufieh, from June 15 to June 19. Mohamed Shoukri had previously been the President of the Tantah court and thus had judicial experience.\textsuperscript{291} Mohamed Ibrahim also assisted the mudir even after he had turned the charge of the investigation over to him.\textsuperscript{292} There were some aspects of the investigation in which more military than judicial actions were taken. For instance, Mohamed Ibrahim ordered that owners of threshing-floors and fields in the area of the incident as well as the inhabitants of the village be brought up and shown to two of the British officers. He also ordered the houses of the villagers searched, though he did ask for their owners’ permission; what action would have been taken if this permission was refused was not stated.\textsuperscript{293} Finally, Mohamed Shoukri’s order to place a

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item \textsuperscript{288} Ibid., 8-10; and House of Commons, “Egypt. No. 4 (1906). Further Paper Respecting the Attack on British Officers at Denshawai,” Sessional Papers, Cd. 3091, p. 53-58.
\item \textsuperscript{290} United Kingdom, FO 371/66, “Extract from ‘El-Lewa’ of June 19, 1906.”
\item \textsuperscript{291} House of Commons, “Egypt. No. 3 (1906). Correspondence Respecting the Attack on British Officers at Denshawai,” Sessional Papers, Cd. 3086, p. 12.
\item \textsuperscript{292} House of Commons, “Egypt. No. 4 (1906). Further Paper Respecting the Attack on British Officers at Denshawai,” Sessional Papers, Cd. 3091, p. 20.
\item \textsuperscript{293} Ibid., 7-8.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
cordon around the village at 4:00 a.m. on June 17 in order to bring the remaining villagers who
had not been examined and show them to the victims more closely resembled a military
operation than a criminal investigation.\textsuperscript{294}

There was a marked difference in the way in which the British officers and the Egyptians
were presented during the trial. Ibrahim Hilbawi, the counsel for the prosecution, took the
officers at their word that they had not started the fire in the threshing-floor or fired at the
villagers. He spoke of their “fine character” and remarked that they had seen military service.\textsuperscript{295}
In contrast, he described the Egyptians repeatedly as “capable of any crime.”\textsuperscript{296} He also
disparaged the evidence of Ahmad Hassan Zagzoog, the ombashi of police, referring to him as
“an example of the shortcomings of the Egyptian police” who were “unintelligent and
incapable.”\textsuperscript{297} Finally, he assumed that if the officers had understood Arabic, they could have
given much more evidence that the villagers wanted to harm them. The counsel for the defense
accepted this negative characterization of the villagers. Mohamed Youssef, one of the counsel
for the defense, argued that the incident was “the work of ignorant and savage people, inhabiting
a criminal district.”\textsuperscript{298} Ahmad Lutfi al-Sayyid, another member of the counsel for the defense,
ended his pleading by asking for mercy for the defendants who “were living in a ‘milieu’ which
had influenced their actions.”\textsuperscript{299} The blatant representation of the British officers as above
reproach compared to the portrayal of the Egyptians as savage and criminal, a characterization
that ignored the efforts of some of the villagers to defend the officers from attack, must have
affected the way in which the evidence of the British and the Egyptians was viewed.

The cause of the Dinshwai incident also is important in determining if the British
response to the incident was just. There are three possible causes for the Dinshwai incident: the
shooting of pigeons, the threshing-floor fire, and the wounding of the villagers. As explained
above, the shooting of pigeons had resulted in several incidents between Egyptians and British
soldiers prior to the Dinshwai incident. Although Ibrahim Hilbawi, the counsel for the
prosecution, argued that the pigeons were wild and that the dovecots were only traps,\textsuperscript{300} it is clear

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{294}Ibid., 44.
\item \textsuperscript{295}“Death Sentence,” \textit{Egyptian Gazette} (Alexandria, Egypt), 27 June 1906, p. 3.
\item \textsuperscript{296}Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{297}Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{298}Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{299}House of Commons, “Egypt. No. 4 (1906). Further Paper Respecting the Attack on British Officers at
Denshawai,” Sessional Papers, Cd. 3091, p. 75.
\item \textsuperscript{300}Ibid., 70.
\end{itemize}
from the evidence that the villagers who owned dovecots considered that they had proprietary rights to the birds. At the trial, Muhammad Omar Zayed, a peasant of Dinshwai, testified that Hassan Mahfouz and the other owners of pigeons had been upset that the officers had shot pigeons the previous year without being seized. Bekhit Said, one of the coachman, testified that Hassan Ali Mahfouz was angry when he met their party and said, “Are you coming to shoot pigeons?” Ibrahim Moussa, general messenger to the village, said that he saw Hassan Ali Mahfouz in a group with several other people. Mahfouz told them not to shoot and said, “You came last year and the year before and excited the people, but if you will shoot that is your business.” Abd-el-Aal Sakr, the officers’ guide, testified that when he had met Hassan Ali Mahfouz, Mahfouz told them not to shoot close to the village. Major Pine-Coffin said that Hassan Ali Mahfouz had told him through Abd-el-Aal Sakr that they could shoot but only near the trees. It appears that Abd-el-Aal Sakr did not communicate everything that Mahfouz said to Pine-Coffin, only telling him that they could shoot if away from the village. Since Pine-Coffin assumed that Hassan Ali Mahfouz was the representative of the omdeh, he believed that they had been given permission to shoot.

Despite Pine-Coffin’s belief that he had taken the necessary steps for pigeon-shooting, the British practice of continuing to allow pigeon-shooting represented a disregard for Egyptian customs. Ahdaf Soueif described this as “a very aggressive act” that was “imposing British norms of social life and entertainment on an environment for which they were completely unsuitable.” Sir Edward Grey, British Foreign Secretary, describes a conversation he had with Lord Cromer in which Cromer gave his opinion of the cause of the Dinshwai incident. He said that Cromer told him that it was the custom of British officers to pay the omdeh to allow them to shoot pigeons and that this money would then be distributed to the owners of the pigeons. Cromer believed that this money must not have reached the owners who had decided not to allow further pigeon-shooting. Cromer’s statement reveals that he knew that pigeons belonged to the

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302 Ibid., 8-9.
303 Ibid., 9.
304 Ibid., 8.
305 Ibid., 3-4.
306 Ibid., 3.
307 Soueif, telephone interview.
308 Grey, Twenty-Five Years, vol. 1, 135.
villagers yet allowed the practice of pigeon-shooting to continue regardless. As a result of the Dinshwai incident, pigeon-shooting was forbidden.\textsuperscript{309}

Ahmad Lutfi al-Sayyid, one of the counsel for the defense, argued that the incident was caused by the fire in the threshing-floor.\textsuperscript{310} During the preliminary investigation, both Mohamed Abd-el-Nebi-el-Moazzin and his wife Om Mohamed Bint Ibrahim testified that they were in the threshing-floor when a shot set it on fire.\textsuperscript{311} Major Pine-Coffin supported the theory that the fire had caused the incident. During the preliminary investigation, Pine-Coffin reported that his first indication that there was a problem was when an Egyptian tried to seize the gun of Captain Bull.\textsuperscript{312} He described the man who tried to seize the gun and those who were with him as being “in a state of excitement and fury.”\textsuperscript{313} The man was pointing toward the smoke from the fire.\textsuperscript{314}

At the trial, Pine-Coffin testified that after he had seen the attempt to seize Captain Bull’s gun, he saw the smoke of a fire and the guide coming to tell them that a fire had started in the tibn and the villagers had surrounded the second group of officers.\textsuperscript{315} Captain Bostock testified that a fire broke out about 100 yards from him and Lieutenant Porter before the villagers attempted to seize Porter’s gun.\textsuperscript{316} Lieutenant Porter also stated that the fire had broken out before his gun had been seized.\textsuperscript{317} During the preliminary investigation, the mudir conducted a test to see if shot fired into corn from various distances could ignite it. The corn failed to catch fire, leading him to believe that some accident had caused the fire.\textsuperscript{318} Yet, Mohamed Dawood,
one of the Egyptians injured by the officers’ gun, had burn marks on his clothing where the shot had penetrated it.  

Mohamed Youssef, one of the counsel for the defense, argued that in addition to the fire, the wounding of a woman caused the incident. Thus, the wounding of the villagers is another possible cause of the Dinshwai incident. During the preliminary investigation, Youssef Hussein Selim stated that after the fire broke out his uncle, Ali-el-Dabshah, was shot. When he went to his uncle, Ali-el-Dabshah told him to seize the gun of the officer, which he did. At the trial, Ahmad Hassan Zagzoog, ombashi of police, testified that he saw the villagers seizing the gun of one of the officers. He explained that “during the quarrel a shot went off and wounded a woman in her knee. People were excited and began to deal blows.” Amer Ads, the sheikh of ghaffirs, stated during the preliminary investigation that he saw a woman hit and was hit himself by shot, losing consciousness. He asserted, “No aggression was committed against the officers until the time I was injured.” Further evidence that the wounding of the villagers could be a cause of the incident was given by both Lieutenants Smithwick and Porter, who testified that the villagers had taken them back to the threshing-floor to see the wounded woman.

Probably, no single cause led to the Dinshwai incident. Hassan Ali Mahfouz and the other owners of dovecots were upset about the shooting of their pigeons and wanted to prevent its recurrence. When the second group of officers began shooting, they were shooting close to a threshing-floor, which caught fire. Believing that the officers’ shooting had caused the fire, the villagers attempted to seize Lieutenant Porter’s gun. In the struggle for the gun, it discharged, wounding a woman and enflaming tensions further. For the villagers, the officers had triply abused them by disregarding their property, crops, and lives.

Another important issue in the Dinshwai case is whether the officers fired on the villagers. During the trial, Major Pine-Coffin was told that three persons had been wounded besides the woman. He was asked if they were wounded before or after the officers’ rescue. Pine-Coffin replied, “Porter told me that the gun had accidentally gone off and killed a woman. I

319 Ibid., 64-65.
320 “Death Sentence,” Egyptian Gazette (Alexandria, Egypt), 27 June 1906, p. 3.
wanted to put things right by what I did.” Lieutenant Smithwick stated that he heard the woman was hit but did not know other Egyptians had been shot. Mohamed Youssef asked Captain Bostock if he had been present when the three injured persons besides the woman were hit. Bostock responded that he did not know anything about that until he returned to camp. In reference to the Egyptians who had been wounded, Lieutenant Porter mentioned the wounded woman and a ghaffir who had been trying to assist the officers. Dr. Harold Nolan’s testimony that he believed that all of the Egyptians had been wounded by a single shot supported the officers’ accounts.

Nevertheless, certain Egyptian witnesses offered damaging testimony as to the officers’ role in the shooting of the villagers. Amer Ads, the sheikh of ghaffirs, asserted during the preliminary inquiry that the shot that hit him had come from an Englishman. At the trial, Ali Mahfouz, sheikh balad of Dinshwai, described the wounding of the woman when the officers’ gun discharged after being seized by the villagers and then said, “When the officers saw what had happened to their companion, they fired shots at the natives intending to frighten them, but some of them were hurt.” Ahmad Hassan Zagzoog also stated, “When we wished to return, another shot was fired by another officer, whom I cannot identify, though the distance between him and me was very near. This shot wounded a grey-haired man in his leg, whom I can identify if I see him, because I saw him when he was wounded.”

Qualified Judges?

There were additional concerns. The qualifications of the judges of the special tribunal were called into question. The Egyptian press criticized the fact that there was only one Muslim among the judges and that only two of the judges understood Arabic well enough to understand the counsel of the prosecution, the counsel of the defense, and the witnesses. In a letter to Sir

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327 Ibid., 7.
328 Ibid., 7-8.
332 Ibid., 13.
333 [Marsot], Egypt and Cromer, 171.
Edward Grey, Charles de Mansfeld Findlay, who was acting for Lord Cromer during Cromer’s leave, commented upon the knowledge of Arabic of the English judges of the special tribunal. Findlay wrote, “Of the English Judges who are sitting on the special Court, one is a thorough Arabic scholar, while the others are more or less acquainted with the language.” Findlay’s attitude was surprisingly flippant when in the same letter he acknowledges that the prosecuting counsel in the trial would be an Egyptian due to “the absolute necessity of a knowledge of Arabic for examining the witnesses.” John Marlowe admits that English judges in the national courts were generally “neither very good lawyers nor very good linguists,” while Robert Tignor confirms that knowledge of Arabic was “not rigidly enforced in the selection of judges.” In addition, Boutros Ghali, who served as president of the court in his position as acting minister of justice, had no judicial experience.

Two of the three English judges on the special tribunal violated Egyptian judicial procedure in connection with the trial. According to Egyptian criminal procedure, every judgment given is considered to be the decision of the entire court. Judges are not allowed to discuss their opinions about cases that they try or discuss the court’s deliberations. William Goodenough Hayter, Acting Judicial Adviser and member of the special tribunal in the Dinshwai trial, was ignorant of this rule forbidding discussing the deliberations of the court and spoke with Findlay about the case. On June 27, 1906, Findlay sent a telegram to Grey informing him of the judgment of the special tribunal. He stated, “Mr. Hayter, Acting Judicial Adviser, who was a member of the Court, informs me that, in his opinion and in that of Judge Bond, any British jury would have found the first six prisoners guilty of murder.”

After receiving this telegram, Grey answered a question about the Dinshwai incident in the House of Commons on June 28, repeating Findlay’s statement and attributing it to Bond and

334 House of Commons, “Egypt. No. 3 (1906). Correspondence Respecting the Attack on British Officers at Denshawai,” Sessional Papers, Cd. 3086, p. 5. Findlay was probably referring to Walter Bond, vice-president of the national court of appeal, as the member of the court who was “a thorough Arabic scholar.” House of Commons, “Egypt. No. 3 (1906). Correspondence Respecting the Attack on British Officers at Denshawai,” Sessional Papers, Cd. 3086, p. 5, 14.
335 House of Commons, “Egypt. No. 3 (1906). Correspondence Respecting the Attack on British Officers at Denshawai,” Sessional Papers, Cd. 3086, p. 5.
339 United Kingdom, FO 371/66, Findlay to Grey, No. 217, 7-13-06.
340 United Kingdom, FO 371/66, Findlay to Grey, No. 196, 6-27-06.
The Foreign Office requested that Findlay provide Bond and Hayter’s reasons for this statement. Bond protested to Findlay about his opinion having been divulged and explained the legal issues involved. He also diluted his opinion on the universality of the judgment given. Instead of saying “he was certain that six of the prisoners would have been found guilty of murder by an English jury,” he claimed that “a charge of murder against them might have been sustained before a jury.”

This opinion placed both Findlay and Grey in an awkward position. Findlay could not provide Bond and Hayter’s reasoning for the Dinshwai judgment and was forced to use a summary of the evidence to determine the main factors in the judgment that he thought were important in order to provide the Foreign Office with the requested information. Grey had repeated the judges’ opinion to justify the severity of the sentences only to find the judges’ support withdrawn. In addition, Findlay was anxious that in case of publication of his telegram, Hayter and Bond’s indiscretions not be disclosed. Findlay argued that Hayter was in a difficult position since as acting judicial adviser he was supposed to give his opinion to Findlay, but as a member of the special tribunal he was forbidden to do so. As for Bond, Findlay wrote that “if the Egyptian judges who are his colleagues supposed he had infringed the rule, his great influence with these might be seriously affected, and it would be desirable therefore to cover him, if possible.” This incident showed two of the English judges either ignorant of or violating Egyptian criminal procedure and casts doubt about their qualifications to sit on the special tribunal.

The presence of troops from the army of occupation as well as high British officials, such as the advisers to the Ministries of Finance and Interior, created an atmosphere at the special tribunal intimidating to the counsels of defense and Egyptian witnesses. On June 28, 1906, a telegram from “Egyptians in Oxford” to the Prime Minister argued that the presence of British troops must have “overawed” Egyptian witnesses, causing them to give “evidence favourable to might rather than right.”

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341 United Kingdom, FO 371/66, Question in House of Commons, 6-28-06.
342 United Kingdom, FO 371/66, Foreign Office to Findlay, No. 112, 7-11-06.
343 United Kingdom, FO 371/66, Findlay to Grey, No. 217, 7-13-06.
344 Ibid.
345 United Kingdom, FO 371/66, Findlay to Grey, No. 219, 7-14-06.
346 “Denishwai Again,” Egyptian Gazette (Alexandria, Egypt), 6 July 1906, p. 3.
347 United Kingdom, FO 371/66, Egyptians in Oxford to Prime Minister, 6-28-06.
Mohamed Youssef, one of the counsels for the defense, expressed his regret that the Dinshwai incident had occurred and hoped that it would not damage the relationship between the British army and the Egyptians. He also expressed his gratitude for “the liberty which the Court allowed them.” Since every accused person is entitled to a defense, his attitude as to the forbearance of the court suggests intimidation. Ismail Assem, another member of the defense team, applauded the advantages that the British occupation had brought, including the reforms instituted and the liberty the Egyptians possessed. When given an opportunity to call witnesses for the defense, defense counsel renounced this right even though they had planned to call witnesses.

The negative characterization of Egyptians by both the counsel for the prosecution and the counsels for the defense further prejudiced the court against Egyptian testimony. The accused were accorded very little time to speak in their defense. The court took about thirty minutes for fifty-two defendants individually to enter their pleas and only fifteen minutes for the accused to give their final statements. The Egyptian Gazette reported, “The evidence, too, given by the fellaheen was almost impossible to follow and the interpretations given by the translator were almost equally incomprehensible, chiefly owing to his being nearly inaudible.” Finally, the judges failed to take adequate time to deliberate on the testimony given in court. After the final statements of the accused were heard, the sitting of the court was closed at 6:00 p.m. on June 26. On June 27 at 8:30 a.m., the court reconvened, waited about thirty minutes for El Said Suleiman Kheirullah to recover from an epileptic seizure, and delivered the verdict.

Finally, the judgment of the special tribunal deserves mention. According to this judgment, the crime committed was “homicide, preceded, accompanied, or followed by the

349 “Death Sentence,” Egyptian Gazette (Alexandria, Egypt), 27 June 1906, p. 3.
351 Ibid., 69.
353 “Yesterday’s Hearing,” Egyptian Gazette (Alexandria, Egypt), 26 June 1906, p. 3.
crime of robbery with violence.”

Yet, there was no evidence that a homicide was committed. In reference to the cause of Captain Bull’s death, Dr. Nolan testified that “the wounds found on the body of the victim were not of a nature to cause death alone.” In fact, Captain Bull was able to run about five miles before he collapsed on a day in which the temperature reached 107º F. In response to a question by Ismail Assem, Dr. Nolan conceded that sunstroke could cause death by itself. As Mohamed Youssef argued, the villagers had not killed Major Pine-Coffin, Lieutenant Smithwick, and Lieutenant Porter when they were at their mercy. In addition, numerous witnesses gave evidence that the villagers of Dinshwai did not know of the coming of the soldiers before their arrival, providing a refutation for premeditation.

In addition, the prosecution failed to provide proof for its claims that the villagers had started the threshing-floor fire in order to afford a pretext for the Dinshwai incident. It also dismissed the evidence of Ahmad Hassan Zagzoog, claiming that he “had been guilty of neglect of duty in going to lunch with a friend instead of going straight to the house of the omdeh and informing him of the arrival of the party.”

Hilbawi presented no witnesses against the ombashi to prove his claim; whereas, some of the villagers confirmed that the ombashi had visited the omdeh’s house and gathered the ghaffirs as instructed.

Following the example of the case at Keneseh in 1887, the communal punishment of the village unfairly targeted the village leadership, many of whom had served as witnesses for the prosecution during the trial. The omdeh of Dinshwai, Mohamed-el-Shazli, lost his position

357 House of Commons, “Egypt. No. 3 (1906). Correspondence Respecting the Attack on British Officers at Denshawai,” Sessional Papers, Cd. 3086, p. 8; and “Death Sentence,” Egyptian Gazette (Alexandria, Egypt), 27 June 1906, p. 3.
361 House of Commons, “Egypt. No. 4 (1906). Further Paper Respecting the Attack on British Officers at Denshawai,” Cd. 3091, p. 70. Ibrahim Hilbawi cited the mudir’s experiment as evidence that gunshots could not have started the fire. He also claimed that anyone who saw the burned threshing-machine would conclude that it did not catch fire accidentally.
362 “Proceedings To-day,” Egyptian Gazette (Alexandria, Egypt), 26 June 1906, p. 3.
363 House of Commons, “Egypt. No. 4 (1906). Further Paper Respecting the Attack on British Officers at Denshawai,” Sessional Papers, Cd. 3091, p. 28-29, 35, 38-39; and United Kingdom, FO 881/8986, “Denshawai Case: Summary of Evidence,” p. 11. Subsequently, Ahmad Hassan Zagzoog was tried by court-martial for neglect of duty for failing to carry out the officers’ orders and not attempting to calm the mob and sentenced to two years’ imprisonment and fifty lashes. “Hunted Down,” Egyptian Gazette (Alexandria, Egypt), 3 July 1906, p. 3; and Blunt, Atrocities, 42.
despite the fact that he had been away from Dinshwai to attend a meeting on the day of the incident and had cooperated with the investigation by questioning the villagers as to the cause and ringleaders of the incident.\textsuperscript{364} In addition, the ghaffirs were removed even though they had defended the officers.\textsuperscript{365}

Finally, the punishments of the special tribunal cast serious doubt on British boasts of judicial reform. According to the 1895 decree, the special tribunal allowed the court to deliver any punishments it felt were necessary “without being bound by the provisions of the Penal Code.”\textsuperscript{366} As a result, the court called for a public execution though public executions had been stopped two years before.\textsuperscript{367} It also gave multiple sentences of flogging, a punishment outside of the Egyptian penal code though it was allowed in England.\textsuperscript{368} During the execution of the sentences, each victim hanged was allowed to remain in the noose while two prisoners were flogged. Findlay explains, “This was done to carry out punishments as quickly as possible, and thus to minimize tension and the chance of disturbance, and also suspense of those awaiting punishment.”\textsuperscript{369} Despite this justification, Dr. Nolan, who attended the executions of sentences and prepared a report on them, claimed that all of the deaths were instantaneous.\textsuperscript{370}

The Sersina Incident

After discussing the Dinshwai judgments and the sentences executed, one final piece of the Dinshwai puzzle must be added. When Captain Bostock and Captain Bull ran to get help for the officers under attack at Dinshwai, only one made it to camp but both affected the Dinshwai story. Captain Bostock alerted the camp from which two patrols left to aid the officers at

\textsuperscript{366} House of Commons, “Egypt. No. 3 (1906). Correspondence Respecting the Attack on British Officers at Denshawai,” Sessional Papers, Cd. 3086, p. 4.
\textsuperscript{367} [Marsot], \textit{Egypt and Cromer}, 172.
\textsuperscript{368} United Kingdom, FO 371/66, Findlay to Grey, No. 203, 7-3-06.
\textsuperscript{369} House of Commons, “Egypt. No. 3 (1906). Correspondence Respecting the Attack on British Officers at Denshawai,” Sessional Papers, Cd. 3086, p. 20.
Dinshwai. The patrol under Lieutenant Hargreaves left first on the road to Dinshwai, eventually meeting the officers on their way back. The second patrol under Sergeant Major McKenzie was alerted by an Egyptian mounted policeman to Captain Bull lying unconscious near the market at Sersina. Seeing Bull in a serious condition and Egyptians running, the members of the patrol assumed that they had reached the place of the Dinshwai conflict. They gave chase to the fleeing Egyptians, arresting four, and exchanged gunshots. In searching the area for weapons, Sergeant Major McKenzie found an Egyptian, Said Ahmed Saad, lying dead with his head shattered in fifty pieces. Later, another man, Ahmed-el-Bakly was found to have a bullet wound in the legs. The police investigation that followed uncovered three Egyptian witnesses who said that Said Ahmed Saad had been chased by two British soldiers. Ahmed-el-Bakly initially claimed to have been shot by the soldiers but later attributed his injury to a private quarrel with two men over a woman.372

The army of occupation held an inquiry. The Egyptian witnesses could not identify the soldiers involved. In addition, the Egyptians’ testimony that the soldiers had been on horseback within the market, which was surrounded by a high fence, conflicted with the soldiers’ testimony that none of them had entered the market on horseback. The court also determined that Ahmed-el-Bakly’s wound had been inflicted by a bullet larger than that used in the soldiers’ rifles.373

Following this inconclusive result, the Parquet held an inquiry, and the body of Said Ahmed Saad was exhumed so that it could be examined by Dr. Nolan in the hopes of determining a cause of death. Although Dr. Nolan did determine that Said Ahmed Saad’s skull had been shattered with great violence, he did not believe that such a wound could be caused by the butt of a rifle without causing noticeable damage to it. The closest comparison that he could make to the wound was that sustained by the kick of a horse, but the advanced deterioration of the body prevented a definite diagnosis. The Parquet continued its investigation but its results were also inconclusive.374

Charles de Mansfeld Findlay requested a further inquiry, which was conducted by John Felix Kershaw as Chef de Parquet.375 After completing his inquiry, Kershaw prepared a report of

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371 Unfortunately, the full names of Lieutenant Hargreaves and Sergeant Major McKenzie are not given in the official reports.

372 United Kingdom, FO 371/66, Findlay to Grey, No. 156, 9-15-06.

373 Ibid.; and United Kingdom, FO 371/66, Findlay to Grey, No. 123, 7-15-06.

374 United Kingdom, FO 371/66, Findlay to Grey, No. 156, 9-15-06.

375 Ibid.
his findings on September 3, 1906. After conducting an inquiry that was “as thorough as it is possible to make it,” Kershaw believed that Said Ahmed Saad had been alive from five to fifteen minutes before the arrival of the second patrol. He thus explored the theories that he had been killed by the Egyptians prior to the patrol’s arrival or by the patrol itself. He finally decided that his evidence was inconclusive. Despite this verdict, he gave greater weight to the argument that Said Ahmed Saad had been killed by the patrol. He could not accept that the Egyptians suddenly had killed “a companion in broad day light, a strong man, with people going about, and relations of the deceased within call.”

Instead, despite the fact that no individual soldier was implicated, he could understand how soldiers, finding one of their own brutally beaten and seeing fleeing Egyptians whom one assumes had committed the crime, could lose control. He wrote, “They had no officer to control them. The wonder is that every one of the Egyptians in that market place was not killed. Sergeant Mac Kenzie says they behaved extremely well. I am not disposed to disagree with him.”

In a letter to Sir Edward Grey on September 15, 1906, Findlay described the various stages of the investigation. He concluded, “The death of Said Ahmed Saad is a mystery, and I am afraid it must remain so.” Despite his resignation that all possible efforts had been made to determine the truth, Findlay and other members of the British government were not content to leave things exactly as Kershaw had left them. If his report was ever published, it would have to be edited so that suspicion was not raised against the British patrol.

The decision to handle the Dinshwai incident by the decree of 1895 and thus outside of the normal Egyptian judicial system would place British policy in Egypt in the forefront of public debate. Questions in Parliament and the press would force the British government to evaluate its Egyptian policy and determine if any changes needed to be made for the future even as the relationship between the home government and its agents abroad would be tested.

377 Ibid., 1-6.
378 Ibid., 2.
379 Ibid., 5-6.
380 Ibid., 6.
381 United Kingdom, FO 371/66, Findlay to Grey, No. 156, 9-15-06.
382 United Kingdom, FO 371/66, Findlay to Gorst, 10-14-06.
CHAPTER 3

THE BRITISH RESPONSE TO DINSHWAI

To his mind these transactions savoured far more of a desire to strike terror 
than to do justice.

- John Dillon in the House of Commons in reference to the handling of the Dinshwai incident

The Foreign Office had approved of Cromer’s decision to have the Dinshwai case tried 
by the special tribunal. When it learned of the judgment given, however, the Foreign Office, 
particularly Sir Edward Grey, had to decide to what extent to support the British Agency in 
Egypt. Concerned that failure to support the British Agency would provoke Egyptian unrest, he 
backed British officials in Egypt. Yet, once he learned the full facts of the case, he decided the 
actions taken had been “open to question.”

Nevertheless, Grey defended the British Agency, particularly Charles de Mansfeld 
Findlay, in Parliament against an unofficial Egyptian Committee that decried the way in which 
the Dinshwai case was handled. Opposition in Parliament came from only a handful of 
members, but they were extremely vocal and repeatedly questioned the government about every 
aspect of the Dinshwai incident, trial, and execution of sentences. Although the British press 
covered the case, it generally adopted a pro-government stance. Yet, certain individuals, like 
Wilfrid Scawen Blunt and George Bernard Shaw, also wrote about the affair, and they 
condemned how it was handled. Cromer’s resignation in March 1907 gave the Foreign Office 
the opportunity to reassess its policy toward Egypt, and the policies of Cromer’s successors 
would reflect its evolving views on Egyptian policy.

1 Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 4th ser., vol. 160 (1906), col. 315.
2 Edward Grey, Twenty-Five Years, vol. 1, (New York: Frederick A. Stokes, 1925), 133.
The Foreign Office Questions the Actions of the British Agency

During the early investigation of the Dinshwai case, the Foreign Office trusted the British Agency in Egypt to handle the affair; but when it learned of the harshness of the sentences, it was forced to evaluate whether the British officials in Egypt should be supported. On June 18, John Dillon, who represented East Mayo in the House of Commons, asked Sir Edward Grey for more information on the case. Grey replied that the cause of the incident had yet to be determined and that it would be necessary to wait for the completion of the trial in order to ascertain all of the facts. The Foreign Office sent requests to the British Agency for answers to the questions posed to Grey in Parliament, such as whether the officers had been in uniform and performing military duty when attacked and what provisions had been made for the defendants’ defense.

On June 27, Grey sent a telegram to Findlay stating that he had heard that death sentences had been given and requested notice of the sentences and the principal facts in the case. Grey asserted, “It is desirable that we should know all facts before the sentences are executed.” Findlay responded with a statement of the sentences passed by the special tribunal. He reported that a finding of premeditation had been reached and that both William Goodenough Hayter and Walter Bond believed “the first six prisoners would undoubtedly have been found guilty of murder by any British jury.” Findlay concluded, “I have discussed the whole case very fully with the Regent and Mr. Hayter, and I have not the slightest doubt that the sentences are fully justified by the evidence, and that they have been given purely on the merits of the case, and not for political or other reasons.” In reply, Grey asked if there was “any means by which an opportunity can be secured of considering the sentences before they are carried out.”

On June 28, Findlay explained that according to the 1895 decree the sentences of the special tribunal must be carried out at once. He asserted that neither the British Agency nor the

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3 Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 4th ser., vol. 158 (1906), col. 1366.
4 United Kingdom, FO 371/66, Foreign Office to Cromer, 6-18-06; and United Kingdom, FO 371/66, Grey to Findlay, No. 95, 6-21-06.
5 United Kingdom, FO 371/66, Grey to Findlay, No. 96, 6-27-06.
6 United Kingdom, FO 371/66, Findlay to Grey, No. 196, 6-27-06.
7 Ibid. It is interesting to note that in the published account of this telegram two important items were omitted. The name of Hayter was not included, signifying the Foreign Office’s willingness to cover him for his mistake in discussing the trial. The published account also omitted Findlay’s statement that the judgment was based on the evidence not on political factors. United Kingdom, FO 371/66, Findlay to Grey, No. 196, 6-27-06; House of Commons, “Egypt. No. 3 (1906). Correspondence Respecting the Attack on British Officers at Denshawai,” Sessional Papers, Cd. 3086, p. 11.
8 United Kingdom, FO 371/66, Grey to Findlay, No. 97, 6-27-06.
Egyptian government had the authority to interfere with the execution of the sentences. He argued that any interference by the home government was “earnestly to be deprecated” since “dangerous results might be brought about by such interference.” He further stated, “You may be perfectly assured that the Court were not inspired either by panic or vindictiveness in passing sentence; that the evidence proved premeditated and concerted action on the part of the condemned men; that the death of Captain Bull was due to their action, and that they were the principal participators in that action.”

In his memoirs, Grey describes his response to the news of the judgment. He thought the sentences were “very severe, startlingly so.” He consulted Prime Minister Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman and Chancellor of the Exchequer Herbert Henry Asquith, and they decided to support the special tribunal and its judgment. When Grey later learned all of the facts of the case, however, he “felt that what had been done was open to question.” He explained that if the government had not supported their officials in Egypt, “disorder might have broken loose, severe measures of protection and repression might have become necessary, with loss of life and many untoward results.” He recognized that this incident underscored the dilemma the British government faced in its attempt “to uphold the authority on the spot at the cost of making British rule open to reproach, or to override it at the risk of undermining it altogether.” In a telegram on June 28, Grey offered his support to Findlay’s actions and recognized that he lacked the authority to interfere “even if it had been desirable to do so.” Yet, in his memoirs, Grey noted that while the British did not have the “right to interfere,” they did have the “power to intervene.” Nevertheless, he still required a complete report of the trial, the evidence, and the execution of the sentences.

With discussion in Parliament and the reports of the execution of the sentences in the press, Grey continued to interrogate Findlay about issues that required clarification. On July 3, Findlay answered a number of Grey’s inquiries. He stated that Captain Bull had suffered a

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9 United Kingdom, FO 371/66, Findlay to Grey, No. 197, 6-28-06.
10 Ibid.
11 Grey, Twenty-Five Years, vol. 1, 132.
12 Ibid., 133.
13 Ibid., 133-134.
14 Ibid., 134.
15 United Kingdom, FO 371/66, Grey to Findlay, No. 100, 6-28-06.
16 Grey, Twenty-Five Years, vol. 1, 133.
17 United Kingdom, FO 371/66, Grey to Findlay, No. 100, 6-28-06; and United Kingdom, FO 371/66, Grey to Findlay, No. 101, 6-29-06.
concussion that “contributed to his death.”\textsuperscript{18} He described how the sentences had been carried out, relating that the prisoners were not allowed to witness the punishment of their fellow prisoners and that there were two floggings after each hanging in order to fulfill the requirement of leaving a man hanging for a period. He related, “This was done to carry out punishments as quickly as possible, and thus to minimize tension and the chance of disturbance, and also suspense of those awaiting punishment.”\textsuperscript{19}

As to the rights accorded to the defendants during the investigation and trial of the case, Findlay said that they had not had counsel during the preliminary investigation because this was not a normal part of Egyptian procedure. During the trial, the members of the defense counsel were given the opportunity to cross-examine the witnesses after their testimonies. He assured Grey that the judgment of the court had not been submitted to him for approval and justified the sentences of flogging “by the extreme and persistent brutality with which the officers were treated when defenceless, and even in one case unconscious.”\textsuperscript{20} On July 4, Grey expressed his relief that the stories in the press that made the sentences seem “deliberately protracted”\textsuperscript{21} were untrue. Still, he believed the best way to counter the false impressions of the press accounts was to present a complete account of the trial with the evidence to Parliament.\textsuperscript{22}

When the questions in Parliament and Grey’s requests for information continued, Findlay replied on July 5 with a warning about the repercussions in Egypt caused by the inquiries in Parliament. He claimed that the local press was conducting a campaign “with such violence and such utter disregard of truth that it is evident that a great deal of money has been spent.”\textsuperscript{23} He then relayed two accounts of violence against an irrigation inspector and a soldier as “showing the results which may be expected if the respect for the law is shaken.”\textsuperscript{24} He threatened that these things could lead to the passage of a press law and an increase in the army of occupation.\textsuperscript{25}

Despite Findlay’s attempts to blame unrest in Egypt on the Parliament's questions, which reflected upon the government’s support for the British Agency’s policy, he also admitted that some of the examples he was using stemmed from local problems. Of the two cases of violence

\textsuperscript{18} United Kingdom, FO 371/66, Findlay to Grey, No. 203, 7-3-06.
\textsuperscript{19} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{20} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{21} United Kingdom, FO 371/66, Grey to Findlay, No. 104, 7-4-06.
\textsuperscript{22} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{23} United Kingdom, FO 371/66, Findlay to Grey, No. 205, 7-5-06.
\textsuperscript{24} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{25} Ibid.
that he mentioned, he gave theft as the motive for one. He also admitted that unrest was caused by the Sersina incident in which an Egyptian had been killed and another Egyptian wounded.\textsuperscript{26} On July 11, he responded to another query from Grey and asked if the Foreign Office required a copy of the \textit{procès-verbal} of the preliminary inquiry that would require three weeks to translate, placing a strain on the short-handed Ministry of Justice.\textsuperscript{27} Although the Foreign Office replied that it did want the translation, it assured Findlay that there was no need to hurry since the translation could not be completed in time to include it with the papers that were about to be presented.\textsuperscript{28}

As more of the evidence from the investigation and trial was revealed, the case for premeditation began to weaken. On July 13, Findlay pointed out that it was not required for premeditation to be proven “to justify sentence of death if it is proved, as it was in this case, that homicide is accompanied by another crime (robbery with violence).”\textsuperscript{29} In the Foreign Office notes accompanying this telegram, it is acknowledged that “the case for ‘premeditation’ is not as strong as could be wished.”\textsuperscript{30} One detects a note of defensiveness in the letter in which Findlay sent Grey a copy of the summary of the evidence. He asserts that while the press had violently attacked the judgment of the special tribunal without regard to truth, “it has not been once suggested that the Court had confused the innocent with the guilty.”\textsuperscript{31} Yet, in the Foreign Office files with this letter, the following comment appears: “It comes out very clearly that the attack was decided upon beforehand as a demonstration against pigeon-shooting.”\textsuperscript{32} Although the Foreign Office was wavering on the validity of the Dinshwai judgment, it remained necessary to defend that judgment in Parliament.

\section*{Debate in Parliament}

Grey faced a barrage of questions in the House of Commons concerning the Dinshwai incident. An unofficial Egyptian Committee was formed with John Mackinnon Robertson, an ardent anti-imperialist, as a prominent member. Its goal was to monitor Egyptian affairs and

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{26} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{27} United Kingdom, FO 371/66, Findlay to Grey, No. 212, 7-11-06.
\item \textsuperscript{28} United Kingdom, FO 371/66, Foreign Office to Findlay, No. 112, 7-11-06.
\item \textsuperscript{29} United Kingdom, FO 371/66, Findlay to Grey, No. 217, 7-13-06.
\item \textsuperscript{30} United Kingdom, FO 371/66, Notes concerning Findlay to Grey, No. 217, 7-13-06.
\item \textsuperscript{31} United Kingdom, FO 371/66, Findlay to Grey, No. 122, 7-15-06.
\item \textsuperscript{32} United Kingdom, FO 371/66, Notes on Findlay to Grey, No. 122, 7-15-06.
\end{itemize}
champion reforms. Several Irish nationalists, like John Dillon, also decried the treatment of the Dinshwai case. As Mohammad Salama explained, “Denshawai was important for Ireland because it could help rally world opinion against the abuses of the Empire.” Members of Parliament declared that the same argument was made against Egypt as had been lodged against Ireland, that both peoples were unfit for self-government. Although their numbers were small, these pro-Egyptian members of Parliament raised the issue of the Dinshwai incident repeatedly, forcing Grey to defend the government’s policy in the House of Commons.

Members of Parliament asked many questions about the Dinshwai incident, the trial, and the execution of the sentences. One issue that was raised was whether this case should be tried under the 1895 decree since the officers were not performing military duties at the time of the incident. On July 12, Grey assured the House of Commons that the officers had been in uniform and that “the officers of an Army of Occupation in uniform cannot be considered as private individuals.” It was pointed out that the pigeons, which the officers had been shooting, were tame pigeons. Grey justified that the officers believed they had met the requirement for shooting pigeons. Grey continued, “As to the future, it is quite clear that, after such a serious accident as this, there should be no more pigeon shooting, and I understand that instructions were given some time ago that it should cease.” John Dillon asked Grey whether any Egyptians had been injured in the incident and whether the officers would be tried for their role in the affair. Grey stated that the officers had given up their guns, and “if any natives were killed, it was clearly not by the action of the British officers.” Grey said “that no one was wounded or killed before the officers were attacked, but that, after the guns had been given up by the officers, one of the guns was let off and caused injury.” In a later session, Grey was asked again whether the officers

34 Mohammad Ramadan Salama, “Reading the Modernist Event from the Margins of History: The Denshawai Incident, the Trial of Djamila Bouhired and the Question of Egyptian Modernity” (Ph.D. diss., University of Wisconsin—Madison, 2005), 114.
36 Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 4th ser., vol. 160 (1906), col. 1056.
37 Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 4th ser., vol. 159 (1906), col. 1135.
38 Ibid., col. 1133.
39 Ibid., col. 1134.
40 Ibid., col. 1135.
were guilty of trespass since they did not have permission from the omdeh to shoot pigeons to which Grey replied that they were not.\textsuperscript{41}

The reasons for the use of the special tribunal and what powers it had under the 1895 decree, particularly in regard to punishment and appeal, were discussed. Grey related that according to article six of the 1895 decree, crimes against members of the army of occupation were to be tried by the ordinary courts unless both the Agent and Consul-General of Great Britain and the officer commanding the army of occupation requested the special tribunal, which had happened in this case. He failed to give the reasons why these officials thought it necessary to utilize the special tribunal to handle the Dinshwai incident.\textsuperscript{42} Grey was questioned as to whether flogging was allowed under the Egyptian penal code or the 1895 decree. He informed the House of Commons that according to article 5 of the decree the special tribunal could dictate any punishment warranted. When asked whether any punishment, for instance, torture, could be used, Grey promised to provide a translation of the 1895 decree and then would discuss it if questions remained.\textsuperscript{43} He also related that no appeal was permitted under the decree.\textsuperscript{44}

Whether the defendants were accorded full rights was another concern. On June 21, Grey was asked what measures had been taken for the prisoners’ defense. Grey admitted that the accused had the right to counsel according to article four of the 1895 decree.\textsuperscript{45} On June 28, he also informed the House of Commons that “the prisoners were defended by three of the best known native advocates, who had a full hearing.”\textsuperscript{46} On July 5, Dillon asked “whether there was any preliminary investigation, and, if so, whether the prisoners, or any of them, were represented thereat by counsel, and whether such investigation was held in public or in private.”\textsuperscript{47} Grey vaguely explained, “The Decree of 1895 lays down that a preliminary investigation shall take place, on the termination of which the case shall be brought publicly before the Court.”\textsuperscript{48}

The issue of whether the defendants could be defended by counsel at the preliminary investigation was an interesting one. As a result of reforms issued in the judicial system by 1899, the accused could have counsel during the preliminary investigation and interrogate

\begin{footnotes}
41\textit{Parliamentary Debates}, Commons, 4\textsuperscript{th} ser., vol. 160 (1906), col. 1055-1056.
42\textit{Parliamentary Debates}, Commons, 4\textsuperscript{th} ser., vol. 159 (1906), col. 361, 1133-1134.
43\textit{Parliamentary Debates}, Commons, 4\textsuperscript{th} ser., vol. 160 (1906), col. 1054-1055.
44Ibid., col. 228.
45\textit{Parliamentary Debates}, Commons, 4\textsuperscript{th} ser., vol. 159 (1906), col. 361.
46Ibid., col. 1134.
47\textit{Parliamentary Debates}, Commons, 4\textsuperscript{th} ser., vol. 160 (1906), col. 226.
48Ibid.
\end{footnotes}
witnesses against them.\textsuperscript{49} The publication of this investigation shows that the accused did confront witnesses against them, but there is no evidence that they had counsel. Since Dinshwai was a small village, counsel may not have been available and/or the accused might not have been able to afford it.

Some members of the House of Commons expressed concern that the Egyptians receive a fair trial by qualified judges. On July 5, Dillon asked Grey why the Egyptian Ministry of the Interior issued an official report about the case before the trial since this could prejudice both the court and the public.\textsuperscript{50} Grey stated that this was done due to “the very incorrect reports which were being circulated in the Press.”\textsuperscript{51} Dillon argued, “The issue of the official account before the trial was improper, because it must be remembered that in Egypt there was no such thing as an independent judge. Every judge in Egypt held his position by the favour of Lord Cromer, and he thought it was objectionable to issue a detailed account of the proceedings, coming from the Minister of Justice, some days before the trial.”\textsuperscript{52} In response to an inquiry whether the judges of the special tribunal were qualified in Arabic and in law,\textsuperscript{53} Grey responded, “The English Members of the Court were specially chosen on account of their knowledge of Arabic, and all except the military member, who was specially selected for his knowledge of Arabic and his experience of such matters, were technically as well as thoroughly qualified in criminal law.”\textsuperscript{54} Grey did not know if Boutros Ghali had ever been a judge, but he had been Under-Secretary of State at the Ministry of Justice. He served as head of the court in his position as Acting Minister of Justice.\textsuperscript{55}

When asked if an appeal was possible for the accused,\textsuperscript{56} Grey asserted, “There is no legal power of interference on the part either of the Egyptian Government or of the British agency with the execution of the decision of the Court, and I am confident that the character of the tribunal is the greatest safeguard possible against a miscarriage of justice.”\textsuperscript{57} Once the sentences of the special tribunal were announced on June 27, John Dillon asked the Prime Minister whether the execution of the sentences could be delayed until Grey had an opportunity to review the

\textsuperscript{49} Tignor, \textit{Modernization and British Colonial Rule in Egypt, 1882-1914}, 137-138.
\textsuperscript{50} \textit{Parliamentary Debates}, Commons, 4\textsuperscript{th} ser., vol. 160 (1906), col. 225.
\textsuperscript{51} Ibid., col. 226.
\textsuperscript{52} Ibid., col. 313.
\textsuperscript{53} Ibid., col. 225-226.
\textsuperscript{54} Ibid., col. 226.
\textsuperscript{55} Ibid., col. 1056.
\textsuperscript{56} \textit{Parliamentary Debates}, Commons, 4\textsuperscript{th} ser., vol. 159 (1906), col. 1133.
\textsuperscript{57} Ibid., col. 1134.
evidence. Prime Minister Campbell-Bannerman affirmed that Dillon could depend on “the
discretion and humanity of my right hon. friend the Foreign Secretary and of those on whose
opinion he will rely.”\textsuperscript{58} The following day, another member of the House of Commons asked if
the lives of the accused could be saved since “the nature of the fracas did not indicate murder in
the sense in which we in England understood it.”\textsuperscript{59} Grey responded that he believed the
sentences had already been executed.\textsuperscript{60}

News of the execution of the sentences sparked further outrage among members of
Parliament. The leaving of a man hanging while others were flogged, the public nature of the
spectacle, and the cries of the accused during the floggings were matters of concern.\textsuperscript{61} On July 2,
J. D. White asked if the reports of the punishments were true, and if so, “whether steps will be
taken to have the execution of any such sentences in Egypt conducted in accordance with the
usage of civilised nations.”\textsuperscript{62} On July 5, Sir Charles Dilke warned “the punishment of flogging
when, even remotely, it appeared to be connected with political offences was one which did this
country great and permanent harm abroad.”\textsuperscript{63}

On July 5, Grey appealed to the House of Commons to hold discussion until full papers
were available. Grey declared “a fanatical feeling” was spreading in Egypt and across North
Africa.\textsuperscript{64} As a result of this fanaticism, the size of the army of occupation had had to be
augmented and the Dinshwai incident had occurred.\textsuperscript{65} He warned, “We may be on the eve of
further measures necessary to protect Europeans in Egypt; and if the House of Commons
questions the decision of a tribunal composed of the highest English Judges and the highest
Egyptian Judges, it is bound to have the effect of weakening the authority of the Egyptian
Government.”\textsuperscript{66} If the Egyptian Government was overcome by this fanatical feeling, the British
would be “face to face with the use of force.”\textsuperscript{67} In response to Grey’s appeal, Earl Percy,

\textsuperscript{58} Ibid., col. 956.
\textsuperscript{59} Ibid., col. 1135.
\textsuperscript{60} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{61} Ibid., col. 1411.
\textsuperscript{62} Ibid., col. 1413.
\textsuperscript{63} Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 4\textsuperscript{th} ser., vol. 160 (1906), col. 281.
\textsuperscript{64} Ibid., col. 288.
\textsuperscript{65} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{66} Ibid., col. 288-289.
\textsuperscript{67} Ibid., col. 289.
representing South Kensington, thought there was no point “in carrying the matter further.” Yet, not everyone heeded Grey’s advice; Dillon devoted a lengthy speech to the discussion of the Dinshwai case. He prophesied, “This disgusting exhibition would remain for ever a stain on the history of the British occupation of Egypt.”

Grey’s declaration of fanaticism in Egypt prompted further discussion. On July 12, Grey was asked upon what he based his reports of fanaticism. Grey replied, “The statements I have made are based upon confidential reports received from His Majesty’s representative at Cairo extending over several months.” On July 19, the Secretary of State for War was questioned as to whether the commander of the army of occupation in Egypt was on leave and if he would be asked to return due to the unrest, to which he responded in the negative. When Grey was asked if Lord Cromer and the British adviser to the Ministry of Justice were on leave and if they planned to return to Egypt, he replied, “If the situation in Egypt became such as to require their presence they would no doubt return.”

On August 4, Grey thanked the House of Commons for heeding his appeal to avoid discussion of the Dinshwai incident until papers had been received. At the same time, he seemed to retreat from his claim of Egyptian fanaticism, calling it instead “restlessness” or an “unsettled feeling.” Yet, he warned against the unfair censuring of British officials. Grey chided, “If you are to assume, where you think a mistake has been made, that your officials in general are likely to be guilty either of moral or intellectual deficiencies, and if you are to assume and to adopt the tone that they have done wrong, you are undoubtedly adopting a tone which would make it quite impossible to conduct the business of the British Empire.” Calling in question the punishments in the Dinshwai case, he referred to public executions as “a very

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69 Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 4th ser., vol. 160 (1906), col. 290.
70 Ibid., col. 311.
71 Ibid., col. 1054.
73 Ibid., col. 390-391.
74 Ibid., col. 391.
75 Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 4th ser., vol. 162 (1906), col. 1831-1832.
76 Ibid., col. 1832.
77 Ibid., col. 1833.
doubtful expedient” that “should never be resorted to except in the rarest cases.”

As to public flogging, he thought it “should never be resorted to.”

On November 22, Dillon asked Grey if Egypt was still “in a dangerous and disturbed condition, and affected by a wave of fanaticism,” and, if so, whether tourists should be warned. Grey responded that Egypt’s condition was “not now giving rise to special anxiety,” and he did not believe a warning for travelers was necessary. Dillon wondered sarcastically if Grey had noticed “the remarkable fact that fanaticism in Egypt disappeared when the tourist season commenced.”

Grey’s statements regarding the verdicts issued on June 27, 1906, were seriously questioned. Grey had claimed that “the evidence clearly established premeditation” and that “the first six prisoners would undoubtedly have been found guilty of murder by a British jury.” On August 4, 1906, John M. Robertson argued “there was no evidence of anything in the nature of premeditation” and Findlay’s statement that six prisoners would have been convicted of murder in a British court was “absurd” since there had been no murder. He asserted that the crime was not murder but homicide. Molteno, a representative from Dumfriesshire, believed that the House of Commons, not the local officials, should formulate Egyptian policy. He pointed out the discrepancy between Findlay’s description of the case as a premeditated murder with the verdict of homicide with robbery. The following year, Hugh Law claimed that he saw no evidence of premeditation and that he doubted if an English jury would have given a verdict of murder or even manslaughter. He stated, “If there was murder at Denshawi, it was not a murder committed by the villagers; it was a judicial murder committed with the approval of the Egyptian Government, and he was sorry to say, of the Home Government.”

Charles de Mansfeld Findlay’s telegram to Grey on July 5 in which he warned of “the deplorable effect” caused by members of Parliament questioning the judgment of the special

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78 Ibid., col. 1835.
79 Ibid.
80 Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 4th ser., vol. 165 (1906), col. 1004.
81 Ibid.
82 Ibid.
83 Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 4th ser., vol. 159 (1906), col. 1111.
84 Ibid., col. 1112.
85 Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 4th ser., vol. 162 (1906), col. 1825.
86 Ibid.
87 Ibid., col. 1827.
88 I have not been able to determine Molteno’s full name.
89 Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 4th ser., vol. 162 (1906), col. 1830.
90 Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 4th ser., vol. 179 (1907), col. 1284.
tribunal\textsuperscript{91} also sparked resentment in the House of Commons. On August 4, Molteno referred to Findlay’s remarks as threats against the House of Commons.\textsuperscript{92} Grey defended Findlay, saying that he was performing his duty by explaining how the discussion in the House of Commons would affect the situation in Egypt.\textsuperscript{93} He asserted that he did not believe Findlay’s communication was meant to be “provocative” or “a criticism of the House of Commons.”\textsuperscript{94} He related, “One of the difficulties of governing the British Empire is that criticism of what is done in various parts of the Empire is always certain to have a disturbing effect on the spot. That is not always the paramount consideration, but the officials on the spot ought to let us know what it is, because it is one of the elements which we must take into account in forming a judgment.”\textsuperscript{95}

Grey concluded, “The House should take it as a statement of fact, and not as criticism upon itself—the placing before it of facts which, however disagreeable, ought to be borne in mind.”\textsuperscript{96} Robertson responded to Grey’s arguments in a letter to the \textit{Tribune} that was published in \textit{The Egyptian Gazette}. He believed that it was not the discussion in Parliament that had caused the unrest in Egypt but the Dinshwai sentences and executions themselves. While Grey spoke of Findlay’s duty to assess the effect Parliamentary debate was having locally, Robertson countered that he had a duty “to say what he thought of the official exhibition, of the despatches, of the atrocity of the sentences, of the dangers to peace and civilization arising from the whole course taken.”\textsuperscript{97}

In addition to queries about the Sersina incident,\textsuperscript{98} the cause of Captain Bull’s death,\textsuperscript{99} and the trial of the ombashi whose evidence contradicted the officers,\textsuperscript{100} the punishment of the village of Dinshwai also sparked questions. Dinshwai was attached to an adjacent village and deprived of an omdeh. Its ghaffirs were removed and replaced by twenty specially selected ghaffirs from Cairo who would be paid by the villagers.\textsuperscript{101} In a July 5 speech in the House of Commons, John

\textsuperscript{91} House of Commons, “Egypt. No. 3 (1906). Correspondence Respecting the Attack on British Officers at Denshawai,” Sessional Papers, Cd. 3086, p. 13.
\textsuperscript{92} Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 4\textsuperscript{th} ser., vol. 162 (1906), col. 1831.
\textsuperscript{93} Ibid., col. 1834.
\textsuperscript{94} Ibid., col. 1833.
\textsuperscript{95} Ibid., col. 1834.
\textsuperscript{96} Ibid., col. 1834-1835.
\textsuperscript{97} “Dinishwai Executions,” \textit{Egyptian Gazette} (Alexandria, Egypt), 22 August 1906, p. 5.
\textsuperscript{98} Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 4\textsuperscript{th} ser., vol. 160 (1906), col. 1304-1305; Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 4\textsuperscript{th} ser., vol. 161 (1906), col. 391; and Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 4\textsuperscript{th} ser., vol. 162 (1906), col. 1831.
\textsuperscript{99} Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 4\textsuperscript{th} ser., vol. 159 (1906), col. 1413.
\textsuperscript{100} Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 4\textsuperscript{th} ser., vol. 162 (1906), col. 1034-1035; Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 4\textsuperscript{th} ser., vol. 166 (1906), col. 295; and Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 4\textsuperscript{th} ser., vol. 179 (1907), col. 1285.
Dillon pointed out that the Dinshwai villagers had protected the officers. On July 16, Dillon asked what punishments were accorded to the Dinshwai villagers and was told of the punishments above. The Foreign Office files relating to this issue note that the ghaffirs were always paid by the village; however, it was assumed that the new ghaffirs would cost the village more than the original ones had. Since the money would leave the village, the Foreign Office considered this a punishment, and Grey intimated his approval of this explanation by initialing this note regarding Dillon’s question. When this issue resurfaced on December 6, Dillon asked Grey whether the ghaffirs had actually protected the officers. Grey responded that the ghaffirs “did not prevent them from being assaulted” and that the British government would not “interfere with the measures taken by the Egyptian Government to preserve public security.”

On April 30, 1907, John M. Robertson revisited the subject, asking by what law the Egyptian government was punishing the village of Dinshwai. Grey replied that he was “not aware that any special law was enacted or required for these matters, which seem to be purely administrative.” A final indignity to the family and friends of those who were executed at Dinshwai was that the British failed to release the bodies of the deceased to their families for mourning and burial, instead transporting the remains to the cemetery under police guard.

Revision of the Decree of 1895

The revision of the decree of 1895 presented a further subject for debate. In a July 12, 1906 memorandum, Lord Cromer admitted that some revisions should be made to the decree, but he wanted to return from his leave and discuss the matter with the Egyptian ministers and their British advisors before making a definitive recommendation as to how the decree should be modified. He did deal with a few issues of conflict: whether an appeal to the special tribunal should be allowed, whether the special tribunal should have the authority to order public executions, and whether the special tribunal should be allowed to inflict punishments outside of

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102 Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 4th ser., vol. 160 (1906), col. 313.
103 Ibid., col. 1305-1306.
104 United Kingdom, FO 371/66, Notes on Question in the House of Commons 7-16-06.
105 Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 4th ser., vol. 166 (1906), col. 1177.
the penal code such as flogging. Although he favored the prompt execution of sentences, Cromer believed the sentences of the special tribunal “should be confirmed by some superior authority.” He admitted that he personally opposed public executions but did not want to preclude them if deemed necessary by the special tribunal. Finally, he thought that the decree should be modified so that the special tribunal could only impose punishments approved by the penal code.109

In a memorandum on September 8, 1906, Cromer noted that the 1895 decree had not been submitted to the Legislative Council as was the ordinary practice in the passage of decrees. He explained that since the army of occupation was involved, he believed the matter could be resolved between the British and Egyptian governments. He proposed that any revision to the 1895 decree should follow the same procedure, bypassing the normal requirement of submission to the Legislative Council.110

After returning to Egypt, Cromer sent a further recommendation to Grey on October 24, 1906. Cromer wrote, “Broadly stated, my proposal, therefore, is that the Egyptian Government should be moved to repeal the Decree of February 25th 1895, and that, in case of necessity, a Military Court should be substituted in the place of the Special Tribunal for which that Decree provides.”111 He believed that the ordinary courts should continue to try cases of offences against members of the army of occupation that resulted from private quarrels. The military court would be called only when a member of the army of occupation was attacked as such.112

On November 19, 1906, Cromer wrote another letter to Grey in which he dealt with questions that Grey had about how his recommendations would be put into practice. Cromer expressed his belief that the decree of 1895 must be reformed. In reference to his recommendations, he had considered making it mandatory for the general commanding the army of occupation and the British Agent to request the approval of the War Office for submitting a case to a military court. After discussion with the general commanding the army of occupation, however, he was convinced that this should not be required in cases of emergency. Nevertheless,

109 Ibid.
111 United Kingdom, FO 371/68, Cromer to Grey, No. 186, 10-24-06.
112 Ibid.
he advised that the War Office and Foreign Office be alerted immediately to the formation of a military court, “thus giving the Government at home full time to issue whatever instructions they might think fit before any definite action had been taken.” Cromer then expressed his concern that the British Agency in Egypt and the home government should not appear to disagree on policy. He wrote, “I am particularly anxious that nothing should be published from which it might appear that there was any difference of opinion between the Government at home and us out here.”

Members of Parliament also declared that the decree of 1895 should be modified. On August 4, 1906, John Robertson stated, “There was no reason for thinking that offences against the Army of occupation could not be duly punished by the tribunals that already existed in Egypt. Court-martial action of this kind ought not to be possible in Egypt or anywhere else.” Molteno also reviewed the suggestions Cromer outlined in his July 12 memorandum and asked that the government support them. He asserted, “Where the ordinary law did not permit these punishments to be carried out they should not be allowed to resort to this special tribunal.”

Grey also recognized that there were some aspects of the decree of 1895 that required modification and expressed his support for Cromer’s recommendations.

On November 15, 1906, the issue of the modification of the 1895 decree was again raised, and it was suggested that the decree not apply to members of the army of occupation “not engaged in the execution of their duty.” John Gordon Swift MacNeill, representative for Donegal South, asked Grey on July 30, 1907, what progress had been made on the reform of the decree of 1895. Grey explained that difficulties had arisen in reforming the 1895 decree, that the ordinary law courts would temporarily be used for offenses against members of the army of occupation, and that the British Agent had been told not to invoke the special tribunal without consulting the home government. On August 15, 1907, Mackarness asserted, “It could not possibly conduce to strengthen our position in Egypt or to make our Army popular with the Egyptians that such a tribunal should be brought into existence for the purpose of giving a sort of

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113 United Kingdom, FO 371/68, Cromer to Grey, 11-19-06.
114 Ibid.
116 Ibid., col. 1830-1831.
117 Ibid., col. 1835.
119 Ibid., col. 101.
120 Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 4th ser., vol. 179 (1907), col. 767-768.
sacred character to the British troops and treating any offence against them as a kind of high
 treason.”¹²¹ In response, Grey assured the House of Commons that the special tribunal would not
 be convened until reforms to the decree of 1895 had been made.¹²²

Sir W. J. Collins raised the subject on February 4, 1908, and asked if the 1895 decree had
 been modified to allow appeal to which Grey reiterated that the special tribunal would not be
 convened until reforms had been made.¹²³ On June 30, 1908, the issue of the reform of the 1895
decree was again discussed. Mackarness wondered, “Does the Egyptian Government think it
desirable to keep up a law of exceptional severity in the interest of the British Army of
occupation and no one else?”¹²⁴ Grey answered, “That depends upon how the native tribunals do
their work.”¹²⁵

Debate over the Revision of the Dinshwai Sentences

Finally, some members of Parliament called for a revision of the Dinshwai sentences. On
July 9, 1907, William Redmond asked Grey about revising the sentences.¹²⁶ On July 30, Grey
responded that the British government would not oppose revising the sentences but claimed it
was “too soon to make any promise of that kind.”¹²⁷ He further stated that “if the sentences are
revised it must be done by the deliberate and calm opinion of the Egyptian Government at a time
when the exercise of clemency is likely to have a good effect.”¹²⁸ On August 1, Hugh Law
argued that the sentences were dictated “under the influence of panic.”¹²⁹ He pleaded, “It was

¹²¹ Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 4th ser., vol.180 (1907), col. 1706. I have been unable to determine
definitively the full name of Mackarness; however, in a petition for the release of the Dinshwai prisoners sent to the
Foreign Office on October 9, 1907, a Frederic Mackarness is listed. The Parliamentary Debates do note that the
Mackarness who made this statement represented Berks, Newbury. United Kingdom, FO 371/248, Memorial on
behalf of the Dinshwai prisoners to Grey, 10-9-07; and Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 4th ser., vol. 180 (1907),
col. 1705.
¹²² Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 4th ser., vol. 180 (1907), col. 1716.
¹²³ Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 4th ser., vol. 183 (1908), col. 711.
¹²⁵ Ibid., col. 568. Grey’s response seems to be infused with a sense of menace. Although the question refers to the
Egyptian government’s feelings about the 1895 decree, it can be assumed that just as the British Agency initially
suggested the adoption of the decree, the British Agency’s assessment of the continued need for it would determine
if it was invoked.
¹²⁶ Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 4th ser., vol. 177 (1907), col. 1437.
¹²⁷ Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 4th ser., vol. 179 (1907), col. 880.
¹²⁸ Ibid. It is interesting to note that Grey mentions the possible revision of sentences in terms of the political effect
it might have.
¹²⁹ Ibid., col. 1285.
too late to appeal about the four men who were executed, but it was not too late, now the panic
was past, to order the early release of those who were still suffering.”

On August 15, Mackarness argued that if the convicted men had broken the law, “they
had suffered abundantly” and maintained that their sentences would not have been possible
under the ordinary law. He stated, “These punishments were admitted, he thought, to have been
far in excess of anything the offences could possibly have deserved, and he wished, therefore, to
urge on the Government the real urgency of not allowing these unfortunate villagers any longer
to continue under the infliction of these very severe punishments.” Grey attempted to stifle
debate by saying that “really nothing he had said on previous occasions had excluded the
prospect of a revision of some of the Denshawi sentences, and to dwell upon the controversial
aspect of the question again would have no other effect than apparently to impair the prospect of
revision.”

Protests to the Foreign Office

In addition to questions and criticism from Parliament, Grey faced opposition through
protests made to the Foreign Office. On June 26, 1907, C. H. Norman addressed a letter to
Grey. Norman, a shorthand writer and court reporter, was active in politics. During his
lifetime, he held memberships in the Social Democratic Federation, the Society for Abolition of
Capital Punishment, the Penal Reform League, and the Independent Labour Party. He was vocal
in support of his beliefs, writing articles and contacting government officials in an effort to gain
support for his positions. During World War I, he served as treasurer of the Stop the War
Committee. Also a member of the National Committee of the No-Conscription Fellowship,
Norman participated in their campaign against the punishment of conscientious objectors and
was imprisoned during the war.

In his June 26 letter to Grey, Norman called upon him to urge the King to pardon the
Dinshwai offenders or remit part of their sentences. In sometimes scathing terms, Norman
reasoned that the sentences of death were unjust since Captain Bull had died of heat apoplexy,
that Judges Walter Bond and William Goodenough Hayter were incompetent as evidenced by their statement that six of the defendants would be found guilty by a British jury, “that a Court which unjustly condemns prisoners to death is not likely to exercise any care in inflicting sentences of imprisonment,” and that the judgment issued tarnished Britain’s international honor.\footnote{136 United Kingdom, FO 371/248, Norman to Grey, 6-26-07.} Notes in the Foreign Office file regarding this letter suggest that Norman’s letter be simply acknowledged, but it was proposed that this issue be discussed with Sir Eldon Gorst when he arrived in London.\footnote{137 United Kingdom, FO 371/248, Notes on Norman to Grey, 6-23-07. There is some discrepancy as to the date of Norman’s letter. The letter gives the date as June 26; however, it has a Foreign Office stamp on it dated June 24. In referring to it in a subsequent letter, Norman says that the Foreign Office had received it on June 24. The Foreign Office notes concerning the letter are dated June 23-24.}

Norman sent further communications on July 15 and July 26, asking that he receive a reply to his first letter.\footnote{138 United Kingdom, FO 371/248, Norman to Grey, 7-15-07; and United Kingdom FO 371/248, Norman to Grey, 7-26-07.} Referring to Norman’s letter of July 15 in the Foreign Office notes, Grey writes, “I don’t know anything about this man & am indifferent whether any answer is sent or not.”\footnote{139 United Kingdom, FO 371/248, Notes on Norman to Grey, 7-15-07.} On July 29, 1907, the Foreign Office wrote Norman relating that an acknowledgment to his previous letter had been sent and that “Sir E. Grey is unable to enter upon a correspondence respecting the sentences passed upon the persons found guilty of participation in that affair.”\footnote{140 United Kingdom, FO 371/248, Foreign Office to Norman, 7-29-07.}

Despite the Foreign Office’s reluctance to discuss the matter, Norman continued to press the issue. On October 9, Norman again contacted the Foreign Office, enclosing a memorial for the release of the Dinshwai prisoners signed by fifty-three people. The signers of the memorial can be seen as a who’s-who that included writers, scholars, politicians, and social reformers. Some of its prominent supporters included Hilaire Belloc, Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, Sir William Francis Butler, Edward Carpenter, G. K. Chesterton, L. T. Hobhouse, Ramsay MacDonald, Gilbert Murray, George Bernard Shaw, G. M. Trevelyan, Sidney Webb, H. G. Wells, William Butler Yeats. The memorial explained that the early impression of the incident, “that a party of British officers had been attacked without provocation in an Egyptian village, and one of them put to death in an outburst of anti-English prejudice and Moslem fanaticism,”\footnote{141 United Kingdom, FO 371/248, Memorial on behalf of the Dinshwai prisoners to Grey, 10-9-07.} had been altered as a result of the publication of papers. The papers had shown that the incident had “no political
or religious significance.”

In addition, the trial of the offenders without a jury was “altogether repugnant to British practice.” The memorial concluded that it would not ask Grey to withdraw his support “of what we may call the official view of the calamitous incident at Denshawai;” yet, it did call for “the speedy release of the prisoners from an imprisonment which has already lasted fifteen months.”

The notes regarding the memorial in the Foreign Office files state that Grey seemed to have come to a decision in consultation with Sir Eldon Gorst about this issue but that “no official document is in existence recording the decision arrived at.”

On October 16, 1907, the Foreign Office sent an acknowledgment of the memorial to Norman with the message that “the subject has been very recently discussed in Parliament and that Sir. E. Grey cannot at present add to the statements which he then made concerning it.”

**Liberal Party Opposition**

Grey faced opposition from within the Liberal Party to the government’s policy in regard to Dinshwai. On November 9, 1907, Holford Knight, secretary of the New Reform Club (Political Committee), wrote Grey to express the committee’s “profound dissatisfaction at the continued detention in prison of the Denshawai prisoners” and requested that Grey “receive a deputation on the subject at an early date.”

On November 20, 1907, the Foreign Office replied that Grey was familiar with liberal feeling about this issue, that it had been discussed in Parliament and there would be further opportunities for discussion, that Grey’s statements in Parliament on August 1 show that the committee’s concerns are not being disregarded, and that “further representations in the interval are not necessary in order to press them, nor would they make it more easy to give effect to them.”

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142 Ibid.
143 Ibid.
145 United Kingdom, FO 371/248, Notes on memorial on behalf of the Denshawai prisoners to Grey, 10-9-07.
146 United Kingdom, FO 371/248, Foreign Office to Norman, 10-16-07.
147 United Kingdom, FO 371/248, Knight (secretary of New Reform Club) to Grey, 11-9-07.
148 United Kingdom, FO 371/248, Foreign Office to Knight, 11-20-07.
Dissatisfied with this response, Knight wrote again on behalf of the New Reform Club (Political Committee) explaining that the government seemingly failed to recognize the importance of this issue, which was straining the solidarity of the Liberal Party. He requested that if Grey could not provide “an official assurance that all the prisoners will be released at the first opportunity,” he should give “at least some communication more cordial in tone and more sympathetic to Liberal sentiment than the one at present received.”¹⁴⁹ Before replying to this message, Grey contacted Lord Weardale, the chairman of the New Reform Club, and asked that he meet with him so that Grey could draft a reply that would appear sympathetic to the New Reform Club’s views.¹⁵⁰ Lord Weardale replied that he would be glad to meet with Grey and would, in the meantime, attempt to ascertain the views of the members of the committee who attended the meeting in which the Dinshwai prisoners had been discussed.¹⁵¹

On December 5, the Foreign Office replied that the committee must not have reviewed Grey’s speech in the House of Commons on August 1 since if it had, it would not have considered his answer to its communication unsympathetic. Therefore, the Foreign Office was enclosing an extract from it. The Foreign Office assured the committee that its concerns were being considered, although no announcement of a decision could be given at the present time. Nevertheless, Grey understood from Parliamentary discussion of the subject that “some decision in accord with the considerations stated then would be expected within a reasonable time and that there would be disappointment, if none were forthcoming.”¹⁵²

In addition to the opposition from the New Reform Club (Political Committee) to Grey’s policy, the Executive Committee of the West Herts Liberal Association also protested the sentences passed against the Dinshwai offenders. On November 12, 1907, Richard J. Childs, secretary of the West Herts Liberal Association, wrote to Grey to inform him of a resolution that had been unanimously passed at a meeting of the Executive Committee. The resolution stated, “That the British Government be asked to use its best efforts to induce the Egyptian Government to as soon as possible revise the sentences passed upon the Denshawai peasants [sic].”¹⁵³

¹⁴⁹ United Kingdom, FO 371/248, Knight to the Foreign Office, 11-25-07.
¹⁵⁰ United Kingdom, FO 371/248, Grey to Weardale, 11-28-07. I have been unable to determine the full name of Lord Weardale.
¹⁵¹ United Kingdom, FO 371/248, Weardale to Grey, 11-28-07. Though he had not attended the meeting in which the letter to Grey was considered, Lord Weardale had heard that G. Bernard Shaw had drafted it.
¹⁵² United Kingdom, FO 371/248, Foreign Office to Knight, 12-5-07.
¹⁵³ United Kingdom, FO 371/248, Childs to Grey, 11-12-07
On November 19, 1907, the Explosive Branch of the Woolwich Workers Union wrote to Grey to communicate a resolution that they had accepted. The resolution condemned the British government “for its callous behaviour with regard to the Denshawai incident” and urged the government to rectify the situation “by ordering the release of the prisoners now undergoing punishment, and also, to arrange some compensation, both for them, and the dependents of those who were wrongfully hanged.”

**Release of the Dinshwai Prisoners**

On December 23, 1907, Sir Eldon Gorst telegraphed Grey that he had met with Khedive Abbas II and had “informed His Highness that, in the opinion of His Majesty’s Government, it had now become desirable to release the Denshawai prisoners, and that they suggested the anniversary of His Highness’s accession (8th January) as a suitable occasion for the exercise of his prerogative of pardon in their favour.”

“The Khedive evinced great satisfaction on receiving this announcement” and agreed to the British government’s request that the pardon “should distinctly state that the measure had been adopted with the concurrence of the British Government.” The Khedive then expressed his and the Egyptian people’s appreciation for this measure, predicting “that the effect produced throughout the country would be excellent.”

Gorst then related his regret that Mustafa Kamil’s newspaper, *Al-Liwa*, had published the news before he could inform the Khedive, thus reducing “the good results” from his announcement.

The British Agency learned that *Al-Liwa* planned to hold a demonstration commemorating the Dinshwai prisoners’ release on January 8 and arranged to have them released on January 7 instead and transported to Dinshwai by steamer in order to prevent it. In a letter to Grey on January 10, Ronald Graham writing for Gorst describes the proceedings that *Al-Liwa* had planned. He wrote, “It had been intended to bring the men by rail to Cairo, and to march them through the streets, headed by a band, to the ‘Lewa’ offices, where they were to have received a sum of £ E. 150 collected for them by that paper, and to have made a suitable
expression of their thanks to Moustapha Kamel. After speeches, the men were to have been marched in procession to the station.”

Graham also described the details of the release of the nine prisoners still serving sentences in the Dinshwai case. They were released on January 7 and placed aboard a steamer. Their families, who had been waiting outside the prison for their release, immediately proceeded to the railway station to travel to Dinshwai in order to meet them. The Dinshwai prisoners stayed at the home of the omdeh of El-Ghatta for the night and “arrived opposite Denshawai” just after noon on January 8. Dinshwai is approximately a mile from the Nile bank where hundreds of people met them. “There was great rejoicing, and the released prisoners expressed their thanks, in which their relatives joined,” for the treatment they received while being brought home.

Graham then smugly related the reaction of the newspaper reporters and nationalists when they realized they had missed the prisoners’ release. He stated that “the newspaper reporters and Delegates expressed much annoyance at finding the men had already left, but it was explained to them that the Khedive having signed the order for release on the 7th, it would have been impossible to delay carrying it into effect.” He concluded, “The ‘Lewa’ talks of organizing a demonstration at Denshawai, but this would be unobjectionable as compared with one in the streets of Cairo, and I am led to believe that the latter is now improbable, as it would have lost most of its point.”

On February 4, 1908, a question was asked in the House of Commons as to whether the Dinshwai prisoners had been released and if the village of Dinshwai still suffered under any penalties as a result of the incident. Grey responded that the prisoners were released on January 7 and that “Denshawai is not now subject to civil disability or any other penalty.” He continued, “The Omda was restored in June last, and the Ghafirs are the same in number as before the occurrences referred to.” It appears from the wording of Grey’s response that while

\[160\] United Kingdom, FO 371/448, Gorst to Grey, No. 5, 1-10-08.
\[161\] Ibid.
\[162\] Ibid. Graham relates, “The men were well fed on the journey, and each of them was given a few shillings to purchase cigarettes or other luxuries.” United Kingdom, FO 371/448, Gorst to Grey, No. 5, 1-10-08. It is disturbing to see the way in which he proudly describes the meager liberties accorded the prisoners at their release when these are contrasted with the eighteen months of their prison sentences that they had endured.
\[163\] United Kingdom, FO 371/448, Gorst to Grey, No. 5, 1-10-08. The delegates to which Graham refers were the nationalists who planned to conduct the demonstration.
\[164\] Ibid.
\[165\] Parliamentory Debates, Commons, 4th ser., vol. 183 (1908), col. 699.
\[166\] Ibid.
the position of omdeh was restored and the number of ghaffirs remained the same, the original omdeh and ghaffirs of Dinshwai were not reinstated.

Reaction to the Dinshwai Incident in the British Press

In the British press, both Liberal and Conservative newspapers generally supported the government’s handling of the Dinshwai incident. In order to determine the British press’ attitude in covering the Dinshwai incident, a study was made of both Liberal (Daily Chronicle, Manchester Guardian, Pall Mall Gazette) and Conservative papers (Evening Standard, Globe, Times) published about the Dinshwai incident from June through August 1906. The press coverage was generally favorable to the government’s policy. This contradicted John Marlowe’s statement that the press “reacted with its usual irresponsible hysteria” to the Dinshwai incident. Marlowe argued, “It is unlikely that the execution of these sentences, excessive and indeed barbarous as they were, would have provoked very much organized protest in Egypt had it not been for the explosion of feeling which took place in England. Left to themselves, it would probably not have occurred to the nationalist leaders to make very much of an issue about the hanging and flogging of a few peasants.”

Marlowe’s statement represents the colonial argument that the sensibilities of the Egyptians are not as highly evolved as that of their occupiers. He further displays a colonial mentality when he refers to Egypt as “a politically backward country.”

Other evidence supports the contention that the British press supported the government’s policy. In his memoirs, Abbas Hilmi II refers to B. L. Mosely, who was a British subject who served in the Egyptian courts but resigned because he refused to render verdicts based on political consideration. In a letter from Mosely to Abbas written on July 30, 1906, Mosely stated that the Egyptian cause had not gained popular approval in Great Britain yet. In an interview conducted by the author of this study on September 8, 2009, Ahdaf Soueif agreed that the handling of the Dinshwai incident did not cause a great outcry in British society. She said that

169 John Marlowe, Cromer in Egypt, 266.
170 Marlowe, A History, 205.
“everything that the British did in Egypt aroused the concern of a small group of dissidents.”\footnote{Dr. Ahdaf Soueif, interview by author, 8 September 2009, tape recording.} There would be “a flutter of interest but nothing, nothing really sustained.”\footnote{Ibid.} Finally, in his diary entry of June 21, 1906, Wilfrid Scawen Blunt wrote, “English feeling on these matters has become absolutely callous, and I believe if Cromer ordered a dozen of the villagers to be crucified or impaled, no serious objection would be made to it here…”\footnote{Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, \textit{My Diaries: Being a Personal Narrative of Events 1888-1914}, part 2, 1900-1914 (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1923), 147.}

On June 14, the \textit{Pall Mall Gazette} summarized the Dinshwai incident.\footnote{“Serious Affair in Egypt,” \textit{Pall Mall Gazette} (London), 14 June 1906.} On the following day, the newspaper argued that the significance of the incident would be determined by the motives that caused it. It assumed that the court of inquiry would determine whether the incident occurred from a local provocation such as a fire or if it represented general unrest. Regardless of the cause, however, the accused must be “punished with the utmost rigour” in order to preserve “British prestige.”\footnote{“Occasional Notes,” \textit{Pall Mall Gazette} (London), 15 June 1906.} On June 19, the newspaper declared that “there was no overt cause whatever for the assault in Egypt, which simply had its origin in the feelings of the people.”\footnote{“Military Notes,” \textit{Pall Mall Gazette} (London), 19 June 1906.} The article stated that the dispute over the Egyptian boundary in the Sinai Peninsula combined with this incident proved that the British garrison in Egypt could not be reduced “except by incurring grave danger.”\footnote{Ibid.} On June 21, the \textit{Pall Mall Gazette} reported, “Everything indicates that the outrage was much more serious than at first supposed, and that it was prearranged. Fortunately this time Lord Cromer is convinced of the bad faith of the natives. They will be severely dealt with, and the sentences will be carried out with military severity.”\footnote{“The Egyptian Murderers,” \textit{Pall Mall Gazette} (London), 21 June 1906. The article gives as its source the Alexandrian correspondent of the \textit{Daily Chronicle}. It further predicts that those sentenced to death would be shot.} On the same day, the \textit{Daily Chronicle} reported that the Egyptian “murderers” would be “publicly shot.”\footnote{“Foreign and Colonial,” \textit{Daily Chronicle} (London), 21 June 1906, p. 1.}

The \textit{Times} also supported the government’s view of the affair. On June 18 in a description of the Dinshwai incident, it claimed that the fire in the threshing-floor was “believed to have been a preconcerted signal for the general attack which followed.”\footnote{“The Attack on British Officers in Egypt,” \textit{Times} (London), 18 June 1906, p. 5.} The article stated that the district of which Dinshwai is a part had a bad reputation and that the Dinshwai \textit{fellaheen}...
“probably had their criminal propensities excited by the anti-European agitation” that was displayed during that year.\textsuperscript{182} When the \textit{Times} announced the judgment of the special tribunal, it assured its readers that Europeans and “many respectable natives” approved the judgment and that the attack had been premeditated.\textsuperscript{183} It then printed the official report issued before the trial by the Egyptian Ministry of the Interior.\textsuperscript{184} The \textit{Times} attributed the incident “to fanaticism stimulated by the mischievous action of the Turks on the Egyptian frontier and by the incitements of their emissaries in Egypt.”\textsuperscript{185} The paper described the incident as not only “a brutal and unprovoked murder,” but also “a revolt upon a small scale on the part of the lowest and most fanatical of the Mussulman \textit{sic} population,” “which must be put down at all costs.”\textsuperscript{186} It asserted that the judgment was justified and “imperatively demanded.”\textsuperscript{187} The newspaper concluded, “So long as we remain responsible for the government of Egypt we have to make our authority respected, and must suppress outbreaks of fanaticism, however prompted, with unsparing rigour.”\textsuperscript{188}

Despite the press’ general approval of the government’s handling of Dinshwai, some British newspapers criticized the government’s policy. For instance, the \textit{Manchester Guardian} asked whether justice had been served in the Dinshwai case. In a report on the incident on June 15, the \textit{Manchester Guardian} reported that the Foreign Office did not know the cause of the attack; yet, there was a tendency “to regard the display of hostility towards the British officers as a purely local manifestation not at all likely to lead to widespread trouble.”\textsuperscript{189} On June 21, the newspaper published an article by Wilfrid Scawen Blunt in which Blunt portrayed the Dinshwai incident as similar to any number of incidents caused by “the inability of young English officers, especially those recently arrived from home, to understand their position in Egypt or to conform to the laws and regulations of the country, more particularly where these interfere with their sports.”\textsuperscript{190} Blunt predicted that the incident would be handled severely since it would “have a political aspect, whatever its true nature, in native eyes.”\textsuperscript{191} In reference to Cromer, Blunt

\textsuperscript{182} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{184} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{185} \textit{Times} (London), 28 June 1906, p. 9.
\textsuperscript{186} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{187} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{188} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{189} “An Affray in Egypt,” \textit{Manchester Guardian} (Manchester), 15 June 1906, p. 7.
\textsuperscript{191} Ibid.
continued, “The members of the court are of his own choosing, and we may be sure that all of
them will understand it is their duty to condemn.”**192

On June 28, the Manchester Guardian reported that the sentences in the Dinshwai case were “so exceeding
ly severe” that it would present the official version of the case. After doing so, the newspaper contended that the official account was not “an absolutely complete statement
of the facts.” **194 Since similar incidents had occurred before, the officers “should have known
that they were doing something which was very likely to bring them into collision with the
villagers.” **195 The newspaper argued that the officers may have been guilty of trespass when the incident began and that they had not given up their guns until after the villagers had been
wounded. The Manchester Guardian believed that the shooting of a woman as well as the fact
that Captain Bull’s death “was not actually due to wounds” would have caused the charge in an
English court to be reduced to manslaughter. **196 Not only was the charge not reduced, but the
offense also was “magnified into rebellion.” **197 The newspaper objected to the fact that the
sentences were “made to wear a vindictive appearance quite foreign to European notions of
justice.” **198 It did not believe “that the condition of Egypt is such as to justify the severity of the
sentences or the extreme temerity with which they were ordered to be carried out, as though to
prevent the possibility of appeal or reprieve.” **199 It concluded that the sentences were
“indefensible,” and “if political necessity has been allowed to override justice to the individual,”
“Englishmen should make it a point to insist on knowing what is its nature and urgency that it
should do such violence to what they have always been told about the nature of British rule in
Egypt.” **200

On June 29, the Manchester Guardian argued that premeditation was “quite unsupported
by the facts.” **201 It also decried the “atrocities” with which the sentences were carried out. **202 It
claimed that the execution of the sentences “must have been deliberately calculated for effect,
and that they must imply a conviction in some responsible person’s mind that these things are

**192 Ibid.
**193 Manchester Guardian (Manchester), 28 June 1906, p. 6.
**194 Ibid.
**195 Ibid.
**196 Ibid.
**197 Ibid.
**198 Ibid.
**199 Ibid.
**200 Ibid.
**201 Manchester Guardian (Manchester), 29 June 1906, p. 6.
**202 Ibid.
necessary to maintain the prestige of the British army in Egypt.”

The commentary concluded, “They prove as nothing else could have done that there is disease in our rule in Egypt.”

The Manchester Guardian further rejected Sir Edward Grey’s plea of “supreme political necessity for the executions in Egypt” as a “dangerous line of defence.” It conceded the existence of fanaticism in North Africa but objected to the way in which the incident was handled, claiming “that no British interest is ever to be served by bringing justice into suspicion.” It objected to “the unseemly and degrading terrorism of the whole business” and asserted that Sir Edward Grey’s statement did not “remove any of the discredit that attaches to any Government that attempts to rule by terror.”

The Dinshwai Incident in Print

In addition to press coverage about the Dinshwai incident, certain individuals published their own impressions of the affair. In September 1906, Wilfrid Scawen Blunt published a pamphlet titled Atrocities of Justice under British Rule in Egypt. He declared that his purpose in writing it was “to try and trace the history of cases of the kind” and “to show the essentially inequitable basis on which the criminal relations between Englishman and native, especially between English officer and Egyptian fellah, have been made to stand, as often as it has been thought advisable on political grounds to uphold the former and punish the latter.” He proclaimed “that the Denshawai miscarriage of justice is no exceptional error of judgment, but part of a system under which every principle of civilised law has been for years past made subservient to what has been considered political advantage.” He argued that Lord Cromer’s influence over the Egyptian judicial system in political cases had eliminated any independence in

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203 Ibid.
204 Ibid.
205 Manchester Guardian (Manchester), 6 July 1906, p. 6.
206 Ibid.
207 Ibid.
208 Roger Owen, Lord Cromer: Victorian Imperialist, Edwardian Proconsul (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 338. Blunt presented his work as an appeal to his countrymen but threatened to have it published in French and Arabic if measures were not taken to remedy the wrongs of the Dinshwai case. He sent a copy of the pamphlet to Sir Edward Grey in September. Two Egyptian newspapers published it in Arabic in October. Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, Atrocities of Justice under British Rule in Egypt (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1906), 6-7; United Kingdom, FO 371/66, Blunt to Grey, 9-19-06; and Owen, Lord Cromer, 338.
209 Blunt, Atrocities, 3-4.
210 Ibid., 6.
the Egyptian courts.\textsuperscript{211} He then related a number of cases in which Englishmen and Egyptians had come into conflict and Egyptians had been forced to bear the burden of responsibility.\textsuperscript{212}

In the case of Dinshwai, Blunt proposed to depict the facts of the case not only from the official publications of the government, but also from reports concerning the case in Cairo and Alexandria newspapers and from a special report submitted to him by the “notables and merchants of Cairo.”\textsuperscript{213} He discounted any premeditation in the incident\textsuperscript{214} as well as any “evidence of killing or an intention to kill.”\textsuperscript{215} Since the principal cause of Captain Bull’s death was sunstroke, he found “no conclusive evidence even of manslaughter against the villagers.”\textsuperscript{216} He further rejected fanaticism as a motive of the incident and proclaimed that “the plea of fanaticism as a cause of the conflict” was “an afterthought.”\textsuperscript{217} He concluded by calling for the repeal of the decree of 1895 and for Lord Cromer to explain his actions or be relieved of his responsibilities in Egypt.\textsuperscript{218}

George Bernard Shaw also criticized the British government’s handling of the Dinshwai affair in the preface to his play \textit{John Bull’s Other Island}. He began his retelling of the Dinshwai incident by providing “the British equivalent of what happened at Denshawai.”\textsuperscript{219} He wrote, “Try to imagine the feelings of an English village if a party of Chinese officers suddenly appeared and began shooting the ducks, the geese, the hens, and the turkeys, and carried them off, asserting that they were wild birds, as everybody in China knew, and that the pretended indignation of the farmers was a cloak for hatred of the Chinese, and perhaps for a plot to overthrow the religion of Confucius and establish the Church of England in its place!”\textsuperscript{220} He argued, “No English mob, under similar provocation, would have behaved any better; and few would have done as little mischief.”\textsuperscript{221} He presented a “warning to England that if her Empire means ruling the world as Denshawai has been ruled in 1906…then there can be no more sacred and urgent political duty on earth than the disruption, defeat, and suppression of the Empire.”\textsuperscript{222}

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\textsuperscript{211} Ibid.  \\
\textsuperscript{212} Ibid., 8-32.  \\
\textsuperscript{213} Ibid., 33.  \\
\textsuperscript{214} Ibid., 47-48.  \\
\textsuperscript{215} Ibid., 48.  \\
\textsuperscript{216} Ibid., 49.  \\
\textsuperscript{217} Ibid., 51.  \\
\textsuperscript{218} Ibid., 63.  \\
\textsuperscript{219} Bernard Shaw, \textit{Bernard Shaw: Collected Plays with Their Prefaces}, vol. 2 (New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1975), 853.  \\
\textsuperscript{220} Ibid.  \\
\textsuperscript{221} Ibid., 856.  \\
\textsuperscript{222} Ibid., 867.  \\
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He also castigated the House of Commons for allowing the execution of the Dinshwai sentences and scorned Sir Edward Grey’s attempt to stifle debate with charges of fanaticism.²²³

**Discourse between the British and the Egyptians**

In the aftermath of the Dinshwai incident, the visits of prominent Egyptians to England served to promote the Egyptian cause. In July 1906, Mustafa Kamil arrived in England, where he gave a speech at the Carlton Hotel before a small group that included some members of Parliament like John Mackinnon Robertson. He denied the charge of Egyptian fanaticism and explained that “the present agitation in Egypt was a national movement.”²²⁴ He listed Egyptian grievances against British rule such as the loss of the Sudan; the growing number of British, at the expense of Egyptian, officials; and the lack of support for education. He objected to the increase in the number of British judges, decried the existence of the special tribunal, and demanded the revision of the Dinshwai sentences. He further called for a constitution for Egypt. After Kamil’s address, Robertson assured him of “the active sympathy” of many Englishmen for the Egyptian Nationalist Party.²²⁵ In an interview with the *Daily Chronicle*, Kamil explained that Egyptians were unanimous in their opposition to the handling of the Dinshwai case. He stated, “No country in the world has such a tribunal as this which Lord Cromer established to decide cases between the British and Egyptians—a tribunal with absolute power, from which there is no appeal.”²²⁶ While in England, Kamil also addressed the Pan-Islamic Society, contending that Islam was not “incompatible with progress and enlightenment.”²²⁷ Newspaper editors like Hafiz Awad, editor of *Al-Mimbar*, and Dr. F. Nimr, editor of *Al-Muqattam*, also traveled to England following the Dinshwai incident.²²⁸

**Cromer Faces Opposition**

Lord Cromer returned to Egypt in October 1906. He soon noticed the increasing involvement of the home government, which was interested in providing reforms to counter British and Egyptian criticism. In an effort at reform, Cromer elevated the status of the

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²²³ Ibid., 868-869.
²²⁵ Ibid.
education department to that of a ministry and appointed the Egyptian Saad Zaghlul as its head. He also sought to encourage the more moderate nationalists, hoping that they would provide a counter to the criticisms of Mustafa Kamil and the Nationalist Party. During this time, he was experiencing intensifying problems with his digestion. He resented questions about and criticisms of his Egyptian policy in Parliament and blamed continuing Egyptian unrest on the support of British politicians. He also resisted Grey’s suggestions that the Dinshwai sentences should be modified but was forced to agree to a cabinet decision that the Egyptian courts would handle cases involving members of the army of occupation. In letters to Grey, he charged that he was receiving less than full support from the home government. Grey attempted to reassure him and granted an increase in the army of occupation. Cromer’s health continued to deteriorate, and on March 28, 1907, he submitted his resignation. In his letter to Grey, he gave his health as the reason for his resignation, suggested that Sir Eldon Gorst succeed him, and requested that a statement be issued that no change in policy would follow his resignation.229

Cromer’s Successors and Changing Egyptian Policy

On May 7, 1907, Sir Eldon Gorst assumed the position of British Agent and Consul-General.230 Gorst had a long history of Egyptian service, having been Advisor to the Ministry of the Interior as well as Financial Adviser.231 While professing publicly that no changes would be made to Egyptian policy, the Liberal government encouraged Gorst to modify Cromer’s policy by promoting Egyptian self-government and reconciliation with the Khedive.232 Although the British government was unwilling to institute significant reform in Egypt’s central representative bodies,233 it was willing to expand the powers of the provincial councils. The provincial councils were increased in size and given greater control over local administration, particularly regarding education. They gained the right to raise the land tax by up to five percent and to devote this revenue to projects that had the Ministry of the Interior’s approval. The majority of the money

230 Marlowe, Cromer in Egypt, 273.
231 Ibid., 272.
233 Tignor, Modernization and British Colonial Rule in Egypt, 1882-1914, 295. Some minor reform was instituted in the Legislative Council and General Assembly such as mandating that meetings would be held in public and government officials would attend important sessions and respond to questions. Marlowe, A History, 199.
collected was used to improve education, and in time, the provincial councils were given authority over government primary and village schools.\footnote{\textit{Tignor, Modernization and British Colonial Rule in Egypt, 1882-1914}, 294-295.}

Gorst also wanted to give Egyptians more responsible positions within the government and halt the continuing influx of British recruits.\footnote{\textit{Marlowe, Cromer in Egypt}, 274.} On October 19, 1908, Lewis Morris Iddings, the American Agent and Consul-General of Egypt, described the changes instituted by Gorst: “Formerly many Englishmen were brought out each year to fill places in all the services. For 18 months very few have come, and these principally in the schools, and post office departments. Wherever possible, Egyptians are appointed.”\footnote{“Numerical and Minor Files of the Department of State, 1906-1910,” file 6120, microcopy 862 roll 496, RG 59, National Archives.}

Gorst sought to repair relations between the British Agency and Khedive Abbas II by fostering the Khedive’s friendship. By this means, he gained Abbas II’s support for British policies and separated him from the Egyptian nationalists.\footnote{Tignor, \textit{Modernization and British Colonial Rule in Egypt, 1882-1914}, 296; and \textit{[Marsot], Egypt and Cromer}, 183.} In his letter of October 19, 1908, Iddings remarked on the improvement in the relationship between the British Agent and the Khedive. He stated, “Lord Cromer was not on amiable terms with the Khedive. It is remarked that they hardly looked at each other, even when exchanging remarks on occasions of official receptions. Sir Eldon Gorst is most friendly with His Highness, who is said to have publicly remarked that he thanked God ‘for sending Gorst.’”\footnote{“Numerical and Minor Files of the Department of State, 1906-1910,” file 6120, microcopy 862 roll 496, RG 59, National Archives.}

Despite his attempts to improve relations between the British and the Egyptians, Gorst faced opposition to his policies. The British officials in Egypt did not support his attempt to allow Egyptians more self-government. They were jealous of their own prerogatives and feared that the efficiency of the Egyptian administration would diminish under greater Egyptian control.\footnote{\textit{Marlowe, A History}, 200-201.} As for the Egyptian nationalists, they were suspicious of Gorst’s close relationship with the Khedive. As Afaf Lutfi al-Sayyid Marsot explained, “For if a more liberal government meant in British eyes granting more power to the Khedive, it did not mean the same thing to the Egyptians who, from the time of Urabi, had been trying to limit the sovereign’s autocracy. The Legislative Council and the General Assembly and all the nationalist parties were clamouring for a constitution to restrain both Palace and Agency; and since by 1908 even Turkey had restored
her constitution, the previous excuses offered against granting Egypt one were no longer valid.**240

Gorst’s accommodations to the Khedive reduced his support from the moderate nationalists, who believed they should be consulted concerning Egyptian policy and offered government positions. They joined with more extreme nationalists to wage a press campaign against Gorst.241 Ahmad Lutfi al-Sayyid, a moderate nationalist and the editor of Al-Jarida, gave a speech in which he expressed disapproval of the improved relations between the British Agent and the Khedive, saying “we can only be pained by the knowledge that our Sovereign should be the object of eulogy in the report of the Agent of the Power which holds Egypt, but holds it without any legal title, and all the more since the world in general might well assume that our Sovereign is entirely in accord with the policy pursued by the new British Agent, a policy fatal to all our hopes of independence.”242

Gorst’s selection of Boutros Ghali as Egyptian Prime Minister in 1908, his revival of the press law of 1881 in 1909, and his support for the Suez Canal Concession in 1909 further alienated him from the Egyptians. Gorst had chosen Boutros Ghali as Prime Minister in an attempt to raise capable Egyptians to high office. Yet, Boutros Ghali, a Coptic Christian, had signed the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium Agreement in the Sudan, had served as one of the judges of the special tribunal in the Dinshwai trial, and supported the extension of the Suez Canal Convention; all three of these actions earned the wrath of Egyptians.243 In 1909, Gorst hoped to control the Egyptian nationalist press and reduce criticism of the British by reviving the press law of 1881, “which gave the government the power to grant licenses to newspapers before they could be published and also to warn, suspend, and suppress papers in the interests of public security.”244 Unfortunately for the success of Gorst’s policy, many newspapers easily evaded the law. Foreign newspapers were exempt from the law as a result of their capitulatory privileges, and Egyptian newspapers often were able to claim a foreign interest to gain immunity as well. Egyptian newspapers, which were suppressed or suspended, also circumvented the law by changing their names.245 Robert Tignor explained, “The press law, in short, did not enable the

240 [Marsot], Egypt and Cromer, 198.
243 Tignor, Modernization and British Colonial Rule in Egypt, 1882-1914, 298-299; and [Marsot], Egypt and Cromer, 199.
244 Tignor, Modernization and British Colonial Rule in Egypt, 1882-1914, 299.
245 Ibid.
British to establish controls over the press or to restrict the intensity of the attacks on the occupation. Indeed, the press law itself seemed to have created just one more grievance for the nationalists to attack and exploit.”

Another issue of contention for the Egyptian people was raised in 1909 when the Suez Canal Company proposed the extension of its concession for forty years in exchange for a percentage of the profits from the canal tolls to be paid to the Egyptian government. Gorst encouraged Boutros Ghali to promote the plan to the General Assembly, which overwhelmingly rejected it with only one member voting for its adoption. The day following the vote, February 10, 1910, Boutros Ghali was assassinated by a young nationalist, Ibrahim al-Wardani.

When Gorst died in July 1911, his policy had been largely discredited. The British government favored a stronger hand against nationalism and a return to autocracy in Egypt. Lord Kitchener, who succeeded Gorst, reversed the policy of reconciliation with the Khedive while offering concessions to moderate nationalism. He abandoned Gorst’s emphasis of bringing more Egyptians into government service. Nevertheless, he did continue the reform of Egypt’s central representative bodies. By the Organic Law of 1913, he combined the Legislative Council and the General Assembly into one body, the Legislative Assembly. The Legislative Assembly had the power to veto taxation and interrogate ministers. The government also had to present new legislation to the assembly; however, the assembly had only veto power over direct taxation. Kitchener also “used reform projects to win support for the regime, and to divert attention from possible sources of discontent.”

In the aftermath of Dinshwai, the Liberal government had attempted to curtail British and Egyptian dissent of its Egyptian policy through greater Egyptian participation in Egyptian government and a reconciliation between the British Agent and the Khedive. Gorst’s efforts to implement this policy failed to satisfy the demands of the nationalists, who conducted a vociferous press campaign against the British. With Gorst’s death in 1911, Kitchener re instituted an autocratic, British-led strategy for the government of Egypt.

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246 Ibid., 300.
247 [Marsot], *Egypt and Cromer*, 173, 199-200; Marlowe, *A History*, 202; and Tignor, *Modernization and British Colonial Rule in Egypt, 1882-1914*, 312-313. Wardani gave Boutros Ghali’s participation in the Dinshwai trial as one of the reasons for his assassination.
251 Ibid., 205-206.
Kitchener from 1911 to 1914 more closely resembled those of Cromer than those of Gorst. The British reforms inspired by the ferment created by the Dinshwai incident failed to endure because they fell far short of the demands of the Egyptian people. The impetus to nationalism that Dinshwai provided would be far more enduring.
CHAPTER 4

THE EGYPTIAN RESPONSE TO DINSHWAI

The essence of imperialism is to be found in a moral relationship—that of power and powerlessness—and any material consequences which spring from it are not enough to change it.

- Albert Hourani

Dinshwai galvanized Egyptian opinion against the British occupation. As Amine Youssef recalled, Egyptians viewed Dinshwai “as persecution rather than as an act of even high-handed justice.”

Previously, Lord Cromer and the British officials had considered the Egyptian fellahaen to be among the occupation’s strongest supporters as they had received specific benefits from the occupation. The British response to Dinshwai, however, was directed against the Egyptian fellahaen. It broadened the appeal of Egyptian nationalism, which had been restricted previously along class lines, to all elements of Egyptian society.

The Egyptians rejected the British interpretation of Dinshwai and wrote their own accounts of its importance. As Ahdaf Soueif expressed, Dinshwai “was a flagrant acting out of power and of the fact that the indigenous Egyptians were worth nothing in the eyes of the British.”

The Dinshwai incident would remain an important Egyptian event in which the evils of imperialism...

254 Amine Youssef, Independent Egypt (London: John Murray, 1940), 11.
255 Mohammad Ramadan Salama, “Reading the Modernist Event from the Margins of History: The Denshawai Incident, the Trial of Djamila Bouhired and the Question of Egyptian Modernity” (Ph.D. diss., University of Wisconsin—Madison, 2005), 90; and John Marlowe, A History of Modern Egypt and Anglo-Egyptian Relations 1800-1956, 2d ed. (Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1965), 197. Reforms in irrigation were particularly important to the Egyptian fellahaen.
256 Salama, “Reading the Modernist Event from the Margins of History,” 93-94. Egyptian nationalism had been popular among the educated classes in the urban areas.
257 Dr. Ahdaf Soueif, interview by author, 8 September 2009, tape recording.
were blatantly exposed as well as a powerful justification of Egypt’s demand for independence.258

**Opposition to the Government in the Egyptian Press**

By 1906, Egyptian opposition to the British occupation and Cromer’s policies began to appear. Since Egypt had no responsible representative institutions, Egyptians turned to newspapers as their principal outlet for political expression and used them to express their aspirations for Egypt. Some of these newspapers, such as *Al-Muqattam* and the *Egyptian Gazette*, supported the British occupation and the policies of Lord Cromer.259 Yet, others began to formulate a new vision for the future of Egypt and became the voices of new political parties.

Three of these newspapers came to represent the emergent political currents within Egyptian society. *Al-Muayyad* was established to counter the pro-occupation stance of *Al-Muqattam*. Shaykh Ali Yusif became its editor in 1889.260 Yusif supported the claims of Khedive Abbas II to rule Egypt. He also encouraged Muslim solidarity and promoted pan-Islam or the unity of all Muslims.261 *Al-Muayyad* served as the principal nationalist journal until the establishment of *Al-Liwa* by Mustafa Kamil in 1900.262

In *Al-Liwa*, Mustafa Kamil also promoted Egypt’s Ottoman connection in his efforts to end the British occupation. In 1906, he joined many Egyptians in support of the Ottoman claims in the Sinai Peninsula as a means of protesting the British occupation. Despite his support for the Ottoman Empire’s rights as the suzerain of Egypt, his primary concern was Egyptian territorial nationalism.263 Kamil professed a deep and abiding love for his country.264 He

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258 Ibid.
262 Kelidar, “The Political Press in Egypt 1882-1914,” 15. Israel Gershoni and James Jankowski provide a definition of nationalism as “a perception about political community: that nations are a natural social formation, that they are the object of the ultimate political loyalty and allegiance of their peoples, and that they have an inherent right to autonomy and self-determination within the world assembly of nations.” Israel Gershoni and James P. Jankowski, *Egypt, Islam, and the Arabs: The Search for Egyptian Nationhood, 1900-1930* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), vii.
conducted a two-pronged campaign for Egyptian independence in which he attempted to convince European public opinion of the need to end the British occupation of Egypt and labored to awaken nationalism within Egypt.\textsuperscript{265} He was a powerful speaker whose pronouncements such as “had I not been born an Egyptian, I would have wished to become one” are still remembered in Egypt.\textsuperscript{266} His message particularly appealed to Egyptian college students. On July 23, 1906, \textit{Al-Liwa} reported that two letters had come from Egyptian students comparing Kamil’s work in Egypt to that of Giuseppe Garibaldi’s in Italy and recognizing Kamil as the head of their national party.\textsuperscript{267}

Ahmad Lutfi al-Sayyid, editor of \textit{Al-Jarida}, rejected Kamil’s support for Ottoman claims in the Sinai Peninsula.\textsuperscript{268} Lutfi’s central emphasis was on Egyptian territorial nationalism; he did not believe that any other loyalty (whether to the Ottoman Empire or the Islamic religion) should come before his devotion to his country. He feared that any appeal to religion could divide Egyptian Muslims and Copts.\textsuperscript{269} He instead proposed that the inhabitants of Egypt had a unique national character and thought that Egyptians should give their primary devotion to Egypt.\textsuperscript{270}

Most Egyptians did not share Lutfi’s belief that Egypt should be the sole focus of their devotion, and \textit{Al-Jarida}’s circulation never matched that of \textit{Al-Muayyad} or \textit{Al-Liwa}. Nevertheless, all three newspapers represented political currents within Egyptian society and became the voice for various political parties.\textsuperscript{271} In September 1907, \textit{Hizb al-Umma}, or the People’s Party, became the first official political party, and \textit{Al-Jarida} served as its official mouthpiece. The following month, \textit{al-Hizb al-Watani}, the Nationalist Party, became an official political party with \textit{Al-Liwa} representing its views. \textit{Al-Muayyad} presented the opinions of the \textit{Hizb al-Islah ‘ala al-Mabadi al-Dusturiyya}, or the Constitutional Reform Party.\textsuperscript{272}

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\textsuperscript{265} [Marsot], \textit{Egypt and Cromer}, 156-157.
\textsuperscript{266} [Marsot], \textit{Egypt and Cromer}, 161.
\textsuperscript{268} Gershoni and Jankowski, \textit{Egypt, Islam, and the Arabs}, 8; and [Marsot], \textit{Egypt and Cromer}, 168. \textit{Al-Jarida} was formed as an independent newspaper in March 1907.
\textsuperscript{271} Gershoni and Jankowski, \textit{Egypt, Islam, and the Arabs}, 14; and [Marsot], \textit{Egypt and Cromer}, 188.
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Nationalism and Pan-Islamism in Egypt

The emergence of nationalism in Egypt arose from the Westernizing reforms that had been instituted in Egypt during the previous century. Many Egyptians had gone abroad for their education or had benefited from the Western-style schools established in Egypt. Through these avenues, they had been exposed to the nationalist philosophies prevalent in Europe.\textsuperscript{273}

With a majority Muslim population, Egypt had no predisposition to nationalism as it was understood in Europe. According to Islam, all Muslims belonged to one community or \textit{umma} regardless of such factors as race, culture, or language.\textsuperscript{274} Pan-Islam elaborated this view and can be seen as an Islamic alternative to traditional territorial nationalism. Egypt still technically owed its allegiance to the Ottoman Empire, which was the principal Muslim power and incorporated a multitude of ethnic groups. The Ottoman sultan in his position as caliph (“successor to Muhammad as head of the \textit{umma}”) was the most important religious figure among the Muslims, and during this period, Sultan Abdulhamid II was promoting his position as caliph in order to consolidate support within an empire faced with nationalist revolts and demands for liberal reform. For Muslims such as Mustafa Kamil, the Ottoman connection was an important counterweight against British absorption of Egypt, and support of this connection provided a means of opposition to the British occupation. Muslim solidarity could also be used to appeal to the Egyptian masses, who showed little support for Egyptian territorial nationalism. Thus, nationalism in Egypt during this period often contained a mixture of pan-Islamism and territorial nationalism.\textsuperscript{275}

Reaction to the Dinshwai Incident

All elements of Egyptian society reacted with shock to news of the Dinshwai incident and the British handling of it. On June 28, 1906, “Egyptians in Oxford” sent a telegram to Prime

\textsuperscript{273} Goldschmidt and Davidson, \textit{A Concise History of the Middle East}, 8\textsuperscript{th} ed., 186; and Abbas, \textit{The Last Khedive of Egypt}, 7, 17.
\textsuperscript{274} Goldschmidt and Davidson, \textit{A Concise History of the Middle East}, 8\textsuperscript{th} ed., 185.
Minister Campbell-Bannerman asking that the sentences be delayed so that the Dinshwai accused could have a fair trial. They objected to the use of the special tribunal and called for the resolution of the case within normal judicial procedures. They argued that the charge against the villagers should have been manslaughter, rather than murder, since Captain Bull’s death was not directly caused by his wounds. They also asserted that extenuating circumstances such as the fire and the shooting of a woman had not been properly considered by the court and that the charge of a premeditated plot was “absurd in view of Egyptian feelings for British work in Egypt.” They believed that Egyptian witnesses during the trial were likely intimidated by the British troops stationed in the area. Finally, they implored the British government to delay the execution of the sentences so that the accused could have a fair trial. The British government decided not to grant the Egyptians’ request. In the British Foreign Office files accompanying this telegram, Grey noted, “No action seems necessary.”

A correspondent for the Manchester Guardian described the reactions of the fellaheen to the execution of the Dinshwai sentences. He contrasted their typical demeanor, which was “so light-hearted and demonstrative,” with that displayed after the punishments. He related, “Every brow was contracted, every tone subdued, and every eye betrayed the impression of a harrowing recollection.”

Popular ballads about Dinshwai were composed and sung throughout the countryside. One of these ballads related the lack of mercy of the sentences and described family members watching their loved ones’ punishments. It also recalled Mustafa Kamil journeying to England to demand the removal of Lord Cromer and indemnity for the families of those executed at Dinshwai. Another ballad, attributed to Mustafa Ibrahim Ajaj, began with the imperative “Be comforted, O Danshaway!” It described the English firing to shoot pigeons but hitting a woman and her barn instead, the killing of an innocent man (presumably, the Egyptian found dead at Sersina), and soldiers representing the government arriving to investigate the incident. It continued, “Cromer turned up, seeking excessive restitution. / He issued orders on the spot, and

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276 United Kingdom, FO 371/66, “Egyptians in Oxford” to Campbell-Bannerman, 6-28-06.
277 Ibid.
278 United Kingdom, FO 371/66, Notes on “Egyptians in Oxford” to Campbell-Bannerman, 6-28-06.
280 Ibid.
281 [Marsot], Egypt and Cromer, 173.
283 Ibid., 255.
substituted flogging for [lesser] sentences, / ….” 284 The ballad ended, “Those who were hanged have died, and from the lashes blood ran, / Something that indeed brings tears to the people, the sons of the Fatherland.” 285 Pierre Cachia, who collected these two ballads in his Popular Narrative Ballads of Modern Egypt, noted that “the events of Dansaway had touched such a live nerve in the consciousness of the people that ballads about it were, if not current, at least obtainable half a century later.” 286

Members of Egypt’s educated classes were profoundly moved by news of the Dinshwai judgment as well. 287 Mustafa Kamil wrote, “The violence of indignation swamped Egypt when these executions were recounted. All the enemies of England could not have produced such a result in fifty years of struggle.” 288 The author Ahmad Amin related that he had learned of the Dinshwai verdict at a dinner party, where many of the guests wept in response to the judgment. 289 Qasim Amin recalled, “Everyone I met had a broken heart and a lump in his throat. There was nervousness in every gesture—in their hands and their voices. Sadness was on every face, but it was a peculiar sort of sadness. It was confused, distracted and visibly subdued in the face of superior force…The spirits of the hanged men seemed to hover over every place in the city.” 290

In his memoirs, Khedive Abbas II described the Dinshwai affair as “a bitter and real agony;” yet, “English haste and the weakness of the Egyptian Government gave me no time to intervene at the time of the trial.” 291

The Dinshwai Incident in the Egyptian Press

The Dinshwai incident received considerable press coverage in Egypt. On July 22, 1906, Al-Hourryah complained of the extensive press coverage that the affair was getting and referred to Dinshwai as an ordinary incident that would be quickly forgotten. It also claimed that the

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284 Ibid.
285 Ibid., 257.
286 Ibid., 75.
288 Abbas, The Last Khedive of Egypt, 166.
289 [Marsot], Egypt and Cromer, 172-173.
290 Ibid., 173.
291 Abbas, The Last Khedive of Egypt, 159. Abbas also noted that he wanted to pardon the Dinshwai prisoners who had not been executed. Lord Cromer, however, refused since “the honour of the British army was at stake,” forcing Abbas to wait until Sir Eldon Gorst succeeded Cromer “to repair the damage.” Abbas, The Last Khedive of Egypt, 162.
Egyptians could not agree among themselves about the implications of the incident. Actually, the differing press accounts could be divided between the pro-government press and the nationalist press, which had widely varying views about the cause and impact of the Dinshwai incident.

The pro-government press tended to blame newspaper agitation for the Dinshwai affray. Al-Muqattam reported that an incident in which a British soldier had been attacked at Mex stemmed primarily from the incitements found in a portion of the Egyptian press. Al-Muqattam believed that the Anglo-Egyptian press’ continuous stress upon past Egyptian unrest and its repeated assurances that the British would not modify their policy in Egypt served to incite opposition in the Egyptian press.

While on a visit to England, Dr. F. Nimr, the editor of Al-Muqattam, gave an interview to a correspondent of the Daily Chronicle. He argued that Egyptians had “no real political grievances.” He believed that Egyptian discontent was social in that the British officials in Egypt did not interact with Egyptians, thus preventing Egyptians from overcoming their prejudices against them. While expressing respect for Cromer’s liberal treatment of the press, he thought that some elements in Egypt viewed this as weakness. He said, “If you checked the writers you might not have to hang and flog their dupes, nor to increase, every now and then, the charge of expenditure of the British Army of Occupation in the Egyptian Budget.” He admitted, “The Denishwai executions were terrible; but they have had their effect, and we hope that they will bring the dupes of Pan-Islamic agitators to their senses.”

On July 17, 1906, Al-Watan, a Coptic newspaper, published an article that discussed the divided nature of Egyptian public opinion with regard to Dinshwai. It approved of the government’s handling of the affair and spoke of the benefits that the fellaheen had received.

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294 Ibid.
295 “Inflamatory Newspapers,” Egyptian Gazette (Alexandria), 7 July 1906, 3.
298 Ibid.
299 Ibid.
from the occupation. It saw the Dinshwai incident as an example of the fellahaen’s evil nature and encouraged Egyptians to abandon fanaticism.\footnote{Kenneth Bourne and D. Cameron Watt, ed., \textit{British Documents on Foreign Affairs: Reports and Papers from the Foreign Office Confidential Print}, Series B: The Near and Middle East, 1856-1914, ed. David Gillard, vol. 15 (n.p.: University Publications of America, 1985), 418-419.}

Ibrahim Awny, a judicial official in the province of Menoufiyeh, also supported the Dinshwai judgment. He wrote to Sir Edward Grey on August 3, 1906, to allay any false impressions that the English people may have gained about Dinshwai. He related that he had thorough knowledge of the case, having attended the inquiry and the trial of the special tribunal. He wanted to express “the deep regret caused in the minds of all sensible Egyptians by the lamentable crime which was committed at Denshawee.”\footnote{United Kingdom, FO 371/66, Awny to Grey, 8-3-06.} He called the incident “an unpardonable crime” and regretted “seeing some so called ‘national’ newspapers, for their own personal interests, inciting the ignorant people to hate those English who conduct business here and trying to destroy all their respect for them.”\footnote{Ibid.} He assured Grey that the judgment “met with the approval of every sensible person, except some young men, who have only a smattering of education, who wish to get salaries for their incapacity and incompetence in the management of the business of the country.”\footnote{Ibid.} He applauded the character of the judges and told Grey that the sentences had been carried out “with all due respect for the customs and usages of the country.”\footnote{Ibid.} He hoped his letter would be communicated to the House of Commons so that it could allay any misrepresentations that its members may have gleaned from the Egyptian press. Finally, he asked that the army of occupation in Egypt be increased “to control the people, and to rap the knuckles of the proprietors of those newspapers, who stir up the minds of the natives.”\footnote{Ibid.}

Ibrahim Awny’s letter reflected the British view of the Dinshwai incident and Egyptian politics expressed in the Dinshwai judgment and Cromer’s reports. The British government approved of his views, referring to his communication in the Foreign Office files as “an excellent letter.”\footnote{United Kingdom, FO 371/66, Note on Awny to Grey, 8-3-06.} As an official of the government, Awny also stood to benefit from his support for the British handling of the affair.

While the pro-government press approved the handling of the Dinshwai affair, the nationalist press condemned it. \textit{Al-Muayyad} considered the judgment a British demonstration. It
reported that it had received hundreds of letters objecting to the harshness of the judgment and the poor quality of the defense.307 Regarding the villagers attacking the British officers for shooting their pigeons, the paper argued, “It may perhaps therefore be admitted that they prepared to act on the first movement of the offenders, but it is impossible to admit the charge of evil premeditation on their part considering that their action was to depend upon that of others upon whom the real and sole responsibility should be laid.”308 It recognized the villagers’ offense, stating, “Moreover they are more to blame than their offenders because they did not seek redress by legal means but defended their rights by a gross aggression, which was all the grosser that it was made against officers of the army of occupation.”309

Nevertheless, Al-Muayyad did not believe the convening of the special tribunal was necessary and thought that the presence at the trial of British troops as well as the British advisors to the Departments of Finance and the Interior influenced the judgment. It further affirmed that the pigeons were the property of the villagers and that the shooting of them was an act of theft.310

Al-Muayyad rejected Grey’s charge of fanaticism, arguing that Lord Cromer had instigated this assertion in order to avoid a review of the Dinshwai case by Parliament. It continued, “Lord Cromer acts to preserve his absolutism in Egypt from any superior authority such as that of Parliament, which in discussing such matters considers nobody to be above justice. The Egyptians, consequently, cannot maintain any safeguards for their national future unless they set their matters directly before Parliament, which should know how matters stand in Egypt, from a native source.”311

Mustafa Kamil also rejected Grey’s charge of fanaticism within Egypt. In a letter to the Tribune, he explained that he believed that Grey made this charge in order to prevent discussion of the incident. He asked, “Was not the Denishwai incident sufficient to provoke an outbreak of fanaticism if fanaticism existed?”312 Rather than a fanatical movement, Kamil recognized a national movement in Egypt.313 In a letter to the Daily Graphic, he explained, “We want ‘Egypt

308 “Denishwai Again,” Egyptian Gazette (Alexandria), 6 July 1906, p. 3.
309 Ibid.
310 Ibid.
311 “Sir E. Grey’s Speech,” Egyptian Gazette (Alexandria), 9 July 1906, p. 3.
312 “Fanaticism in Egypt,” Egyptian Gazette (Alexandria), 7 August 1906, p. 3.
313 Ibid. Mustafa Kamil stressed that the Egyptian nationalist movement was not anti-Christian. He urged all Muslims to proclaim, “We are no enemies of Christianity, but enemies of injustice.” “Mustapha Pasha Kamel,” Egyptian Gazette, 26 July 1906.
for the Egyptians.’ No foreign yoke and no foreign rule.” He asserted, “We deem ourselves quite capable of self-government, and will not admit for an instant that we have need of anyone to rule over us or to tutor us.”

In an appeal “to the English nation and to the civilized world” published in the French newspaper Le Figaro on July 11, 1906, Mustafa Kamil countered the British version of the Dinshwai incident. He said that the villagers had warned the officers’ interpreter that they had been upset by an earlier incident of the shooting of their pigeons. He related the fact that the Ministry of the Interior had issued an official version of the facts in the case before the trial. He noted, “A newspaper in the service of the occupation pushed the contempt for justice to the point of publishing the news that the gallows had already been dispatched to Dinshwai.” The special tribunal disregarded an ombashi’s statement that the officers had fired on the villagers and based its decision solely on the officers’ testimony. Kamil proclaimed, “Special laws and tyranny cannot but provoke the Egyptian into opposing those who practise them.” If the Dinshwai villagers had attacked the officers because of the wounding of a woman, Kamil asserted, then the Dinshwai sentences were unjust. He continued, “If, on the contrary, the fallahs acted on feelings of religious or national hatred, Lord Cromer should admit that they hate the occupation and that the administration of His Lordship has ended with the most pitiable failure.”

Al-Mimbar argued that the Egyptians were guilty of criticizing the British and maintaining sympathy for the Ottoman Empire, not of fanaticism. On August 14, 1906, it noted that Grey’s accusation of fanaticism had been changed to restlessness and viewed this as “an acknowledgment that the Egyptians now feel that their rights are not observed.” It also agreed with Grey’s statement that troubles with the Ottoman Empire were felt by Muslims
everywhere and believed that this fact would eventually cause Britain to change its treatment of Muslims “when it feels the strength of the Pan-Islamic movement.”\textsuperscript{324} The article concluded, “This is our strength; this is our union; would that it were known by our brethren even in China, and would that they tried to strengthen this union with wisdom.”\textsuperscript{325}

\textit{Al-Zahir} believed that the charge of fanaticism was introduced in order to make a change in Egypt, and that this accusation would cause other countries to avoid Egypt and “enable England to enjoy an undisturbed preponderance in our country.”\textsuperscript{326} It thought that Britain wanted to avenge Egypt’s support of the Ottoman Empire during the Sinai Peninsula dispute. \textit{Al-Zahir} stated, “Every now and then these English people suddenly suspect us of being very fanatical, that is, when they see the right is on our side, and can find no other means of getting rid of responsibility or blame.”\textsuperscript{327} \textit{Al-Zahir} believed that the Egyptians had been “unjustly treated and insulted” during the Dinshwai incident and proclaimed that the special tribunal had “entirely removed from our hearts all sympathy with and inclination towards the British Occupation.”\textsuperscript{328}

**Discussion of the Dinshwai Incident**

According to reports in the British \textit{Foreign Office Confidential Print}, Dinshwai was also a topic of discussion among Egyptians at the meetings of various societies. On July 22, 1906, a meeting of the Islamic society of Nejm-el-Terakki was held.\textsuperscript{329} At this meeting, Mohamed Rifaat, a fifteen-year-old student, spoke about the Dinshwai incident and received a warm reception. He asked the audience, “Have you ever seen or heard of a Government like this of ours, or of chief men like ours, or of Ulema like ours, who deliver the necks of their people to a savage race like the English to hang and flog, imprison and ruin, as has been done at Denshawai?”\textsuperscript{330} He was followed by the president of the society, Eelim-el-Yakoubi, who elaborated on the sufferings of those at Dinshwai “until the audience were affected to tears.”\textsuperscript{331}

\textsuperscript{324} Ibid., 418.
\textsuperscript{325} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{326} “British Garrison in Egypt,” \textit{Egyptian Gazette} (Alexandria), 10 July 1906, p. 3.
\textsuperscript{327} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{328} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{330} Ibid., 421. Rifaat also lamented the part played in the Dinshwai trial by Ibrahim Hilbawi. In \textit{Egypt and Cromer: A Study in Anglo-Egyptian Relations}, Marsot explains, “The three Egyptians involved in the trial…were despised, and the public never forgave them….” [Marsot], \textit{Egypt and Cromer}, 173.
At a meeting of the society Rising Generation held at the Grand Preparatory School in Saida Zenab, the president began the meeting by mentioning the Dinshwai incident and regretting what he deemed an insult to the Egyptians. Abdel Aziz Hamdi, the editor of *Al-Mufid*, discussed the special tribunal, claiming that the English had been biased. He stated, “Write this on your hearts until the day when you can revenge yourselves.” Mohamed Radiel-Sha’ir also accused the special tribunal of violating the laws and backed up his assertion with quotes from some members of Parliament. On July 27, 1906, another meeting was held at which eight students gave speeches and recited poetry rebuking the English for their treatment of the Egyptians in the Dinshwai incident and calling for independence.

The Dinshwai Incident in Egyptian Literature

Egyptians rejected the British description of the Dinshwai incident as represented in the judgment of the special tribunal and turned to literature in order to present their view of the affair. Robert Tignor explains, “Literature was employed as a medium of social criticism rather than purely as an aesthetic and artistic exercise.” He adds that a new interest in previously ignored aspects of the Egyptian experience such as the peasantry and rural life were now discussed. Two of Egypt’s leading poets, Hafiz Ibrahim and Ahmad Shawqi, wrote verses about Dinshwai. In *The Denshawai Event*, written in 1906, Hafiz Ibrahim addressed the British, asking if they had forgotten the Egyptians’ “loyalty and meekness.” He compared the Egyptians to pigeons and proclaimed that “the yokes have not left our necks.” The following year, Ahmad Shawqi wrote *Denshawai’s Anniversary* to ask for the pardon of the Dinshwai prisoners. Shawqi related, “Many months

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332 Ibid., 423. This meeting appears to have occurred on July 12.
333 Ibid., 424.
334 Ibid.
335 Ibid., 426.
337 Ibid.
338 Ibid., and Salama, “Reading the Modernist Event from the Margins of History,” 95.
339 Ibid., 99.
340 Ibid.
341 Ibid.
342 Ibid., 95.
have passed for those in their graves / and a year has elapsed for those in their fetters.”

In 1906, Mahmud Tahir Haqqi wrote *The Maiden of Dinshway*, one of the first Egyptian novels. Mixing real historical figures with fictional characters, Haqqi presented a work of fiction that still managed to cast the Dinshwai incident in a light far different from that given it by the British. In the 1909 edition of his work, he told his readers that his novel was “more literary than historical.” Haqqi was reported to have lost his job as a result of the publication of his work, and he included a disclaimer when it was republished about the dangerous nature of his topic. He explained that there were many versions of the event and “any misrepresented word” could cause him “unnecessary trouble.” Consequently, he exercised “extreme caution” in his writing and “used euphemism and refrained from commentary on many of the events so as not [sic] end up joining the line of the Denshawai accused or to be the last one punished because of this incident.”

Beginning his story on the first day of June 1906, Haqqi painted an idyllic picture of Egyptian life in the countryside but foreshadowed the conflict to come by referring to past instances of British troops shooting the villagers’ pigeons. A complaint had been made to the omdeh about this practice, but he had not presented the villagers’ grievance to the British. Thus, the officers made plans to shoot again. In discussing their proposed sporting trip, Major Ben Coffin assured Lieutenant Smith Weak that they would be treated generously by the wealthy landowners and disregarded the sentiments of the *fellaheen* whom he characterized as cowards.

Once their sport commenced, the officers appeared more concerned with their friendly shooting competition than with the effects of their shooting, which had started a fire. Haqqi explained that the *fellaheen* did not offer any resistance to the officers as they began to shoot.

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341 Ibid., 98.
342 Ibid.
346 Salama, “Reading the Modernist Event from the Margins of History,” 104.
347 Ibid., 105.
348 Ibid., 105-106. It was reported that he had been secretary to the minister of *awqaf*. Salama, “Reading the Modernist Event from the Margins of History,” 105. *Awqaf* were Muslim endowments for charitable purposes. Goldschmidt and Davidson, *A Concise History of the Middle East*, 8th ed., 496.
349 Salama, “Reading the Modernist Event from the Margins of History,” 106.
350 Ibid.
When Muhammad ‘Abd al-Nabi’s wife was hit and his barn was set ablaze by the shooting, however, he lost control and approached the officers. A scuffle ensued, Muhammad ‘Abd al-Nabi called for help, and some of the villagers responded. Believing the people intended to attack them, Porter fired at the crowd, hitting three people and causing the villagers to attempt to secure the officers’ weapons. When Major Coffin arrived on the scene, he attempted to diffuse the situation by ordering the officers to surrender their guns and pretending to arrest the soldiers responsible for the fire.353

When the conflict continued, Captain Bustock and Captain Paul attempted to run for help.354 Haqqi gave a comical description of Captain Bustock “with his clothes in tatters, his suspenders torn, and his trousers falling to his knees.”355 Eventually losing his pants altogether, Bustock saw Captain Paul lying on the ground and stopped at his side to pray and encourage him before continuing on to get help. Meanwhile, a peasant, Sayyid Ahmad Sa’id, saw the officer on the ground, approached him, and prayed for him. When the peasant made no attempt to harm him, Paul signed that he wanted water. Though Sa’id brought him water, Paul quickly succumbed to his injuries while clutching a crucifix. When other soldiers arrived, one confused Sa’id for the murderer of Paul and killed him while the others gathered around Captain Paul to pray.356

Haqqi created an unusual blend of characteristics in the officers, juxtaposing religious imagery with brutality. When Sa’id brought him water in his cupped hands, Paul was concerned about drinking it because of Sa’id’s dirty hands. In the next instant, he was clutching a crucifix and thinking of his mother as he died. When reinforcements arrived, one of the soldiers caught and killed Sa’id while the rest paused to pray over Paul’s body.357

Haqqi then described the consequences of the altercation. Mitchell approached Lord Cromer with news of the incident. Immediately, Cromer began to plan a harsh revenge. He chose Ibrahim al-Hilbawi to prosecute the case, forcing Hilbawi to choose between his ambition and his loyalty to his people.358 When his ambition triumphed, he “accepted the position and started to spend his days and nights exploring the criminal code and examining the scene of the

353 Ibid., 26-27.
355 Ibid., 28.
356 Ibid., 28-29.
357 Ibid., 29.
358 Ibid., 29-31.
incident, until he reached the desired conclusions.”\textsuperscript{359} The villagers also contemplated their next move. They considered running away and then thought of sending representatives to tell their side of the story. When they learned that one of the soldiers had died, they recognized the extreme seriousness of the situation.\textsuperscript{360} One of the villagers still clung to the hope that justice would prevail only to be countered with the statement: “If there is justice, would the British attack your village, shoot your pigeons, kill your women, and burn your barns?”\textsuperscript{361}

Haqqi contrasted the disunity of Egyptian society with the unity of the British officials. Butrus Ghali and Hilbawi were willing to sacrifice their countrymen in order to further their own careers. Two-thirds of the defendants had been falsely accused by private enemies. By contrast, the British officers followed the prompts of the judges of the special tribunal to condemn the accused despite their inability to recognize anyone.\textsuperscript{362} As he surveyed the accused, Major Ben Coffin thought, “I have absolute control over your destiny. With one word I can condemn you all to death or bring you back to life!”\textsuperscript{363} Haqqi continued, “Thus he kept walking between the rows of the defendants, their lives hanging on his words, until he accused all those whose appearances did not appeal to him, and pardoned the rest.”\textsuperscript{364} When Egyptian witnesses’ testimony conflicted with that of the officers, it was promptly disregarded. In summing up the case of the prosecution, Hilbawi emphasized the difference in status between the officers and the Egyptians, wondering how the Egyptians could dare to speak to the soldiers much less attack them.\textsuperscript{365} He also discussed his own betrayal of his people, saying: “See how I accepted my present task with pleasure, readily betrayed my country and scorned all my principles. See how I became a burning fire for my country, asking you to crush and execute its sons. How would you judge a nation which includes a man like me?”\textsuperscript{366} Hilbawi was followed by the defense attorneys, who praised the British while neglecting the defense of their clients. When the judges were given time to deliberate over the case, there was no discussion, only unanimous approval of the verdict.\textsuperscript{367}

\begin{footnotes}
\item 359 Ibid., 31.
\item 360 Ibid., 31-34.
\item 361 Ibid., 34.
\item 362 Ibid., 30-31, 35-39.
\item 363 Ibid., 37.
\item 364 Ibid.
\item 365 Ibid., 40-42.
\item 366 Ibid., 42.
\item 367 Ibid., 43.
\end{footnotes}
In describing the execution of the sentences, Haqqi noted the differing attitudes of the government officials and the peasants. Officials talked and laughed as if they were at the movies while the Egyptian peasants’ eyes were drawn to the scaffold. When Hasan Mahfuz approached, the highest official laughed at his “stunned look.” The authorities heartlessly denied his son the chance to have a last word with his father. Upon seeing the anguish of his family, “Mahfuz bowed his head which had never been bowed by age, and tears welled up in his eyes which had never shed tears before in spite of all afflictions.” Even Mahfuz’s dog “was crying, whereas man showed no signs of mercy.”

Haqqi ended his account by addressing the village of Dinshwai. He comforted it that its hardships would not be forgotten and urged it to tell its children of its persecution “so that they can learn how civilized the twentieth century can be under British domination!” Unable to comfort the village, Haqqi recognized, “The only thing I can offer in memory of this agonizing disaster is the pen of a writer, recording your events in the form of a novel, to be dedicated to the executioner of Egypt who hanged four of your sons readily and easily.” Haqqi’s offering provided an indictment of the injustice of Dinshwai and gave the Egyptian people an opportunity to emerge from the silence that the British imposed.

Although a fictional account of the Dinshwai incident, The Maiden of Dinshway should not be dismissed for that reason. As Robert Tignor notes, the Egyptians used literature as a means of social criticism. With limited political power, they were forced to express their opposition to British dominance sometimes by indirect means. They took advantage of the freedom of the press in order to build a forum in which they could discuss political ideas. They also employed literature to begin building a consensus of opinion about the basic definitions within their society: the role that the British played in Egypt and the issue of whether there was a common Egyptian identity rather than a composite of various nationalities and classes. The basic outlines of Haqqi’s story (the relationship between the British and Egyptians and the inherent inequalities within that relationship, the culpability of the officers in instigating the Dinshwai incident, the ombashi’s testimony that the British officers purposely fired on the

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368 Ibid., 45.
369 Ibid., 46.
370 Ibid.
371 Ibid.
372 Ibid., 48.
373 Ibid.
374 Tignor, Modernization and British Colonial Rule in Egypt, 1882-1914, 250.
Egyptian crowd, and the killing of an innocent Egyptian at Sersina) were accepted as truth by the majority of Egyptians. The details were frequently altered, but the major themes remained consistent.\footnote{It is important to note that the British also had difficulties in portraying completely accurate accounts. Articles in the British press, excerpts from which are given in chapter three, often portrayed the general outline of the situation accurately while misrepresenting the small details. In an article of the Pall Mall Gazette on June 15, 1906, the article wondered if the Dinshwai incident had arisen as a result of a local incident such as a fire in the neighboring village. (The fire occurred in a threshing-floor, not in another village.) “Occasional Notes,” Pall Mall Gazette (London), 15 June 1906. The Manchester Guardian attempted to analyze critically all of the news about the government’s policy in Egypt despite its discomfort in criticizing the Liberal Party. Nevertheless, in an article printed on June 28, the Manchester Guardian erroneously reported that an Egyptian woman had been killed during the Dinshwai incident. (A woman was wounded and was believed dead at the time. Her injuries, however, were superficial and were described in a medical report regarding the people wounded in the incident.) Manchester Guardian (Manchester), 28 June 1906, p. 6. Although newspaper reports were not the British government’s official view, they did prompt questions in Parliament.} By pointing out the disunity of the Egyptians, Haqqi communicated the need to create a common Egyptian identity. He helped to produce a public opinion hostile to any Egyptian collaboration with the British system of government. He exposed the flaws in Britain’s belief in its inherent superiority by revealing specific instances in which no such quality was evident. He also presented the Egyptians’ traditional passivity in the face of injustice and illuminated the limitations of this tendency. The works of Hafiz Ibrahim, Ahmad Shawqi, and Mahmud Tahir Haqqi helped to create the idea in the public consciousness that Egypt existed and could affect its own political destiny.\footnote{This was the same message that nationalists attempted to encourage in the press. In September 1895, Mustafa Kamal wrote to Juliette Adam seeking her support in his campaign for Egyptian independence. He said, “I wish in the old Egypt to awake the young one. My country, they say, does not exist, it lives, Madame, I feel it live in me with such a love that it will dominate all others and that I wish to consecrate to it all my youth, my strength, my life.” Kamel, Egyptian-French Letters addressed to Mme. Juliette Adam, 1895-1908, 2, 4.}

The Egyptian authorities recognized the potential impact that examples of cultural expression could have. A note in the Egyptian Gazette on July 13, 1906, stated, “The Ministry of the Interior has prohibited a drama, written round the Denishwai incident, from being staged at the Esbekieh Theatre, Cairo.”\footnote{“Local and General,” Egyptian Gazette (Alexandria), 13 July 1906. One may ask why the Egyptian government allowed Haqqi’s The Maiden of Dinshway to be published but prohibited the production of a play. This was probably because Egypt’s low literacy rates made published works less threatening than a play, which could be understood by the literate and illiterate alike.}

**The Continuing Impact of the Dinshwai Incident**

The Egyptian people continued to advocate for the Dinshwai prisoners until they were released in 1908. On June 24, 1907, Sir Eldon Gorst sent Grey a translation of a petition to Khedive Abbas II requesting the pardon of the Dinshwai prisoners. *Al-Līwa* had prepared the
petition and was attempting to obtain signatures for it. The petition expressed the unanimous desire of the Egyptian people for the prisoners’ release, saying, “Your Highness know [sic] that every family in Egypt claims the Dinshawai prisoners among its members: sorrow has entered every dwelling, from the palaces of the rich to the cottages of the poor.”

If Abbas acceded to this request, he would “make happy every Egyptian” and fulfill “the hopes of every patriot.”

When news spread that the Dinshwai prisoners were to be released on January 8, 1908, the prisoners’ families traveled to the prison to meet them upon their release, and Al-Liwa planned a demonstration in their honor. In order to avoid such a demonstration, the British arranged for the prisoners’ release a day early and had them conveyed by steamer to Dinshwai. Nevertheless, when the families learned of the prisoners’ release, they immediately set out for Dinshwai to meet them on their return. Hundreds of people met the prisoners on the Nile bank, a mile from Dinshwai, when they arrived on January 8, 1908.

The Dinshwai incident continues to be commemorated in Egyptian culture. In the province of Menoufieh, June 13, the date of the Dinshwai incident, is celebrated as the province’s national day. Menoufieh’s emblem includes a pigeon tower as well as “the flame symbolizing the revolution of peasants in Denshway village.” In 1960, the Denshway Museum was established. After being rebuilt, the museum reopened on the ninety-third anniversary of the Dinshwai incident in 1999. Today, the museum houses five show halls as well as the historical records of the event, agricultural implements used at the time of the incident, and a model of the early Dinshwai village. “The building also includes a roofless theatre, cultural centre, music hall, VIP’s hall and an atelier as well.” In this way, it commemorates the past while creating opportunities for the future.

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378 United Kingdom, FO 371/248, Gorst to Grey, No. 103, 6-24-07.
379 Ibid.
380 United Kingdom, FO 371/448, Gorst to Grey, No. 5, 1-10-08. On January 2, 1908, Mohamed Wahid sent a telegram to Sir Edward Grey on behalf of Egyptian liberals expressing their thanks for the pardon. United Kingdom, FO 371/448, Wahid to Grey, 1-2-08.
381 “Menofya Governorate,” www.eip.gov.eg/Periodicals/WasfMistr/2008/mnf.pdf, p. 236. The entire emblem is described as follows: “The cogwheel refers to the industry. It is topped by spikes of grain to symbolize agriculture in the governorate. In the Middle of the emblem, there are the pigeons tower, and the flame symbolizing the revolution of peasants in Denshway village.” “Menofya Governorate,” www.eip.gov.eg/Periodicals/WasfMistr/2008/mnf.pdf, p. 236. (This quote is rendered exactly as it appears on the website. I believe that any irregularities in the description result from its translation from Arabic to English.)
382 Molefi Kete Asante, Culture and Customs of Egypt (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2002), 85.
384 Ibid.
The Dinshwai incident profoundly affected and continues to shape Egypt to this day. It helped to bring together the Egyptians in common opposition to the British. It became a symbol of resistance to imperialism and an example of the enduring spirit of the Egyptians. Dinshwai helped to define and continues to remain a part of the Egyptian experience. In an interview, Dr. Ahdaf Soueif was asked how she had learned about Dinshwai. Her response reflects the centrality of the Dinshwai incident to Egyptian identity. She explained that she had studied it in school, that it “was always there as an example of what happens when you’re ruled by imperialists.” She concluded that “there was no way that you could be Egyptian in the ’60s and not hear of Denshwai.”

In his song “The High Dam,” Abdel Halim Hafez recalled the struggle that Egypt had fought against colonialism. Dinshwai was a part of that struggle. Hafez wrote:

And the gallows were for whoever was coming and going;
And the blood of the free who passed away in Denshawai.
Here it all started;
The people began the story.
Our struggle,
By the fire of our wounds,
Was written with the blood of the victims.
And we overcame! We overcame! We overcame!”

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385 Dr. Ahdaf Soueif, interview by author, 8 September 2009, tape recording.
386 Ibid.
CONCLUSION

The Dinshwai incident serves as a powerful example of the dangers of imperialism. An in-depth study of this single case illuminates many aspects of imperialism. The colonial mentality that asserts that colonies and their people require the help and training of the imperial power stirs resentment, inflames nationalism, and often leads to rebellion. When an act of rebellion occurs, the imperial power is faced with a difficult choice. Generally suffering from limited resources of men and money and giving their colonies a low priority in the allocation of their resources, the colonial government, whose power is based “on force and on prestige,”

oftentimes chooses to react harshly in order to discourage future opposition. If the original offense was a genuine act of rebellion and the punishment seems appropriate for it, reaction may be muted. In a case such as Dinshwai, however, in which there is no clear rebellion and the punishment is viewed as excessive, the imperial response will serve only to foster resistance. As Amine Youssef stresses, Dinshwai was viewed “as persecution rather than as an act of even high-handed justice.”

British officials in Egypt reacted to Dinshwai based on their fear of rebellion and their desire to preserve the prestige of the British occupation forces rather than on the causes of the incident. Dinshwai was not the beginning of a revolution against British rule; it was the act of specific villagers whose livelihood was threatened by a small group of British officers. The Dinshwai villagers responded to the shooting of their livestock and the kindling of their threshing-floor by attempting to disarm the officers and stop the shooting. When threatened, the officers fired into the crowd, wounding a woman and local officials. Although the soldiers’ commanding officer, Major J. E. Pine-Coffin, tried to diffuse the situation, the villagers’ rage was beyond control, and they attacked the soldiers.

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388 Edward Grey, Twenty-Five Years, vol. 1, (New York: Frederick A. Stokes, 1925), 130. Even though Britain considered Egypt vital for its strategic interests, it insisted that Egypt pay for the cost of the army of occupation.  
389 Robert L. Tignor, Modernization and British Colonial Rule in Egypt, 1882-1914 (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1966), 284-285. The championing by Irish members of Parliament of Egyptian rights shows that the Irish saw the Dinshwai incident as another example of British oppression as a result of imperialism. They found common cause with the Egyptians and used the Dinshwai incident in their own fight for independence.  
390 Amine Youssef, Independent Egypt (London: John Murray, 1940), 11.
Lord Cromer’s decision to view this incident as an act of rebellion and call for the use of the special tribunal influenced the judges. The khedivial decree of 1895, which established the special tribunal, was issued so that the British could deal more harshly in cases of attack against members of the army of occupation. The issuance of the official version of the incident by the Ministry of the Interior before the trial had begun provided further encouragement for the judges of the special tribunal to view the matter harshly. The judges, who were either British or who owed their positions to the approval of the British, followed the lead of their superiors and called for excessive punishment.

As Mohammad Salama explains, “Denshawai was made into an event that would serve to demystify the myth of Egyptians’ prosperity and of their contentment with British rule, exposing the servitude and humiliation of the fallahin and the cruelty of the penal system in the colonies.”

Although Egyptians who dealt regularly with British officials were confronted with the British belief in their own superiority, most Egyptians had little contact with the British in their daily life. Dinshwai, however, was widely publicized and presented to the Egyptian fellahaen the inequality inherent in British rule. While four Egyptians were executed for one officer’s death, which was caused primarily by sunstroke, the murderer of a resident of Sersina was never punished. Popular ballads and a novel were written about Dinshwai and circulated throughout the countryside, exposing both the literate and illiterate to this example of injustice.

The Dinshwai incident broadened the appeal of the nationalist groups in Egypt to the majority of Egyptians. Previously, the nationalists had publicized issues such as the lack of Arabic instruction in the schools and the growing number of British officials in the Egyptian administration that had little resonance among the mass of the population. With Dinshwai, they were able to present a blatant example of injustice against the Egyptian people. As Afaf Lutfi al-Sayyid Marsot revealed, “Never had feeling run so high in Egypt as over this affair.”

When questioned as to the evils of imperialism today, Egyptians still recall Dinshwai as one of the principle examples in its history of British oppression of Egypt. Along with the nationalization of the Suez Canal and the building of the Aswan Dam, Dinshwai rests in popular Egyptian culture as an example of fighting back against oppression.

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391 Mohammad Ramadan Salama, “Reading the Modernist Event from the Margins of History: The Denshawai Incident, the Trial of Djamila Bouhired and the Question of Egyptian Modernity” (Ph.D. diss., University of Wisconsin—Madison, 2005), 92.

Significance

This study provides the only comprehensive account of the Dinshwai incident in the English language. In so doing, it introduces many previously undiscovered elements of the Dinshwai case and corrects errors in the historiography. For example, it chronicles the Foreign Office’s handling of the Dinshwai incident, presents protests and statements of approval of the handling of the Dinshwai case from British and Egyptian sources, and provides an early example of the British Labour Party’s opposition to imperialism through a memorial for the release of the Dinshwai prisoners sent to the Foreign Office on October 9, 1907.\textsuperscript{393} It analyzes the British press’ reaction to Dinshwai and refutes the previously accepted view that the Dinshwai incident caused a huge outcry in Britain. Through a review of both Conservative and Liberal newspapers, it instead shows that the British public in 1906 was generally supportive of an imperialist policy. A thorough review of the Parliamentary debates also reveals that criticism of the Dinshwai incident was confined to a small minority of members and that most of the members of Parliament willingly supported the government’s policy.

This study contradicts the assumption that the British government in London reacted harshly to the Dinshwai incident out of a concern for its economic decline and the growing threat of Germany, a country that already possessed the largest land army in Europe and was developing a navy that threatened to destroy Britain’s naval supremacy. Instead, it provides a classic example of the British “man on the spot,” rather than the officials at the Foreign Office, determining major policy initiatives. It shows the authority and influence that Lord Cromer wielded as British Agent and Consul-General of Egypt from 1883 to 1907 and how his concern for Egyptian reform impacted British imperial policy.

It chronicles the shifts in British imperial policy in regard to Egypt between 1882 and 1914. These shifts include the British government’s abandonment of the idea of a temporary occupation and the acceptance of the long-term importance of Egypt within British imperial policy, the decline of Constantinople and the rise of Cairo as the central focus of Britain’s Middle Eastern policy, and the adoption of the theory that the Nile valley must be controlled in order to insure the security of Egypt. It also shows how the British occupation of Egypt and the

\textsuperscript{393} United Kingdom, FO 371/248, Memorial on behalf of the Dinshwai prisoners to Grey, 10-9-07.
British government’s changing imperial policy provided a powerful impetus for the “Scramble for Africa.”

This study disputes accepted scholarship that Egyptian nationalism only gained momentum during the mid-twentieth century, particularly in the Nasser era. It rejects the view that the *fellaheen* of Egypt had to be taught the importance of Dinshwai over time through a long campaign instigated by Egyptian intellectuals. Instead, it reveals that the Egyptian peasants felt the impact of Dinshwai in 1906. The resonance in Egyptian society of popular ballads about Dinshwai insured that these songs were still sung fifty years after the Dinshwai event. A petition for the pardon of the Dinshwai prisoners addressed to Khedive Abbas II in 1907 expressed the unanimous desire of the Egyptian people for the prisoners’ release and asserted that “every family in Egypt claims the Dinshawai prisoners among its members: sorrow has entered every dwelling, from the palaces of the rich to the cottages of the poor.”

When the British government approached him in late 1907 about pardoning the Dinshwai prisoners, Abbas expressed his and the Egyptian people’s appreciation for this measure, predicting “that the effect produced throughout the country would be excellent.” His statement was vividly supported by the hundreds of people who met the Dinshwai prisoners on their return home.

Harry Boyle served as Cromer’s Oriental Secretary and lived in Egypt from 1885 to 1909. When he returned to Egypt on a six-week mission in 1921, Boyle remarked on the “still vivid recollection” of Dinshwai as showing “how long it takes to bridge over a breach of this description.”

In *Independent Egypt* published in 1940, Amine Youssef recognized that the story of the Dinshwai incident had been repeatedly told and its memory would “never die in Egypt.” He asserted, “In this case it was among the *fellaheen* that the resentment against the British was engendered and it is only by long years of tact and care that the memory of the incident will ever

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394 United Kingdom, FO 371/248, Gorst to Grey, No. 103, 6-24-07.
395 United Kingdom, FO 371/248, Gorst to Grey, No. 86, 12-23-07. The italics are mine and are used to show Abbas’ stress on the universality of the Egyptian response. Abbas’ statement reveals that news of Dinshwai had not only reached Egypt’s major cities but also the vast rural areas in which the majority of the Egyptian population lived.
397 Ibid.
398 Ibid., 235.
cease to poison their feelings.”400 Youssef’s statements reveal that the Dinshwai incident specifically impacted the Egyptian fellaheen in 1906.

At the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries, Egypt took on a crucial role within British imperial policy. In 1906 and the years that followed, the Dinshwai incident had a profound impact on Egyptian society and Egyptian nationalism. This study explores both sides of the Dinshwai incident, the British and the Egyptian, and thus contributes to the historiography of both.

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Kimberly Alana Luke has spent her academic career preparing to share her love of history with college students. She graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in History from LaGrange College, LaGrange, Georgia in June 1997 and with a Master of Arts in History from Jacksonville State University, Jacksonville, Alabama in August 2000. She began doctoral study at Florida State University in August 2000 and was admitted to candidacy in August 2004. Her fields of expertise are modern European history and the Middle East. She particularly enjoys pursuing research interests that combine both European and Middle Eastern history such as the British occupation of Egypt in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

While at Florida State University, Kimberly Luke has had a variety of opportunities to work as an historian and an instructor. She served as an archival assistant and reference specialist at Florida State University’s Institute on World War II and the Human Experience where she coordinated research for The Color of War, a series about World War II aired on the History Channel. She participated in the Holocaust Institute for Educators June 20-26, 2004 as part of Florida State University’s Center for Professional Development. She has taught courses in Middle Eastern and world civilization in the Department of History. In 2006, she was awarded the Joe Richardson Teaching Award in Recognition of Excellence in Teaching for 2005 by the Department of History.

Kimberly Luke has participated in scholarly debate through the presentation of her work at conferences and in publications. In October 2004, she presented the paper “Order or Justice: The Denshawai Incident and British Imperialism” at the Southeast World History Association conference. In November 2003, she presented the paper “Baguio: Civilian Internment in the Philippines during World War II” as part of the Florida State Speaker Series. She also participated in Phi Alpha Theta regional conferences in 1996 and 1998. In 2006, she won the Africa Prize in History Compass’ 2006 Graduate Essay Contest and the following year had the article “Order or Justice: The Denshawai Incident and British Imperialism” published in History Compass. She also has published book reviews in H-Diplo.