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Fu'ad I

Ahmad **Fu'ad I** (1868-1936) was appointed sultan of Egypt (r. 1917-22) under the British protectorate and king of Egypt (r. 1922-36) under British military occupation. He was the sixth living son of Khedive Isma'il (r. 1863-79). Fu'ad's mother, Firyal, was a Circassian slave in the harem. After studying in Cairo, Geneva, and Turin, Fu'ad entered the Italian military academy in 1885. He befriended the Italian royal family and, in the late 1880s, joined the Italian army. Fu'ad then became a military attaché in the Ottoman embassy in Vienna. In this capacity, he accompanied his nephew, 'Abbās Hilmī, back to Egypt in 1892 when the latter became the khedive of Egypt as 'Abbās Hilmī II (r. 1892-1914).

Fu'ad assumed the image of a nationalist aristocrat as he maintained a busy social life in fin-de-siècle Egypt. He married once but soon divorced, survived an assassination attempt, and considered claiming the thrones of Libya and Albania in the 1910s. He chaired several learned societies, the most important of which was the Egyptian University (founded 1906, opened 1908; today Cairo University). Like many members of the late-Ottoman-Egyptian elite, Fu'ad respected European orientalisks and wanted to employ some to teach in the new faculty of humanities

in Arabic, including Arabic literature. He asked the Italian king to send Italian scholars in 1910 and asked the Italian government to pay the base salaries of these professors, which it did (Budayr, 122-4). Only after Fu'ad resigned from the presidency in 1913 were Egyptians allowed to teach Arabic literature at the Egyptian University.

After the death of Sultān Ḥusayn Kāmil (r. 1914-7), the British High Commissioner, Reginald Wingate (in office 1917-9, d. 1953), appointed Ahmad Fu'ad the new sultan in Egypt during the First World War. In the winter of 1919, the chair of the visiting British commission, Lord Milner (d. 1925), characterised Fu'ad's abilities as "considerable cleverness with extreme small-mindedness" (private diary, FO 848/5). Both the British and Fu'ad insisted that the sultan was the official representative of Egypt, a stance that enabled the British government to reject the nationalist delegation (*wafd*) in 1919 which was preparing to go to London to ask permission to participate in the Paris Peace conference; instead, members were arrested and only later allowed to go to Paris. The Wafd, the emerging mass party with a rich Egyptian nationalist leadership—especially its president, Sa'd Zaghlūl (1859-1927)—became Fu'ad's archenemy.

After the 1919 uprising and the Egyptians' continued passive resistance to the British protectorate, High Commissioner General Allenby (in office 1919-25, d. 1936) shared with the sultan news of the unilateral British decision to grant Egypt's independence on 28 February 1922. Fu'ad announced independence and assumed the title King of Egypt (Malik Miṣr) on 15 March 1922. Contemporaries often called this a *coup de roi*.

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