

Abu Naddara: The Forerunner of Egyptian Satirical Press

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Abstract

"*Abu Naddara*" was an early satirical journal that was first published in Cairo in 1878 by Yaqub Sannu. After Sannu's collision with Khedive Ismail and eventual departure to Paris, he continued to publish it there for almost three successive decades uninterrupted, however under various changeable names. This journal was by all means the forerunner of satirical opposition press in modern Egypt. In a relatively very short time, "*Abu Naddara*" gained tremendous success through its humorous but rather bold and scathing criticism of Khedive Ismail's and later Khedive Tewfik's regime that helped turn public opinion against them. No wonder, it soon won popularity because it gave a voice to the downtrodden masses who found in it an outlet for their long-bottled anger. In other words, it turned to be their *Vox populi* that addressed their pressing problems and expressed their pains. Accordingly, it emerged as a political platform that stood in the face of corruption and social injustice, called for an all-encompassing reform, and most of all raised country-wide national awareness in the hope to develop grass-root activism. This paper investigates the role played by the journal of "*Abu Naddara*" in spearheading the national opposition against Khedival excesses together with the growing foreign intervention within the closing years of Ismail's reign and the opening years of Tewfik's one that ended up with the British occupation of Egypt. The paper focuses lens mainly on the journal's early formative years (from 1878 to 1884) that shaped its orientations, defined its identity and carved its path for years to come. It also tracks the historical context in which it appeared and examines its notable impact on the Egyptian society in general and the political arena in particular amidst such turbulent milieu.

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The historical setting:

The Egyptian society had undergone remarkable transformations during the reign of Khedive Ismail. It seems safe to say that Ismail had real big aspirations for Egypt which he ardently pursued. He wished not only to modernize it, but also to build a national state and create unprecedented cultural efflorescence unseen before.

In other words, it was an age of enlightenment that gave room to circulation of new ideas and beliefs. Nowonder, various currents and discourses emerged in the Egyptian society at that time. Much impressed with the European prototype, Ismail tried to promote the ideals of the enlightenment, and diffuse its values across the country. He also gave patronage to newly- imported forms of arts. That's how Egypt got its first opera house and theatre while many prominent renaissance intellectuals rose to limelight. In short, it was a crucial moment of social and cultural change in modern Egypt that altered its bearings ever after. Therefore, Ismail's reign was described as "*a gallop at full speed*"

¹ while he himself was regarded as "*Baron Haussmann*" of Egypt² and its "*moving spirit of progress*"³.

Certainly, such a new climate had caused a state of agitation among Egyptian intelligentsia. As a result, Ismail soon footed the bill of the progressive agenda which he eagerly introduced. Although, people had put much hope on him at the early beginning, he didn't rise to their expectations. He failed his believers when failed to march the course to its very end. Therefore, some of the nascent periodicals that notably expanded under his reign and which praised him for his big achievements at the beginning turned eventually against him. They came to question his liberal intensions and to criticize his arbitrary rule as well as his salient tendency to extravagance.

At the same time, a number of pioneer Arab journalists like Yaqub Sannu, Adib Ishaq and others demanded a greater share of freedom like that enjoyed in Western societies. They also worked hard to develop Egyptian public opinion and sculpt a national identity. That's to say, it was more or less a time of awakening that stirred up the public mind which was already in ferment⁴. Amidst such rough seas, the journal of *Abu Naddara* was born.

Yaqub Sannu: a man of talents

"*Abu Naddara*" was the name given to the first satirical journal published in Egypt at the hands of Yaqub Sannu. To understand the message of this journal and to investigate its impact on the Egyptian society, it was deemed necessary to throw lights on its founder and his orientations.

Yaqub Sannu was an Egyptian self-proclaimed playwright, journalist, activist as well as a caller of reform. He presented himself to his readers as the founder of Arabic theatre and teacher of foreign languages.⁵

He was born in Cairo in 1839 of a Jewish origin. At the age of twelve, he composed his first poem and recited it to his father Rafayel. On hearing his son's poem, Rafayel realized that his son was really talented. Therefore, he advised Yaqub to compose a poem in honor of his employer Prince Ahmad Yakan the grandson of Muhammad Ali. The young Yaqub listened to his father's advice and composed an Arabic poem for the Prince and met him personally afterwards. The Prince admired him so much and decided to send him to Europe to study there at his own expense. That's how Yaqub at the age of thirteen travelled to Leghorn in Italy to complete his education. He studied political science, international law, arts and music. Besides, he spoke a number of foreign languages. In 1855, he returned back to Egypt after the death of both his patron and his father. To earn his living, he worked as a tutor for the children of the royal family as well as the children of elite families. He used to teach them languages, arts and music.⁶

Undoubtedly, this job had given him access to the palaces of the ruling elite and enabled him to build ties with this class. It is worth mentioning that he would take advantage of those ties and extensively use them in a later stage of his career when he was deported to Paris as will be discussed afterwards. Inside these palaces, he was acquainted with elite culture and lifestyle. Besides, he got to know a lot of their secrets and untold stories. Such early exposure to elite's life must have been an eye opening experience for him. It is not surprising that it spurred him to reconsider some of his views concerning the ruling elite.

In an illuminating passage in his journal, Sannu revealed this fact. He wrote that he had misjudged Ismail. In the beginning, he thought that Ismail was a good ruler who worked for the sake of his people. Therefore, he called him "*Aziz Misr*" and like many of his contemporaries wrote poems and songs glorifying him. Yet, he soon found out that he was mistaken and was immensely deluded.⁷

After a while, Sannu was appointed as a teacher at the Polytechnic Institute of Cairo.⁸ This was another notable shift in his career because he got to know a considerable number of students who would soon become officers⁹ and join Urabi's bloc thus forming the early nucleus of the national party.¹⁰ He introduced them to western liberal thoughts and principals of freedom. However, this didn't last for long because Sannu, according to his own narrative, was unfairly fired from his job only for translating the contents of some European periodicals to his clever students.¹¹

It seems that exposing the students to those far liberal political thoughts which those periodicals contained had much alarmed the Khedive and his close circles. Accordingly, Sannu had to leave his place, lest he should arouse the students with such thoughts.

Early activities

Sannu's pivotal meeting with Gamal Al Din Al Afghani was his life turning experience. It formed another watershed in his long course. Sannu became one of Al Afghani's loyal students and was much influenced with his ideology, views of reform as well as his revolutionary approach. In fact, the impact of Al Afghani on all the intellectuals of the day was a prodigious one and Sannu was no exception. That's why Sannu called him "*The philosopher of the Orient*"¹². Sannu used to attend his lectures and visit him on daily basis and came to learn a lot from him. That's why Sannu regarded him as his professor.¹³ He even admitted that he was heavily indebted to Al Afghani who taught him how to write articles¹⁴ and attributed the fame of his journal to Al Afghani's unique articles published in it¹⁵.

Sannu's strong relation with Al Afghani must have helped him to overcome the crisis of his dismissal from the poly technique school. That's why he didn't give up or render himself to despair. On the contrary, he crossed a new threshold without waste of time. He soon laid the foundation of the Egyptian theatre probably at a suggestion of Al-Afghani.¹⁶

This theatrical adventure was meant to raise awareness among people as well as to educate and entertain them at the same time. Sannu founded a troupe from some young amateurs and started performing their

comic plays at a small open-air theatre at Al Azbakiyyah garden¹⁷. He also persuaded two girls to join his troupe¹⁸ thus successfully overstepped gender boundaries and broke taboos of that time.

To one's surprise, Khedive Ismail himself well- received Sannu's theatrical activities in as much as his audience. He even encouraged Sannu and invited him to perform his plays at the royal palace¹⁹. Furthermore, he highly appreciated Sannu's initiative at the beginning and called him "*Moliere d' Egypte*"²⁰ since he was the one who founded the Egyptian theatre like Moliere who founded the French theatre.

No doubt, the remarkable success Sannu secured had probably strengthened his heart and urged him to redress social ills in his plays and direct public attention towards them. He also made mild references to some of the atrocities of the ruling elite. He even preached them in some of his plays not to treat the peasants harshly and to work for the welfare and progress of Egyptians²¹. His plays had gradually turned to be a "*means of drawing attention to the abuses committed by the governing classes*"²² That's how Sannu stirred a hornet's nest. It seems that Ismail and his high officials couldn't stand such underlying criticism which led eventually to the closure of Sannu's theatre by public authority²³.

However, some scholars argue that this was a mere allegation which Sannu had probably circulated to add to his credit and that the closure of the theatre was due to purely financial reasons²⁴. This could be also deduced from Jerrod's account when stated that Sannu didn't receive the financial support which he expected from the Khedive who didn't keep his promise of providing help to his newly-born theatre. This must have caused Sannu's big losses especially that he had already reduced the prices of entry to his theatre²⁵. No matter the cause, Sannu's theatrical initiative was sadly nipped in the bud.

Nevertheless, Sannu had already acquired credible celebrity through this adventure which he would later count on and make advantage of it. This was probably the time when Ismail's liberal mask had almost fallen down in Sannu's eyes. No wonder, Sannu's view of Ismail had radically and dramatically changed.

Publishing Abu Naddara

Once again, Sannu tried to overcome his disappointment and made up his mind to publish a journal to address the average people and highlight their urgent problems. As an advocate of reform, he decided to discuss complex social and political matters but in a rather simplified manner to communicate his message to the populace. Therefore, he heavily counted on popular stories and popular forms of narration for this purpose.

At first, Sannu published an early version of his journal in 1876 under the name of "*Al Therthara Al Misriyah*"²⁶ or the "Egyptian jabber" in a number of languages. However, it didn't last for long for some vague reasons. Given that Sannu was passing through a financial crisis at that time and was forced to sell all his belongings to pay his debts back²⁷, one can deduce that this abrupt stop was involuntary one and was due to lack of financial resources.

After settling his problems, Sannu had seemingly restored his former enthusiasm and republished his journal in a new form. "*Abu Naddara Zarka*" or the "man with the blue eyeglasses" was the name he gave this time to his journal that came to light in March 1878. The question that raises itself here is: why it was so-called? Actually, there was an interesting story behind this distinctive name. When Sannu decided to publish his journal, he was very hesitant about the name he would give it. Therefore, he met with Gamal Al Din Al Afghani and Muhammad Abdu and the three of them kept discussing this matter for long and considered many suggestions but in vain. At last, the exhausted Sannu left them. On his way home, a donkey driver shouted at him to give him a lift: "*hey you man with blue glasses come and ride my donkey*". With his quick wit, Sannu picked the word and decided to give it to his infant journal²⁸. The name had a latent implication. The eyeglasses which Sannu used to wear helped him to see things more clearly and so would be his journal that would help people to see things going around them more clearly. It would provide insights into matters that were unseen or hidden from sights. He revealed his intentions to look into the shady zones of the Egyptian society in one of its issues that was later issued in Paris saying that at the beginning of each month, he used to sit at his observatory in Paris, put on his glasses and direct them towards Egypt and watch people from there and write down their news²⁹.

To disguise his journal at times when it was later outlawed and to avoid confiscation by the authorities, it was published under various other names like "*Abu Suffara*", "*Abu Zummara*", "*Al Nazzarat al Masriya*" and others as would be lengthy discussed later. However, the most common name under which the journal was published and was well-known with throughout its long journey was "*Abu Naddara*". It is worth mentioning that Sannu sometimes dropped the word "*Zarka*" or blue and some other times kept it.

Clashing with the Khedive:

At this juncture, tension erupted between Sannu and the Khedive and escalated gradually till Sannu fell out of his favor. However, and according to Sannu's version which he recounted in his unpublished memoirs, Khedive Ismail's Chamberlain Khairy Pasha tried hard to work things out again and to remove such congestion among them. Through his mediation, the Khedive agreed to give Sannu another chance and to pardon him. Sannu himself promised not to transgress red lines and resumed his old habit of composing praise poems in Khedive's honor³⁰. Clearly, Sannu was still keen not to lose the Khedive's patronage or to annoy him for fear of the consequences. Some scholars believe that Sannu during this early stage of his life was a court jester³¹ who still owed allegiance to the Khedive and was reluctant to be excluded of his favor.

However, this didn't last for long because Sannu appeared to have liberated himself from both greed and fear and put them behind. Thus entered a new stage of his life where his national sense outweighed his self-interest. No wonder, he broke his promise to the Khedive, resumed his vehement onslaughts against his regime and disclosed some of his secrets. This must have maddened the Khedive who insisted to know Sannu's source of information inside the palace. According to Sannu, who was full of egoism and known with his natural tendency to exaggerate things especially when it comes to his valorous stands, Ismail offered him via one of his men 4000 pounds as a bribe to divulge his source of information. Sannu firmly turned down the offer and refused the bribe thus caused a rupture in their relations and left him under attack. Sannu also claimed that he survived assassination attempts made on his life before his exile to France at the Khedive's instigation.³² Hence, all these trials that aimed to make him docile or to mute his voice had ostensibly failed.

Abu Naddara's Approach:

Through publishing the journal of "*Abu Naddara*", Sannu created a new forum for public expression in modern Egypt and stepped a threshold that was never stepped before. Indeed, "*Abu Naddara*" wasn't the first periodical to appear at that time, yet it was the first of its kind. No doubt, the unprecedented humorous satirical approach which Sannu adopted had made of him a pioneer in such a field. Sannu revealed himself and explained his approach in the editorial of the first issue of his journal. He made it very clear that he would enlighten his readers and amuse them at the same time with humor. He even described his journal as a journal that aimed to bring entertainment and evoke laughter while openly stated that it would not tackle political or religious matters³³.

Such a claim of keeping his journal nonpolitical was probably a camouflage to hide his real intentions of publishing the journal. In other words, it was just a trick meant to avoid provoking the wrath of the Khedive and his men at the first appearance of the journal. However, Sannu couldn't keep his word for long or keep himself away from the political life in Egypt as he falsely claimed in the first issue.

In the beginning, he tried to ring alarm bells and to grab people's attention to grave threats endangering their country and their public peace in a cautious and rather covert way. Yet, as the journal gained wide circulation, he soon raised his tone of objection gradually. As a matter of fact, he yielded to a number of maneuvers to conceal his dispositions like looking back to the early history and linking the present with episodes of the remote past and recalling some historical figures (such as Qaraqush, Oghuz Mamluks) while projecting their legacy onto the present so as to criticize it. He also turned to symbolism to disguise the figures which he attacked. For example, *Sheikh al-Hara* (the Chief of the quarter) stood for Ismail, *al-Wad al-Ahbal* (the Foolish Boy) for Tawfiq, *Sheikh al-Tumn* (the chief of the prison) for the Ottoman Sultan and so on³⁴.

Nevertheless, his resentment and his daring revolutionary approach had eventually become crystal clear. This was best manifested in his eleventh issue when he urged the people in the words of one of his characters whom he called "*El Hedeq*" or (the smart one) not to remain silent and to send petitions expressing their grievances from *Sheikh al-Hara* (Ismail) to *Sheikh al-Tumn* (the Ottoman sultan) in order to depose him³⁵.

Although, Sannu was eventually exiled to Paris, he didn't abandon the cause. His deeper concerns towards Egypt's future urged him to resume publishing his journal there. Rising from the ashes, this time Sannu dropped all the masks, overlooked all restrictions which he self-imposed on his journal in its early days and

acted in a more self-assured way. It was quite clear that he used his journal as a vehicle to disseminate revolutionary ideas, extend political awareness and push for change through collective activism. No wonder, the journal of "Abu Naddara" was regarded as a standard bearer of liberty in Egypt at that time: "*L'Abou Naddara tout en defendant en Egypte les idees de progress et de liberte*"³⁶

Interestingly, Sannu's residency in Paris had neither alienated him from his people nor hindered him from developing a mechanism to collect information and gather news from all Egyptian provinces. At his description, he had a wide network of agents everywhere who used to inform him with the latest news through sending him secret letters to Paris under false names.³⁷

In other words, they were his falcon's eye in Egypt who provided him with the materials he needed. Such a mechanism had proved to be an effective one because he managed through his original sources to publish insiders' accounts and to unravel a lot of secrets over years. This was indispensable for his success because if he was just dissing the country from outside, his journal would have lost its credibility.

On looking inside the journal of "Abu Naddara", one can safely say that it revolved around a number of prime axes:

- Poking fun at those who were in power but betrayed their countrymen and spotting lights on their shortcomings.

- Fighting autocracy, corruption and other woes which the Egyptian society had suffered from then.

- Generating a sense of identity among his compatriots as well as motivating for political action in the hope to press for greater structural change.

- Withstanding all forms of foreign intervention in Egypt and divulging its wicked plots. Although, this axis in particular had received cardinal importance in the journal from the beginning, it was further intensified after the British occupation of Egypt. Therefore, the cartoon of John Bull (the [national personification](#) of [Great Britain](#)) continued to appear frequently in the journal.

It is potently obvious that Sannu believed that the masses and lower orders were the cannon fodder of any desired ground-breaking political change. Therefore, he mainly addressed them. It should be noted that he was keen to use the proper means through which his revolutionary ideas could find understanding and acceptance among them. Undoubtedly, the satirical cartoons which he later added were his prime weapon that helped him achieve his objective to trigger change.

As a matter of fact, Sannu was the first to introduce graphic cartoons to Egypt. It was by all means a "novelty"³⁸ which he imported from Europe. They soon grabbed his readers' attention and were a key factor to his journal's success. It is quite clear that he realized the massive potential of visual rhetoric. Accordingly, he heavily utilized cartoons since they were apt to convey his message and communicate political critique even to the illiterate who couldn't read or write. He also added captions to them so as to explain its content and reveal its underlying themes. In a later stage, he even added French captions to his cartoons and short commentaries to widen the scope of his journal and to mobilize international public opinion in support of his cause.

The use of biting words, vernacular verses and rather crude unpolished language was another fatal weapon which he successfully used. That's how his satire hit at home. It appealed to a wide audience because of its easy-to-understand colloquial language³⁹ as well as his sarcastic comments that gratified their humorous taste. At the same time, he skillfully used different Arabic dialects especially that of the peasants all over Egypt.⁴⁰

This was meant to represent all segments of the Egyptian society as if he was their spokesman while his journal was the mouthpiece of the Egyptian nation in its entirety. One can safely say that Sannu wanted to give voice to those who were voiceless.

That's why; Sannu delved into the language of the poor and used it in a blunt unvarnished manner which endeared him to his countrymen. It also gave it an agreeable home-made taste. In short, Sannu's initiative resulted in the rise of the so-called "*Folkloric journalism*"⁴¹ that became popular in Egypt in the last decades of the 19th century.

To evoke laughter, Sannu sometimes stressed on the European mispronunciation of Arabic language⁴² due to their ignorance of its grammatical constructions and their inability to command the language or to properly pronounce certain letters. Through imitations of "*foreigner talk*", or the language of the foreigners⁴³, he managed to provide a stream of laughs. For instance, he presented a lengthy conversation in Arabic between the Khedive's mother and a foreign physician supposed to be inspecting the Khedive⁴⁴. The physician mispronounced many letters which altered the meaning of the words. Besides, he made a number of grammatical errors with respect to the structure of the sentences, the conjugation of verbs as well as the use of possession suffix.

In addition, Sannu did use rhyming prose or "*Saje*" in some of the short pieces he published in his journal⁴⁵ to create music and make them pleasant to hear.

Pretty familiar with the nature of Egyptians who are deeply religious and well-versed in Islamic culture, he always used a rhetoric heavy laden with religious references to appeal to his audience. In spite of his non-Muslim origin, he borrowed many statements that are extracted from the Holy Quran or from sayings of the Prophet (peace be upon him) or at least had its origin in the Islamic culture. Among such numerous borrowings one can read: "*There is no power but with Allah the Almighty*"⁴⁶, "*Allah alone is sufficient for us and he is the best disposer of affairs*"⁴⁷

One must also take into account that Sannu's early theatrical activities had left its imprints on his journal. Almost every issue of his journal contained a small theatrical sketch whose characters commented on the government, the Khedive and high dignitaries in a sarcastic way.⁴⁸ This was also another innovation introduced by Sannu in his journal. Moreover, he utilized several strategies to advocate nationalism, such as delving into history, using some historical figures from the past as a backdrop to project onto the current situation and contemporary figures who were in power as previously explained.

On the other hand, Sannu didn't mind using very obscene words, commentaries and descriptions that broke all taboos of the day and sometimes offended feelings as long as they served his end especially in targeting his opponents' reputation and debasing them as will be discussed in details afterwards. This had negatively affected the impartiality of the journal at sometimes or caused its sharp deviation and almost departure from the core principals of ethical responsible journalism at others.

A quick glimpse at Sannu's journals:

The suppression of "*Abu Naddara Zarqa*" that came after few months of its existence in Egypt, didn't spell its end as Khedive Ismail had mistakenly imagined. After Sannu's departure to Paris, he staged the ultimate come back of his journal. He first published "*Riḥlat abī nazzāra zarqā al-walīy min miṣr al-qāhira ilā pāriḥ al-fākhira*" where he documented his flight trip starting from Alexandria, passing by Malta till he reached Paris and settled there. This collection consisted of 30 issues starting from 7th of August 1878⁴⁹. Then he resumed publishing "*Abu Naddara Zarka*" (Sometimes written as "*Abi*" instead of "*Abu*" after replacing the "U" with the "I" and "*Nazzara*" after altering the "D" with "Z"). It should be noted that he added a new statement that had its significant connotation as he called himself the servant of Egyptian liberty. Clearly, Sannu wanted to aggrandize his contributions to the Egyptian cause through such a statement and to surround himself with an aura of glory and fame.

In the subsequent year, Sannu published another journal which he called "*Abu Suffara*" or the flute player. This time, he changed the description of the journal and stated that it aimed at the entertainment of the Egyptian youth whom he prayed to God to save them from the hands of the Pharaonic tyrant (referring to the current Khedive then) while described himself as a lover of independence and freedom⁵⁰.

Shortly after, he published "*Al-Nazzārāt Al-Miṣriya*" where he stressed on the contributions of the Egyptian youth in editing that journal. He was probably referring to the news, reports and stories which he regularly received from them to nourish his journal and to reveal many painful truths concerning the Egyptian society. He also placed a new statement under its heading that showed his big obsession with the slogans of the French revolution: "*long live equality, fraternity and liberty!*"⁵¹

It should be noted that the change in the name of his periodical wasn't accompanied with a core change in its content, substance or satirical approach. Actually, such frequent change in the name was only a maneuver to overcome the ban imposed on his journals in Egypt as previously mentioned.

In a later development, when he cultivated maturity in thinking, and *ability to make sound judgments, he described his journal "Abu Naddara" as the mouthpiece of the Free Egyptian nation*⁵². This was an explicit reference to the profound role it played in defending the Egyptian rights and championing its cause abroad. He also published a journal under the name of "Al Hawi" or the charmer where he put much emphasis on its mission which he summarized as follows "Addressing his dear countrymen in Arabic not in French, make his utmost effort in editing it and draw 4 illustrations in every issue and amuse all people by his funny words"⁵³

In the wake of the British occupation of Egypt, he multiplied his efforts. As part of his struggle against the British colonial greed, he launched "Al-Watani Al-Misri" or "The Egyptian Patriot" at the alleged request of the national party in Egypt then⁵⁴. It was an outcry in the face of imperialism. It was a bilingual journal published in Arabic and English this time (not French as usual) which furnishes ample proof that he was addressing the British people in particular. It aimed at checking the British occupation authorities through focusing lens on the formidable power of the national movement led by intellectuals as well as exposing its evils to the world.

This appeared vividly in a very expressive cartoon that occupied the front page of its first issue. It shows the greedy and rather sneaky John Bull seated on a banquet eating meat while throwing the bones to a poor Egyptian peasant who stood nearby the table. John Bull in this cartoon had denied the Egyptian his very right to sit next to him on the table and reduced him to a servile status while deceitfully calling this kind of discrimination a fraternal share. (Figure 1)



Figure 1. Source: *Al-Watani Al-Misri*, September 29, 1883, no. 1.

Such anti-British discourse which Sannu adopted in his journal had much alarmed the British press that anxiously commented: "Its general tone.... to render England ridiculous in the eyes of Orientals"⁵⁵

However, Sannu's major breakthrough was made in 1884 when he placed the motto of "Egypt for the Egyptians" on both sides of his journal's title⁵⁶. This addition marked a turning point in the course of his journal. It was much more like a pledge of aid he made and a strict commitment that his journal would ardently pursue this end. It also reflected a high sense of responsibility towards the national cause as well as a high degree of maturity and understanding.

In sum, the frequent change in the names and descriptions of the mission of his journals also suggest that Sannu had spent a lot of time groping his footsteps in Paris and learning a quite deal from the French press. During these early formative years, he was probably in eager search for an identity for his journal that could echo his deep-seated conventions and at the same time could bring him laurels out of his readers' satisfaction.

Hardships:

All along its course, "*Abu Naddara*" had faced a lot of hardships. Nevertheless, it persistently got over them all one after another with much resilience. Thanks to the distinctive writing style which its energetic editor possessed as well as his stubbornness, it miraculously survived. Over the years, it became one of the top largest-selling journals in Egypt and the most widely-circulated ones at its time.

At its first appearance, "*Abu Naddara*" must have aroused the worries of men of state due to its sharp tone and sour satire that escalated gradually and steadily. However, they were advised not to suppress it so as not to increase its readership as one of its contemporaries reported: "*When the functionary who overlooked the Press was consulted as to the advisability of suppressing this powerful enemy, he advised that it should be left unmolested. To suppress it would be to confess fear of it: besides, the Porte had proclaimed the liberty of the Press throughout the Sultan's dominions.*"⁵⁷

According to Sannu's narrative, Ismail himself told his men to put up with it lest it should cause much more harm if suspended.⁵⁸ On the other hand, they worked hard to foment troubles for "*Abu Naddara*" and other similar opposition press to force their closure. In his memoirs, the Premiere of Egypt at that time, Nubar pasha revealed how the government did tighten the noose around the opposition press. He related how he gave decisive orders to close down one of those printing houses to check its owner who was Italian thus openly challenged the capitulations that granted foreigners a special status and protected their financial interests in Egypt⁵⁹. In the same manner, some high governmental officials threatened Mr. Castile the printer in order to have him abandon Sannu otherwise his printing house will be shut up altogether.⁶⁰

To find a way out of this vicious circle, Sannu who was of Italian ancestral roots⁶¹ sought the protection of the Italian Consulate in Egypt to ensure his own safety.⁶² However, such Italian protection and such fragile tolerance did not last for long as "*Abu Naddara*" was finally suppressed: "*however at first decided to let it alone....some highly placed officials however felt themselves aggrieved and a decree for the suppression of the journal was issued after it had been in existence for twelve month*"⁶³

Caught between the devil and the deep blue sea, Sannu had to leave Egypt to Paris in its wake. However, his move to Paris had much worked in his favor. It had enabled him to write freely away from censorship and without fear of being harassed, detained or assassinated because of his satirical attacks. He was no longer subject to considerable intimidation by men of the state so he resumed publishing his journal there. Yet, he faced a number of difficulties which he had to overcome one after another.

Undoubtedly, the lack of funds together with the remarkable high costs of printing there formed the biggest obstacle he faced. No wonder, Sannu had bitterly complained of these high printing costs in addition to the shipping costs and the huge sum of money which he had to pay for the cartoonist in one of its issues⁶⁴.

He overcame this major problem through two means. The first means was to change his journal from a weekly journal (between August 1878 and March, 1879) to a monthly one⁶⁵ to decrease the costs of its printing.

Sannu's dire need for money in order to finance his journal leads to the view that, he had seemingly turned to Halim Pasha whom he politically supported all along for assistance. There were many indicators confirming that Halim was the patron of *Abu Naddara* and that Sannu was overtly his political partisan regardless of Sannu's continuous and persistent denial of such affiliation. This was the second means which he yielded to in order to rescue his journal that was in jeopardy. Some contemporary press reports confirmed the fact that the journal of Sannu wasn't a self-sustained journal but a sponsored one that received its necessary funds from one of the princesses⁶⁶.

The second difficulty was to keep himself up-to-date with everything that was taking place in Egypt and to provide a wide-range coverage of its then-current events (in the form of capsule summaries, reviews, press letters etc.) so as not to lose the credibility of his journal. Accordingly, he developed while in his exile a system to collect information and gather news from all parts of Egypt as previously mentioned. He had agents everywhere to inform him with the latest news. Furthermore, he cultivated good relations with many grandees who used to spend their annual vacation in Europe. In the course of such visits, he met with them and got to know what was going behind the closed doors. Sannu's daughter also recalled one of his friends who was a princess of the royal house in Egypt and who used to spend summer in Paris in her father's company and to provide him with the news of the upper class which he was looking for. Clearly, she was a big supporter for him; that's why he kept her picture and grieved deeply over her death.⁶⁷

The third difficulty was the ban imposed on his journal's entry to Egypt after it was outlawed with the promulgation of the law of Press in 1881⁶⁸ and the restraints superimposed by the government on opposition press⁶⁹. Such insistence to hold journalists in leashes was depicted in an illuminating cartoon showing Sherif Pasha's attempt to tie the hands of journalists and Khedive Tawfik's attempt to mute their voices. (Figure 2)



Figure 2. Source: *Abou-Naddara*, December 1881, no. 13.

In addition to these harsh measures, the authorities assigned some detectives to frighten people and prevent them from buying Sannu's journal. Suffice to say that those who were seen holding the journal were forced to pay a large fine⁷⁰ as if caught red-handed. The policemen snatched the journal from their hands and fined them 5 livres⁷¹ on the spot. In the same vein, the issue no 9 was kept at the post office and was never released (10 packs each contained 200 copies).⁷² Other similar opposition journals like: "*al-Maymoun*", "*al-Tegara*", "*Misir*" were suspended⁷³ thus experienced the same ill-fate likewise.

In response, Sannu changed the name of his journal a number of times as mentioned before to disguise it and deceive the authorities in Egypt. However, they were alert to this particular trick and prohibited the release of "*Abu Suffara*" or the flute player and later "*Abu Zummara*" or the pauper⁷⁴.

These repressive measures had gravely affected the journal's circulation that dropped to 7000 as reported in contemporary periodicals: "*Seven thousand copies of this week's number are said to have been sent off to Egypt, the expectations being that though many will be seized, a large number will reach their destination*"⁷⁵

Although, Sannu claimed that the number of the copies of his journal distributed in Egypt was about 10000 (two thousands in Cairo and Alexandria while 8000 in the countryside for free⁷⁶. The circulation of the journal continued to dwindle down in Egypt till it reached 4000 copies⁷⁷ due to the authorities crack down.

Yet, Sannu had skillfully challenged his ban. He often resorted to maneuvers to send to Egypt. For example, he smuggled them to Egypt through tightly packing them in sardine boxes⁷⁸. He also smuggled a huge number of them through stuffing a mattress and two pillows with its copies and placed them among the luggage of a poor woman who made a considerable fortune from selling them afterwards. At other times, he smuggled them among imported musical notes and sheets.⁷⁹

Sannu also related in his memoirs that Mr. Augustan had made a fortune about 8000 Franks from selling his journal that became like the forbidden fruit to which all sights are directed. The officials at the customs duties used to read it first, and then lend them to their friends and relatives then at last sell them secretly at a price of 5 Francs for every pack of hundred.⁸⁰ One can safely say that Sannu had adroitly aborted all governmental efforts to prohibit "*Abu Naddara*" and emerged victoriously every time he reached an impasse.

Popularity

*The journal of Abu Naddara was by all means a big hit at its day. No wonder, it sparked the interest of European press that resembled it with "Punch" or the famous British weekly magazine of humour and satire established in 1841: "Egypt has its punch or satirical newspaper"*⁸¹

They even recognized its influential role in Oriental societies and regarded it as an Oriental Punch: "---semble jouer le role d'un veritable Punch Oriental" ⁸²

One must take into account that Egyptians all over ages have enjoyed a high sense of humor. As Edward William Lane had rightly observed in the course of his stay in Egypt that lasted for a number of years during the first half of the Nineteenth century: *"The Egyptians are particularly prone to satire, and often display considerable wit in their jeers and jests. Their language affords them great facilities for punning, and for ambiguous conversations, in which they very frequently indulge. The lower orders sometimes lampoon their rulers in songs, and ridicule those enactments of the government by which they themselves most suffer"*⁸³.

No wonder, they well received it because of their humorous nature. This fact was reported and confirmed by its contemporaries who were impressed with its increasingly growing success: *"the satire was so thoroughly to the taste of the public, that the paper was sold in immense quantities."*⁸⁴. In other words, the journal found a favorable medium and a fertile soil to flourish in

The addition of cartoons to the written texts had certainly enlivened the journal and largely contributed to its success likewise: *"M. Sanua [Sannu'] now added point to his attacks by availing himself of the French talent for caricature. He gave pen-and-ink cartoons of the subjects of his diatribes. These were far behind the brilliant drawings published by his London confrere; but, being a novelty in Egypt, whether the journal found its way under cover, they formed an attraction to natives and foreigners alike."*⁸⁵

The colloquial language in which it was written must have added its quota to its wide publicity too: *"It is written in the common Arabic so as to be easily understood by the people"*⁸⁶

As a result, its circulation had sky rocketed within a relatively short time to reach 50,000 copies according to the estimation of the Times reporter: *"its circulation ran up to 50,000 soon after it was started-----"*⁸⁷

Jerrold provided a similar estimation: *"the excitement with which the Arab population throughout Egypt hailed the Abou Naddara until its weekly circulation reached 50,000 copies astonished and troubled Ismail---"*⁸⁸

Certainly, there was a lot of exaggeration in this number due to the wide spread of illiteracy in Egypt at that time. As a matter of fact, it is extremely difficult to figure out the actual number of its copies that were in circulation. Nevertheless, the aforementioned number though exaggerated, it indicated its big popularity among Egyptians no matter their backgrounds. As a result, its circulation wasn't restricted to the intellectual circles, but it went far beyond it: *"It was in every barrack, in every government office. In every town and village it was read with the liveliest delight. The success of the journal was assured.....The journal found its way to every village and was read universally"*⁸⁹

This fact was reported in many original sources written by contemporaries who eye witnessed the journal's boom that was undreamed of: *"Emissaries were sent all over the country, travelling from one village to another surrounded by people there who listened to their promises of exemption from taxation, land grants, exemption from military service while picked at the khedive who mortgaged every inch of Egypt"*⁹⁰

Jean Ninet reported a similar narrative: *"There was hardly a donkey boy of Cairo or of any of the provincial towns who had not heard them read, if he could not read them himself; and in the villages I can testify to their influence, for I was myself a diligent colporteur of Sanua's lucubrations wherever I went"*⁹¹

It was also read in popular coffee houses of Alexandria⁹². This must have increased its accessibility to a large readership or listenership⁹³. Sannu himself confirmed that 10000 copies of his journal that arrived to Egypt were sold like "a piece of cake" in spite of all the restraints posed on it.⁹⁴

The correspondent of *L'Europe Diplomatique* in Cairo reported an incident that occurred in June 1879 which provides a concrete evidence of such popularity. During a concert held by the famous singer Ahmad Salem, some vendors sold secretly the journal of *Abu Naddara* that was banned then. The audience had diverted their attention to reading the journal and forgot about the singer whom they invited afterwards to sing a song published in the journal. The famous singer had no choice but to submit to his audience's will and started singing it. To his chagrin, he and his troupe were soon arrested by the police who was after the journal's sellers and were imprisoned for ten days.⁹⁵ Such attitude of the audience proved that the journal had a tremendous impact on them thus; they treasured its words and wished to hear them in a song.

Furthermore, *Abu Naddara's* fame flew far and wide and was not restricted to Egypt that it "*has certain circulation in India where he says his articles are translated and largely quoted in its native press*"⁹⁶. One must take into consideration that after Sannu's exile to France, *Abu Naddara* turned to be a bilingual journal written in Arabic and French. This development had likely attracted foreign readers who could now understand its content: "*Publie en arabe et en Francais un journal tres goute' de la presse algerienne*"⁹⁷

It seems that *Abu Naddara's* unprecedented success had enticed other writers to follow Sannu's footsteps and to publish similar popular opposition journals that would appeal to the masses and awaken them at the same time. Among those writers were Abd Allah Al Nadim who published his famous humorous journal *al-Tankit wa al-Tabkit* or Raillery and Reproof and Adib Ishaq who published "*Misr*" and "*Al Tegarrah*".⁹⁸

Abu Naddara's Agenda:

The journal of *Abu Naddara* had set a clear-cut political agenda and adhered to it in its early formative years. It rested primarily on three cardinal points that would be thoroughly discussed here.

First: condemning the current deteriorating conditions of the country and unveiling the gross abuses of the royal family as well as their entourage in order to arouse the masses to revolt against them. In fact, stirring up the masses was a new principle introduced into Arabic journalism then⁹⁹ at the hands of the new generation of writers like Sannu in order to meet the needs of the moment and to challenge the status quo which they obviously rejected. No wonder, the issues of "*Abu Naddara*" amounted to an indictment against Ismail's regime. It was quite evident that Sannu held Ismail responsible for the fiscal malaise that left the country on the verge of bankruptcy. He even accused Ismail of wasting money on his whims.¹⁰⁰ Besides, he accused him of indebting the country: "*During his reign, our rich country became indebted to the Franks (European nations) with 100 million pound*"¹⁰¹.

In the same vein, Sannu accused him of impoverishing the people of Egypt who became a prey for his gluttony: "*The children starved of hunger and the cattle were sold and all ways of making living were closed in our faces.*"¹⁰² and described the unbearable burden of taxes that had caused their wretchedness: "*He imposed unprecedented taxes on land property and multiplied it as well as capital tax on people whether rich or poor even the penniless among them who couldn't find their daily subsistence as well as on beasts of burden (camels, horses, mules and donkeys), cows and poultry, plants, fodder, even the dung of the animal was taxed. Most strikingly, taxes were levied on the dead that had to be paid by his heirs.*"¹⁰³

One particular cartoon drawn in 1879 had combined all these charges when he depicted Ismail selling Egypt to the foreigners. In this cartoon, the fattened Ismail appeared trying to sell Egypt's history and antiquities represented in the pyramids and the sphinx in auction to get money at any cost. The caption reads as follows: "*After selling the harvest of the seven fat years in advance, the Pharaoh is now selling the pyramids in auction*". Then he loudly called upon tourists saying: "*Come to the auction of the sphinx and the stones of the pyramids, Oh tourists and lovers of antiquities! The sale is in cash and the currency is pounds, pounds free of copper. One, two, come on people, raise the price*"¹⁰⁴ (Figure 3)



Figure 3. Source: *Abu Nazzara Zarka*, May 30, 1879, no. 11.

"*Abu Naddara*" had even gone further and accused Ismail of making a bargain with the British to recognize the British rule over Egypt and in return he would be their protégé like the princes of India. Thus, he would live with his sons a long life enjoying all delights amidst flowers, women and wine while the British enslave the Egyptians.¹⁰⁵

At the same time, *Abu Naddara* also focused on Ismail's atrocities to expose them to public and brand him. For instance, *Abu Naddara* gave much attention to a wide-spread rumor about Ismail's indulgence in the murder of his minister of finance Ismail Seddiq known as Al- Mofatish who used to be his right-hand-man. It seems that Ismail wished to silence Al- Mofatish for ever to hide all evidences that convicted him as a spendthrift who squandered Egypt's resources. Actually, the journal of *Abu Naddara* had explicitly accused Khedive Ismail of getting rid of Seddiq and feeding his corpse to the fish¹⁰⁶. It even went further and mentioned that Khedive Ismail didn't suffice himself with having him drunk the poisonous coffee but also burnt all the documents, records and transactions which he kept in his possession. In addition, he stole Al Mofatish's money and sold his concubines¹⁰⁷. Sannu depicted such mean crime in an illuminating cartoon showing the ghost of Al Mofatish revealing himself to Ismail who seemed to suffer from self-guilt therefore he was wandering in the cemetery begging for his victim's forgiveness. (Figure 4)



Figure 4. Source: *Rihlat Abi Nazzara Zarka*, August 14, 1878, no. 2.

After deposing Ismail, *Abu Naddara* turned its steering wheel in the direction of Tewfik and his premiere Riyad. It fiercely opposed their policies especially their approvals on the sale of the country's land to foreigners to enable them master the country.¹⁰⁸ In other words, it dared attack the increasing foreign intervention in Egypt which the Egyptians paid dearly for it and attacked Riyad for collaborating with the British.¹⁰⁹ It also sharply criticized Riyad for firing Egyptian functionaries and replacing them with foreigners who received high wages.¹¹⁰

In the same manner, it sharply attacked the measures taken by the notorious liquidation committee that enabled the foreigners to escape from paying taxes while caused the loss of the rights of Egyptians while focused on the *Muqabla* debts that were never paid back¹¹¹. More significantly, it illustrated People's suffering under the regime's heavy hand and lamented their inability to earn their living and revealed their resentment of Riyad's decisions¹¹².

It also stressed on Riyad's mean character and his willingness to collaborate with the British represented in John Bull. To confirm this idea, Riyad was shown in the cartoon below offering to sell Mr. John Bull not only the Egyptian railway lines but the entire country at the price of a cigarette box while Nubar pasha referred to as *Ghubar* which means dust) was the one who was negotiating this bargain at the request of



Riyad. (Figure 5)

Figure 5. Source, *Al-Nazzarat al-Misriya*, February 20, 1880, no. 05.

After the British occupation of Egypt, *Abu Naddara* had even suspected Tewfik's compliance in the massacres of Alexandria¹¹³ and claimed in a very expressive cartoon that it was his treachery that led to the British occupation of Egypt after Urabi's defeat at Al Tell El Kabir. (Figure 6)



Figure 6. Source: *Abu Naddara*, October 6, 1882, no. 14.

One can safely say that *Abu Naddara* had worked hard to urge people to revolt against both regimes of Ismail and Tewfik as the only way to put an end to their suffering. One can find such explicit calls for revolution in many places: "Unite together as if one hand and one tongue behave like men, annihilate the quack and get rid of the ministry and its aberrant ministers"¹¹⁴

On another place, *Abu Naddara* tried to kindle people's anger and called upon them to form one front through a song he published: "Oh peasant son of the country, hold arms against oppression, let us go and expel the boy from our land"¹¹⁵. Sometimes, Sannu had even attacked the people of Egypt on some issues of

Abu Naddara and accused them of passiveness. This was meant to spur them to take action and to have them moved.¹¹⁶

Second: Backing Halim pasha to take over and assume power in Egypt.

It is worth mentioning that Muhammad Abd Al Halim pasha (widely known as Halim) was the youngest and the last surviving son of Muhammad Ali and he was well-known for his liberal-mind and enlightened approach.¹¹⁷ Apparently, there was a heated rivalry between Ismail and his uncle Halim who was one year younger. In other words, they were at each other's throat.

Halim survived what he believed to be an attempt made on his life in 1858 when he was invited together with Prince Ahmad Refaat and Ismail to inspect the Suez Canal. The train they were riding went so fast that it couldn't stop at Kafr Al Zayyat where the draw bridge there was open. Thus, it fell into the river causing the drowning of Prince Ahmad Refaat while Prince Halim made a narrow escape. Definitely, the sudden absence of Ismail that day on the excuse of his illness had aroused Halim's suspicions in his indulgence in this plot to remove both lawful heirs from his way¹¹⁸.

On the other end of the spectrum, Ismail's tremendous efforts in Istanbul and the huge sums of money he poured there had resulted in the change of order of succession in Egypt by introducing primogeniture to it. This new *Firman* which Ismail got contradicted with the law of the Ottoman Empire and was at the words of Jean Ninet "*obtenu a prix d'or*"¹¹⁹ Now the throne would pass in a direct line from father to son (i.e. in favor of Ismail's eldest son Tewfik). That is to say such *Firman* deprived him of what he believed to be his very right as the senior male member of the house of Muhammad Ali who was supposed to rise to the throne of Egypt one day in accordance with the traditional Ottoman law of succession. At the same time, Ismail believed that Halim was conspiring against him therefore he banished him to Istanbul and confiscated his wealth and property.¹²⁰

Nevertheless, Halim didn't give up. Although, he seemed to be pursuing a chimera, he continued to work behind the scenes in Cairo, Istanbul and Paris to realize this dream and bring the downfall of Ismail regime. He much depended on his sister Princess Zeineb Hanem who backed him all along and put her money at his disposal.¹²¹

In his endless endeavors to strengthen his position, Halim had to rely heavily on press because of its prodigious influence on masses as well as on statesmen and policy-makers: "*Prince Halim has now spent well-nigh all his substance amongst his adherents in Egypt, and in the systematic subventioning of continental news-papers; but his sister is still rich and willing to spend more money if occasion requires it.*"¹²²

This was the time when Halim had seemingly established an alliance with Sannu who shared him the same animosity to both Ismail and Tewfik. No doubt, Halim must have exploited the malcontent of many prominent figures then against Ismail to develop a vast network of allies and agents working in his favor. Sannu was no exception. And since then, Halim became the subject of *Abu Naddara's* flattery and adulation.

It is potently obvious that Halim had badly needed Sannu's journal known for its extremely high popularity to build up a popular base among the masses: "*The great point was to enlist the sympathies of the lower classes and this could only be done through the press....it was then resolved to issue it abroad This paper was called Abou Naddara and was printed by James Sanua of No. 48 Aveneu de Clichy Paris*"¹²³

One can safely say that the relationship between Halim and Sannu was intricate and rather complicated one. They developed over years a patron-client relationship and had mutual interests. It is quite evident that Sannu highly regarded Halim and put much hope on him. At the same time, Halim had ostensibly recruited Sannu and utilized his journal as an effective political instrument capable of shaping a public opinion in

support of his lawful claims. This could be traced in Sannu's pro- Halim sentiments that were crystal clear in his journals.

Clearly, Sannu himself had much believed in Halim's capabilities. He had a deep-seated conviction that Halim's rise to the throne of Egypt was the only remedy that could cure Egypt's malaise and its last hope. As a result, he constantly backed Halim in his quest for his lost rights. This view was best embodied in one of

Sannu's cartoons that depicted Halim as the rising sun that would bring the new dawn which Egypt had long waited for. (Figure 7)

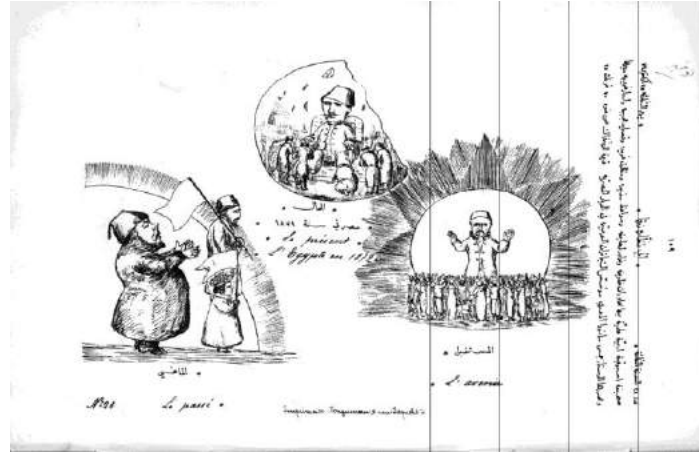


Figure 7. Source: *Abu Nazzara Zarka*, November 25, 1879, no. 28.

The question that raises itself is: why Sannu had much believed in Halim? Perhaps Halim's liberal European education which he received in Paris during his four-year stay there ¹²⁴ could have been the prime reason for such life-long support. As a renaissance intellectual, Sannu must have been looking for a progressive enlightened ruler open to new ideas that could move his country forward and save it.

This could be also deduced from Sannu's depiction of Halim as the savior who is going to rescue Egypt that was reduced into ruins at the hands of Ismail. (Figure 8)

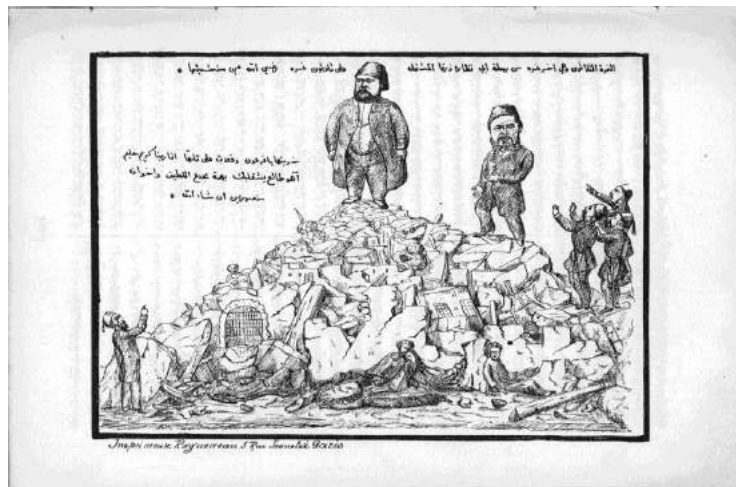


Figure 8. Source: *Rihlat Abi Nazzara Zarqa*, March 13, 1879, no. 30.

As a matter of fact many other intellectuals and prominent contemporary figures shared Sannu the same view of Halim including Urabi himself. They all believed that Halim was "*both more intelligent and liberal in his views than the other (Tewfik)*" ¹²⁵

Halim's sympathy with the poor ground trodden masses must have added to his credit and caused them to align with him: "*----the poor peasants loved him, and because he had the courage to take the part of the oppressed, and to raise his voice again and again against the ruinous and cruel policy under which the people were suffering.*" ¹²⁶

Similarly, the European press in general adopted the same view of Halim and spoke highly of him. They published every now and then letters in his favor like that of G. Oltramare describing Halim as "*plus affable, plus genereux et plus humain*" ¹²⁷ among other princes and confirming that Halim's inherited his father's high qualities.

Halim's letter to Ismail including his prescription for Egypt's crisis had also grabbed worldwide attention and was published in European press¹²⁸. It was even reproduced in the Times (in spite of the objection of the British government to the installation of Halim)

That's to say Halim was clever enough to cater for world public opinion when sent the aforementioned letter to Ismail and published it in European press. It wasn't a mere verbal juggling but it was his diagnosis of the problem and his proposed procedures to find a way out. It is very likely that Sannu was one of his press advisors because of his invaluable experience in this field. Over and above, Sannu believed as he stated in his journal that "*Halim was the lawful heir to the vicereignty of Egypt*"¹²⁹ Therefore, Sannu might have felt morally committed to back him till he would restore his stolen right.

However, the outspoken propaganda for Halim which the journal of *Abu Naddara* included with unfailing regularity must have stimulated some of Sannu's contemporaries to question his underlying motivations. To put pieces together in a logical way, in order to arrive at the correct solution of the puzzle, it seems safe to say that Sannu, in addition to his being Halim's disciple, must have been commissioned by Halim to enhance his public image. In other words, Halim was clearly the paymaster of *Abu Naddara* and its prime sponsor. Therefore, Sannu remained a loyal agent to Halim who was the major channel of his journal's finance till the very end.

It is not surprising that, Sannu was repeatedly accused of putting his journal at Halim's service and receiving money from him for this purpose. The journal itself was partly seen as a propaganda campaign for the sake of Halim: "*The caricatures as well as the letterpress are devoted partly ---to advocating the substitution of prince Halim for the present Khedive*"¹³⁰.

It should be noted here that Sannu's old companions, Al Afghani and Abdu did accuse him too of receiving money from Halim to finance his journal. In response, Sannu denied this charge and defended himself claiming that he worked in teaching in Paris to provide the necessary costs for printing his journal¹³¹. He also stated that he worked as an Arabic teacher in 3 schools and at the same time used to give private lessons in Italian and English to 4 students at home.¹³² Besides, he assured his readers that he never profited from Halim and that he was not for sale¹³³.

Sannu even went further and denounced Al Afghani and Abdu for changing their stances, betraying their old friendship and joining the bloc of his adversaries who were in fact the adversaries of the country¹³⁴.

Nevertheless, Sannu's defense fell short to convince those who rejected his notable bias to Halim and apparent submissive attitude towards him. Ironically, Sannu himself admitted in his journal that the Arabic printing in Paris was very expensive. At the same time, the journal was outlawed in Egypt and was smuggled to it with much difficulty. Accordingly, the subscriptions of the readers couldn't have been sufficient at all to cover its high expenses. Therefore, Sannu was in dire need for money to publish his journal on regular basis. It is worth mentioning that Al Afghani and Abdu faced the same financial problem to publish their journal "*Al Urwa al Wuthqa*" in Paris that's why it came to a halt after eight months only of its publication. However, Abdu turned to his old friend Blunt. He sent a letter to him in London asking for a grant or a loan for their journal¹³⁵.

On the contrary, Sannu appeared to have received continuous financial support from Halim which made the independence of his journal dubious in a way or another. Yet, it guaranteed its perpetuation for all those years.

It is worth mentioning that the search for a sponsor to subsidize a journal was a common practice at that time. Sannu's peer, Louis Sabunji who was the editor of the Arabic journal "*Al Nahla*" published in London since 1877 was likewise "*a heavily subsidized journalist*"¹³⁶ However, the identities of his benefactor remained anonymous. Although, Sabunji at last revealed that the Sultan of Zanzibar was his chief patron, there were some indicators showing the patronage which ex- Khedive Ismail extended to his journal¹³⁷ that's financing remained "*a mystery*"¹³⁸ at Blunt's description. On the contrary, Sannu never declared the identity of his benefactor nonetheless it was unmistakable for everyone. It seems that both Sannu and

Sabunji tried hard to conceal the names of their patrons most probably at their own request or perhaps to avoid any unnecessarily headache like political confrontations, complications and hostilities.

In fact, the frequent explicit propaganda for Halim which the journal of *Abu Naddara* contained also suggests that Sannu was entitled to mobilize the average Egyptians around Halim to consolidate his position. That's to say, Sannu who was Halim's protégé had to pave the road for him to take over through preparing the masses to accept his rule. To this end, Sannu used to illustrate Halim's picture on his journal. It is not surprising that his portrait had once occupied the cover page of the journal and appeared frequently in a considerable number of its issues accompanied with applause¹³⁹. (Figure 9)



Figure 9. Source: *al-Nazzarat al-Misriya*, May 6, 1880, no. 10.

It is quite noticeable in almost all the illustrations of Halim published at "*Abu Naddara*" that he was depicted in a gallant manner. He always appeared as a noble knight on his horseback (Figure 10) to convey the idea of his chivalry and knighthood. In other words, Sannu was in fact creating a positive mental image for Halim in the public mind.



Figure 10. Source: *Abu Nazzara Zarka*, December 9, 1879, no. 29.

In addition, Halim always appeared as a protagonist who dominated the scene with a heroic act. This appeared vividly in two of his cartoons:

In the first one, Halim appeared chasing an owl that took Ismail's features and its off springs that looked like his sons because they wished to ruin the country. (Figure 11)

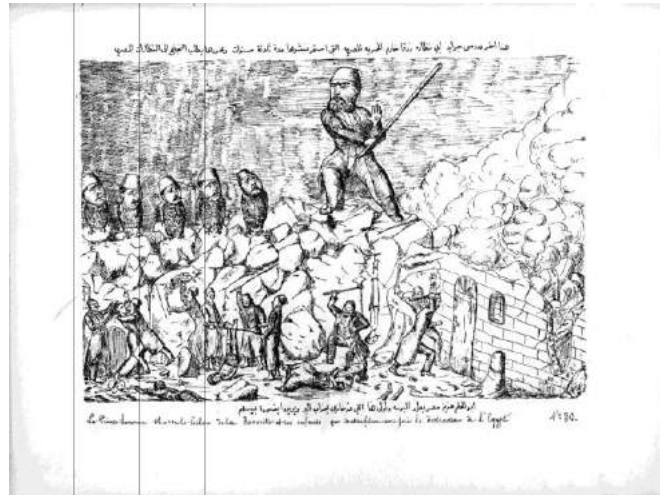


Figure 11. Source: *Abu Nazzara Zarqa*, 1879, no. 30

In the second cartoon, one can see a scrawny cow having the face of the sphinx thus symbolizing Egypt and Halim defending her by yelling at Tewfik who insisted to milk her in spite of her visible weakness. The caption reads as following: "*shame on you have mercy on her and let her take a breath after what your father did to her*" (Figure 12)

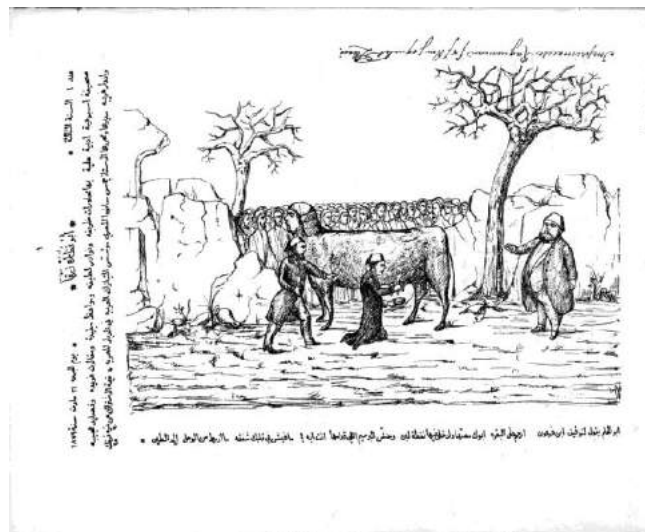


Figure 12. Source: *Abu Nazzara Zarqa*, March 21, 1879, no. 1.

In the same manner, Sannu tried hard in his articles to put Halim on a pedestal to enhance his image in people's eyes and glorify him. Numerous citations of his journal confirm this fact like for example: "*.....Halim is a man of virtues*"¹⁴⁰, "*If Halim rose to power, the foreigners won't dominate us and the people of Egypt will gain their freedom like European countries*"¹⁴¹ and "*Fumigate your mouth with incense when mention Halim, the difference between him and the foolish lad is like the difference between day and night*"¹⁴²

Moreover, Sannu used to refer to him with his nickname "*Abu Al Hulum*"¹⁴³ to show that he was a prince of hearts putting much emphasis on his meekness, gentleness, refined manners as well as his closeness to people. In fact, his view of Halim's eligibility for the throne was echoed in many citations like: "*Prince Halim is just and generous prince, he is very popular in Egypt and loved by all people who long to see him their ruler. If any of the readers asked me about the cause of such popularity, I will tell him because Halim told his nephew Ismail when he assumed the Khedivate be fair Ismail because if you continued to plunder the peasants, impose corvee' on them and steal the money of the rest of population, the country shall never prosper. That's why Ismail became outraged and exiled Halim, humiliated his siblings and stole his money and property. Therefore, the people of Egypt love him and pray to God not to deprive them of watching his face.*"¹⁴⁴

That's why he drew a comparison between Halim and Ismail to numerate Halim's brave deeds: "Halim is the first and last to defend the rights of Egyptians whether belonged to upper classes or lower ones when he found that Your Ismail when became a Khedive tried to levy taxes on the elite while insulted the peasants which nurtured hostility between them. However Halim, May God pleases his time, still defend the people of Egypt and work in their favour although he is far away now of his beloved country"¹⁴⁵

Sannu even attributed the hostility between Ismail and Halim to the latter's insistence to relieve the pains of the peasants and improve their living conditions: "The peasants in general side are with Halim because they know that Halim's sympathy with them procured the enmity of his nephew. He used to say to the expelled khedive: My nephew, if you really want to improve the country's conditions, you must low after peasants and support them by lending them money at a low interest rate to buy cattle, seeds and such other needs"¹⁴⁶

At the same time, Sannu made glamorous promises to people of Egypt very similar to election promises and spoke of the happy future that awaited them in case of Halim's ascension to power: "You will no longer suffer oppression if Halim the original heir of the throne was installed. The experiences he passed through had well-trained him in addition to his gentleness, courtesy and moral excellence as well as his noble descent"¹⁴⁷

More significantly, Sannu's claimed that the notables and the elite of the country wrote petitions which they intended to send to the Sublime Porte demanding the installing of Halim¹⁴⁸. Obviously, this claim was in fact a Manuel of action and a path Sannu wished to guide the people to go through. In short, the journal of *Abu Naddara* had come to serve Halim's interests whether deliberately or not.

Third: Supporting Urabi and the national movement in their struggle for liberty, justice and independence.

It seems that the growing weight of the national party had motivated Halim to nurture ties with its members and to work in harmony with them to pursue the political reform which he looked for.¹⁴⁹ To this end, Halim utilized some respected figures like Ninet the Swiss gentleman who resided in Egypt for a long time, as intermediaries to open dialogue with nationalists and polarize them.¹⁵⁰ It is very likely that Sannu had also performed the same role and acted as a link between Halim and Urabi. One must take into consideration that Sannu had much admired both men for their liberal thoughts.

In addition, Sannu had eye witnessed the birth of the national party and had put much hope on it to rid Egypt from its corrupted rulers and bring reform. He expressed this view in a cartoon showing men of the army backed by an angel expelling and punishing the corrupted rulers of the country who devastated it. (Figure 13)



Figure 13. Source: *Abu Naddara*, January 20, 1882, no. 2.

He also credited men of the army with another heroic act which is spoiling Riyad vicious schemes in collaboration with the British. This was manifested in an insightful cartoon where Riyad was presented as a bride who was about to get married to the wicked John Bull and the dowry was supposed to be the Nile valley (in a veiled reference to Riyad's obnoxious collaboration with the British). To their chagrin however, men of army interfered to prevent this treason. (Figure 14)



Figure 14. Source: *Abou- Naddara*, May 1881, no. 3.

Apparently, Sannu had always boosted his relation with the National party which led a French periodical to credit him with its foundation.¹⁵¹ Regardless of such exaggeration in attributing the formation of the national party to Sannu, he highly estimated the party and continued to support it. One must take into account that some of its members were Sannu's former students at the poly technique school and he managed to perpetuate his close ties with them.

As mentioned above, Halim tried to invest *Abu Naddara's* big readership to augment his popularity and attract more supporters among the army: "*Le journal Arabe Abou Naddara est lu par les officiers de l'armee egyptienne*----"¹⁵²

No wonder, "*Abu Naddara*" that heavily defended Halim's cause was distributed for free in the barracks. This was confirmed in the correspondences of the British high officials in Egypt at that time: "*with regard to Prince Halim it is a notorious fact that an Arabic newspaper printed at Paris in his interests entitled Abou Naddara is distributed gratis among the troops here.*"¹⁵³

On another occasion, similar confidential correspondences exchanged among high British officials revealed *Abu Naddara's* big support for Halim and high expectation on him: "*Both the Irvet-el-Wuska and the Abou Naddara are hostile to the present Khedive, and to the English- Occupation; and the Abou Naddara is moreover especially remark-able for its support of Halim Pasha, as being the nominee of the Sultan, and whom it considers the only man capable of restoring liberty and prosperity to Egypt.*"¹⁵⁴

In the same manner, Sannu had substantially contributed to the expansion of Urabi's popularity through his journal too: "*his presumed popularity due almost to the efforts of the satirical Arabic journalist James Sanua who is in exile in Paris*"¹⁵⁵

He used to praise Urabi in his journal and called him master of the Arabs¹⁵⁶.

More importantly, he showed Urabi in one of his cartoons as the defender of the country against foreign intervention represented in John Bull who was the personification of England. (Figure 15)

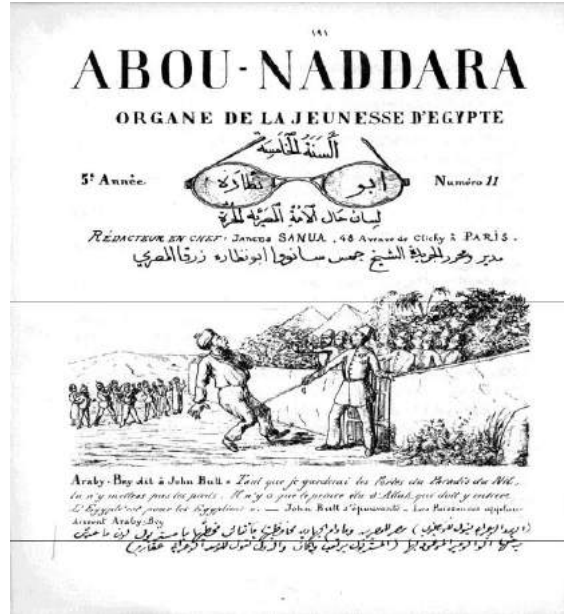


Figure 15. Source: *Abou-Naddara*, November, 1881, no. 11.

It is quite evident that he much believed in Urabi's true patriotism. It comes as a little surprise that he called upon Egyptians to elect him together with his companions Mahmud Sami, Tulba Esmat, Abd Al Aal Helmy, Mahmud Fahmy, Yaqub Samy¹⁵⁷.

It is note worthy to say that Sannu continued to back the nationalists and the army in Paris therefore he composed an anthem for the army similar to the national anthem of France: "*Un chant patriotique intitulee La Marseillaise Arabe compose' par Sanna et chante' par les bandes d'Arabi----*"¹⁵⁸ Besides, he placed his journal at the disposal of the national party¹⁵⁹ and considered it as its official organ.

Over and above the revolutionary cries that appeared in the issue of *Abu Naddara* published on 9th of September 1881¹⁶⁰ which synchronized with Urabi's historical march to Abdeen suggest that there was a prior coordination between Urabi and the editor of the journal who seemed to be on the same wave length with him. This could have never been a mere coincidence especially if one paid attention to the cartoon that occupied the front page of this issue (Figure 16). It expressed one of the demands which Urabi presented to the Khedive which was the dismissal of Riyad's cabinet for serving the British interests and for their suspected compliance with them. It showed a group of honorable military men who were tying Riyad's hands to prevent him from submitting the keys of Egypt to Mr. John Bull who personified Great Britain. Thus Sannu castigated Riyad in that cartoon and provided a justification for ousting him.

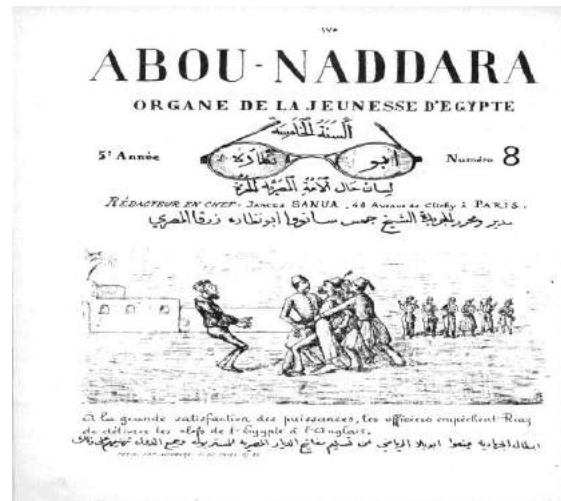


Figure 16. Source: *Abou-Naddara*, September 9, 1881, no. 8.

Such coordination with the nationalists was meant to develop grassroots resistance to liberate the country from oppression and corruption of its current administration then and later from the British occupation that dominated the country starting from September 1882.

End justifies the mean:

Although, "*Abu Naddara*" was mainly an opposition journal calling for reform, it turned sometimes to be a yellow press employing sensationalism, gossips, exaggerations of news, scandal-mongering and similar techniques to attract more readers and imbue them with certain political views. This must have sometimes come at the expense of accuracy and proficiency. Thus breached the agreed upon overriding principles of ethical journalism that seek the truth and verify information before releasing it to ensure credibility.

Through *Abu Naddara's* issues, Sannu had launched unscrupulous bone-crushing war against Ismail and Tewfik whom he called frightful tyrants ¹⁶¹as well as against their regimes. No wonder, Sannu appeared to be vindictive in a way or another and was bent on hitting where it hurts. Therefore, he saved no effort to undermine confidence in their administration and slander them. In other words, it wasn't always a fair play opposition as journalism code of ethics dictates. Such vindictive attitude had sometimes affected the objectivity of his journal. Besides, Sannu's tendency to act on behalf of special interests on certain occasions (like that of Halim pasha) had rendered the independence of the journal dubious and rather questionable.

As a matter of fact, Sannu didn't mind invading the personal life, space and privacy of some high-profile figures on whom he repeatedly attacked and wrote abusive things concerning them. This was meant to scandalize them even if he transgressed all red lines or violated moral and social norms. Such form of character assassination would eventually create a credibility gap between them and the masses and pave the way for their overthrow. As a result, Sannu sometimes yielded to manipulation, misinterpretation and twist of facts leading to whisper campaigns to badly injure their public image and foment troubles for them.

For this purpose, he persistently introduced Ismail in a dreadful way and portrayed him as a devil on many occasions. For instance, he depicted him as a devil who firmly denied access to heaven while the caption of the cartoon reads: "*A devil must not approach angels*". Through this depiction, Sannu wished to instill this hateful image in the minds of his readers. (Figure 17)



Figure 17. Source: *Rihlat Abi Nazzara Zarga*, December 15, 1878, no. 18.

At other times, he depicted Ismail as an abhorrent, obese and money-hungry figure to convey the idea that he fattened his coffers, filled his pockets and gained flesh at people's expense. On the contrary, he depicted the Egyptian peasant (in the same cartoon) pale, skinny and in a miserable status. (Figure 18) This sharp contrast arouses one's pity for the peasant while provoke one's fury over the ruler who caused him such misery.



Figure 18. Source: *Rihlat Abi Nazzara Zarqa*, October 22, 1878, no. 11.

More importantly, he focused on the alleged sexual improprieties of the royal family and their courtiers like referring to the alleged scandalous manner of the Khedive's mother¹⁶² and portraying Fakhry pasha who was a high official as a playboy¹⁶³ fully occupied in his caprices.

Needless to say that circulating such damaging rumors was another indecent tactics which Sannu resorted to. This was by all means a lethal blow which he successfully dealt to the royal family and their courtiers to blacken their reputation and discredit them. Actually, the veiled accusations as well as the unreserved use of obscene words that had pejorative connotations were part of Sannu's Machiavellian plan which he employed without any qualms of conscience.

For example, Sannu made fun of Riyad's manhood and spoke of him as a female. This was in an implicit reference to Riyad's alleged homosexuality: "*Riyad is an, ex-male, who belongs to the harem*"¹⁶⁴. Besides, he repeatedly called him "*Rayouda Hanem*"¹⁶⁵ or Lady Riyad.

In many other places, Sannu claimed that Riyad used to entertain his master Abbas I through singing, dancing and playing music¹⁶⁶ like slave girls. Certainly, such accusation was capable of ruining Riyad's reputation in an oriental conservative and rather patriarchal society that highly places men and boosts their manhood. Sannu even showed Riyad in one of his cartoons being buried at the hands of Urabi and his fellows in his dancing dress (in another covert reference to his disgraceful past when he used to dance in a feminine way to please his former master and satisfy his obliquity according to Sannu's narrative) while Halim as usual appeared on the background mounting his horse (Figure 19) signifying his complete and rather undisputed manhood.



Figure 19. Source: *Abou-Naddara*, October 1881, no. 9.

He also ridiculed Tewfik's manhood and called him "*Tawfika*" (the feminine form of his name) and described him as the "*mistress of Lord Seymour*"¹⁶⁷

It comes as little surprise that Sannu continuously used this description when referring to Riyad and Tewfik to confirm this claim: "*Don't be afraid of Abu Reda (Riyad) and the boy (Tewfik), they are women rather than men, and their actions reveal that they are mean*"¹⁶⁸

Sannu also accused Ismail of debauchery and stated that he spent the country's money on prostitutes and that he forced some women to have sinful relations with him through his agents¹⁶⁹. He stated in some other place that Ismail gave Ms. Shnider who was an artist girl he met in France 150 thousand Francs for spending a night with him.¹⁷⁰ However, Sannu deliberately ignored mentioning anything whatsoever concerning the massive projects which Ismail undertook to modernize the country which swallowed the largest amount of the country's money. This furnishes enough evidence of the contradictions and fallacies which the journal had sometimes contained to vilify a particular figure and to underestimate, if not totally neglected, his contributions.

Besides, one can easily discern Sannu's striking tendency for exaggeration that sometimes went beyond the limits of truth and proved to be misleading. Therefore, in some places one must not take Sannu's narrative for granted. On the contrary, one must stop for a while to question the degree of objectivity, validity and reliability of his accounts to build on.

This appears vividly on his interpretation of the Europeans stance towards Halim and how they supported his claim for the throne of Egypt as the rightful heir. It is quite evident that Halim was no more than a pressure card in the hands of the European powers. They threatened to use this card to realize their objectives firstly with Ismail and subsequently with Tewfik.

This was also best manifested when the Sultan informed the British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs of his willingness to nullify the Imperial *Firman* which he granted to Ismail concerning the change in the law of succession in Egypt¹⁷¹ and his intensions "*to depose the Khedive and to appoint Halim pasha as his successor*"¹⁷²

On receiving this news, the representatives of the European powers in Egypt worked swiftly on the ground to exploit the situation for their best as Lord Cromer clarified in his account. Therefore, they rushed to the Khedive's palace to blackmail him:

"On the night of June 24, M. Tricou, the French Consul -General, received information from Constantinople to the effect that the Porte had decided

upon the deposition of the Khedive and the appointment of Halim Pasha as his successor. Although it was past midnight, Sir Frank Lascelles, M. Tricou, and Baron de Saurma, the German Consul- General, went at once to the Khedive's palace."¹⁷³

As a matter of fact, they openly threatened Ismail that they would allow Halim rise to the throne of Egypt if he wouldn't abdicate the throne voluntarily to his son: "*The great powers have notified the Khedive that they will enforce his dethronement immediately in favour of Halim pasha unless he voluntarily abdicate at once*"¹⁷⁴

At the same time, they fiercely opposed Halim's candidature in Istanbul. They had seemingly preferred Tewfik because of his young age and less experience that would make him more docile than Halim. Therefore, they revealed their true colors to the Porte and made it very clear that the candidature of Halim didn't appeal to them: "*The Powers of Europe evidently determined that Prince Tewfik, and not Prince Halim, should be Khedive of Egypt*"¹⁷⁵

It is not surprising that they kept on exerting pressures on the Sultan to change his decision of appointing Halim till he finally submitted to their will: "*the diplomatic pressure brought to bear in Constantinople had produced its effect*"¹⁷⁶

In other words, they used the Porte's offer only to intimidate Ismail yet they had no intention whatsoever to accept it because it wouldn't have served their own interests.

For the same reason, they panicked when Urabi pasha later in a speech "*openly boosted that the Sultan of Turkey had decided to depose Tewfik pasha and enthrone prince Halim----*"¹⁷⁷

Similarly, Sannu exaggerated in praising the French stand from the Egyptian question. Among his numerous citations in this regard, one can read: *"The English men had set their sights on our country but the French are kind people, they said Halim is the one for Egyptians because they knew the foolishness of our boy (Tewfik)"*¹⁷⁸.

Actually, the declarations of Gambetta the French minister then unfounded Sannu's former claim: *"On December 15, M. Gambetta told Lord Lyons that "he considered it to be extremely important to strengthen the authority of Tewfik Pasha. On the other hand, the enemies of the present system, the adherents of Ismail Pasha and Halim Pasha, and the Egyptians generally should be made to understand that France and England, by whose influence Tewfik has been placed on the throne, would not acquiesce in his being deposed from it. . ."*¹⁷⁹

Truly, Sir Edward Malet the British Consul General in Egypt stated in one of his letters to Lord Granville dated on April 22nd, 1882 that the French government had suggested through M. de Freycinet the substitution of Prince Halim as a remedy for Egypt's critical situation¹⁸⁰, yet this proposal was soon withdrawn when Granville objected to it. On the contrary, the French government had soon abandoned the idea of deposing the Khedive and worked jointly with the British government afterwards to send Anglo-French squadron to Egypt¹⁸¹ to protect Tewfik and enable him to retain its throne.

This refutes Sannu's allegation of the French unconditional support of Halim. It also furnishes concrete evidence of the duplicity of France that pretended to help Egypt while outrightly intervened in its internal affairs and made deals with Britain at its expense. Nevertheless, *"Abu Naddara"* turned a blind eye to this utilitarian French attitude towards the Egyptian question and maintained complete silence to it.

The same exaggeration can be traced in *Abu Naddara's* description of Halim's popularity and how the Egyptians were his warm defenders and were willing to back him wholeheartedly despite the fact that they had never experienced his rule. For instance, one can read: *"Halim is the apple of the Egyptians' eyes"*¹⁸² and *"All people of Egypt belong to Halim's party because he is the beloved of the Nile valley"*¹⁸³

On another place, it assured that *"The people of Egypt are longing for the return of Halim in as much as their longing for the rise of the crescent that marks the coming of the feast"*¹⁸⁴

This salient tendency to exaggeration could also be noticed in the way Sannu depicted himself. Actually, he spoke of himself as a *"waliy"*¹⁸⁵ or a saint who was visionary and far-sighted. He also exaggerated in describing his place and his eminent status among Egyptians which he felt on the occasion of his departure from Egypt. He claimed that people wept because of his exile: *"they used to shed tears"*¹⁸⁶ and begged him not to go away and leave them in the hold of *Sheikh al hara*. He also claimed that the authorities strove hard to deny him the popular send off which he deserved thus *"stopped the train and changed the railway schedule to deprive the young men who were gathered at the station from bidding him a farewell before his exile"*¹⁸⁷

In the same manner, he glorified himself and exaggerated his enlightening role describing himself as *"a free man who prefers to die than to live in servitude"*¹⁸⁸

This also applies to his claim that he asked Urabi to allow him to return back to Egypt two months prior to the British occupation. However, Urabi ordered him to stay there and not to return back because he was the organ of the Egyptian nation who defended its rights in Europe¹⁸⁹.

This story seems to be a mere pretext which he provided to justify his stay in Paris away from all the vicissitudes which Egypt passed through at that hard time. Clearly, he didn't want to return back to Egypt so as to continue to live and work freely in Paris and without any fears. It is very likely that his worries about his own personal security must have rendered him naturally cautious and increasingly alert. Thus, it might have been the main factor that impeded his return to Egypt. This sounds more logic than the story which he circulated to glorify his stay in Paris that has been portrayed as if a sacred mission he was entitled with.

The legacy of "Abu Naddara" and its founder

Throughout its long span, the journal of *"Abu Naddara"* had always advocated patriotism. Sannu himself was one of those few nationalists who early raised the slogan of *"Egypt for Egyptians"* not only in numerous issues of his journal¹⁹⁰ but on almost every occasion till it became the policy which his journal continued to

defend¹⁹¹ wholeheartedly. He also stressed on his attachment to Egypt his homeland: "*I am an Egyptian and son of an Egyptian which is a great pride for me*"¹⁹²

No wonder, he continued to champion his country's rights unfailingly for more than thirty years as was published in his obituary: "*Pendant cinquante cinq ans defendit avec passion les droites del'Egypte son pays natal*"¹⁹³

To one's surprise, he was actively engaged in the Egyptian politics in spite of his stay in Paris where he was re-located and continued offering help for his countrymen.¹⁹⁴ As a result, he was always regarded with high esteem and portrayed as "*---un patriot egyptien---*"¹⁹⁵. In the same vein, his work was hailed as "*un marchepied de la liberte' des peuples*"¹⁹⁶ while his journal was classified as "*journal liberal*"¹⁹⁷

The journal itself had certainly enriched both the political and cultural life in Egypt: "*du journal satirique illustré du proscrit cheikh Abou -Naddara , lequel a joué un rôle si important dans l'histoire contemporaine politique et littéraire de son pays -----*"¹⁹⁸

However, the real tremendous success which the journal of *Abu Naddara* secured remained in its striking ability to reach average people and to deeply influence them. Clearly, it had a "*great effect on the multitude*"¹⁹⁹ as a contemporary foreign journal affirmed. Sannu too referred to the potential power of his journal and its wide effect on the people that made of it a formidable opponent to be reckoned with in one of its early issues published in Paris. This appeared in the caption of one of its cartoons on the mouth of Khedive Ismail who was complaining that Sannu's journal hit vigorously therefore he was afraid of its blows that might injure his head while its latent but rather forcible language terrified him. Then he begged Sannu to stop publishing his journal and in return he would be a good ruler again as he was in the past.²⁰⁰

Needles to say that much of the journal's uniqueness was largely due to its unprecedented popular approach. No wonder, it remained highly committed to the cause of the downtrodden masses which it spoke on their behalf²⁰¹. Actually, it did the work of a doctor who opened up the wound of his patient to treat it.

More significantly, it inspired others and set a new model in Arabic journalism which many would later follow. It should be noted here that the character of the modern Egyptian mass culture was shaped at that time in the journals and other works of the three pioneers of this field Uthman Galal, Yaqub Sannu and AbdAllah Nadim who substantially contributed to the crystallization of this mass culture: "*The parameters, tone and direction of colloquial Egyptian mass culture were arguably formulated as early as the 1870s by the precedent-setting newspapers, plays, and zajals of Uthman Jalal (1828-1898), Ya'qub Sannu (1839-1912), and Abdallah Nadim (1845-1898).....Not only were these three pioneers the first to popularize a new type of mass-produced colloquial culture, but more importantly, they created media templates which were emulated by countless other.*"²⁰²

Moreover, Sannu had tried hard to highly place this culture to which he belonged part and parcel. Therefore, he always took pride in his own native culture. This explains why he always appeared wearing his national costume in Paris²⁰³ as if a badge of honor or a guard over his own identity. In doing so, he was generating a sense of cultural pride among his countrymen who lived in Europe and were self-alienated.

At the same time, he endeavored to introduce the Oriental culture to Europeans to bridge the gap between Eastern and Western societies. His endeavor for rapprochement between Muslim societies and Western ones was best manifested in the conference he held in Paris for "*Le literature et les moeurs del' orient*" where he spoke highly of Oriental women²⁰⁴. Similarly, he organized a special conference at l' institut Rudy about the evolution of the contemporary Arab literary movement²⁰⁵ to spot lights on it and well-present it to the intellectual circles in France.

To the same end, he used his journalistic abilities to address Europeans and started publishing another journal that was written purely in French under the name of "*L'Univers Musulman*" in his last years. Through this journal, he wished to open interfaith dialogue and to help his European readers gain insights of Islamic culture thus get rid of their unfair prejudice against it²⁰⁶. This could bring about reconciliation and enhance a better understanding between Islamic culture and Western one from his point of view.

On the other end of the spectrum, he started another additional monthly journal which he called "*Al-Tawwaddud*" or Sympathies. This was another constituent part of his rapprochement initiative meant to help Egyptians and Eastern people in general get well-acquainted with Western policies and culture.²⁰⁷

It is noteworthy to say that Sannu had always paid homage to France in his writings and spoke highly of its liberal thoughts, stands and particularly its free press²⁰⁸. Indeed he might have been obsessed with the French civilization, yet Sannu seemed to be flattering the French public opinion. He was probably exploiting the heated rivalry between France and England and the common Anglophobic French attitude to gain the sympathy and support of both the French government and people. By this way, he could utilize such colonial hostility to serve the Egyptian cause. It was a sort of manipulation which some scholars considered as a part of the resistance strategies employed by colonized intellectuals²⁰⁹ in their pursuit to face their invaders.

As time lapsed, Sannu became a celebrity in the Parisian intellectual circles and a keynote speaker who was often invited to deliver public lectures. Besides, he enjoyed a special status as "*le doyen des écrivains Orientaux résident à Paris*-----".²¹⁰

He also managed to build networks and nurtured friendship with many eminent figures like Hammoud ben Muhammad Sultan of Zanzibar whom he wrote his biography in 6 languages²¹¹ as well as the Emperor of Brazil whom he placed one of his conference under his headship and auspices²¹².

He was also received in May 1888 by the head of the chamber of deputies in France as a representative of the Eastern people who live in France while wearing his richly ornamented national dress which he always treasured: "*Le président de la Chambre des députés a reçu ce matin le cheick Abou Naddara, notre confrère égyptien, qui, vêtu de son riche costume national,*"²¹³ Certainly such good relations must have helped him to partly achieve his goal by drawing French attention to the Egyptian question.

Besides, he cultivated good relations with Muslim communities in Paris like Algerians and Tunisians that's why they commissioned him to write a poem in 6 languages in their name wishing success for the new president of the French republic and prosperity for France.²¹⁴ In the same manner, he was authorized to present felicitations on their behalf to the chamber of deputies in France. "*---- lui a présenté les félicitations de ses frères d'Égypte, de Tunisie et d'Algérie*"²¹⁵

In sum, "*Abbu Naddara*" had started as a local journal deeply-rooted in the Egyptian society and primarily concerned with Egypt's affairs but over years it broadened its scope till it became a multi-dimensional one. No wonder, it tried to harbor divisive elements and to enhance mutual cultural understanding between Oriental societies and Western ones. Nevertheless, it continued to maintain that striking equilibrium between its newly-acquired scope and its noted originality.

Conclusion

The publication of the journal of "*Abu Naddara*" marked a humor assault launched against the regime of that day as well as the colonial powers and their covetous schemes. Throughout its long life-span that lasted for almost three decades, the journal was read widely among all classes of the Egyptian society. Thanks to its easily understood colloquial language, biting political diatribes and humorous cartoons, it much appealed to its readers regardless of their background and had a lasting impact on them. It came to expose the absurdity, discrepancy and vices of the ruling elite that was vehemently castigated and openly attacked on its pages. Depending mainly on visual rhetoric, Sannu picked at their aloofness and ridiculed many of their stances in the hope to vilify them and bring their regime down. In the same vein, the journal gave warning signals to direct rulers' attention to things that weren't getting enough attention like the grinding poverty from which the peasants suffered and the grave threat which the colonial power posed on the country. On the other hand, it abided itself by liberal ideas and strove eagerly for reform, justice and individual freedoms.

At the same time, Sannu himself had proved to be an adroit political player who tried hard to arouse the masses, provoke their resentment and bring them to action. It seems safe to say that he was serving a political agenda which he tried hard to promote no matter the obstacles he faced. That's how *Abu Naddara* turned to be an impetus for change and devoted its efforts to construct country-wide national consciousness. To be more precise, it helped in preparing the ground for the rise of the national movement spearheaded by Urabi and his fellows and in its gaining momentum and popularity among average Egyptians.

No wonder, *Abu Naddara* placed itself undisputedly at the vanguard of Egyptian satirical journalism that came to flourish at Sannu's hands. As a result, it rode freely on a revolutionary wave, influenced the political spectrum and produced a blueprint for others to follow.

However, "*Abu Naddara*" had sometimes deviated from the proper path of responsible journalism. On more than one occasion, it focused on one side of the story only and deliberately ignored the other or employed immoral methods in its parodies and justified them without showing the least sign of remorse. This must have reduced -if not weakened- its neutrality in a way or another. That's to say, it may have meant well, but it sometimes missed the way.

Over and above, *Abu Naddara's* biggest and rather undeniable contribution however, remains in its firm stand for freedom of thought and political liberty against all forms of autocracy and despotism.

The other great contribution of "*Abu Naddara*" lies in the window it gives on the Egyptian society amidst such turbulent years. Through the wide variety of facts it provides about the policies of the rulers, the practices of the people and their way of life and most of all about the overall climate whether political, social or cultural one, it depicts a clear picture of the community then. In other words, the journal is of high value to historians as it helps them feel people's pulse and understand how they responded to certain events of that day and interpreted them.

To his credit, Sannu was the one who set the stage for this kind of journalism in Egypt. He started the relays race and passed the baton to others who extensively counted on such satirical press in addressing the populace and awakening them.

Notes

¹¹"Ismail Pasha and Egypt", *New York Times*, November 26, 1882.

¹²"Death of Ismail Pasha", *New York Times*, March 3, 1895.

¹³Ismail Pasha and Egypt", *New York Times*, November 26, 1882.

¹⁴Blanchard Jerrold, *Egypt Under Ismail Pacha: Being Some Chapters of Contemporary History*, (London: [S. Tinsley & co.,1879](#)), 218.

⁵ Ya'qub ibn Rafai'l Sannu', *Suhuf Abū Nazzārah*, (Beirut: Dar Sadr, 1974), I: 4.

⁶ Ibrāhīm 'Abduh, *Abū Nazzārah: imām al-sihāfah al-fukāhīyah al-masmūrah wa-za'īm al-masrah fī Misr 1839-1913*, (Cairo: Maktabah al-Ādāb bi-Darb al-Jamāmiẓ, 1953), 25; Irene L. Gendzier. James Sanua and Egyptian Nationalism, *Middle East Journal* 15, no. 1 (Winter, 1961):18-19.

⁷ *Abi Naddara Zarqa*, July 1, 1879, no. 15.

⁸ "Correspondance", *La Justice*, Juillet 26, 1882.

⁹ *Abou Naddara*, February 28, 1887, no. 2.

¹⁰ Matti Moosa, "Ya'qub Sanu' and the Rise of Arab Drama in Egypt" *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 5, no. 4 (Sep., 1974): 402.

¹¹*Abi Naddara Zarqa*, July 1, 1879. no. 15.

¹²*Abi Naddara Zarqa*, June 24, 1879, no. 14.

¹³ *Abu Naddara Zarka*, January 19, 1883, no. 1.

¹⁴*Abi Naddara Zarqa*, June 24, 1879, no. 14,

¹⁵ *Abu Naddara Zarka*, January 19, 1883. no.1.

¹⁶ Gendzier, 20.

¹⁷ "Abou Naddara", *The Times*, March 3, 1885, 13.

¹⁸ 'Abduh, 25.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 27.

²⁰ *Abou Naddara*, February 28, 1887, no. 2; Jerrold, 217.

²¹ *Abi Naddara Zarqa*, June 24, 1879, no. 14.

²² "Abou Naddara", *The Times*, March 3, 1885, 13.

²³ *Ibid.*, 13.

²⁴P.C. Sadgrove, *The Egyptian Theatre in the Nineteenth Century 1799–1882*, (Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 2007), 111.

²⁵ Jerrold, 217.

²⁶ *Le Journal D'Abou Naddara*, 1896, no. 5

- ²⁷ *Abi Nazzāra Zarqa*, July 1, 1879, no. 15.
- ²⁸ 'Abduh, 41; Moosa, 403.
- ²⁹ *Abou Nazzāra Zarkā*, December 6, 1884, no. 10.
- ³⁰ 'Abduh, 36-37.
- ³¹ Adam Mestyan, "Arabic Theater in Early Khedivial Culture, 1868-1872: James Sanua Revisited", *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 46, no.1 (February 2014):118.
- ³² *Abi Nazzāra Zarqa*, July 1, 1879, no. 15.
- ³³ *Abu Naddara Zarka*, March 25, 1878. No.1.
- ³⁴ M.M. Badawi, "The Father of the Modern Egyptian Theatre: Ya 'qūb Ṣannū'", *Journal of Arabic Literature*, 16 (1985): 135.
- ³⁵ *Abu Nazzara Zarka*, May 5, 1878, no. 11.
- ³⁶ "Correspondance", *La Justice*, Juillet 26, 1882, 3.
- ³⁷ Sannu', *Sūhuf Abū Nazzārah*, 3: 111.
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