

Middle East Report by Robert Dreyfuss

Sadat cleans up his opposition

The Egyptian president's roundup may bear promise, but only if Sadat follows through on the economy.

On Sept. 4 Egyptian President Anwar Sadat initiated a series of political arrests which constitute the broadest purge of his opposition in the 11 years he has governed. Fifteen hundred arrests have been made thus far, and the crackdown has neutralized religious and political groups and societies ranging from the extreme left to the ultra-rightist Wafd Party, and has removed leaders of the powerful Coptic Christian Church, including its Patriarch, Pope Chenouda III, from their posts.

Though marked ideological differences exist between the individuals and groups Sadat rounded up, they share one thing in common: they are supported by Israeli and Anglo-Venetian intelligence services. Less than one week prior to Sadat's crackdown, Lufti al Kholi, a prominent Egyptian leftist, announced from London that an alliance of forces spanning the ideological spectrum of Egyptian politics had come together to challenge Sadat.

Al Kholi was speaking on behalf of the Fabian Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation, for which he has been an agent for over 20 years. As *EIR* has documented, the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation played a central role in knocking the Shah of Iran out of power.

The coalition which al Kholi announced, composed of mass-based extremist Islamic fundamentalist groups like the Muslim

Brotherhood and allied with small leftist and Marxist groupings, is strikingly similar to the movement of Ayatollah Khomeini.

By cutting off the head of this opposition movement, Sadat has bought critical time to alter the political and economic climate in Egypt which has provided a deadly breeding ground for his challengers. More than anything else, Sadat's failure to fulfill the promise made when he signed the controversial Camp David Treaty with Israel two years ago—a promise to bring prosperity to Egypt—has sparked mass dissatisfaction which Al Kholi and the Muslim Brotherhood are exploiting.

An Egyptian professor who is in Washington observed that "for the time being, Sadat's mass arrests have crippled the opposition, but I think a lot of what remains will go underground and will eventually emerge even stronger, especially if the economic crisis worsens."

The rapidly growing Muslim fundamentalist groupings in Egypt have, as in Khomeini's Iran, attracted Egyptian youth.

During his Sept. 2 speech to the Egyptian Parliament, Sadat ruthlessly attacked the Muslim Brotherhood and its cothinker Islamic groups for threatening national unity. He broke his traditional policy of toleration for the Brotherhood by disbanding the Brotherhood and six allied Muslim societies. Sadat arrested Omar Tamasani, the head

of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood who maintains ties with Khomeini and other Muslim extremists.

Sadat also stunned his countrymen by dismissing the Coptic Church's Pope Chenouda, who is known to have supported extremism within the Coptic community, generating sectarian violence between Copts and radical Muslims. Both Chenouda and Tamasani are strongly influenced by the Israeli intelligence service Mossad and agents of the British Foreign Office.

Among the other longstanding political luminaries in Egypt of those arrested is the 70-year-old Fuad Seraghadin, leader of the ultra-rightist Wafd Party, which like the 60-year-old Muslim Brotherhood is a direct product of British colonialist rule of Egypt. Seraghadin, along with left opposition figure Khalid Mohiedine, has historically close ties to the court of King Farouk, whom Nasser overthrew two decades ago.

The *Times* of London, a mouthpiece for the British monarchy, has strongly condemned Sadat's crackdown, in particular bemoaning the detention of Egyptian journalist Mohammed Heikal, an agent of British intelligence who writes for the *Times*.

Numerous Egypt watchers over the last week have put out the British-sponsored line that the root of Sadat's problems is Egypt's burgeoning population growth. Jihan Sadat, Egypt's Anglo-Egyptian first lady, is a strong proponent of this outlook. But it is precisely this policy which Sadat must break with now in favor of industrial renewal if he wants to prevent his country from going the way of Iran.