

THE FIFTH JUNE 1967 (NAKSAH) SETBACK VIEWED BY THE EGYPTIAN INTELLECTUAL ELITE CULTURALLY AND SOCIALLY

Prof Dr. Enaam Mahdi Ali Al- Salman

Ms. Azhar Abed Ali Hussain

ABSTRACT

In the outset of 1967, tension prevailed in the Middle East region shortly after the Israeli threat had come to its peak against Syria. As a matter of fact, "Israel" launched a sudden attack and successful ground offensive against Syrian lands on 7th April. By the advent of 5th June 1967, "Israel" staged another unexpected attack against Syria and Egypt. Thus, "Israel" seized the Sinai peninsula, Gaza strip from Egypt, and the West Bank and the East Jerusalem from Jordan, and the Golan Heights from Syria. Accordingly, "Israel" had destroyed Syrian. Accordingly, "Israel" had destroyed Syrian and Egyptian airports, warfare and air defenses. Ultimately, president Jamal Abdul Nassir agreed on 8 June 1967 to sign a ceasefire treaty with "Israel" and all Arab forces had withdrawn out of the battlefield after four days of war outbreak. Afterwards, views, stances and attitudes differ concerning the 5th June setback and these views represent the Egyptian Journalists, writers, artists and social figures.

As a result, the psychological situation of the Egyptian people was deplorable and lamentable shortly after Naksah- However there emerged National forces looking for ways to surmount the crisis and regained the Egyptian territories and they urged the Egyptian people to start out a new chapter through writings. Besides, the Egyptian artists played a vital role through their songs and performance in order to rehabilitate and re-collect the national enthusiasm and patriotic feelings. Despite the fact that their views differ. Yet, their purpose was of mutual interest in that they tried to get rid of the current crisis and eliminate its negative impact.

Consequently, the intellectual elite voiced their viewpoints concerning the main causes of the setback and criticized the political and military leadership. They were indeed driven by their feelings for the sake of the general welfare of Egypt.

In conclusion, It is found that the role of the Egyptian intellectual elite was an important milestone in the modern and contemporary Egyptian history through their clear and remarkable stances, and attitude as well as their bounties, sacrifice together with their love for Egypt.

INTRODUCTION

In the outset of 1967, tension prevailed in the Middle East region shortly after the Israeli threat had come to its peak against Syria. Indeed, "Israel" launched a sudden attack and successful ground offensive against Syrian lands. on 7th April 1967, at the advent of 5th June 1967, "Israel" staged an unexpected attack against Syria and Egypt. Thus, "Israel" seized the Sinai peninsula, Gaza strip from Egypt, and the West Bank and the East

Jerusalem from Jordan, and the Golan Heights from Syria.

In fact, "Israel" had destroyed Syrian and Egyptian airports, warfare and air-defenses. Ultimately, "Israel" won the war and the Egyptian president Jamal Abdul Nassir agreed on 8 June 1967 to sign a ceasefire treaty with Israel and all Arab forces had withdrawn out of the battlefield after four days of war outbreak. Actually, Egypt had been defeated. Accordingly, views, stances and attitudes differ concerning the 5th June (Naksah)

These views represent the Egyptian Journalists, artists and social figures.

Firstly setback viewed by Intellectuals and Journalists:

Each political action gives rise to counter reaction by Intellectual elite especially, the fifth June 1967 setback which influenced principally on the Egyptian people by all its classes and denominations. Chief of them, Mohamed Hassanein Heikal, the Egyptian Journalist and the editor - in - chief of the Cairo Newspaper Al-Ahram and has been a commentator on Arab Affairs for more than (50) years. Heikal had expected that there should be Israeli attack against Egypt. He said that "Israel potential war plan depended on a surprise attack, called "Operation Focus", which would destroy the Arab air forces on the ground and then "Israel" controlled the skies, and after that it was matter of finishing the job and every thing would become ruins. Hekal added that "circumstances required an Egyptian capability, readiness and efficiency to foil any sudden strike or attack and to be alerted defend"⁽¹⁾.

Heikal believed that the reason behind Naksah or defeat lies in the fact that president, Jamal Abdel Nassir committed two mortal mistakes. The first one was that he closed the Gulf of Aqaba and announced the blockade of the straits of Tiran to Israel and Israel-bound shipping.

The second one was that he appointed Abdel Hakim Amer commander -in - chief of the Egyptian Army- Heikal pointed out that "Israel reiterated that any closure of the straits would be considered an act of war, or justification for war"⁽²⁾. He wrote in Al- Ahram Newspaper before the war break out, on (26) March 1967 he warned that "The closure of the Gulf of Aqaba means the armed war against Israel and we will sustain the first strike in the battle field and we must, wait the first strike from the enemy, we must, as we could resist it and the second strike will be ours which is very influential"⁽³⁾.

As to the appointment of Abdel Hakim Amer, Heikal believed that Amer did not have any sound and rational military decision - making and thus Heikal criticized Amer's decision to withdraw the Egyptian Army

immediately without any air cover. This had led to a serious loss and heavy toll of lives and equipments.

Heikal principally highlighted two main trends after the setback. The first one was to underestimate the heavy loss and the second one was to encourage Egyptian people to be ready for potential next war against "Israel" and manifest the balance of power whether on the military or political levels with an attempt to let the Egyptian public opinion be acquainted with the developments and happenings. Despite the Fact that Heikal acknowledged Egypt's defeat, He cautiously tried to belittle and mitigate its bed consequences.

He then argued that "Every war has two aims, the first one is to destroy the enemy military forces and the second one is a final aim in that it is to destroy its political will, and thus the enemies of the Egyptian Nation do succeed on (5) June 1967 in achieving the first aim but they fail in achieving the second on".

Heikal also was well- known for his usage of (NAKSAH) Instead of "defeat" and he who had written the president, Jamal Abdel Nassir's resignation letter on (9) June 1967.

He described the setback as a heavy loss but was not final one since, according to him, the final defeat was that which undermined the political will completely and he cited that In the united state of America, when pearl Harbour was attacked by the Imperial Japanese air craft service and All eight U.S. Navy battleships were damaged yet, the united state had Ultimately defeated Japan⁽⁴⁾.

As far as Louis Awad is concerned was an Egyptian and the literary editor at the newspaper al- Ahram during the time of the setback, he stated that in the second and the third day of the setback, Abdel Halim Hafez attended the office of the official Gazette and he cried bitterly, he said "what will we tell people ? will we sell them idols and delusions".

Accordingly, Louis Awad described his feelings and attitude towards the setback and said that the setback undermined all his literary career due to his propound sadness and misery.

He added that "countries had been abused and proscribed by the Israel occupation". He mentioned another example in that the Egyptian Naguib Mahfouz stopped writing his story "Miramar" in 1966 and Tawfiq

al -Hakim had also stopped writing "Anxiety Bank" in 1966 and many others writers lost their literary interests due to the setback⁽⁵⁾.

As for the Journalist, Mohamed Al- Tabae expressed his viewpoint about the setback saying that the soviet union had involved in Egypt defeat through his negative stance towards Egypt and he added that the Egyptian press was bounded and Journalism was guided by the government⁽⁶⁾.

As to the Journalist, Jalal al-Din Al Hamamsi, He criticized the behaviour of the Egyptian political and military leadership by saying that "The president, Jamal Abdel Nassir, wanted to play a political game by using Arab Armies and their dignity without being ready to preserve and maintain armies his political game out of the terrifying collapse which led to political and military setback that was still remembered up till today.

As a matter of fact al- Hamamsi was surprised that the Egyptian army was sent to the front to fight and defend Arab entity without being fully- ready and without sufficient ammunition and food⁽⁷⁾.

As to the Journalist Lutfi al- khuli, he had different viewpoint in that he viewed the setback positively since he believed that the Egyptian people had uncovered the political class as well as awareness level had been increased through the large-scale criticism against the ruling power and Al- Khuli added that all questions and inquiries should be taken into consideration and discussed loudly and called for collective collaboration in searching for realism in the events to come⁽⁸⁾.

Viewpoints and attitudes had differed towards political events for instance, the Journalist Ahmed Abdel Rahim Mustafa was one of the defenders and supporters of the Egyptian government concerning the setback, he Justified his viewpoints by stating that a large number of Egyptian armed forces had stationed in Yeman as well as Egypt was at odd with the kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Hashemite kingdom of Jordan. Besides Israel wanted to get into war with Egypt and it started the war after closing the gulf of Aqaba.

He added that the war a western scheme attempting to destroy every revolutionary Arab system. Yet, he also criticized the stance of the Egyptian decision of withdrawal without an air cover⁽⁹⁾.

Secondly: Setback viewed by men of letters, writers and Artists

The Novelist, Naguib Mahfouz, described his trauma due to the setback saying that "The last trauma I have ever experienced was on (5) June 1967- while I was walking, I began to talk to myself by virtue of the tragic Naksah, I wish I could die before that day, It was not only a defeat but it was abortive strike to all our dreams and aspirations. It was a great stab. It was disturbing period before I regained myself writing a short story dealing with a man, sitting in Helwan metro station, who loved a girl and the man found his beloved murdered for which reasons she was killed. No body knew-that was our situation"⁽¹⁰⁾.

Naguib Mahfouz had a great desire for writing. However he had no specific topic in his mind due to his absent mindedness, He had so many inquires within his mind he could not express or write by virtue of the confusion he felt.

He proclaimed that he had already assumed the position of the manager of cinema and thus the Egyptian government ordered him to present films that its revenues would go to the benefit of the government. Actually, there were many ready-made films before one year of the setback. Yet, these films were comic and entertaining, and when these films were displayed, the whole organization was criticized severely since the Nation was in a state of Naksah- Mahfouz pointed out that all our defensive attempts fell apart as well as no one could be convinced of our justifications⁽¹¹⁾.

As Tawfiq Al- Hakim is far as concerned, He said that the Egyptian leaderships did not only learn lesson out of its loss in Yemen war in 1962 but they also committed a horrible mistake in the setback.

He believed that the Egyptian government lost nearly (4.000.000) (LE) and according to him this huge amount of money could be large enough for (4000) villages which underwent poverty, illness and ignorance⁽¹²⁾.

Al- Hakim criticized the war and deemed it as a careless and hasty decision and he described the setback as a great disaster. He pointed out that what happened was the defeat which lasted only six hours. At the beginning, I did not believe the defeat and said that if the

oppression was to protect the revolution and it was an issue we could accept. But, the situation had come to the fact that a huge army could be defeated and how could Israeli air force destroy our ground defenses bases ?

Accordingly, Abdel Nassir made speech and said "No one soldier can prevent the Israeli's from entering Cairo, there is no one soldier? So, where does this army disappear. This fact made me re- consider things and wondered. The Regime first made way to the right path, So what reason and How did the defeat happen⁽¹³⁾ ?

As for as Anis Mansour is concerned, He described the setback as an Egypt handicap and he explained that "we have lost generations of Young men... All of them have vitality, hope and will- they are ready to make history but they do not find the way or they find the way but do not find the means".

Mansour criticized the military organization which did not give information about the causes of the setback as compared to "Israel" leaders who gave information about the progress of the battle whether to the press or writers.

Mansour believed that this information are of high value in correcting the situation after Naksah. He added that "we believe that we are defeated. We believe thousand times that we are defected in present and future. This belief makes us hopeless and workless"⁽¹⁴⁾.

As far as Jamal al-din al Ramadi, he expressed his attitude towards the setback by saying that "June 1967 war was neither spontaneous nor retaliate an existing aggression or defend usurped rights Rather, It was on outcome of an old grudge and an extension of an old imperialist policy across ages. June war was not a defensive one in the part of the Jews but a concocted aggressive war for destroying the Arab right.

Nowadays, Nations and countries are fully aware of these lies and deceits and they should destroy all the restraints of imperialism and adhere to our National principles"⁽¹⁵⁾.

As far as the Egyptian singer, Umm Kulthum, is concerned when she heard that news of the setback she did not talk to any body, and did not meet any one and she confined herself at home. Thus, she expressed her attitude by saying "when I make sure that the news of Naksah is true, I decide not to sleep and my own real business is to turn towards God in My prayer and

besech God to grant us a glimpse of hope to save Egypt. Umm Kulthum added that "I was calling my friends by night and day, hopefully, I could find news a bout the setback"⁽¹⁶⁾.

Two months later, Umm Kulthum sang a new song called "Touf wa shouf", written by Abdul Fatah Mustafa and composed by Riyadh Al- Sunbaty. Thus, the main aim of this song was to glorify and extol Egyptian ancient monuments. In fact, Umm Kulthum focused basically, at that time, on enthusiastic songs in order to boost high morale and spirits among Egyptian citizens⁽¹⁷⁾.

Umm Kulthum expanded her role in Egyptian public life and she advocated governmental support of Arabic music and musician as well as she endowed a charitable foundation and, most importantly, after the Egyptian defeat in the 1967 war, she began a series of domestic and international concerts for Egypt, she traveled throughout Egypt and the Arab world, collecting contributions and donating. The proceeds of her performances to the government of Egypt⁽¹⁸⁾. She proved that women could change or did much for her homeland and country. One of the most national attitude that Umm Kulthum could express, when she was in Paris and she was asked by photographers about the best places she could like to take photos, she told them that the best place was before the Egyptian obelisk in concord square⁽¹⁹⁾.

As far Abdel Halim Hafez is concerned, He was one of the most popular singers in Egypt and the Arab world. When June 1967 war broke out, Abdel Halim Hafez recorded National songs and chants "I swear on its sky and soil" written by Abnoudi, and composed by Kamal al- Tawil and "Your son calls you a Hero" written by Abnoudi and composed by Kamal Al- Tawil. He sang these songs on order to boost high spirits of the Egyptian people⁽²⁰⁾.

During war time Halim recorded the National song "Ada Al- Nahar" written by Abnoudi and composed by Baligh Hamdi and this song gave hope and light that almost no one had at that time.

Abdel Halim Hafez described his feeling during Naksah saying that "Actually, June 1967 war was a disaster which turned our joy a., tranquility and self satisfaction into defeat and oblivions" Accordingly, Halim recorded

many national songs such as (Fedaey, Rayet El Arab, Borkan Al- Ghadab and Anzar be al dam).

Abdel Halim Hafez represented the voice of a whole generation and characterized by patriotic passion and was expressive of one of the most important periods of Arab History during which national and sincere hopes and dreams of a promising future followed the elimination of colonialism⁽²⁰⁾.

It is not surprising that there were political films about the June 1967 war since the setback left political trace and Negative Impact on the Egyptian society. one of these films was "Chitchat on the Nile".

It was 1971 film based on the Novel by Egyptian Nobel laureate Naguib Mahfouz. The film addressed the decadence of Egyptian society during the Jamal Abdul Nassir era. The film tells the story of a simple Egyptian forgotten society and lives in the margin of life.

Which has nothing to do with what happened people do not care about defeat or Naksah people get together in a small boat in the Nile and smoke shisha they try to forget the reality and hypocrisy of Egyptian life.

The film is seen as a criticism of the Nasser's politics and ideology. The idea of the film is that Egyptian people should pay much attention to the huge destruction which befall their country⁽²¹⁾.

The other film is "Al-Khouf" or "fear". It tells a story of an Egyptian citizen who departed into Cairo due to the huge destruction befallen his city. The film depicts people's suffering after Naksah.

The Egyptian cinematography presented many other films including (Miramar, dawn visitor, the choice the sparrow).

As far as Samia Sharawi's film is concerned written by Wajih Abu Zekry. The film tells a story of a Leader in the Egyptian Army after NAKSAH in which this leader appeared as a defeated one, bearded, and fatigued. All people wanted to make him a scapegoat by laying the responsibility on his shoulder, even though it was the responsibility of Army and political leadership. In fact, there is a clear indication to Abdel Hakim Amer, the Egyptian commander-in-chief after his suicide at the end of the film⁽²³⁾.

The June 1967 Naksah fired the Imagination of many theatre and dramatic writers, thus, many plays are

written such as (Five and Olive) written by Alfred Faraj and (Frolics for 5th June) written by Saad Allah Wanus⁽²⁴⁾.

CONCLUSION

The psychological situation of the Egyptian people was deplorable and lamentable after NAKSAH. However, immediately after that there appeared National Forces looking for ways to Surmount the crisis and get back the Egyptian territories. Most importantly, one can observe the attitudes and stances of the Intellectual elite in that they urge the Egyptian people to start out new chapter through their writings. Besides, the Egyptian Artists play a vital role through their songs and Artistic performance in order to rehabilitate and re-collect the National enthusiasm and feelings. Although, their view points differ, but their purpose was to get rid of the crisis and eliminate its negative aspects consequently, the intellectual elite expressed her viewpoints of the causes of the setback and criticizing the political and military leadership driven by its feelings for the sake of the general welfare of Egypt.

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