Between Cosmopolitanism and Nationalism: The Strange Death of Liberal Alexandria

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Between Cosmopolitanism and Nationalism: The Strange Death of Liberal Alexandria

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Abstract

The history of interwar Alexandria illustrates the difficulties associated with maintaining liberal stability in colonial cosmopolitan societies. While Europeans and those of European descent became closely integrated into the economy and social life of the city, political integration was much more problematic. Despite a tolerant political environment with little local community tension, the separate national customs and institutions that gave the city its unique flavor and character were vulnerable to extremist political exploitation, particularly at a time of international tension and economic contraction. Liberal Alexandria was therefore already dying before the nationalist and socialist policies of the Nasser regime.

Keywords

Alexandria, Egypt, cosmopolitanism, nationalism, socialism, governance, integration, public space, residential structure, cotton

Alexandria . . . is a proof that much prejudice and racial hatred, much chauvinism, much religious fanaticism may grow milder, and may even disappear, when a race or nationality has occasion to live in daily contact with other races and other nationalities . . . Each retains his political, social and moral ideal, but they all respect that of others, and no one insists that his is the best or the finest and that it ought to govern the world.¹

Evaristo Breccia’s words represent a classic eulogy to the liberal cosmopolitanism image of Alexandria. Breccia, as director of the Greco-Roman museum in the city, was well placed to appreciate the complex multicultural and multiethnic history of this remarkable Mediterranean city. Once the intellectual center of the Greek world and a great merchant city of the Roman African empire, it had been for two millennia a meeting place of people from Europe, Asia, and Africa.² In the early nineteenth century, it was reborn as the gateway to the new Egypt of Mohammed Ali and, ultimately, British India. It was a colonial city but a colonial city with deep roots in the past and one that no one people or nation could claim as their sole possession. Christians, Jews, and Moslems had lived side by side for centuries. The economic changes of the Mohammed Ali period brought new peoples to its shores, this time from both the region

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and further afield. British and French communities joined the Italians, Greeks, Armenians, Syro-Lebanese, and of course, Egyptians. It was a model of an open cosmopolitan city-state—a city where every language of the region could be heard. Yet by the late 1950s it was a memory, destroyed by the violent reaction to the Tripartite Aggression of 1956, government nationalizations and sequestrations, and the rise of nationalist socialism within the Egyptian population. Rather like the cities of Istanbul and Smyrna, it was a city broken by sudden convulsions of war and revolution, its dissident populations driven to all shores.

This, at least, is the accepted view. Yet it is only part of the story of modern Alexandria. This article will reexamine the fate of Alexandria in the first half of the twentieth century and argue that even at its apparent interwar height, cosmopolitan Alexandria faced decline. While the nationalist socialism of the 1950s finally destroyed the city of Egypt’s “belle époque,” by then the liberal cosmopolitan city was already under assault from forces that had fatally undermined the basis of its existence. Changing economic conditions, the demographics of urbanization, and inherent internal contradictions in Alexandria’s version of liberal cosmopolitanism were all major factors in its demise. The very national differences that had once given Alexandria its alluring identity were used and distorted to destabilize its liberal character—a character already threatened by the collapse of the cotton economy on which so much of its prosperity was dependent.

This research explores how an apparently cosmopolitan city contained inherently nationalistic elements that could be provoked into life by both external events and the dynamics of its own cultural politics. It examines both the sources and spaces of cosmopolitanism but also nationalistic community dynamics that threatened to tear apart the consensus on which it depended. A cosmopolitanism that celebrated cultural difference and provided institutional protection for different national cultures proved vulnerable in the political environment after the First World War. That Alexandria was cosmopolitan is an established truism—but what is cosmopolitanism and how useful is it as a concept for understanding the dynamics of complex urban societies? At an elementary level, cosmopolitanism delineates a polity that incorporates, in important respects, citizens of many different nations and cultural characteristics. In the practical study of urban history, “cosmopolitan” is often used to refer to forces or factors that are “nonlocal” or in some ways make reference to outside agencies. Yet there are a number of problems when attempting to apply this framework to specific circumstances and especially Alexandria. First, this framework establishes a bipolar opposition between original, indigenous, or local forces and those that are nonoriginal or external. This is not especially helpful in the case of complex cities that have a long history of immigration and cultural diffusion between their populations. In the case of Alexandria, different religions and traditions were embedded in the historic local fabric of the city. Those who had been present the longest were sometimes the most cosmopolitan, moving easily in a multicultural environment. Second, it raises the ugly question of who should be considered the original “local”—Jew, Christian, or Moslem—a question that reveals more about our modern nationalist notions of “ownership” and “entitlement” than how ordinary citizens may have viewed their city in specific historical circumstances. Third, it assumes that newcomers and outsiders are “cosmopolitan.” Again, in the case of Alexandria, it was sometimes the newcomers who were the least willing to engage with existing cosmopolitanism. The growth of Italian fascism in the city and the haughty attitude of some British community leaders meant that these national groups could become alienated from the cosmopolitan mainstream. A more helpful approach may be to examine the different economic and social components of cosmopolitanism, as understood in the specific historical context of particular cities. Kleingeld’s work on eighteenth-century Germany not only revealed the many different aspects of the cosmopolitan phenomenon, moral, legal, political, cultural, and economic, but also highlighted that just because some aspects of cosmopolitanism may be present, this does not necessarily imply
the presence of others. Cultural and economic cosmopolitanism does not necessarily indicate support for legal and political cosmopolitanism. As this article will show, the presence in Alexandria of a vibrant cosmopolitan social and business life did not necessarily imply a cosmopolitan approach toward the voluntary organizations and political institutions that were key elements in urban governance.

In recent years there has been a tendency to link cosmopolitanism to imperialism, even to see cosmopolitanism as a somewhat “phoney” concept designed to conceal European imperial ambitions and to deny native peoples national cultural ownership of their own cities through the imposition of foreign cultural activities, social structures, and urban forms. While imperialism fed the development of cosmopolitan societies, one should be cautious about viewing cosmopolitanism as a simple by-product of foreign imperialist and capitalist competition that brought diverse nationalities together in the search of resources and profit. Cosmopolitanism could be an imposition against local wishes but it could also be embraced by those of nationalist leanings. In Egypt and the Middle East, this historiographical association of cosmopolitanism with imperialism can be traced back to Abu-Lughod’s work on “dual cities” and her focus on the construction of new, supposedly “cosmopolitan” cities by Europeans dominating the old the native city. However Abu-Lughod’s view that there was a clear demarcation between Middle East “European” cities and older native quarters has come in for considerable criticism. In the case of major cities such as Cairo, Tunis, Tehran, and Alexandria, the division between the old and new was not obvious and there was clearly a very high degree of cultural, social, and economic action between the two. Moreover, the whole concept of dual cities is problematic in the context of an urban community that grew and contracted over many centuries, and reflects a somewhat unsophisticated European view of Islamic urban societies—societies that had their own ethnic and religious divisions and had been home to different minority communities for centuries.

Another charge against the notion of cosmopolitanism is that it privileges the experience of an elite Westernized population and ignores those on the cultural margins or the very poor. The romantic image of Alexandria’s belle époque aimed at the Western reader perhaps inevitably focuses on elite European societies, with their casinos, fancy dress balls, days at the races, and expensive motor cars. One should certainly be cautious in subscribing to the view that this represents the “meaning” of cosmopolitanism in the Alexandria context. The lack of a detailed and holistic social history of Alexandria has meant that everyday interactions between people of modest means have been largely neglected. In recent years, there has been an attempt to correct this omission. Fahmy’s work is important in highlighting how court records can reveal another side to cosmopolitanism: a world of individuals from different communities and backgrounds conspiring to commit crime, fighting in coffee shops, drinking together, and visiting prostitutes. Yet nor is this “typical” cosmopolitan Alexandria. Perhaps the least written about “cosmopolitanism” is the ordinary one of people going about their daily business, their everyday communal interactions, and their shared community and Mawlid celebrations. While this article cannot hope to capture the full variety of Alexandrian cosmopolitan life, it will attempt to plot its varied character and essential dynamics—economic, social, and institutional. From this, much can be revealed about the strands of cosmopolitanism and the tensions of national difference that remained within.

The Economic Basis of Cosmopolitanism

Most cosmopolitan cities in the region were forged through their role in the wider Mediterranean economy and their links with trade routes to the East. Little is known about the Ottoman period of the city before the beginning of the nineteenth century. Shortly before the Napoleonic invasion, it was a city of around 15,000 people, clustered in the peninsula by the harbors. Many of
its elite population were from outside modern Egypt and included merchants and officials from across the Ottoman Empire, including Syro-Lebanese, Greeks, and Turks. Arabic was the primary language, but the various minorities spoke other languages of the region. The leading authority on Ottoman Alexandria related that it was “scarcely cosmopolitan” on the grounds it contained only around one hundred Europeans. However this is to take a rather narrow view of the notion of cosmopolitan; it drew its population from across the Ottoman empire and the lands with whom it traded.

It was the modernization programs of Mohammad Ali that were to revive the commercial fortunes of modern Alexandria and ensure that it became the leading port in the region and the gateway to Egypt and the east. Most historians focus on the importance of the new canal linking Alexandria to the Nile; however, a revolution in land tenure, major irrigation works and the planting of cotton on a commercial scale were equally important in shaping the fortunes of the city. As early as the 1830s, the built environment of Alexandria was benefiting from the prosperity of this trade and a new wave of Italian and Greek immigration into the city. The new Place des Consuls, laid out in the 1830s by Francesco Mancini, became the commercial heart of the city, giving the new area a distinctively Italian flavor. Land around the square was granted by Mohammed Ali to the major foreign communities who progressively built consular buildings and places of religious worship. By the end of the century, the area contained a Roman Catholic cathedral, a Greek Orthodox church, a Scottish Presbyterian chapel, an English Episcopal church, and a synagogue. The development of this cultural infrastructure was made possible by the rapid acceleration in commercial activity. In 1822 there were twenty-two European and Levantine commercial establishments in Alexandria; by 1837 this figure had increased to sixty-nine. This was facilitated by a number of factors. Egypt’s move to a cash
crop economy started very early under Mohammed Ali, with cotton and later sugar cane benefitting greatly from new programs of irrigation.\textsuperscript{19} By the mid-1850s, land reform allowed for the selling or mortgaging of land and for foreigners to acquire land of any kind. This was a somewhat novel step in an Islamic society and it served to place Egypt at a comparative advantage allowing for increasing foreign investment in productivity improvements. By the 1920s foreigners owned around 20 percent of land in Egypt.\textsuperscript{20} Following the opening of the Alexandria to Cairo railway in 1853 there was a rapid expansion of the rail networks and by the end of the century Egypt had a railway and telegraph network that matched those of many Western states with a much higher level of economic development.\textsuperscript{21}

Many of the new Europeans attracted to Alexandria were lower middle class and a significant number were of very modest means. As Reimer records, a substantial number of Europeans appear to have been dependent on some form of charity from their compatriots—paradoxically, the scale of localized poverty and social problems contributed to the rich associational life of the nineteenth-century city.\textsuperscript{22} Some of the incomers took on lucrative roles as middlemen in the city’s key trades and in providing capital investment for Egyptian peasant farmers. Owen’s study of cotton production suggests that the Greek petit bourgeoisie played an important role in providing the resources for the Egyptian peasantry, often working with local Egyptian usurers.\textsuperscript{23} In Alexandria itself, the period before the British occupation saw the rise of a substantial Greek and Italian “shopocracy” that appears to have been highly integrated into the retail economy of the city and, in some cases, came to dominate certain trades. Many came into daily contact with the Egyptian and Ottoman populations and in many cases, because of their relatively modest means, lived in quarters where Egyptians and Ottomans were in the majority.\textsuperscript{24} Even at this stage, there was a tendency for certain national or ethnic groups to be associated with particular sectors of the economy, with the French associated with the housing development and the Syro-Lebanese with finance, journalism and translation services. This may have led to the marginalization of some Egyptians and Ottomans but it also provided them with new retail and mercantile opportunities, with a significant number being found among middling brokers and merchants.\textsuperscript{25} This early phase of rapid economic growth brought with it few apparent signs of intercommunity violence or tension in contrast to other cities in the region.\textsuperscript{26} In Alexandria, economic growth resolve the social tensions associated with rapid structural transformations in the economy. A strike in the Egyptian cotton presses in the 1870s produced significant concessions from employers, who eventually awarded an increase in wages that doubled their workers’ previous pay rates.\textsuperscript{27} Religious factors played a limited role in urban conflict. The riots of 1882 associated with the Arabi revolt were deemed by most Alexandrians to be a political response to the coup rather than the product of community tensions in Alexandria. Many of Arabi’s Muslim sympathizers were keen to stress that the rebellion was not aimed against local non-Muslims and there were many accounts of Muslims giving non-Muslims shelter from the riots.\textsuperscript{28} Disturbances associated with the “first Egyptian revolution” in 1919 attracted much press comment precisely because communal violence had become unusual.\textsuperscript{29}

The development of commercial infrastructure, advanced communication technology, irrigation programs, and business networks put Alexandria in an ideal position to benefit from the cotton boom of the 1860s and later the program of investment in cotton cultivation after the British occupation of 1882. Alexandria was just as much a “cottonopolis” as Manchester or Liverpool and by the First World War had the largest cotton exchange, the Bourse, outside Lancashire. Great profits were made during the American civil war and by the 1870s cotton was established as a highly profitable cash crop stimulating large amounts of foreign capital investment.\textsuperscript{30} The British occupation brought more benefits to the cotton industry, with the completion of the Nile barrage and other irrigation works leading to a sudden increase in the output of every major Egyptian crop, but especially cotton, which had by this time become the dominant
export product. In 1884 cotton represented 75 percent of the total value of exports. By 1910-1913 this figure had leapt to 92 percent. This resulted in a strong upward movement in the cotton terms of trade. Estimates suggest a 350 percent increase in the real value of foreign imports over this period, reaching over two British pounds per head by 1913—a figure in excess of Japan and Greece and roughly equivalent to that of Spain.

The benefits and problems for the Egyptian economy of relying overly on a single cash crop have long been debated. The cotton boom effectively created the modern city of Alexandria, with the city’s population increasing from 180,000 in 1865 to 320,000 in 1897 and 600,000 in 1927. It brought with it a diverse population serving the commercial needs of cotton and its associated service sector. Yet it also made Egypt, and particularly Alexandria, subject to the vicissitudes of the cotton economy. The 1907 banking crisis raised many questions about the stability of the Egyptian economy and naturally affected the confidence of foreign investors.

Despite agricultural improvements and construction of a vast network of light railways to efficiently move cotton to the port, the industry was still subject to the deleterious effects of the climate and inherent geographical difficulties. Problems in cotton drainage led to a steady decrease in yields, culminating in a disastrous harvest in 1909. There were already signs in the early 1920s that the great days had passed. The postwar slump had a significant effect on Alexandria’s trading warehouses through a significant drop in international and domestic demand. There were also signs that Egyptian nationalism was already beginning to alarm investors, with the President of the Chamber of Commerce warning that a “tranquil Egypt” was essential for the recovery of the trade.

The final turning point for the fortunes of the cotton economy came in the early 1930s with the rapid drop in the price of raw cotton. Between 1930 and 1939 cotton’s share of the total value of agricultural exports fell from 92 to 72 percent. Falling prices had a disastrous effect on Egypt’s terms of trade, leading to drastic drops in imports of all kinds, and especially European manufactured goods and processed food. Although Egypt as a whole may have benefited from the effects of import substitution and the development of new industries, the general trend was quite clear. Demographic growth was coupled to economic stagnation and contraction. In 1937 per capita income had still not recovered significantly and was slightly below that reached before the First World War. Alexandria, as Egypt’s “cottonopolis” and the center of the import/export trade, was affected severely. Unlike Cairo, which had a large state administrative sector to absorb some of the commercial pain, Alexandria was dependent on its commercial heart. Major European commercial families began to emigrate. The city’s most famous commercial family, the Greek mercantile Benarchi family, began to diversify their interests and, significantly, the head of the family moved to Athens.

Prices for cotton rose in the postwar boom but there was little confidence that the boom would continue. Egypt’s leading economist Charles Issawi noted in 1949 that “the price of cotton will once more decline” and that even stabilization at its current level “would spell poverty.” This forecast did little to encourage new foreign investment. Prices were high but the inflationary cycle in Egypt’s domestic economy meant that many in the middle class had little investment income available. Moreover, 1950 saw a significant decline again in cotton yields, despite a considerably enlarged acreage of land under cultivation. The problems of the cotton industry contributed to a dramatic change in patterns of land ownership, with foreigners rapidly disposing of agricultural assets in an attempt to minimize losses. In the 1920s foreigners owned about 10 percent of registered land. By 1950 this had dropped to 3.6 percent. Even before the 1952 revolution, the foreign commercial interests that remained found it difficult to influence either the Egyptian government or to persuade foreign governments to manage the process of decolonization in a way that may be sympathetic to foreign interests.
The collapse of the cotton economy cut away much of the traditional economic base of the city during the interwar years. However, the combination of existing capital accumulation and rapid urbanization meant that the evidence of relative economic decline was less obvious than in many other cities affected by the cotton depression. Urban expansion in the early years of the century was modest—the total numbers living in large towns remained at around 14 percent between 1897 and 1917—but there was rapid urban population growth in the period after the First World War.46 This urban population growth came mainly through demographic growth and internal migration although in the case of Alexandria international immigration was also a major factor, especially in the early 1920s.47 Calculating the total number of “foreigners” in Alexandria is notoriously difficult because nationalities were ill defined and there were many “paper nationals.” However, the best estimate is that the population movements and exchanges after the First World War resulted in a significant increase of the foreign population from the 1917 figures of 84,705 or 19 percent of the total population. There was then a gradual fall to 63,534 in 1937. Urban expansion now meant that by this point the proportion of foreigners had dropped to just 7 percent.48 Some of this fall may be accounted for by more “foreigners” taking Egyptian nationality, but it is also clear many wealthier Egyptians sought the protection of foreign nationality. What one can say with certainty is that the percentage of Alexandria’s population carrying foreign passports fell sharply well before the 1952 Revolution. Moreover, a large proportion of new foreign immigrants coming into Alexandria during the interwar years came before 1927 and as a result of the population movements that followed the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. While many of these were Greeks, a significant minority were Syro-Lebanese, Armenian, and Albanian. The majority of these new immigrants were from poorer backgrounds, often fleeing with few possessions from forced expulsions. This explains why many of the poorest residential areas of the city continued to be remarkably mixed in their population composition. Although the transitory nature of the poorer districts and limited census records make it difficult to be precise about the residential mixing, oral history accounts suggest it was extensive. Gheit el-Enab, often thought of as a “native” district, actually contained a substantial proportion of Greeks, Italians, and Armenians.49 The Greek poet Constantine Cavafy famously lived in an impoverished quarter just north of the city center above a low-class brothel. Kom El-Dikk was another apparently “native” quarter that had a high proportion of the foreign poor. Even those expressing Egyptian nationalist views fondly remember the old Kom El-Dikk where foreigners “lived with us like family, just like common people, and their kids played with ours.”50 In some of the poorer districts, foreigners may have even been in a majority. Estimates put the numbers in Labban and Attarine at around three-quarters.51 The consequence of these patterns of immigration and residential occupation was a city very different from the nationalist representation of a poor native city and a rich European one.

There were, of course, the wealthy “European” residential districts to the east of the old city—districts that grew rapidly in the 1920s and 1930s. The growth of these districts was facilitated by the development of the Ramleh railway, later turned into a modern electric tramway, immortalized by Lawrence Durrell as the “little tin tram.” For Robert Ilbert, this area represented the ambivalence of the city, where ordinary Egyptian citizens could see all too well that the best parts of the city were not their own.52 However any hostility to its residents was mitigated by several factors. First, no single nationality dominated these districts; their populations represented the diversity of Alexandria. The names of the tram stops took the names of landowners, investors or prominent figures associated with the city—Chatby (Maghrebian religious leader), Ibrahimieh (Prince Ibrahim), Sidi Gaber (religious figure), Rushdy Pasha
(Egyptian minister), Bulkeley, Stanley, Fleming (English merchants), Laurens (French cigarette manufacturer), Zizinia (Greek cotton merchant), Saba Pasha (Syrian postmaster), Mazloum Pasha (Turkish minister), and Gianaclis (Greek wine manufacturer). These stops later became the names of the residential districts around them. Alexandrians were in no doubt that particular tram stops reflected social distinctions but these were described more in terms of economic status than national difference. As a 1950s resident remarked, tram stations were “an indication of social-classes”; from Anfoushi to Moharram Bey, “you are ‘Baladi’ or from the miserable, if you are from Mahattet El Ramel, Saad Zaghoul or Safia Zaghoul you are a cosmopolitan.”

While cosmopolitan identity in this particular context was linked to wealth, it was clear that not all these eastern districts were populated entirely by wealthy Europeans. Stanley Bay and Smouha were originally exclusive but the expansion of the commercial holiday trade ensured a high degree of social mixing. The large villas in the carefully planned European estates drew on a large contingent of domestic labor, many of whom lived close by. As the city expanded, there were inevitably large numbers of vacant plots, and it was not unusual for Bedouin tribesmen to camp next to villas or alongside the local tramway stations. For every street that sought to promote a more exclusive identity, there was another that had become famous precisely because of its social mix—the color of Attarine, Sysotis, Salah El Din, and Khedive came through its vivid array of different national characteristics. There were some districts that became associated with particular communities. The Quartier Grec was traditionally the center of the Greek community and Chatby became associated with middle-class Jewry. However, sharp residential divisions were relatively rare, mainly because of the fragmentary nature of Alexandrian city planning. Plots were generally sold in a piecemeal fashion and it took several years for sites along the central corniche to be fully built up. Alexandria did not see its first “garden city” until
the development of the area south of the Sporting Club in the 1930s. Thus, few areas of the city were exclusively home to one national group. Until the Second World War, most Alexandrians lived close to those of different faiths and nationalities.

**Cosmopolitan Public Space and National Difference**

These patterns of residential mixing were reinforced by the creation of public spaces that fostered the interaction of different national communities. Islamic cities tend to be characterized by a lack of noncommercial public space, reflecting values of family and community privacy. Egyptian cities conformed largely to this pattern. Alexandria, however, followed European patterns of open public space, freely accessible to all citizens. Mancini’s Place des Consuls (later Muhammad Ali Square) and the adjacent French Gardens provided Alexandrians with a promenading and circulating space right at the heart of the commercial city. These were spaces where all classes and nationalities mingled. The development of the new railway station at the end of the 1920s saw the development of Place de la Gare, a large open space at the end of Rue Nebi Daniel, while the development of the exclusive Hotel Cecil saw the laying out of Ismail Square, on the corniche, between it and the old Ramleh tramway station. As the city expanded, new municipal gardens were also opened to the east of the city, to enclose the remaining ancient city walls. These developments were complemented by private initiatives, such as the development of the neoclassical gardens of Antoniadis, Nouzha, to the south of the city center. The open-air concerts at Nouzha became a summer Sunday institution, with Armenians, Greeks, Italians, Maltese, Shamis, Albanians, Egyptians, and Jews frequenting the famed dances. The sea and the balmy climate, of course, added much to the playful nature of the city. The beach was not privatized into the hands of individual commercial developers or hoteliers. Instead a public corniche was laid out, passing the French gardens and the commercial heart of the city. Alexandria had created a public space where citizens and visitors were encouraged to see and be seen.

The tradition of promenading created opportunities for tradesmen of all nationalities who lived and worked on these routes. Most obviously they provided the stimulus for the development of Alexandria’s most famous contemporary institutions, the café and patisserie. Pastroudis, Trianon, and Baudrot became immortalized as the haunts of the characters of Laurence Durrell’s *Alexandria Quartet*, but these represent only the upper and perhaps less typical end of this sector. Smaller shops on Khedive Street were where Alexandrians of more modest means went to buy their “Harrisa,” Alexandria’s favorite cake. Roads facing down toward the corniche often served a multitude of national tastes. The Rue de l’Ancienne Bourse contained a Greek restaurant, the Restaurant Khedeviale, a German Bierstube, and a range of shops and traditional Ottoman coffee outlets. Hotels also provided open meeting places for Alexandrians as well as visitors to the city. The new corniche facilitated a rapid expansion of the hotel sector, catering for a wide range of tastes, from tea dances at the Greek Manoussos Hotel to more exclusive events at Claridge’s on the Rue Fuad or in the Majestic in the French Gardens. In the side streets, small Egyptian retail businesses flourished alongside European enterprises catering for all tastes. The central Billiards Palace on Rue Missala was fronted by a café that catered for journalists and intellectuals, while the billiards hall itself doubled as a meeting place for homosexuals.

The extent, quality, and complexity of Alexandria’s public space were significant factors in uniting diverse communities and providing each citizen with an opportunity to find their place. Alexandrians could enjoy a significant quality of life, even with relatively modest means. The cost of basic Egyptian foodstuffs remained low and, significantly, the poor and the middle classes tended to consume similar traditional products, namely fuul- and falafel-based dishes. Those who could not afford the latest European tobaccos could still enjoy the
Figure 3. A classic view of Alexandria through the windows of the Athenias restaurant—an establishment little changed since the time of Laurence Durrell.

sabaress (secondhand smoked tobacco collected from thrown tips) sold in many places in the city, including the walls of Amound El Sawari. For those with a little more disposable income, a very wide range of cheap consumer products was available. Brooke Bond Tea, White Horse Whiskey, and Rowntree’s Milk Chocolate were among the major brands available to the discerning consumer shortly after the First World War. Robert Hughes in Rue Sesostris could even provide Alexandrians with the very latest in English cricket equipment. Yet the
cosmopolitan flavor of Alexandria’s public space went much beyond a culture of commercial imports. Even as late as 1955 a cycle ride through the streets of Alexandria could produce the sensations of Italian Neapolitan melodies, Greek Boozooki tunes, Darawish music from Zar circles, and many others. There would be traditional Egyptian watermen with their carts and Albanian yoghurt sellers with their familiar cry of “Yaoutry.” There would be the smell of local bakeries in Moharrem Bey and the hum of news and gossip in the Commercial Café. Alexandria was a feast for the promenader and the flâneur.

A critical part of the city’s public space was the beachfront. The traditional bank holiday Sham el Nassim, the first Monday after Coptic Easter, saw the beaches packed to capacity but Alexandria was an active resort throughout the year, a factor that contributed to the city’s unique character. Many of the fashionable resorts were far to the west of the old city center, physically beyond the gaze of the mosque and the church, whose religious leaders may have looked disapprovingly on the excesses of the holiday spectacle. Perhaps the most fashionable location in the interwar years was San Stefano, a resort modeled on the casinos of Deauville, Trouville, and Ostende that contained concert halls, tennis courts, and a theater and was home to the city’s famous annual flower show. The fashionable set of the period were more unconstrained by social convention than they may have been in the fashionable resort of southern France. Many would think nothing of wandering the corniche in the latest bathing costumes and getting on trams partially dressed. The beach was also a place where all nationalities could meet each other in a neutral territory, away from the influence of family or institutional ties. Organized sport provided institutional links between communities. The Anglo-Egyptian Association promoted organized sport between all Alexandrians, arranging events between newly emerging...

Figure 4. The Metropole hotel and the Trianon coffee shop, two of the city’s most famous social locations. This is also reputedly the site where Hypatia was murdered by a Christian mob.
sports clubs across Egypt. The city’s leading amateur football team, Red Star, had in 1910 players who were Greek, Italian, Egyptian, British, and French.

A “Melting Pot” or a Network of National Communities?

The relative openness of the city’s social public space and its high level of residential integration were key factors in the city’s liberal cosmopolitanism and the way in which citizens perceived their roles within it. This can be seen in the personal and nostalgic memories of Alexandrians. In oral history accounts, many sought to play down their own religious and national identities. Russian Tatiana Monti reported how her community had “excellent relations” with the others. Serbian Zeibab Niazi-Badr reflected on how “everybody was cosmopolitan . . . never a question of colour or of creed.” Meanwhile Egyptian respondents commented on how foreigners were “like family” and how “everyone respected everyone else.” For the famous Egyptian film maker and distributor Basile Behna, cosmopolitanism “was an engine that would move you forwards . . . creative and fertile.” Many saw themselves explicitly as “cosmopolitans,” with loyalty to the city and the communal idea at least as important as national roots. When asked where they were from some would declare “from Alexandria, it’s not the same as Egypt.”

Yet these accounts also revealed a background of rising Egyptian nationalism. Many “native” Egyptians saw no contradiction between embracing elements of cosmopolitanism and their European neighbors while resenting the influence of European governments and business over their daily lives. Hay Mustafa el-Mulla, a tailor from the traditional “native” quarter of Kom El-Dikk, emphasized how racism was wholly absent from his youthful society and how Muslim, Coptic, and Jewish families lived together, sharing food and communal festivities. Yet he was happy to admit that the British were “hated” and that the killing of British soldiers met with little sympathy. Tradesman Mohamed Abd el Samad reflected similarly on cosmopolitanism, while expressing resentment that foreigners took up the administrative jobs in the city, even the railways and that “the Egyptians, were the strangers, not them!” The children who threw stones and beat up the British soldiers at Ramleh station were compared favorably to modern-day fedayeen of Palestine.

Recent discussions of Alexandria have tended to focus on whether Alexandrians were subsumed into a “melting pot” or whether individual communities remained distinct but came together in a process of what Ilbert described as “dynamic contiguity.” It seems that in practice, communities did both, depending on the nature of the activity they engaged in and the particular outcome they sought. How else could one explain the apparent contradictions in both Egyptian and European views of the city? Alexandria could never be a true “melting pot” because of the power of national community groups and the fact that these were institutionalized in the social and political fabric of the city. The millet system of the Ottoman Empire, whereby the leaders of national communities were empowered to manage and control their own populations, continued as a system of routinized social management throughout the twentieth century. It created distinctive national community boundaries and centralized authority in the hands of respected community elders. In many respects, it was remarkably successful in diffusing tensions and resolving communal differences. It resolved communal disputes between the Greeks and the Jews in 1878 and between Armenians and Muslims in 1899 and 1904. National community leaders such as the President of the Greek Community George Averoff could inspire loyalty from the whole city, not just their own respective communities. The power of community notables derived at least in part from the representative nature of national community organizations. The Greek parikia (colony) was governed by a kinotis, a secular communitarian body regulated by processes of nomination and election. Like most community organizations, membership was limited to those
who could afford the subscription but it sought to serve all those of Hellenic nationality, including the many impoverished Greeks of Attarine and Ibrahimieh.82

Ties to national communities and national community organization were reinforced by the continuing power of national consular authorities within Egypt. Under the Ottoman Empire, foreign communities were subject not to domestic legal frameworks but to the legal framework of their own consular authorities. This system emerged to reflect the different laws and standards of justice that prevailed in Christian Europe and the largely Muslim Ottoman Empire. However, it not only allowed foreigners to be exempt from certain forms of local taxation, it provided them with certain legal privileges, especially when in dispute with Egyptian subjects. The creation of the Mixed Tribunals was an attempt to put “foreigners” and Egyptians on a similar legal footing when coming together in disputes, but “foreigners” still gained many legal benefits from this system known as the Capitulations. These special privileges help explain why many Europeans chose to settle permanently in Alexandria but also why few were prepared to adopt local citizenship when Egyptian nationality became formalized in the 1920s. By the interwar years, many European Alexandrians could trace their family roots back several generations. The levels of business investments and the personal capital sunk into elite private residences suggest a “foreign” community deeply rooted in the city and one with plans to remain—but as Europeans, not Egyptians.

The new nationality laws required many Alexandrians to make a formal choice about their nationality. Religion was no barrier to Egyptian nationality. Residents of the former Ottoman Empire were entitled to citizenship, a policy that included Ottoman Greeks, Syrians, Armenians, Turks, and Jews. For those with financial resources and connections, obtaining overseas nationality was not especially difficult, especially if one had business interests in the country concerned. Military supplier John Antoniadis, an Ottoman subject of Greek extraction, had no difficulty obtaining a British passport.83 Italian passports were notoriously easy to obtain, since the destruction of registration records at Trieste meant that anyone claiming birth at Trieste had to be considered a legitimate applicant for papers.84 The advantages afforded by the Capitulations and the rise of Egyptian nationalism meant that few from the wealthier classes had any incentive to adopt Egyptian nationality. Poorer members of the Jewish community were among those most likely to adopt local papers.85 In a tragic irony, the community most willing to adopt Egyptian nationality were the ones to later suffer the severest consequences from the rise of militant Egyptian nationalism.

Nationality remained important as it provided an institutional social network and a refuge at times of trouble. Every national community had its own school and hospital, which, while open and used by those of all communities, articulated the distinctive cultural identity and achievements of the organizing national community. The schools of the Italians and Greeks were particularly prominent, but the smaller communities too developed active and successful schools. The most famous English school was Victoria College, modeled on the best public schools and located in the leafy eastern suburbs. At times their cosmopolitan nature was put under severe strain by external political events. The Italian schools suffered from attempts by the Alexandria Fascio to introduce a strong nationalistic and fascist element to studies. Although the new schools benefited from an extensive program of investment from the fascist government in Rome, their associations with Abyssinia invasion fractured the schools from the cosmopolitan mainstream. Similarly, attempts by the British community to impose the English language on international schools were particularly controversial. Making English the major language of instruction at institutions such as the Agricultural School could be seen by opponents as an attempt to further marginalize French, which had previously been the dominant second language and the first language of commercial and official circles.86 Moreover, as hostility to the British occupation grew, British schools became a target for resentment and
later became victims of confiscation. All British university staff members were dismissed in 1952 on the grounds that “half an Egyptian is better than an Englishman.” Similarly, the last foreign heads of the Greco-Roman museum and Alexandria Archaeological Society both departed immediately after the revolution.

Nationalism and the Retreat into National Communities

The tendency to retreat into national community organizations at a time of crisis illustrated the fragility of Alexandrian cosmopolitanism. The Capitulations had encouraged this tendency toward a national community focus, and the announcement of their abolition in 1937 as a result of the Montreaux treaty meant that national community associations now became the major source of institutional support, rather than consular authority. Yet they cannot alone explain the general tendency to retreat into national communities. This retreat was produced by local problems, the political fragmentation of civic life, and the impact of wider international controversies. The failure of Alexandria to develop a system of municipal government with the power and prestige to bring communities and community leaders together was an important factor in the political fragmentation of the city. The establishment of the municipality of Alexandria in 1890 had given the city an important degree of self-government and had facilitated many of the most important public initiatives, including the laying of new roads and the building of the corniche. Unfortunately, some of these projects were mired in scandal, undermining the political credibility of the new body. It became well known that many of municipal leaders who had planned the corniche development had benefited from it personally through open land speculation. The municipality was also hamstrung by a constitution that could not be modified unless all fifteen European governments that had aided its foundation agreed. Factional disputes and near bankruptcy eventually resulted in the central government in Cairo depriving the Alexandria municipality of much of its power and preventing it responding to the economic challenges that Alexandria faced. This in turn led to the major European families turning away from involvement in municipal life and back to social and political leadership of their own communities.

Local government came to be conducted as much through national community organizations as the official municipal authority. These organizations stepped in where the local authority failed to act. Widespread poverty was made worse by the cotton slump, with many needing the support of charities organized by national communities. Court records suggest that public disorder and crime was a significant problem. The expansion of the city to the east provided new policing problems, with some in the expanding population living in fear of muggings and housebreaking. In 1923 members of the British community decided to form a “self-defense” committee, arming themselves with revolvers and ordering automatic weapons. This highlighted British community insecurity but also threatened to provoke further tensions. Three years previously, the British community had established a group of volunteers designed to break a threatened railway strike of Egyptian and Greek employees. The confrontational approach adopted by the committee and its leader, Brigadier General Blakeney, did little to build relations with the mixed community municipal council and reinforced the traditional stereotype of British high-handedness in the face of community differences. It was a reputation that was enhanced during the Second World War when Alexandrians linked to “enemy combatants” were arrested without apparent discrimination, including “paper Italians.”

Indeed, it was the impact of international events that had the most damaging impact on an interwar Alexandria already suffering from the collapse of the cotton trade and an undercurrent of Egyptian nationalism. The first community to suffer the trauma of international events was the large Greek parikia. As many as 25,000 Greeks came out onto the streets of Alexandria in
April 1915 to cheer Eleftherious Venizelos and his support for the “Great Idea”—the unification of all Greek peoples in one “Greater Greece.” Yet the Great Idea was an idea greeted by most non-Greeks in the Ottoman empire as an attempt at the construction of a Mediterranean empire. The destruction of the Great Idea on the shores of Smyrna demonstrated not only the futility of imperialist ambitions but also the possible vulnerability of Greeks overseas when faced with a nationalist rising. If the ancient cities of Constantinople and Smyrna could be a victim of war and nationalist expulsions, how safe was Alexandria? The political fallout from the defeat of Greece saw a reevaluation of Hellenic Alexandrian identity. For some, it marked the beginning of a gradual return of many Greeks to the now rapidly expanding Greek capital, while some Egyptianized Greeks began to take Egyptian nationality. Over the following years, the Greek community fragmented, reflecting the political differences in the home state. For those who continued to take an interest in Greek affairs the Greek civil war represented a fundamental fracture between republicans and conservatives, and the battle that was also fought out, sometimes quite literally, on the streets of Alexandria. The militancy of the Greek republican and communist forces in Alexandria marginalized wealthier conservative Greeks who lost their ability to lead and control their community. Alexandrian Greeks gave strong support to the communist-inspired Greek army and navy mutinies of 1944, and the city’s leading contemporary poet, Stratis Tsirkas, became their leading propagandist. During the Suez crisis, the remaining Greek community was almost unanimous in their support of Nasser, with many Greek volunteers seeking to support the Egyptian regular forces. Yet, tragically, this was to contribute to the community’s eventual destruction. Nasser’s nationalizations and collectivizations included the medium-sized enterprises in which Greeks were most heavily represented. Most of the remaining members of the community departed in the early 1960s.

The second-largest “foreign” community in Alexandria was also devastated by the consequences of external politics. In 1918 there were about 25,000 Italians in Alexandria who had varying degrees of understanding and commitment to Italian identity. These included several hundred who were descendants of old Sicilian and Venetian immigrant families and others who could trace their origins back to the earlier development of “modern” Alexandria at the time of Mohammed Ali. These, together with the many “passport Italians,” had few direct connections with the Italian peninsula, although some would have read the Alexandrian Italian press Il Messaggero Egiziano or attended Alexandrian schools such as Don Bosco. Paradoxically, it was the very weakness of Italian identity among any Alexandrians that encouraged the Fascist authorities in Rome to push for the Italianization of the Fascio in Alexandria, with all its inevitably divisive consequences. Italian Fascist meetings in Cairo began as early as March 1923 when Fascist film shows were put on at the Empire theater for the benefit of local war orphans. Other communities struggled to comprehend this development, and the undercurrent of fear grew.

The Italian community was split in its response to Fascism. When, by 1926, most of the major Italian public bodies had fallen under the control of the Fascio, some Italians withdrew their children from Italian schools and placed them in French alternatives. Passport Italians were even more repelled from their adopted identity, some becoming “white Egyptians,” with even the occasional conversion to Islam. Yet Mussolini’s construction of impressive new Italian schools in Alexandria, the Littorio, highlighted the desire of Rome to dominate the city’s Italian colony and shape its children in the Fascist mold. As Fascism gained ground, the Italian community became increasingly isolated from the social worlds of Alexandria. The brutal Ethiopian war destroyed many positive images of the Fascist regime, while Rome’s race laws of 1938 not only horrified liberal Alexandrians but it fractured the Fascio itself. Before 1938 many Italian Jews, who were the largest section of wealthier Alexandrian Italians, had supported the Fascio as the official representative of their government. Overnight they suddenly found that they were excluded from it by a policy that bemused many Italian Alexandrians. Some of the Fascio’s
greatest political patrons had been declared to be its enemies. Many Italians were disoriented, cosmopolitan liberals appalled. The hostility expressed itself in a boycott of Italian businesses and even a ban, in some restaurants, of pastasciutta, the Italian national dish. The departure of many Italians to Canada and the United States accelerated as the community fragmented politically and geographically. The Second World War brought the final humiliation, with many Italians, including many unfortunate Italian Jews, interred as “enemy aliens.” In 1940 all Italian schools were closed by the Egyptian government. While some Italian businesses continued after the war, the community had been fatally wounded. Those who remained tended to be those most closely integrated into Egyptian society or those whose skills were particularly valued. The tradition of Italian architectural excellence in Alexandria continued for some years, with Italian architects being responsible for some of the city’s greatest postwar mosques. A form of Italian cosmopolitanism remained but it was a remnant of its interwar heyday.

The fragmentation and diminution of the two major European communities, coupled with rapid Egyptian rural immigration into Alexandria, changed the flavor and character of city life. The social deepening of inner suburbs brought more “native” Egyptians into areas previously occupied by Europeans, with areas such as Sporting becoming progressively less exclusive. The nature of the retail economy also changed, with Egyptian nationals gradually taking over trades previously dominated by Europeans. In 1946 the first Egyptian-owned florist opened, the Florelle, which had rapid success as both a grower and retailer. Other businesses underwent Egyptianization. The owners of the Greek Minerva chain of shops were keen to admit that they lived in the same manner as Egyptians, with the owner holding dual Greek and Egyptian nationality. Egyptians even took ownership of that quintessentially English institution, the traditional public house. The Alexandrian Jewish community fared particularly badly. Zionism

Figure 5. The Italian consulate building, representative of the work of the many Italian architects active in the city.
had long enjoyed support among the local Jewish community. In the years before the development of pan-Arab nationalism, Zionism was not necessarily seen as a threat to Egyptian national interests, but by the end of the Second World War the picture had changed markedly. In 1945 Egypt became the first Arab country to refuse nationality rights to Jews, despite the long history of Jewish communities in its territory and the extensive capital still invested by Jews in its economy. Before the war Jews dominated major parts of Alexandria’s economy—including the bankers Mosseri and Curiel, land agents Smouha and Toriel, the retailers Chamla, Cucurel, Hannaux, and Benizon and the industrialists Herrling, Saltiel, Suares, and Rolo. While there were signs of a diminution of Jewish commercial interests before 1939, the immediate postwar period saw the rapid disposal of assets and large-scale emigration. This was hastened by continuing government attempts to Egyptianize major companies by requiring them to have at least two directors who were Egyptian nationals. A new generation of wealthy Egyptian business leaders was emerging and, not surprisingly, many were Alexandrian. Business moguls Muhammad Ahmad Farghali held no less than 18 directorships, while fellow Alexandrian Ali Amin Yahya held 16. The 1952 revolution would accelerate the trend that culminated in the final expulsions of the Jewish community in 1956.

**Conclusion:** The Impact of Nationalism within Cosmopolitan Society

Modern Alexandria was a city founded on international networks of commerce and especially the highly profitable cotton trade. The city’s strategic importance as the gateway to Egypt allowed it
to take advantage of Europe’s demand for raw cotton and to become a leading distribution center for European imports. This brought with it a diverse European population, from financial speculators and cotton merchants to those fleeing persecution in Eastern Europe and the Ottoman Empire. Alexandria never therefore became a “dual city” where populations were divided on racial or ethnic grounds. Instead it was one divided primarily in terms of class, with its working- and lower-middle-class populations largely intermixed. Although the wealthier parts of the city had a more European population, many in this population were not expatriates in the traditional sense but Alexandrian citizens with their lives deeply interwoven into the fabric of the city. Unlike many Islamic cities, Alexandria had extensive public spaces that those of all nationalities took advantage of, sharing similar pastimes and social life. The diversity of Alexandria and the spread of wealth between its populations meant that successful businessmen, traders, and shopkeepers needed to develop networks beyond their own national communities.

Yet Alexandria was vulnerable through the dependence of its core economy on a single cash crop. Cotton provided a highly profitable export product and the means by which the country could buy foreign goods that came primarily through Alexandria. It was the basis of Alexandria’s export economy and its role as a distribution center. The great depression ended the booming cotton economy for good. Thus, while a picture-postcard view of Alexandria in the 1920s and 1930s is one of cosmopolitan prosperity, it was actually a city living off its vast stocks of accumulated capital, while undergoing a quiet economic transformation. European capital was no longer flowing into the cotton economy and many Europeans spent the period disposing of their interests in agricultural land. Finally the announcement of the abolition of the Capitulations in 1937 meant that not only was consular legal protection being withdrawn, traditional tax concessions and loopholes were also likely to be closed. It was an announcement that could hardly have come at a worst time for Alexandria. With its cotton economy in tatters, it had now lost its key competitive advantage in attracting outside investment and foreign residents.

Cosmopolitan may have been able to weather the economic storm had it not been for important internal and external political factors. The collapse of the Alexandria municipality into factionalism, scandal, and eventual near-bankruptcy took away a formal institutional framework for bringing together the major communities and their leaders. Consular involvement in its constitutional arrangements made reform difficult and resulted in it developing into little more than an agency of the central government. This resulted in withdrawal of interest from many community leaders and meant that is was less effective in dealing with the social and economic problems of the interwar period. The traditional Millet system, coupled to the Capitulations, meant that Alexandria never became a true political melting pot. However much nationalities lived together and socialized together, they remained formally part of a particular national community. During times of political, economic, or legal problems, national communities inevitably become more important. The influx of poor immigrants after the First World War and the depression of the 1930s meant that national community organizations did not recede but instead, sometimes, actually became more important. Similarly, religious welfare organizations, often linked to national communities, remained important and did not experience the decline seen in many northern European countries. Institutionally, Alexandria remained divided into distinctive communities. While Nasser’s racist nationalist socialism of the 1950s was catastrophic for the cosmopolitan city, it was nationalism imported from Europe that destroyed much of the cosmopolitan political atmosphere of the interwar years. The Second World War made Germans and Italians enemy aliens, with many fleeing, never to return. From 1946 many Greeks in Alexandria either went to support their families in the Greek civil war or helped them flee to new opportunities in the Americas, while the city’s Jewish community went into rapid and terminal decline following the creation of Israel and the first Arab-Israeli war of 1948. The absence of local political parties and political movements in Alexandria that crossed national
community boundaries meant that the national community associations became the focus of nationalist politics and community confrontation.

Alexandria represented a paradox of cosmopolitanism. National traditions and national rivalries fed the vibrant cosmopolitan public life of the city. The everyday lives of interwar Alexandrians were enriched by the social mixing of communities in the sporting clubs, cafes, pâtisseries, and beaches of Alexandria. Yet it was a city living off accumulated capital of days gone by. Foreign politics was driving a wedge between different national communities and in many cases causing bitter divisions within those community groups. As many Alexandrians were forced to withdraw into their national identities, a wave of new immigrants threatened to change their city for good. These were, in a sense, as “foreign” as the Italians, Greeks, and Englishmen who had come before. These were the Egyptian migrants coming into the city as a result of a demographic explosion in the nation’s population. As the European populations became more marginalized politically, demographic change ensured that the future city would be Egyptian and largely monocultural. Finally, the decline of the Mediterranean passenger liner meant that for most Europeans Alexandria was no longer even the gateway to Egypt but simply a peripheral provincial city of about five million people. Only the most curious cosmopolitanism remains: a city of French pâtisseries, Italian palazzi, and Greek restaurants enjoyed by an almost exclusively Arab population.

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Notes
3. For background see J. Jankowski, Nasser’s Egypt, Arab Nationalism and the United Arab Republic (London: Lynne Rienner, 2001); for a modern Arab perspective on the period, see S. Aburish, Nasser the Last Arab (London: Thomas Dunne, 2004).
4. This established nostalgic view can be seen in most contemporary representations: from tourist books, such as the Rough Guide, to Haag’s scholarly City of Memory.
7. This is an issue that has been debated in many post colonial contexts, including, most recently in legal debates about post-Apartheid South Africa. See R. Nagy, “Post-apartheid Justice: Can Cosmopolitan and Nation-Building be Reconciled?,” Law and Society Review 40 (2006): 623-52.
10. E. M. Forster and Lawrence Durrell, like other European commentators, often referred to the old part of Alexandria as the “Turkish town,” a confused reference that implied that this was the major native quarter. Yet the “Turkish town” was an important cosmopolitan area, serving both harbors and the central port, and one that contained a very mixed population, including Ottoman Turks, Syro-Lebanese, and other races from North Africa.


33. The classic assessment is Issawi, “Egypt since 1800.”


36. See “Map of Egyptian Railways” (Cairo: Egyptian State Railways, undated but 1920s), Egyptian National Railway Museum, Cairo.


38. See reports in the *Egyptian Gazette*, March 3, 1923.

50. H. Mustafa el-Mulla, in *Voices from Cosmopolitan Alexandria*, 98.
51. M. Abd el Samad, in *Voices from Cosmopolitan Alexandria*, 103.
53. Awad and Hamouda, *Voices from Cosmopolitan Alexandria*, 11. Some were subsequently changed or supplemented after the 1952 revolution.
67. See, e.g., the fixtures lists in the *Egyptian Mail*, September 14, 1917.
68. *Egyptian Mail*, December 9, 1917.
70. E.g., E. al Kharat, E. Cassimatis, in *Voices from Cosmopolitan Alexandria*, 33, 57.
71. T. Monti, in *Voices from Cosmopolitan Alexandria*, 73.
72. Z. Niazi-Badr, in *Voices from Cosmopolitan Alexandria*, 74-75.
73. H. Mustafa el-Mulla M. Mawhoub, in *Voices from Cosmopolitan Alexandria*, 98, 103.
74. B. Behna, in *Voices from Cosmopolitan Alexandria*, 62.
77. M. Abd el Samad, in *Voices from Cosmopolitan Alexandria*, 103.
78. M. Abd el Samad, in *Voices from Cosmopolitan Alexandria*, 103.
86. Egyptian Mail, November 2, 1917.
93. Haag, Alexandria, 73.
98. Egyptian Gazette, March 19, 1923.
104. For a survey of the Italian architectural contribution, see M. Awad, Italy in Alexandria: Influences on the Built Environment (Alexandria: Alexandria Preservation Trust, 2008).
106. E. Cassatis, in Voices from Cosmopolitan Alexandria, 57.
107. For example the Spitfire Bar that still remains (in 2010) in the same family ownership.
108. Egyptian Mail, 15 November 1917.

Bio

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