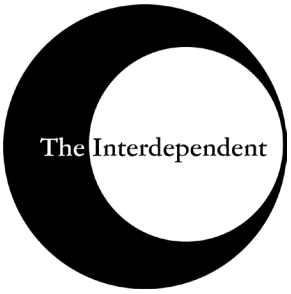
Cultural Clichés and the Cleo-Craze: How did Great Britain Use Propaganda Between 1882 and 1922 to Influence British Public Opinion to Support their Annexation of Egypt?



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Abstract

The contemporary relationship between British politicians, their press, and the British public is rooted in a propaganda model established in the 19th century, after advances in printing technology coincided with the expansion of the empire and subsequent justifications for imperialism. This article examines the founding of this relationship, specifically in the case of the official British annexation of Egypt between 1882 and 1922, in an attempt to illuminate more generally colonial power dynamics and how the media's portrayal of history alters a public's conceptions of race. Thus, the relationship between the Victorian press, the British government, and their annexed country Egypt, provides an important case analysis for propaganda studies generally, and furthers the discussion about how race and class are perceived by the British public as a result.

Keywords

Britain; Egypt; Propaganda; Press; Imperialism; Media; Victorian Era; Middle East

Introduction

At its height, the British Empire was the largest in recorded human history. By 1920, at the peak of its power, the British controlled 13.71 million square miles of territory and almost a quarter of the world's population.[1] However, even for a state involved in constant conquests, the 1882 annexation of Egypt stands out for two reasons: it triggered new imperial expansions in Africa, and advancements in press technologies of the late 19th century supplied novel methods by which the public was directed to support the military action. This article illustrates how the press became the vehicle by which the British government justified their imperial claims to almost a quarter of the world.

The rationalizations for imperialism are often rooted in racist, classist, and self-interested arguments and ideologies that posit one country and its people as superior to another. Contemporary moral codes consider these ideologies false, and post-colonial scholars usually contend that the circulation of these views—namely by states and/or political elites—amounts to propaganda. Yet, propaganda is more than the mere dissemination of false or insincere information; it influences the minds and the politics of the public, with the goal of establishing a certain reality. Therefore, in order to have a nuanced discussion of the role of the British media in perpetuating false ideologies related to the Empire, we must establish a more concrete theoretical definition of the term.

What Is Propaganda, and What Is It Used For?

[1] Vivid Maps, "British Empire at Its Territorial Peak," last modified October 5, 2017, vividmaps.com/british-empire-at-its-territorial-peak/#:~:text=At%20its%20height%2C%20it%20was.

The very existence of propaganda is dependent on the concept of free speech. Free speech—or the ability to share ideas, thoughts, or opinions without fear or restraint—theoretically allows open discussion. The antithesis of free speech, then, is restricted speech—the inability to share ideas, thoughts, or opinions without fear, or being forced or coerced into sharing them regardless of whether or not one believes them to be true. Propaganda, as a type of content, must therefore be situated somewhere within the binaries of 'free' or 'restricted' speech.

Where precisely propaganda lies on this spectrum is a topic of debate. In *How Propaganda Works* Jason Stanley discusses propaganda in its application to public political discourse in liberal democracies. He portrays propaganda as the "manipulation of the rational will" by making use of "liberal democratic ideals" to cover up "significant gaps between ideals and reality" to maintain stability.[2] In other words, because propaganda is inherently political in nature, then it is dependent on our understanding of what a good functioning polity should be—and its purpose is to manipulate political subjects into complacency with the current order by masking "the gap between the given ideal and reality by the propagandistic use of that very ideal."[3] Thus, by this definition, propaganda works on a higher level to maintain stability—but the content does not necessarily need to be true or false, sincere or insincere, rather it is *any content used to support or erode certain beliefs so as to maintain or expand the current political system.*

We can neatly apply Stanley's definition of propaganda to the justifications of the Empire made by British political elites in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. During the imperial period, Great Britain was a constitutional monarchical state headed by Queen Victoria, with a Parliament that would inaccurately refer to itself as democratic—indeed, they operated under a monarch, most

[2] Jason Stanley, *How Propaganda Works* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015), 48-51.
[3] Stanley, *How Propaganda Works*, 51.

of their population was disenfranchised, and their Parliament was run by aristocrats. It was these aristocrats that weaponized the *language of liberalism* to steer public opinion in favor of the annexation of Egypt. Therefore, my definition of British propaganda during the period of annexation is: *any* media about the Egyptian annexation appearing in the Victorian press between 1882-1922, taking the form of written content and/or editorial images, with the intention of *supporting* British nationalism and *eroding* the projection of liberal democratic understandings of autonomy and race into foreign contexts—thereby promoting annexation.

We can understand the functional aspects of this propaganda through Edward Herman and Noam Chomsky's model, presented in *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media.* Whereas Stanley describes *what* propaganda is, Herman and Chomsky discuss *how* those in control of the system are able to disseminate it. They assert that the media is in the hands of the dominant elite, who express their messages to the public through the media by controlling the size of the press, influencing its streams of advertising revenue, promoting a reliance on elite sources for information, and using "flak" as a tool for discipline.[4] They suggest that "not only are choices for publicity and suppression comprehensible in terms of system advantage, but the modes of handling favored and inconvenient materials (placement, tone, context, fullness of treatment) differ in ways that serve political ends."[5] Herman and Chomsky's model can be applied specifically to the question of British pro-annexation propaganda by concluding that the dominant elite in Victorian-era Britain are the governmental, aristocratic, and monarchical figures who circulate pro-imperialist rhetoric in the media.

[4] Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky, *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media* (London: The Bodley Head, 1988), 71-72.
[5] Herman and Chompsky, *Manufacturing Consent,* 103.

The State of the British Press in the 19th Century

The 19th century brought about many advances in technology and political thought, especially in industrialized nations such as Britain. During and following the Industrial Revolution, city populations skyrocketed and newspapers became the vehicle by which many of the latest advancements in political thought were disseminated to their metropolitan audiences. James Curran and Jean Seaton discuss these developments at length in *Power without Responsibility: Press, Broadcasting, and the Internet in Britain*.

In the early 19th century, Britain was a wealthy monarchical state led by the rich, despite the fact that in the Victorian period over three-fourths of Britain's population was working class.[6] At this time, the British government had levied heavy taxes on newspapers, with the dual intentions of restricting broadsheet readership to the well-off and assuring that high production costs would dissuade the poor from attempting to distribute their own radical leaflets.[7] Nevertheless, a genuinely popular underground radical press did emerge and maintained its circulation despite early attempts from the government to shut them down.[8] Yet as the century continued, an increasingly wealthy and cosmopolitan public, inspired by liberal democratic ideals, began to push for financially-independent free market journalism and new laws guaranteeing press freedoms in the United Kingdom. While this push brought about an increase in newspapers and a diverse (by those standards) amount of content, causing what many scholars refer to as the "golden age of British journalism" throughout the Victorian era, newspapers remained largely aligned with the

[6] Susie Steinbach, "Victorian Era," *Encyclopedia Britannica*, last modified Nov. 30, 2022, https://www.britannica.com/event/Victorian-era.
[7] James Curran and Jean Seaton, *Power without Responsibility* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 7.
[8] Curran and Seaton, *Power without Responsibility*, 10.

interests of the dominant political elite. Indeed, Curran and Seaton explain that overall "newspapers long remained an extension of the party system."[9] They write:

> …the parliamentary campaign for a free press was never inspired by a modern libertarian commitment to diversity of expression. Indeed, the ruthless repression of the unstamped press in the mid-1830s had much the same objective as the campaign which set the press 'free' 20 years later: the subordination of the press to the social order. All that had changed was a growing commitment to positive indoctrination of the lower orders through a cheap press, and a growing conviction that free trade and normative controls were a morally preferable and more efficient control system than direct controls administered by the state.[10]

This shift in strategy by the British government—from one that directly ordered its subjects, to one that attempted to indirectly influence them via the press so as to maintain the illusion of free choice—represents the tenants of propaganda determined by Herman and Chomsky.[11] Giving the British public an increase in press freedoms thus achieved three results: (1) it allowed campaigners to believe that they had achieved their goals—thereby perpetuating liberal democratic ideals of representation; (2) it effectively kept the same political elites in power; and (3) it opened up the press to a wider audience that could be manipulated by the same political elites. This shift also essentially killed the radical press, which could not keep up (financially, or in terms of circulation) with the state-backed liberal media, thereby homogenizing newspaper culture in Britain.

By the 1870s, this new press design intersected with an increase in printing technologies, adult literacy, and general wages. Curran and Seaton write that "[a]dult literacy (as measured very imperfectly by the ability to sign one's name) rose from 69 percent in 1850 to 97 percent in 1900 … and average real wages rose by an estimated 84 percent between 1850 and 1900."[12] Naturally,

[9] Curran and Seaton, *Power without Responsibility*, 4, 6.
[10] Curran and Seaton, *Power without Responsibility*, 21.
[11] Herman and Chomsky, *Manufacturing Consent*, 71-72.
[12] Curran and Seaton, *Power without Responsibility*, 33.

it should come as no surprise then that the rise in wages and readership with the new accessibility of printing brought about an increase of content, especially content geared at this newly-literate crowd; indeed, "[a]nnual newspaper sales … per capita … rose from six copies in 1850 to 182 copies in 1920."[13] By the end of the 19th century, over 50,000 separate periodical titles were published in Britain, which "circulated more feely and to a wider audience than printed books did."[14] Nevertheless, Curran and Seaton contend that British political elites accordingly began to dedicate more effort to becoming *sources* and *definers* of news: "all national newspapers launched between 1855 and 1910, and the overwhelming majority of new local daily papers, encouraged positive identification with the social system in contrast to their radical predecessors." This dichotomy is represented clearly in the negative depictions of Queen Victoria in 1837-1855 compared with positive depictions of her between the mid-1870s and onward.[15]

Ultimately, the British press at the time of the 1882 annexation was one that aggressively enforced the quasi-democratic ideals of the British state. This content was fueled primarily by the political elites at the time, who were almost (if not) always white, rich, Conservative men who owned and controlled the papers—and often wrote for them. By the end of the 19th century, these 'press barons' built empires that consolidated the ownership of the press into the hands of a few of these men and launched national newspaper chains, becoming what Curran and Seaton referred to as "engines of propaganda, manipulated in order to further their political ambitions."[16] This development was a point of public pride for such aristocrats. In fact, John Morely, Liberal Cabinet

[13] Curran and Seaton, *Power without Responsibility*, 32.
[14] Paul Auchterlonie, "From the Eastern Question to the Death of General Gordon: Representations of the Middle East in the Victorian Periodical Press, 1876–1885," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 28, no.1 (2001): 8, https://doi.org/10.1080/13530190120034530.
[15] Curran and Seaton, *Power without Responsibility*, 34.
[16] Curran and Seaton, *Power without Responsibility*, 37.

minister and editor of the *Fortnightly Review* from 1867-1882, boasted that he was entrusted with the "momentous task of forming national opinion."[17] Additionally, Lord Beaverbrook, the owner of the *Daily Express,* told the first Royal Commission on the Press that he ran the paper "merely for the purpose of making propaganda and with no other motive."[18] These owners were able to expand their readerships (and thereby maintain their financial control) by halving the selling price of a paper and making up the lost revenue by increasing advertisements—processes not available to Left-wing publications, which faced discrimination by advertisers for fear of decreased readership or backlash.[19] Per Herman and Chomsky's propaganda model, by controlling the size of the press, influencing its streams of advertising revenue, positioning themselves as ideal sources, and controlling content for fear or flak or backlash, the British political elites in the late 19th and early 20th centuries created the perfect vehicle for the pro-State propaganda that Stanley defines.

The Role of Propaganda in the Annexation of Egypt

Despite the vast size and widespread cultural dominance of the British Empire, the nation was struggling to keep a hold of their overseas territories prior to their annexation of Egypt. In his "Prestige, Prudence, and Public Opinion in the 1882 British Occupation of Egypt," Dan Halvorson describes the position of the British Empire in the international system as a "*status quo* Power in relative decline…thinly stretched over a large Empire."[20] By the 19th century, Britain had lost many of their economically-prosperous North American colonies following the Revolutionary

[17] Auchterlonie, "Representations of the Middle East," 8.
[18] Curran and Seaton, *Power without Responsibility*, 42.
[19] Curran and Seaton, *Power without Responsibility*, 530.
[20] Dan Halvorson, "Prestige, Prudence, and Public Opinion in the 1882 British Occupation of Egypt," *Australian Journal of Politics and History* 56, no. 3 (2010): 423, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8497.2010.01563.x.

War, and despite emerging from the Napoleonic Wars (1792-1815) as the de-facto military and economic leader of Europe, the empire needed more financial holdings to uphold its international reputation, validate domestic nationalist sentiments, and keep up with a ravenous hunger for raw materials amidst the Industrial Revolution.[21] Although Britain had sought wealth via its colonial holdings before, the technological advancements of the 19th century promised new and violent methods of resource extraction.

However, Britain was not the only country interested in nation-building. They faced strong competition from other colonial powers such as France, Russia, Germany, and the Ottoman Empire for resources in the Eastern Hemisphere, as the United States declared the Western Hemisphere off-limits in the 1823 Monroe Doctrine.[22] Africa thereby became the geopolitical target for this period of "New Imperialism" (1881-1914), by which these countries could extract recently-discovered resources such as gold, diamonds, copper, tin, cocoa, palm oil, rubber, peanuts, and ivory.[23] A defining trait of this New Imperialism was its violence—because trade routes and resource deposits were subject to change, and local populations often fought bloody one-sided battles against the colonial powers, borders and international policies were constantly transforming and provoking new conflicts. Nevertheless, despite the contentious colonial political climate and anxieties around resource procurement, many 19th-century British Liberals in Parliament still opposed the annexation of Egypt.[24] This begs the question—why would Britain willingly choose to interfere in Egyptian affairs despite it being a costly military engagement?

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[21] Mehmet Önder, "A New Imperial Order: The European Reconstruction of the Orient in the Late Nineteenth Century and the Role of the British Periodicals," *Hacettepe Üniversitesi Türkiyat Araştırmaları Dergisi* 24 (2016): 114, search.trdizin.gov.tr/yayin/detay/213000/.
[22] Önder, "A New Imperial Order," 115.
[23] Önder, "A New Imperial Order," 117.
[24] Begum Yildizeli, "An Analysis of the British Invasion of Egypt (1882) Through the Lens of Victorian Party Politics." *Tarih Dergisi* 69, no. 0 (Aug. 2019): 120, https://doi.org/10.26650/turkjhist.2019.18010.

British Motivations for the Annexation of Egypt

Understanding the political context behind the British government's leadership is a crucial component towards addressing the motivations behind the Egyptian conquest. At the time of annexation, the title of British Prime Minister had changed hands from the Conservative Benjamin Disraeli to the Liberal William Gladstone, and Gladstone spent much of his time trying to reverse Disraeli's foreign policy.[25] Indeed, Hopkins describes him as a progressive Christian ruled by ethics, "pre-occupied by the Irish question and ill-informed about Egyptian affairs."[26] Yet despite the fact that Gladstone was expressly an anti-imperialist, his government supported the annexation of Egypt. This opens up the question—why?

Britain's initial interference with Egypt is thus a hotly debated topic among contemporary historians, usually centered on one of the following three theories: Britain interfered with Egyptian politics to (1) maintain access to the Suez Canal based on security and financial interests; (2) cover up hasty decisions made by "men on the spot" administrators; and/or (3) sustain its prestige as the preeminent colonial power.

The Suez Canal Theory

The first theory refers to the British government's stake in the Suez Canal, a massive infrastructural project completed in 1869 with French financing, that connected the Mediterranean and the Red Seas in Egypt.[27] The British were immediately interested in the canal's extreme geopolitical value, as it permitted them direct access to their most important (and profitable)

[25] Yildizeli, "Invasion Through the Lens," 117.
[26] Hopkins, A. G. "The Victorians and Africa: A Reconsideration of the Occupation of Egypt, 1882." *The Journal of African History* 27, no. 2 (1986): 382, http://www.jstor.org/stable/181140.
[27] "Britain in Egypt," Whipple Library, Cambridge University, last modified May 10, 2019, https://www.whipplelib.hps.cam.ac.uk/special/exhibitions-and-displays/conflicting-chronologies/britain-egypt.

colony, India.[28] Britain accordingly obtained access to the canal during the 1870s Egyptian financial crisis, when Egyptian Khedive Isma'il Pasha sold £4 million worth of shares in the Suez Canal to the British government. However, despite this purchase, in 1876 Egypt declared bankruptcy, leading to the establishment of the Public Debt Commission, an administration that essentially granted rich foreign administrators rule over the Egyptian economy.

Naturally, many Egyptians were upset about direct foreign involvement in their politics and the siphoning of their resources and capital. This inspired the slogan "Egypt for the Egyptians" and the 1879 nationalist uprising, led by Colonel Ahmed 'Urabi in the military and the National Society in the Egyptian cabinet.[29] Khedive Isma'il was forced out of power after he granted concession to the rebels, but the 'Urabists rejected the ascension of his foreign-influenced son and instead united in favor of a constitutionally-led autonomous Egyptian state. 'Urabi influenced the cabinet to dismiss all European officials from the government and made sweeping changes in the military to benefit Arabophone Egyptians, causing an "atmosphere of triumph against the West" which engendered antiforeign demonstrations in Alexandria in June 1882.[30]

The threat of violence in Egypt concerned many British investors who had financial interests in the country through the canal's trade. However, this reasoning was not salient across official government discourse. Instead, British policymakers framed the violence as a threat to their access to India, a long-standing strategic priority—this is despite the fact that 'Urabi's reforms never directly threatened British use of the canal. This line of thinking was confirmed in 1883, when the former Indian Administrator George Campbell stated, "[n]obody threatened the

[28] Önder, "A New Imperial Order," 119.
[29] Lisa Pollard, "Domesticating Egypt: The Gendered Politics of the British Occupation," in *Nurturing the Nation: The Family Politics of Modernizing, Colonizing, and Liberating Egypt, 1805-1923* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/j.ctt1pp5cp.9.
[30] Pollard, "Domesticating Egypt," 81.

Canal; it had no part in the transactions which led to the late war. For fifty years, a succession of Egyptian Governments, including that of Arabi, have never impeded our route to India."[31] This begs the question: if no real strategic risk threatened Britain's access to India, why spend valuable resources on military action in Egypt? There is one likely answer: although the Liberal British government repeatedly said that they were not "moved by love for the bondholders," "the protection of financial interests remained official policy."[32]

The 'Men on the Spot'

In "The 'Men on the Spot' and the English Occupation of Egypt in 1882," Alexander Schölch argues that the majority of British decisions leading up to the annexation were made by 'men on the spot,' a term that references locally uninformed British government officials operating in Egypt. These men are typically characterized as imperialists only interested in Egypt for financial opportunities, yet they remained largely in control of enacting foreign policy decisions on behalf of a disinterested and even less-informed national government in Britain.[33]

Most scholars agree that Gladstone himself was unprepared to push for Egyptian nationalism because, as Lord Cromer (the British controller-general of Egypt) put it, his ignorance of Egyptian and Near Eastern affairs was "amazing."[34] This ignorance was not helped by the fact that Gladstone had very few friends in his cabinet, and his refusal to directly negotiate with the Egyptian government so as to not seem "insecure."[35] Additionally, members of Gladstone's government admitted to a lack of direction and oversight from the Foreign Office—Lord Dufferin

[31] Auchterlonie, "Representations of the Middle East," 16.
[32] Alexander Schölch, "The 'Men on the Spot' and the English Occupation of Egypt in 1882," *The Historical Journal* 19, no. 3 (1976): 774, 778, http://www.jstor.org/stable/2638229.
[33] Schölch, "The 'Men on the Spot,'" 778.
[34] John S. Galbraith and Afaf Lutfi al-Sayyid-Marsot, "The British Occupation of Egypt: Another View," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 9, no. 4 (1978): 479, http://www.jstor.org/stable/162074.
[35] Galbraith and al-Sayyid-Marsot, "British Occupation," 481.

reported on 17 June that the first "meeting of Ambassadors on the affairs of Egypt took place to-day. None of them had instructions."[36]

Sir Edward Malet, the British consul-general in Cairo from 1879 to 1883, even said on his deathbed that he had *still not yet discovered* "the key to the enigma" of the 1882 government's Egyptian policy, and claimed he had to make decisions on the spot.[37] With the absence of true top-down leadership, the 'controllers' that dominated the finances of Egypt became a part of a broader pro-annexation movement that had considerable influence on the home government. Despite their various natures, all of the European interests in Egypt were united by their desire for Britain's annexation. This belief aligned the controllers with the pro-imperial MPs—specifically, the Conservatives.

Prestige

While the controllers' primary argument for annexation was economic, the Conservative and/or pro-imperialism MPs were motivated by politics—namely, a disapproval of the Liberal government's apathy towards military action. Although their justifications for Empire varied, they were united in a belief of British superiority over other colonial powers and the colonized nations themselves. Galbraith and al-Sayyid-Marsot even argue that "Britain's power over non-European peoples depended to a large extent upon the awe with which it was regarded…this myth would be shattered if Britain made terms with the leader of a ragtag army, a man whom it had vowed to eliminate as a force in Egypt."[38]

At the time of annexation, although Britain had lost many of her colonial holdings, domestic sentiment was generally nationalistic—which inspired many Conservative lawmakers to

[36] Halvorson, "Prestige, Prudence, and Public Opinion," 435.
[37] Schölch, "The 'Men on the Spot,'" 773.
[38] Galbraith and al-Sayyid-Marsot, "British Occupation," 481.

take an aggressive stance against other colonial powers in their domain. Even prior to the 'Urabi revolt, but especially after, many Britons—not just politicians—thus thought it necessary that Britain not lose international prestige by allowing an upstart African nation to deny British involvement in their affairs—or deny Europeans the opportunity to extract wealth.

Nevertheless, Gladstone and his Liberal government were hesitant to act upon these motivations. Dan Halvorson argues that by trying to maintain balance between their anti-imperialist campaign and the desires of the political elite to annex, there were "accusations of vacillation and indecisiveness in the press and by the Opposition."[39] Sir Charles Dilke, the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, noted in his diary on 15 June that "[o]ur side in the Commons is very jingo about Egypt. They want badly to kill somebody. They don't know who."[40] Aware that Gladstone and his cabinet would need external pressure to annex, the political elites that made up the pro-Annexation side (correctly!) knew that there was one force that any rightful liberal-democratic politician could not ignore: the public. Yet how could the political elites convince the public to push for annexing a country 3,000 miles away? The answer was the press.

The Politicians, the Press, and the Propaganda

The chaos behind-the-scenes at the Foreign Office—coupled with pressure from bondholders and Conservative political elites about British financial and economic interests in Egypt—contributed to a culture of insecurity within Gladstone's parliament. Lacking a source of credible intelligence, the Liberal government resorted to the press for updated information. Galbraith and al-Sayyid-Marsot explain that once Gladstone "complained that he had to rely on

[39] Halvorson, "Prestige, Prudence, and Public Opinion," 425.
[40] Galbraith and al-Sayyid-Marsot, "British Occupation," 484.

newspapers for information on Egypt and that the telegrams from local officials to the Foreign Office gave him little or no additional insight, but he made no effort to correct this condition."[41] The only issue? The press was controlled by the very voices that Gladstone tried not to listen to.

As noted, at the time of annexation, the British press was dominated by the political elites—namely, wealthy conservatives. Halvorson writes,

> [A] symbiotic relationship existed between policy elites in London, British officials abroad, the reporting of foreign correspondents, and perceptions of public opinion in the late-Victorian era [and politicians] had to respond to the growing pressures of public opinion, felt in an enlarged franchise and expanded party memberships, increased literacy rates, and a burgeoning popular press.[42]

If we consider the press as the vehicle of communication between politicians and the public, the Victorian press was extremely influential because of the mass amounts of coverage it gave to politics—and as of early 1882, it started giving a lot of attention to the Egyptian Crisis.

Although it is difficult to accurately gauge public sentiment in this pre-polling era, "the tone and disposition of the mass-circulation press…however inaccurately, was considered synonymous with public opinion."[43] Of course, it would be inaccurate to say that the monarchical British government was steered by public opinion. But Halvorson notes that "perceptions of public opinion tended to function as a negative constraint on policymakers, precluding government inaction on highly publicized issues."[44] This lends increasing importance to the fact that British journalists reporting on foreign affairs usually relied on representatives abroad to get content, giving British political elites in Egypt the unprecedented ability to tell and frame the news. Consider, too, who would be abroad—either the wealthy, who could afford to go, or the politically-

[41] Galbraith and al-Sayyid-Marsot, "British Occupation," 479.
[42] Halvorson, "Prestige, Prudence, and Public Opinion," 430.
[43] Halvorson, "Prestige, Prudence, and Public Opinion," 430.
[44] Halvorson, "Prestige, Prudence, and Public Opinion," 430.

connected, who usually were also wealthy. Most, if not all, of these sources would have personal motivations for annexation, whether those be financial or political. And because of their upper-class status, many of these 'foreign sources' had direct ties to newspapers. *The Times'* main source was C.F. Moberly Bell, whose family had business interests in the cotton trade in Cairo.[45] And the aforementioned Auckland Colvin, the British Controller of finances in Cairo, was the Egypt correspondent for the *Pall Mall Gazette*—Gladstone's preferred daily newspaper.[46]

Taking advantage of the lack of information about Egypt (*especially* Gladstone's lack of information), the pro-imperialist controllers and Conservative MPs were able to launch a propaganda campaign that would effectively influence the Liberal government to act. The public was reading papers more than ever, and with the vast majority of papers being in favor of annexation, domestic sentiment was naturally also in favor of annexation. As tensions rose in Egypt and Britain, the conglomeration of financial concerns, weak and uniformed leadership, and a nationalist domestic sentiment, made it harder for Gladstone to convince the pro-imperialists or his own Liberal Cabinet not to act.

Scholars suggest that Gladstone finally decided to support the annexation sometime between the bombardment on 11 July and 20 July, after a dispatch from the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs said the official government position was that only by force could the Egyptian Crisis be resolved, and Britain's prestige thus regained.[47] By that time, not only Gladstone was convinced—but also almost anyone who read the papers. The exact nature of this propaganda is therefore important. The coverage did not just convince Britain to launch a drastic and unnecessary military intervention that would occupy a foreign country for over 40 years and kickstart a new

[45] Hopkins, "Victorians and Africa," 383.
[46] Halvorson, "Prestige, Prudence, and Public Opinion," 430.
[47] Halvorson, "Prestige, Prudence, and Public Opinion," 437.

age of imperialism and the Rape of Africa. It also indicates what the political, social, and cultural opinions were alluring to the British public at the time. Hopkins reminds us that "[a] stable government was one with a solid domestic power-base; but the stronger its local support the greater its ability to resist or qualify external demands."[48]

The media thus allowed the political elites to disseminate their justifications for imperialism to the public (and more broadly, to their entire Empire), which solidified some of the racist, sexist, and classist tropes we still see today in regards to coverage about the Global South. The popularity of this coverage in the late 19th century and early 20th centuries and the money it gave these publishers also cemented the structure of the British tabloid press that still exists today. It would not be unfair to say that the writings of these journalists/politicians dramatically changed the world. So—what did they say?

Examining the Propaganda

As a reminder, propaganda is defined here as *any* media about the Egyptian annexation appearing in the Victorian press between 1882-1922, taking the form of written content and/or editorial images, published with the intention of *supporting* British nationalism and *eroding* liberal democratic understandings of autonomy and race—thereby promoting annexation. By playing off 19th-century British stereotypes about race and the Global South, members of the press took advantage of Gladstone's indecisiveness to overwhelm the print and illustrated pages with these calls to maintain British prestige and limit Egyptian autonomy. As previously mentioned, advancements in printing technology allowed the press to publish text *and* images (in the form of

[48] Hopkins, "Victorians and Africa," 376.

cartoons/sketches, and later, photographs). Though the propaganda took many forms, this section shows that pro-annexation British government figures used their influence with the *print* press to (1) inundate the public with a vast number of stories that propelled the conflict itself and (2) stoke British nationalism by calling for violent acts to maintain its prestige, while simultaneously (3) telling horror-stories about how Egyptians treated white Christian Britons.

Printed Propaganda and News Coverage

Escalation and Prestige

Simply by saturating the media with Egyptian content, the pro-annexation government and media officials were able to solidify and validate the threat of war in the mind of the public. Figure 1 on the right depicts some of the most popular British periodicals between 1876-1885, and confirms that the Middle East was a major topic of importance in this era.

Periodical title	Dates	Middle East North Africa, Islam	Afghanistan, Central Asia	Total
Blackwood's Magazine	1876–1885	72	10	82
Contemporary Review	1876–1885	62	8	70
Fortnightly Review	1876–1885	61	2	63
Nineteenth Century	1877–1885	54	6	60
Fraser's Magazine	1875–1880	30	1	31
Macmillan's Magazine	1876–1885	29	1	30
Edinburgh Review	1876–1885	19	4	23
National Review	1883–1885	10	5	15
Quarterly Review	1876–1885	11	2	13
Cornhill Magazine	1876–1885	5	1	6
Total		353	40	393

Turkey and the Eastern question	124
Egypt and the Suez Canal	121
Islam	30
Mahdi	(5)
Caliphate	(3)
Syria/Palestine/Lebanon	29
Euphrates Railway	(8)
Afghanistan	28
Sudan	22
North Africa	13
Central Asia	12
Arabian Peninsula	6
Cyprus	6
Literature	6
Women	4
Iran	4
Iraq	1

Figure 2 on the left likewise demonstrates how saturated this coverage was with the Egypt Question, confirming the fact that the press was hyper-focused on Egypt. [49]

[49] Figure 1. Periodical titles surveyed and number of articles found, 1876-1885. Auchterlonie, "Representations of the Middle East," 9. Figure 2. Subjects covered within the surveyed articles. Auchterlonie, "Representations of the Middle East," 10.

Again, the argument here is not that politicians acted entirely based on the suggestions in the press—rather, politicians acted based on the general *national sentiment* towards annexation. And though the press exhibited pro-annexation content prior to 1882, a chronological analysis starting in February 1882 of the print news reportage about the Egyptian crisis reveals how the press escalated the conflict via their consistent coverage and calls to uphold British prestige.[50] Remarkably, this propaganda truly began in February, and by September, Egypt fell.

Following Gladstone's decision on 2 February to involve all of Europe in the "Egyptian Question," the conservative press immediately began to accuse the Cabinet of vacillation and cowardice, which the *Standard* said was surrendering "Britain's special interests in Egypt."[51] The liberal *Pall Mall Gazette* (Gladstone's favorite paper) suggested on 24 February that the Egyptian National Movement could inspire "a Mahommedan rising in India," and from February onwards, the press became hysteric about the "appearance of armed bands of lawless men" and the "increase in the temper of the Moslem mob" which threatened the safety of Europeans in Egypt.[52]

In March, the *Pall Mall Gazette* began to raise the possibility of armed intervention, and started covering the impact of war on European stocks, saying "The Controllers represent the guarantee for the due payment of the dividends held by European bondholders; but how long can they guarantee payments from an Exchequer they cannot control?"[53] This financially-focused coverage was repeated by *Reuters* and *Havas,* whose local agencies received "substantial" grants

[50] Halvorson, "Prestige, Prudence, and Public Opinion," 428.
[51] Halvorson, "Prestige, Prudence, and Public Opinion," 431.
[52] Halvorson, "Prestige, Prudence, and Public Opinion," 431.
[53] Schölch, "The 'Men on the Spot,'" 780.

from the Financial Control.[54] The financial angle inevitably spooked bondholders, who (unsuccessfully) pressured the Liberal government to intervene.[55]

On 25 May, the British demanded the exile of 'Urabi and the resignation of the Council of Ministers, which the Egyptians immediately rejected because the Powers had 'no right to interfere.'[56] On 31 May, *The Derby Mercury* said, "Once more the English government finds itself in a condition of serious embarrassment owing to the crisis in the East, brought on in the present instance by … our blundering Premier."[57] Facing pressure from investors, and humiliated by the Egyptian government, Halvorson contends that by the end of the month, secretly, "key-decision makers had contingency plans for a military intervention."[58]

By July, the 'Suez Canal theory'—the government's excuse for intervention—began to appear in the news. The *Pall Mall Gazette* said on 3 July that "Reluctantly and slowly public opinion in this country has declared in favor of the protection of the free passage of the Canal," and on 7 July, *for the first time*, Gladstone told Granville that Britain had to protect the Canal.[59] A show of force was determined necessary by Conservatives, because "if Egypt could pull the lion's tail and not be mauled, who else might be tempted to chance their arm?"[60] On 8 July, after a deliberately misleading telegram from Malet, the Admiralty authorized themselves to bombard Alexandria without the permission of the prime minister, the cabinet, or the Foreign office.[61] On 11 July, they opened fire—hitting Alexandria with 3,000 shells for ten hours, rejecting an Egyptian

[54] Schölch, "The 'Men on the Spot,'" 780.
[55] Hopkins, "Victorians and Africa," 383.
[56] Halvorson, "Prestige, Prudence, and Public Opinion," 432.
[57] Yildizeli, "Invasion through the Lens," 124-125.
[58] Halvorson, "Prestige, Prudence, and Public Opinion," 432.
[59] Schölch, "The 'Men on the Spot,'" 784.
[60] Hopkins, "Victorians and Africa," 383.
[61] Galbraith and al-Sayyid-Marsot, "British Occupation of Egypt," 485.

plea for peace, and causing 2,000 casualties—not in self-defense, as was the official motive, but in "retribution for the massacres of 11 June and a vindication of British prestige in the Orient."[62] The press reported luridly that while the Egyptian forces retreated, they committed atrocities against Christians—yet evidence suggests that the harm was actually done by the British themselves.[63] Halvorson says that "in fixating on the 'atrocities' and 'massacres' inflicted on Europeans and other Christians in Alexandria, foreign affairs' reporting fully engaged the public's concern for imperial order."[64]

On 24 July, Parliament started hearing cases for unilateral British intervention, which it passed after hearing realist policy justifications from Gladstone and his cabinet, who cited a desire to maintain their international prestige.[65] "The bombardment of Alexandria," said Under-Secretary of State Charles Dilke, "like all butchery, is popular."[66] On 28 July, *The Times* reported that "liberal papers except the *National Gazette* were of the opinion that the preparations for an earnest war had already been made to such an extent that public opinion in England would not allow the Cabinet to beat a retreat."[67] By 2 August, every imperial nation had granted Britain unilateral power in the region, and by 15 September, Cairo was occupied and 'Urabi was captured.[68]

Case Study: Depictions of Ahmed 'Urabi in the Periodical Press

This imperialist rhetoric that convinced the public to support the annexation consequently impacted their views of the Egyptians, especially Colonel Ahmed 'Urabi. 'Urabi was a decorated

[62] Halvorson, "Prestige, Prudence, and Public Opinion," 436; Galbraith and al-Sayyid-Marsot., "British Occupation of Egypt," 486.
[63] Halvorson, "Prestige, Prudence, and Public Opinion," 436.
[64] Halvorson, "Prestige, Prudence, and Public Opinion," 437.
[65] Halvorson, "Prestige, Prudence, and Public Opinion," 437.
[66] Galbraith and al-Sayyid-Marsot, "British Occupation of Egypt," 487.
[67] Yildizeli., "Invasion through the Lens," 121.
[68] Halvorson, "Prestige, Prudence, and Public Opinion," 439.

army officer born to humble origins in a Nile delta village, who climbed the ranks of the Egyptian Turco-Circassian military and became the perceived leader of the Egyptian nationalist movement and the 1879 'Urabi Rebellion. Influential amongst the Egyptian lower classes and the politicians alike, his ability to wrestle social change from the grips of the royal family and foreign policymakers made him the ultimate representative of Egypt in the press during the Anglo-Egyptian crisis.[69] Coverage of his actions by the Victorian periodical press is paradigmatic of the racist and Orientalist treatment of Egyptians at this time, and serves as a compelling case study by which the attitudes of the British media towards minority subjects can be discerned and the root causes explored.

'Urabi started to consistently appear in British newspapers in September 1881, after he became a part of an uprising against the Khedive demanding proper pay and treatment for Egyptian military officers and the end of the British and French Dual Control.[70] In the beginning, some newspapers were hesitant to criticize his motivations—a Spectator article said "He may personally be the least corrupt of mankind"—but by July 1882 he was described "as pure evil."[71] Mehmet Önder credits this switch to the "conflicting decisions of policy makers at the time." Essentially, in the early stages of the annexation when Gladstone's Liberal government still opposed imperialism, the periodicals were less likely to totally align with the pro-annexation Conservatives, but as the conflict exacerbated, the papers were more likely to fall in line with the government as the perceived external threat unified the domestic front.[72]

[69] Shauna Huffaker, "Representations of Ahmed Urabi: Hegemony, Imperialism, and the British Press, 1881-1882," *Victorian Periodicals Review* 45, no. 4 (2012): 375, http://www.jstor.org/stable/43663144.
[70] Huffaker, "Representations of Urabi," 379.
[71] Huffaker, "Representations of Urabi," 379.
[72] Önder, "Imperial Order," 122.

This pro-annexation and anti-'Urabi rhetoric became increasingly racist and paternalistic as time went on. Many cartoons and articles infantilize 'Urabi, calling him short, quick-to-anger, and childlike.[73] Importantly, he is often depicted as childish and weak compared to his British counterparts, such as in this cartoon in Figure 3 on the right from 1881, where he is begging for the attention from the neo-classically beautiful and respectable British and French women. [74]

142 PUNCH, OR THE LONDON CHARIVARI. [SEPTEMBER 24, 1881.

AN EGYPTIAN BOND.

France and England (duet). "YES, WE TOGETHER!"

Gratitude!

[Speaking before the Land League Convention in Dublin, MR. PARNELL, for the hundredth time, repudiated the idea of "gratitude" being due to England or to any English Minister.]

GRATITUDE? No, Sir! Though handicapped badly
By wrongs of the past, we are striving for right.
As to thanks for our labours, we leave that quite gladly
To justice and time; knowing surely, if sadly,
No gratitude comes from Unreason and Spite.

THE poor little Guys who have been compelled by unthinking parents to walk about in long skirts, antique cloaks, and coal-scuttle bonnets, have caused so much laughter that the dress is now called the "The Grinaway Costume."

Words of Command for the Egyptian Army.

"MOVE to the right in *échelon* upon the Palace!" "Form hollow square on the KHEDIVE!" "Prepare to receive bribes!" "Advance arms for 'Backsheesh'"! "At the word 'One,' fix bayonets; at the word 'Two,' present petitions!" "Take (everything you can find in) open order!" "And, lastly, at the caution 'Somebody's coming!'—run away!"

HISTORICAL PARALLEL.—King JOHN signing Magna Charta in the presence of the Barons, and the KHEDIVE giving a Constitution to the Colonels. This Colonel idea came out of our own Artist's Nut.

"THE state of the approaches to Billingsgate Market," says a City Father, "has been something too offal!" [The Mud-Salad district hasn't sensibly improved.]

This language was replicated in the articles themselves, such as when a journalist for the *Times* called him a "simple fellah of very small intelligence" or when another *Times* reporter says "Speaking to ['Urabi], one is astonished at the statements that he utters, and at the childish arguments with which he supports his propositions … No donkey boy could state notions more crude and laughable."[75] The concept that 'Urabi's ideas (that Egypt could be self-governed) were 'immature' stemmed from a larger British habit of what Edward Said calls infantilization. Lisa Pollard says in "Domesticating Egypt" that "[i]n the British colonial discourse, Egyptian men had to be transformed themselves before they

[73] For example, see "Egyptian Preference!" *Punch* 83, August 5, 1882, 50, Gale *Punch* Historical Archive, 1841-1992, No. ES700243607.
[74] Figure 3. "An Egyptian Bond," *Punch* 81, September 24, 1881, 142, Gale *Punch* Historical Archive, 1841-1992, No. ES700243193.
[75] Huffaker, "Representations of Urabi," 382.

could claim authority to reform Egypt. In order to take their positions as fathers of a new Egyptian order, Egyptian men had to endure a 'childhood' before 'growing up.'"[76]

A British justification for imperialism, which they repeated constantly in the press, was that it was their moral duty as Christians to share their knowledge from years of experience in governing "subject races."[77] Defamations of Islam, and 'Urabi as an Arab, were plentiful, ignorant, and vicious, in the periodicals—especially in the Liberal papers. In 1884 the *Fortnightly Review* said "the soul-killing, emasculating and polygamous institutions of Mahometanism cause moral and political death and must, in the nature of things, pass away before the advance of Western civilization."[78] 'Urabi was called "Dervish Pasha" or "the Would-be Dictator of Egypt" as ways to discredit his popularity by making him seem like a crazed Muslim.[79] This religious animosity coupled with another fear in the British subconscious: that 'Urabi was popular. It was hard to paint him as an "illegitimate Oriental military dictator" if he had complete control of his armies, so the British press began to lie—on 20 May it was reported that his popular support was waning, but after Egypt was annexed, more articles would come out admitting that "there had been significant public support for 'Urabi" and "there were good reasons for the Egyptians to be dissatisfied with the status quo."[80] In fact, even some Britons supported his claim, including the editor of *Nineteenth Century*, who let 'Urabi write for his periodical.[81]

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[76] Pollard, "Domesticating Egypt," 99.
[77] Peter J. Cain, "Character, 'Ordered Liberty', and the Mission to Civilise: British Moral Justification of Empire, 1870–1914," *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 40, no. 4 (2012): 560, https://doi.org/10.1080/03086534.2012.724239.
[78] Auchterlonie, "Representations of the Middle East," 21.
[79] "The Crisis in Egypt," *The Illustrated London News* 80, June 10, 1882, 562, Gale *The Illustrated London News* Historical Archive, 1842-2003, No. HN3100113199; "The Crisis in Egypt," *The Illustrated London News* 80, June 24, 1882, 662, Gale *The Illustrated London News* Historical Archive, 1842-2003, No. HN3100113332.
[80] Huffaker, "Representations of Urabi," 380.
[81] For more examples of pro-'Urabi Britons, see Auchterlonie, "Representations of the Middle East," 17.

In turn, 'Urabi was painted as childish yet dangerous, supported yet feared, greedy yet withholding…and eventually as a failure, when Egypt was annexed. After two years of repeating hegemonic representations of 'Urabi and his Egyptian followers in the press, he was exiled to Ceylon, and his story was exiled to the back pages of the periodicals, eventually replaced by depictions of British soldiers and tourists in Cairo. Huffaker says, "once 'Urabi's purpose had been served, his importance began to fade."[82] Yet the racist, paternalistic, and Orientalist tropes about him and his people remained.

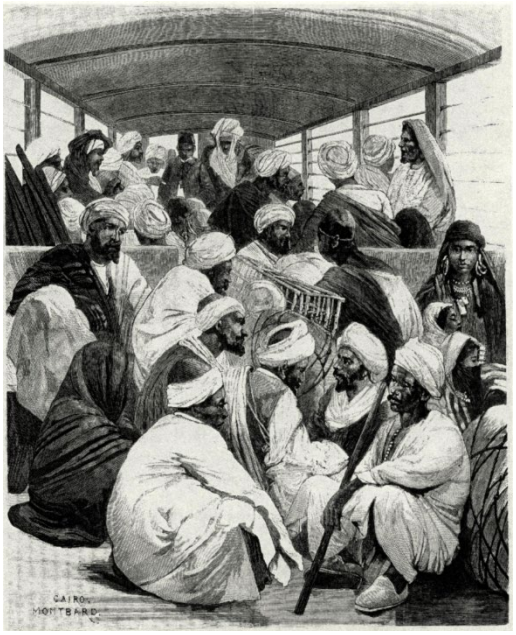
Pictures in Periodicals, Cartoons, and Colonial Coverage

As the Orientalist tropes played out in print propaganda, they also took form in sketches, photographs, and cartoons of Egypt within the period of annexation—and these methods were arguably more effective at influencing the recently-literate public. The opening address of the *Illustrated London News* from 14 May 1842 says "[i]f the pen be ever led into fallacious argument, the pencil must at least be oracular with the spirit of truth," summarizing the Victorian belief that an illustration was produced by the objective eye rather than the subjective hand.[83] The Victorians knew what an ironic cartoon was, but prior to photography, the sketches and lithographs depicted in periodicals like the *Illustrated London News* (*ILN*) served as the most objective recreation of a scene available. Sketches, cartoons, and photography thus became an important tool in the British propaganda machine.

[82] Huffaker, "Representations of Urabi," 384.
[83] Fatima Zohra Hamrat, "Photography and the Imperial Propaganda: Egypt under Gaze," *Cultural Intertexts* 11 (2021): 91, www.proquest.com/docview/2617716904?pq-origsite=gscholar&fromopenview=true.

Regardless of what the image itself captured, multiple aspects of the drawing were manipulatable—its captions, linked articles, and even its arrangement in newspaper columns all played a role in how a picture was perceived. In general, the *framing* of an image within the paper served to "support the opinion expressed in the article … reinforce its arguments … [and] follow the editorial and political line of the paper." A clear example of this was the characterization of the Egyptian landscape. Early illustrations of Egypt depicted excavations of historical sites, inherently comparing the fantastical and mysterious Ancient Egypt with the decrepit architecture of contemporary Egypt. Yet after Britain started to get more financial and military control in the region, the illustrated coverage began to focus on the infrastructure and development that British rule was bringing to the "'mild and good-tempered, industrious and laborious,' ... 'long-suffering, hard-working, and war-hating'" peasantry that the British felt a moral duty to parent.[84]

Huffaker notes that Egyptians are rarely depicted in Western-style clothing, in settings with modern (Western- or Arab-style) buildings, or in commercial or educational activities. These beautifully executed engravings portray an Egypt in absolute opposition to the British conception of self. Egypt is depicted as valuing idleness in place of industry, inaction in place of action, backwardness in place of modernity, slovenliness in place of cleanliness, and ignorance and superstition in place of religion.[85] And when Egyptians are shown in more modern settings, like the railcar on the left in Figure 4, the



[84] Hamrat, "Photography and Propaganda," 93; Auchterlonie, "Representations of the Middle East," 17.
[85] Huffaker, "Representations of Urabi," 386.

depictions of the natives stand out against the technology, further illustrating Huffaker's point.[86] The European reader looking at the pictures for entertainment subconsciously digests the dichotomy between Ancient/contemporary Egypt, British/Egyptian technology, and the pros/cons of intervention.

These dichotomies are complicated by the contextual information provided by the newspaper. Captions and linked articles supplemented imagery with descriptions of the different ethnicities, cultural practices, and classes that made up the Egyptian social sphere. Sometimes the image was irrelevant to the story, but Huffaker says that editors would use a caption to deliberately make a connection between current events and images of the exoticized Egyptians—for example, on 10 June, *ILN* said 'Urabi was "appealing to Musselmen fanaticism," and two pages later there was a full-page picture of a half-naked street performer preaching in front of a mosque in Cairo.[87]

Huffaker suggests that because all British representations of Egypt were linked intrinsically to 'Urabi, these images suggest that he was exactly the type of leader to emerge from "the popular religion of the streets and with the superstitious, ignorant and uncivilized religious leaders."[88] This dynamic played out in depictions of the military, too, which began to dominate the coverage from June to August 1882. The Egyptian troops are usually depicted as noticeably lethargic and bored, wearing rumpled clothes and loosely holding their weapons, which suggests that their leader is also undisciplined. Yet in juxtaposition, the British army was depicted as active, clean, handsome, and heroic.

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[86] Figure 4. "Egypt as It Is: A Third-Class Carriage on the Railway between Alexandria and Cairo," *Illustrated London News* 80, March 25, 1882, 277, Gale *The Illustrated London News* Historical Archive, 1842-2003, No. HN3100112541.

[87] Huffaker, "Representations of Urabi," 388.

[88] Huffaker, "Representations of Urabi," 388.

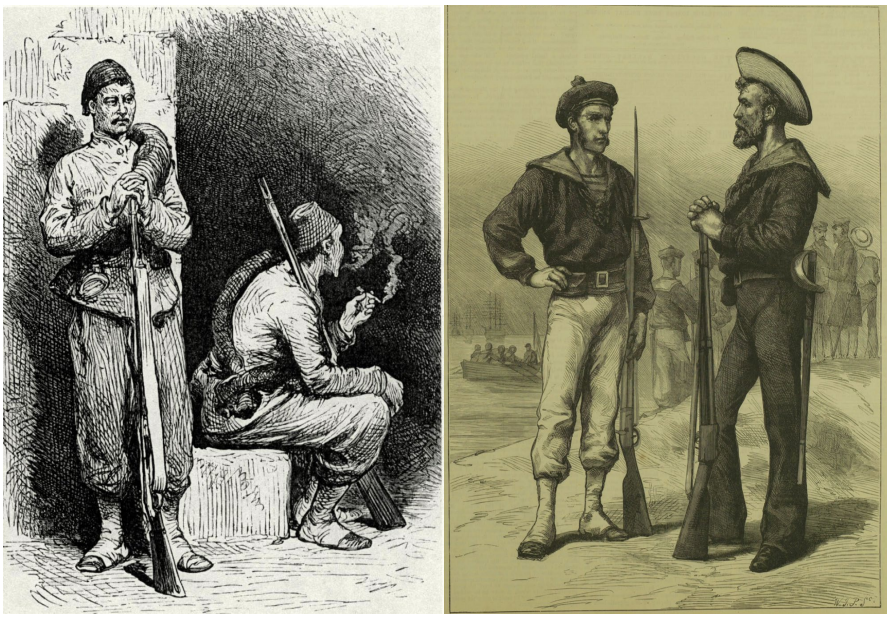


Figure 5 on the left[89] v. **Figure 6** on the **r**ight.[90]

The presentation of images in such a way serves to reinforce the justifications of the British empire. And through repetition, these tropes become cemented in the imperialist discourse. Representations of 'Urabi and the Egyptians in the periodical press normalized the British belief in moral, religious, and historical superiority over Egypt, which contributed to the vitriolic relationship between colonial and colonized countries in this period. The Victorian belief in an objective pen limited a sense of suspicion towards the conservative content, and allowed for a new form of Orientalist propaganda to take hold on the psyche of a nation.

Case Study: Travel Journalism

Though sketches and cartoons originated prior to photographs, "photography emerged at a time when painters were not only seeking a new realism [but also] continuing the exploration and

[89] Figure 5. "The Crisis in Egypt: Soldiers Guarding the Streets of Alexandria," *Illustrated London News* 81, July 8, 1882, 33, Gale *The Illustrated London News* Historical Archive, 1842-2003, No. HN3100113412.
[90] Figure 6. "The Crisis in Egypt: The Men for Arabi Pasha–English and French Soldiers at Alexandria," *Illustrated London News* 80, June 24, 1882, cover, Gale *The Illustrated London News* Historical Archive, 1842-2003, No. HN3100113332.

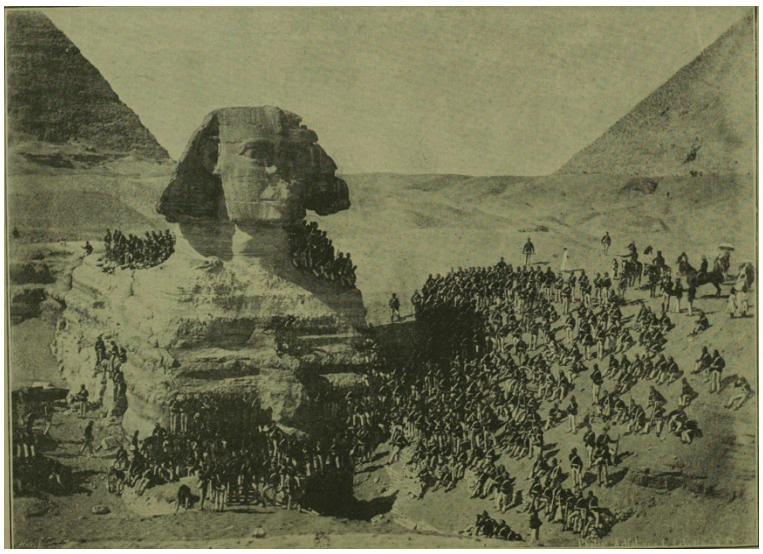
the settlement of new lands."[91] Photography satisfied this search for realism, as its physical capabilities reproduce reality and serve as a true representation of nature—"to many Victorians photography seemed to be a perfect marriage between science and art: a mechanical means of allowing nature to copy herself with total accuracy and intricate exactitude."[92] With this newfound technology, the 'dream' of the Orient was dashed—a seemingly-objective reproduction of Egypt could now be disseminated, so preexisting fantasies about the nature of the country, once derived from books, speeches, or paintings, were replaced.

Yet because photography was popular in social settings as well as scientific and archaeological contexts, it permitted certain misrepresentations of "the Orient" to be spread under the guise of objectivity. In "Photography and the Imperial Propaganda: Egypt Under Gaze," Fatima Zohra Hamrat points out that "the choice of the subjects and the angles of perception cannot be considered trivial and purposeless," and although photography can counter the old Orientalist depictions of the Orient, it is still "creating a new orientalism free from fantasies but more committed to Imperial propaganda."[93]

Hamrat contends that Victorian photographs represented the Orient by its emptiness and immutability—whereby early Oriental photographs were characterized by wide open spaces, a spiritual emptiness, and a human element limited to technical details and scale indicators. She quotes Derek Gregory, who says "early photographers tacitly represented Egypt as a vacant space awaiting its repossession … from Europe."[94] Photography can thus be used to justify colonial policy to the public, as the framing of an image can control, order, and scale the land in a way that

[91] Hamrat, "Photography and Propaganda," 86.
[92] Hamrat, "Photography and Propaganda," 86.
[93] Hamrat, "Photography and Propaganda," 88-89.
[94] Hamrat, "Photography and Propaganda," 89.

is inherently political. For example, in this photograph on the right (Figure 7), [95] an iconic symbol of the Ancient Egyptian Empire is shown as dominated under the masses of British armies who equal the size of the cultural artifact.



A key way in which this dynamic plays out is via British travel journalism about Egypt leading up to and during the period of annexation. Travel journalism was a popular form of periodical writing, especially because of the appeal of the fantasized "Orient" amidst the backdrop of imperial expansion and archeological excavations. With the expressed purpose of advertising, the first photographers of the Orient were foreign travel photographers who were "motivated by business and commercial competition."[96] Notably, almost all of the photographers were "more attracted by the hugeness of the pharaonic vestiges than by the Egyptians themselves and their miserable life."[97] Maria Wyke and Dominic Montserrat explain this fascination with Ancient Egypt in "Glamour Girls: Cleomania in Mass Culture," when they say, "[p]olitical events connected with the imperialist government … reminded people that in antiquity Egypt itself had ruled a great empire, and that Cleopatra, the Eastern opponent of the West, had been its last queen before she was vanquished by Rome," and naturally, this female ruler was inherently compared to the stuffy Queen Victoria—which "hints

[95] Figure 7. "The Bicentenary of the King's Own Scottish Borders: The Sphinx Under a New Aspect," *Illustrated London News* 94, March 23, 1889, 372, Gale *The Illustrated London News* Historical Archive, 1842-2003, No. HN3100134256.
[96] Hamrat, "Photography and Propaganda," 88.
[97] Hamrat, "Photography and Propaganda," 88.

that Cleopatra's attraction lies precisely in her unlikeness, in her embodiment of everything that Victorian England … denied."[98] They go on to point out the plethora of ways in which the Victorians were obsessed with the iconography of Ancient Egypt and Cleopatra, and how Egypt again became a signifier of the Orientalist dual-identity theory, as it was simultaneously exoticized and lauded as the birthplace of Western civilization. They coin this Victorian cultural obsession with Ancient Egypt as "Egyptomania" or "Cleomania," which manifested in commodity culture and a desire to travel to Egypt.[99]

The travel photographer thus had the important job of depicting an exoticized Ancient Egypt for commercial benefit, whereby they inevitably engendered the cultural propaganda that contributed to this period of "Cleomania." In magazines like the *ILN* or *Punch,* images of these Ancient Egyptian artifacts would often be compared with images or articles depicting the failings of contemporary Egyptian society, drawing parallels between the Egyptian Empire of the past and the need for intervention from the British Empire of the day. The tourist would fit into this dynamic as an adventurous spectator, who would usually arrange their tours around areas of historical importance—thereby filling strategic Egyptian cultural areas with more and more Europeans, who would buy into the Egyptian economy and make it more difficult for Egyptians to cast off the yoke of British oppression. That is why it was not uncommon to see chronicles of the war in the press simultaneously arranged next to advertisements for Egyptian tourism, such as this *ILN* article from 28 January 1893:

> Amidst the political and official intrigues disturbing the process of administrative reform in Egypt under English guidance, the European visitor still finds Cairo …

[98] Maria Wyke and Dominic Montserrat, "Glamour Girls: Cleomania in Mass Culture," *Cleopatra: A Sphinx Revisited*, ed. Margaret M. Miles (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), 173-174, http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/j.ctt1pnvmm.13.
[99] Wyke and Montserrat, "Cleomania," 174.

> the remains of the most remote antiquity … while the native peasantry, the Fellaheen, are much the same people as their early ancestors, simple, unwarlike, and submissive labourers, too often plundered and oppressed. It is not in ten years, and perhaps not by the benevolent efforts of any single foreign Power of Christendom, that Egypt can be made a prosperous independent nation.[100]

This type of juxtaposition solidified the link between the historical appeal of ancient Egypt to the contemporary appeal of imperial conquest.

In sum, the use of imagery in Victorian political propaganda contributed to the imperialist rhetoric of the day by providing "objective" examples for intervention. The dissemination of this imagery, whether in illustrated or photographic format, supported the Orientalist dual-identity theory by inherently comparing Ancient/contemporary Egypt, Egyptians/Britons, and pre/post-annexation advances in development. Via the consistent repetition of this overwhelmingly-partisan content, created by the pro-annexation Conservatives in the British government and media, this imperialist rhetoric was cemented into the British consciousness and validated 19th- and 20th-century racist, sexist, Islamophobic, and Orientalist stereotypes. These stereotypes manifested into a Victorian cultural obsession with Ancient Egypt, which thereby engendered support for further British political action and justified British territorial claims in Egypt.

The Effects of Propaganda on British Thought

A.G. Hopkins writes that "according to one estimate, Britain made no less than 66 official declarations of intent to withdraw from Egypt during the period of 1882-1922."[101] There is no use in trying to analyze whether or not these declarations were genuine attempts to be relieved of the

[100] "Life in Egypt: Cairo," *Illustrated London News* 102, January 28, 1893, 103, Gale *The Illustrated London News* Historical Archive, 1842-2003, No. HN3100465334.
[101] Hopkins, A. G. "The Victorians and Africa," 388.

"onerous responsibility" of governing Egypt, but what is important is that despite their repeated attempts to leave, they stayed—presumably because "those members of the government who pushed Gladstone into Egypt were not going to let him out until their aims had been achieved."[102] However, Gladstone wasn't the only public figure impacted by the propaganda and the pressures of imperialists—Queen Victoria herself also changed her mind. In 1840, she "had already declared that she sided with the territorial integrity and independence of the Ottoman Empire [in Egypt]," but by September 1882 "Wolseley, the commander of the British forces, decided that 'Urabi should be shot; Queen Victoria thought that hanging was more appropriate; and Gladstone, mustering all the ambiguity that only a great liberal could command, wanted him executed after a fair trial."[103] And though it is near impossible to judge the opinions of the British public without polling data, the consistent partisan rhetoric expressed in the periodicals suggests that the general British sentiment at this time was in favor of annexation.

That being said, it would be remiss not to acknowledge the fact that there were some anti-imperialist and anti-annexation figures actively dissenting against the intervention at this time. Auchterlonie lists a number of British public and/or political figures who supported 'Urabi's character and his political aims: such as Ardern Beaman, Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, William Gregory, and A.M. Broadley.[104] Furthermore, there were a number of prominent scholars and political figures who defended the Islamic capacity for governance in the press, such as Bosworth Smith, Edward Blyden, Edward Palmer, Arthur Nicolson, Roger Upton, and Laurence Oliphant.[105] And naturally, there was a portion of the British public that refused to support annexation. Whether

[102] Pollard, "Domesticating Egypt," 96; Hopkins, "Victorians and Africa," 388.
[103] Yildizeli, "Invasion through the Lens," 115; Hopkins, "Victorians and Africa," 384.
[104] Auchterlonie, "Representations of the Middle East," 17.
[105] Auchterlonie, "Representations of the Middle East," 21-22.

they were exposed to this anti-imperialist pop culture or periodical content, or whether they just had a strong moral belief that it was wrong, Huffaker points to "the existence of an undercurrent of dissatisfaction with British policy."[106] In short, while the overwhelming saturation of media with pro-imperialist propaganda has been demonstrated, it is important to balance this criticism of the Victorian's 2-D coverage of the Egyptians by acknowledging the (albeit minimal) dissenters of British foreign policy.

Conclusion

By the end of the 19th century many British Victorians were in favor of the British "veiled protectorate." The very existence and scale of this pro-imperialist and anti-Egyptian propaganda speaks to the British morals and values at this time, and demonstrates the increasingly influential role of the press in political decision-making. Additionally, the structure of the British periodical press established in this era still exists in British culture today—and many of the anachronistic views towards minorities and the Global South are still being espoused by the descendants of these British Conservatives. As Stanley writes, the political elite use propaganda to justify their claims to power and maintain the status quo. While the Victorians were effectively able to use their propaganda to maintain British prestige, that does not mean that contemporary readers have to absorb a similar pro-state rhetoric. Even in the Imperial era, there were—as in most historical struggles—dissenters. So long as the news is viewed with a critical eye, and the question of propaganda is posed, more critical discussions can be had about who is benefitting from the selection and saliency of our media content.

[106] Huffaker, "Representations of Ahmed Urabi," 396.

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