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s through Peru and Brazil

# Farouk of Egypt

*A Biography*  
Barrie St. Clair McBride

*Illustrated*



Robert Hale · London

Egypt

shows a man with firmer  
in an Oriental Sultan, an im-  
turned tips to his moustache  
pects, could one say, in an  
explorer and Army generals  
ary career for him at an age  
t would have encouraged him  
barracks rather than oriental  
ning the boy was not to have.

### Chapter 3

#### No More Auspicious Opening (6th May 1936—July 1937)

Alexandria was astir early on the morning of 6th May 1936. Flags which had been at half-mast were raised to the masthead. Ships in the harbour were dressed overall and sailors on the British warships stood by at their stations. H.M.S. *Ajax* relinquished its escort as the liner carrying Farouk approached the harbour, and the *Amir Farouk* fired a royal salute to the accompaniment of guns from Port Saleh and the British Navy. The King transferred to the royal yacht *Mahroussa* and then by launch to the Ras el Tin Palace quay. The royal standard broke over the palace, the Egyptian Army guard of honour presented arms and the band played the national anthem and within a few minutes the King was driving to the station in an open Rolls-Royce with the Prime Minister Ali Maher Pasha. Crowds lined the route, Girl Guides and Boy Scouts, soldiers, policemen and firemen, men and women in their thousands, white turbaned theological students, Wafdist Blue Shirts, Young Egypt Green Shirts, workmen's syndicates, and children shouted "Long Live Farouk King of Egypt and the Sudan", "Long live the King of the Nile". A measure of the delirious welcome was the number drowned or killed in the crush.

Fellahin waved to the King's train on its journey to Cairo where Farouk shook hands with many of the 3,000 notabilities waiting on the red-carpeted platform, banners waved "King Farouk—King of Egypt and the Sudan", people climbed the fountains and trees, shouted from balconies and rooftops and cheered as the party left to pray at his father's tomb in the Mosque of El Rifaii, surrounded by the Royal Bodyguard in

their blue, white and scarlet summer uniforms. As the procession passed crowds rushed into the street stirring up the sand which had been laid earlier, until everything was seen through a haze of dust. Later at about 5 p.m. the King, followed by the Princesses and Queen Nazli, drove from Abdin Palace to Koubbeh Palace. The dust and the din had died, a new reign had begun.

The day after his return Farouk broadcast an eagerly awaited message to his people. The speech was his own: "It was Allah's will that I be deprived of a last meeting with my father. I start a new life which I embrace firmly and with goodwill. I promise that I will dedicate this life to your service and to the continuous efforts for your prosperity. With my own eyes I have seen your love and attachment for me, and I say to you that I intend to maintain this solidarity for the sake of our dear Egypt. I believe that the greatness of a king is in the greatness of his people. I want to bring reforms and in this Allah will help me."

Fuad, whose debts had had to be paid off by the British when he became Sultan, left something over £10 million to Farouk, in land and investments abroad. He inherited the estates of Faroukia, Edfine, Ismailia, Mariout and Zafaran. King Fuad had laid down that the succession should rest in his own direct descendants, and not, as previously, in the eldest male relative of the Sultan (under which system Prince Mohamed Ali, Farouk's uncle, would have become ruler of Egypt). The Egyptian Constitution safeguarded the monarchy; two articles forbade any proposals for the amendment of the monarchical system of government. Other articles conferred important prerogatives on the king: the right to dissolve and prorogue the parliament; the right to create and grant civil, military and other honorary titles; the appointment and dismissal of the army officers; and the nomination of two-fifths of the senators.

As Farouk was then only sixteen the Cabinet was faced with a task of appointing a regency. According to the Law of Succession the new king was due to attain his majority in August 1937, eighteen Moslem or lunar years from his birth and although he would then be able to rule without a regency he would not attain his civil majority until his twenty-first lunar year. The new Egyptian Parliament met on 8th May 1936 to nominate a Council of Regency and appointed Prince Mohamed Ali, the



With his mother, Queen Nazli,

heir presumptive, a popular and affable prince of distinguished appearance and manners; Aziz Pasha Izzet, who had married Fuad's niece, and had spent three years as Egyptian Minister to the Court of St. James's and a year as Minister of Foreign Affairs, known as an excellent diplomatist with charming manners; and Sherif Pasha Sabri, the junior member of the Regency, Queen Nazli's brother and then Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

Prince Mohamed Ali, author of *Breeding of Arabian Horses* and owner of one of the world's largest studs, was the younger son of the Khedive Tewfik, and grandson of the Khedive Ismail. He was well known in international society, where his strong sense of humour and outspoken manner charmed his wide circle of friends. A large part of his palace was arranged to house his collections which included many exquisite specimens of Turkish art, forming the largest and most complete group of rugs, illuminated manuscripts, embroideries, ceramics, and jewellery ever assembled in private ownership. The Prince was remarkably handsome, dark, with fine drawn aquiline features, though he was of delicate health, and never married. The Aga Khan wrote of Mohamed Ali: "He is a fascinating and many-sided personality . . . he exerted for long a quiet, soothing but very powerful influence, largely behind the scenes, in Egyptian life and politics . . . his energy and vivacity are as great as his spirit is sensitive and his intellect powerful. . . . He speaks several languages, ranging from Arabic and Turkish, through English, French, and German. . . . His detailed historical knowledge of Egypt . . . is truly phenomenal. . . . All his life he has been a great admirer of Britain, and of the British character and way of life, and a staunch supporter of Anglo-Egyptian friendship. . . ."

It was partly Mohamed Ali's friendship with the English, and possible collusion with the Wafd, that inspired Ali Maher, to whom Fuad had entrusted the undertaking to ensure that Farouk became King, to get Farouk back to Egypt quickly after Fuad's death. Mohamed Ali later admitted that he had wished to keep Farouk in England for at least two more years but that the unfortunate influence of Ali Maher to the contrary swayed him. Nazli, jealous of the English, who had never been allowed by Fuad to have any influence on Farouk, wished to have him at home with her. She opposed his return to England.



an early . . .  
Fuad on his twelfth birthday

