



Confronting Fascism in Egypt: Dictatorship versus Democracy in the 1930s

Israel Gershoni, James Jankowski

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Confronting Fascism in Egypt offers a new reading of the political and intellectual culture of Egypt during the interwar era. Though scholarship has commonly emphasized Arab political and military support of Axis powers, this work reveals that the shapers of Egyptian public opinion were largely unreceptive to fascism, openly rejecting totalitarian ideas and practices, Nazi racism, and Italy's and Germany's expansionist and imperialist agendas. The majority (although not all) of Egyptian voices supported liberal democracy against the fascist challenge, and most Egyptians sought to improve and reform, rather than to replace and destroy, the existing constitutional and parliamentary system.

The authors place Egyptian public discourse in the broader context of the complex public sphere within which debate unfolded—in Egypt's large and vibrant network of daily newspapers, as well as the weekly or monthly opinion journals—emphasizing the open, diverse, and pluralistic nature of the interwar political and cultural arena. In examining Muslim views of fascism at the moment when classical fascism was at its peak, this enlightening book seriously challenges the recent assumption of an inherent Muslim predisposition toward authoritarianism, totalitarianism, and "Islamofascism."

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