



## ENCYCLOPEDIA OF WOMEN AND ISLAMIC CULTURES

### Women under Colonialism: Egypt

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- ❖ Lord Cromer, the colonial diplomat to Egypt for the British, stated in 1916 of the British project for Egypt, that the position of women in Egypt is a fatal obstacle to the Egyptian “elevation” to European standards.<sup>1</sup>
- ❖ On March 16<sup>th</sup>, 1919, the wives of exiled Egyptian leaders organized a protest of thousands of women, Muslim and Christian, against British colonial rule.<sup>2</sup>
- ❖ In 1923, upper-class women began forming Egypt’s first women’s organizations, campaigning for basic rights, such as the right to vote.<sup>3</sup>
- ❖ Though far from harmonious, the relationship between Egyptian Feminism (especially in the form of the Egyptian Feminist Union) and Egyptian nationalism in the early part of the 1920s was very important for the call to end British colonial occupation.<sup>4</sup>
- ❖ In 1923, Egypt began to be symbolized as a woman in nationalist imagery, depicting the Egyptian women as educated, well dressed, well-traveled, and driving a car. Furthermore, sexual imagery was not used to depict the strength of Egyptian women.<sup>5</sup>
- ❖ In 1923, the Egyptian Feminist Union held a conference in Rome called the “International Women’s Suffrage Alliance Conference”.<sup>6</sup>
- ❖ After the birth of the Wafd Party in 1924, Egyptian women played salient roles as leaders for gender equality, acting on the notion that the struggle against imperialism is necessarily accompanied by the struggle for women’s rights.<sup>7</sup>
- ❖ The rise of the Egyptian feminist movement in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century succeeded in many ways, such as establishing equality in curriculum for boys and girls and allowing women to receive university education in 1925.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <http://abdullahandalusi.com/2013/12/23/a-brief-word-by-lord-cromer-on-the-british-colonial-project-for-egypt/>

<sup>2</sup> <http://nvdatabase.swarthmore.edu/content/egyptians-campaign-independence-1919-1922>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.coloradocollege.edu/dotAsset/f2b083ed-ed66-486f-aa1d-e8d634937f21.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> [http://iknowpolitics.org/sites/default/files/womens20movement20in20eg20and20turkey\\_unrisd.pdf](http://iknowpolitics.org/sites/default/files/womens20movement20in20eg20and20turkey_unrisd.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.h-net.org/reviews/showrev.php?id=22900>

<sup>6</sup> <http://guardianlv.com/2014/06/egypt-and-feminism-what-does-it-mean-to-be-egyptian-and-female/>

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.encyclopedia.com/topic/Wafd.aspx>

<sup>8</sup> [http://www.mediterraneas.org/article.php3?id\\_article=178](http://www.mediterraneas.org/article.php3?id_article=178)