



A Peer Reviewed International Journal of Asian  
Academic Research Associates

**AARJSH**  
**ASIAN ACADEMIC RESEARCH**  
**JOURNAL OF SOCIAL**  
**SCIENCE & HUMANITIES**



## INTERNATIONAL STRUGGLE AGAINST THE SLAVE TRADE IN EGYPT IN THE LATE OTTOMAN PERIOD

RECEP KUREKLI<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Asst. Prof. Dr., Faculty of Education, Nevsehir Hacı Bektas Veli University, Turkey

### Abstract

The process of removing the widespread slave trade from the Province of Egypt which had long shores in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Red Sea began with the issuing of an act that prohibited slave trade by the British Parliament in 1873. An important treaty was signed by the British and Egyptian Governments on the 4th of August in 1877 in order to enact this law. New treaties would follow in 1885 and 1895 consecutively. This article displays the ways in which Egyptian and British authorities prepared reports and established a legal base to combat slave trade in Egypt. As part of the international struggle against slavery, the article exposes that, following the treaty that was signed with Britain. Egyptian Government managed to control and finally defeat slave trade in Egypt at the eve of the World War I. Slave trade was no more a significant issue for the Province of Egypt.

**Key Words:** The Eastern Mediterranean, Ottoman Egypt, Slave Trade, Abolition of Slavery, White Slave Trade

## Introduction

In the Ottoman Empire, slaves played an important role in the Ottoman state and social life through use in the military and civilian administrations of the state as well as the home services. There was a dynamic social relationship between the slave owner and the slave, based on mutual self-sacrifice.<sup>1</sup> The great majority of the slaves in the province of Egypt were male black slaves brought from different parts of Africa. In domestic services, slaves or servants were employed and performed average jobs. Another area of slave use was the harem (*harem ağalığı: eunuch*). These were only used by the Mehmet Ali<sup>2</sup> family and high-ranking Turks. Many of their hordes had their slaves in addition to protecting the harems.<sup>3</sup> The slaves were being carried to the coast from central Africa in large quantities. Slaves were often brought with Greek boats, and at the same time, these ships were used to transport weapons, tobacco, etc. to other parts of the Ottoman Empire. Smuggling of goods<sup>4</sup> was also carried out in alia.<sup>5</sup>

In Egypt, slave traders were clearly divided into two classes. These were sellers of black slaves and sellers of white slaves expressed in Turkish as prisoners (in Arabic as singular was expressed *yâsiriji* and as plural *yâsirjiyya*). Although this distinction continued throughout the 19th century, some traders were trading in both black and white slaves. The slaves were brought to Alexandria by way of Cairo or Siva. As reported in 1873, Alexandria did not have a slave-gathering place where slave trade or exchange was made; but there were some slave traders in their hands who traded in their places of residence, slaves from 6 to 15-20. Slave traders were meeting at a certain coffee houses and whenever someone wanted to sell a slave, they were calling their slave traders to their home to look at the slave.<sup>6</sup>

The use of slaves in military service was a path commonly used by Egyptian rulers as much as the British occupation. From Mehmet Ali Pasha to Khedive Ismail many slave armies, especially Sudanese, were taken. In the 1870s a large number of slaves sought to achieve

<sup>1</sup> Shaham 2000, 162.

<sup>2</sup> Born in Kavala in 1769 or 1770, Mehmet Ali Pasha became one of the 300 soldiers who took off from Kavala against the French who occupied Egypt in 1789, in 1787. After the end of French occupation, Ottoman and Mamluks struggle started in the absence of authority emerged in Egypt. Mehmet Ali Pasha, who won this struggle in favor of the Ottomans, was to be appointed as the Governor of Egypt on 3 July 1805. For detailed information about the life of Mehmet Ali Pasha, who would later enter the struggle for power with the Ottomans. Look; Kutluoğlu 2002, 62-65.

<sup>3</sup> Baer 1967, 419-420.

<sup>4</sup> Some smugglers agreed to abduct weapons and ammunition with the captains of the Greek postal ferryboats. The illegal weapons and ammunition were able to land on the shores of Eastern Mediterranean coasts like Beirut. Look; BOA, Y.PRK.ASK., 248/94, 8/C/1325.

<sup>5</sup> PRO, FO, 407/131, No: 51, p. 56 (Lord Cromer to the Earl Kimberly, Cairo, February 22, 1895)

<sup>6</sup> Baer 1967, 428-430.

freedom through the British Consulate. As a result, having slaves in Egypt was very common. Examples of slave owners were Bedouins, elders, farmers, millers, butchers, shopkeepers, book sellers, merchants, bankers and officers, religious officials, lawyers and others. However, many Christians and Jews had slaves. In the same period, Europeans in Turkey were not allowed to be the owners of the slaves; but until the end of slavery in Egypt, the Europeans would continue to have slaves.<sup>7</sup>

### **1873 the Law and its Effects on the Prohibition of Slave Trade**

In Britain in 1873 a law on "Slave Trade" was issued. Under this law, any agreement made by or on behalf of a foreign government with or on behalf of the British Government shall be communicated to the British Parliament within six weeks and shall be deemed to be a slave trade agreement under this Act and shall enforce all the terms of the law.<sup>8</sup> Relevant to the Egyptian government's view of the treaty, Nubar Pasha<sup>9</sup> informed the British on behalf of Khedive (Ismail<sup>10</sup>) that he was ready to sign an agreement to stop the slave trade in Egypt.<sup>11</sup> As a result, the answer given by Egypt stated to be happy to be involved in such an agreement.<sup>12</sup> On August 4, 1877 "Mr. Vivian "and Khedive Ismail, signed an agreement to prevent slave trade. With this agreement, Khedive absolutely forbids any black or Ethiopian slave to enter the country, and likewise forbade them to cross Egypt. All slave trafficking would be punished, and the slaves in the hands of slave sellers would be freed. However, the Egyptian government was committed to pursuing those who were involved in crimes such as a child trade or crippling of a child, with an endeavor to prevent wars in central Africa to prevent slavery between tribes. The treaty also had the authority to search and investigate Egyptian vessels that British cruisers were found to be associated with black or Ethiopian slave trade. Likewise, it was forbidden to buy and sell "de famille â famille" among slaves among the slaves. These prohibitions would be in force for seven years from Alexandria to Aswan, and within twenty years they would be extended from Sudan to the other provinces of Egypt. "White Woman Trade" would be banned throughout the entire Egyptian territory in

<sup>7</sup> Baer 1967, 420-422.

<sup>8</sup> *PRO, FO, 881/5227X* (Extract from The London Gazette of Tuesday, April 6, 1886)

<sup>9</sup> An Armenian politician, Nubar Nubaryan (1825-1899) is generally known as Nubar Pasha. Nubar Pasha, one of the most important personalities of his time, had been in charge of important government affairs such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Prime Ministry. Look; Hunter 1897, 367-375.

<sup>10</sup> Ismail Pasha, son of Ibrahim Pasha, returned to Egypt by doing modern sciences and engineering education in Paris. Ismail Pasha, who had political and military experience, became the governor of Egypt on 18 January 1863 on the death of his uncle Said Pasha. Look; Cetin 2001, 117-119.

<sup>11</sup> *PRO, FO, 141/108*, No: 8, p. 1 (No: 1, Sir H. Elliot to Earl Granville, Therapia, July 8, 1873)

<sup>12</sup> *PRO, FO, 141/108*, No: 8, p. 1 (No: 2, Earl Granville to Sir H. Elliot, Foreign Office, July 11, 1873)

seven years. As a result of this agreement, it was hoped that after 1884, slavery in Egypt would gradually disappear.<sup>13</sup>

"Malcolm Pasha" visited all the villages, starting from "Musavva"<sup>14</sup> to the Suez by visiting all the villages to see how the slave trade is, how the lives of the settlers were maintained, who were the leading persons and who were governors, and to learn about issues such as who was involved in slave trade within the country or through shipping, and which routes were used for this trade and where the wells were located. At the end of the journey, he prepared an assessment of his findings and recommendations for each place. According to this, there was a regular slave trade traffic around "Zeyla"<sup>15</sup> and "Tacura", partly by the sea coast, partly by land through "Obuk"<sup>16</sup> road and "Moka" and "Hudeyde"<sup>17</sup>. "Malcolm Pasha" stated that "Tacura", "Zeyla" and passing through the path of "Harar"<sup>18</sup> continue to follow a caravan, "Zeyla" Governor, Abu Bakr Pasha and a few sons and major investors in this traffic; The King of "Shiva"<sup>19</sup> stated that "Menelik" was a great interest in this trade, and that the "Harar", the route through which this traffic passes, was probably known by the Governor of "Harar". "Malcolm Pasha" was also talking about a document about Aden he received from Sharif Pasha. In this document, "Tacura" was a departure point for slaves, Abubakir Pasha and others were slaving here, and some of them were already in prison. "Malcolm Pasha", however, also stated that a slave stream from Abyssinia, which had hundreds of counties around "Musavva", some of which remained in Egypt; but most of them went to the shore and went there with the ships to Arabia.<sup>20</sup> However, the punishment for renting a liberated slave to a document bearing the seal of "Kadi" is \$ 100 and imprisoned for 6 months with a

<sup>13</sup> *PRO, FO, 881/4509*, p. 17-18 (Summary by Lord Tenterden on the History of the Administration of Egypt 1840-81, Foreign Office, October 10, 1881)

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.google.com/maps/place/Massawa,+Eritre/@15.602493,39.4507885,13z/data=!3m1!4b1!4m2!3m1!1s0x16728c5791260363:0xb4963f0447a30a5d> (AD: 13 March 2018)

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.google.com/maps/place/Zeyla,+Somali/@11.35278,43.4741716,16z/data=!3m1!4b1!4m2!3m1!1s0x1623bf7000467ca1:0xa4527bbb15eb2c1> (AD: 13 March 2018)

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.google.com/maps/place/Obuk,+Cibuti/@11.9672511,43.2888312,15z/data=!3m1!4b1!4m2!3m1!1s0x162266620d7b186b:0x37712eb107c1201b> (AD: 13 March 2018)

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.google.com/maps/place/El+Hudeyde,+Yemen/@14.7900308,42.9655535,13z/data=!3m1!4b1!4m2!3m1!1s0x16053be363aba37b:0x7aea559347f1b8a2> (AD: 08 February 2018)

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.google.com/maps/place/Harar,+Etiyopya/@9.3128491,42.1181488,14z/data=!3m1!4b1!4m2!3m1!1s0x1631bda3c73a509d:0x47a0ad82e9e99ed6> (AD: 13 March 2018)

<sup>19</sup> <http://global.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/540208/Shewa> (AD: 08 February 2018)

<sup>20</sup> *PRO, FO, 881/3739*, No: 1, p. 1-2 (Report by Malcolm Pasha respecting the Abolition of Slave Trade in Egypt, Malcolm Pasha to Mr. Vivian, March 12, 1878)

rowing penalty; it was stated that the penalty for selling someone else, directly or indirectly, a liberated slave, was imprisonment of 500 dollars and 12 months of rowing penalties.<sup>21</sup>

According to the agreement made in 1877 on August 4, 1884 in all parts of Egypt, the White Slave Trade would definitely be finished. Thus, after the Treaty of 1877, Egypt could expect that slaves would be brought to the slaves for trade and that slaves would not be allowed to be sold for sale to Egyptian peoples; but the deal was ineffective. The Egyptian government regarded the agreement as just a document, not only in distant places, but also in Cairo, openly and actively in the eyes of Khedive.<sup>22</sup> By 1882 a partial success was achieved with the effects of this agreement. The "Manumission Bureaux" began to operate in Cairo, Alexandria and elsewhere; but these branches were in the hands of the Directorates or Governors, and the abuse was widespread. The influence of local forces, wealthy and powerful plaintiffs deterred the clerical officers from doing their jobs properly. Even in Cairo, the slaves were openly sold. It was known that there were about 32 slaves in Cairo in 1882. The "Slavery Removal Service", which began to work, was given the authority to control new slaves entering Egypt; but due to the lack of strict preventive measures, many new slaves could enter the country.<sup>23</sup> "Slavery Removal Service", in 1882 had £ 17627 as a separate budget for its value. This service would then be operated by the police department.<sup>24</sup>

Before 1882, the task of the "Slave Trade Department" was to follow desert routes and prevent caravans from bringing slaves to Egypt. Sale of slaves in Egypt, the release of slaves, the prosecution of slave sellers was not under the authority of the department. The effective custody of all of the roads leading to Egypt was impossible unless slave requests were cut off. The only thing that could be done to tackle the problem was to check the demand. There was a very significant change in January 1883. The "Slave Trade Department" was included within the Police Service and under the management of Colonel "Schaefer", responsible for fulfilling the legal commitments of the agreement. At that time, 32 slave vendors in Cairo were doing most of their activities openly. These sellers were arrested, tried in a military court, and severely punished. It could be safely said that there was not a slave dealer in Cairo or any part of Egypt. By then, probably and occasionally a small number of slaves would be

<sup>21</sup> PRO, FO, 881/3739, No: Inclosure 2 in 2, p. 9 (Paper to keep in Book as reference, and onlu this Paper to have Government Stamp and be sealed by Cadi, 1878)

<sup>22</sup> PRO, FO, 141/135, No: 13 (Inclosure in No 2), p. 8-9 (Analysis of the Slave Trade Convention of the 4th August, 1877-Cairo, September 21,1880)

<sup>23</sup> PRO, FO, 407/88, No: Inclosure in No 19, p. 25 (Sir E. Baring to the Marquis of Salisbury, Cairo, April 12,1889)

<sup>24</sup> PRO, FO, 881/5027, No: Inclosure in No 250, p. 155(Mr.Egerton to Earl Granville, Cairo, August 3,1884)

illegally sneaked into the country and secretly sold; but the slave trade in Egypt was about to come to an end.<sup>25</sup>

"Lord Dufferin" suggested a settlement that would have a validity for seven years in Egypt that would end slavery. Accordingly, the slave liberation bureau would continue to work and a decree would be issued announcing that the duties of the "Slavery Removal Service" would have been transferred to the new municipal unit with an authority on the slave trade issue. A special police force would also be established in "Sevakin" and "Mousavva" to prevent slave trade, and the unit created to prevent slavery in the Red Sea under British supervision would be reorganized.<sup>26</sup>

### **New Initiatives to Block Slave Trade: UK, Italy, Egypt Cooperation**

Britain and Italy acted to work in mutual co-operation for the termination of African slave trade, and as a consequence they had made an agreement. They declared that this slave trade activity, which they considered to be piracy, was forbidden for anyone who was engaged in this business, even if it was their own citizens, or under whichever protection they were. It was declared that the vessels found with slaves under their patronage would lose all rights to that patronage. Even a commercial ship belonging to one of the negotiating parties would be handed over to the authorities in the vicinity of that country by the cruiser of the other, with the captain, the crew, the cargo and the slaves being detained and carried out to the proceedings by the government.<sup>27</sup> When the pilgrimage season began, there would be a great demand for slaves in Jeddah, so the slave traders were expected to make new moves. All necessary precautions were taken against such a situation.<sup>28</sup> Slave trade and smuggling were very active in Jeddah.<sup>29</sup> The 1877 agreement was considered an agreement that meticulously met the expectations of those who agreed to negotiate from all other angles except for a few aspects that were no longer applicable in Sudan, and was seen as an instrument that would gradually and effectively suppress slavery. People who wanted to be a slaveholder began to be reluctant to risk their money with such a bad investment. There was a very significant change in the local public opinion. Accordingly, the slaves believed that they would not abandon their homes and go to liberty camps to face any difficulty in obtaining a certificate

<sup>25</sup> *PRO, FO, 407/106*, No: 64, p. 84 (Sir E. Baring to the Marquis of Salisbury, Cairo, March 29, 1891)

<sup>26</sup> *PRO, FO, 881/4767*, No: 6, p. 9 (Analysis of Parliamentary Paper "Egypt No.6 (1883)

<sup>27</sup> *PRO, FO, 881/5858*, No: 5858X (Treaty between Her Majesty and His Majesty the King of Italy for the Suppression of the African Slave Trade, Signed at London, September 14, 1889)

<sup>28</sup> *PRO, FO, 407/119*, No: 152, p. 119 (Lord Cromer to the Earl of Rosebery, Cairo, March 9, 1893)

<sup>29</sup> *PRO, FO, 407/75*, No: Inclosure, p. ix ( Acting Consul Oswald to Mr. Portal, Suakin, July 23, 1888)

of freedom, and were indifferent to anyone's freedom. The slave owners sought to get rid of most of their slaves while encouraging their slaves to remain in their homes by remarkably amending the circumstances of their slaves in their homes.<sup>30</sup>

On December 21, 1885, a slave trade agreement was signed between the British Government, the Italian Government and the Egyptian Government. Governments were responsible for their rights and obligations against each other. The agreement, signed and sealed in three copies in Cairo, would be counted as a "Slave Trade Agreement" under the 1873 law.<sup>31</sup> Slave trade would continue its existence as long as it was demanded. The communities involved in the removal of slavery would be more effective on the roots of slave trade if they could allocate their resources for social and educational reforms.<sup>32</sup> In Islamic belief, slaves are encouraged to be released.<sup>33</sup> In 1885 there was a large increase in the number of Manumission Bureaux. Along with this step, the slaves did not encounter any difficulty in finding a certificate of freedom. As a result, the number of slaves who had attained their freedom increased four times. Henceforth the number of slaves applying for certification decreased every year. In reality there were far fewer slaves in private homes than in the past.<sup>34</sup>

In Egypt, the slave trade could hereupon be said to have ceased completely. Because in 1888 a single slave had not been sold and at that time attempts were made to bring slaves to the country only four times. In these initiatives, two slave sellers lost their lives. The facilities provided for the freedom of slaves and the violent punishment for the slave sellers completely ended the slave trade. A new department of slavery was established in 1883 to give freedom to slaves in the country and to prevent slavery in the country. The Department of Slavery that was established in 1885, which was previously under the control of the Governors, was put under order of this department. Colonel Schaefer was assigned to this unit. His measures gave very fruitful results. The number of freed slaves was calculated as 10,000 in 1883, which together with the 1885, 1886 and 1887 rates were higher.<sup>35</sup> Major aid provided by tactics and judgments of Major Hasan Haris, a Muslim civil servant in the Slavery Department at the top of the slave order, provided substantial contributions.<sup>36</sup> In 1885 and 1886, slave freedoms

<sup>30</sup> *PRO, FO, 407/106*, No: 64, p. 83-84 (Sir E. Baring to the Marquis of Salisbury, Cairo, March 29, 1891)

<sup>31</sup> *PRO, FO, 881/5227X* (Extract from The London Gazette of Tuesday, April 6, 1886)

<sup>32</sup> Butler 1887, 98.

<sup>33</sup> Shaham 2000, 162.

<sup>34</sup> *PRO, FO, 407/106*, No: 64, p. 84 (Sir E. Baring to the Marquis of Salisbury, Cairo, March 29, 1891)

<sup>35</sup> *PRO, FO, 407/88*, No: Inclosure in No 19, p. 29 (Sir E. Baring to the Marquis of Salisbury, Cairo, April 12, 1889)

<sup>36</sup> *PRO, FO, 407/106*, No: 64, p. 84 (Sir E. Baring to the Marquis of Salisbury, Cairo, March 29, 1891)

reached 2,075 and 2,628 slaves, respectively. The effectiveness of the Slavery Relief Bureau was increasing. In the first place, Cairo and the bureau in Alexandria had freed many slaves, but from the middle of the 1880s the most active slave liberation bureaus would be in Upper Egypt. The Lower Egyptian Provinces left Alexandria behind the slave freedoms. By 1889, about 18,000 slaves had been freed by these bureaucrats.<sup>37</sup>

At the beginning of the 1880s and early 1890 slave sellers were primarily Sudanese, Bedouins, peasants and Maghrebis in the province of “Buheyra”, mostly residing in the Upper Egyptian region, especially in Egypt, in Cairo. Until the late 1880s, "Count della Sala" was sent to inspect the slave trade in the Upper Egyptian territory. "Count della Sala" has informed that most of the residents of four villages around "Darâw" (about 25 miles north of Aswan) must be arrested, including village sheikhs and government officials, in order to enforce the laws prohibiting slave trade.<sup>38</sup>

The number of slaves who applied to obtain a certificate of freedom for the Manumission Bureaux was continuously decreasing. For this reason, 1,400 in 1890, 816 in 1891, 422 applications were received in 1892. These figures indicate that the slave trade was being depleted in Egypt as a practice, and it would be completely withdrawn from time to time. In addition to the preventive measures taken in the last decade, the facilitation of slaves' skepticism of slaves who want to keep their slaves in the hands of the servicemen or threatened with monthly wages would also be effective in the removal of slavery. As it was stated, in 1892, while 422 slaves were freed, in 1893 284 slaves were freed. The number of Sudanese female slaves who achieved their freedom in both years was too much. The number of slaves who resorted to the Manumission Bureaux to get rid of slavery was steadily declining. With the condition that the buyer and the seller can control, over time, slavery in Egypt would completely disappear.<sup>39</sup> In 1891, Lord Cromer had just mentioned the fact that there was very little relative slavery in the house, especially in homes. As a result, trading in slaves was not a good investment.<sup>40</sup>

During the year 1892, the Egyptian government allocated the necessary funds for the establishment of high-level troops to prevent smuggling of slaves from Sudan to the Red Sea and Hijaz. With the establishment of the camel troops, strong patrols were sent to the Nile

<sup>37</sup> Baer 1967, 434.

<sup>38</sup> Baer 1967, 427.

<sup>39</sup> *PRO, FO, 881/6570*, No: 92, p. 139(Lord Cromer to the Earl of Rosebery, Cairo, March 9,1894)

<sup>40</sup> Baer 1967, 439.



and a port called "Mersa Halaib", which was a port near the Red Sea. These steady troops controlled only the Nile of the country and the Red Sea shores in the northern part of "Suakin". An area between "Suakin" and the Italian region south of "Suakin" was still unprotected. Slave traders have begun to use the road south of "Suakin" again due to the presence of a deputy in the north of "Suakin". In order to provide effective control over this region, it would be necessary to increase the number of camel units. Sometimes few slaves were smuggled by Bedouins living on the border; but the number of them was maybe less than 10 per year. When slavers or slaves were captured, slaves were confiscated before they were taken to the military court.<sup>41</sup>

A new agreement was signed on November 21, 1895 to reshape the 1877 "Slavery Agreement" in force. Two Khedivate Decisions that shaped this agreement were also published on January 21 of the following year. The new agreement had some basic differences with the agreement of 1877. Previously, buyers and sellers were being punished equally. Now, all uncertainties had been lifted regarding punishments, buyers and sellers would be punished according to the degree of guilt, and these ratios were clearly defined. In addition, according to a remarkable ruling, the family head would also be responsible for the actions of the family members. Even if a clear offense had not been proven, the family head could be punished if the family had a slave. According to the 1877 treaty, crimes related to slave trade were discussed by military courts. This could be seen as an excuse when the treaty was made because there were no civil courts in the country in 1877. Among the intellectual segments of the indigenous people, the influence of the important developments in civil courts over the past years had led to the feeling that there was no longer any need for military courts. From then on, a special court of justice consisting of five judges to be elected from the Egyptian appeals court would be authorized and the decisions of that court would be final.<sup>42</sup>

It was observed that the new regulations worked well in practice. In 1895, while 498 slaves were freed, in 1896, 891 slaves were freed unusually. The increase of slave liberation bureaus in the provinces supported this increase. This made it easier to apply for a certificate of liberty. With the new regulations, inspections done to the domestic ships trading in the Red Sea were going well and there was little objection by ship captains or owners.<sup>43</sup>

<sup>41</sup> *PRO, FO, 407/119*, No: 152, p. 119 (Lord Cromer to the Earl of Rosebery, Cairo, March 9, 1893)

<sup>42</sup> *PRO, FO, 881/6808*, No: 7, p. 25 (Lord Cromer to the Marquess of Salisbury, Cairo, February 3, 1896)

<sup>43</sup> *PRO, FO, 881/7091*, No: 14, p. 35-36 (Lord Cromer to the Marquess of Salisbury, Cairo, January 15, 1897)

There was no easy solution to solve a fundamental problem like slavery. Even when it came into the 20th century, many Arab tribes around Sudan, especially the “Reshaidah” tribe, were engaged in slave-smuggling. As a result of the work of the Egyptian Slavery Department under the control of an English supervisor, some people were brought to justice. Among these people there was a sheikh of the “Reshaidah” tribe who was sentenced to seven years in prison for buying and selling slaves. A patrol system was established in connection with the armed forces of the Egyptian Army and various ways to detect caravans engaged in slave trade would be followed carefully.<sup>44</sup> After that the operations against slavery were directed to Sudan. One slave dealer in Cairo was investigated and he was sentenced to one year in prison. Some people from the "Bisharin" Arabs in Aswan were convicted of kidnapping. 39 men and 69 ladies' slavery were given a release certificate.<sup>45</sup>

Captain "McMurdo", head of the Slavery Department, said the whole slave trade has almost stopped. As a result of the new treaties and laws, it seemed completely understandable that this crime would not go unpunished. The judgment of the criminals undoubtedly had a considerable and precious influence in the world. In the first years of the 20th century, many slaves were freed and the number of slaves in Egypt was very low. Even now, complaints about the difficulty of finding a maid were heard.<sup>46</sup>

### White-Slave Trade

The Circassian "White Slaves" who were settled in Anatolia and the eastern shore of the Black Sea were brought to Egypt through Istanbul.<sup>47</sup> The Egyptian authorities were also closely involved in the issue of White Women's Trade<sup>48</sup> and used all their authority to prevent this traffic. In 1904 a branch of the International League was in Alexandria to prevent White Women's Trade. In 1914, a branch would be opened in Port Said. They did remarkable

<sup>44</sup> *PRO, FO, 633/70*, No: Inclosure in No 2, p. 78 (Report by the Sirdar and Governor-General on the Finances, Administration and Condition of the Soudan in 1900)

<sup>45</sup> *PRO, FO, 407/163*, No: 4, p. 44 (The Earl of Cromer to the Marquess of Lansdowne, Cairo, February 26, 1904)

<sup>46</sup> *PRO, FO, 633/70*, No: 1, p. 41 (Viscount Cromer to the Marquess of Lansdowne, Cairo, March 1, 1901)

<sup>47</sup> Baer 1967, 441.

<sup>48</sup> The slaves were judged according to their colors. For example, white slaves (mamluk, plural mamalik) are quite expensive, and while black slaves (the United States, pluralism) are quite cheap, they are employed in the lowest positions, while the upper classes are being run by the upper class. However, since the colors of the Ethiopians were darker than whites, they were employed in intermediate positions, as they were more open than politicians. In the same way, when black girl slaves were employed by the middle and lower class families as housekeepers and concubines, white girl slaves were rare and more valued and used by high-ranking families in domestic service and in the harem. Look; Shaham 2000, 171.

activities with the help of the police in both branches. With the help of the police, the main activities of this association were:<sup>49</sup>

- 1- The fact that the young unprotected girls in the vessels coming to Egypt being sent to their consulates or religious authorities,
- 2- Preventing the underaged little girls from falling into immorality,
- 3- Investigation of the cases of suspected smuggling,
- 4- Prosecution of women sellers (Souteneurs).

These developments would facilitate the work of the authorities; public attention would be drawn to this issue; the public would be informed and many people would be sympathetic to the solution of that problem. In 1912, 1,292 young girls were taken to the shore in Alexandria and handed over to religious authorities, nursery schools, relatives or friends. 875 of them were Christian or Jewish Ottoman citizens, 75 were Muslim Turks and the remaining were from European nations.<sup>50</sup> Investigations in Istanbul revealed that some of the women and girls were deceived and brought to Egypt to work in the prostitution sector, and it was seen that these people had been prosecuted.<sup>51</sup> Many of the girls who were brought to Egypt with the promise of marrying a rich husband were being dragged into prostitution in brothels in Alexandria, Port Said, Tanta and Cairo.<sup>52</sup> Investigations were made on the men and women who came from Alexandria to Izmir occasionally and took Muslim women to Egypt and Alexandria, selling them as concubines and dragging them into prostitution. Investigations were focused on the reasons for their arrival and departure in Alexandria. Information was given to the passport authorities about the persons whose circumstances were finalized.<sup>53</sup> For the same purpose, it was also found that some of the persons named as trustees around Limni were dragging the girls they had received from their parents to prostitution in Alexandria over America or Europe. In order to prevent trustees' misconduct, it was possible for the girls to leave the country either with their relatives or with their documentation so that they could make their living abroad legitimately.<sup>54</sup> But those who were known to be honorable to come

<sup>49</sup> *PRO, FO, 141/466/1* (Ministry of the Interior, White Slave Traffic, Cairo 18th November 1915)

<sup>50</sup> *PRO, FO, 368/809*, No: 1, p. 41 (Reports by His Majesty's Agent and Consul-General on the Finances, Administration and Condition of Egypt and the Sudan in 1912, Cairo, March 22, 1913)

<sup>51</sup> *BOA, DH.EUM.KADL.*, 20/16, 12/C/1329.

<sup>52</sup> *BOA, Z.B.*, 603/84, 20/H/1325

<sup>53</sup> *BOA, Z.B.*, 465/14, 28/A/1317.

<sup>54</sup> *BOA, DH.MKT.*, 856/28, 16/Ra/1322.

to Limni and its surroundings were allowed to take these maidens with them as servants and vouch for the girls' honor in the presence of the metropolitan bishop.<sup>55</sup>

The British Consulate in Alexandria also struggled with a serious issue such as "White Women's Trade" with the help of the Egyptian police. According to these examinations, it was found that a French ship brought three British girls to Egypt, and two of these girls had been issued with new birth certificates, according to which it was seen that one was bigger than her actual age and the other was younger than she seemed. Although the young girl was sent home by the Consulate of Cairo, she returned to Cairo and lived with a Greek national in a known place. The third girl was said to be 21 years old. There was no birth certificate, but the girl seemed much younger. She and two other girls were taken into custody and sent to the monastery "the Sours de la Délivrande".<sup>56</sup>

Between 1912 and 1914, the British Consular Courts had taken effective measures to combat the White Slave Trade in Cairo and Alexandria. The prosecution of those dealing with slave trade continued. For example; "Salvatore Spiteri" was sent by the Cairo Court to take a six-month prison sentence to Malta. Alessandro Tanti, 21 years old, Giuseppe Vassalo, 23 years old, Giuseppe Mifsud was 35 years old were sent to Malta as a punishment. In the first half of 1913, the Alexandrian Court sentenced one of the two men to exile for one month to three months and the other for nine months.<sup>57</sup>

The Egyptian Police had done the best of the fighting hands with the White Women's Trade throughout 1914 despite limitations due to the capitulations. More than 1.100 underage girls, some of the slaves who were delivered to various authorities who took their responsibilities, were saved from falling into an immoral path. "The International Bureau" helped Egypt to empower and organize society by suppressing "White Woman Trade".<sup>58</sup>

In 1914, 931 young girls in Alexandria were landed on board ships, sent to their consulates or religious authorities, or otherwise handled in a satisfactory manner. 85 young girls were saved from falling into an immoral path, 17 women soldiers were deported, and 8 of them were sentenced to imprisonment for encouraging or facilitating the underaged girls. In Alexandria the "International Union" was without a doubt a source of necessity. It is desirable to provide a home for rescued girls, and there was also an association in Alexandria

<sup>55</sup> BOA, DH.MKT., 884/47, 17/C/1322.

<sup>56</sup> PRO, FO, 891/9, File: 86/12 (White Slave Traffic, Alexandria, November 14th, 1912)

<sup>57</sup> PRO, FO, 847/52, Dossier No: 43, White Slave Traffic, 27 April 1914 (Consular Court Cases, 1914)

<sup>58</sup> PRO, FO, 881/10114, No: 136, p. 122 (Viscount Kitchener to Sir Edward Grey, Cairo, April 6, 1912)

called "The Association for the Protection of Greek Girls in Egypt". This association had a nest for Greek girls and this nest was expanded to accommodate other needy girls. The Egyptian authorities were undoubtedly happy to cooperate with the Italian and Maltese authorities to prevent White Slave Trade.<sup>59</sup>

By the end of the 19th century, the common influence of administrative, economic, social and cultural factors facilitated the oppression of slave trade. By the 20th century, slavery was no longer an ongoing issue in Egypt.<sup>60</sup>

### **Conclusion**

It seems that the steps taken in cooperation between the Egyptian authorities and the British have been successful to suppress slave trade. The process of abolishing slave trade in Egypt had begun with the enactment of a law that banned "slave trade" in England in 1873.

As a result of the bilateral agreement with the British in 1877, it was expected that the pressure on the slave trade and slavery system would be gradually increased. Following the agreement Egyptian Khedive (Ismail) forbade the entry of any slaves into the country and to pass through Egypt in the same way. All slave trafficking would be punished, and the slaves in the hands of slave sellers would be freed. Moreover, the Egyptian government was also committed to pursuing those who were involved in crimes such as child trafficking. It aimed to prevent the wars between tribes for slavery in central Africa. However, the Egyptian authorities were not efficient to fulfill the provisions of the agreement.

Before 1882, the task of the "Slave Trade Department" was to follow desert routes and prevent caravans from bringing slaves to Egypt. The unit was not authorized to cope with the selling of slaves, the liberation of slaves, the prosecution of slave sellers in Egypt. In 1883, this unit was handed over to the police force and left to the administration of Colonel "Schaefer" who would fulfill the obligations of the agreements. After the 1877 treaty, the pashas and officials prepared reports on the slave trade routes and centers in Egypt, the identification of the buyers and sellers involved in this business, the purposes of slaves' use and the measures to be taken to combat slave trade. According to the reports the great majority of the slave traders of Egypt were made up of people from Upper Egypt, Bedouins living in the desert, and peasants in the province of Buheyra. The capital Cairo was a center

<sup>59</sup> PRO, FO, 141/466/1 (Ministry of the Interior, White Slave Traffic, Cairo 18th November 1915)

<sup>60</sup> Baer 1967, 440.

where the slave trade was made publicly. There were the Manumission Bureaux in Cairo, Alexandria and elsewhere, but these branches were in the hands of the Directorates or Governors, and the abuse was widespread. Local forces who were involved in slave trade and wealthy and powerful slave traders deterred the clerical officers from doing their jobs properly. Even in Cairo, the slaves were sold in publicly. It was known that there were slave traders in Alexandria, Port Said, Tanta. During Colonel Schaefer's tenure the Slave Trade Department and Slave Release Offices ran effectively. The number of slaves who applied for freedom certificates to The Manumission Bureaux was constantly decreasing. If we were to express by numbers; the number of free slaves was calculated as 10,000 in 1883, with 1885, 1886 and 1887 with a greater reduction rate, 1,400 in 1890, 816 in 1891 and 422 in 1892. These figures can be regarded as signs that slave trade was under pressure in Egypt as a practice and that it would completely disappear over time.

The "International Offices" which opened in port cities such as Alexandria and Port Said. The Consulate Courts and the Egyptian Police Service dealt with the "White Slave" brought to Egypt from the eastern coasts of the Black Sea and the Anatolian Circassians and other nations. In this respect, the abuse of young girls who came from these regions was also prevented.

In historical terms, the abolition of slavery in the Ottoman Egypt was not a solvable issue in a while but a process issue. This process began with a law that banned "slave trade" in England in 1873, and continued with the efforts shown to fulfill the obligations of the agreements made in 1877, 1885 and 1895. As a result of these efforts, slave trade was not a visible problem right before the World War I in Egypt.

**References****A- British Archive (PRO)****PRO: Public Record Office****FO: Foreign Office**

PRO, FO, 141/108, No: 8, p. 1 (No: 1, Sir H. Elliot to Earl Granville, Therapia, July 8,1873)

PRO, FO, 141/108, No: 8, p. 1 (No: 2, Earl Granville to Sir H. Elliot, Foreign Office, July 11,1873)

PRO, FO, 141/135, No: 13 (Inclosure in No 2), p. 8-9 (Analysis of the Slave Trade Convention of the 4th August, 1877-Cairo, September 21,1880)

PRO, FO, 141/466/1 (Ministry of the Interior, White Slave Traffic, Cairo 18th November 1915)

PRO, FO, 368/809, No: 1, p. 41 (Reports by His Majesty's Agent and Consul-General on the Finances, Administration and Condition of Egypt and the Sudan in 1912, Cairo, March 22, 1913)

PRO, FO, 407/75, No: Inclosure, p. ix ( Acting Consul Oswald to Mr. Portal, Suakin, July 23,1888)

PRO, FO, 407/88, No: Inclosure in No 19, p. 25 (Sir E. Baring to the Marquis of Salisbury, Cairo, April 12,1889)

PRO, FO, 407/88, No: Inclosure in No 19, p. 29 (Sir E. Baring to the Marquis of Salisbury, Cairo, April 12,1889)

PRO, FO, 407/106, No: 64, p. 83-84 (Sir E. Baring to the Marquis of Salisbury,Cairo, March 29,1891)

PRO, FO, 407/119, No: 152, p. 119 (Lord Cromer to the Earl of Rosebery, Cairo, March 9,1893)

PRO, FO, 407/131, No: 51, p. 56 (Lord Cromer to the Earl Kimberly, Cairo, February 22,1895)

PRO, FO, 407/163, No: 4, p. 44 (The Earl of Cromer to the Marquess of Lansdowne, Cairo, February 26, 1904)

PRO, FO, 633/70, No: 1, p. 41 (Viscount Cromer to the Marquess of Lansdowne, Cairo, March 1, 1901)

PRO, FO, 633/70, No: Inclosure in No 2, p. 78 (Report by the Sirdar and Governor-General on the Finances, Administration and Condition of the Soudan in 1900)

PRO, FO, 847/52, Dossier No: 43, White Slave Traffic, 27 April 1914 (Consular Court Cases,1914)

PRO, FO, 881/3739, No: 1, p. 1-2 (Report by Malcom Pasha respecting the Abolition of Slave Trade in Egypt, Malcolm Pasha to Mr. Vivian, March 12, 1878)

PRO, FO, 881/3739, No: Inclosure 2 in 2, p. 9 (Paper to keep in Book as reference, and onlu this Paper to have Government Stamp and be sealed by Cadi, 1878)

PRO, FO, 881/4509, p. 17-18 (Summary by Lord Tenterden on the History of the Administration of Egypt 1840-81, Foreign Office, October 10, 1881)

PRO, FO, 881/4767, No: 6, p. 9 (Analysis of Parliamentary Paper “Egypt No.6 (1883)

PRO, FO, 881/5027, No: Inclosure in No 250, p. 155(Mr.Egerton to Earl Granville, Cairo, August 3,1884)

PRO, FO, 881/5227X (Extract from The London Gazette of Tuesday, April 6, 1886)

PRO, FO, 881/5858, No: 5858X (Treaty between Her Majesty and His Majesty the King of Italy fro the Suppression of the African Slave Trade, Singed at London, September 14, 1889)

PRO, FO, 881/6570, No: 92, p. 139(Lord Cromer to the Earl of Rosebery, Cairo, March 9,1894)

PRO, FO, 881/6808, No: 7, p. 25 (Lord Cromer to the Marquess of Salisbury, Cairo, February 3, 1896)

PRO, FO, 881/7091, No: 14, p. 35-36 (Lord Cromer to the Marquess of Salisbury, Cairo, January 15, 1897)

PRO, FO, 881/10114, No: 136, p. 122 (Viscount Kitchener to Sir Edward Grey, Cairo, April 6,1912)

PRO, FO, 891/9, File: 86/12 (White Slave Traffic, Alexandria, November 14th, 1912)

### **B- Ottoman Archive of Prime Ministry in Turkey (BOA)**

**Dâhiliye Emniyet-i Umumiye, Kısım-ı Adli Kalemi (DH. EUM. KADL)**



BOA, Fon Kodu: DH.EUM.KADL., Dosya No:20 , Gömlek No: 16, Tarih: 12/C/1329.

**Dâhiliye Mektubi Kalemi (DH. MKT)**

BOA, Fon Kodu: DH.MKT., Dosya No: 856 , Gömlek No: 28, Tarih: 16/Ra/1322.

BOA, Fon Kodu: DH.MKT., Dosya No: 884 , Gömlek No: 47, Tarih: 17/C/1322.

**Yıldız Perakende Evrakı, Askeri Maruzat (Y.PRK. ASK)**

BOA, Fon Kodu: Y.PRK.ASK., Dosya No: 248 , Gömlek No: 94, Tarih: 8/C/1325.

**Zabtiye Nezareti Belgeleri (Z.B)**

BOA, Fon Kodu: Z.B., Dosya No: 603 , Gömlek No: 84, Tarih: 20/H/1325.

BOA, Fon Kodu: Z.B., Dosya No: 465 , Gömlek No: 14, Tarih: 28/A/1317.

**C- Secondary Sources**

- Avcı 2003. Casim Avcı, “Masavva” *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi*, Cilt 28, Ankara 2003, s. 73-74.
- Baer 1967. Gabriel Baer, “Slavery in Nineteenth Century Egypt”, *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 8, No. 3 (1967), p. 417-441.
- Butler 1887. Alfred J. Butler, *Court Life in Egypt*, Chapman and Hall Limited, London 1887.
- Çetin 2001. Atilla Çetin, “İsmail Paşa, Hidiv”, *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi*, Cilt 23, Ankara 2001, s. 117-119.
- Hunter 1897. F.Robert Hunter, “Self-Image and Historical Truth: Nubar Pasha and te Making of Modern Egypt”, *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 23, No. 3 (Jul., 1897), p. 367-375.
- Kavas 2013. Ahmet Kavas, “Zeyla”, *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi*, Cilt 44, Ankara 2013, s. 350-352.
- Kurtuluş 1998. Rıza Kurtuluş, “Hudeyde”, *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi*, Cilt 18, Ankara 1998, s. 299-301.
- Kutluoğlu 2002. Muhammet Hanefi Kutluoğlu, “Kavalalı Mehmet Ali Paşa”, *Türkiye*

*Diyanet Vakfi İslam Ansiklopedisi*, Cilt 25, Ankara 2002, s. 62-65.

Shaham 2000. Ron Shaham, "Masters, Their Freed Slaves, and the "Waqf" in Egypt (Eighteenth-Twentieth Centuries)", *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, 43 (2000), p. 162-188.

#### D- Online Sources

##### AD: Date of Access

<http://global.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/540208/Shewa> (AD: 08 February 2018)

<https://www.google.com/maps/place/El+Hudeyde,+Yemen/@14.7900308,42.9655535,13z/data=!3m1!4b1!4m2!3m1!1s0x16053be363aba37b:0x7aea559347f1b8a2> (AD: 08 February 2018)

<https://www.google.com/maps/place/Harar,+Etiyopya/@9.3128491,42.1181488,14z/data=!3m1!4b1!4m2!3m1!1s0x1631bda3c73a509d:0x47a0ad82e9e99ed6> (AD: 13 March 2018)

<https://www.google.com/maps/place/Massawa,+Eritre/@15.602493,39.4507885,13z/data=!3m1!4b1!4m2!3m1!1s0x16728c5791260363:0xb4963f0447a30a5d> (AD: 13 March 2018)

<https://www.google.com/maps/place/Obuk,+Cibuti/@11.9672511,43.2888312,15z/data=!3m1!4b1!4m2!3m1!1s0x162266620d7b186b:0x37712eb107c1201b> (AD: 13 March 2018)

<https://www.google.com/maps/place/Zeyla,+Somali/@11.35278,43.4741716,16z/data=!3m1!4b1!4m2!3m1!1s0x1623bf7000467ca1:0xa4527bbbb15eb2c1> (AD: 13 March 2018)